

Wednesday, 11 March, 2009

DRIVERS ASKED TO LOOK AHEAD AND PICK A LANE ON NEW M1

New traffic conditions on the West Gate Freeway will require drivers to make an early decision on where they intend to travel as part of safer traffic measures to be introduced in the \$1.39 billion upgrade of the M1 corridor.

Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas announced the changes today and said from next week driving conditions on the freeway would change as Victorians get their first glimpse of how the improved freeway will run.

“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.

“As part of these changed traffic conditions on the West Gate Freeway drivers will need to look up, pick a lane depending on their destination and stick to it.”

About one kilometre of concrete barrier will be installed on the freeway outbound towards Geelong between Bolte Bridge and Todd Road from next week. The barrier will separate traffic so that drivers heading to either Todd Road or the Bolte or West Gate Bridges will need to decide early which lane they need to travel in.

“The \$1.39 billion upgrade will make driving the M1 easier and safer to travel, with this being the first of the changes drivers will need to get used to,” Mr Pallas said.

“Signage will alert motorists to make a choice before they get to the barriers and get into the appropriate lane for their destination. So the message to drivers is to be aware of the new conditions, look up and ahead for new signs before picking a lane and sticking to it.”

Mr Pallas said the changed traffic measure will be the first of many on the West Gate Freeway and will begin to alter the way Melburnians drive on freeways.

“This will change the way we drive on Melbourne’s freeways as motorists will need to get into the correct lane in advance of their intended exit,” he said.

“By separating the lanes we are removing some of the weaving and merging that currently happens in that section – making it safer and easier for all.”

M1 Upgrade Project Director John Cunningham said changed traffic conditions will affect drivers:

- Using the Todd Road exit-ramp (including Shell Service Centre customers);
- Travelling from the Bolte Bridge towards the West Gate Bridge; and
- Those moving outbound on the West Gate Freeway heading to the Bolte (CityLink).

“Drivers are advised to pay particular attention to the new signs to ensure that they make the correct decision regarding their route”, Mr Cunningham said.

Mr Cunningham said the main change would be for outbound traffic exiting at Todd Road, which will be required to take the exit-ramp approximately 800 metres earlier than existing conditions.

“This change also applies to traffic heading to the Shell Service Centre, next to the Todd Road exit. Shell customers are therefore advised to ensure they follow the signs to that exit,” 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.”

Mr Pallas also confirmed the installation of temporary public safety barriers on the West Gate Bridge today, until the permanent barriers are delivered towards the end of next year.

“The installation of public safety barriers on the bridge was announced in December last year part of the strengthening project and we need to ensure the barriers are done right, while protecting the structure and integrity of the bridge,” he said.

“Temporary barriers will therefore be installed within the next two to three months along the full length of the bridge until the permanent barriers are installed. The New Jersey-style industrial barriers will be similar to those currently used to close off lanes on the M1 project.”

A map of the traffic changes on the West Gate freeway and further information is available on project website at www.mcwupgrade.com.au or by calling the project hotline on 1300 881 137.