

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 15 October 2020

CROSSINGS GONE, TRAINS BACK ON UPFIELD LINE TWO WEEKS EARLY

Victoria's biggest ever level crossing removal construction blitz is on track to finish two weeks early, with trains running on the new Upfield elevated rail line from November 2.

Trains will return to the line after a three-month construction blitz to remove four dangerous and congested level crossings – minimising disruption while train patronage is lower, and ensuring vital construction jobs can continue with strict COVIDSafe measures in place.

Crews have worked around the clock since late July to remove four sets of boom gates and raise the rail line over Bell Street, Munro Street and Reynard Street in Coburg and Moreland Road in Brunswick.

Getting rid of these level crossings – including the notorious Bell Street crossing, used by around 41,000 drivers per day – will reduce congestion, slash travel times and free up traffic on one of Melbourne's busiest arterial roads.

Since July, crews have installed 268 concrete L-beam bridge segments, 21,000 tonnes of ballast, 7,000 concrete railway sleepers and more than ten kilometres of new rail to build the 2.5-kilometre elevated rail bridge in record time.

When trains return to the Upfield line, they will run express through Coburg and Moreland stations while work continues on the station buildings until mid-December. Replacement buses and trams will run between Brunswick and Batman stations to connect passengers with train services.

Work will continue into next year to create more than two MCGs worth of community open space underneath the rail line, featuring over 3,000 new trees and plants.

Work is ramping up right across the northern suburbs, including in Glenroy and Preston, where five more level crossings are being removed by the end of 2022, including the other Bell Street crossing in Preston – making Bell Street completely level crossing free in just two years.

The Victorian Government is now more than halfway through the program to remove 75 level crossings by 2025. When trains begin running on the Upfield line elevated rail in November, 43 level crossings will have been removed.

For more information about Victoria's transport infrastructure projects visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Our Big Build program has continued to make great progress, in difficult circumstances. When trains run on this line in November, 43 level crossings are gone for good – 28 new train stations have been built, with more to come."

"As we safely open up and rebuild, construction will be more important than ever before. We'll continue to deliver the projects Victorians need, that create and support thousands of jobs."

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"One dangerous and congested set of boom gates on Bell Street is now gone – and we're not wasting a second getting on with its neighbour down the road in Preston, with this notorious arterial road to be level crossing-free by 2022."

Quote attributable to Member for Pascoe Vale Lizzie Blandthorn

"Locals will be thrilled to see trains return to the Upfield line two weeks early – and we thank them for their patience over the past months. Over summer, the construction team will get to work on the landscaping and the beautiful new open space underneath the rail bridge."

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.