

TBM BREAKTHROUGH AND DEMOBILISATION

WEST GATE TUNNEL
PROJECT



Exit of the citybound tunnel

Tunnel boring machine – after breakthrough, what happens next?

After tunnelling under Yarraville, the West Gate Tunnel Project's tunnel boring machines (TBMs) have arrived at their destinations.

Vida arrived at the citybound tunnel entrance site on the West Gate Freeway near Williamstown Road in February 2023. The inbound tunnel is 2.8km long.

Bella, the outbound TBM, tunnelled 4km under Williamstown to reach the tunnel exit just east of Millers Road on the West Gate Freeway in early May.

Both journeys culminate with a 'breakthrough', when the TBM pushes through the concrete or rock wall into a retrieval pit, which marks the end of the tunnel boring works.

Following the breakthrough, the machines are broken down in to pieces, and mostly moved offsite via trucks.

Major works then continue within the tunnel to install services, lighting and the new road and motorway management systems.

In partnership with:

Transurban





TBM Vida pushing the cutting head forward and laying concrete rings behind

Tunnel boring machine, Vida

With careful planning and monitoring in place, the TBM breaks through the natural rock wall into what is known as the "retrieval pit" where it stops. From here, the machine is broken down into smaller sections ready for transport. It is then carefully lifted onto trucks to be taken back to the West Gate Tunnel Project tunnelling hub on Whitehall Street,

to the former flower market in Footscray, or for storage before parts are either recycled or sent back to the manufacturer for reuse.

Dismantling and removing the full TBM takes several months with works and transport happening both day and night.

Superload transporting the TBM cutterhead





TBM Bella

Tunnel boring machine, Bella

As there is more space available at the outbound tunnel exit where Bella's journey ends, the second TBM removal follows a difference process.

While many components are still removed, the extra space here allows the largest parts of the machine to remain right next to where it stops. This option also reduces time, noise and traffic disruptions by sliding parts of the TBM to

a space within the breakthrough area where it can be buried. The TBM is then filled with, and enclosed in, concrete before being covered by soil.

Using concrete to stabilise and bury materials is a common construction technique and endorsement by relevant authorities has been obtained.

Inbound and Outbound Southern Portals





Back end gantries building the tunnels

How we will keep you updated

- Works notifications distributed to the local community
- Updates on the West Gate Tunnel Project website and social media accounts
- SMS alerts for people who wish to subscribe
- Monthly drop in sessions in our information centre on Somerville Road
- Pop ups near the portal.

Contact us

Our dedicated Community Relations team is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to speak with anyone who has any concerns about construction impacts. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we finish this important milestone for the West Gate Tunnel Project.

Do you live or work near the West Gate Freeway? Stay informed on the latest works in the area – sign up and be a member of the West Gate Tunnel Project – West Gate Freeway Construction Updates Facebook Group. Visit [wgtp.qrd.by/freewayupdates](https://www.wgtp.qrd.by/freewayupdates) or scan the QR code to join.



Contact us

Please contact us if you have any questions or feedback.

@ info@wgta.vic.gov.au

f facebook.com/westgatetunnelproject

westgatetunnelproject.vic.gov.au

@westgatetunnel

1800 105 105

West Gate Tunnel Project
GPO Box 4509
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Interpreter service: 03 9209 0147

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CONTACT US

info@wgta.vic.gov.au | 1800 105 105

West Gate Tunnel Project Information Centre
Corner of Somerville Rd and Whitehall St
Yarraville VIC 3013



Translation service

For languages other than English, please call 03 9209 0147.

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