

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Transport Infrastructure



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Monday, 22 July 2019

NEXT STEPS FOR WESTERN HIGHWAY DUPLICATION PROJECT

The Andrews Labor Government welcomes the Federal Government's decision which allows work to resume on the Western Highway duplication.

The Labor Government has worked with the Federal Government, the local community and Traditional Owner groups for many years to deliver this urgently needed safety upgrade.

There have been more than 100 crashes and 11 fatalities on the Western Highway between Ballarat and Stawell in recent years. The duplication of the highway will vastly improve safety for people in Victoria's west.

The project has undergone a rigorous planning process over several years, including a full independent Environment Effect Statement process.

The Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the upgrade has been approved by the Registered Aboriginal Party, Martang Pty Ltd, and includes measures for the protection and respectful management of 21 Aboriginal heritage places as part of the project.

The Government has also been working closely with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation since 2017, after concerns were raised about two trees on the project alignment.

In February this year, the Government agreed to significantly alter the design of the project to avoid these trees. Additional design revisions made since will allow for an additional 13 trees to be retained.

Major Road Projects Victoria will continue to work with the local community as we deliver this important project.

This project has overwhelming support from locals and will vastly improve safety along this stretch of the Western Highway.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"We're pleased a decision has been reached after extensive consultation and significant design revisions - we'll look to restart work as soon as possible"

"The project has been approved by the Registered Aboriginal Party, Martang Pty Ltd and by the Eastern Marr Aboriginal Corporation, it has all necessary planning, environment and cultural heritage permissions and following the Federal Government's decision, we're pleased to be able to get back to work."

"It's crucial for the safety of the local community that the Western Highway upgrade is complete, and now a decision has been made we'll look to deliver this much-needed project."