

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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DELIVERING THE NORTH EAST LINK OUR GROWING STATE NEEDS

The Allan Labor Government is getting on and delivering Victoria's biggest ever road project to reduce travel times across our suburbs and create thousands of jobs for Victorians – with the first contracts to deliver the much-needed Eastern Freeway Upgrade and M80 Ring Road Upgrade now signed.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson today announced the new contracts for the two biggest freeway overhauls in the state's history, which form a vital part of the North East Link project.

Anyone who drives between the northern and eastern suburbs knows that the missing link between the Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway is Melbourne's most urgently needed road project. The North East Link will take 15,000 trucks a day off local roads, save 35 minutes in travel time from the east to the outer north, and create 12,000 jobs.

Through six years of detailed design and planning work, significant additional scope has been added to the North East Link project in response to community feedback – including a longer tunnel, a major upgrade of the M80 Ring Road, better interchanges and more public open space, all of which will create thousands more jobs.

The Eastern Freeway hasn't had a major upgrade in decades. Our upgrade includes more than 45 kilometres of new lanes and new traffic management systems along the freeway to deliver 11-minute travel time savings between Springvale Road and Hoddle Street, 10 kilometres of walking and cycling paths and a rebuilt Koonung Creek Reserve.

New noise walls along the freeway will give local homes even better protection and the project will also deliver Melbourne's first dedicated busway from Doncaster to the city, and an upgraded Park and Ride at Doncaster.

In the north, a major upgrade will finally complete the M80 Ring Road at Greensborough, adding nearly 15 kilometres of new lanes from Plenty Road to the new North East Link, a more efficient interchange at Grimshaw Street and new walking and cycling links.

Work is also continuing on the North East Link Tunnels, with tunnelling to begin on the 6.5 kilometre stretch from next year. The first tunnel boring machine is being assembled, with a launch area now built on the eastern side of Greensborough Road.

The awarding of key contracts followed an extensive competitive process with the world's most experienced construction contractors.

Nexus – made up of Laing O'Rourke Australia Construction Pty Ltd, Symal Infrastructure Pty Ltd, WSP Australia Pty Ltd and Arcadis Australia Pacific Pty Ltd – has been appointed to deliver the first part of the \$5.7 billion overhaul of the Eastern Freeway from Burke to Tram Road.

AMA – made up of Acciona Construction Australia Pty Ltd, AECOM Australia Pty Ltd, and MACA Civil Pty Ltd – will deliver the \$3.8 billion M80 Ring Road Upgrade.

These costings also reflect the spike in inflation and the massive escalation in construction costs we're seeing across Australia and the world.

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The two biggest freeway overhauls in Victoria's history are expected to cause significant disruption over coming years as both freeways get much needed upgrades and are tied in with the new North East Link tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen.

The North East Link tunnels, Eastern Freeway Upgrade and M80 Ring Road Update are expected to open in 2028 and are jointly funded by the Federal and Victorian governments.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"This project has been talked about for 60 years – we're getting on and building the much-needed missing link because families in our growing state need it and jobs depend on it."

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson

"The cost of not building this project is too great – we simply can't do without it – and we're investing more because we have expanded the project and we're delivering it in a different economic environment."

Quote attributable to Major Road Projects Victoria CEO Duncan Elliott

"We have expanded this project in line with what the world's best engineers, drivers and the local community have told us."