

# Old Calder Highway and Watsons Road, Diggers Rest

Consultation report

August 2023

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



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

# 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.

Removing these level crossings will make the Sunbury Line level crossing free in 2025, making journeys faster and more reliable with safer local roads.

When the Metro Tunnel is finished, trains will be able to get from Sunbury to Pakenham and Cranbourne without a single boom gate going down.

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

## Your feedback

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



**128**

survey responses received



**18**

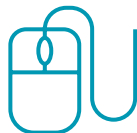
questions asked on Engage Victoria

**100**

additional feedback submissions received

**1,965**

people visited our Engage Victoria project page



**467**

comments from in-person and online consultation sessions



**10**

local knowledge submissions made on Engage Victoria



Over

**8,000**

community updates delivered



**2,316**

project page website views

# Consultation summary

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

The opportunity for feedback was open from Tuesday 13 June to Sunday 16 July 2023.

Feedback was collected via an online survey on the Engage Victoria website, and during community consultation sessions held in-person and online.

Printed surveys were available by request, and the online survey was also available in Hindi and Punjabi.

We also invited the community to ask questions and share their local knowledge via our Engage Victoria.

The feedback we received informs the concept designs and helps us understand what's important to the community.

**Thank you to all who submitted feedback and attended a consultation session.**



**3** email updates sent to over **1200** people during the consultation



More than **73,500** views on social media

More than **80** people joined us at our



**3** consultation sessions

## About the data

Data in this report comes from the 128 survey responses received through Engage Victoria, hard copy survey submission, as well as the comments provided at consultation sessions. Note that some questions were multi-select options and not all questions required an answer, and some respondents may have chosen not to answer some of these questions in their submissions.

# About you

We asked you to share your preferences, insights and feedback on the project.

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

## Your interest in the project



71%

live nearby



48%

drive through the Old Calder Highway level crossing



48%

catch the train to or from Diggers Rest Station



42%

own land or property in the area



29%

use services in the area



26%

shop in the area



17%

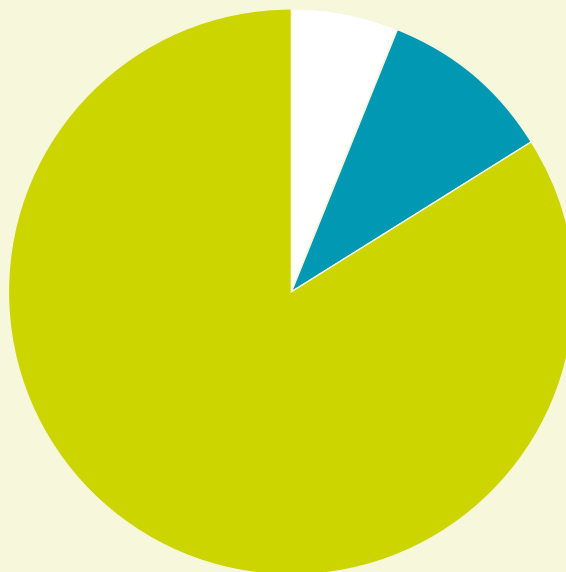
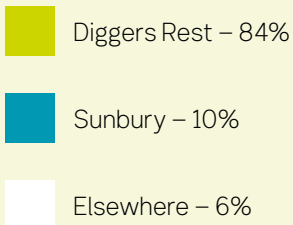
walk or cycle along the nearby paths and roads



12%

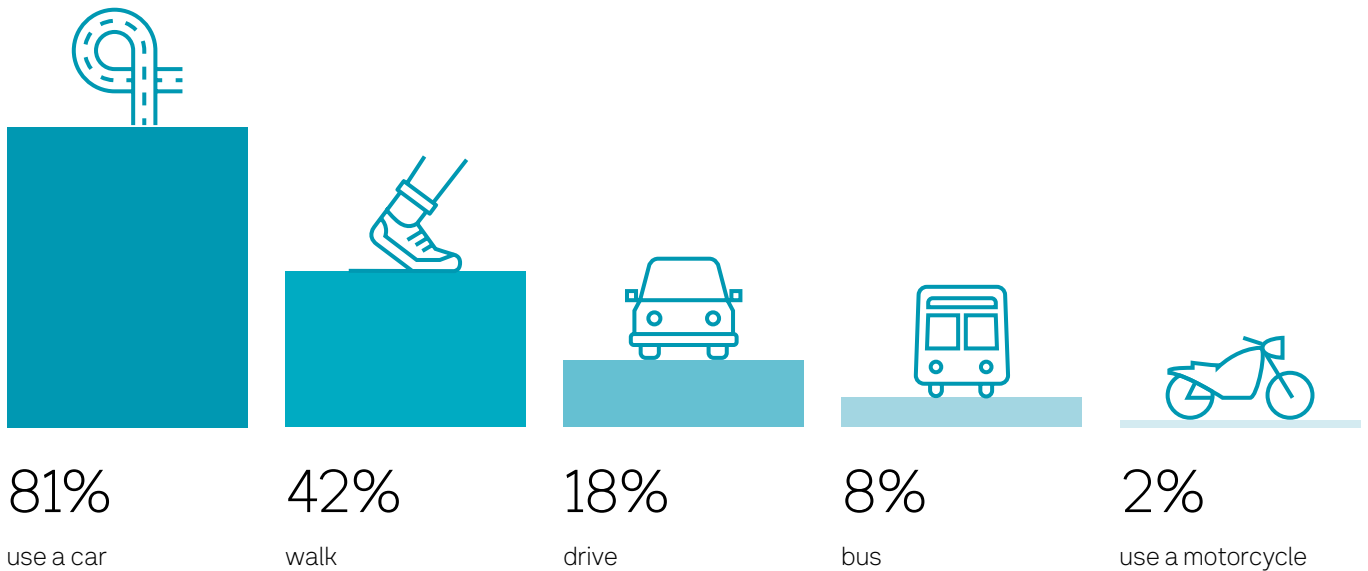
drive through the Watsons Road level crossing

## Where you live



# Moving around the area

How you mostly get around Diggers Rest



Your top destinations in the area



# Your challenges in moving around the area

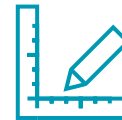
## The top challenges we heard:



**Traffic and dangerous vehicle** behaviour at the level crossings and nearby



**Congestion** at the level crossings



**Intersection design of the level crossing** at Old Calder Highway



**Driving through the area** – poor road infrastructure, unsafe intersection designs and issues accessing residential streets and properties



**Walking or cycling in the area** – feeling unsafe on local roads and pathways or poor pathways and connections in the area

## Other challenges mentioned



**Public transport services** – reliability, frequency and connectivity to other services



**Parking** at Diggers Rest Station or in the area



**Facilities** near the level crossings, such as station facilities, lighting and shelter



## Examples of comments about your challenges

'Congestion outside the station and mainly at the post office during peak hour. Road/rail crossing in current configuration makes it dangerous to access the area safely.'

'At least once a week a truck will get stuck trying to beat the boom gates going down.'

# Old Calder Highway

Here's what you told us about the Old Calder Highway level crossing and surrounding precinct.

## Design elements for the precinct

We asked you to rank six design elements for the Old Calder Highway level crossing removal from most important to least important.

Most people ranked **combined walking and cycling pathways and connections** as their most important design elements.

This was followed by **public space, landscaping, cycling pathways and connections,** and **seating.**

## What you told us about the local area's values and identity

The top things we heard you value and see as the local identity:



**Local heritage sites** and the **area's history**, such as the heritage Diggers Rest Station, the history of the gold rush era and Houdini's Flight



**Country and community feel** of the area



**Local businesses** like Houdini's Café e Cucina and Australia Post



**Trees, flora, fauna and nature sites** in the area, such as Mt Kororoit and the Organ Pipes National Park



**Community meeting places and hubs**, such as the Stan Payne Reserve, Diggers Rest Bowls Club and the Lions Club

Other things you mentioned:



**Diggers Rest Station**



**Aboriginal cultural heritage** of the area



**Proximity to other connections and services** such as the city and the airport



**Development and growth** of the area



### Examples of comments about what you value

'The open paddocks and country feel is a bonus. Houdini and Gold Rush history are plentiful and need to be recognised.'

'Houdini's and the post office are institutions.'



# Watsons Road

Here's what you told us about the Watsons Road level crossing and surrounding area.

## What you told us about the local area's values and identity

The top things we heard you value and see as the local identity:



Country feel and rural setting



Existing trees, landscaping and local wildlife



Aboriginal cultural heritage and history of the area



Nature reserves, such as the Holden Flora and Fauna Reserve and Jacksons Creek



Development and growth of the area

Other things you mentioned:



Cycling pathways



Existing heritage sites and memorials near the level crossing



The level crossing at Watsons Road, Diggers Rest.

# Diggers Rest Station

Here's what you told us about the Diggers Rest Station and surrounding area

## How you get to Diggers Rest Station

Most of you said **you drive and park a car at Diggers Rest Station**, and over half of you said you **walk to the station**.

Other travel methods you mentioned include:



Getting driven and dropped off by another person



Riding a motorcycle



Cycling and parking your bike at the station



Cycling and taking your bike with you on the train



Taking the bus



Using rideshare or private transport services like Uber

## Urban design principles

We asked you to rank our five design principles that we're using to guide urban design on the Old Calder Highway and Watsons Road level crossing removals.

From your rankings, the principles **integrate with existing and emerging precincts** and **improve and establish linear and cross-corridor active transport connections** were equally ranked as the most important.

The level crossing at Old Calder Highway, Diggers Rest.

# 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 key themes from this feedback.



## Traffic and movement of vehicles should be considered in the designs

You told us that you would like the designs to improve traffic conditions and make journeys through the area easier. Many of these comments included requests to prioritise journeys of emergency service vehicles.



## Impacts on residents near the level crossings

You told us that the designs need to consider impacts on residents near the level crossings in Diggers Rest. You mentioned aspects like noise, privacy and proximity.



## Local businesses, community venues and group meeting places are important

You told us that you would like minimal impact to existing local businesses, community venues and meeting places near the level crossings. We heard that these businesses, venues and places are important to you.



## Access across the rail line

You told us that you wanted to be able to maintain east-west connections across the rail line in both areas. You mentioned that you didn't want the design to divide the town.



## Local area growth and developments

You told us that you would like the new road bridges to improve the local area by working in with future residential and commercial developments in the area.



## Safety and accessibility impacts

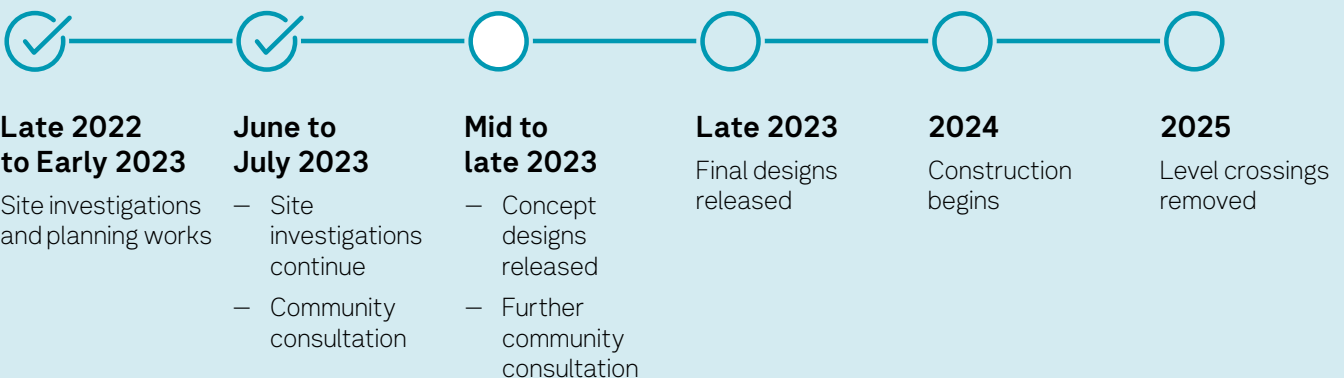
You told us that safety and accessibility for all members of the community is important. You want us to consider making the area safer for all who use it.



## Old Calder Highway design solution

We received feedback regarding alternative methods of removal and suggested road bridge locations.

## Project timeline



\* Timeline subject to change.

# Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback.

We are using your feedback to inform the concept designs for the project.

Soon, we'll release the concept designs and invite more feedback from you and the local community.

**Your feedback on the concept designs will help inform the final designs for the project, which will be available later this year.**



## 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](https://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/diggers-rest)

Sign up for email updates at [levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/subscribe](https://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](mailto:contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au)








A train travelling 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](http://relayservice.gov.au)

