



# Gladys Berejiklian MP

Minister for Transport

---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

Monday 3 November 2014

### **THREE NORTH WEST RAIL LINK TUNNEL BORING MACHINES NOW DIGGING**

Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian today announced three of the North West Rail Link's massive tunnel boring machines are now in the ground and tunnelling, as work continues on Australia's biggest public transport project.

The Minister joined local MPs at Cherrybrook to launch tunnel boring machine Isabelle. A second machine, Florence, got underway at Bella Vista last week, joining the first machine, Elizabeth which has already dug more than 600 metres.

Ms Berejiklian said it is now full steam ahead on the North West Rail Link which is set to open to customers in the first half of 2019.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals came to government promising the first of the four massive North West Rail Link tunnel boring machines would be in the ground before the end of 2014 – now we have three machines underground digging, well ahead of schedule," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Labor spent 16 years talking about this project, cancelling and announcing it countless times. This Government has done the hard work of planning and designing the rail line and now we're getting on with the job of delivering.

"This is another major milestone as we get on with the job of building the North West Rail Link, which is the first stage of Sydney Rapid Transit, the city's brand new modern railway network.

"The North West Rail Link is the first transport infrastructure project in Australian history to use four tunnel boring machines at once – that's a great example of the sheer size of this world-scale infrastructure project."

The first two tunnel boring machines are digging 9 kilometres from Bella Vista to Cherrybrook and the second two will travel 6 kilometres from Cherrybrook to Epping, delivering the twin 15 kilometre North West Rail Link tunnels.

The four mega tunnelling machines are supporting 900 new jobs as part of the \$1.15 billion tunnelling contract, which was awarded in June last year.

The North West Rail Link will include:

- Australia's first new fully-automated rapid transit trains;
- A train every four minutes in the peak, or 15 an hour, with 98 per cent reliability;

- Eight new railway stations – two more than originally planned;
- 4,000 commuter car parks and;
- Five existing stations upgraded to rapid transit standards.

Ms Berejiklian said she was also pleased to release new designs for Cherrybrook Station, which will be delivered as part of the \$3.7 billion North West Rail Link operations contract signed in September.

“Cherrybrook Station will include state-of-the-art platform screen doors, lifts for customers, a new bus interchange and 400 commuter car parking spaces,” she said.

“The station’s landmark arching roof canopy design was inspired by the local Blue Gum High Forest, making it a station truly set in the forest and engineered to get people in and out as quickly and comfortably as possible.

“Rapid transit will transform the way of life for people in the North West and it’s fantastic that residents are able to see the features and designs of their local stations taking shape.

“The NSW Government has made it clear that if we receive a mandate next March, the Rapid Transit network will be fast-tracked through the CBD and west to Bankstown, giving public transport customers right across Sydney access to fast, reliable and modern turn-up-and-go services.

“Sydney Rapid Transit will reduce crowding right across the network – unblocking major bottlenecks in the city and allowing up to 60 per cent more trains every hour across the train network.”

## **FACTS – TUNNEL BORING MACHINES**

- Tunnel boring machine Elizabeth started digging at Bella Vista in early September and has travelled more than 600 metres on its way to Norwest Station.
- Tunnel boring machine Florence started digging at Bella Vista late last week.
- Tunnel boring machine Florence started tunnelling today at Cherrybrook.
- A fourth tunnel boring machine will join Isabelle at Cherrybrook and start digging to Epping Station.
- To get down to tunnelling depth at Bella Vista, about 120,000 tonnes of rock was removed from the Bella Vista station ‘box’, and most of it re-used on the wider construction site.
- At the Cherrybrook tunnelling site, 75,000 tonnes of rock was dug out to get to the tunnelling depth of 16 metres.
- On major tunnelling projects around the world, underground workers look to Saint Barbara for protection and, because of that, machines that work underground are traditionally given female names.
- The first tunnel boring machine was named after local colonial pioneer Elizabeth Rouse by local school students, tunnel boring machine 2 was named after Australia’s first female engineer Florence Mary Taylor by the community and the third tunnel boring machine was named Isabelle by the tunnel builders, to represent the workers.