

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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FAST-TRACKING LEVEL CROSSINGS TO SUPPORT LOCAL JOBS

The Andrews Labor Government is speeding up its removal of 75 dangerous and congested level crossings, preparing to award \$1.5 billion in contracts for nine level crossings and fast-track a further seven to remove them ahead of schedule.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan today visited the site of the Union Road level crossing removal in Surrey Hills, which is being fast tracked for removal along with the nearby level crossing at Mont Albert.

Level crossings in Surrey Hills, Mont Albert, Pakenham, and Glen Huntly will now be gone for good earlier, as part of an accelerated delivery program which will see one level crossing removed every four weeks on average in 2021.

With two fatalities at Union Road in 2016 when a train and car collided – and a further eight near misses in recent years – the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities will be safer when the boom gates are removed and a rail trench dug to separate the road and tracks by 2023.

Extensive engineering and technical investigations found consolidating Surrey Hills and Mont Albert stations into a single premium station in a central location will reduce construction impacts, avoid acquiring homes and businesses and provide more trains, more often for the local communities.

The new, modern station will sit in a central location less than 150 metres from the current Surrey Hills Station and less than 400m from the current Mont Albert Station – and with entrances at both ends of the platforms.

Construction on the new station will start in mid-2021, with major works to begin in 2022 to deliver a modern, accessible station with entrances at both ends to maximise access from both Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

Further out in Melbourne's south-east, the Labor Government will also deliver a new train station at Pakenham East, extending the metropolitan rail track by two kilometres to boost transport connections for the growing community.

Pakenham is currently a major bottleneck where V/Line and Metro trains merge onto shared tracks, often getting stuck behind one another. The new Pakenham East station will include separate turnback tracks for Metro trains and dedicated V/Line tracks – avoiding congestion and improving service reliability.

These upgrades will be delivered as part of work to remove level crossings at McGregor Road, Racecourse Road and Main Street in Pakenham – which will be removed with a raised rail line, a new Pakenham station and opening up new space for community use.

Together with the Cardinia Road level crossing, due to be removed when a new road bridge opens next week, Pakenham will be boom gate-free in 2023/24, travel safer and easier for more than 60,000 vehicles that travel through level crossings in Pakenham each day.

The community will also benefit from a new premium elevated Pakenham station, providing better connections between metropolitan and regional train services along with upgraded facilities.

As part of the \$1.5 billion in fast-tracked contracts to be awarded by the end of the year, level crossings will go faster in Hallam, Williamstown, Deer Park Ardeer, Glenroy and Bell Street Preston, the most congested level crossing in Melbourne – with the Bell Street Coburg crossing already gone, delays will ease significantly on one of the city’s busiest roads.

As well as delivering eased congestion and five brand new stations, the contracts will generate over 3,400 direct local jobs. Across the level crossing removal project more than 48.5 million hours have been worked to date – with thousands of jobs for engineers, signal operators and labourers and broader local supply chains.

With 43 level crossings already gone for good, the Government is well ahead of schedule on the commitment to remove 50 crossings by 2022, and 75 by 2025.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“Every level crossing removal makes our streets safer, improves traffic flow and allows us to run more trains – in addition to creating hundreds of Victorian jobs.”

“With a dangerous and congested level crossing to go every four weeks on average in 2021, we’re not wasting a minute getting rid of these relics of the past.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

“From Preston to Pakenham, our level crossing removals are freeing up our biggest rail and road bottlenecks to get Victorians moving faster – and we’re delivering them well ahead of schedule.”

Quote attributable to Member for Box Hill Paul Hamer

“Getting rid of these dangerous and congested level crossings will make Surrey Hills and Mont Albert safer and easier to get around.”