

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for Suburban Rail Loop



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FOUR LEVEL CROSSINGS TO GO FOR GOOD IN PRESTON

Four of Melbourne's most notorious level crossings will soon be gone, with major works now underway on the Andrews Labor Government's Preston Level Crossing Removal Project.

Level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road in Preston will be gone for good by the end of 2022, with new stations at Bell and Preston and significant new open space under the two-kilometre rail bridge ready for the community to enjoy in 2023.

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

With the contract for major construction at Preston awarded at the end of last year, work on the project will ramp up this weekend as buses replace trains between Clifton Hill and Reservoir on the Mernda line.

Crews will install fencing along the rail corridor and foundations for temporary overhead wiring, while getting ready to move the rail power supply underground – while temporary station facilities will be constructed at Preston and Bell over the coming months to keep passengers on trains during the construction phase.

Throughout construction, disruptions to train services on the Mernda line will be minimal, with the rail line not closing for more than 12 consecutive days at a time – ensuring trains can continue to access the Epping train maintenance facility, which is critical for the smooth running of the wider rail network.

The two new modern stations at Bell and Preston will rejuvenate the station precincts for locals and create safer and more direct links between public transport, local shops and parking – with the community encouraged to have their say on the new open space the project will create through the Preston Open Space Advisory Panel.

With 45 dangerous and congested level crossings gone for good around Melbourne, work on the remaining level crossings is in full swing right around the city.

In the south-east, work is ramping up on the Pakenham line, with major construction underway to remove level crossings in Dandenong, Hallam, Berwick, and work fast tracked on the removal of three more sets of boom gates at Pakenham – where new stations will also be built at Pakenham and Pakenham East.

Construction on the Cranbourne Line Upgrade is making great progress, with work underway to duplicate eight kilometres of track between Dandenong and Cranbourne, remove the last four remaining level crossings between Cranbourne and the city, and build a new station at Merinda Park in Lyndhurst.

In the West, Werribee's Cherry Street level crossing will be gone by Easter – months ahead of schedule.

In Mooroolbark and Lilydale, a week-long construction blitz is currently underway, where crews are preparing to remove two more level crossings by building new rail bridges. To enable these works, buses are replacing trains on sections of the Belgrave/Lilydale, Mernda, and Pakenham lines. For more information, visit ptv.vic.gov.au

With a dangerous and congested level crossing to go every four weeks on average in 2021, the project is on track to remove 75 level crossings by 2025. For more information visit levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"Bell Street takes more cars than any other level crossing in Melbourne, and by 2022 it will be crossing-free – we're getting on with delivering smoother, safer journeys for Victorians and creating all-important local jobs."

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Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

“It’s exciting to see work ramping up on this incredible project that will transform the area and make our suburbs safer - whether you’re driving, on public transport or walking across the rail line.”

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

“The Preston community told us they want safer, less congested roads, more open space and better community connections and that’s exactly what this project will deliver.”