

# Community Meeting Summary – Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project

**Sunday 13 November 2022, 3-4:30pm, Brunswick Town Hall**

**Organiser:** Cr James Conlan

## Key Issues Discussed

### Park St interface

Questions were raised about how the new rail bridge would work from technical perspective when it meets the rail cutting near Park Street. There is a deep rail cutting at this location which may require a steep gradient to reach proper elevation.

Concerns were raised about the potential loss of significant trees at this location, visual impacts, and how the rail bridge would integrate with Jewell Station.

### Community consultation processes

One of the key concerns from the group, especially those involved in the Coburg LXP campaign, was that the community consultation processes for LXPs appear to be minimal and tokenistic. The state government's decision to bypass the usual regulatory and consultation processes usually afforded by the Planning Panels process, was criticised. The group expressed a desire for LXP consultation processes to be meaningful and conducted in a way that allows the community's views to be genuinely taken into account. One way to achieve this would be for the state government to reinstate the Panels Process for the Brunswick LXP.

### Priority crossings for people who ride and walk

The group expressed a desire that the LXP lead to increased safety and amenity for people who ride and walk in and around the corridor, especially via priority crossings at key intersections.

Some suggested that existing, closed streets, like Barkly Street, should remain closed and not be reopened to traffic.

It was proposed that Albert Street, Brunswick, be closed to through traffic at the intersection with the rail corridor to address traffic concerns and improve safety for vulnerable road users.

### Duplicate the Upfield Train Line

The Upfield Train Line will be closed for at least a few months during construction. There's no excuse not to duplicate the small amount of track near Gowrie Train Station as part of the Brunswick LXP to improve train services for the entire line.

### Amenity impacts

Some are concerned about how amenity impacts of the project during construction would be dealt with, and how residents along the corridor would be looked after. Many questions and

concerns were raised about access to the LXP's relocation scheme, as details on this are very unclear at this stage.

### Train station design

The visual bulk and dominance of the new Moreland and Bell Stations in Coburg was raised. Some suggested that they'd prefer a different design to the Coburg stations for the Brunswick end of the project due to the narrower, denser corridor. A more subtle, scaled back design for the new stations was suggested instead.

### Trees and vegetation

While most people accept that some tree and vegetation loss is inevitable for a project like this, many people in the community are angry and upset with the extent of tree loss inflicted as part of the Coburg LXP. People want to see as many trees and vegetation retained as possible, especially mature trees.

### East west traffic movement

Some noted that level crossing removal projects are designed to improve traffic flow – that's the point of removing the rail crossings as stated by the state government. Many are concerned about increased traffic flows on key east-west roads, including surrounding residential streets. That's why many are advocating for the closure of some roads, as discussed above.

### Disability access

The new, elevated train stations must be accessible to people who use prams, wheelchairs and other devices. Preferably, accessible ramps will be installed at the new stations, or at least multiple elevators (in case any break down).

### Alternative routes during construction

The Upfield corridor will be closed during construction to people who ride and walk – this is the perfect opportunity to trail protected bike lanes and accessible tram stops along Sydney Road.

### Car dominance

There were general comments about the LXP facilitating car dominance by making it easier to drive. A lot of people in the community want our streets to be safer through reduced car use.

### Impacts to local landmarks

Concerns were raised about the amenity impacts from SkyRail to Brunswick Baths, especially the outdoor swimming pool. Questions were also raised about how the project would impact Bulleke-bek Park – one of Merri-bek's newest and much-loved local park.

### Number of train stations

Discussion about whether the group would prefer the same or a fewer number of train stations when the line is raised. Four people spoke in favour of retaining the same number of stations, while none proposed to remove stations. There seemed to be general agreement for retaining the same number of train stations as part of the project.

## Other groups to contact

- Royal Park Tennis Club
- Park groups like Protectors of Public Lands
- Rail Tram and Bus Union

## Actions

- James to ask Merri-bek Council for traffic data for the east-west roads intersecting the Coburg LXP before and after construction

## Next steps

Brunswick Residents Network will organise a public forum soon – details TBC.