



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **VTA welcomes \$100 million North East Link funding**

The Victorian Transport Association (VTA) has welcomed a \$100 million funding allocation from the Victorian Government in the forthcoming State Budget for design, planning and pre-construction works associated with the North East Link.

“It is encouraging to see some serious funding being allocated to this vital infrastructure project, following the welcome commitment from the Victorian Government in December to build the North East Link, and its subsequent establishment of the North East Link Authority (NELA),” said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

“The VTA has already met with NELA CEO Duncan Elliott and the project team to discuss our preferred routing of the connection, and the importance of considering options that do not include tunnels, which are expensive to build and cannot accommodate dangerous goods vehicles.

“With or without a tunnel, Melbourne and the freight industry desperately need the North East Link, however we were encouraged that the Authority is considering a range of routing options, and that they understand the restrictions tunnels present for placarded dangerous goods vehicles.

“We look forward to being actively involved in the consultation process over the coming months, which will culminate with the construction of the state’s most important infrastructure project,” Mr Anderson said.

The North East Link has long been the number one infrastructure project for the VTA, with the Association stepping up efforts in 2016 in conjunction with the RACV for the connection to be built.

The VTA estimates heavy vehicle traffic on arterial roads in the north east of Melbourne will be dramatically reduced following the road’s construction, providing congestion and amenity improvements, as well as significant productivity gains for the freight industry.

The VTA suggested in January that a variation to the northern option via Eltham could see the North East Link extended further east to Chirnside Park and connect with the Maroondah Highway, which could be converted into a “Maroondah Freeway”, hooking back up with Eastlink at Ringwood and bypassing the Eastlink tunnels.

“While an ‘out there’ idea, it could mitigate the need for expensive tunnels and appeal to the broadest variety of heavy vehicle types, as well as cater for population growth in the outer east,” Peter Anderson said at the time.

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