



City of
DAREBIN

PRESTON RECONNECTED

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Darebin Council's design, movement and
delivery objectives for the Preston-Bell
Level Crossing Removal Project

JUNE 2021

Message from the Mayor



In 2019, after many years of advocacy by Darebin City Council, the State Government announced that four level crossings in Preston at Bell Street, Cramer Street, Oakover Road and Murray Road will all be removed by 2022.

Council's successful advocacy also secured an elevated rail solution, which will open a significant amount of new space for residents, and presents the chance to develop new precincts and community infrastructure, including green open space.

The Preston-Bell elevated rail is a once in a generation project and has the potential to significantly transform the city for the better, where people can get around more easily on foot or on bike to enjoy more open space. Getting the corridor layout and design detail right is fundamental in securing this positive and lasting legacy for current and future communities.

Whilst this project is being delivered by the State Government through the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP), Council still has an important role to play as the voice for our community before, during and after construction, and to advocate strongly for the best outcomes. To help achieve that, Council has developed Preston Reconnected.

Preston Reconnected outlines Council's ongoing advocacy for the projects in Preston, ensuring that Council, the community and the LXRP have a clear position on what Council is seeking to be delivered along the rail corridor. This includes clear communication and practical support to local businesses that are impacted by the prolonged period of disruption.

I encourage you to find out more about the Preston-Bell Level Crossings Removals by visiting levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/projects/bell-street-preston

Cr Lina Messina

Darebin City Council Mayor

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and pays respect to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Council affirms that Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

Council respects and recognises all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to selfdetermination.

What is Preston Reconnected?

Preston Reconnected has been prepared to guide Council's next phase of advocacy for the Preston-Bell Level Crossings Removal project.

It is underpinned by the community's vision for this project and supported by existing Council strategies, such as Breathing Space, the Junction Urban Master Plan and Streets for People, as well as Council's vision for a greener, bolder, and more connected city.

Preston Reconnected outlines Council's desired outcomes by focusing on three key areas:

- Design – ensuring that the new architecture, open spaces, street furniture, integrated artworks and pathways enhance the character and function of Preston and celebrate its local culture and history
- Movement – to make journeys between points safe, accessible, efficient and enjoyable
- Delivery – to ensure that the inevitable disruption is as minimal as possible and local businesses are as resilient as possible throughout the construction.



A birds eye view of Preston in 1948



A more connected city

- The removal of four level crossings at Oakover Road, Bell Street, Cramer Street and Murray Road
- A new continuous, meandering, north-south Shared User Path, at least 3m wide, underneath the rail bridge from Oakover Road to north of Murray Road.
- Separate bike and pedestrian pathways around Preston Station to minimise conflict.
- High quality east-west connections that:
 - Prioritise people, then bikes at Warrs Street, Esther Street, Adeline Street, Gertrude Street, Garnet Street, Emery Street, Herbert Street, Edith Street and Clinch Avenue.
 - Prioritise bikes, then people at Showers Street and Bruce Street.
- A raised crossing at Oakover Road and Cramer Street that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists, with signalised crossings at Bell and Murray Road.
- Safe pedestrian crossings and access at each level crossing allowing for improved movement.
- No infrastructure that prioritises cars, such as roundabouts and signalised crossings, along Cramer Street as a designated street for people.
- Designed to allow future east-west connections from Adeline Street to St John Greek Orthodox college, Darebin Arts Centre and Ray Bramham Gardens at Bell Station and at Preston Station in line with the future 421 High Street connection.

What we want it to look like



Pavement treatment to prioritise pedestrians and increase safety around the station precinct.

Source: www.pinterest.com.au/pin/13510867617591967/



Safe, accessible pedestrian crossings on local streets.

Source: Darebin City Council



Meandering shared user path to support local trips underneath the new elevated rail corridor.

Source: Level Crossings Removals Project website



High quality raised crossings, designed to accommodate people and bikes.

Source: VicRoads



Dedicated bike lanes will be rolled out on Cramer Street in with Streets for People.

Source: City of Melbourne



Separated cycling pathways are encouraged around Preston Station to help minimise conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and enhance the amenity of new public open space.

Source: bicycledutch.wordpress.com/2015/11/



New useable, beautiful, green open spaces

- Four hectares of new open space (equivalent to two MCG football ovals) and six new high-quality, green, usable parks, designed in collaboration with the community, including:
 - A village green adjacent to the residential areas south of Bell Station, of at least 3000m², containing open lawn areas for informal recreation or community picnics, multi-age play spaces and areas of native planting..
 - A civic park in front of the Preston Station, which prioritises pedestrians containing spaces for meeting, rest, reflection and celebration amongst the trees.
 - A linear park between Bell and Bruce Streets, containing a mix of passive and active park activities, such as playspace, outdoor gyms and/or dog-parks, and seating nodes.
 - A pocket park at the north west corner of the Preston City Oval, containing an active recreation play areas (urban jungle).
 - A pocket park north of Murray Road, adjacent to the Northern Pipe Trail shared user path with seating areas and multi-age play spaces.
 - A pocket park at Railway Place East near Oakover Road with an outdoor gym, seating areas and natural shade.
- New public spaces are seamlessly integrated with existing open spaces such as Preston City Oval (including relocating the cricket nets) and Cramer Street Pocket Park.

A rewilded corridor rich with local plants, trees and local fauna

- All significant mature trees are accommodated into the design, with five new trees for any tree removed.
- Increased tree canopy coverage to 25% on public land in line with Darebin's Urban Forest Strategy.
- New trees are healthy, with locations that maximise sunlight and are suitable for deep ground planting.
- New vegetation is made up of at least 95% indigenous and native plants which respond to specific climatic and environmental conditions of the precinct including soil types, wind, temperature, rain, and solar access noting the impact of the rail infrastructure.
- There are multiple nature-based play spaces for kids to enjoy and connect with nature.
- Along the rail, interpretative signage promotes learning and appreciation for local biodiversity and nature.
- Indigenous 'woody meadow' feature plants of local provenance to Darebin, in collaboration with local universities.

What we want it to look like



Source: ASPECT Studios



Source: www.flickr.com/photos/johnloo/14928176288



Source: ASPECT Studios



Open spaces for play, rest, reflection, exercise and community gatherings are delivered along the Bell-Preston elevated corridor.

Source: ASPECT Studios



Source: ASPECT Studios



Source: Gehl Architects



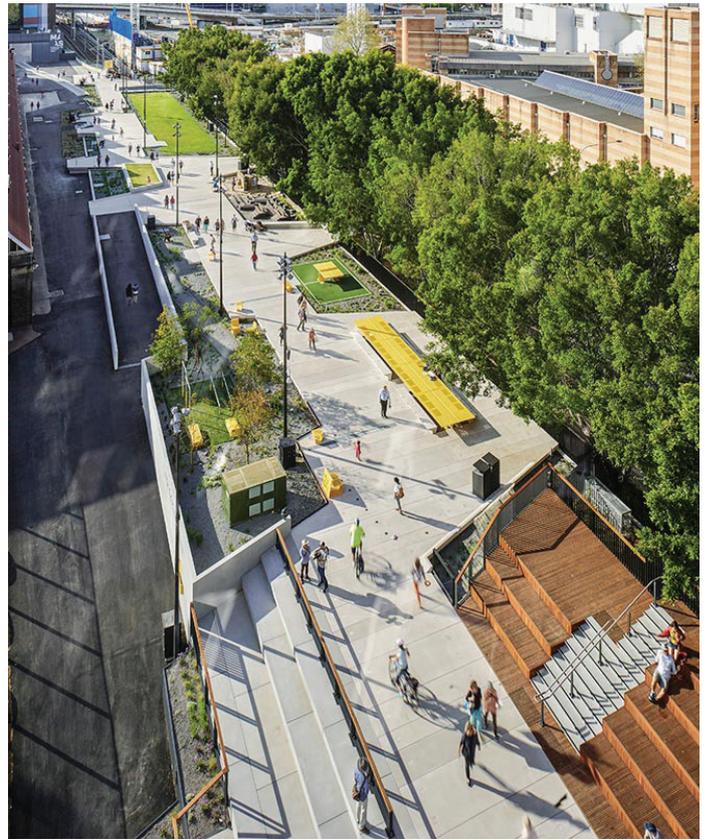
Source: JPE Design Studio



Source: <https://www.croquet-nsw.org/club/news24.html>



Source: <https://localgymsandfitness.com/AU/Richmond/8778325375/Burnley-Bouldering-Wall>



Source: ASPECT Studios



Source: <https://pinterest.com.au/pin/434738170278290788/>



Source: buggybuddys.com.au/things-to-do/playgrounds-and-parks-in-perth/whiteman-park-dog-park/



Enhanced local neighbourhoods

- Movement, connection and local character in existing streets and paths are improved by the level crossing removals and design.
- Local streets are not negatively impacted by new traffic movements, including Adeline, Esther, Gertrude and Garnet Streets near Bell station.
- Bell Station's Metro Trains Melbourne depot is relocated away from residential neighbourhoods of Darebin to create new open space.
- Disruptive infrastructure like substations are relocated if possible, or visually mitigated.
- New feature lighting around each station is designed to avoid spilling into nearby residential properties.
- Rail noise is kept to a minimum through noise attenuation bridge design.
- Visual clutter is reduced through undergrounding powerlines at Oakover, Bell, Cramer and Murray.
- Any future use and development of adjoining parcels of State Government owned land is tested with the community and includes defined community benefits.
- Rear access to properties is retained and enhanced through the level crossing removal works and boundary fences that interface the new area are upgraded.

What we want it to look like



Active, green streets to connect in with Preston's neighbourhood character



Pocket parks provide great places to rest but also improve the surrounding neighbourhood

Source: Hansen partnership



Healthy green streets with large canopy trees are integral to the community.



The station interface is improved with green spaces connecting into the neighbourhood.

Source: Darebin City Council



Pocket parks provide informal opportunities for recreation and the community improve the health and wellbeing of

Source: Aspect studios



Playspaces to encourage play and activity for the young and old.

Source: www.crs.net.au/projects/cherrybrook-public-school



Safe and welcoming for all

- Stations and the corridor are safe both day and night, designed with women, children and the gender diverse in mind.
- Design of stations and paths provides equitable, Age Friendly, and dignified access to all parts of community, especially walkers and 'wheelers' (walking frames, wheelchairs, motor scooters).
- Design discourages graffiti and anti-social behaviour by using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- The entire 2km shared path is well-lit with areas for people to use.
- The corridor has frequent exit points, framed by low level landscaping and narrow tree trunks for safer, clear lines of sight.



Lighting design at the University of Sydney

Source: TCL



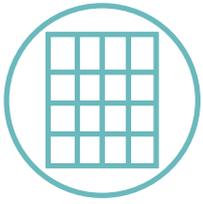
Windsor Plaza during the day

Source: ASPECT Studios



Windsor Plaza at night

Source: ASPECT Studios



The highest quality architecture and built environment

- The new Bell & Preston station buildings are modern and contemporary, exemplifying design excellence and respond to local context in terms of its built form, aesthetics, culture, heritage, and design language.
- High quality and durable materials are used for station buildings, ensuring the building ages well.
- Station entries address key public spaces with safe, comfortable, well-lit and sheltered station platforms.
- Activation of the station building on ground level next to key pedestrian areas and public spaces.
- The utility, infrastructure and back of house components of the station functions are integrated into station design and don't clutter the public realm.
- The premier Preston Station includes escalators in its design to ensure this busy station continues to function well in a growing precinct.
- The rail bridge is at least 7m high, allowing natural light and minimising shadows and wind tunnels along the new public open space corridor.



Parkville Station Concept

Source: Rail Projects Victoria



Active entrance to Rosanna Station

Source: commercial.prebuilt.com.au



Active entrance to Rosanna

Source: Level Crossing Removal Project



Improved public transport connections

- Bus stop waiting, transfer and shelter facilities in line with Preston's importance as an Interchange under the Department of Transport's Movement & Place Framework. Access to bus stops on Murray Road are integrated with the new entry to Preston Station.
- Real time Passenger Information Displays within Preston and Bell Stations and at bus stops - showing both bus and train live tracking.

Bell Station

- The relocation of the existing bus stop on Bell Street to outside Bell Station, fully accessible when the new station opens.

Preston Station

- Direct and convenient access between station exits and bus stops on both sides of Murray Road.
- Bus priority on approach and departure of Murray Road/St Georges Road/Spring Street intersection



New custom designed bus stops are integrated into the new entries of Bell and Preston Stations with real time passenger information displays.

Source: Gehl Architects



Custom bus shelters should be easily accessible from the new entry to Preston and Bell Stations

Source: Outdoor design source

Integrated facilities for cyclists

- Cycling facilities are well lit, secure and easily accessible.
- 180 free bike parking spaces at Bell Station will have and a new enclosed Parkiteer providing 26 additional spaces.
- 280 free bike parking spaces at Preston Station a new enclosed Parkiteer providing 52 additional spaces.

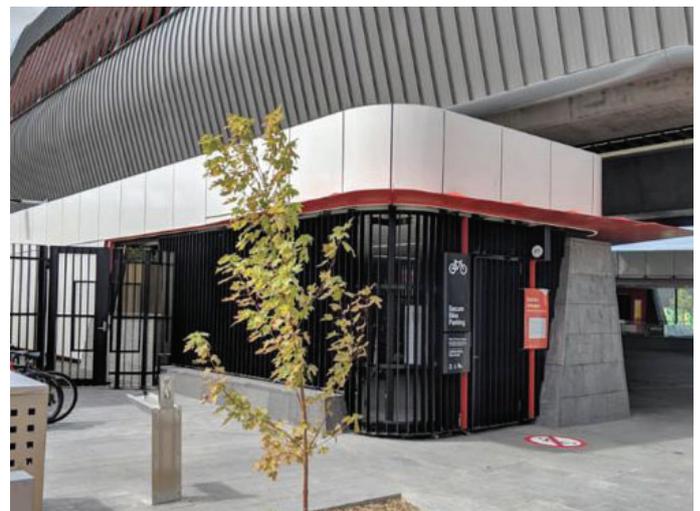
Safe and accessible commuter car parking

- Commuter car parking is located on the western side of the railway line at Preston and Bell Stations, and is easily accessible from main roads such as Bell Street and Murray Road, avoiding the use of the local road network. Alternatively, the Bell Station commuter car park access is from Bell Street via Blanch Street (preferably), or Garnet Street, to ensure local streets to the east are pedestrian friendly.
- The number of commuter carparking spaces is the same as currently at each station.
- Accessible car parks, 'kiss & ride' drop offs and taxi ranks are conveniently accessible from station buildings and designed to minimise pedestrian conflict.



End of destination cycle facilities to be located on the edges of new public spaces

Source: Gehl Architects



Parkiteers integrated into the new station at Murrumbena

Source: Level Crossing Reomvals Project



Celebrate local heritage, art and identity

- The corridor's design celebrates the local qualities of the four distinctive precincts along the corridor:
 - Oakover Green – This burgeoning precinct undergoing significant transformation, is rich in local heritage and stories. Once Preston's employment heart, it was home to tanneries and the manufacturing industry, employed many tram and railway workers and is rich in indigenous history with the Aboriginal Advancement league.
 - Bell Arts - With the iconic Bell Street and new premium station at its centre, the Bell Arts precinct is a vibrant welcome mat to Darebin Arts Centre (DAC) and its burgeoning urban creative communities including Gertrude Contemporary International Gallery nearby.
 - Preston Oval - With the iconic Preston City Oval at its centre, this precinct is an urban recreation hub that interfaces with the Preston Market and a new neighbourhood surrounding it, the new premium station, the Bruce Street urban neighbourhood and key links to Melbourne Polytechnic, St Georges Road and High Street
 - Preston Central – With the celebrated Preston Market and High Street at its heart, the precincts rich multicultural heritage and the stories of its diverse community embedded
- The corridors' unique indigenous, cultural and multicultural heritage is reflected through the architecture and design of open space and infrastructure.
- Bell Station Building Heritage and history is celebrated by incorporation into the design of the Precinct.
- The social, cultural and architectural heritage of Preston Market is responded to in designs for Preston Station.
- A Creative Arts Curator is employed to integrate art into built form elements throughout the corridor - architecture, landscape, lighting, signage, fences, rail pylons at rail bridges over Bell, Cramer, Murray and Oakover, reflecting local stories and working with indigenous, multicultural and local artists.
- The Aboriginal community is engaged with early, continually and meaningfully throughout the design process of new open spaces to final construction.
- The multiculturalism and history of the area is reflected in less formalised recreational infrastructure, such as spaces for Trugo, bocce or other socially connecting activities.



Four distinctive precincts along the Bell-Preston corridor will help inform a place-based integrated urban design, architectural and public art design response to the project.

What we want it to look like



Celebrating Darebins indigenous history

Source: gggiraffe.blogspot.com/2016/07/aboriginal-street-art-in-melbourne-2



Prestons rich multicultural history is reflected through public art along the corridor.

Source: Prestonmarket



Source: Darebin City Council



Integrating rail heritage into the urban and architecture design response.

Source: Level Crossing Removal Project



Temporary public art events underneath the rail undercroft

Source: <https://twitter.com/BrentToderian> - Artwork: UninterruptedCA



References to cultural diversity through art & architecture

Source: Hassell



Public art integrated the public environment - Swing installation at a bus stop and Ash Keating mural

Source + artist: Daily Tous Les Jours



Source + artist: Ash Keating



Public art integrated into the Station architecture

Source + artist: Josh Raymond and Chris Fox (<https://chrisfox.com.au/interloop>)



Source + artist: Josh Raymond and Chris Fox (<https://chrisfox.com.au/interloop>)



Designed-in easy and sustainable maintenance

- The corridor is made up of well designed, easy to maintain spaces that will look as good in 20 years as they do on day one.
- Public spaces feature materials which are high quality, durable, low maintenance, and minimise opportunities for unwelcome graffiti.
- Locals and visitors can easily find their way around with new information and wayfinding signs designed in line with the Darebin Signage Strategy.
- The materials of buildings and infrastructure are sustainable, using concrete from sustainable sources and other recycled materials, and concrete aggregate for the Shared User Paths.
- The corridor is greened with indigenous, native and hardy plants for sustainability and easy maintenance.
- Playspaces, active recreation spaces, dog parks, community spaces are designed using robust, sustainable materials and landscaping.
- The corridor is water sensitive with Water Sensitive Urban Design incorporated into open spaces to maximise useability for all users
- The initial maintenance period provides a high quality and frequency of regular maintenance to ensure successful establishment of plants/landscaping during the defects period.
- Appropriate reuse of materials in new open spaces. This can include train station elements, track, heritage elements and landscaping (habitat tree logs).

What we want it to look like



Retaining significant trees in new open spaces along the corridor.

Source: trees.stanford.edu/ENCYC/EUCnotes



Indigenous focused plant palette

Source: www.austrahort.com.au



Indigenous plants and natural materials for seating

Source: pinterest.com.au/pin/434738170278290788/



Combination of asphalt and concrete pathways.

Source: Darebin City Council



Re-use of tree logs and rocks for nature base play.

Source: nottinghampost.com/news/nottingham-news/robin-hood-themed-natural-play





Proactive support for our local communities and businesses to minimise the disruption they will face during construction

- Local businesses, Preston Market management and traders, the Preston Central Business Association and community are supported throughout construction disruptions and the additional works post construction.
- Clear communication and consultation with due notice prior to impacts such as road closures, power outages or occupations, with individual Preston Market businesses and the Preston Market management and traders as well as High Street businesses, and their concerns actively incorporated into delivery activities. This includes information sessions as a complement to written documentation.
- Communication strategies and provision consistently addresses the digital, written and verbal information needs of CALD and non-CALD businesses. This includes information in many languages and provided in person as much as possible with translators.
- A program of temporary activation events to support local businesses thrive during the works, including 'shop local' campaigns and activities that bring/retain customers and visitors. Programming takes a coordinated approach with Council and the Business Association to ensure a significant positive impact.
- Minimised disruption to local communities by ensuring haulage and delivery of goods for the project occurs only on major roads and during off-peak times.
- Maintaining the current level of pedestrian and cycle access throughout disruption.
- Public parking is kept free for the community, visitors, shoppers and local workers.
- Construction staff and contractors and their work vehicles are provided with alternative parking with no reduction in car spaces available to the public.
- Existing public car parks such as that at Preston Market, continue to be publicly available throughout the construction period.
- Construction timing minimises disruption on busy market days (particularly Fridays and Saturdays).
- Connection is maintained for people accessing Preston Station and the Market while the station is in operation.
- LXR and workers creatively support a diverse range of local business types and sectors, including through encouraging worker patronage across different goods and services and sourcing goods and services for prizes.

What we want to achieve



Marketing events to help the Preston Central thrive, not just survive throughout the construction period.

Source: Darebin City Council

Source: Darebin City Council



Engage early with Preston Market and High Street businesses

Source: Darebin City Council



Targeted employment & training opportunities to local people who need it the most

- Prioritise employment and training opportunities to Darebin residents impacted by Covid-19 through the LXRП across profession types.
- Target employment and supply chain opportunities towards economically disadvantaged groups, specifically the CALD community, women, young people and Darebin residents impacted by COVID19. This should be reflected in LXRП contractual arrangements.
- People from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are employed to create a more diverse workforce target of 3% and add value to the project.
- Darebin based social enterprises are engaged and provide employment opportunities for the level crossing removal project.
- Local artists are engaged to design and create work decorating construction hoarding panels.
- Partner with local tertiary education institutions to support local employment and training opportunities.

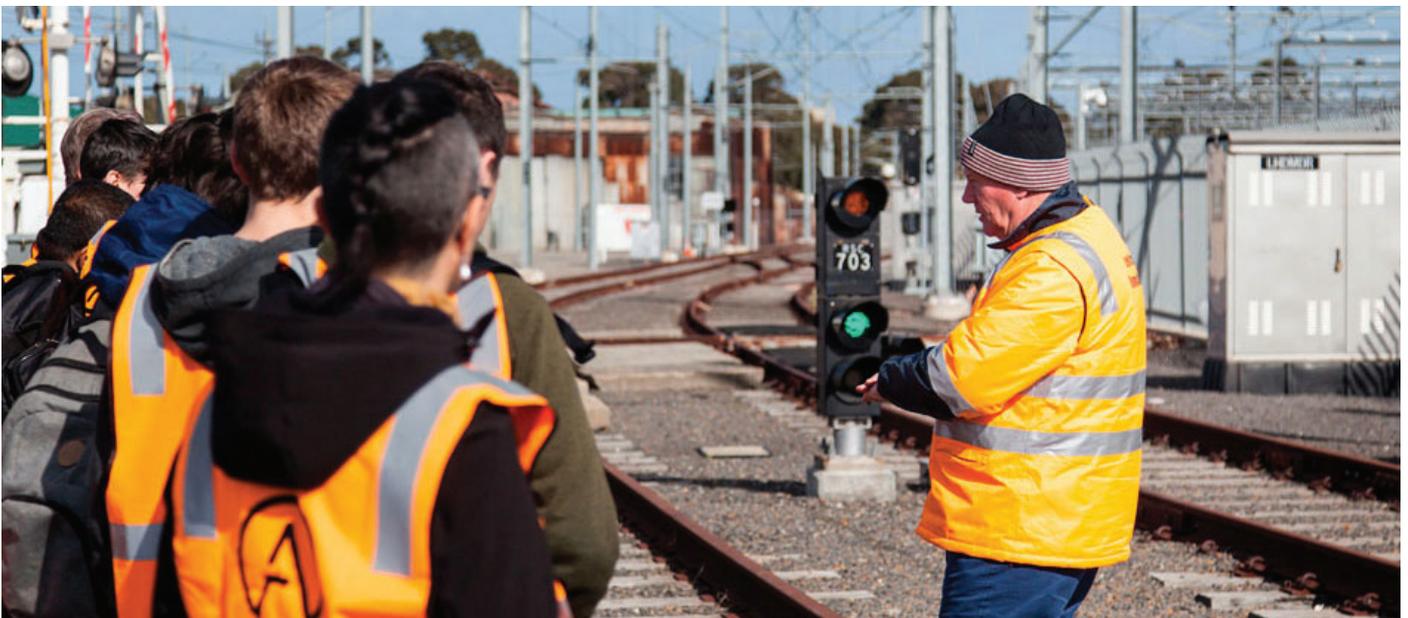
What we want to achieve



Source: www.ausesolutions.com.au/spring-weed-control



Source: VicTrack



Prioritise employment and training opportunities to people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, CALD community, women, young people and Darebin residents impacted by COVID19.

Source: Level Crossing Removal Project



Artists employed to beautify construction hoardings for the Melbourne Metro Tunnel project.

Source: Darebin City Council



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