

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Transport Infrastructure



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Friday, 1 February 2019

CHANGES TO WESTERN HIGHWAY DUPLICATION

The Andrews Labor Government will make changes to the Western Highway duplication alignment between Buangor and Ararat, responding to concerns of the Aboriginal community.

The Labor Government has worked with the Aboriginal community on these localised design changes that will ensure two significant trees are retained along the alignment.

Work has been undertaken with the Djab Wurrung community for several years, including work with the Registered Aboriginal Party, Martang Pty Ltd as well as Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

These discussions highlighted the significance of these two trees to the Aboriginal community, which is why the Government has taken proactive steps to change the road alignment. The realignment includes around one kilometre of localised design changes to avoid the two trees.

There has been comprehensive planning on this section of the Western Highway duplication, including an independent Environment Effects Statement process and Cultural Heritage Management Plan which obtained approval in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*.

In January 2019, the Federal Department of the Environment and Energy decided no protection declaration would be made on the area.

Several environmental initiatives will also be implemented, including timber reuse in the local community, the construction of animal crossings and retaining hollows.

The western Victorian community has waited for this upgrade and – with cultural and environmental sensitivities firmly in mind – work will now recommence progressively along the alignment.

The project has overwhelming support from locals and will provide a vital boost to the regional economy.

The \$672.3 million Western Highway duplication between Ballarat and Stawell will vastly improve safety for communities in Western Victoria.

Over the last five years there have been 92 crashes on the Western Highway between Ballarat and Stawell, including 10 fatalities and 50 serious injuries.

The Australian Government has committed \$501.3 million and the Victorian Government \$171 million to the Western Highway duplication between Ballarat and Stawell.

The project is being delivered by Major Road Projects Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

“We understand how important these trees are to the Aboriginal community, which is why we’ve listened and made these changes to the Western Highway alignment to retain them.”

“We’ve worked through this issue at every level and, with cultural and environmental sensitivities firmly in mind, work will now recommence on this long-awaited project.”

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