

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for Suburban Rail Loop



Wednesday, 5 May 2021

LEVEL CROSSING CONSTRUCTION RAMPING UP IN PRESTON

The Andrews Labor Government's work to remove four dangerous and congested level crossings in Preston is scaling up, with a six-day construction blitz to take place along the Mernda line from this evening.

Crews are preparing to build a new two-kilometre rail bridge as the crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road are removed, cutting congestion and making the roads safer for the more than 82,000 motorists who pass through each day – where the boom gates are down for up to 40 per cent of the morning peak.

From 8:30pm tonight until the last service on Tuesday 11 May, buses will replace trains on the Mernda line between Clifton Hill and Reservoir as the construction crew works inside the rail corridor, installing overhead wiring structures and carrying out signaling, track, and drainage works.

The existing station buildings at Bell and Preston will be demolished and temporary station facilities installed to reduce disruption for passengers while the new, premium stations are built – and passengers will start using the temporary stations when trains return to the line on Wednesday 12 May.

Bell Street will remain open to traffic during the construction, although there will be some local road closures and pedestrian access changes in the area.

As works are underway in Preston, the community is encouraged to get involved in the 'GO Preston... Shop Local' campaign ahead of Mother's Day, celebrating the creativity and diversity of local small businesses. Shoppers at participating stores can scan a QR code for their chance to win a local shopping voucher.

The four level crossings at Preston will be gone, and the new stations open by the end of 2022, with the open space ready for the community to enjoy in 2023.

Disruptions to train services on the Mernda line will be kept to a minimum during construction, with works planned so that the rail line will never close for more than two weeks at a time.

For more information about the project, including road closures in the area, visit levelcrossings.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"We're removing four of Melbourne's most notorious level crossings, including the state's busiest at Bell Street in Preston – easing congestion in the north and improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and rail passengers."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"Soon our community will no longer be divided as the rail line is elevated, freeing up a significant amount of open space for everyone to enjoy – and I'd like to say a huge thank you to locals for their patience during construction."

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

"It's exciting to see major works kicking off on the Preston level crossing removals – with the elevated rail and brand-new stations to be open by 2022, our local community will be safer and less congested for everyone."