



9 August 2018

To the Level Crossing Removal Authority

*Re: Moreland Rd and Bell St Level Crossing Removal Project*

The Upfield Urban Forest is a community based network of local groups and passionate individuals living, working and studying along the Upfield line from Jewell Station to Merlynston Station committed to transforming the Upfield railway corridor into a safe beautiful urban forest...a place where users can experience tranquility, shade, inspiration and connectedness. We have a current membership of 156 people signed up to our email list who and regularly volunteer their weekends to weed, plant, maintain, clean up and celebrate our slowly growing pockets of green open space along the Upfield line. We propagate and maintain most of our plants with some additional support from the Stationeers grants, Moreland City Council and the generous support of our network. We are also supported by local businesses, mechanics, architects, jewelers, booksellers, artists. Even Bunnings chips in! Weekend activities normally attract between 12 and 45 volunteers for two hours at a time. We have invested significant community energy and resources in to improving what was an uninviting and largely barren, hardscape.

You can find out more about us on our website: [www.upfieldurbanforest.org](http://www.upfieldurbanforest.org)



We are very impressed by the commitment from LXRA to improve community health and wellbeing through the Caulfield to Dandenong Level Crossing Removal Project. In particular we are excited by LXRA's commitment to realising the opportunity of elevating the railway line to create a new linear park to a once divided community. This investment in improving the communities access to open space through thoughtful and engaged planning and the design is very exciting. We hope that the benefits and lessons of the Open Space Expert Panels work along the Dandenong line can be transferred to the Upfield line.

In order to understand the position of our group and make a submission based on our group's views we asked our group to consider whether its supports a set of key principles behind the level crossing project.

We found unanimous support from our 156 members to the following principles which we strongly encourage the LXRA to consider:

- Maximize open space
- Maximise opportunities for greening
- Protect existing vegetation
- Improve space for the shared path
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Improve community connectivity and neighbourhood permeability (through the removal of the railway line as a barrier)

In order to achieve these principles we ask that you plan carefully around the following issues:

- Create new and improved open spaces that transform the Upfield Line in to a safe, welcoming, accessible and cool corridor of green parks;
- Protect existing vegetation where possible throughout the construction project;
- Acknowledge the significant community input in to greening and improving the amenity of the Upfield line by working with the community to develop a new green railway corridor complete with new parks, and civic spaces with plenty of space for vegetation;
- Include a community grants program as part of the landscape maintenance fund to engage local residents, workers and students to deliver innovative and creative greening solutions;
- Incorporate integrated water sensitive urban design elements from stormwater with greening to ensure healthy vegetation and optimized cooling outcomes with green walls, swales, raingardens, canopy trees, community orchards and habitat plantings;
- Improve pedestrian and cycling links and pathways along the new elevated line to encourage safe and sustainable modes of transport for commuters and the local community.

In order to achieve these improved community and greening outcomes, of the two options presented, the Upfield Urban Forest prefer the elevated option. At a minimum, we recommend extending the elevated section of railway all the way from Tinning Street Brunswick to beyond O'Hea Street Coburg so as to include the removal of the Munro Street and Reynard Street crossings.

More strategically, we recommend elevating the whole line from Park Street Parkville through to Gaffney Street Coburg to release significant community access to open space, creating a new linear park, and improving neighbourhood permeability while providing greater outcomes for commuters, pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you for providing the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the project. We would be very happy to meet with the LXRA to discuss any of our recommendations or to answer any questions.

Below is a snap shot of some of the responses to our survey of our members.

Gavin: *Your points align with my views, happy for you to send this.*

Eliza: *my husband and I - who back on to the train line - are very pro elevated rail for the reasons you've listed. I've also travelled up the Upfield line and seen what an open trench looks like in practice, no thank you! There's a campaign against elevated that's, predictably, happening at the moment around where we are so I suspect you'll hear from some haters. We're with you, and I would also love to see a vote in there in support of the council's plan to remove all the crossings on the Upfield corridor as part of this project - the potential then for green space and bike paths would be huge."*

Shuan: *If its to be elevated it should be done a long the whole line. How waiting times for walking & cycling can be reduced is another issue to be addressed as part of the removal too (being able to move freely without lights would be ideal)*

Madi: *I completely agree with your position. Thanks for taking the time to put in a submission!*

Deb: *Thanks for putting in a submission! All these principles sound excellent*

Drew: *I've been a little unsure where I sit on this. I understand that there's an anti "skyrail" group. I suspect they're protesting because there was such vocal opposition to elevated rail elsewhere so they assume it must be a dreadful idea! I think it could be good if planned well enough (and with adequate funding for development of good green/open spaces AND ongoing maintenance) but I also understand people's concerns.*

*The open trench seems like a pretty dreadful idea. If you're going to dig a trench then just dig it a little deeper and cover the whole damn thing! Imagine the potential for open space! They could sell some land too to get some money back.*

*So yes, I guess I'd support a submission based on those principles.*

Vig: *if the decision is a trench, then they should also build a series of footbridges.*

Tristan: *All great principles. I agree that an Elevated railway line would achieve these outcomes better than rail trench. Good luck with submission.*

Michael: *I made a submission which said "align with Upfield Urban Forest initiative"!!*

Michael: *Great outline and support the comments*

Sofia: *Sounds great - thanks!*

Thank you for providing the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the project. We would be very happy to meet with the LXRA to discuss any of our recommendations or to answer any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tamar', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Tamar Hopkins  
On behalf of Upfield Urban Forest  
[www.upfieldurbanforest.org](http://www.upfieldurbanforest.org)