



PRESTON

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

February 2020



levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne





Contents

Project overview	2
Introduction	3
Feedback activities	4
What we heard	5
Safety	6
Pedestrian and cycling connectivity	6
Traffic flow	7
Open space and vibrancy	8
Bell and Preston station precincts	9
Next steps	11



Bell Street level crossing

PROJECT OVERVIEW



The Victorian Government is removing the dangerous and congested level crossings at Murray Road, Cramer Street, Bell Street and Oakover Road, Preston.

The boom gates at these four level crossings are down for 40% of the weekday morning peak, creating a bottleneck for the 82,000 drivers who travel through them each day.

Removing these level crossings will make communities safer and get commuters in Melbourne's inner north home sooner.

The four level crossings are located on the Mernda line, which carries about 33,000 passengers and runs more than 200 train services each day.

By raising the rail over the roads, the Preston project will deliver new community open spaces, two new stations and improve safety.

The project is currently in the planning phase. Early works will begin in late 2020 and the level crossings will be removed by the end of 2022, with open space ready for locals to enjoy in 2023.



Oakover Road level crossing

INTRODUCTION

In November and December 2019, the Level Crossing Removal Project asked the Preston community what was important to them in the local area and what they wanted to see delivered as part of the Preston Level Crossing Removal Project.

This report summarises the key themes raised in the feedback from the community, local businesses and stakeholders during the early planning phase of the project. This feedback will help identify key issues that are important to the community for the project to consider as the design is developed.



Feedback activities

(November – December 2019)

5



Conversation booths held at Bell and Preston train stations, as well as Preston Market.



247
ONLINE SURVEYS



22,000
LETTER
DROPS



OVER 20
Meetings with
local schools,
community
groups and
traders



Bell Station

What we heard

From our conversations and surveys, we heard that feeling safe, improved walking and cycling paths, and less congestion were the top three priorities for Preston.

Top ranking features of the Preston Level Crossing Removal Project

Rank	Feature
1	Improved safety
2	Pedestrian and cycling paths
3	Efficient traffic flow
4	Retaining or creating open space
5	Environmental sustainability
6	A vibrant station precinct
7	Community facilities

Safety

The community rated 'improved safety' as their highest priority when completing the online survey. Some of their safety concerns included:

- Pedestrians hurriedly crossing Bell Street to access the station when the boom gates are down, without any signalised crossing
- Feeling unsafe walking at night around Bell and Preston Stations where there is poor lighting
- Feeling unsafe walking at night south of Bell Street where there is poor lighting
- The unsafe east-west cycling routes between St Georges Road and High Street where there are little to no bicycle lanes.

Pedestrian and cycling connectivity

With 38% of online survey respondents recording walking or cycling as their mode of travel, many people voiced a need to improve walking and cycling conditions in the area. Issues raised included:

- The incomplete and faded bike lane on Cramer Street was raised as an issue. You said Cramer Street was a popular east-west route for students and needed a continuous, protected bike lane with improved road markings.
- The unsafe mix of drivers and pedestrians in the Preston Market car park. You said a dedicated pedestrian path from Preston Station to Preston Market would make this area safer.
- Formalising pedestrian paths around the train stations, particularly the laneway between Gertrude Street and Bell Station.
- Installing a safe and controlled pedestrian crossing at Bell Street to access Bell Station, without taking risks when the boom gates are down.
- Creating stronger walking and cycling connections between St Georges Road in the west and High Street in the east.
- Installing a new north-south walking and cycling path underneath the rail bridge to take pressure off the St Georges Road bike path and create better connections to the train stations and Preston Market.



Cramer Street level crossing



Bell Street level crossing

Traffic flow

People told us that improving traffic flow and reducing congestion is a priority. While not all the concerns raised are within the scope of our project, we will provide a design that integrates with the existing traffic network and improves traffic flow in the area. Some of the concerns regarding traffic movements included:

- Increased traffic and noise on local streets, especially the streets south-east of Bell Station. You said maintaining local use on these streets was important for preserving harmony in the area.
- The unsafe mix of drivers, walkers and cyclists using Railway Parade East. Many people said we should consider making this a 'local use only' road or limit its use to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Simplifying the intersection at Murray Road and St Georges Road with clearer signage improved sightlines.
- Turning right out of Clinch Avenue onto Murray Road was described as a difficult and dangerous turn to make.
- Congestion at the Preston Market entry and exit points. Many said cars turning in and out of these points held up traffic and dangerously crossed paths with cyclists in the adjacent lane.
- The hump at the Oakover Road level crossing was raised by many as dangerous and in need of resurfacing.



Bell Station

Open space and vibrancy

Many people expressed excitement about the opportunities for open space under the new rail bridge. Some ideas included:

- Greening up the area with more trees, vegetation and grassland
- Creating more shaded areas for people to keep cool
- More seating to create places for people to sit and relax
- Shared walking and cycling trails which connect easily to the stations and the market
- Public art which reflects the rich history and character of Preston
- Creating areas which are well lit, welcoming and don't attract vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.



Bell and Preston station precincts

We heard that people want more accessible, modern stations which easily connect to other modes of transport. Some of the feedback included:

- Creating more access points to the stations from all directions
- Installing more lighting and CCTV cameras
- Creating smoother connections between trains, buses and trams
- Aligning the bus stops and pedestrian crossing on Murray Road to avoid people crossing where there is no pedestrian crossing
- Installing a drop-off/pick-up zone for buses
- Installing more bike parking
- Responses varied regarding car parking in the area with some wanting more car spaces and others wanting less.



Preston Station



Murray Road level crossing

Top five places around Bell and Preston stations

We asked what areas, places and landmarks are important to you around Bell and Preston stations. Responses included:

Rank	Place
1	Preston Market
2	High Street shops
3	Preston City Oval
4	Ray Brabham Gardens
5	Bell Station building

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their local knowledge for this round of feedback. Gathering your insights now about how you move around the area and what's important to you in Preston means we can deliver a project that truly reflects the interests of the Preston community.

The local community will be invited for a chance to directly contribute to the design of the open space as part of a Preston Open Space Advisory Panel (POSAP). Further details about the POSAP including how you can get involved will be shared soon.



Cramer Street level crossing

CONTACT US

contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au
1800 105 105
Level Crossing Removal Authority
GPO Box 4509, Melbourne VIC 3001

Follow us on social media
[@levelcrossings](#)



Translation service – For languages other than English, please call 9280 0780.

Please contact us if you would like this information in an accessible format.

If you need assistance because of a hearing or speech impairment, please visit relayservice.gov.au