

Southern ventilation structure

Fact sheet

September 2026



Artist's impression of the southern ventilation structure

North East Link will take up to 15,000 trucks off local roads every day and reduce travel times by up to 35 minutes.

The ventilation system for the 6.5km tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen includes two ventilation structures and one emergency exhaust. It has been designed according to stringent air quality standards to protect the health of communities and drivers using the tunnels.

Construction is underway on the southern ventilation structure, located on Bulleen Road near the Eastern Freeway.

The ventilation system works by drawing in fresh air from the tunnel entry, which is then pushed through the tunnel by the movement of

vehicles and jet fans. Before the tunnel exit, air is pushed up and out of the tunnel through a ventilation structure and into the atmosphere where it mixes with fresh air. There are no emissions from the tunnel portals where vehicles enter and exit.

The southern ventilation structure is surrounded by the Yarra Link green bridge – connecting the Koonung Creek Trail to Bulleen Park.

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[Watsonia Hub, 17 Watsonia Road](#)



Artist's impression of the Yarra Link green bridge



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Yarra Link green bridge

A two-hectare green bridge over Bulleen Road will be planted with indigenous trees, grasses and shrubs. Pockets of open space will provide a bike and walking trail, fitness station and place to stop, rest and enjoy views of the Yarra River.

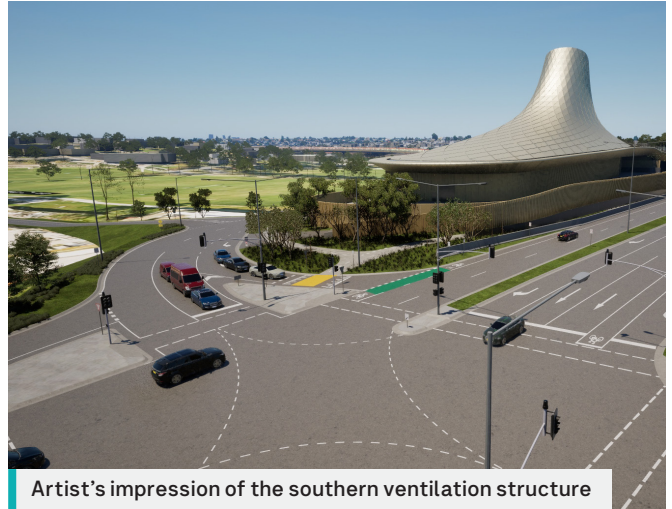


Artist's impression of the Yarra Link green bridge

Local access

A new road will provide access to the Marcellin and Trinity playing fields, with new pathways and planting.

New signalised intersections to the north and west of the Yarra Link green bridge will provide safe access to Bulleen Park for students, pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.



Artist's impression of the southern ventilation structure

Construction

The southern ventilation structure is taking shape over Bulleen Road and will reach its maximum height of 51 metres once complete.

We will continue to work closely with residents and share regular updates about construction progress.



Construction of the southern ventilation structure

Construction timeline for the southern ventilation structure



Early 2026

Structural concrete elements installed



Mid-2026

Construction of the Yarra Link green bridge commenced



Mid-2027

Cladding and landscaping works commence





Artist's impression of the Yarra Link green bridge and tunnel portal, Bulleen

What you'll see

Construction of the ventilation structure and Yarra Link green bridge will involve large equipment and machinery, including a tower crane and concrete pumps.

For several months, the ventilation structure and bridge will appear as a large concrete building while the main structural works are completed. By mid-2027, architectural cladding panels will be installed, completing the bridge's final urban design.

Once construction is complete, the surrounding area will be transformed into a significant new green space, with indigenous trees, grasses and shrubs, walking and cycling connections between the Koonung Creek Trail and Bulleen Park, and community facilities including BBQs and fitness equipment.



Construction of the southern ventilation system



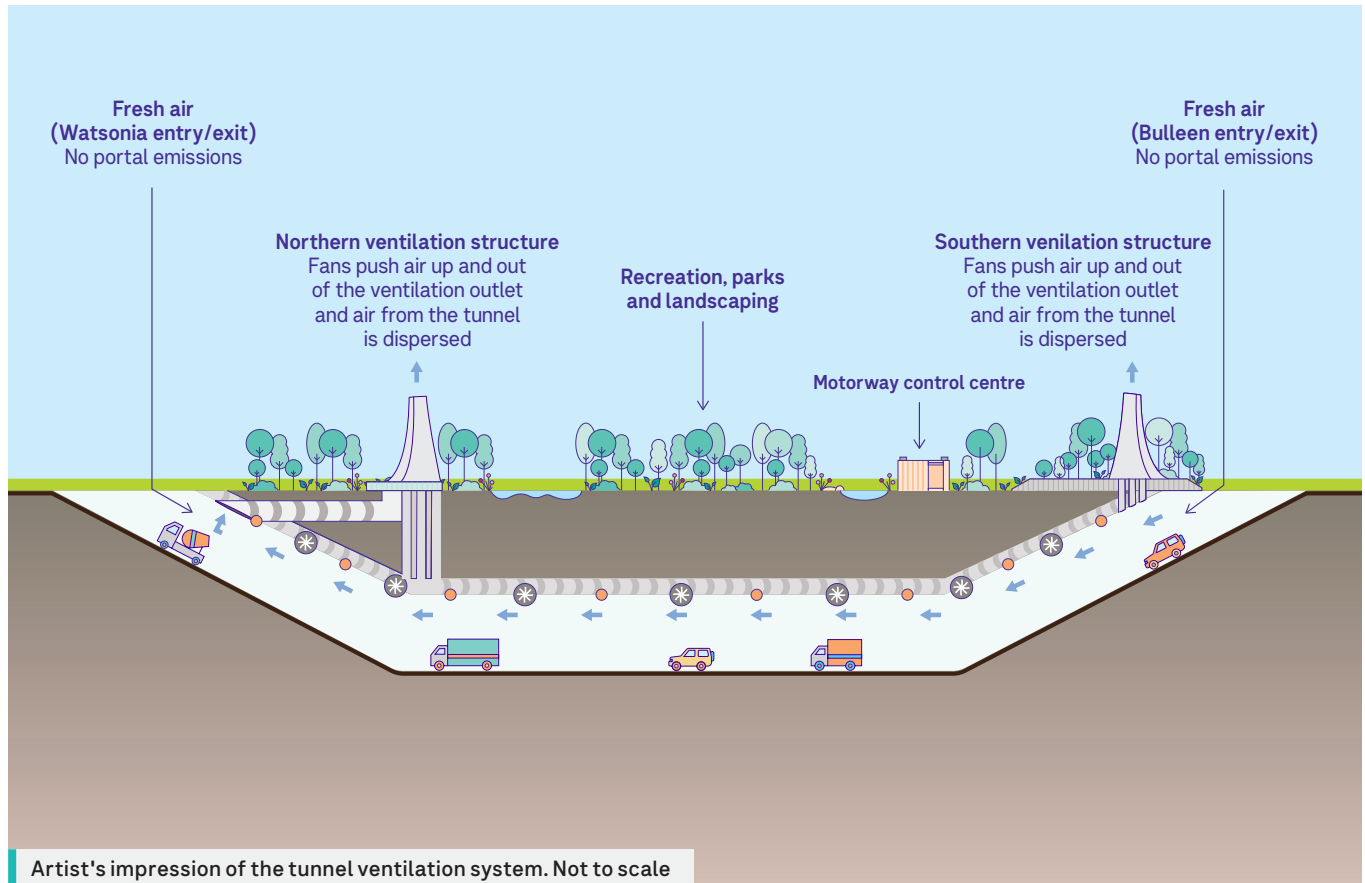
Artist's impression of the southern ventilation structure

Environment and community

Road tunnels can help reduce air pollution by moving traffic off roads where people live and work. In tunnels, vehicle emissions can be controlled and dispersed more effectively, and monitored to ensure standards are met.

Research from around the world shows emissions from well-designed tunnel ventilation systems have no measurable effect on local or regional air quality.

Whether you're walking, riding or spending time on the Yarra Link green bridge near the ventilation structure, it's been designed to be a safe and enjoyable space for everyone.



Monitoring

Air quality is monitored during construction and will be monitored inside and outside of the tunnels once North East Link opens to traffic.

Air quality monitoring stations have been set up in the project area to understand current local conditions.

The location of the air quality monitoring stations were established in consultation with Victoria's Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

Air quality results will be published on the project website in 2027.

Want more information?

To learn more about how the North East Link Project works with EPA Victoria, visit epa.vic.gov.au/north-east-link-project

northeastlink.vic.gov.au

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