

Media Release

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BIG BUILD WORKS POWERING AHEAD THIS AUTUMN

The Allan Labor Government is powering ahead with works across Victoria's Big Build this autumn, as it prepares to open the Metro Tunnel and West Gate Tunnel later this year, along with removing another dangerous and congested level crossing.

Minister for Transport Infrastructure Gabrielle Williams visited a North East Link site today where the first of more than 100 concrete Super T-beams has been lifted into place to support the newly aligned Bulleen Road that will seamlessly connect the Eastern Freeway to the 6.5 kilometre North East Link tunnels.

Over the next five months, the beams – weighing between 64 and 126 tonnes each – will be lifted to support the newly aligned Bulleen Road – with crews set to build the road surface later this year.

As work continues, lane-splitting is now in place on the Eastern Freeway outbound between Burke and Bulleen roads, with crews set to focus on the citybound side in March. There will also be road closures at times including overnight on the Greensborough Bypass and the M80 Ring Road in Greensborough.

Critical testing and trial operations are underway on the Metro Tunnel Project, as work continues on the biggest upgrade of Melbourne's train network since the City Loop opened in 1981.

Testing will take place on weekends in March, April and May, and buses will replace trains on part of the Sunbury, Cranbourne and Pakenham lines, and coaches will replace trains on most of the Gippsland Line for most services across four days in mid-April.

Cranbourne and Pakenham Line passengers will also need to change trains at Caulfield Station for Frankston Line trains to get to the city.

As we race towards the West Gate Tunnel opening later this year, work will get underway to take down the huge tower crane that built the outbound tunnel portal. While this is happening drivers on the West Gate Freeway will experience some outbound lane and ramp closures for two weekends between March and April.

Drivers are reminded inbound ramp closures are set to begin from tonight until late March between Grieve Parade and the West Gate Bridge, and inbound traffic will continue to be reduced to three lanes. The inbound entry ramps on Millers Road and Grieve Parade, as well as the Williamstown Road exit ramp, will be closed.

Also in Melbourne's west, works will take place across weekends on the M80 freeway in March to integrate the West Gate Tunnel into the existing freeway network.

The dangerous and congested level crossing at Station Street in Beaconsfield will be gone for good this autumn, bringing us a step closer to a boom gate-free Pakenham Line this year.

Level crossing removal works will also ramp up in early March across Melton, Mordialloc and on the Sunbury Line, which will also become boom gate-free later this year.

Construction is continuing across all Suburban Rail Loop East station sites, as crews prepare for tunnelling next year. In Burwood, buses will replace Route 75 trams for part of the journey for two weeks in May, and through autumn there will be lane closures at times in both directions on the Burwood Highway.

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Clayton Road in Clayton will be closed overnight for up to five weeks from late March, and there will also be traffic changes on Blackburn and Ferntree Gully roads in Notting Hill.

Works will push ahead on the Pakenham Roads Upgrade, with the Princes Freeway closed citybound between McGregor Road to Cardinia Road between the evening of Friday, 14 and Monday, 17 March.

In regional Victoria, coaches will replace trains on the Gippsland Line for ten days from the 21 March for works to prepare the line's new signalling system.

Coaches will replace trains on the Geelong and Warrnambool lines for part of the journey for two weeks from the 31 March while crews upgrade level crossings on the Geelong Line and work begins on a stabling upgrade at Warrnambool Station.

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

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Gabrielle Williams

"We are getting on and delivering critical works that will cut congestion and provide safer journeys across the state."

"Our crews are charging towards the finish line as we look towards opening the Metro and West Gate tunnels later this year, which will change the way people move across Melbourne for the better."

"We're getting on with delivering the Eastern Freeway's first major upgrade since the 1990s – delivering new express lanes and Melbourne's first dedicated busway – cutting travel times and improving public transport in Melbourne's east."