

Media Release

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



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THREE MCGS OF NEW OPEN SPACES FOR PRESTON

As works to remove dangerous and congested level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road in Preston continue, designs have been unveiled for new open spaces under the elevated rail line.

The Preston Level Crossing Removal Project is removing the four level crossings by raising the Mernda line over the roads, which will make room for almost 60,000 square metres – or approximately three MCGs – of new open space.

The open space designs released today show landscaped areas with more than 700 trees and around 150,000 grasses, shrubs and groundcover plants, as well as two new playgrounds and a shared walking and cycling path to connect the new Preston and Bell stations.

The open space areas were designed in collaboration with the Preston Open Space Advisory panel, using feedback gained from the local community during consultation last year. Locals said they wanted multi-use spaces, more native plants, active spaces, community areas and improved safety.

The designs feature plenty of multipurpose community spaces including an amphitheatre to the west of Bell Station, a barbecue area and casual seating.

New nature-based playgrounds encourage exploration and interaction for children of all ages. One playground will be located near Oakover Road and the other near Preston Oval. A fitness zone will also be located near Preston Oval with a range of exercise equipment.

This builds on the open space recently completed nearby in Brunswick and Coburg as part of the removal of four level crossings on the Upfield line, with a 2.5 km cycling and pedestrian path being used by hundreds of locals each day since it opened late last month.

Work is well underway on the Preston level crossing removals, with large concrete segments arriving on site this month that will form the elevated rail line. The boom gates will be gone and new stations open by the end of 2022.

The new open space will be ready for the community to enjoy in 2023. For more information, visit levelcrossings.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

“These critical projects are so much more than simply removing level crossings. We’re building green new open spaces and better connections that will be enjoyed by communities for generations to come.”

“Bell Street is one of the most congested level crossings in Melbourne and we’re making it boom gate-free. This project is a game changer for anyone travelling through the inner north, with less congestion and improved safety.”

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

“Preston needs more open space – and we’re delivering it. Created by and for our community, these vibrant and accessible new spaces will breathe new life into the rail corridor and transform the way we meet, travel and connect.”

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

“There’s something here for everyone. With plenty of places to sit and relax or play and exercise, these new open spaces in Preston will become a real hub for the community to enjoy.”

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