



Tunnel boring machine at Burwood site

Tunnelling

Construction of SRL East is underway, with tunnelling now started.

Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) East will slash travel times and cut congestion, while helping deliver thousands more homes within walking distance of the new stations – close to jobs, healthcare, green open spaces and universities. Trains will be taking passengers in 2035.

Tunnels are being built using specialised tunnel boring machines (TBMs). TBMs started arriving on site in late 2025 to build 26 kilometres of twin tunnels between Cheltenham and Box Hill. At their deepest point, the tunnels will be approximately 60 metres below ground, the equivalent depth of a 16-storey building.

Each TBM is more than 100 metres long, with a cutterhead more than seven metres in diameter. All TBMs will be powered by renewable electricity.

Fast facts



Tunnels are 10 km from Box Hill to Glen Waverley; 16 km from Glen Waverley to Cheltenham



TBMs can operate 24/7 excavating up to 100 metres per week



TBMs launched from Burwood, Clarinda and Heatherton



Tunnelling commenced in 2026

More information
suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au



Introducing our TBM names

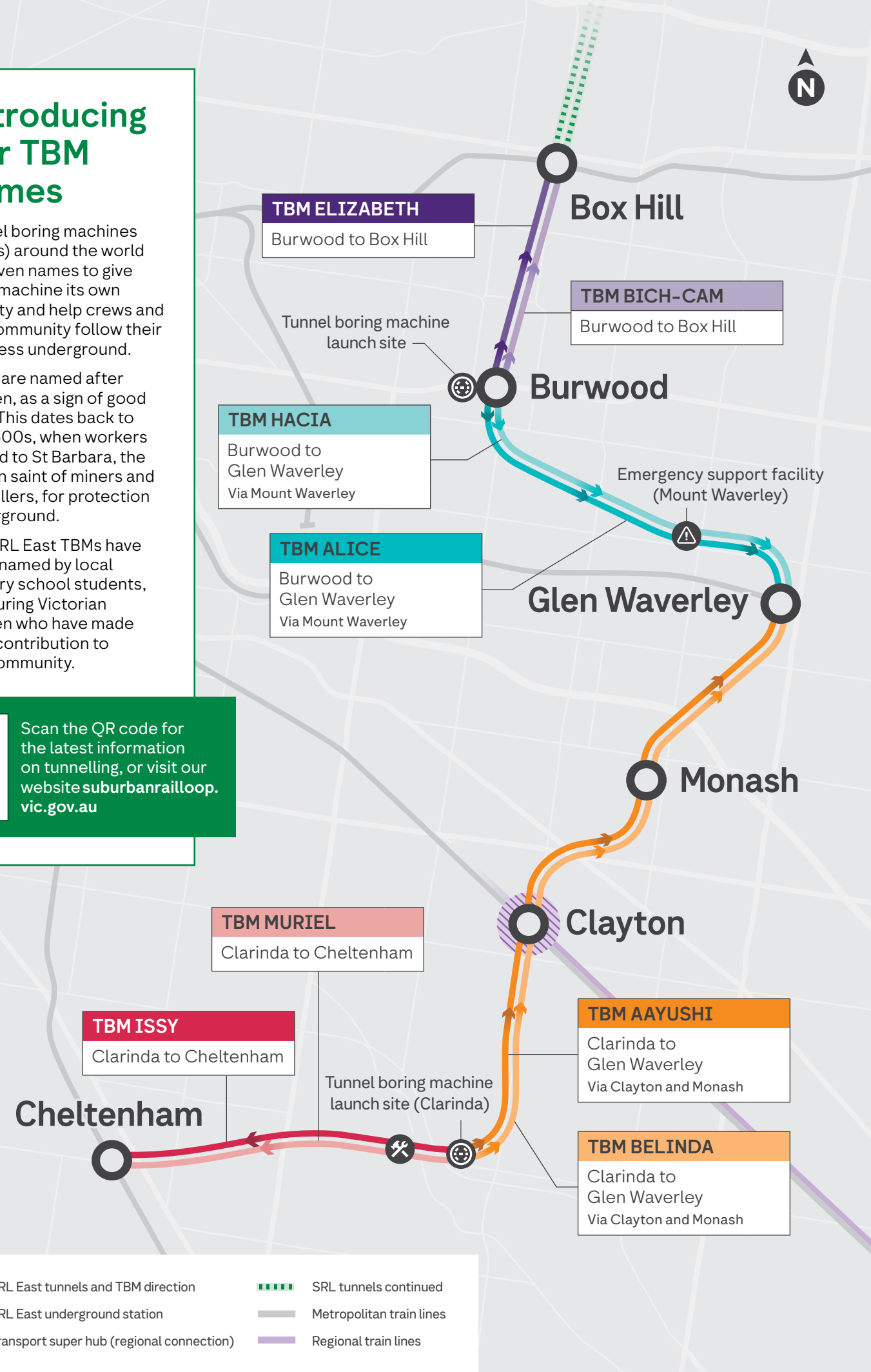
Tunnel boring machines (TBMs) around the world are given names to give each machine its own identity and help crews and the community follow their progress underground.

TBMs are named after women, as a sign of good luck. This dates back to the 1500s, when workers prayed to St Barbara, the patron saint of miners and tunnellers, for protection underground.

The SRL East TBMs have been named by local primary school students, honouring Victorian women who have made a big contribution to our community.



Scan the QR code for the latest information on tunnelling, or visit our website suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au



Elizabeth

TBM Elizabeth – after Elizabeth Chong AM, celebrity chef, teacher and author who pioneered the popularisation of traditional Chinese cuisine in Australia.

Named by Roberts McCubbin Primary School



Bich-Cam

TBM Bich-Cam – after Bich-Cam Nguyen OAM, founder and president of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association and 2021 Senior Australian of the Year.

Named by Essex Heights Primary School



Alice

TBM Alice – after Melbourne music producer and musician Alice Ivy, who has been nominated for numerous ARIA awards and has played more than 400 shows across the world.

Named by Kerrimuir Primary School



Hacia

TBM Hacia – after construction industry trailblazer Hacia Atherton, founder of Empowered Women in Trades that seeks to create a more inclusive future for women in construction.

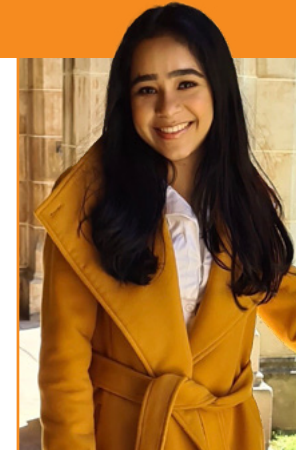
Named by Glen Waverley Primary School



Aayushi

TBM Aayushi – after youth and health advocate, researcher and medical student Aayushi Khillan, founder of social enterprise Body Buddies which uses soft toys to teach children about health.

Named by Le Page Primary School



Belinda

TBM Belinda – after steam train driver and medical student Belinda McKenzie, the first woman to drive Melbourne's historic Puffing Billy.

Named by Clayton North Primary School



Issy

TBM Issy – after the world's first female TBM pilot Isolde Piet, SRL East Tunnels South construction manager for tunnels who will lead southern tunnelling crews, including the world's first all-women TBM crew.

Named by Huntingdale Primary School



Muriel

TBM Muriel – after Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Boon Wurrung Elder Aunty Muriel Bamblett AO, advocate for Aboriginal children and families and Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency CEO.

Named by Kerrimuir Primary School



SRL East underground stations will be as close to the surface as possible to minimise travel times for passengers. The stations will vary in depth, between 15 and 30 metres below street level.



About the TBMs

Our tunnel boring machines (TBMs) are more than seven metres in diameter and between 100 metres and 150 metres long.

TBMs are like underground factories, with a state-of-the-art navigation system. They are fully equipped with facilities for staff, including an office, kitchen and toilets. Each TBM is staffed and monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week with up to 25 people working in each TBM. Workers include the pilot, who drives the TBM, as well as tunnel and electrical engineers.

The rotating cutterhead grinds through rock and soil. As the TBM moves, it installs a concrete lining behind it, which then becomes the tunnel walls.

The soil passes through the TBM cutterhead, into the excavation system, where it will be carried to the surface by conveyor or slurry pipe, depending on the TBM type.

Inside the TBMs

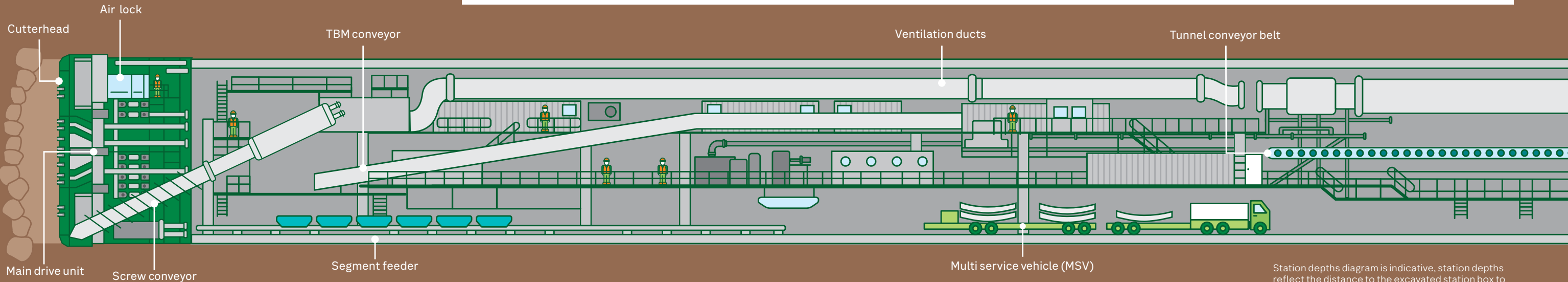
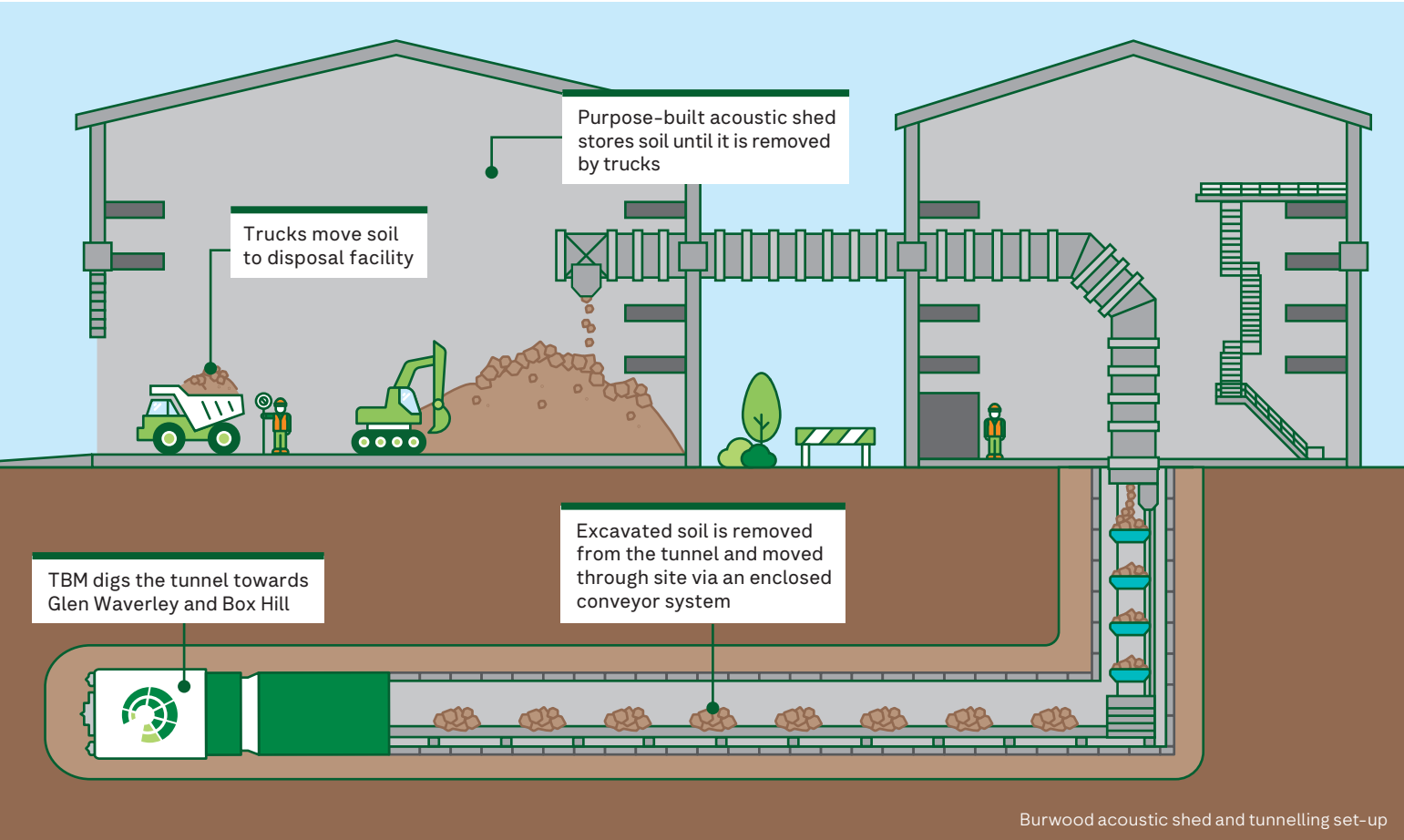
This type of TBM is being used along the northern section of the SRL East tunnelling alignment. All SRL TBMs will be powered by 100 percent renewable energy.

What will you do with rocks and soil excavated from tunneling?

Construction of SRL East will generate around 3.5 million cubic metres of excavated rock and soil during tunnelling.

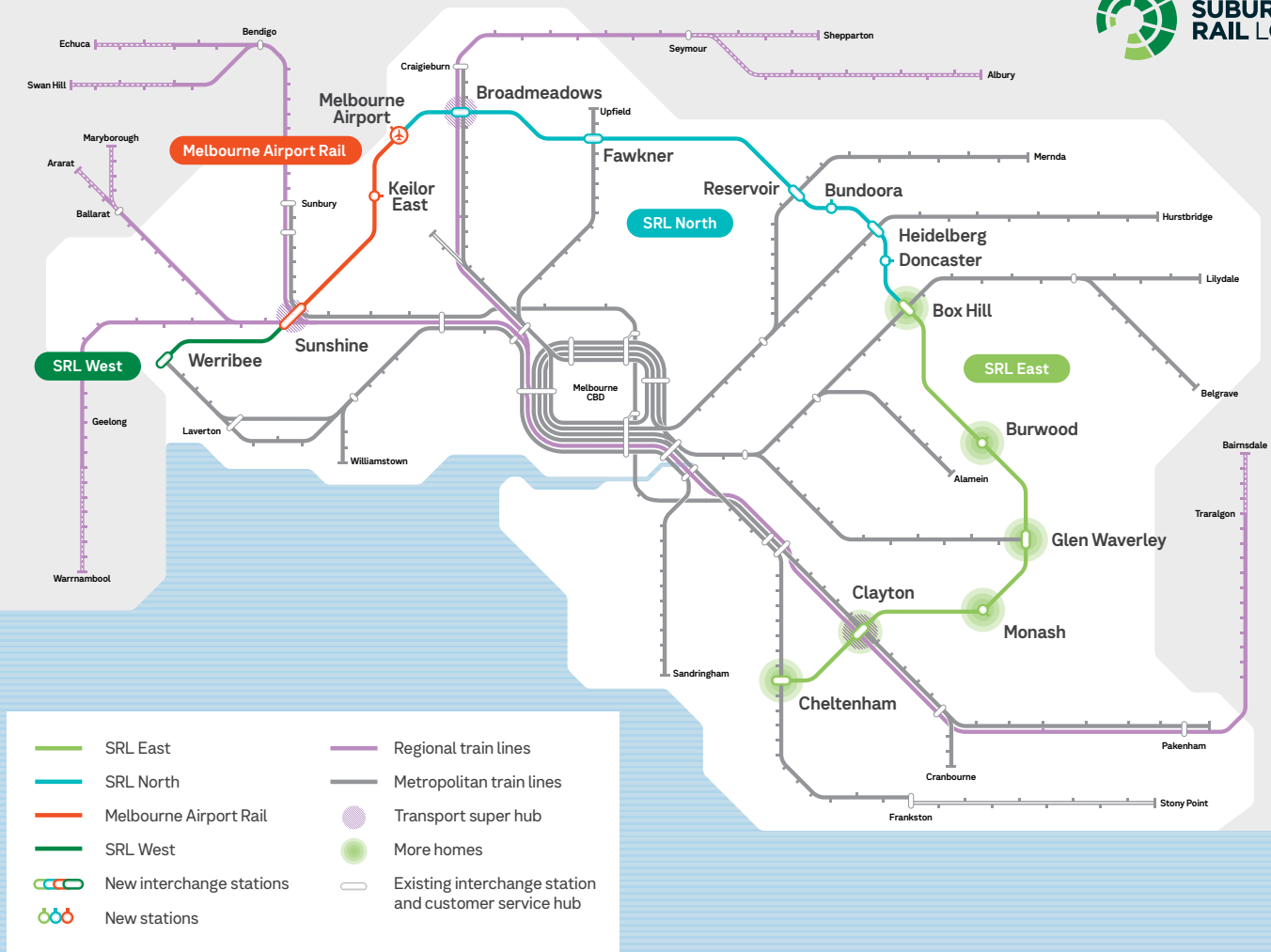
Excavated material is transported via enclosed conveyor systems into purpose-built acoustic sheds, where it is stored in enclosed bins before being removed from site. Trucks are loaded inside the acoustic shed and are washed, weighed, covered, and GPS tagged before leaving the site. All trucks are fully sealed so there is no soil dropping onto the road.

Excavated soil is tested and managed safely in line with EPA requirements and environment and planning controls arising from the comprehensive SRL East Environmental Effects Statement.



Station depths diagram is indicative, station depths reflect the distance to the excavated station box to ground level. These depths are subject to change.

Tunnel boring machine for illustrative purposes only.



For illustrative purposes, subject to further detailed technical investigations and consultations.

What to expect during tunnelling

Will I hear or feel tunnelling under my home or business?

The SRL East tunnels will be constructed deep underground, generally between 20 and 40 metres below the surface, with the deepest sections approximately 60 metres underground.

Tunnel boring machines (TBMs) are designed to minimise noise and vibration. The vast majority of people who live above the proposed path for tunnelling will not notice tunnelling occurring underground.

We have undertaken extensive modelling and monitoring to predict and manage potential impacts from tunnelling. Noise, vibration and ground movement will be continuously monitored to ensure tunnelling remains within strict environmental requirements and safe operating limits.

The level of any ground-borne noise or vibration experienced at surface level will vary depending on local ground conditions, tunnel depth and building type.

For additional peace of mind, properties located directly above the tunnel alignment will be offered a property condition survey ahead of tunnelling works.

contact@srla.vic.gov.au | 1800 105 105 (call anytime)
suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au

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