

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Closure of Morrell Bridge announced.**

The closure of Morell Bridge to motor vehicles will help to ensure the long-term preservation of the historic bridge and enhance the Yarra environs as a place to walk, ride and relax.

The closure to vehicle traffic will reduce through-traffic and improve the amenity of the area for local residents.

Morell Bridge, which connected Anderson Street in South Yarra and Batman Avenue, will now join a new shared bike and foot path on the north side of the Yarra. The shared path, straddling the South Eastern Freeway and linking to Gosch's Paddock and Punt Road, is being constructed by Transurban as part of the CityLink project.

Built in 1899, Morell bridge is not considered suitable in the long-term for use in a modern-day road network. A four-tonne limit on vehicles using the bridge has been in force for about four years. Continued use by motor vehicles would possibly require structural modifications to the bridge, which is listed on the Victorian Heritage and National Estate registers.

The closure of the bridge is required at this time to allow the completion of CityLink construction works on the South Eastern Freeway and Punt Road interchange. Reconnection of the bridge to CityLink following completion is not feasible due to the level of the approach to the Domain tunnel.

Transurban's managing director, Mr Kim Edwards, yesterday conducted an unofficial 'handover' of the bridge to dedicated pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Mr Edwards told assembled guests that the change in the use of Morell Bridge was good news for local residents and users of the Yarra banks.

'The handover of Morell Bridge to pedestrians and cyclists is a positive step towards a revitalisation of the riverside that will reunite the botanic gardens with the river, reduce traffic noise, and improve access to the sports and entertainment precinct.

'By late next year, when we're scheduled to open the southern section of CityLink, there will be a big reduction in the volume of transit traffic along the banks of the Yarra,' he said.

Mr Edwards acknowledged the historical significance of Morell Bridge. 'It is an elegant, stylish bridge and I understand it's the first reinforced concrete structure built in Victoria', he said.

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