

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 29 May 2022

FOUR LEVEL CROSSINGS GONE FROM PRESTON

Four dangerous and congested level crossings will be gone from Preston tomorrow, with trains returning to the Mernda line after a two-week construction blitz – marking 64 level crossings removed since 2015.

Getting rid of four level crossings from Preston while separating cars and trains is a massive win for the community. It makes Bell Street – one of the busiest roads in Melbourne – boom gate free, easing congestion and boosting safety.

Over the past two weeks, crews have worked around the clock to remove four sets of boom gates at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road, connect the new elevated rail line with the existing ground-level tracks, and remove old rail tracks and overhead wires.

From tomorrow, trains will return to the Mernda line on a new single elevated track between Regent and Thornbury stations until September, running express through Bell and Preston stations.

Shuttle buses will connect passengers travelling to and from Bell and Preston stations during this time, as works continue on the new stations for the next three months.

In September, the second elevated rail track will be finished and new, modern stations at Bell and Preston will open to passengers. Passengers can look forward to better station facilities, including a comfortable waiting room at ground level, lift and stair access, undercover seating areas and improved lighting.

About 82,000 vehicles passed through these level crossings each day, and the boom gates were down for up to 40 per cent of the morning peak.

Next year, work on landscaping and planting under the elevated rail line at Preston will continue. Almost 60,000 square metres of new open space will be created by the project – approximately 3 MCGs worth.

The open space will include 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.

We're removing 85 dangerous and congested level crossings from around Melbourne by 2025, with 64 gone for good already. For more information, or to plan your journey, visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We promised we'd move 50 – and we smashed that target. We've now removed 64 dangerous and congested crossings well ahead of our new schedule to remove 85 – we're getting it done."

"These projects don't just make communities more accessible and safer – they support thousands of local jobs every single day."

Quote attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"With no boom gates to hold up journeys on Bell Street, commuting will be easier for so many Melburnians, whether you're driving to the airport or your local school – it's one of the busiest arterial roads in Melbourne."

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Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"The boom gates are finally gone and we're seeing cars travelling on our level-crossing free roads. Next, we'll see the Bell Station precinct come to life and get on with creating new open spaces for the whole community."

Quote attributable to Member for Preston Robin Scott

"I'd like to thank our local community for their patience while crews worked around the clock to remove these four dangerous and congested level crossings and get the Mernda line ready for passengers. I'm so proud to see the project benefits really come to life for the community in Preston."