



CAULFIELD TO DANDENONG

LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT

TREES AND VEGETATION

Managing tree and vegetation removal

The Level Crossing Removal Project: Caulfield to Dandenong involves the removal of nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong. It includes five rebuilt stations at Carnegie, Murrumbeena, Hughesdale, Clayton and Noble Park, as well as power and signalling upgrades.

All level crossing removal options – rail over, rail under, road over, road under – can have an impact on trees and vegetation adjacent to rail lines.

An advantage of the current design is that it allows for the retention of more mature trees and the opportunity to plant new larger species of trees adjacent to the rail line, as well as in the new areas of open space that are created.

An open cut trench would require the removal of the majority of trees within the rail corridor to allow for construction. Larger trees could not be planted adjacent to a cutting due to space and safety issues associated with larger trees falling across the lowered rail tracks. Trees, vegetation and green space are important to local communities and support biodiversity along the Caulfield to Dandenong rail corridor. Minimising the impact of tree and vegetation removal has been considered as part of both project design and construction.

Assessing trees and vegetation

Approximately 6,000 trees and vegetation within, and adjacent to, the rail corridor are assessed to determine:

- Structural strength, including the size and location of tree roots
- Health and life expectancy
- Amenity and environmental value
- Location of services in proximity to trees.

COMMITMENT TO VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The project team's construction, environment and sustainability, and community and stakeholder experts, working with project stakeholders, develop the project's design and how it can be built to reduce the need for tree and vegetation removal.

Parts of the rail corridor are very narrow and project construction will require unavoidable tree removal. Every effort will be made to protect existing vegetation during early works and throughout project construction.

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Protecting existing vegetation

Where trees are to be retained, Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) will be established. TPZs protect the above and below ground parts of a tree during construction phase activities. No Go Zones (NGZs) are also used in various locations. These protect vegetation, habitat zones, heritage sites and waterways from the impacts of construction.

Clearing trees and vegetation

Once confirmed for removal, trees are identified and marked on construction plans. Consultation with project construction, environment and sustainability, and community and stakeholder teams, local councils and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) occurs to ensure impacts are fully considered and that all relevant approvals are in place.

Trees are inspected for the possible presence of native animals, with a wildlife carer on hand to safely remove and relocate any animals found. Immediately prior to removal, a pre-clearing inspection is undertaken and NGZs and TPZs established.

Trees are then cleared using chainsaws and other standard equipment. Trees are mulched on site to allow for the easy and safe removal of mulch from within the rail corridor.

Replanting trees

The elevated rail design opens up the existing rail corridor, providing additional community open space underneath. The design also provides the opportunity to plant new trees underneath and adjacent to the rail lines that will not impact on the safe operation and maintenance of them.

Current plans allow for the planting of more than 4,000 new trees and vegetation, of varying heights and species. New plantings will be mostly native with some exotic species used in appropriate locations. These trees and vegetation will provide screening benefits and help improve the visual amenity of the area and its surrounds.

The project has also introduced a Fencing and Landscaping Package for residents along the rail corridor. Landscaping options including local shrubs and trees, some of which will grow to a full height of approximately 12 metres, will be made available to eligible properties. For more information on eligibility visit www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au or email caulfieldtodandenong@levelcrossings.com.au.

Contact us

Should you have any questions or concerns about the project or our work, or would like more information on how we are managing tree and vegetation removal, please contact us via:

✉ caulfieldtodandenong@levelcrossings.com.au

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COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE EXPERT PANEL

The Victorian Government has appointed a Community Open Space Expert Panel (COSEP) to oversee plans for the community open space created by the project.

Chaired by Chief Executive of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Professor Tim Entwisle, the panel will include members of local communities and councils, and representatives from expert organisations including Bicycle Victoria and the Office of the Victorian Government Architect.

The panel will consider how community feedback is addressed in the final design of the community open space. This will include advice on future tree and vegetation plantings.

