



Artist's impression of Yarra Link green bridge over Bulleen Road, Bulleen

Project design Bulleen and Balwyn North

Design Update
February 2023



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

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

We've listened to what people had to say and are building longer 6.5 kilometre tunnels to Watsonia, simpler interchanges and 50 MCGs of open space across the entire North East Link Program.

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

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

North East Link near you



6.5km
longer tunnel



2 hectare
Yarra Link
green bridge



3 new
wetlands



8.5km
of walking and
cycling paths



2900
new trees planted

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**NORTH
EAST LINK**
PROGRAM

**VICTORIA'S
BIG BUILD**



Artist's impression of new cultural wetlands, Bulleen

The North East Link Tunnels will take traffic and trucks under, instead of through, our suburbs and give local roads back to local people. We're also building new wetlands and parklands, better connecting Koonung Creek and Yarra River trails and delivering a major upgrade of the Eastern Freeway.

1 North East Link Tunnels

In response to community feedback through the project's planning approvals, we're tunnelling an extra 1.9km using tunnel boring machines (TBMs). The TBMs will travel further south under Manningham Road, avoiding the need for construction work at Banksia Park.

2 Manningham Road interchange

The Manningham Road interchange will shift 14,700 vehicles a day off Bulleen Road and into the North East Link Tunnels. The interchange has been carefully designed to avoid the historic River Red Gum tree on Bridge Street, keep Bulleen Art & Garden open for business, and create land that can be used for future development opportunities later on.

If you live in the local area and want to use the North East Link Tunnels, ramps at Manningham Road will connect you to the Eastern Freeway. Ramps at Thompsons Road will connect you to the M80 Ring Road.

3 Eastern Freeway interchange

Existing connections between the Eastern Freeway, Thompsons Road and Bulleen Road will be kept. New ramps will connect the Eastern Freeway to the North East Link Tunnels.

4 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 bike and walking trail, fitness station and places to stop, rest and enjoy views of the Yarra River.

5 New Yarra River and Koonung Creek wetlands

New wetlands will be created and connected with paths and trails including:

- an expansive new 1,800m² wetland along the Yarra River in Bulleen, re-establishing a significant cultural landscape for the Wurundjeri people and creating an Indigenous knowledge-sharing precinct for Melbourne
- new wetlands and paths along Koonung Creek in Bulleen
- upgraded Koonung Creek Trail with BBQ area and rest stops at Koonung Creek Reserve in Balwyn North.

6 Motorway Control Centre

The centre will monitor traffic conditions, store maintenance vehicles and be a 5-Star Green Star building.

7 Tunnel ventilation structure

The design is inspired by traditional Wurundjeri eel traps. Solar panels will help power the tunnels below.

Artist's impression of Eastern Freeway interchange, Yarra Link green bridge and tunnel ventilation structure, Bulleen



The North East Trail through Bulleen and Balwyn North will deliver 8.5km of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths including:

- an upgraded Koonung Creek Trail in Balwyn North with new crossings under Bulleen Road
- a new bridge over the Eastern Freeway at Bulleen Road
- a shared use path on the east side of Bulleen Road, a footpath on the west side and on-road cycle lanes in both directions
- new paths from Bulleen Road through to Yarra River parklands
- new signalised crossings along Bulleen Road, at Manningham Road and Templestowe Road.



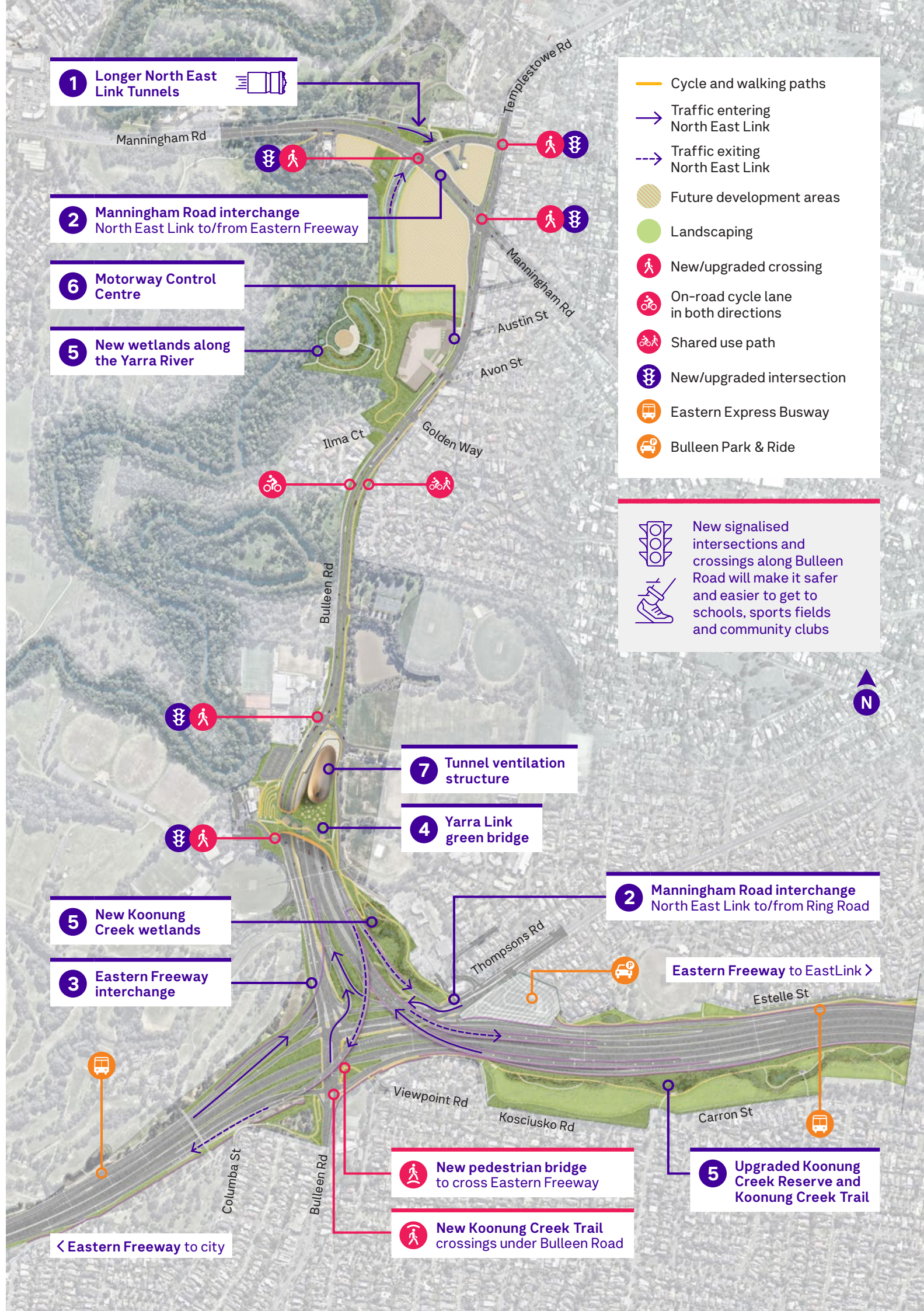
Artist's impression of North East Trail over Yarra Link green bridge, Bulleen



The Eastern Express Busway from Doncaster towards the city is Melbourne's first dedicated busway. High-speed bus lanes will pass under the Eastern Freeway interchange ramps at up to 100km an hour. Passengers will be catching buses from the brand new Bulleen Park & Ride from early 2023, ahead of upgrades to the existing Doncaster Park & Ride.



Artist's impression of Motorway Control Centre, Bulleen





Tree planting program

To build the North East Link Tunnels and Eastern Freeway Upgrades trees will need to be removed while we're working at the surface. This will help create space to build a section of tunnel under sports fields along the east side of Bulleen Road, the tunnel portal and connections to the Eastern Freeway.

For every tree removed, at least two will be planted including extensive indigenous planting at the new wetlands, across the Yarra Link green bridge and at Koonung Creek Reserve.



2900 new trees

will be planted in Bulleen and Balwyn North for North East Link

Artist's impression of new tree planting along Koonung Creek Reserve and Koonung Trail, Balwyn North

Community feedback shaping your local area

More than 15,900 pieces of community feedback since 2017, including over 870 submissions on the project's Environment Effects Statement, have helped develop the design for North East Link.

In 2022 we exhibited an Urban Design and Landscape Plan for the North East Link Tunnels and asked local people to provide feedback on the design for their local area. In response to feedback received we're:

- building better walking and cycling connections and wider paths through the Manningham Road interchange area for connections to the new Cultural Landscape Precinct, Heide Museum of Modern Art and surrounding paths
- building a straighter, easier to use Bulleen Road bridge over the freeway for pedestrians and bike riders and extending shared use paths along Bulleen Road further north to better connect with surrounding paths
- improving connections to Bulleen Park as part of more detailed design work. This includes for drivers using Bulleen Park Road and pedestrians and bike riders using the new green bridge. We've also added two raised pedestrian crossings along the Marcellin College entry road
- keeping existing trees and plants in Koonung Creek Reserve near Leonis Avenue in Balwyn North, creating more space for trees and plants along noise walls for Estelle Street in Bulleen and looking at where we can use more trees and plants to help screen noise walls in Koonung Creek Reserve
- providing the community with more information about the project's stringent air quality modelling and monitoring requirements
- continuing to support Bulleen Art & Garden through construction and providing clearer information in the plan for land.

For more information about what we heard in submissions and the changes made in response, visit northeastlink.vic.gov.au



Artist's impression of Yarra Link green bridge, Bulleen

Building Victoria's longest road tunnels

While most of the work to build the North East Link Tunnels will happen deep underground, major works are needed at the surface to launch and retrieve the tunnel boring machines (TBMs), build the Manningham Road interchange, tunnel ventilation structure and upgraded Bulleen Road.

The TBMs will be launched and operated from the northern end of the tunnel in Watsonia and retrieved at the Manningham Road interchange.

The Manningham Road interchange ramps will be built using a method called cut and cover. A deep area will be excavated to build the tunnel and connecting ramps, then covered over when finished.

We'll use smaller mining machinery to build the tunnel under residential areas in Bulleen and cut and cover to build the section further south under the sports fields connecting through to the Eastern Freeway interchange. The ground conditions here aren't suitable for a TBM or smaller mining equipment.



Artist's impression of tunnel portal, Bulleen

Key dates

- Early 2022**
Site investigations and surveys
- Late 2022**
Work to prepare for tunnelling works on the east side of Bulleen Road begins
- 2023**
North East Link tunnel excavation starts on the east side of Bulleen Road
Manningham Road interchange construction starts
- 2027/2028**
North East Link opens to traffic

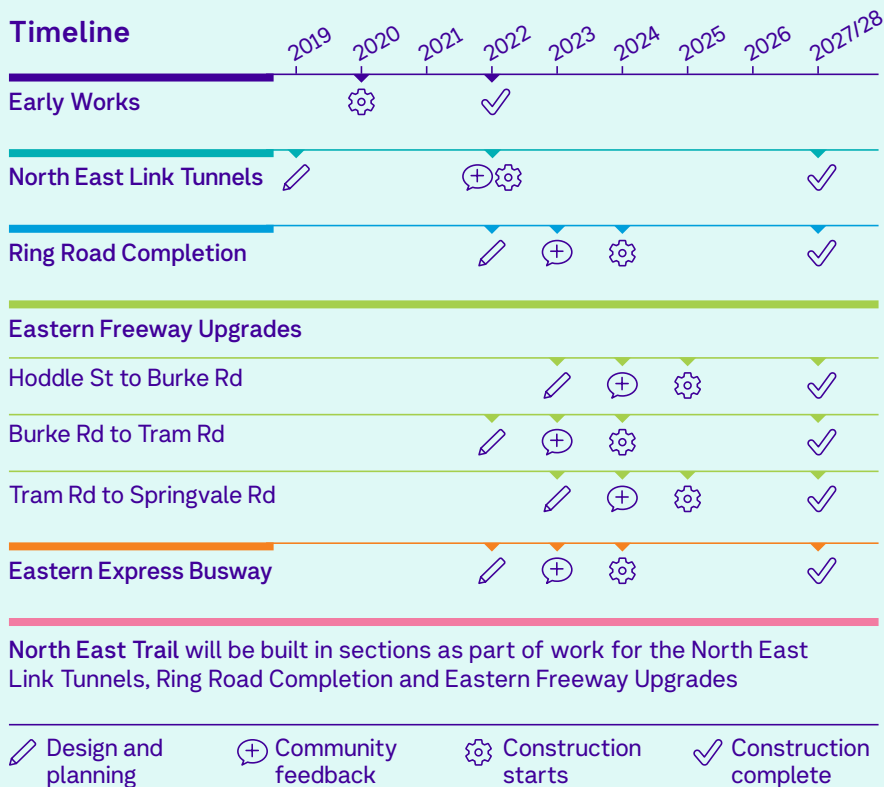
North East Link Program

The North East Link Tunnels are just one part of the biggest ever investment in Melbourne's north east.

We're also completing the Ring Road in Greensborough, overhauling the Eastern Freeway, building Melbourne's first dedicated busway and the North East Trail – more than 34km of new and upgraded bike and walking paths.

This massive program of works is being carefully planned so the whole project can open around the same time in 2027/2028 – bringing all the pieces of North East Link together.

Timeline



This information is current at the time of publication, however changes may occur. Please visit our website for the latest updates.

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