

Media Release

Mr Danny Pearson MP

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop

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Sunday, 15 December 2024

NORTH EAST LINK TUNNEL REACHES THE ONE KILOMETRE MARK

Tunnelling is powering ahead on the Allan Labor Government's North East Link – with the first of two tunnel boring machines (TBM) having tunneled more than one kilometre.

Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson today entered the new tunnel for the first time to announce TBMs Zelda and Gillian are well on their way to digging the 6.5-kilometre tunnels – which will help take 15,000 trucks off local roads.

TBM Zelda is excavating the northbound tunnel and has completed one kilometre, while TBM Gillian has just passed 700 metres on the southbound tunnel.

As they move forward, the 4,000 tonne machines are installing concrete segments made locally in Benalla, while concrete culverts made in Echuca are also being installed behind each TBM to form a service route for maintenance vehicles inside the tunnels.

Next year the TBMs will break through near Lower Plenty Road where on and off ramps are being built, before they relaunch underground and continue their journey towards Bulleen – with tunnelling expected to be complete in 2026.

The new twin tunnels will divert traffic below ground by up to 45 metres – cutting congestion on local roads and slashing travel times by up to 35 minutes.

More than 8,000 workers are currently working across the project – which will create 12,000 jobs before completion in 2028.

While the TBMs continue their journeys, crews are undertaking major upgrades along the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road to connect the freeways to the North East Link tunnels.

The North East Link tunnels, M80 Ring Road Completion and Eastern Freeway Upgrades are jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments and will be open in 2028.

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson

"The North East Link has been talked about for decades and works are powering ahead as we build the missing link in Melbourne's road network – creating thousands of jobs in the process."

Quote attributable to Member for Ivanhoe Anthony Carbines

"We are getting on with building Victoria's biggest road project which will take 15,000 trucks off local roads and move traffic underground rather than through local suburbs."

Quote attributable to Member for Bundoora Colin Brooks

"North East Link will deliver 34km of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, make it easier and safer for locals to get around their suburbs in the North East."

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