

Bella Guerin & Vida Goldstein

FACTSHEET
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Tunnelling tradition dictates a tunnel boring machine cannot start work until it has been given a female name, a sign of good luck for the project ahead – a tradition dating back to the 1500s when miners and military engineers working with explosives, for underground excavation, prayed to Saint Barbara for protection. In honour of this tradition our twin tunnel boring machines have been named after two influential Victorian women.

Bella Guerin was a well-regarded political activist, feminist and educator.

Born Julia Margaret Guerin on 23 April 1858 in Williamstown, Victoria, Bella, as she was affectionately known, became the first woman in Australia to graduate from university in 1883 with a



Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne. Several years later she would go on to complete her Masters.

Bella had a highly respected and extensive teaching career, having taught in many schools throughout Australia. She was a big advocate for women in education and would encourage female students to strive for higher education as she had done.

Bella became very active within political circles and was well known for speaking out on controversial topics such as a woman's right to vote, gender equality, rights for illegitimate children and anti-conscription.

Bella's other achievements include:

- Being Vice President of the Women's Political Association from 1912-1914 (during which time she co-authored Vida Goldstein's 1913 Senate election pamphlet).
- Leading the Labor Women's Anti-Conscription Fellowship campaign during the 1916 referendum.
- Being Vice President of the Australian Labor Party's Women's Central Organizing Committee in 1918.
- An induction onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2001.
- Being honoured by Federation University Australia in Ballarat, with the university's Mt Helen Campus Halls of Residence named after her.

Vida Goldstein was a celebrated Australian suffragette who fought for women's rights.

Born on 13 April 1869 in Portland, Victoria, Vida was a prominent figure in the women's suffrage movement and spent her life campaigning for equal rights and social reform.



Vida travelled the world speaking to huge crowds on the social, economic and political issues concerning women. In 1902, she spoke at the International Woman Suffrage Conference, addressing the United States Congress on voting rights for women.

In 1903, Vida became one of the first women to stand in a federal election running as an independent candidate for the Senate. She also played an instrumental role in lobbying the state government in Victoria to grant women the right to vote in 1908.

Vida's other achievements include:

- Chairing the Peace Alliance during World War I
- Founding the Women's Peace Army in 1915.
- Having the Federal electorate of Goldstein in Melbourne's byside named in her honour, in 1984.
- Having a number of awards named after her including, the Victorian Women's Electoral Lobby's Inaugural Vida Goldstein Award and the Victorian Women's Trust's Vida Goldstein Award for Excellence.

Tunnel boring machine Bella dug the 4km outbound tunnel, and Vida dug the 2.8km inbound tunnel between the West Gate Freeway and the Maribyrnong River as part of the West Gate Tunnel Project.

westgatetunnelproject.vic.gov.au

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