

Friday, 27 February, 2009

FIRST COMPLETED SECTION OF M1 UPGRADE OPEN TO TRAFFIC

The \$1.39 billion upgrade of the Monash-CityLink-West Gate (M1) corridor has reached an important milestone with the first fully completed section of the Monash Freeway opening to traffic, Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas announced today.

Mr Pallas said all eight lanes of the 3.5km inbound and outbound carriageways between Forster Road and Warrigal Road had been resurfaced with new line marking providing motorists with a taste of how the new M1 would operate.

“The Brumby Government is taking action now to improve Victoria’s roads, investing in important projects to reduce congestion, create jobs and deliver the best transport network in Australia,” Mr Pallas said.

“We have been able to complete this section of the Monash Freeway early, providing immediate benefits for the thousands of people who live, work and do business along one of Melbourne’s busiest roads corridors.”

Mr Pallas said while the overall project was due for completion in 2010, motorists would not have long to wait to benefit further from the project.

“An eight-lane Monash Freeway between Warrigal Road and Jacksons Road is on target to open by the middle of year, while further sections are due to open by the end 2009,” he said.

“With works clearly visible along the M1 corridor, from the West Gate Bridge through to Heatherton Road, there can be no doubt that the state’s largest road project is well underway.”

Contractors are currently working on the section between Jacksons Road and Ferntree Gully Road. The final section between Ferntree Gully Road and Forster Road will commence next month, once bridge widening works at Ferntree Gully Road are complete.

While parts of the road are either completed or nearing completion, Mr Pallas said drivers should expect further disruption in coming months, with works also scheduled for this weekend.

M1 Upgrade Project Director John Cunningham said with projects of this scale traffic disruptions were unavoidable, however VicRoads and CityLink were working to minimise impact on drivers.

“This weekend works will be carried out right along the corridor and drivers should try to avoid using the road,” Mr Cunningham said.

“Lane closures will be in place the entire weekend from Friday night until Monday morning between Burke Road and Toorak Road, affecting drivers heading in both directions.

“The major works however will happen Saturday night and will mean the Monash Freeway and CityLink will be fully closed in both directions from 9pm Saturday until 9am Sunday morning from Kings Way to Burke Road. The closure will include the CityLink tunnels.

“A fully signed detour route will be in place for motorists via Kings Way, Queens Road and the Princes Hwy. On-road signage will also alert drivers on where to re-enter or exit the freeway.”

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In preparation for Saturday night's full freeway closure, works will be carried out on CityLink's Southern Link. These works will involve lane closures from 11pm Friday and will affect drivers heading outbound between Yarra Boulevard and Glenferrie Road.

Drivers planning to use the West Gate Freeway heading inbound will also be affected by lane closures between Cook Street and Lorimer Street. These lane closures will be gradually implemented from 8pm Saturday and will reopen at 5am Sunday. These works are part of the new Bolte Bridge exit ramp for traffic heading eastbound on the West Gate Freeway.

Mr Cunningham said that motorists using the Monash-CityLink-West Gate corridor should allow extra time for their journeys, plan each trip and be aware of diversion routes.

"We understand that these works will cause disruptions but it is best that we do them this weekend in conjunction with planned maintenance works on the CityLink tunnels, rather than over several weekends," he said.

"We thank drivers for their patience and ask all motorists to take care when travelling on this corridor during construction – for their own safety and for the safety of workers and road users."

Drivers are also advised that there will be works on the Swan Street Bridge overnight on Saturday, which will affect traffic moving in and around the city.

Detour routes will be clearly communicated via radio, on-road signage and on the project website at www.mcwupgrade.com.au