Media Release

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GETTING READY FOR TWO NEW TUNNELS TO OPEN NEXT YEAR

The Allan Labor Government is ramping up work to prepare for the West Gate Tunnel and Metro Tunnel to open next year – two projects that will slash travel times for Victorians.

The Metro Tunnel has entered a new phase known as trial operations, as it prepares to take passengers next year – one year ahead of schedule.

For the first time, station staff, operators, maintenance workers and drivers will practice a wide range of scenarios so that the project is ready to open in 2025.

To complete this critical work, there will be weekend disruptions along the Sunbury, Cranbourne and Pakenham lines from late November to mid-December.

Buses will also replace trains on sections of the Sunbury Line, while Cranbourne and Pakenham passengers will interchange at Caulfield Station for Frankston Line services between Thursday, 2 January and Saturday, 11 January 2025 – with trains set to resume for the opening day of the Australian Open.

Major construction has finished on three of the five new underground stations, with work continuing on the two CBD stations – Town Hall and State Library.

From late January, Flinders Street will be reduced to one lane between Russell and Swanston streets westbound and closed between Swanston and Elizabeth streets until the end of 2025.

In the west, annual maintenance works will also be carried out on the West Gate Bridge between Thursday, 26 December and Saturday, 4 January – with three citybound lanes to be closed, leaving two lanes open. Delays of up to 30 minutes are expected and motorists are encouraged to plan before they travel.

Major road surfacing work will take place on the West Gate Freeway for two months, starting on Monday, 6 January between Millers Road and the West Gate Bridge – lane and ramp closures will be in place while crews complete asphalting, and construction on tunnel ventilation structures continue.

In the south-east, work on the Pakenham Roads Upgrade will continue to widen the ramp from McGregor Road onto the Princes Freeway, improving traffic flow and reducing congestion. The ramp to the Princes Freeway citybound will be closed from Tuesday, 14 January until early March.

Buses will replace trains on sections of the Hurstbridge Line across February and March while crews work around-the-clock to get ready to extend the rail tunnel in Watsonia – as part of major works to connect the M80 Ring Road to the North East Link tunnels and upgraded Eastern Freeway.

Work across 10 level crossing removal sites will heat up over the coming months, with an eight day construction blitz taking place in December – with buses replacing trains on sections of the Sunbury and Bendigo lines, and Watsons Road to be closed until late 2025 to build a new road bridge in Diggers Rest.

Crews will also ramp up works in January to remove four level crossings in Melton and build a new Melton Station.

To find out more and to check before you travel, visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/map.

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson

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"It's going to be huge summer of works as crews prepare to open the West Gate Tunnel and Metro Tunnel next year – two vital projects for Victoria, that will reduce travel times and congestion and improve connections to every corner of Australia's biggest city."

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne

"We are getting on delivering vital works that will help create faster and safer journeys."

Quote attributable to Minister for Public and Active Transport Gabrielle Williams

"We thank people for their patience as we get on with these crucial works that will deliver safer and faster journeys. Remember to plan your journey ahead of time."

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