

# MANAGING VEGETATION REMOVAL



## Getting ready for major construction

The Victorian Government is removing the dangerous and congested level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road in Preston. The project will also deliver new stations at Bell and Preston.

Works have started to remove the four level crossings in Preston, including the relocation of major underground services, site investigations and utility maintenance works.

Raising the rail line to remove the level crossings will deliver new community open space, improve safety, and create new east-west connections.

Trees, vegetation and green space are valued by the Preston community. Minimising the impact of tree and vegetation removal is an important consideration in the design and construction of the project.

To build the new rail bridge and Bell and Preston stations we need to install new infrastructure and relocate existing power, communications, and water services in the area. This means some tree and vegetation removal is required.

To prepare for major construction, tree and vegetation removal will take place from November 2020 until end-2021.

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Careful planning is undertaken by qualified arborists and sustainability and environmental specialists to minimise the impacts to local flora and fauna.

# Landscaping and vegetation management

During the planning stage for the project, independent arborists conducted a comprehensive assessment of 2829 trees in the project area.

This has helped us identify trees that:

- pose a hazard to rail operation
- are impacted by the building of the rail bridge and two new stations
- affect the installation of new underground power and communication services.

We will continue to carry out investigations into the root systems and health of trees to avoid tree removal wherever possible.

## Landscaping and replanting

Tree planting and landscaping are the final activities to take place, once major works are completed in 2022.

We are working with landscape architects as well as Metro Trains Melbourne, Public Transport Victoria and Darebin City Council to refine the open space and landscaping designs. Feedback from the community is also being considered, as well as input from the Preston Open Space Advisory Panel.

We are committed to planting more trees in the new open community spaces and station precincts created by the project than are currently there. A minimum of two trees will be planted for every tree removed and will enhance the visual amenity and enrich the area's biodiversity.

More information including landscaping plans and the types of vegetation to be planted will be shared with the community upon final design.

## What's assessed

Detailed assessments for each tree include several important considerations such as:

- Structural strength, including the size and location of tree roots
- Health, life expectancy and significance to the area
- How close the tree is to construction works, essential underground services and other structures.

## Protecting existing vegetation

Where trees are being retained, we will set up fenced tree protection (no-go) zones. Fencing protects the area around a tree, above and below the ground, from construction impacts.

## Wildlife

We work with qualified ecologists and wildlife handlers on all level crossing removal projects who inspect trees identified for removal and make sure any wildlife is safely relocated.

## Native vegetation

The majority of trees and vegetation to be removed are non-indigenous and have been classified by Darebin Council as non-desirable species and identified for future replacement. Two key areas of native vegetation have been identified within area, which will be protected from project impacts and preserved.

## Environmental initiatives

We will work closely with Darebin City Council to use the wood from removed trees for environmental and community projects, including use throughout Darebin's parks and gardens.

Some of the opportunities we're exploring include:

- providing logs to local community organisations such as community gardens
- delivering logs to local schools, indigenous organisations and artists for use in projects
- directing mulch to local landscaping and revegetation projects.

If you are part of an environmental group that could use the wood for local environmental initiatives, please get in touch.



## CONTACT US

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