

What we heard

Urban Design and Landscape Plan



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About this report

We're upgrading the Eastern Freeway with new express lanes, new traffic management technology and Melbourne's first dedicated busway. These changes will cut travel times and improve public transport in Melbourne's east.

We'll also connect the Eastern Freeway to North East Link in Bulleen – taking 15,000 trucks a day off local roads and cutting travel times between Melbourne's north and east by 35 minutes.

From 1 to 28 September 2025, we asked the local community to share their thoughts on the Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Tram Road to Springvale Road.

We asked for feedback to help refine the design for key local elements including improvements to walking and cycling paths, bridges and underpasses, open space at Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve and the look and feel of new noise walls.

This report includes a summary of what we heard and how it helped further refine the UDLP, ready for more detailed design work and major construction to start.

You can see the final UDLP at bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/eastern-freeway-upgrades

Community consultation timeline

2017

Strategic planning

Understanding the traffic and transport problems North East Link needs to solve, including upgrading the Eastern Freeway and completing the M80 Ring Road in Greensborough.

10,000+

pieces of feedback

2018/19

Environment Effects Statement (EES)

Developing a reference design and setting requirements the final project design must meet for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades, North East Link and M80 Ring Road Completion.

3,500+ 870+

pieces of feedback submissions

2025

Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP)

Showing how the project design for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades: Tram to Springvale meets the requirements community helped develop through the EES and refining key elements ready for major construction to start.

125

submissions

Other UDLPs

The UDLP for the first stage of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road was exhibited in 2023 and updated in response to feedback received. Construction is well underway. A UDLP for the final section from Hoddle Street to Burke Road was exhibited for comment in late 2025 and is currently being finalised.

UDLPs have also been exhibited, updated in response to community feedback, and approved for new and upgraded park and rides for the Eastern Busway in Bulleen and Doncaster.

For more information, visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/eastern-freeway-upgrades



Cover image: Artist's impression of Eram Road bridge, Box Hill North
This page: Artist's impression of Cabena Street bridge, Nunawading



This page: Artist's impression of new freeway lanes and Eram Park improvements, Box Hill North

Engagement

Communication

How we let people know the Eastern Freeway Upgrades Tram Road to Springvale Road UDLP was on exhibition

1.4+ million

people reached through social media and online advertising

19,000+

postcards sent to residents and businesses in the local area

1,500+

project subscribers emailed

3,000+

letters sent to residents and businesses close to where works will be happening

120+

residents visited at home

2

newspaper advertisements

Engagement

Who was interested to know more about the project design and the UDLP

6,700+

visits to the UDLP online

1,790+

visits to project fact sheets online

60+

people came to 6 information drop-ins and spoke with our team

Submissions

Who made a submission

121

local residents

2

local councils

2

government agencies

Top five submitter suburbs

17%

Box Hill North

12%

Blackburn North

9%

Doncaster

9%

Doncaster East

7%

Nunawading

Key changes made

In response to submissions received, the UDLP now includes:



Additional surface upgrades to Koonung Creek Trail



A larger open grassed area at Eram Park



Colours for acrylic panels in noise walls inspired by the creek, trees and sky



Improved rails and screens on walking and cycling bridges



More trees and plants to screen noise walls at Junction Road Reserve and Frank Sedgman Reserve



Additional facilities including drinking fountains and bicycle repair stations



Artist's impression of Koonung Road bridge, Blackburn North

Your feedback

People could give feedback on the UDLP with a short survey or use their own format. Of the 121 community submissions received, 110 (90%) used the short survey.

Overall, you felt the upgrades to Koonung Creek Trail in the UDLP would make it more enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists to use, and that designs to reinstate areas of Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve needed to support construction would return places people would want to visit and enjoy using.

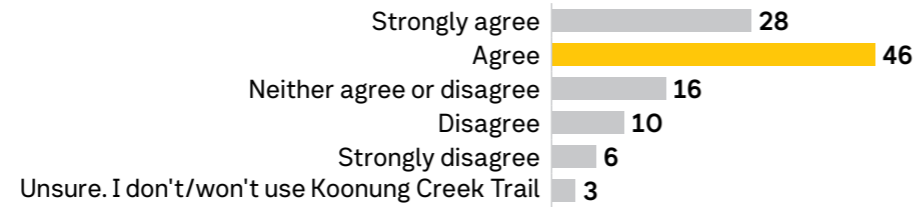
The design for a new section of Koonung Creek at Eram Park moved away from the upgraded freeway to avoid placing it underground and increasing the number of trees and plants received the greatest amount of positive feedback.

Overall, you also felt the designs for new noise walls were a good fit for the local area.

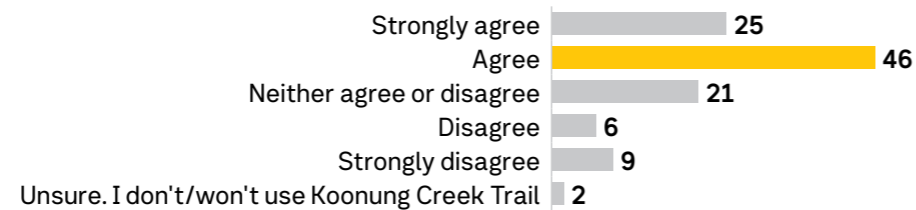
A note about numbers

Not all survey questions were compulsory. Numbers shown are for responses received.

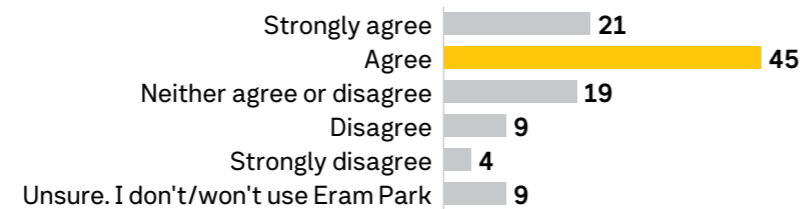
Koonung Creek Trail will be more enjoyable for pedestrians to use



Koonung Creek Trail will be more enjoyable for cyclists to use



Eram Park will be a place people will want to visit and enjoy using

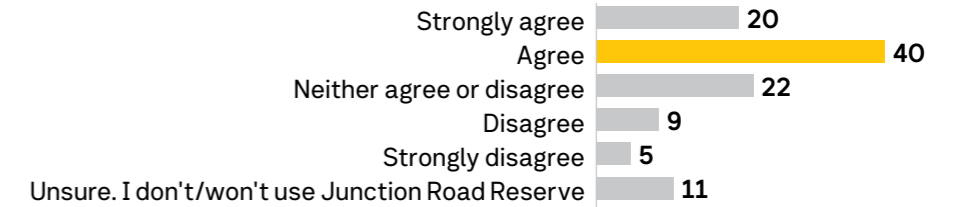


Artist's impression of Cabena Street bridge, Nunawading

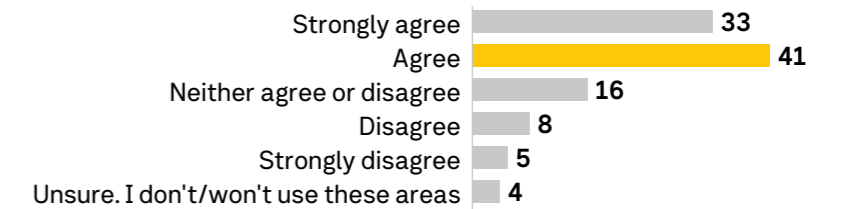


Making the creek more accessible is welcome.

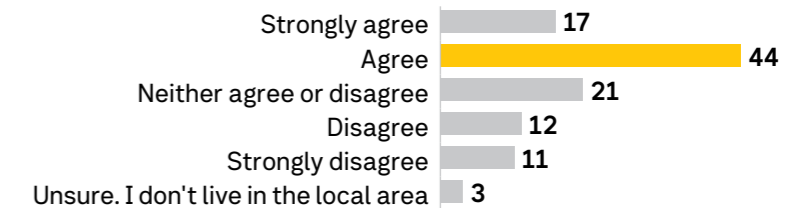
Junction Road Reserve will be a place people will want to visit and enjoy using



The new creek location and extra trees and plants will improve the creek



Noise wall designs are a good fit for the local area



Artist's impression of new section of Koonung Creek and walking and cycling bridge at Eram Park, Box Hill North

Your feedback

Walking and cycling

In response to community feedback received through the EES, the UDLP exhibited for feedback included 1.6 km of upgrades to Koonung Creek Trail and new 'navigation nodes' at entries to bridges and underpasses with seats, plants and signage. It also included new bridges to Eram Park at Eram Road and Koonung Creek and lighting and path surface upgrades for existing underpasses.

Overall, you told us these improvements will make Koonung Creek Trail more enjoyable to use for pedestrians and cyclists.

Elements of the design you felt most positive about were the new navigation nodes and the underpass upgrades. We also heard you wanted some additional upgrades, particularly where existing sections of the path are in poor condition, and more facilities for trail users.

“ Would be good to have some water fountains and pumping and repair tools for bicycles.

In response to your feedback, the project design now includes:

- 1 Additional surface upgrades to Koonung Creek Trail**
At Tram Road, Koonung Creek bridge, Koonung Road bridge, and Junction Road Reserve.
We'll also do an audit to identify if there are other locations that may require surface repairs. This will be done towards the end of construction.
- 2 A wider path at the new Koonung Creek bridge**
To give pedestrians and cyclists more room.
- 3 Improvements to bridge rails**
To improve crossings for pedestrians and cyclists using the existing bridges at Koonung Road and Cabena Street.
- 4 Improved directional signage near Slater Reserve**
To better signpost green space, sporting facilities and other walking trails.
- 5 More facilities along the trail**
Including drinking fountains at Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve and bicycle repair stations along Koonung Creek Trail. We'll work with local councils to best place these.

Other things you asked us to consider

“

I am mostly satisfied with the trail as it is, but there are some areas of surface that could benefit from improvement.

Separating pedestrians and cyclists

Some submissions asked if we could build a much wider Koonung Creek Trail. Others asked for separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists. We also heard requests to reduce vegetation removal and to maximise space for new trees and plants and usable open space.

We've worked hard to balance this feedback, and upgraded sections of the main Koonung Creek Trail will be a consistent three metres wide. This provides space for pedestrians and cyclists to safely use the path while also delivering green spaces.

Gravel paths

Some people asked for all paths to be sealed. Others asked for existing gravel paths to be kept. We've worked to balance this feedback.

The existing gravel path on the south side of the freeway between Surrey Road and the Cabena Street bridge will be kept as it is in good condition and is also outside the area needed for construction works. Where existing gravel paths near the new Eram Road bridge and Junction Road Reserve are impacted by construction and need to be reinstated, they will either be returned as gravel paths or upgraded to sealed paths to improve access

to open space. This level of detail will be developed as part of more detailed design work, and continue to consider and balance feedback received through UDLP submissions.

Lighting

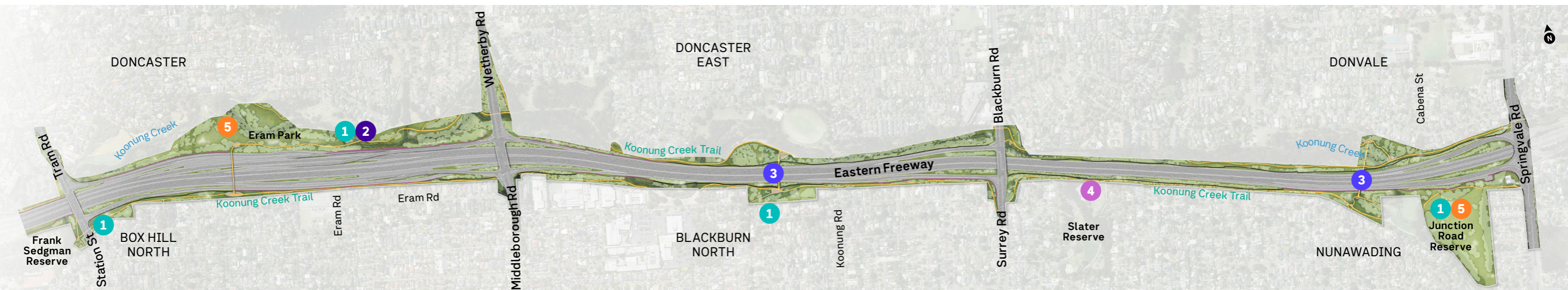
Some submissions asked for lighting along Koonung Creek Trail. In addition to the lighting improvements at underpasses and at the new navigation nodes, the overall lighting strategy for the project will use spill lighting from the freeway for the trail. A detailed assessment will be done to see if additional treatments may be needed in some areas, including opportunities to consider reflective surfaces and materials.

Navigation nodes

The new navigation nodes will provide space for people to stop and rest away from the path, clear signage and path markings and wide turning areas with clear views through the area.



Artist's impression of new navigation node at Cabena Street bridge, Nunawading



Koonung Creek and open space

In response to community feedback received through the EES, the UDLP exhibited for feedback included a new section of Koonung Creek at Eram Park moved away from the upgraded freeway and additional trees, shrubs and grasses to enhance areas of the creek between Eram Park and Junction Road. Areas of Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve needed to support construction were proposed to be returned with open grassed spaces and an increased number of indigenous and native trees and plants.

Overall, you told us the extra trees and plants for open space and along the creek, particularly using indigenous and native species, would improve the local area. We also heard returning the existing bushland feel as well as the informal grassed areas at Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve is important, particularly to provide a mix of habitat for wildlife and places for people to walk, relax and bring dogs.

You asked for some additional facilities for the community to use without overdeveloping these areas, for more planting to screen noise walls and told us the dead 'sculptural tree' at Eram Park is important to the local community.

In response to your feedback, the project design now includes:

- 1 A larger open grassed area at Eram Park**
We've moved the walking and cycling path to the new Eram Road bridge further south to create more space for an open grassed area for people to use.
- 2 More trees and plants at Junction Road Reserve**
We've moved the noise wall closer to the freeway to create more space in the reserve for trees and plants.
- 3 Dead tree returned as a sculptural and habitat feature**
The tree has been carefully removed and is being stored at Eram Park. It will be returned to a permanent location in the park in consultation with Whitehorse Council and Friends of Eram Park.
- 4 Additional community facilities at Junction Road Reserve**
We've balanced feedback from people who would like the reserve to be an area for wildlife habitat with feedback from people who would like it to be a more usable space and will add a small recreation facility such as a nature play area or fitness station near Koonung Creek Trail.
- 5 Better views at Eram Park**
The length of throw-screen mesh on the ramp to the new Eram Road bridge has been reduced for more open views to and from the park while still meeting safety requirements. We're also working with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders on artistic treatments for the bridge including for the path surface and screens.

“ Add a playground for kids.

Other things you asked us to consider

Areas for dogs

The designs for Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve return open grassed areas currently used as off-lead areas so they can continue to be used for this purpose.

While some people asked for fenced areas for dogs, we also considered feedback from people who told us they would like Eram Park and Junction Road Reserve to be returned as informal spaces the whole community can use and asked us to keep the existing off-lead areas as they are now.

Koonung Creek health

Some submissions raised existing issues with pollution and rubbish in Koonung Creek. While the UDLP doesn't include this level of detail, the project design will include bio-swales which act to filter water and remove pollutants and sediment before they enter the waterway.

As we work to increase the number of native and indigenous trees and plants along the creek, we'll also be working to keep the community up to date and to build understanding of the importance for ongoing care for the waterway, including putting rubbish in bins.

New trees and plants

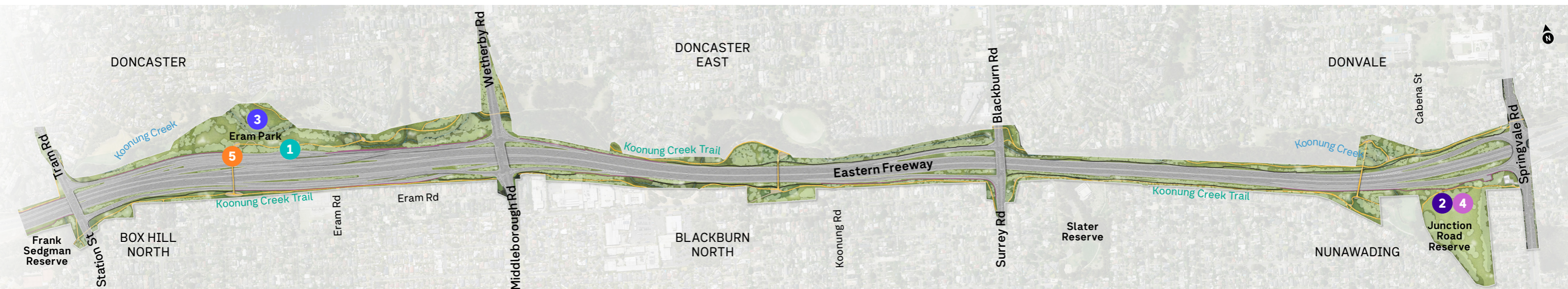
We've heard creating habitat for wildlife is important. As well as working to keep as many existing trees and plants as possible, new trees and plants will include a mix of native and indigenous trees as well as understory grasses and shrubs. Fast growing pioneer species will be densely planted to establish canopy quickly, together with slower-growing, larger trees for longer-term canopy cover. Targeted weeding and infill planting, as well as logs and nesting boxes will also help enhance habitat along the Koonung Creek corridor.

“

I hope there will be habitat for native birds and small animals.

“

Open spaces need to be functional with adequate grass land suitable for people and dogs to play.



Noise wall designs

In response to community feedback received through the EES, the UDLP exhibited for feedback included a quieter road surface and kept existing, concrete noise walls and trees where possible. Designs for new walls used recycled plastic with colours, textures and patterns to complement the existing concrete walls, and acrylic panels for natural light near Koonung Creek Trail, Koonung Creek and homes.

Overall, you told us retaining existing noise walls and trees and using natural colours and textures for new noise walls were a good fit for the local area. You also told us using acrylic panels for natural light is important, however some of you were concerned clear panels would show dirt and dust or asked if the noise walls could better represent the character of the local area, including with more colourful designs. You also told us planting to help screen noise walls is important.

In response to your feedback, the project design now includes:

1 Coloured acrylic panels

In subtle shades of blue and green to represent Koonung Creek, open views of the sky and trees and plants in the local area. The light tint of colour will also mean the panels require less cleaning and weather better over time than clear panels.

2 More screen planting

Along noise walls at Junction Road Reserve and Frank Sedgman Reserve.

“

Strongly support keeping the existing noise walls where appropriate.

“

Need to be more artistic and/or colourful.



Artist's impression of new noise walls near Blackburn Road, Blackburn North

Other things you asked us to consider

Graffiti

Wherever possible, trees and plants will be used to help screen noise walls and make them harder to access to discourage graffiti. Recycled plastic is also a less adhesive surface for paint than other materials and easier to clean. Acrylic panels will mostly be used on the top sections of the walls where they are harder to reach.

Traffic noise levels

Some submissions raised concerns the existing and new noise walls will not be enough to manage traffic noise or asked for more information about future noise levels.

The Eastern Freeway Upgrades will meet the toughest traffic noise standard in Victoria – 63 decibels during the day and a quieter 58 decibels at night. The design for the noise walls is informed by noise modelling which extends 1.5 kilometres from the freeway edges and considers hills and valleys.

Once the upgraded Eastern Freeway is complete, we'll monitor noise levels for 20 years and publish the results online. If the measured noise is higher than the required level, we'll take action to reduce it at affected properties.

Noise wall heights will be informed by detailed noise modelling and kept as low as possible to achieve a good visual outcome while still meeting the project's stringent noise standard.



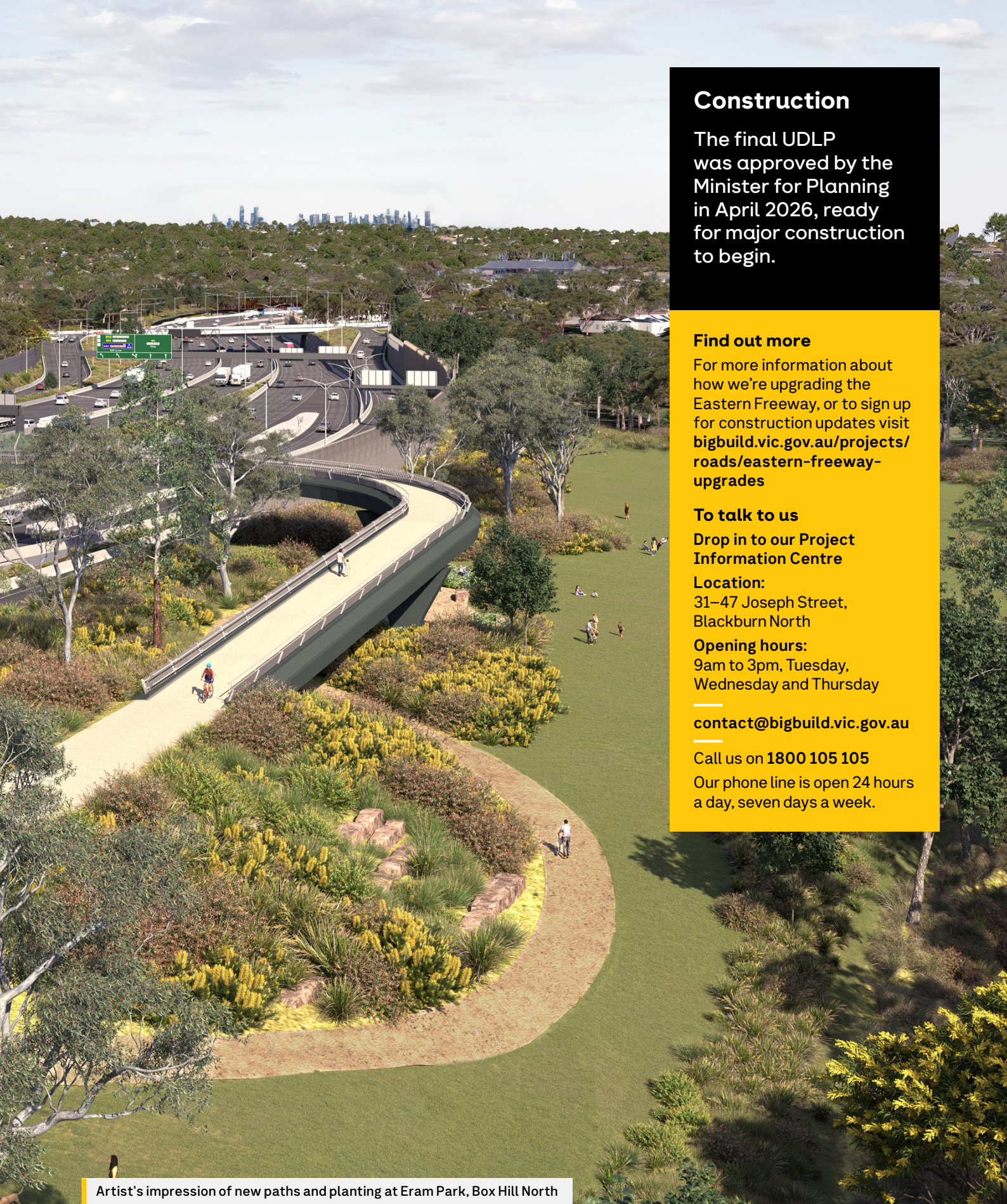
Recycled plastic noise walls for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road developed through co-design with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung

Recycled plastic noise walls for the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road have been co-designed with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and use patterned shapes cast into the walls to represent toolmaking and trade.

Detailed design motifs for new noise walls between Tram Road to Springvale Road are also being co-designed with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and we'll provide the community with more information about detailed designs for noise walls ahead of construction starting.



Artist's impression of Eram Park and bridge, Box Hill North



Construction

The final UDLP was approved by the Minister for Planning in April 2026, ready for major construction to begin.

Find out more

For more information about how we're upgrading the Eastern Freeway, or to sign up for construction updates visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/eastern-freeway-upgrades

To talk to us

Drop in to our Project Information Centre

Location:

31–47 Joseph Street,
Blackburn North

Opening hours:

9am to 3pm, Tuesday,
Wednesday and Thursday

contact@bigbuild.vic.gov.au

Call us on **1800 105 105**

Our phone line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Artist's impression of new paths and planting at Eram Park, Box Hill North

bigbuild.vic.gov.au/roads

1800 105 105 (call anytime)

contact@bigbuild.vic.gov.au



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