



**AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Luncheon outing to North East Link Watsonia Hub Eltham on Monday 2nd June 2025

The North East Link is an under construction 10-kilometre tolled highway scheme in Melbourne, Australia. It will connect the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough with the Eastern Freeway at Bulleen, which will be upgraded from Hoddle Street to Springvale Road at Nunawading.

- 9:18am Board Eltham train to Watsonia Station.
- 9:59am Arrive Watsonia and walk to North East Link Watsonia Hub at 17 Watsonia Road, Watsonia.
- 11:10am Leave North East Link Watsonia Hub and walk back to Watsonia Station.
- 11:22am Catch Train to Eltham Station arriving at 11:33am.
Catch first available bus to Eltham Hotel
- 2:00pm After lunch catch bus back to Eltham Station and train to City or other travel by bus towards Nunawading Station or elsewhere.

Other components of the project include the construction of a new dedicated busway along the Eastern Freeway to serve the Doncaster area, and park and ride car parking facilities. The Eastern Freeway will be widened from nine lanes to 20 in some parts.

In December 2016, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews announced that a re-elected Labor government would build the North East Link at a cost of \$10 billion. Early works began in 2020 and tunnelling commenced in mid 2024, with an expected completion in late 2028.

In 2021, the length of the tunnelled portion was increased by 1.9 km to 6.5 km, and the cost of the main construction contract, to be delivered through a public-private partnership, rose to \$11.1 billion. The overall long-term budget for the project was set at \$16.5 billion in 2017, but this increased to \$26.1 billion as of 2023.

As part of Victoria's Big Build, we're delivering 3 major road projects.

The 6.5km North East Link tunnels from Watsonia to Bulleen will fix the missing link in our city's freeway network, take 15,000 trucks off local roads a day and reduce travel times by up to 35 minutes.

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

This massive program of works is being carefully planned so the projects can open in 2028 – bringing all the pieces of North East Link together.

As part of the project, the Railway line goes in a new tunnel that is only partly built at the moment.

Only the tunnel walls are built, the roof of the tunnel is to be added at a later date. This was the case on Sunday 20th April 2025.

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.

Tolls

In March 2020, the state government announced that a state-owned corporation known as "North East Link State Tolling Corporation" would be set up to collect tolls for the North East Link.

Proposed benefits

North East Link would complete Melbourne's Metropolitan Ring Road project and is estimated to carry around 100,000 vehicles a day, providing non-stop movement and easier access for freight operators, particularly between the growing industrial areas around Dandenong, Campbellfield and the new freight-hub near Donnybrook.

With Melbourne's north expected to be home to around one million people in 2026, it is expected that the North East Link will reduce reliance on Fitzsimons Lane, Heidelberg Road and Rosanna Road, and enhance road access to Melbourne Airport as well as popular regional and interstate destinations, and will allow traffic to bypass central Melbourne.



From the Bigbuild website.

https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/image/0010/637786/NELP2340_Project-Overview-Map_Update-For-Web_01.jpg

This map does not show the Railway, the thing most of us are interested in.

The Railway location is shown on the next two pages.

This map shows whats happening on the Eastern Freeway, which is being widened to 20 lanes wide in parts, I assume 10 lanes in each direction.

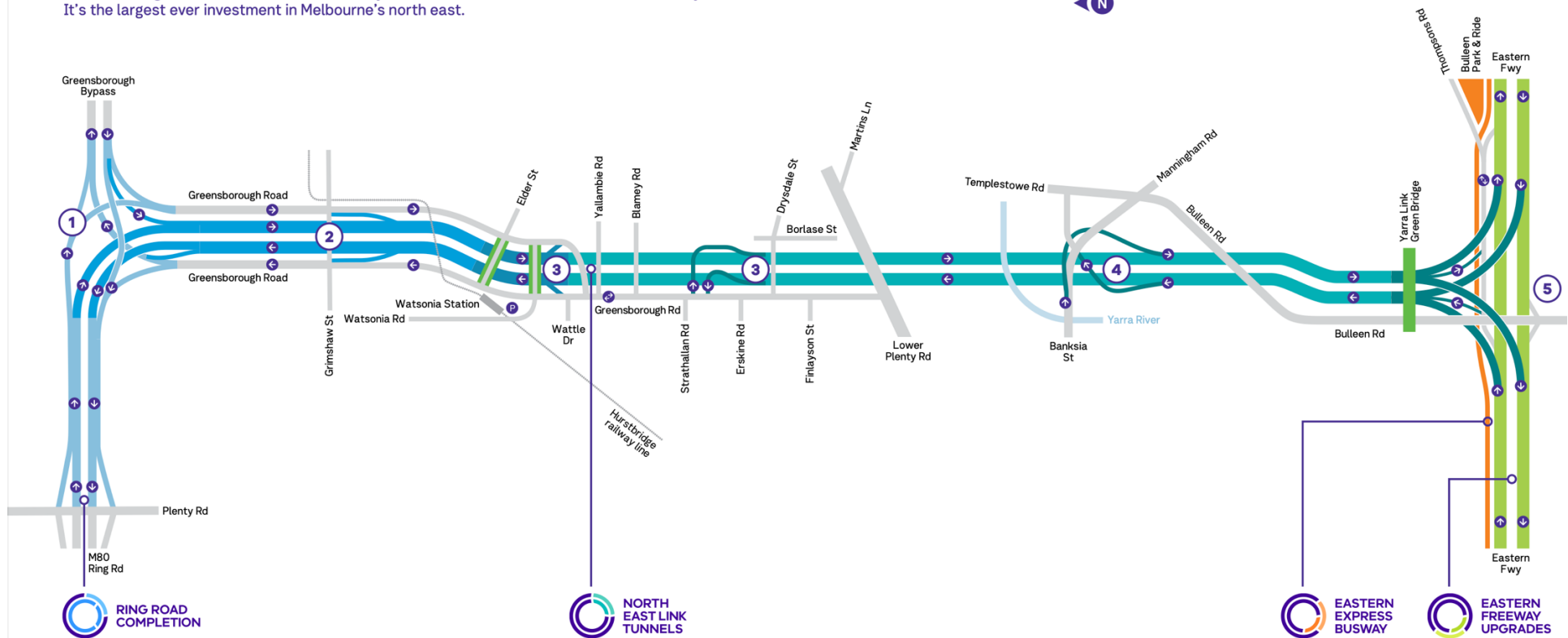


Trips on North East Link

We're fixing the missing link from the M80 Ring Road to the Eastern Freeway – slashing travel times by up to 35 minutes and taking 15,000 trucks off local roads a day.

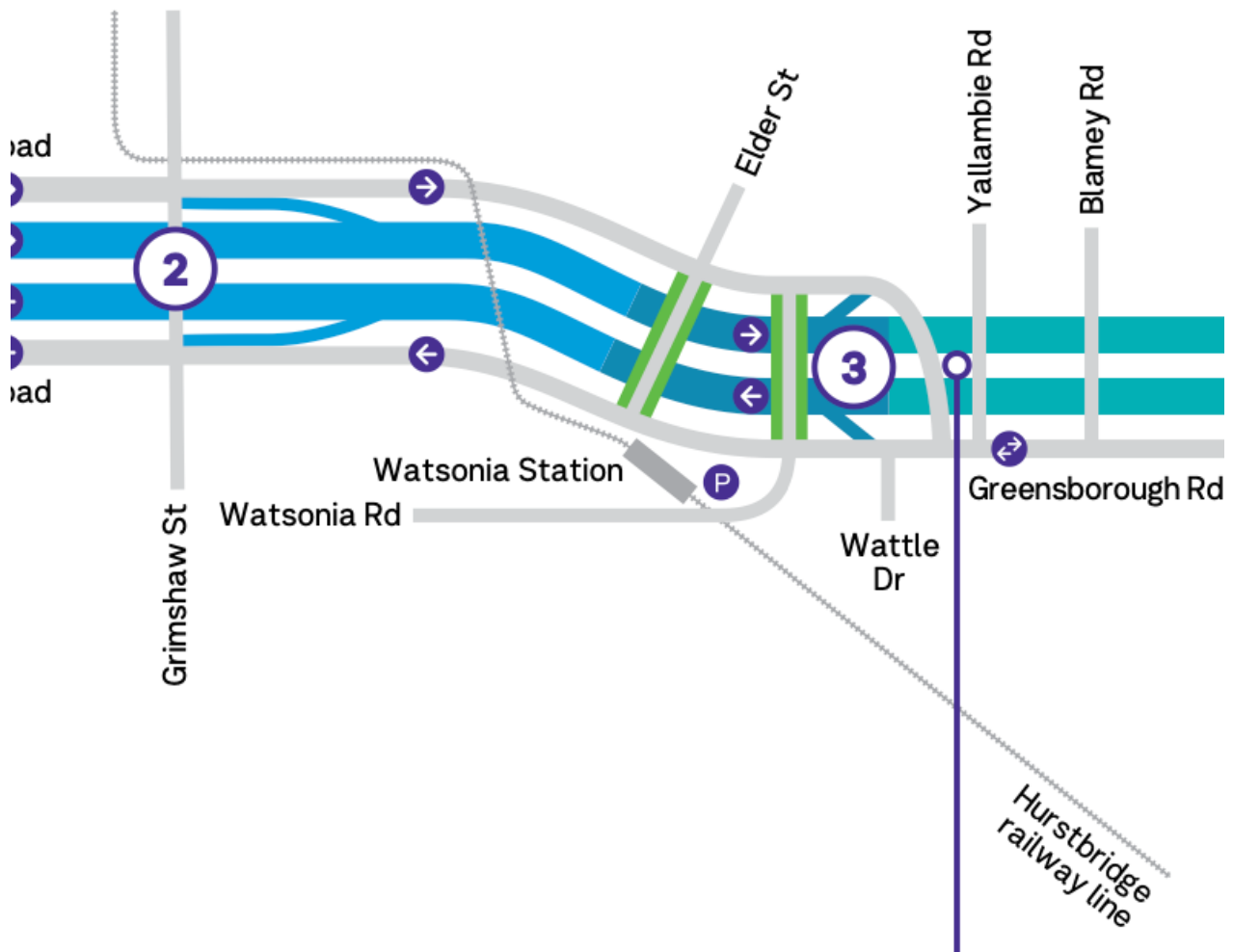
As well as building Victoria's longest twin road tunnels, we'll complete the Ring Road in Greensborough, overhaul the Eastern Freeway and build Melbourne's first dedicated busway. It's the largest ever investment in Melbourne's north east.

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ring Road interchange | Ring Road Completion |
| 2 Grimshaw Street interchange | North East Link |
| 3 Lower Plenty Road interchange | North East Link (trench) |
| 4 Manningham Road interchange | North East Link Tunnels |
| 5 Eastern Freeway interchange | Tunnel entry/exit ramp |
| | Eastern Freeway Upgrades |
| | Green bridges |
| | Eastern Express Busway |
| | Other roads |



This drawing of trips on North East Link is for illustrative purposes only and not to scale.

Map NorthEastLink <bigbuild.vic.gov.au> Trip explainer.



Map NorthEastLink <bigbuild.vic.gov.au> Trip Explainer.

Enlarged portion showing showing Railway Line going through new tunnel over or under the North East Link Project Road or Tunnel?

Information is very sketchy about where the Tunnels Start & Stop and where the Railway Tunnel goes under or above a road or tunnel?

Hopefully we will get some answers today on where the Railway goes?

Information from bigbuild.vic.gov.au & Wikipedia.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE