

Media Release

The Hon Dan Andrews MP
Premier



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Sunday, 9 December 2018

MASSIVE TUNNEL BORING MACHINES HEADED FOR MELBOURNE

The first of the two massive tunnel boring machines that will dig the Andrews Labor Government's West Gate Tunnel will begin its journey to Melbourne next week.

Melbournians have talked about an alternative to the West Gate Bridge for decades, and the Labor Government will deliver it.

Premier Daniel Andrews today joined Minister for Transport Infrastructure to tour the site, where a massive shed is being built to process the thousands of tonnes of dirt and rock that will be excavated during construction for the tunnel's northern portal.

The steel frame is going up for the 90 metre x 180 metre spoil shed at the Yarraville tunnelling hub site, while work is also well underway at the northern portal site to build the tunnel entrance, where the two TBMs will be launched.

The massive TBMs will be 90 metres long, weighing up to 4,000 tonnes each and standing 15.6 metres in diameter – as tall as the top of the dome at Flinders Street Station.

The first TBM will arrive early next year. It will be the first time a full-scale TBM has been used in Victoria.

The first TBM to arrive is named Bella, after Bella Guerin, the first woman to graduate from an Australian University. The second TBM will be called Vida, after Vida Goldstein one of the first women ever to run for Parliament.

Two huge retaining walls have been built either side of the tunnel site, with around 1000 support columns driven into the ground to help keep workers safe on site.

Crews are installing a steel structure inside the huge launch site to provide additional support for the retaining walls which in turn supports the soil at the sides.

To assemble the TBMs, some of the largest gantry cranes ever built in Australia, with up to 500 tonnes lifting capacity, will be used.

Spoil from the tunnel will be moved from the TBM to the spoil shed via a covered conveyor, where it will be safely loaded onto covered trucks inside the shed.

The West Gate Tunnel Project will provide a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge, slashing travel times, taking trucks off local roads and creating 6,000 new jobs for Victoria.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Whether it's the West Gate Tunnel, removing level crossings or building the North East Link, we won't waste a minute getting on with the projects Victorians need."

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"The massive TBMs will be working 24/7 to dig the tunnels that will finally provide a much-needed alternative to the West Gate Bridge."

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Quote attributable to Member for Williamstown Melissa Horne

“The West Gate Tunnel will bring enormous benefits to our community, slashing travel times so locals can get home sooner and safer and improving bike paths and trails for cyclists.”

Quote attributable to Member for Footscray Katie Hall

“This shed will mean less noise and less dust during construction for local residents – we’ll do whatever we can to limit the disruption to locals while this urgently needed project is being built.”