

Trees and vegetation

Fact Sheet
October 2023



Artist's impression of Valda Wetlands, Mont Albert North

We're upgrading the Eastern Freeway to slash travel times and improve public transport in Melbourne's east. We're also delivering one of the biggest tree planting programs for a major road project in Victoria.

The first stage of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road will build new express lanes and bus lanes, new walking and cycling paths and bridges and new noise walls to meet a better noise standard. We'll also connect the Eastern Freeway to the North East Link Tunnels at a new interchange in Bulleen – saving 35 minutes on a trip to the M80 Ring Road and taking 15,000 trucks off local roads a day.

To deliver these major upgrades, areas of open space along the freeway will be needed to support construction, and trees will need to be removed and replaced through new planting.

For every tree removed, at least two will be planted, including extensive planting to reinstate Koonung Creek Reserve and Valda Wetlands, shade walking and cycle paths, and filter views of noise walls.

We've also started planting trees early in local streets, parks and reserves.

Eastern Freeway Upgrades – Burke Road to Tram Road



1.8 million
new trees and plants



10,000
new trees



43,700m²
of revitalised Koonung Creek wetlands

Sign up for updates
northeastlink.vic.gov.au



Tree planting and revegetation

More than 1.8 million new plants, including over 10,000 trees, will be planted for the first stage of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road – returning improved open spaces where it is needed to support construction.

In response to community feedback, extensive reinstatement works include upgrades to reimagine parklands, wetlands and waterways.

At Koonung Creek Reserve, the number of trees and plants will be increased, and new and upgraded walking and cycling paths and nature play areas built.

We'll also be improving the health of the Koonung Creek and Yarra River system with a new dry creek bed to collect and clean stormwater. The dry creek bed will run through the reserve and be planted with indigenous trees and plants – representing the past water course of Koonung Creek and enhancing this important wildlife corridor.

At Valda Wetlands we've improved the design of the freeway to create more space for trees and plants. The wetlands will be reconfigured with new trees, plants, paths and viewing areas, and Koonung Creek will be rebuilt with improvements to better manage water flow and overall health.

We'll be planting indigenous trees and vegetation from local regions, including fast-growing native species, with works carefully staged to return open space to the public as soon as possible, following landscaping and tree planting.



Sheahans Reserve tree planting, Bulleen

Early tree planting

As we deliver the Eastern Freeway Upgrades, North East Link Tunnels and Ring Road Completion, more than 30,000 trees will be planted across Melbourne's north and east.

More than 2500 trees have already been planted through our early tree planting program, with more planned.

For the Eastern Freeway Upgrades, trees have been planted early at Hyde Park, Kew, Katrina Gully Reserve, Doncaster, Morris Williams Reserve, Bulleen, Memorial Park, Box Hill North, R.E. Gray Reserve, Nunawading and Slater Reserve, Blackburn North.

Minimising tree and vegetation removal

Minimising tree and vegetation removal is a priority for the project and there are strict environmental performance requirements and approvals in place.

We know trees are important to the local community and will be working hard to keep and protect as many trees as possible.

At Koonung Creek Reserve, we've minimised the area needed for construction to protect trees along Kosciuszko Street and Carron Street, Balwyn North.

We'll also be working to keep as many of the existing concrete noise walls as possible to minimise tree removal.

Extensive environmental surveys, including field studies and digital

mapping, are used to determine which trees need to be protected and which trees need to be replaced through new planting. Where tree removal can't be avoided, we will be working with qualified ecologists and arborists to plan and manage how works will take place.

To ensure trees and vegetation are correctly identified – and protected where possible – a rigorous process of fencing, flagging and final review by an expert arborist occurs before works start. Regular inspections are also undertaken by an Independent Environmental Auditor.

Protecting wildlife

Extensive field surveys will help identify animals that will need to be re-homed. Before work starts, qualified ecologists and animal handlers will find and safely move animals to a similar habitat nearby.

northeastlink.vic.gov.au

1800 105 105 (call anytime)

community@northeastlink.vic.gov.au



For languages other than English please call 9209 0147

 @nelpvic



Australian Government



Please contact us if you would like this information in an accessible format. If you need assistance due to a hearing or speech impairment, visit relayservice.gov.au