



The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local
Government

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Minister for Transport Infrastructure
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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN ON WESTERN HIGHWAY UPGRADE THIS YEAR

Construction on the Western Highway Upgrade between Buangor and Ararat is set to begin before the end of the year, following the Albanese Labor Government's additional \$372.5 million investment and an additional \$73.5 million investment from the Allan Labor Government.

The extra funding, included in the 2026/27 State and Federal Budgets, takes the total joint contribution to \$1.17 billion, ensuring this critical upgrade will be delivered.

The Albanese and Allan Labor Governments are progressing the urgently needed duplication of the Western Highway, with over 55 kilometres already duplicated between Ballarat and Buangor as part of the broader Western Highway Corridor program.

The Western Highway is one of the busiest national undivided highways in Australia, and a critical freight and tourism route for western Victoria.

This project (Section 2B) will duplicate 12 kilometres of highway between Buangor and Ararat, adding an extra lane in each direction to improve safety and reliability.

The project's design has been recently updated to make the road safer and more efficient.

The updated design also reduces impacts on the environment and meets the latest road safety and design standards.

Subject to final approvals, including from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, construction is expected to begin before the end of this year.

Over the coming months, construction partners will finalise construction plans and timelines.

Interim safety measures were installed on the Western Highway last year, including reduced speed limits and improved signage, to help reduce the risk and severity of serious incidents while planning work continued.

The Western Highway Upgrade has undergone a rigorous planning process over several years, including a full independent Environment Effects Statement process.

Completion of all works is expected by mid-2029.

For more information visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/western-highway-upgrade.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King:

“These upgrades between Buangor and Ararat have been a long time coming, but this additional funding will ensure that they will be delivered.

“We are committed to making this section of highway safe, efficient and importantly, double laned, and the Albanese Government is now investing over \$970 million to make it happen.”

“The Albanese and Allan Labor Governments are working together to make this notorious section of road safer for people who live here, tourists passing through and freight operators.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Transport Infrastructure Gabrielle Williams:

“This is a vital safety upgrade for western Victoria, and we’ve worked through the necessary planning and design stages so construction can commence before the end of the year.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

“This upgrade is the number one priority for Ararat locals who want to see their Western Highway made safer and easier to travel on.”

“It is great to have a partner in Canberra who is prioritising this project and helping us get construction restarted this year. The upgrade will save lives and make our rural communities better and safer to live in.”

Quotes attributable to Senator for Victoria Raff Ciccone:

“As a major transport corridor between Melbourne and Adelaide, the Western Highway upgrade will make travel safer while boosting productivity across Wannon in western Victoria.

“Through its additional \$372.5 million investment, the Albanese Government is supporting regional connectivity and economic growth.”

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