

# Media Release

**Mr Danny Pearson MP**

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop

Assistant Treasurer

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC



Sunday, 15 October 2023

## REMEMBERING VICTIMS OF THE WEST GATE BRIDGE TRAGEDY

The Allan Labor Government today acknowledges the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the collapse of the West Gate Bridge.

At 11:50am on 15 October 1970, two years into the construction of the bridge, a 112-metre span gave way and fell into the Yarra River, killing 35 workers and leaving 18 others seriously injured.

Flags on top of the West Gate Bridge will be lowered to half-mast from 7am to 1:45pm, to honour those who lost their lives in the tragedy and those whose lives it changed forever.

Many safety initiatives now entrenched in Victoria's construction industry, including standard grief counselling for workers after major incidents, can be traced back to changes made in the wake of the terrible events.

Important reforms to our occupational health and safety laws have been driven by the survivors of the collapse, together with the union movement, who have advocated to make sure we deliver safer workplaces for all Victorians.

The West Gate Memorial Park, which aims to increase awareness of workplace accidents and to promote safe work environments, was opened in 2004 on the site of the bridge collapse.

It incorporates the original memorial plaque listing the names of the 35 victims, that was paid for and erected by bridge workers in 1978.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC Danny Pearson

*"This anniversary is a tragic reminder of how dangerous going to work can be and why it's so critical to constantly renew our commitment to safety in every Victorian workplace."*

*"Lowering the flags on the bridge each year on the anniversary of the collapse is a small, but important way we can honour those we lost."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Williamstown Melissa Horne

*"The collapse of the West Gate Bridge has had lasting impacts on families in the west. Today is a day to honour and mourn the lives lost."*