

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Leader of the House
Minister for Transport Infrastructure
Minister for Suburban Rail Loop



Thursday, 7 January 2021

FOUR MORE LEVEL CROSSINGS IN THE NORTH TO GO FOR GOOD

Crews are gearing up to start major construction work this year on the removal of four level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road in Preston with a more than half-a-billion dollar contract now awarded for the project.

The project will benefit more than 82,000 motorists who pass through these level crossings on the Mernda line each day, with the boom gates down for up to 40 per cent of the morning peak. It will also see Bell Street, one of Melbourne's busiest arterial roads, become level crossing free.

In Preston, the rail line will be raised over the four roads on the Mernda line - removing level crossings, delivering new open space under the two-kilometre rail bridge and creating better east-west connections for the community.

The \$564 million contract will generate over 1,000 local full-time jobs during peak construction as Premium modern stations at Bell Street and Preston are built, rejuvenating the area to provide safer and more direct connections between public transport, local shops and parking.

Early works at Preston kicked off late last year with site sheds and fencing set up, and crews beginning to install rail power and communication systems underground near the rail line. Disruptions to services will be minimal with the line not closing for more than 12 days at a time so trains have access to the Epping train maintenance facility.

The contract will be awarded to an alliance of John Holland Group, Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR), Metro Trains Melbourne and the Level Crossing Removal Project – the alliance that recently removed four nearby level crossings and has built new stations at Moreland and Coburg.

Working closely with expert urban, landscape designers and the Preston Open Space Advisory Panel which was made up of local community representatives, the project team has been collecting feedback and insights on uses for the open space under the new rail line from the local community.

To view concept designs for the open space and provide feedback to the project team, head to engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-preston before Sunday 17 January.

The Preston 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.

With 44 level crossings already gone, the Andrews Labor Government is ahead of schedule on its commitment to remove 50 crossings by 2022 and 75 by 2025, with a crossing to be removed every four weeks on average this year.

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"The boom gates on Bell Street have always been a nightmare. We've already gotten rid of one level crossing, and this project will see the second set in Preston banished forever - it's progress we can all be proud of."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"It's great to see so much progress being made on these level crossing removals in Preston. It's amazing to think in two years there'll be no more boom gates on Bell Street."

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

"The elevated rail line will help to open up connections in our community, making it easier to get from the train station to the Preston Market, High Street, or to school or work – wherever you need to go in Preston."

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