

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Leader of the House

Minister for the Coordination of Transport – COVID-19

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for Priority Precincts



Friday, 24 April 2020

PRESTON LOCALS INVITED TO HELP SHAPE NEW OPEN SPACE

New interactive tools have been rolled out to make sure Preston locals can help shape open space created through the removal of four level crossings, including Bell Street which holds up 52,000 vehicles a day.

With Victorians encouraged to stay at home to help slow the spread of coronavirus, the change to online feedback will allow locals to still have their say about the project, which will remove the crossings at Bell Street, Cramer Street, Murray Road and Oakover Road by raising the rail line over the roads.

The tools feature a new digital engagement hub and map so users can navigate the area and leave suggestions for where they would like to see playgrounds, sporting facilities, exercise stations or even pet parks built.

Interviews with project experts have also been recorded remotely, with local residents' frequently asked questions answered, so community members can learn more about what type of landscaping and other elements are available all from their own home.

The community feedback will be provided to the Preston Open Space Advisory Panel to be incorporated into their process. This will ensure views are captured from a cross section of the Preston community.

Feedback will be considered along with local constraints including the narrow rail corridor, nearby drainage basins, heritage considerations and how the facilities will be maintained.

The public space will be created when the four busy and congested level crossings are removed by building a two-kilometre elevated rail line between Murray Road and Oakover Road, Preston. New stations will also be built at Bell and Preston.

The level crossings will be removed by the end of 2022 and the open space under the elevated rail line will be ready for locals to enjoy in 2023.

About 82,000 vehicles pass through the four level crossings on the Mernda line each day. Bell Street is the busiest road in the level crossing removal project with 52,000 vehicles each day, and the boom gates down for up to 40 per cent of the morning peak.

The Andrews Labor Government is removing 75 dangerous and congested level crossings by 2025, making it safer, easier and faster to travel around the city.

To participate in the Preston open space consultation, visit engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-preston

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"Not only are we removing four dangerous and congested level crossings, to keep Preston locals moving – we're opening up new green spaces for the community to enjoy."

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

"We need local input to help shape the design of the open space to ensure it works for the community. I urge everyone to get online and have their say."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"Even though we have to do things a little differently, it's still as important as ever that people who live and work in the local area help to shape the new community spaces that will be used for decades to come."

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