TUNNELLING STARTS ON WESTCONNEX’S NEW M5

Tunnelling has started today on the New M5 – bringing relief a step closer for tens of thousands of motorists using one of Sydney’s most congested road corridors.

Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Roads Duncan Gay witnessed an excavator breaking ground for the nine kilometre twin tunnels, which will run roughly in parallel to the existing M5 East - more than doubling capacity along the busy corridor.

“Anyone who’s used the M5 East knows how critical this link is to fixing traffic congestion in Sydney,” Mr Baird said.

“We now have tunnelling underway on three major motorway links in Sydney with the New M5, M4 East and NorthConnex. Along with our record investments in Sydney Metro rail and light rail, we’re picking up the pace as we rebuild NSW.”

Mr Gay said the New M5 will halve the time it takes for motorists to get from Beverly Hills to St Peters to just ten minutes.

“The M5 is currently congested for 13 hours a day – this new motorway, opening in 2020, will get drivers moving again,” Mr Gay said.

“By moving vehicles underground, we’re able to create more than 18 hectares of new recreational green space, including six hectares at a new Interchange at St Peters.”

Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure Paul Fletcher said: “The Turnbull Government’s $2 billion concessional loan has enabled construction of the New M5 to be fast-tracked. This is a significant day for WestConnex, which will deliver more than $20 billion in benefits to the state and create 10,000 jobs during construction.”

Construction of the New M5 alone will generate more than 4,400 full time jobs, including 155 apprentices and trainees.

Elsewhere on WestConnex, tunnelling on the M4 East is progressing well and a new widened section of the M4 will open to traffic next year.

In addition to new green space, the community will also benefit from the construction of 14 kilometres of new and upgraded shared pedestrian and cycle paths as part of the New M5.