



Artist's impression of new trees and plants, Eastern Busway and walking and cycling path at Chandler Highway, Kew

Trees and vegetation

Fact Sheet: Hoddle Street to Burke Road
October 2025

BIG BUILD EASTERN FREEWAY

We're upgrading the Eastern Freeway to cut travel times and improve public transport and walking and cycling in Melbourne's east. We're also delivering one of the biggest tree planting programs for a major road project in Victoria.

The Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Hoddle Street to Burke Road will complete the final section of Melbourne's first dedicated express busway and build new and upgraded walking and cycling links to inner city parks and trails.

The Eastern Freeway Upgrades will connect seamlessly with the new 6.5 kilometre North East Link — linking Melbourne's east with the Ring Road, slashing travel times by 35 minutes and taking 15,000 trucks off local roads a day.

To deliver these upgrades, areas within the freeway reserve will be needed to support construction, and trees will need to be removed and replaced through new planting.

For every tree removed, at least two will be planted, including new trees to shade walking and cycling paths, filter views of noise walls and green interchanges at Burke Road and Chandler Highway.

We've also started planting trees early in local streets, parks and reserves.

Eastern Freeway Upgrades: Hoddle Street to Burke Road

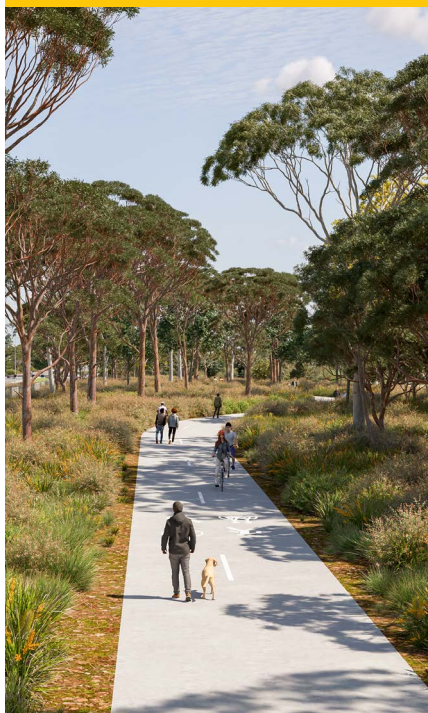


6,000
new trees



400,000
new plants and grasses

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Artist's impression of new trees and plants and walking and cycling path at Yarra Bend Park, Fairfield

Tree planting and revegetation

More than 6,000 trees and 400,000 shrubs, grasses and groundcovers will be planted for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Hoddle Street to Burke Road.

In response to community feedback, the project design has reduced the area needed for construction to keep more existing trees and plants.

The upgraded Eastern Freeway will use some of the existing grassed space in the median strip down the centre of the freeway. Using the median to build 'in' will avoid widening the freeway beyond its existing edges and reduce disruptions for parklands, open space and waterways. We'll also refurbish existing noise walls to avoid removing and replacing these and disturbing existing trees where possible.

Where tree removal is required, new trees and plants will be planted including along new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, at entries to a new walking and cycling bridge over the Yarra River, to help screen and filter views of noise walls and at Chandler Highway and Burke Road.

We'll be planting indigenous trees and vegetation from local regions, including fast-growing native species to enhance existing habitat corridors and to suit local ground conditions.

Early tree planting program

As we deliver the Eastern Freeway Upgrades, North East Link and M80 Ring Road Completion, more than 30,000 trees will be planted across Melbourne's north and east.

More than 3,000 trees have already been planted through our early tree planting program, with more planned.

We've started planting trees early in parks and reserves along and near the Eastern Freeway including Hyde Park, Columba Street Reserve and Freeway Golf Course.



Minimising tree and vegetation removal

Minimising tree and vegetation removal is a priority for the project and there are strict environmental performance requirements and approvals in place.

Extensive environmental surveys, including field studies and digital mapping, are used to determine which trees need to be protected and which trees need to be replaced through new planting. Where tree impacts can't be avoided, we will be working with qualified ecologists and arborists to plan and manage how works will take place and minimise tree removal where possible.

To ensure trees and vegetation are correctly identified — and protected where possible — a rigorous process of fencing, flagging and final review by an expert arborist occurs before works start. Regular inspections are also undertaken by an Independent Environmental Auditor.

Protecting wildlife

Extensive field surveys will help identify animals that will need to be re-homed during tree removal works. Qualified ecologists and animal handlers will find and safely move animals to a similar habitat nearby.

A designated construction 'no-go zone' is in place on the south side of the Eastern Freeway in Yarra Bend Park at Fairfield to protect the Grey-headed Flying-fox colony. Project works will be done from inside the road reserve in this area and are unlikely to cause disturbance significant enough to impact the Grey-headed Flying-fox colony.

This section of the Eastern Freeway is already very noisy and well-lit, and construction is not expected to markedly increase noise or light levels or disturb the camp. The colony will be closely monitored during construction.

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