



The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local
Government



Government
of South Australia

The Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for Energy and Mining

MEDIA RELEASE

TUNNEL VISION TO KICKSTART FUTURE-PROOFING OF SOUTH EASTERN FREEWAY

The Heysen Tunnels are set for an extensive refit to ensure they continue to service South Australia for decades to come.

The project addresses current tunnel elements that are at the end of their service life, to improve safety, traffic management and incident response capabilities.

Works include:

- upgrading the tunnel lighting to a new LED system;
- installing a new automated fire suppression system;
- upgrading the tunnel ventilation system;
- repairing the tunnel lining and installing monitoring equipment;
- upgrading the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) equipment, including thermal incident detection systems, new and replacement CCTV, electronic speed and messaging signage and over-height vehicle detection;
- upgrading the traffic management system to restrict access to the tunnels in the event of an emergency incident; and
- upgrading emergency communication systems, including public address, radio rebroadcast, in-tunnel signage and help phones to improve safety and network reliability.

More than 50,000 vehicles travel through the tunnels each day, around 10 per cent of which are heavy vehicles.

McConnell Dowell Constructors (Australia) Pty Ltd has been appointed as the Managing Contractor for the works and where possible, local sub-contractors and suppliers will be engaged to deliver packages of works.

The Australian and South Australian governments have jointly committed funding towards the Heysen Tunnels Refit and Safety Upgrade Project, with the Australian Government contributing \$120 million and South Australian Government \$30 million, as part of a broader South Eastern Freeway Upgrade, which also includes Stage 2 of the Managed Motorway Measures project.

Initial upgrades, including additional investigation works and the start of tunnel lining repairs, will kick off from Sunday, 19 March 2023, for a period of around two months.

To minimise the impacts to road users, works will be carried out at night from Sundays to Thursdays between 8pm and 6am.

The Crafers-bound tunnel will be closed during these periods, with the Adelaide-bound tunnel to accommodate traffic in both directions.

During works, speed will be restricted to 40km/h in both directions on the approach to the tunnels and through the down-track tunnel.

Traffic will return to normal operation, with usual speed limits, for both carriageways each morning from 6am.

It is not anticipated that works will be undertaken on Friday and Saturday nights, or on public holidays, however advance notice will be provided via onsite message boards, project updates and social media if this changes.

Access for emergency service vehicles and to all safety ramps will be maintained at all times during these works and there is no change to public transport services. Both tunnels will reopen if required in an emergency.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King:

“The Australian Government investment in this project will ensure people can continue to reliably and safely use this crucial and modern traffic link for years to come.

“This project demonstrates our Government’s commitment to supporting more efficient, resilient and integrated traffic and transport solutions for South Australians.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Tom Koutsantonis

“The Heysen Tunnels have served South Australia well for more than 20 years now, but with technology evolving these upgrades are necessary to keep them operating as effectively as possible.

“The technology in these tunnels was cutting edge when they opened in 2000, but with much of it now reaching the end of its service life, we’re able to install modern, state-of-the-art equipment.

“With safety of the South-Eastern freeway a priority for the Malinauskas Labor Government, we are taking steps to future-proof the Heysen Tunnels, so that they can keep operating safely for decades to come.

“McConnell Dowell has delivered some key projects for South Australia; among them the Seaford Rail extension, O-Bahn City Access project and Granite Island Causeway.

“These works will cause some disruption to traffic, so it will be important that people plan ahead, check for updates, allow extra travel time where necessary and obey any of the temporary speed or traffic restrictions in place.”

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