

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education



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MASSIVE TUNNEL BORING MACHINE ARRIVES IN MELBOURNE

The first of the two massive tunnel boring machines that will build the West Gate Tunnel has arrived in Melbourne.

Acting Premier James Merlino joined Acting Minister for Transport Infrastructure Melissa Horne at the Port of Melbourne today as parts of the huge machine were being unloaded.

Bella, the tunnel boring machine (TBM) which arrived today, is 90 metres long, 15.6 metres high and weighs 4,000 tonnes – one of the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere.

The hundreds of pieces that make up Bella will be delivered over the next few weeks to the West Gate Tunnel's northern portals in Footscray, and then assembled over the coming months.

Specialised training for the West Gate Tunnel Project has now also started for more than 30 tunnel workers with a hyperbaric chamber installed onsite so workers learn about operating in pressurised conditions.

Workers will work up to 35 metres below ground level and will need to spend up to two hours depressurising before returning to the surface. Up to 20 people will work in the TBM at any one time.

These next steps come as the Andrews Labor Government today also announced a \$124 million contract to supply 92,200 tonnes of steel for the West Gate Tunnel Project has been awarded to Liberty.

The 92,200 tonnes of steel will be used across the West Gate Tunnel Project corridor from Docklands to Laverton to reinforce the lining of the project's twin tunnels, bridge segments, noise walls and retaining walls.

To help meet demand for the West Gate Tunnel for the next four years, Liberty has now ramped up operations at their Derrimut facilities and employed 150 additional staff, including ex auto workers, to produce Australian steel.

Tunnel boring on the longest of the West Gate Tunnel twin tunnels will start by the middle of the year.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

"We're not wasting a minute delivering this vital project. The main piece of equipment to build the West Gate Tunnel is now here and we're getting ready to start boring."

"The West Gate Tunnel Project will be Melbourne's alternative to the West Gate Bridge and create 6000 jobs – creating employment opportunities for apprentices, trainees and retrenched auto workers."

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Transport Infrastructure Melissa Horne

"This contract will boost jobs in Melbourne's west and our steel contract is already seeing more local jobs to help build this vital project."