

# Project design Watsonia to Bulleen

Design Update  
August 2026



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

## Fixing the missing link between the M80 Ring Road and an upgraded Eastern Freeway.

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

We've listened to what people had to say and are building longer 6.5 kilometre tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen, simpler interchanges and more open space.

In late 2021 we appointed a team of some of the best builders in Australia and around the world, to build the North East Link.

This includes Victoria's longest road tunnels, interchanges at Lower Plenty Road and Manningham Road, new parklands, wetlands, bike and walking paths and improvements to local roads.

Visit the project team  
**Watsonia Hub, 17 Watsonia Road**



**6.5km**  
tunnels



**2km**  
boulevard for  
Greensborough Road



**8 hectare**  
Borlase Reserve



**6.8 hectare**  
Cultural Landscape  
Precinct and new wetland



**2 hectare**  
Yarra Link green bridge



**19.6km**  
of new and upgraded  
walking and cycling paths  
along the tunnels, forming  
part of the 34km across  
the entire North East Link



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# North East Link

## We're fixing the missing link from the M80 Ring Road to the Eastern Freeway.

In response to community feedback we're creating new wetlands and parklands, building better walking and cycling paths, upgrading Bulleen Road and transforming Greensborough Road into a tree-lined boulevard.

We have worked closely with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to create a design that recognises and celebrates Aboriginal knowledge and culture.



Artist's impression of Greensborough Road boulevard

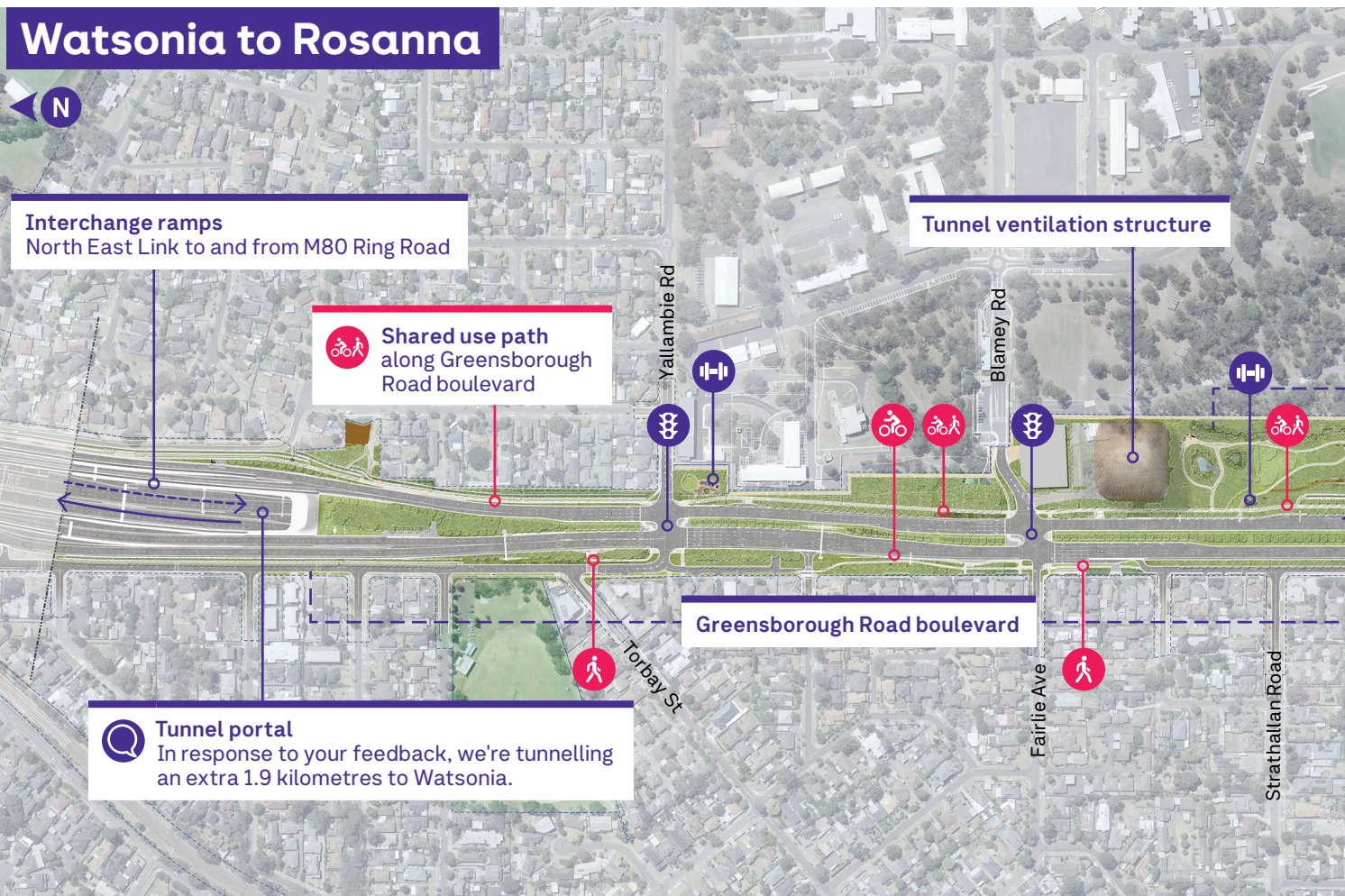
## Greensborough Road boulevard

We're upgrading Greensborough Road to make it better for local trips and to live on. We're using space created by the longer tunnels to build a two-kilometre tree-lined boulevard with avenues of native trees and a 10-metre-wide green median.

We're also delivering better access for local trips with:

- a new, five-metre-wide service road for safer and easier access to homes, more space for paths and on-street parking for residents and visitors
- improved intersections for cars, bikes and pedestrians at Yallambie Road, Fairlie Avenue, Erskine Road and Finlayson Street as well as a signalised pedestrian crossing at Moorwatha Street
- an extra lane in each direction to reduce queuing at lights
- a 2.2km on-road cycle lane

## Watsonia to Rosanna



**Interchange ramps**  
North East Link to and from M80 Ring Road

**Shared use path**  
along Greensborough  
Road boulevard

**Tunnel ventilation structure**

**Tunnel portal**  
In response to your feedback, we're tunnelling  
an extra 1.9 kilometres to Watsonia.

**Greensborough Road boulevard**

## Borlase Reserve parklands

As part of the Lower Plenty Road interchange design we're building 5 MCGs of new parklands along Banyule Creek, including a major expansion of Borlase Reserve to the north with space to:

- revitalise 1.2km of Banyule Creek as a nature and habitat corridor with wetlands, cultural gathering spaces, paths and boardwalks
- build pockets of new open space, a nature playground, BBQ areas, fitness stations, play equipment, parkour area, e-bike charging centres, a half basketball court and netball hoop
- plant more than 100 different species of indigenous trees, grasses, shrubs and flowers, including from seeds collected in the local area
- build a new bridge over Lower Plenty Road to Banyule Flats and Yarra River parklands

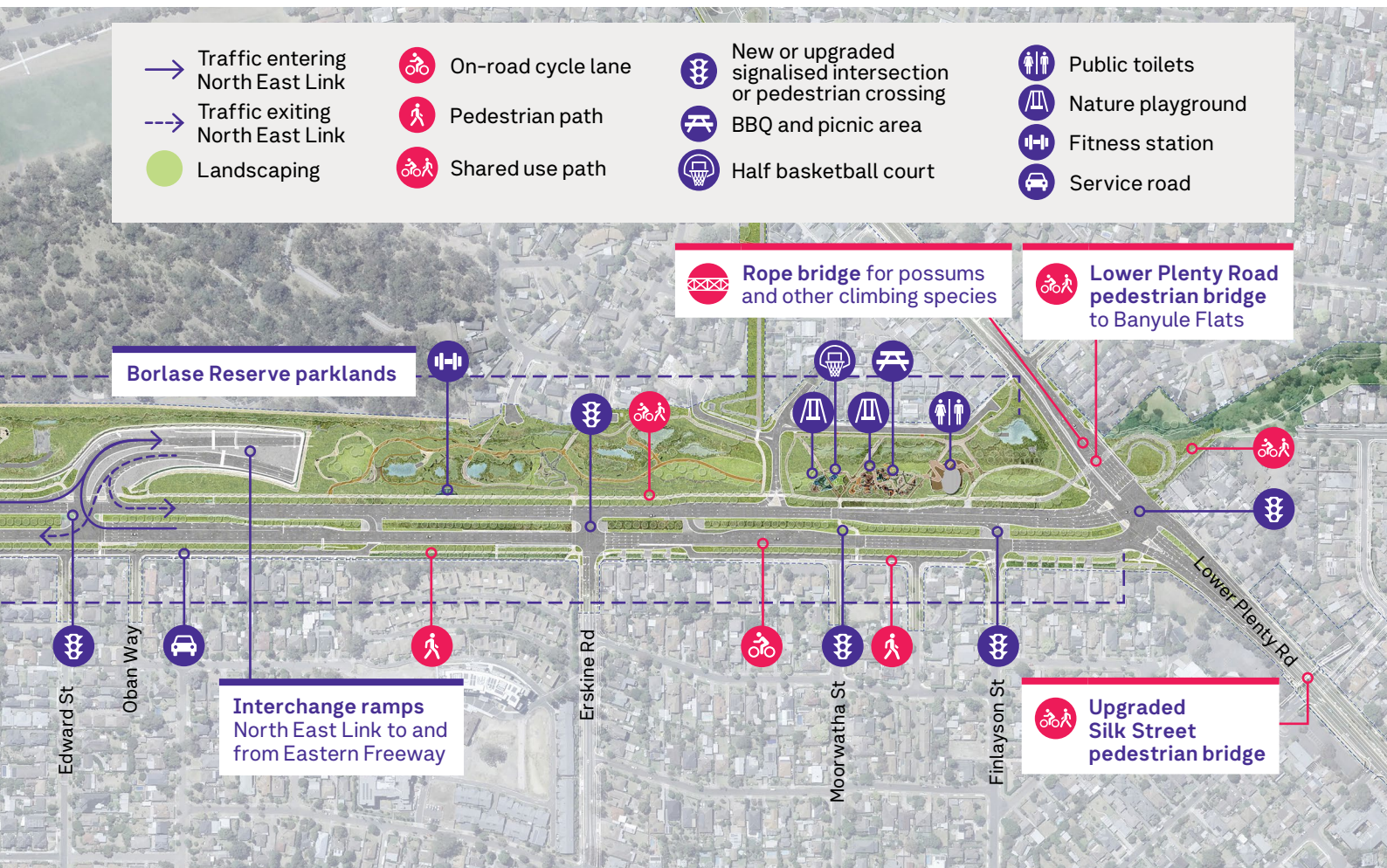
Bridges crossing the revitalised Banyule Creek are inspired by Indigenous canoe shapes. In the playgrounds and resting areas, reclaimed timber has been used as well as motifs and timber engravings as part of Indigenous storytelling.



Artist's impression of Borlase Reserve parklands



Artist's impression of Borlase Reserve parklands



## Yarra Link green bridge

A two-hectare green bridge over Bulleen Road will link Koonung Creek Trail to Bulleen Park for the first time. The bridge will be planted with indigenous trees, grasses and shrubs. Pockets of open space will provide a walking and cycling trail, places to stop, rest and enjoy views of the Yarra River.

Indigenous plants, a yarning circle, views and paths provide a cultural educational journey across the bridge. BBQs on top of the bridge and fitness equipment on the Yarra River side of the bridge provide opportunities for families, friends and individuals to enjoy the space.



Artist's impression of the Yarra Link green bridge

## Cultural Landscape Precinct

This precinct will create over 6.8 hectares of natural space, with new wetlands and connecting paths and trails along the Yarra River in Bulleen, re-establishing a landscape with cultural significance for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and creating an Indigenous knowledge-sharing precinct for Melbourne.

Boardwalks over a new wetland area will provide different views of the landscape, and a shelter and yarning circle will support cultural ceremonies and events.



Artist's impression of the Cultural Landscape Precinct

## Bulleen



### Longer North East Link tunnels

In response to your feedback, we're using tunnel boring machines under Manningham Road to avoid works in Banksia Park.



### Motorway Control Centre

Bulleen Rd

Manningham Rd

Golden Way

Ilana Ct

### Cultural Landscape Precinct

### Manningham Road interchange

The interchange will take 14,700 vehicles a day off Bulleen Road and into the tunnels. It has been designed to protect the historic River Red Gum tree on Bridge Street, keep Bulleen Art & Garden open and free up land for future development.



Artist's impression of the Cultural Landscape Precinct wetlands

## Tree planting program

North East Link is delivering one of Victoria's largest tree planting programs for a major transport project, with more than 30,000 trees to be planted.

Since 2020, more than 7,300 trees have been planted across nearly 20 suburbs in Melbourne's north and east, with thousands more to come. Planting will include:

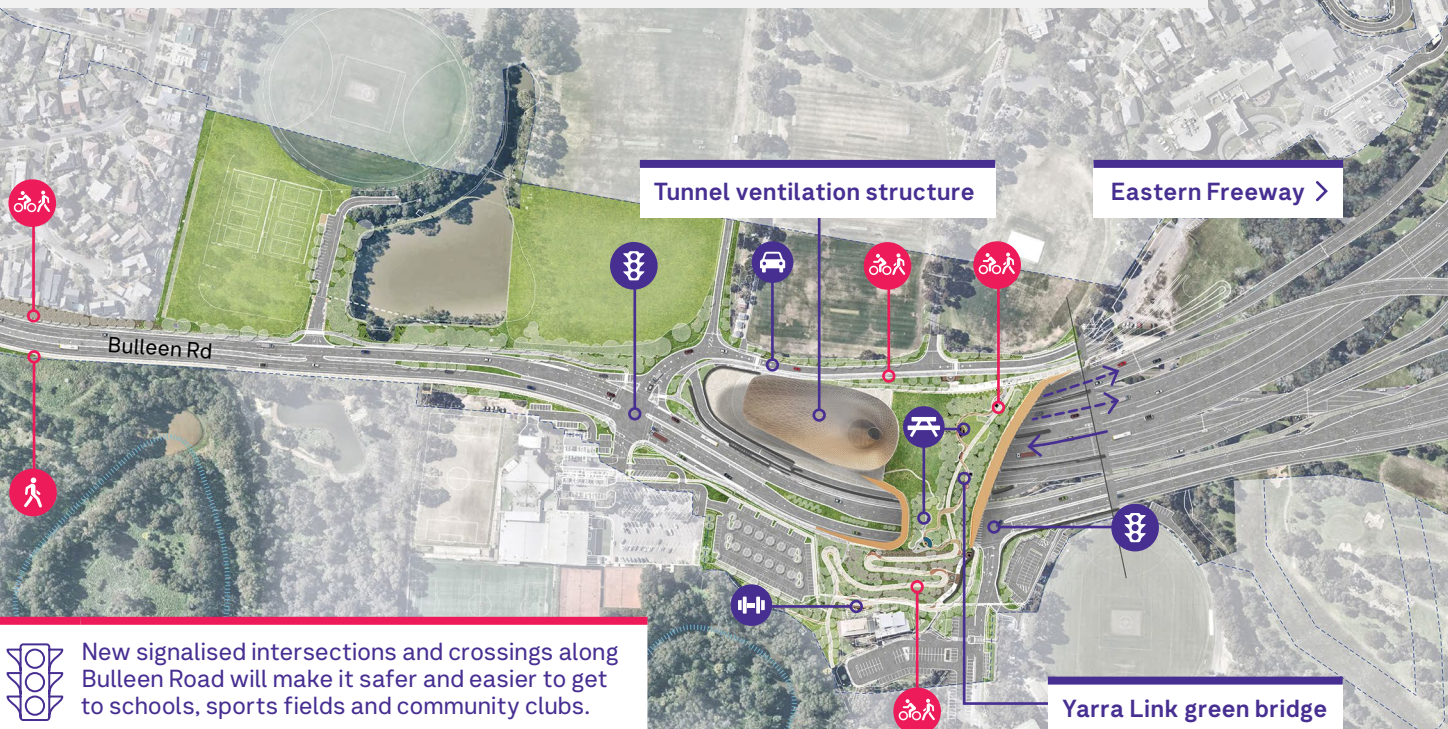
- extensive planting along the new Greensborough Road boulevard
- new planting throughout the Borlase Reserve parklands
- planting to revitalise Banyule Creek, with land used for construction returned to community use
- indigenous planting around the new Cultural Landscape Precinct wetlands and across the Yarra Link green bridge

From late 2026, tree planting will ramp up across the project, creating greener local spaces.

- Traffic entering North East Link
- Traffic exiting North East Link
- Future development areas
- Landscaping

- Pedestrian path
- Shared use path
- New or upgraded signalised intersection or pedestrian crossing

- BBQ and picnic area
- Fitness station
- Service road
- Yarning circle



New signalised intersections and crossings along Bulleen Road will make it safer and easier to get to schools, sports fields and community clubs.

Yarra Link green bridge

# Building the North East Link

While most of the work to build North East Link will happen deep underground, major works are needed at the surface to launch, operate and retrieve the tunnel boring machines (TBMs), build the Lower Plenty Road and Manningham Road interchanges, the new Greensborough Road boulevard, tunnel ventilation structures and upgraded Bulleen Road.

The 6.5km tunnels are being built up to 45 metres underground protecting parklands and sensitive environmental areas and the Yarra River (Birrarung).

Our first TBM 'Zelda' began its journey from Watsonia to Bulleen in August 2024, creating the northbound lanes of the tunnels. Our second TBM 'Gillian' launched shortly after, in September 2024, to build the southbound lanes.

We used a different tunnelling technique with smaller mining machinery to build the tunnel under residential areas in Bulleen and a technique called cut and cover to build the section connecting through to the Eastern Freeway interchange.

In 2026, both TBMs completed excavation of the tunnel between Watsonia and Bulleen. The focus now moves to the fit-out stage, with teams preparing the tunnels for when North East Link opens in 2028.

## Motorway Control Centre

The Motorway Control Centre in Bulleen will monitor traffic conditions and store maintenance vehicles. The building will use 100% renewable energy when operational and includes EV charging stations for maintenance vehicles.



Artist's impression of the Motorway Control Centre

## Tunnel ventilation structures

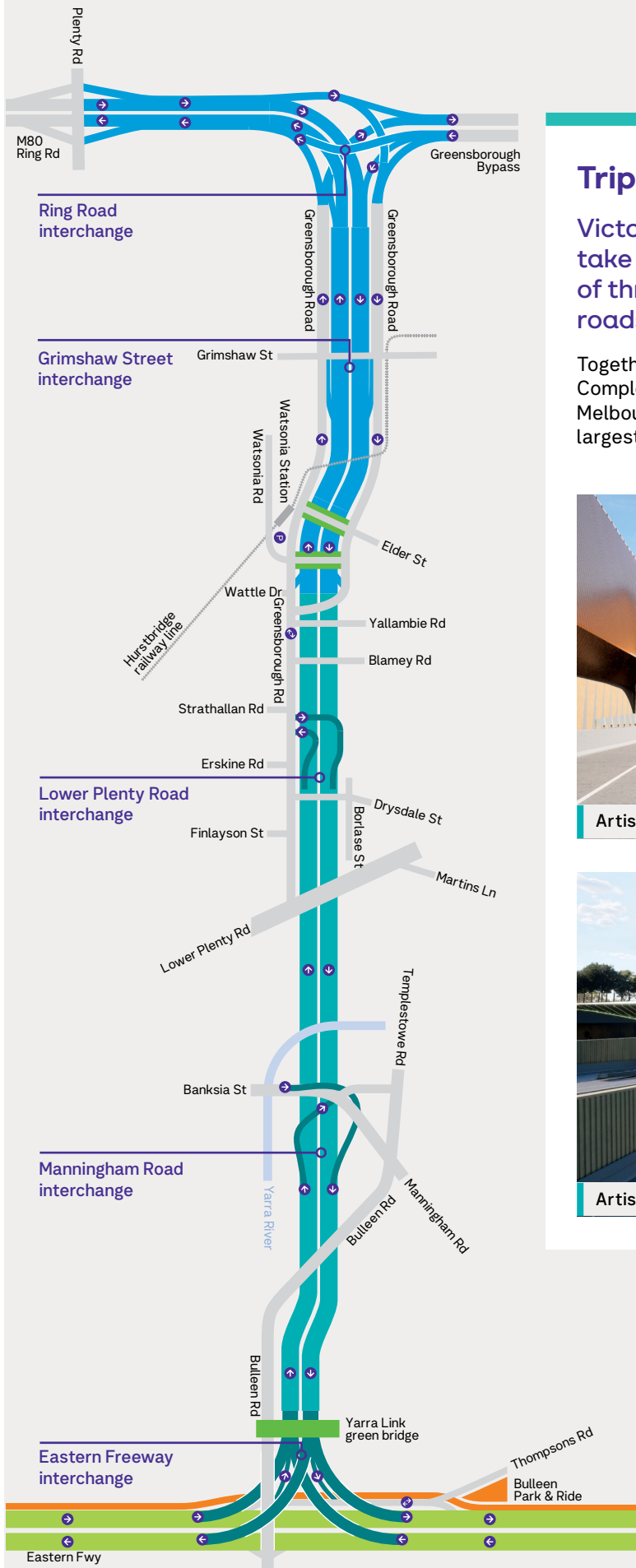
The design for the ventilation structures is inspired by traditional Wurundjeri eel traps and surrounded by new trees and plants.



Artist's impression of the northern ventilation structure



Artist's impression of the southern ventilation structure

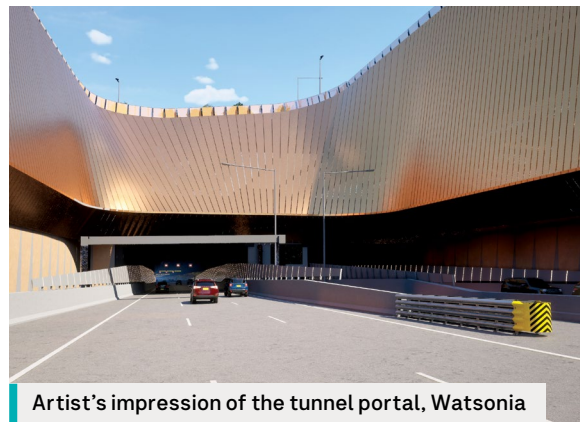


Not to scale. For illustrative purposes only.

## Trips on North East Link

Victoria's longest road tunnels will take traffic and trucks under, instead of through, our suburbs and give local roads back to local people.

Together with the connecting M80 Ring Road Completion and Eastern Freeway Upgrades, including Melbourne's first dedicated express busway, it's the largest ever investment in Melbourne's north east.



Artist's impression of the tunnel portal, Watsonia



Artist's impression of the tunnel portal, Bulleen

- M80 Ring Road Completion
- North East Link Tunnels
- Tunnel entry/exit ramp
- Eastern Freeway Upgrades
- Landscaped bridges
- Eastern Busway
- Other roads

# North East Link Program

The tunnels are just one part of the biggest ever investment in Melbourne's north east.

This massive program of works will also complete the M80 Ring Road in Greensborough, overhaul the Eastern Freeway, deliver Melbourne's first dedicated busway and build more than 34km of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths.

Upgrades to the Eastern Freeway and M80 Ring Road will include new lanes, smart technology and a seamless connection to the North East Link.

Works are being carefully planned so the whole project can open around the same time in 2028 – bringing all the pieces of North East Link together.



Artist's impression of the Eastern Freeway busway and Estelle Street Bridge



Artist's impression of the M80 and Macorna Street Bridge

## Key dates



**2022**

- Site investigations and surveys



**2023**

- TBMs delivered and assembled
- Benalla started making more than 44,000 concrete segments to line the tunnels



**2024**

- Tunnelling began



**2025**

- TBMs cross under Lower Plenty Road
- Silk Street pedestrian bridge upgraded
- Excavation of mined tunnels under Bulleen complete
- Traffic moved onto the permanent Bulleen Road alignment



**2026**

- TBMs complete tunnel excavation
- Construction of both ventilation structures underway
- Work to prepare for the Greensborough Road boulevard begins
- Traffic moved on to the permanent alignment for Bridge Street and Manningham Road



**2027**

- Building the new Greensborough Road boulevard
- Topsoil and landscaping
- New walking and cycling bridge over Lower Plenty Road installed
- Motorway Control Centre completed



**2028**

- Roadworks completed
- Landscaping completed
- Testing and commissioning
- Opening community spaces to the public
- North East Link opens to traffic

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