



Media Release

Westlink: Longer Tunnel Option Means Better Outcomes

The Victorian Government has today outlined its preferred route for the tunnel under Footscray as part of the WestLink freeway project.

With selection of the longer tunnel option, as sought by regional stakeholders, WestLink is now set to deliver better outcomes, including important community benefits by taking trucks off local residential streets, and economic benefits by improving connections to Melbourne's West and creating more jobs and opportunities here.

Westlink is an important project for Melbourne's west, with modelling showing that it will reduce congestion and take heavy vehicles off local roads in the inner west, particularly Somerville Road, Francis Street, Barkly Street, Moore Street and Buckley Street.

To ensure optimal outcomes, LeadWest and its key members strongly advocated for the longer tunnel option as it avoided elevated freeway sections through residential areas and would take the greater amount of trucks off suburban streets in the inner-west.

LeadWest Chairman, the Hon. Ralph Willis is delighted by the decision of the Victorian Government to select the longer tunnel option.

LeadWest CEO Anton Mayer also welcomed the Victorian Government's obvious support for provision of key infrastructure to underpin sustainable population growth in Melbourne's West.

Vital in helping to shape the deliberations of Linking Melbourne Authority as it set about selecting the freeway route, were the efforts of the Hon. Marsha Thomson, the Member for Footscray. LeadWest notes that she engaged in strong advocacy work, providing input and support for the community consultation process.

LeadWest and other key regional stakeholders are now calling on the Australian Government to fast track funding for WestLink because of its nation building capacity.

LeadWest's Chairman stressed that Westlink will provide a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge for motorists and those moving goods and services between the eastern and western suburbs. WestLink will take heavy vehicles off residential streets, which goes beyond issues of amenity. Improved economic productivity and environmental sustainability outcomes are supported when freight is transported more efficiently on WestLink.

Accordingly, LeadWest seeks Infrastructure Australia's continued recognition of the importance of WestLink to Victoria's future.

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About LeadWest

LeadWest Ltd was formed by the metropolitan western region councils. Its board members are representatives from the councils, businesses and educational institutions of Melbourne's West. LeadWest was formed to foster and undertake actions that support the sustainable growth and development of the region. It builds on the existing social, economic and environmental capacity of the region, to ensure a sustainable future for communities and businesses of the West.