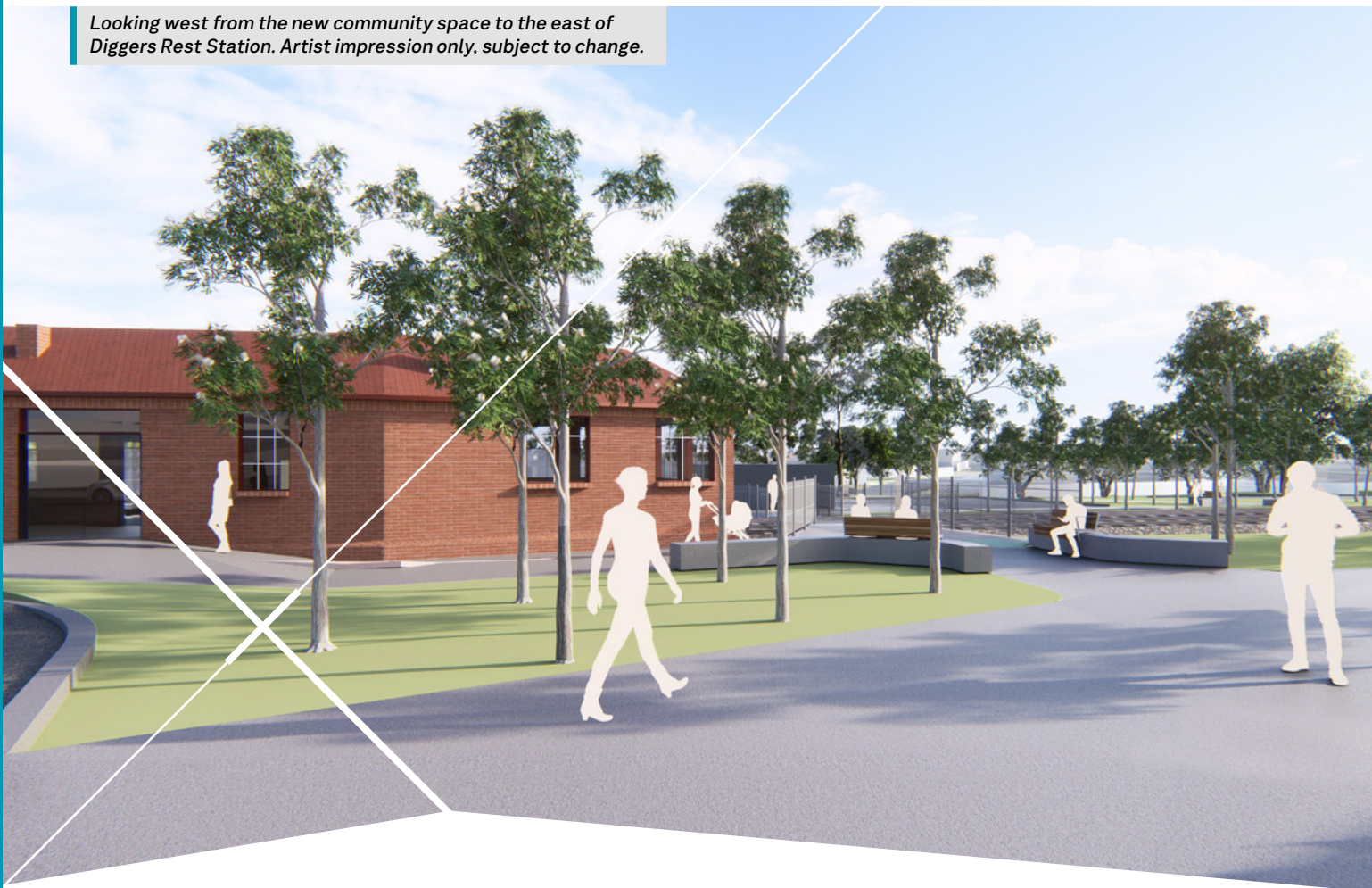


Old Calder Highway and Watsons Road, Diggers Rest

Consultation report

December 2023

*Looking west from the new community space to the east of
Diggers Rest Station. Artist impression only, subject to change.*



Contents

Project overview	2	Ground surfaces	10
Concept designs	3	Seating	11
Consultation summary	5	Landscaping	12
About you	6	What else you told us	13
Look and feel	8	Next steps	15



Aerial view looking south towards the new road bridge at Watsons Road, Diggers Rest. Artist impression only, subject to change.

Project Overview

We're removing the level crossings at Old Calder Highway and Watsons Road, Diggers Rest in 2025. Removing these crossings will improve safety, allow more trains more often and will prepare the area for future development.

Engineering assessments have determined the best way to remove the level crossings at Old Calder Highway and Watsons Road is by building road bridges.

The removal of these 2 crossings will make the Sunbury Line level crossing free in 2025. In conjunction with the Sunbury Line Upgrade and the Metro Tunnel, removing these crossings now will allow more trains to run more often.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2024 and the level crossings will be gone in 2025.

Why these level crossings need to go



6300 vehicles travel through these crossings every day



Boom gates are down for up to 36 minutes of the morning peak (7am to 9am)



Up to 27 trains travel through these crossings during the morning peak (7am to 9am)



An image of a cyclist travelling through the level crossing at Old Calder Highway, Diggers Rest.

Concept designs

The concept designs for the new road bridges were released in September 2023.



View when travelling west over the new road bridge at Old Calder Highway, Diggers Rest. Artist impression only, subject to change.

At Old Calder Highway, the new road bridge will start south of the existing level crossing and connect Old Calder Highway to Diggers Rest–Coimadaí Road.

At Watsons Road, the road bridge will go over the rail line at the same location as the existing level crossing.



Concept designs

Concept designs for the new road bridges are available to view on our website at levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/diggers-rest



View when travelling east over the new road bridge at Watsons Road, Diggers Rest. Artist impression only, subject to change.

How your feedback informed the concept designs

In June and July 2023, we asked you to share how you move around the local area and what you value about Diggers Rest.

During this consultation, you told us you:



experience challenges with congestion, traffic and dangerous vehicle behaviour



want safe ways to walk or cycle through the area



value community meeting places and hubs



value the local businesses and don't want to divide the town.

This feedback informed the concept designs as:

the level crossing removals and the new road bridges will make journeys faster and safer for all

these designs include upgraded and safer pedestrian and cyclist connections

the Old Calder Highway design creates new community spaces near Diggers Rest Station

the designs maintain connectivity across the rail line to access shops, venues and services



Read the full consultation report

Read the June and July consultation report by scanning the QR code or heading to our website levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/diggers-rest



Looking west from the new community space to the east of Diggers Rest Station. Artist impression only, subject to change.

Consultation summary

In September 2023, we asked the community to share their feedback to help us shape aspects of the designs of the new road bridges.

The opportunity to provide feedback was open from Friday 1 September to Sunday 1 October 2023. Feedback on aspects of the designs was collected via an online survey on the Engage Victoria website. Printed surveys were available by request and at our in-person consultation sessions, and the online survey was also available in Hindi and Punjabi. We also invited the community to ask questions about the project via Engage Victoria.

The feedback we received on aspects of the concept designs helps inform the final designs. It also helps us understand what's important to the community. Thank you to everyone who submitted a survey response and attended a consultation session.



Find out more about planning approvals

The community were also able to submit feedback on a range of planning matters during consultation. This was part of our planning approval for the project from the Minister for Planning under Clause 52.03 (Level Crossing Removal Project) of the Hume Planning Scheme and Melton Planning Scheme.

Scan the QR code to find out more about planning approvals for Level Crossing Removal Projects.

Your feedback

There was a high level of interest from the community during the consultation.

87

design feedback survey responses received

>900

people visited our project page on our website

28

planning approval submissions made

>1,900

people visited our Engage Victoria project page

>50

people joined us at our 3 consultation sessions

>40,000

people viewed social media content about the community consultation

40

questions asked via our online engagement hub



>1,200

people received 3 email updates during the consultation

>8,000

community updates delivered to the community

About the data

Data in this report comes from the 87 design feedback survey responses received through Engage Victoria and hard copy survey submissions. Note that some questions were multi-select options and not all questions required an answer. Some respondents may have chosen not to answer some of these questions in their submissions.

About you

Here's some information about you and the other respondents:

Your interest in the project



62%

live nearby



53%

drive through the Old Calder Highway level crossing



41%

catch the train to or from Diggers Rest Station



42%

own land or property in the area



30%

use services in the area



30%

shop in the area



28%

walk or cycle through the Old Calder Highway level crossing





17%

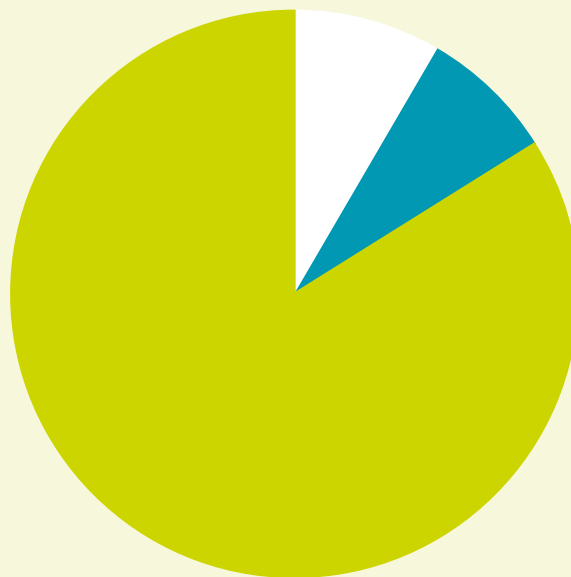
drive through the Watsons Road level crossing

Where you live

 Diggers Rest – 77%

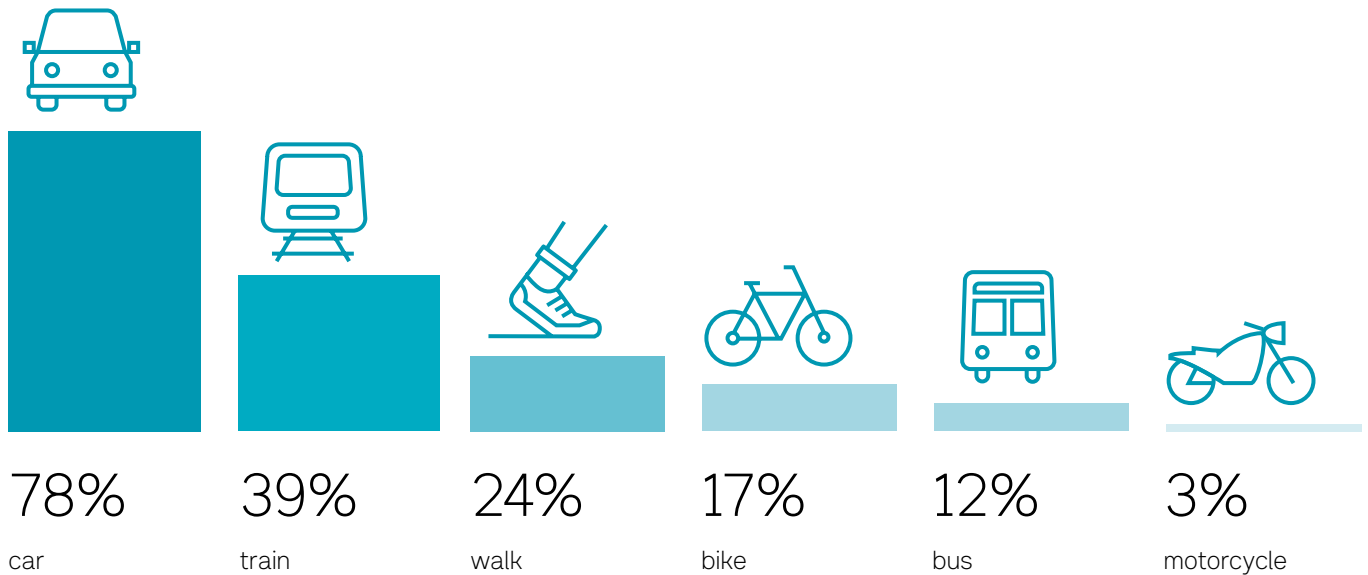
 Sunbury – 10%

 Elsewhere – 11%

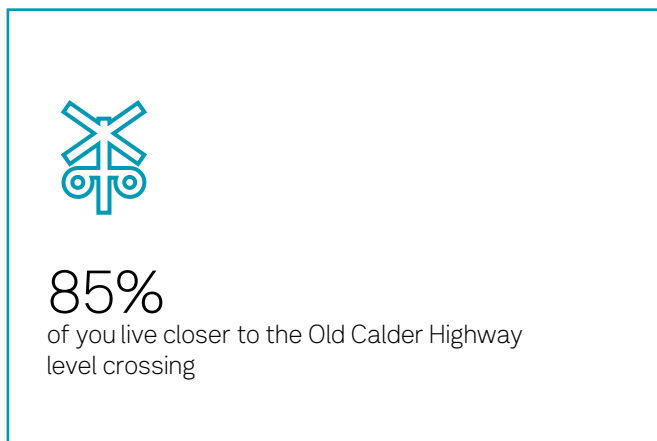


Moving around the area

How you mostly get around Diggers Rest



The closest level crossing to your home



Look and feel

What design elements from other projects you like the most

We showed you six images containing design elements used on previous projects. We asked you to select three images that contained design elements that you liked the most.

Ranked in order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred.



What you told us about these design elements

We then asked you what elements of the images you would like to see incorporated into the designs.

The top design elements you mentioned were:



landscaping



the use of **natural colours, design features and textures**



safety improvements like visibility and lighting



local history incorporated into the designs



fit in with the **existing look and feel** of the area

Other elements you mentioned:



visual screening and barriers



walking and cycling connections



artwork in the designs

Examples of comments about what design elements you would like to see



'Any screening should be like the screening at the railway station and should identify with the heritage of the area.'

'Trees, plants, natural colours.'

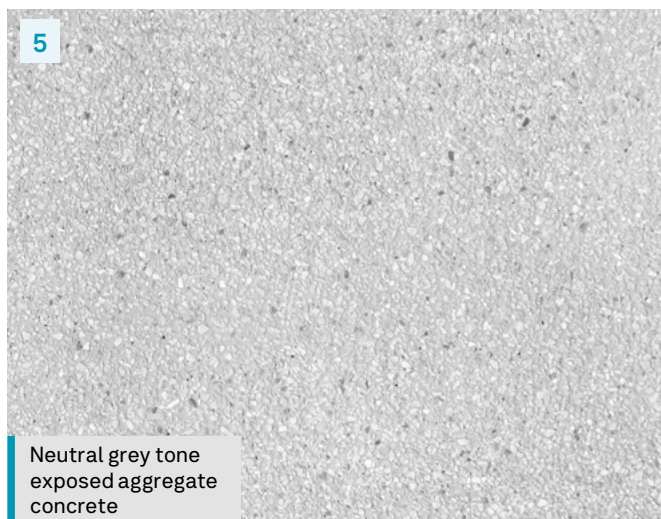
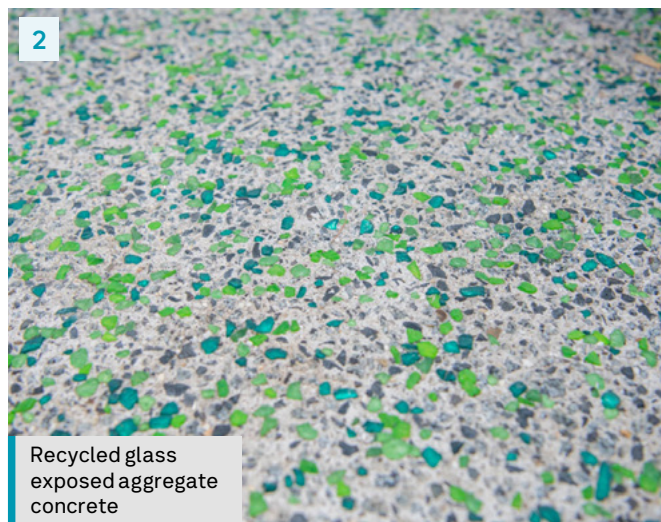
'Simple design with natives and maintained gardens.'

An image of the station signage and entrance to platform 1 at Diggers Rest Station.


Ground surfaces

We asked you to tell us what ground surfaces you prefer.

Out of the five exposed aggregate concrete examples, **most people preferred the warm tone**, followed by recycled glass, cool tone, mixed tone and then neutral grey tone. Ranked in order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred.



Most people preferred the warm tone




Seating

We're creating new community space near Diggers Rest Station. We asked you to tell us what seating style you prefer.

Out of the three pictures of seating examples, **most people preferred timber style seating**, followed by contemporary seating and then standard steel seating. Ranked in order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred.



Most people preferred timber style seating



Landscaping

We'll plant new trees and shrubs in the space around the new road bridges. We asked you to tell us what landscaping styles you would like to see in these spaces.

Out of the example pictures of different landscaping styles, **most people said they would like native or indigenous plants**, followed by trees, low and ground level planting, flowering plants, a mix of all, grass, a 'woody meadow' and then non-native plants or trees. Ranked in order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred.



Most people said they would like native or indigenous plants



What else you told us

We asked if you would like to add anything else about ground surfaces, seating and landscaping for the new designs.

The top things you mentioned were:



include more **trees, native and biodiverse landscaping**



consider the **local flora and fauna**



tie in the designs with the **existing landscaping and surrounds**



incorporate **natural and 'warm' design features**



consider **safety and accessibility**

You also mentioned that you would like us to consider:



improving the **cleanliness** of the area



including **park land and play spaces** for younger members of the community



using **sustainable materials and products** in the designs



providing **community amenities** like drinking fountains



keeping **existing plants and trees** in the designs

Examples of comments about what ground surfaces, seating, landscaping you would like to see



'The landscaping should be picturesque, the heritage buildings and Macedon Ranges in the distance should be highlighted by beautiful gardens.'

'Hard landscaping looks best when integrated into the overall concept blending the line between seated and landscaped area.'

'Keep it as natural looking as possible.'

'Decent lighting for night time travellers.'

What else you told us

We asked you what else you would like to tell us that may be relevant to the project. Here are the most frequently mentioned key themes from this feedback.

Level crossing removal method at Old Calder Highway

We received feedback that included suggestions for an alternative method of removal such as a road or rail underpass or a road closure at the level crossing. You also provided suggestions for other locations and alignments of the road bridge.

Impact on local businesses, community venues and group meeting places

You told us you were concerned about the impact that the new road bridge design at Old Calder Highway will have on the existing local businesses, community venues and meeting places. You told us you would like to see access to these businesses, venues and places maintained or improved as part of the designs.

Traffic and movement of vehicles

You told us that you are concerned about the current local traffic conditions and driver behaviour, and want to see the new road bridges make journeys through the area easier and safer.

Pedestrian connections in the area and across the rail line

You told us you want improved pedestrian connections in the area as part of the final designs, including an upgraded pedestrian crossing as part of the road bridge design at Old Calder Highway.

Consider the impacts on residents living nearby

You told us about the importance of minimising impacts on residents living near the new road bridge and want us to minimise noise, privacy and amenity impacts for these residents.



A train passing through the level crossing at Old Calder Highway, Diggers Rest.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback.

We appreciate the time you took to fill out a survey and share your thoughts and ideas. Thank you to all those who also attended a community consultation session in the area or online during the consultation period.

Your feedback will help inform aspects of the final designs for the project, which will be released in early 2024. When the final designs are released, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the final designs and chat to the project team.



Connect with us

Be the first to know about updates on the Diggers Rest level crossing removals.

Learn more about the project at levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/diggers-rest

Sign up for email updates at levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/subscribe

For SMS alerts, text **DIGGERS** to **0427 840 967** to keep informed of major traffic and construction impacts.

Do you have a question?

Get in touch with us by calling **1800 105 105** or emailing contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Project timeline



Late 2022 to early 2023

- Site investigations
- Planning works



June to July 2023

- Site investigations continue
- Community consultation



September 2023

- Concept designs released
- Further community consultation



Late 2023

- Site investigations continue



Early 2024

- Final designs released
- Community engagement



2024

- Construction begins



2025

- Level crossings removed

* Timeline subject to change.








A train passing through the level crossing at Watsons Road, Diggers Rest.

levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au



For languages other than English, please call 9209 0147.

1800 105 105 (call anytime)     

Please contact us if you would like this information in an accessible format. If you need assistance due to a hearing or speech impairment, visit relayservice.gov.au

