

Sunday, 7 May 2023

## MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH ON WEST GATE TUNNEL PROJECT

A major milestone has been reached on the Andrews Labor Government's West Gate Tunnel project, with tunnel boring now complete on the two twin tunnels that will create a much-needed alternative to the congested West Gate Bridge.

Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) Bella has broken through in South Kingsville – completing a 4-kilometre journey from the west side of the Maribyrnong River under Yarraville to just east of Millers Road near the West Gate Freeway.

Over the past 15 months, TBM Bella has operated 24/7, excavating enough soil to fill the MCG while installing more than 15,000 individual concrete segments to create the tunnel walls.

The significant milestone comes after TBM Vida completed her journey, marking the largest tunnel breakthrough to occur in the southern hemisphere.

The massive tunnel boring machine will be dismantled and removed piece by piece, with the 450-tonne cutterhead buried on-site, and other components either recycled or returned to the manufacturer.

Crews will continue the important work of building the road deck and installing electrical, lighting and safety systems to prepare both tunnels for completion in 2025.

Above ground, work is now underway to construct the ventilation system at the outbound portal and prepare for the installation of the iconic eel net structure.

When complete, the West Gate Tunnel Project will transform travel in Melbourne's west. It will deliver a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge, provide a second river crossing, and remove more than 9,000 trucks from residential streets.

Journeys will be safer and more reliable with travel times between Melbourne's west and the city slashed by up to 20 minutes.

There will also be 14 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, and close to 9 hectares of new parks and wetlands.

### Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"We promised we'd build an alternative to the West Gate Bridge to keep our city moving, and we're getting on with it – creating thousands of jobs and setting our booming western suburbs up for the future."*

*"The West Gate Tunnel Project will slash travel times, take thousands of trucks off local roads, and get families home sooner and safer."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

*"This is a significant breakthrough, completing one of the most challenging parts of the West Gate Tunnel Project – in just a few years' time, thousands of Victorians will travel through this tunnel each day, transforming Melbourne's west."*