



REGIONAL
RAIL REVIVAL
BALLARAT



WHAT WE HEARD

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED
NEW TRAIN STATION FOR TOOLERN

February 2018

Project partners:



A NEW STATION FOR TOOLERN

The Australian and Victorian governments are upgrading the Ballarat line to deliver more trains and improve reliability for Melbourne's outer western suburbs, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Ballarat. The Ballarat Line Upgrade is part of the state-wide Regional Rail Revival program that will deliver major upgrades to every regional passenger line in Victoria.

The Ballarat Line Upgrade will enable much needed extra services in the morning and afternoon peak, plus a train every 40 minutes off-peak for these growing communities.

In November 2017, the Victorian Government announced funding for a new train station at Toolern to help cater for the growing population of Melbourne's outer west and take pressure off Melton station.

Toolern station – funded by the Victorian Government's Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution – is an important project for Melbourne's growing outer west. The new station will provide the public transport infrastructure needed to support Toolern's growth to an estimated population of 55,000 over the coming decades.

The new station will be built in the future town centre of Toolern near the intersection of Ferris Road in Cobblebank and the Ballarat-Melbourne rail line.

It will include:

- Two platforms connected by a pedestrian overpass with lifts, stairs and ramps
- Sealed car parking
- Drop-off zones, taxi spaces and secure bicycle facilities
- A bus interchange and shelters
- Security (CCTV) and lighting
- Station facilities.

Toolern station will be delivered by the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA) as part of the Ballarat Line Upgrade.

Subject to planning approval, the station will be completed by late 2019.

PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the feedback received as part of our community consultation to support the planning and design of Toolern station.

PLANNING AND APPROVALS

To secure approval to build Toolern station, we are requesting the Minister for Planning prepare, adopt and approve an amendment to the Melton Planning Scheme.

To support the planning scheme amendment application, potential environmental effects of constructing the proposed station have been considered through a range of targeted investigations including ecology, Aboriginal cultural heritage, built heritage, and planning and land use.

To view the Toolern Station Planning Scheme Amendment, visit ballaratlineupgrade.vic.gov.au/planning.

STATION CONCEPT DESIGN

We asked the community for their feedback on concept station designs including the proposed station facilities and station layout.

This feedback will be provided to the Ballarat Line Upgrade construction delivery partner – a consortium comprising Lendlease Engineering, Coleman Rail and SMEC – and will be considered during the design development phase of the Toolern station project. More detailed station designs will be shown to the community in mid to late 2018.



ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES

While Toolern currently has a population of around 1,000, the area is set to grow rapidly and is expected to reach 55,000 in coming decades.

During November 2017, we asked the community and a range of other stakeholders to give us feedback on our early plans to guide our planning and design work on the proposed new train station.

HOW WE ENGAGED

INFORMATION	ONLINE	INTERACTIONS
<p>We distributed a letter and a fact sheet to around 1,700 properties close to the proposed site of the station.</p> <p>A letter and fact sheet was distributed to around 1,700 properties close to the proposed site of the station. The letter provided information about the proposed location of the new station and promoted the online survey and upcoming events.</p> <p>An e-newsletter was also distributed to 314 subscribers.</p>	<p>An online survey was launched on the Ballarat Line Upgrade website, which asked questions about aspects of planning, the environment and concept designs of the proposed station.</p> <p>The Toolern page on the Ballarat Line Upgrade website attracted 3,319 visits.</p> <p>Facebook posts reached 9,369 people and prompted 2,500 video views.</p> <p>In total, 77 detailed surveys were submitted during the consultation period.</p>	<p>We held a pop-up session at Melton station, where the project team distributed information and interacted with more than 450 morning commuters.</p> <p>We hosted a stall at Melton's Djerriwarrh Festival and spoke to around 500 community members.</p> <p>We also attended the Toolern Summit, hosted by the City of Melton, to present our concept plans for Toolern station. We spoke to more than 100 people at the event, who provided valuable feedback about aspects of planning, environment and design.</p> <p>Early engagement was initiated with three directly affected landowners about the proposal to build Toolern station including laydown areas and site access.</p>

Feedback about the proposed Toolern station has been gathered through ongoing consultation with other key stakeholders including councils and government agencies via meetings, briefings and presentations.

Key stakeholders we continue to engage with include:

- City of Melton
- Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning
- Transport for Victoria
- VicTrack
- Aboriginal Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- V/Line
- Victorian Planning Authority.

TOOLERN SUMMIT



During the Toolern Summit, we presented concept plans for Toolern station to stakeholders, landowners and community members in three separate sessions.

In the first session, government and agency stakeholders including **Melbourne Water, VicRoads, Office for Suburban Development, Victorian Emergency Services, Department of Justice, Aboriginal Victoria** and **Western Water** attended.

During session two, interested landowners from the area and various housing estates asked questions and provided feedback.

In the last session, we spoke to around 100 community members, including recent home buyers from surrounding estates, namely Atherstone. Residents were excited to hear the station would be operational by late 2019.

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

450+

interactions at a pop-up at Melton station

600+

conversations at events including the Djerriwarrh Festival and Toolern Summit

1,700+

letters and fact sheets mailed to landowners and residents

3,319

visits to the Ballarat Line Upgrade website during the consultation period

9,369

people reached via Facebook posts

2,500

views of online videos

314

e-newsletters distributed to subscribers

77

detailed survey responses received

OUR ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

We developed a detailed engagement framework that outlines activities over the life of the Regional Rail Revival project. This framework captures our commitment to meaningful consultation with stakeholders and communities during the planning and delivery of the project.

The following core principles guide engagement on all projects, including the Ballarat Line Upgrade:

- **Direct:** direct engagement is the preferred means of communicating major issues to affected stakeholders and communities.
- **Open:** communication will be open, transparent, inclusive, accessible, accurate and consistent in its content, and will be planned, coordinated and timely in its delivery to all audiences.

- **Proactive:** proactive communications and early engagement are integral parts of all project and operational planning processes to ensure a “no surprises” approach.
- **Tailored:** messages and delivery channels must be tailored to the communication and information needs of their intended audiences.

This framework and its core principles have been applied to consultation on the proposed new station at Toolern.

WHAT WE HEARD

We received 77 detailed responses about planning, environment, and concept station design through our online survey, which was open from 13 November to 1 December 2017.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL FEEDBACK

Figure 1 shows the planning and environmental aspects that people ranked as most important to them. A summary of specific issues raised on each of these aspects, and the project’s response to each, is outlined below.

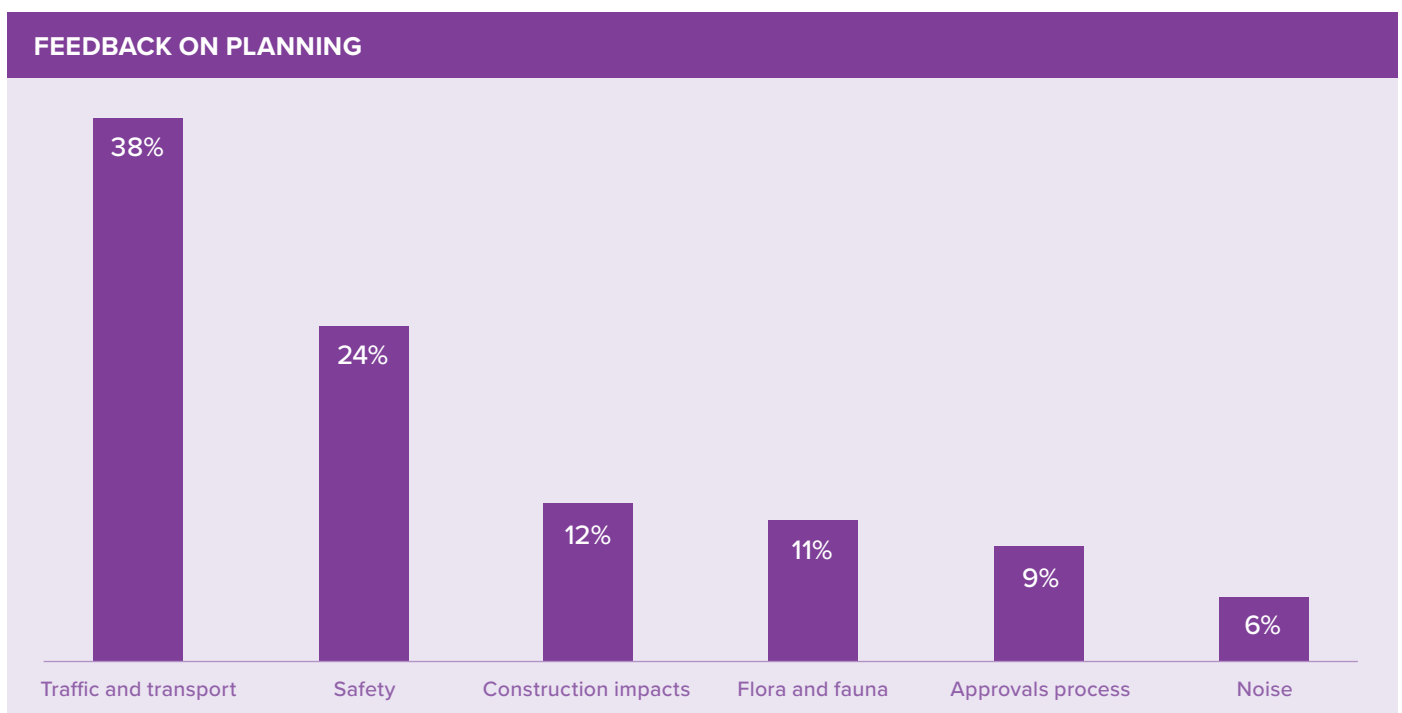


Figure 1

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

WHAT TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT ASPECTS SHOULD WE CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AND DELIVERING THE PROJECT?

38% provided feedback on traffic and transport

Issues raised

We heard that people are concerned about disruption to rail services and would like to see replacement options, including express buses.

Other feedback showed that respondents would like to see trains running much as possible during construction and for the project to minimise the number of occupations.

Concerns were also raised about disruption to local roads, especially Ferris Road, which is a key connection to the Atherstone Estate.

Effective traffic management and minimising local traffic impacts during peak periods and school times are also important to people.

Project response

We will work closely with our project delivery partner to minimise adverse construction impacts on the surrounding residents and the broader community.

Road traffic during construction, including traffic generated by construction vehicles, is expected to be typical of construction on a linear corridor and will occur over a period of about 12 months.

As with other rail line closures, appropriate alternative arrangements will be provided to minimise impacts on commuters. Temporary road diversions or closures and moving heavy equipment to and from the site will occur and will be managed under a Traffic Management Plan.

SAFETY

WHAT SAFETY ISSUES SHOULD WE CONSIDER?

24% provided feedback on safety

Issues raised

Feedback emphasised the need for carefully planned construction near high-speed trains.

People want to know more about how we will manage road traffic around construction areas and some suggested reducing speed limits where appropriate.

We heard that lighting for station areas including platforms, walkways and car parks, and extensive CCTV coverage is important for station design.

We also received some suggestions for safety fencing around the station area.

Project response

Safety for workers and the community is the highest priority for us.

During construction, we will install safety fencing to provide visual and physical barriers around construction areas and worksites.

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the Ballarat Line Upgrade will guide the design of Toolern station and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. These principles include visibility, all ability access, and safe access points at transport interchanges. The UDF will foster the delivery of user-friendly, safe and accessible connections and the station facilities.

The new station and platforms will be well lit with Passenger Information Displays (PIDs) and CCTV.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

WHAT CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS SHOULD WE CONSIDER?

12% provided feedback on construction impacts

Issues raised

Responses emphasised the importance of managing any potential impacts on noise, air quality, and traffic flow during construction.

Feedback also highlighted the need for advanced notice of works and direct communication with residents, especially with regard to potential disruptions to rail services.

Different ways in which construction impacts could be minimised were put forward, with multiple respondents suggesting construction works take place outside of peak hours.

Project response

MMRA will be responsible for providing clear communication for the construction timeframes and giving notice to potentially affected property owners about the nature and duration of works, as well as any replacement services for rail users.

Potential noise impacts and air quality (including increased dust) during the construction will be managed in accordance with the Ballarat Line Upgrade project's Environmental Management Framework (EMF). This includes Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) that have been approved by the Minister for Planning.

The EMF also requires the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to manage environmental impacts during construction.

FLORA AND FAUNA

WHAT FLORA AND FAUNA CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PLANNING AND DELIVERING THE PROJECT?

11% provided feedback on flora and fauna impacts

Issues raised

We heard that the community are eager to see best practice strategies to minimise impacts on native flora and fauna to help maintain the area's natural character.

This would involve preserving native flora where possible and planting additional native vegetation once construction is complete.

One respondent suggested extra special care be taken to protect echidnas in the area, as well as the native vegetation found in the Atherstone Estate.

Project response

A targeted ecology assessment did not identify any threatened flora or fauna species nor threatened ecological communities in the area where Toolern station is proposed to be built.

To minimise and mitigate adverse effects the construction will be managed in accordance with the Ballarat Line Upgrade project's EMF. This includes EPRs that have been approved by the minister for Planning.

Our project delivery partner will avoid adverse effects on native flora and fauna as far as practicable. Where adverse effects cannot be avoided, the project delivery partners must ensure appropriate measures are implemented, including the provision of offsets for the removal of native vegetation.

APPROVALS PROCESS

WHAT COMMENTS DO YOU HAVE ON THE APPROVAL PROCESS?

9%

provided feedback on the approvals process

Issues raised

Responses highlighted the importance of ensuring efficiency in the approval process to ensure the project timeline is maintained.

Feedback emphasised the need for proactive engagement throughout planning and delivery to allow the community to have their say during all stages of the project.

Project response

Community and stakeholder feedback has and will continue to play an important role in the project's planning and development.

Given the extensive consultation undertaken to date and the broad support from the community and affected stakeholders which has been demonstrated so far, MMRA is requesting the Minister for Planning prepare, adopt and approve a Ministerial planning scheme amendment for the Toolern station, including exempting the amendment from formal exhibition under section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Subject to planning approval, the station will be completed by late 2019.

NOISE

WHAT SHOULD WE CONSIDER ABOUT NOISE IMPACTS?

6%

provided feedback on noise

Issues raised

Questions were raised about the potential for increased operational noise from trains following the project's completion, particularly in relation to new residential developments near the railway line.

Specific concerns related to noise from late night and early morning services, with one respondent requesting noise barriers be considered.

Project response

Construction noise will be managed in accordance with the EPRs and with reference to relevant EPA guidelines on management of construction noise.

As part of the Ballarat Line Upgrade, MMRA has assessed the operational airborne noise of the railway reserve in accordance with the Victorian Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy April 2013 (PRINP) and associated guidelines.

Noise levels generated by the Ballarat Line Upgrade and Toolern station after construction are projected to comply with the PRINP following the application of suitable mitigation measures.

STATION DESIGN FEEDBACK

We also asked people to tell us what was important to them when considering the design of the new station at Toolern.

Figure 2 shows the design elements that the community told us were most important to them. A summary of feedback on each of these elements is outlined below.

This feedback will be used by our construction delivery partner – a consortium comprising Lendlease, Coleman Rail and SMEC – to inform their design work.

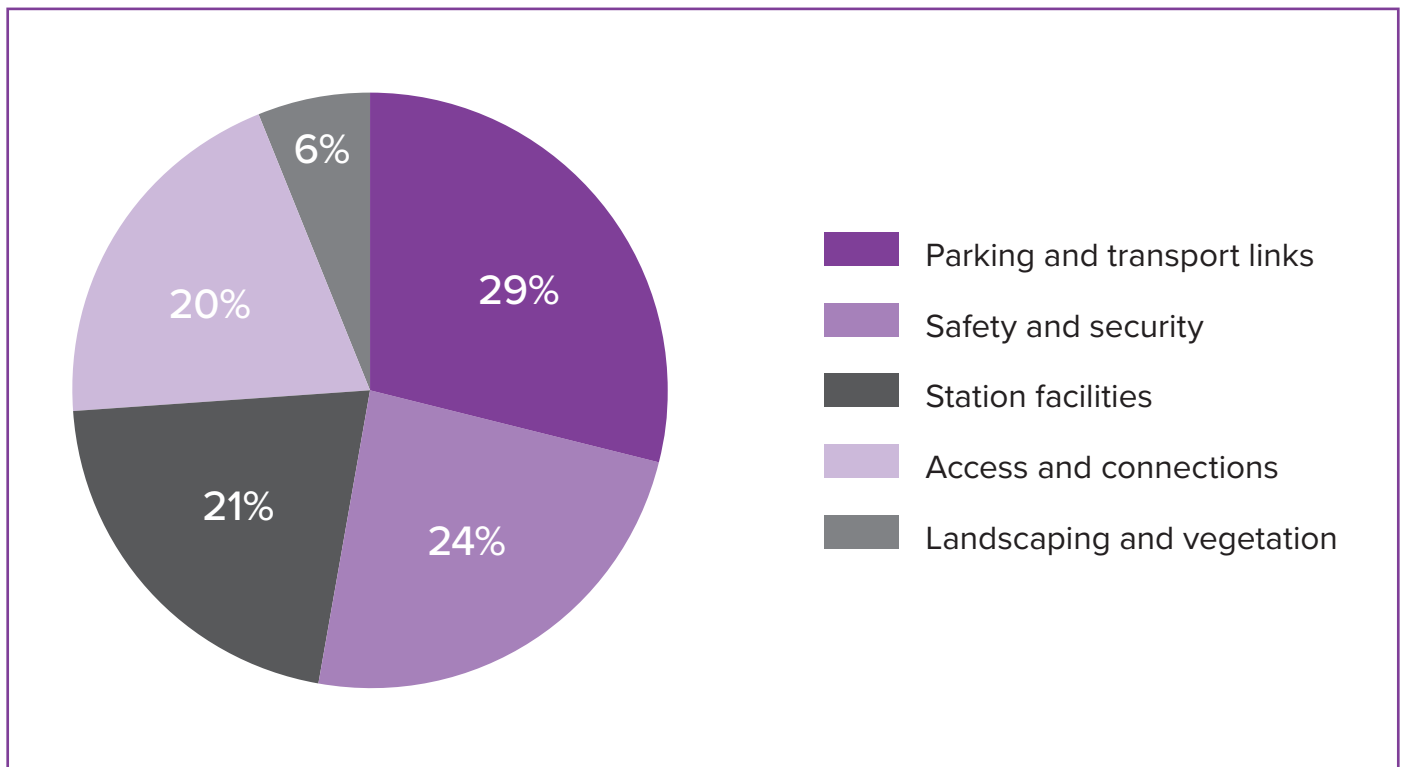


Figure 2

PARKING AND TRANSPORT LINKS	SAFETY AND SECURITY	STATION FACILITIES	ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS	LANDSCAPING AND VEGETATION
<p>Station car parking, bus connections and good pick-up and drop-off zones are key to creating easy access for growing residential areas nearby.</p> <p>We also heard that creating shared pathways for pedestrians and cyclists is important.</p>	<p>Feedback emphasised the importance of providing safety zones, thorough CCTV coverage, and clearly lit pedestrian platforms and waiting areas, for passengers.</p>	<p>We heard accessible myki machines and information displays, adequate shelter from the weather (including covered pedestrian links), waiting areas and toilet facilities are important elements of station design.</p>	<p>Easy access for wheelchairs, bicycles and ambulances (in emergency situations) is important.</p> <p>Feedback also emphasised a desire for high quality pedestrian and cycle paths connecting the new station to the surrounding area.</p>	<p>We heard people would like to see the station designed to accommodate lots of green space (to fit in with the future town centre design) including native trees for shade and plantings to complement the local creek.</p>

OTHER FEEDBACK

Although all feedback is valued, some of the comments we received were considered out of scope for the Toolern station project and the Ballarat Line Upgrade.

These included:

- A request for a direct road between Melton, Rockbank and Toolern
- Suggestions to electrify the line to Melton and upgrade Melton station before building Toolern station
- Requests for more frequent services and longer carriages during peak periods
- Requests for improvements to bus services, including additional new routes and increased frequency
- Requests for longer-term planning for the station area, including provision for expansion
- Frustration with frequent train cancellations
- Suggestions to grade separate the Ferris Road crossing and duplicate the road.

This feedback will be provided to the appropriate authorities for consideration in future integrated transport planning for the Toolern and Melton areas.

WHAT'S NEXT?





Feedback gathered during station consultation has been integrated with the planning and design process to help inform the development of the project.

Subject to planning approval, the station will be completed by late 2019.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed feedback on the proposed Toolern station and we look forward to providing updates on the project as it progresses.

CONTACT US

For more information about the Ballarat Line Upgrade:

	ballaratlineupgrade.vic.gov.au
	ballaratlineupgrade@ecodev.vic.gov.au
	1800 105 105 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
	facebook.com/ballaratlineupgrade



Interpreter Service
(03) 9280 0700

Arabic	العربية	Russian	Русский
Cantonese	廣東話	Serbian	Српски
Greek	Ελληνικά	Sinhalese	සිංහල
Italian	Italiano	Spanish	Español
Korean	한국어	Turkish	Türkçe
Macedonian	Македонски	Vietnamese	Tiếng Việt
Mandarin	普通话		

Project partners:

