

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Transport and Infrastructure

Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop

Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery



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VICTORIA'S LONGEST ROAD TUNNELS TAKE SHAPE IN BULLEEN

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with work on North East Link tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen, with the on and off ramps at the Manningham interchange now being built.

The new interchange will shift 14,700 cars and trucks off Bulleen Road each day and into the new 6.5 kilometre road tunnels, with two massive tunnel boring machines to arrive late this year.

Visiting Bulleen today, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Jacinta Allan viewed construction progress where crews – and a massive 450 tonne crane – are busy building structural walls known as 'diaphragm walls' to allow excavation of the ramps and the tunnel boring machine (TBM) retrieval box.

Nearby, crews are also starting to make some changes to move Bulleen Road further west, to make space to build the new Yarra Link green bridge over Bulleen Road – which will link Koonung Creek Trail to Bulleen Park for the first time. The existing Bulleen Road will stay open until the realigned section is complete in late 2023.

The design of the Manningham Road interchange includes a ramp layout that avoids the historic River Red Gum on Bridge Street and allows Bulleen Art & Garden to stay open.

Across the project, the TBM launch area is under construction in Watsonia, two massive storage sheds are taking shape on both sides of Greensborough Road, and workers in Yallambie are preparing to build the ramps and tunnels for the new Lower Plenty Road interchange.

Tunnelling of the 6.5km tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen will start next year, with the TBMs to arrive from overseas by the end of this year, before the massive task of assembling the 15.6 metres wide, 4000 tonne machines begins.

As work ramps up, there are already more than 4600 workers across North East Link as part of 10,000 jobs the project is creating. Over 300 priority jobseekers – including more than 40 people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds – have already been recruited to work across North East Link.

On the tunnels alone, more than 900 roles will be dedicated to people experiencing barriers to employment.

North East Link will be complete in 2028, slashing travel times by up to 35 minutes, and taking 15,000 trucks off local roads.

The massive investment in Melbourne's north east also includes the completing the M80 Ring Road and upgrading the Eastern Freeway, alongside the Hurstbridge Line Upgrade, Fitzsimons Lane Upgrade and removing 21 level crossings.

North East Link is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"The North East Link is more than just Victoria's biggest road project – it's an investment in communities in Melbourne's north east, getting trucks off local roads and slashing travel times."

"With so many great opportunities to work on Victoria's biggest road project, we're breaking down barriers to employment for people building new lives in Australia."

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