



# PRESTON OPEN SPACE FEEDBACK REPORT

## Project overview

On behalf of the Victorian Government, the Level Crossing Removal Project is removing 75 dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne by 2025.

The level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road, Preston, will be removed by raising the rail line over the road. The project will deliver new community open space, new Bell and Preston stations, and safer local connections.

The rail line will be raised over the roads, delivering new open space underneath the two-kilometre rail bridge.

A shared walking and cycling path from Oakover Road through to Murray Road will connect locals to the new stations and open space.

The four level crossings will be removed simultaneously to minimise disruption to the community.

Around 82,000 vehicles 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.

These level crossings will be gone by the end of 2022 and the open space ready for locals to enjoy in 2023.



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## Introduction

In December 2020 we released concept designs for new open space that will be created as part of the Preston Level Crossing Removal Project.

These designs were developed using feedback and ideas collected from the community throughout 2020. In particular, they were developed in collaboration with the Preston Open Space Advisory Panel, with feedback from the wider community consultation fed directly to the panel.

Upon release of the concept designs, we sought feedback from the community via an online survey on:

- Which open space area would they spend most time in and why
- How often they anticipate they would use the open space
- Whether they thought the open space achieved the following: multi-use, caters to Preston's diverse community, connects to the local area and safe and accessible (multiple choice)
- If they could change one aspect of the open space designs what would they change and why

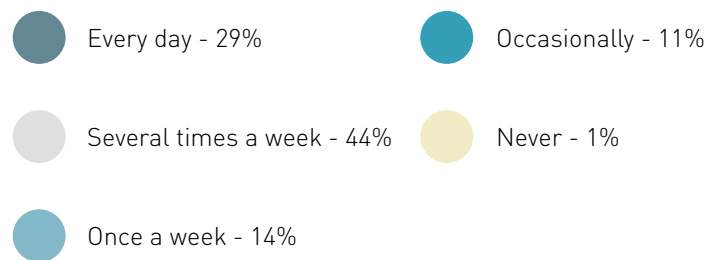
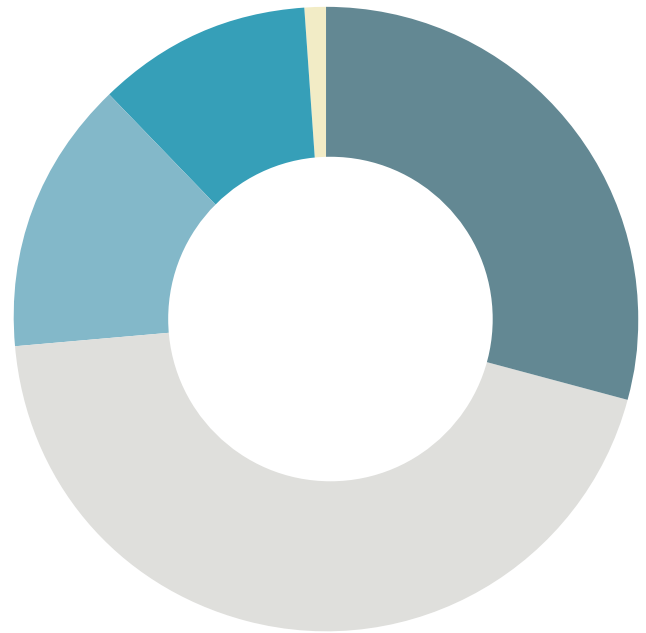
This report summarises the key themes raised in the feedback.

This feedback will be used to further refine the open space designs.

## Online engagement

A total of 237 people completed the online survey to give feedback on the new open space concept designs, between 7 December 2020 and 21 January 2021.

### How often do you anticipate you will use the open space?

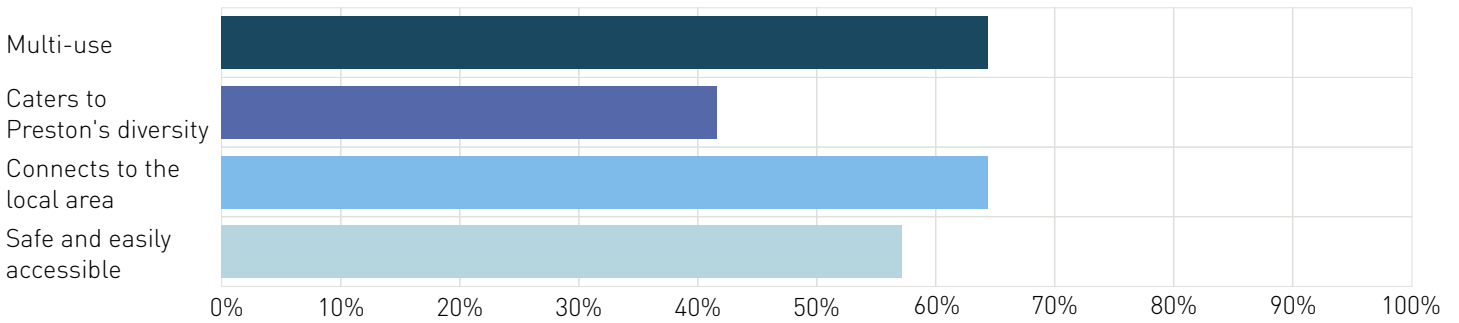


We heard that 44 per cent think they will use the new open space several times a week, while 29 per cent will use it every day. Another 14 per cent anticipate using the open space once a week, while 11 per cent believe they will use it occasionally.

*Note: respondents could select multiple options.*



## Do you think the open space achieves the following?



*Note: respondents could select multiple options.*

Most people think the open space delivers on their multi-use criteria, and that the open space connect the local area. Over half of the people surveyed believe that the open space is

safe and easily accessible, while over a third believe the new open space caters to Preston's diverse community.

## What we heard

Survey respondents made a variety of suggestions in response to the question 'If you could change one aspect of the open space design'.

Suggestions included:

- small bar or café
- mini soccer pitches
- a skatepark
- established trees

- off lead dog park
- basketball court
- car parking
- shade cover
- replacing grassed areas with more trees and shrubs
- removing the BBQ area as it will encourage anti-social behaviour

A number of other suggestions related to matters outside of open space design, project area and feedback on station precincts.



The key themes to emerge were ensuring environmental sustainability, improved safety and more active spaces.

### Trees and environment

Respondents were keen to see plenty of native trees, plants and natural surfaces included in the designs. Using native trees and plants that provide shade and greenery along the open space corridor was something we received a lot of feedback on. This also included using natural surfaces such as timber and rock on surfaces, natural materials where possible and native open environments.

Respondents were also keen to see facilities included for people using the open space, including water fountains, grassy areas and seating.

While some existing trees will be removed during construction, there will be at least two trees planted for every tree removed and all the new trees will be native.

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"I like the idea of returning it to its natural state, as well as the Aboriginal heritage celebration."

### Safety

From having safe connections for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers to measures that deter and prevent anti-social behavior, safety was another area that generated plenty of feedback.

Among the more specific responses, the safety of the area at night was a common response, with people highlighting the need for more lighting, and better visibility around the area.

Some respondents also raised concerns about open space amenities such as barbeque areas, seating areas and connections being used for anti-social behaviour.

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"...consider the inclusion of a stake/riding active spaces..."

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"...Living in this area and walking around the streets every day .... I am deeply concerned about safety..."

### Active Spaces

Feedback showed that Preston is keen to see an increase in active spaces in the community, including separate cycling and pedestrian paths.

We received many comments asking for more sporting facilities, such as; skate park, mini soccer pitches, basketball courts and active riding spaces.

### Next steps

The feedback we received will be used to refine the open space designs to ensure it responds to what the local community values.

We'll be back out to the community later this year, with updated designs for the open space.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the online survey and provide feedback. Your input will help ensure we deliver new open space that transforms the precinct and will be enjoyed by Preston locals for years to come.



## CONTACT US

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