



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Roads and Ports

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NEW SIGNALLING FOR DRIVERS AS MAJOR M1 SECTION OPENS

State-of-the-art traffic management systems will come on line along the M1 this weekend, as major sections of the Monash Freeway fully open to motorists as part of the Brumby Labor Government's \$1.39 billion upgrade of the corridor.

Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas said the latest improvements to the M1 corridor would open on Sunday, 13 December, with the new overhead electronic signs on the freeway to be switched on between the CityLink tunnels and High Street.

Mr Pallas said the freeway would open fully from Toorak Road outbound to Warrigal Road and inbound from Warrigal Road to Toorak Road, relieving congestion, improving traffic flow and making travel times shorter and more reliable for motorists.

"The M1 Upgrade project is a vital part of the Brumby Labor Government's plan to build a better transport system for Victoria, so people can spend less time in traffic and more time with family," he said.

"Motorists have already experienced a number of benefits from the upgrade including the opening of the ramps on the West Gate Freeway and four lanes on the Monash in both directions from Warrigal Road to the South Gippsland Freeway.

"Now we're opening significant stretches of the freeway and switching on a sophisticated new freeway management system with 24-hour monitoring, automatic incident detection, overhead speed and lane signs, and traffic signals at entry ramps. Weather permitting, the section east of the tunnels to Toorak Road will also open to four lanes this weekend."

Mr Pallas said the overhead signs would advise drivers of incidents ahead, lane closures, speed limits and direct them to merge or leave the freeway in the event of an accident.

"The technology automatically alerts control room operators to problems so they can respond and provide advance warning to motorists of incidents ahead, making the M1 one of the most technologically advanced freeways in the world," he said.

"This is all about ensuring this critical part of Melbourne's road network continues to provide a safe and reliable service well into the future, getting people where they want to go safely and efficiently."

The traffic management system will initially be turned on between the CityLink tunnels and High Street, Glen Iris, and when the M1 project is complete will extend from Berwick to Werribee, with overhead signs operating from Williamstown Road at the West Gate Bridge to High Street.

Mr Pallas said the system would also use a coordinated ramp metering system that monitors freeway and ramp traffic and uses traffic lights to regulate the flow of vehicles onto the freeway.

"The ramp signals will be able to talk to each other to manage the amount of traffic entering the freeway, making it safer and easier for motorists to merge and help keep the freeway flowing," he said.

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He said the traffic management system made it possible to convert permanent emergency lanes to traffic lanes and make any lane an emergency lane when needed.

“This has allowed us to safely provide four lanes for normal traffic in areas where this simply wouldn’t have been possible,” Mr Pallas said.

“The project team have worked closely with emergency services in the development of this system. In the event of an incident, speed limits can be changed to slow and safely merge traffic and keep people moving, while on-ramps and lanes can be closed to quickly clear a path for emergency vehicles to and from the incident.

“The control rooms will be monitoring the freeway and can alert an incident response team to attend within a few minutes.”

Mr Pallas said motorists travelling east from Warrigal Road had seen significant benefits in the afternoon peak since the fourth lane opened earlier this year and speed limits along the route were reinstated.

“Since opening the new ramps on the West Gate Freeway we have witnessed some significant improvements in travel times heading towards the city from the West Gate Bridge,” he said.

“CityLink has also not been required to close a lane in the Domain Tunnel since opening two lanes on the new ramp to the Bolte Bridge. This used to be a regular occurrence due to congestion on the West Gate Freeway at the exit from the tunnel.

“There has also been a significant average speed increase in the afternoon peak on the Monash Freeway to the Domain tunnel from 29km/h to 72km/h. Traffic heading from the Bolte Bridge to the Burnley tunnels has also shown significant speed improvements with about an average increase of 10km/h in both the AM and PM peak.”