

# Case Study

## West Gate Tunnel Project: Hea-1 Community Health and Wellbeing



### Overview

The West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) is a city-shaping project that will deliver a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge, provide quicker and safer journeys, and remove thousands of trucks off residential streets.

*"I have had a number of jobs since arriving in Australia with my family from Afghanistan, but this is the first where I have been able to use my professional experience. The John Holland team have provided a supportive environment to help me understand the local industry and workplace culture. This role will set up my career in Australia, I am so grateful and so is my family and wider community."*

**Abdul Gulistani**

CareerSeekers Internship,  
John Holland



The project will include:

- Widening the West Gate Freeway from 8 to 12 lanes and include express lanes between the M80 and the West Gate Bridge, reducing weaving and merging that leads to traffic congestion
- A tunnel from the West Gate Freeway to the Maribyrnong River and the Port of Melbourne which will take motorists and trucks underground and off residential streets, providing a more efficient freight route
- A bridge over the Maribyrnong River, linking to an elevated road along Footscray Road will get people to where they need to go in the CBD north
- State-of-the-art smart technology across the length of the project linking it to other freeway management systems across the city

- Broad landscape improvements
- The project is being delivered by the CPB Contractors John Holland Joint Venture (CPBJH JV) on behalf of Transurban and the Victorian Government

### Fast Facts

- **Project Name:** West Gate Tunnel Project
- **Infrastructure Type:** Road infrastructure
- **Rating type:** Design and As Built IS Version 1.2
- **Key Stakeholders:** Transurban as customer, Councils, and Aboriginal Organisations
- **IS Rating details:** Hea-1 credit Level 3 achieved in Design submission
- **Location:** Victoria

## Drivers

For the year ending 30 June 2016, Melbourne grew by 107,800 people, with much of the growth occurring in Melbourne's western suburbs. The western region of Melbourne continues to be one of the fastest growing regions of Melbourne due to a combination of urban renewal in the inner suburbs and greenfield residential development in the outer suburbs. Councils that will benefit from the WGTP include:

- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- City of Melbourne
- Wyndham City Council
- Brimbank City Council

Effective community and stakeholder engagement and leaving a lasting legacy are core commitments across both joint venture partners, CPB Contractors and John Holland. To achieve Level 3 in Hea-1 both in Design and As Built, CPBJH JV has taken the approach to review each council plans as one method of understanding community sentiment and vision as well as to understand their objectives and targets towards health and wellbeing priority issues.

Through this process, four priority issues have been identified and will be pursued by the WGTP:

1. **Access to active transport facilities:** The project includes the provision of new shared use paths, upgrade of existing shared use paths, a new elevated veloway and pedestrian connections which will support the promotion of sustainable transport options.
2. **Local businesses:** A project of this scale presents a significant opportunity to support local business through the purchase of local goods and services and through promotional campaigns and initiatives.
3. **Diversity and Social Inclusion:** The project will support social and economic inclusion by improving accessibility to employment opportunities, increasing capacity, and facilitating opportunities for all people to participate in the project.
4. **Community Education of local students:**

Education equips students with the tools to tackle local challenges, such as environmental issues, public health concerns, and social inequalities. By empowering individuals with knowledge and critical thinking skills, education can lead to innovative solutions tailored to the specific needs of the community.

## Solution and Implementation

### Priority Issue 1: Access to Active Transport Facilities

In the early stages of the project in 2016, engagement with the Bicycle Network Victoria and the four local councils affected by the project reinforced the importance of active transport options to the local community. Comments captured through consultation that relate to active transport included; safe access to walking and cycling facilities, public transport and the freeway, improvement of cycling route connectivity and upgrading cycling, and pedestrian facilities and complimentary changes to the surrounding road network.

This consultation ultimately influencing project design decisions to deliver shared user paths shows direct contribution to connected networks of local shared user paths. The WGTP will eventually:

- Deliver over 14 km of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths within and beyond the project boundary
- Improve physical separation of cyclists from general traffic to improve safety and provide a more direct travel route
- Enhance a major cycling corridor from the west, providing new cycling links and enhance existing cycling connections
- Upgrade existing shared use paths, providing improved access to public open space and recreational facilities, and
- Reduce the number of trucks on local roads in the inner west, improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians using these streets.

## Priority Issue 2: Local Businesses

WGTP commitment to the importance and investment in local businesses was driven through community collaboration throughout pre-project design and commencement.

CPBJH JV has a Business Involvement Plan to outline the approach to business involvement. The Business Involvement Plan was developed and implemented in consultation with affected local Councils, affected businesses, relevant local trader associations, and other affected stakeholders.

Furthermore, the project Local Industry Development Plan targets Australian/NZ suppliers as “local”, including:

- 93 percent of goods and services will be purchased from Australia/NZ suppliers, except for the specialist tunnel boring equipment,
- 92 percent of steel used milled in Australia/ NZ. Note: This is an aspirational target and will continue to be monitored throughout the construction period.



Local businesses have been engaged through initiatives such as:

- Partnering with Brimbank City Council, CPBJH JV hosted an event for opportunities to local businesses to supply goods and services to the project
- Creating a Business Register to capture key business profiles for successful and timely engagement. CPBJH JV identified highly impacted businesses and populated the Business Register through desktop studies, previous works, site walks, door knocks, council consultation, market research, community surveys and acquisition impacts
- Launching a Workforce Trader Directory to allow businesses to advertise directly to the project workforce. The WGTP encourages our workforce to shop local and explore all that Melbourne’s west has to offer. We are proud to support businesses in the communities in which we work. This directory is free for local businesses wishing to advertise to our workforce. <https://www.wgtp.com.au/traders/>
- Encouraging local suppliers to apply to work packages through the following link. By registering an Expression of Interest (EOI) with ICN, businesses have the opportunity to be considered for this major project. All companies who submit an initial EOI will be included in information presented to the project through a detailed EOI process. It will then be the responsibility of the WGTP to make direct contact with company. <https://gateway.icn.org.au/projects/3937?psid=1560839344&st=projects>

## Priority Issue 3: Diversity & Inclusion

The WGTP aims to facilitate opportunities for all people to participate in the project, irrespective of ability, background, class, gender, and orientation.

The Social Procurement Strategy outlines CBPJH JV’s plan to address social advantage and ensure enterprise for First Nations businesses and small-scale businesses based in Melbourne’s western suburbs are actively engaged as part of the supply chain.



In addition to the Social Procurement Strategy, the Workforce Development Plan includes strategies and activities to ensure at least 20% of our workforce participates in nationally recognised training. It also includes initiatives to meet or exceed the First Nations employment targets of 2.5% of total labour hours and headcount of 90 people. As of July 2024, 29% of our workforce has participated in nationally recognised accredited training. Hours worked by First Nations people represent 2.62% of total labour hours and a headcount of 541 has been achieved. This strategy to achieve the outcome has been reviewed by peak representative body for legally recognised Traditional Owners and the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations. They offered overwhelming support of the strategies.

In addition, the project is working towards targets to source from social enterprises and First Nations businesses. The project has a strong relationship with Career Seekers, which is a non-profit organisation supporting Australia’s humanitarian entrants into professional careers. WGTP has hosted:

- 24 internships to 10 university students
- 5 internships to mid-career professionals
- Most interns have been retained by the West Gate Tunnel Project in full or part-time employment
- Most student interns successfully enter the CPB Contractors Graduate Program at the conclusion of their studies

Similarly, the relationship with Juveniles From Detention aims to provide work placements for 18 – 25-year-olds who are approaching, or have recently been released from detention. The objective of this program is to reduce recidivism and create new futures – ‘Break the Cycle!’ Partners include Parkville College, Jesuit Social Services and YMCA ReBuild. By July 2024, the project has:

- 13 candidates who have been employed either directly via the CPBJH JV or via the subcontractor workforce
- 7 of the 13 candidates have undertaken structured workplace learning (5 of which are either undertaking or have completed a Certificate III Civil Construction)

- Benefits of the program extends beyond the individuals, to their families and persists into future generations.

CPBJH JV is also targeting improvements in workforce diversity through gender diversity targets. Our Structured Workplace Learning & Work Experience Program focus on disadvantaged and female students interested in a trade-based career. Through this program, WGTP has organised:

- 74 placements facilitated across the entire project workforce
- 7 placements hosted directly with the CPBJH Joint Venture
- 5 scholarships offered to motivated students who lack the funding to pursue their career goals
- School Career Days to raise awareness of the diverse careers available in the construction industry.

As of July 2024, more than 4,000 priority job seekers provided employment on the project, more than 60 Service Providers in our Network, employment opportunities provided include:

- First Nations Peoples: 541
- Women: 3101
- New migrants: 539
- People with a disability: 214
- Persons receiving government support: 416
- Asylum seekers: 139
- Retrenched automotive workers: 113



## Priority Issue 4: Community Education

One of the West Gate Tunnel Project’s main contributions to community was the education of local students.

WGTP commenced the West Gate Kids program in parallel with construction progress from 2018. The program is a school engagement program designed to complement the current school curriculum with age-appropriate activities associated with the West Gate Tunnel Project. Part of the project is run through an independent third-party educational business; SciencePlay Kids, led by award winning scientist, Dr Lorien Parker, who delivers sessions of ‘Engineering our City’. This is a 60-90-minute session which targets Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) alongside careers education.

The West Gate Kids school engagement program has targeted primary and secondary schools in Melbourne’s western suburbs. While incursions including ‘Engineering our City’ sessions and the Mobile Info Hub are targeted to the west, school groups from other areas of Melbourne have arranged excursions to the Info Centre. The program established new partnerships with educational organisations and the program engaged project volunteers to participate at schools.

Two pilot programs commenced in late 2018, involving two local schools and after feedback from various stakeholders, a finalised program was developed and completed throughout 2019.

In 2024 – we achieved the following on the project to date:

- Engaged 1,812 students in the broader West Gate Kids program from 18 schools engaged and 93% saying they are more interested in STEAM subjects after the session. Just over half (51%) of all students engaged to date are female.
- 914 students participated in the Engineering our City sessions with Dr Loz
- 3,241 student engagement hours completed for all West Gate Kids programs

- 34 sessions of Engineering our City completed
- Over 30 West Gate Tunnel Project staff volunteered in the program

In 2023, we also marked an impressive milestone for the school engagement program, when we surpassed 10,000 students who have participated in the program since it started in 2019. This is an incredible figure, and one that our project is very proud of.

## Benefits & Achievements:

The WGTP will continue to monitor on the Hea-1 performance indicators and present in the As Built rating. In the meantime, stories like the following could serve as testimony to our efforts in increasing community wellbeing.

### From Afghanistan to the West Gate Tunnel Project Education

Abdul Gulistani never thought his journey to Australia would end up with an opportunity to work on some of the country’s biggest projects, including our very own West Gate Tunnel Project, where Abdul is currently working as a contract administrator in the project’s east zone.

The qualified engineer from Afghanistan secured an opportunity with John Holland thanks to its national partnership with CareerSeekers, which creates paid professional internship opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers. When he moved to Australia, Abdul found it difficult to secure stable employment with his engineering qualifications. He found himself working as a house painter in Adelaide to make ends meet, before securing an internship opportunity at WGTP through CareerSeekers.

For Abdul, it was a life-changing decision.

“I have had a number of jobs since arriving in Australia with my family from Afghanistan, but this derstand the local industry and workplace culture. This role will set up my career in Australia, I am so grateful and so is my family and wider community.”

*“I liked working next to all the massive cranes and having to concentrate to make sure the position of the crane setup and the steel bridge girders were right. I loved being on site, working with the construction team as all the work was happening around me,”*

**Brandon**

Year 10 student, Sunbury College

### **Another student excels in the WGTP work placement program**

The West Gate Tunnel Project recently said goodbye to its third work placement student. Brandon is a year 10 student from Sunbury College, and he worked with the Survey team in the East Zone for two weeks.

This program was established following the project’s social procurement approaching secondary schools within the project area seeking their interest in providing their senior students with meaningful construction project experiences.

Previously, WGTP has hosted a similar work experience placements with Dilak S and James Mc last year. This program provides students with enhanced skill development, practical application of industry knowledge and enhanced employment opportunities.

Brandon spent two weeks working out of the Flower Market in the east and west zones. He learned a lot of new skills while working on WGTP and thoroughly enjoyed the new experience.

“I liked working next to all the massive cranes and having to concentrate to make sure the position of the crane setup and the steel bridge girders were right. I loved being on site, working with the construction team as all the work was happening around me,” Brandon said.

### **Awards & Recognitions**

The WGTP was invited to speak at ISC Conference in September 2023 to present our Social Strategies and Outcomes, and was the Finalist for the ISC Outstanding Achievement Award 2023.

### **Lesson Learnt for Hea-1**

As a mega project spanning five Councils, early collaboration with councils and stakeholders is crucial to successfully address Hea-1 requirements. These identified initiatives should be documented in comprehensive management plans and Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) to ensure their proper implementation and ongoing monitoring. Once detailed plans are formulated, the project can progress to focusing on monitoring the implementations of initiatives throughout the construction phase.

An important aspect of Hea-1 is Monitoring of initiatives. Record keeping and established relationship with different project teams are crucial to ensure accurate indicators can be monitored.

Record-keeping is fundamental for tracking the progress of initiatives within Hea-1. This involves maintaining comprehensive documentation of project timelines, milestones, and any consultation papers or metrics. By systematically recording these details, the team can gain insights into the efficacy of different strategies, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions moving forward.

Establishing robust relationships with different teams such as the communications and stakeholders relations and social procurement team is paramount for successful monitoring efforts. Collaboration and communication across teams foster a shared understanding of goals and objectives, facilitate the exchange of information, and promote synergy in achieving desired outcomes. Building rapport with stakeholders enables seamless coordination and access to critical insights, enhancing the accuracy and relevance of the monitoring process.



Due to the extended duration of the project, Hea-1 has undergone multiple handovers. This frequent handover necessitates a meticulous process to ensure that sustainability knowledge is effectively passed on to the successor team. Proper knowledge transfer is essential for the continued implementation of sustainability measures and for maintaining precise records in the As Built submission.

During the course of the project, we have identified issues early on in achieving some of the monitoring indicators. These challenges highlight the need for a review of our current targets and strategies. To address this, we plan to raise the issue with the ISC to establish a formal process for the potential removal of this particular indicator in the As Built submission.

By taking this proactive approach, we aim to ensure that all sustainability efforts are thoroughly documented and that any targets deemed unattainable are managed appropriately. This strategy will help maintain the integrity of our sustainability commitments and ensure that the project’s final documentation accurately reflects its achievements and challenges.

## Acknowledgements

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