

Feedback on Barwon Heads Road Upgrade Stage 2

Section from Reserve Road, Charlemont, to Lower Duneed Road, Armstrong Creek

The Geelong Branch of the Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) has concerns regarding the continued upgrade to Barwon Heads Road because little consideration has been given to public transport within the scope of the project.

Background

The Barwon Heads Road Upgrade will see the section between Settlement Road in Belmont and Lower Duneed Road in Armstrong Creek fully converted to a 4-lane dual carriageway. Unless there is effective provision for public transport services, and other sustainable transport modes, that will negatively affect communities in the area by further cementing car dependence. Improvements to bus services, including higher frequencies and infrastructure measures such as marked bus lanes, must be provisioned coinciding with road upgrades, to give more people the opportunity to leave their cars at home and take the bus instead, reducing traffic congestion and pressure on the road. We welcome the continuation of the shared cycle path alongside the road providing a new arterial cycle path.

Bus routes 50, 51 & 55 run through the project area between Settlement Road and Barwarre Road. Route 55 rejoins the project area at Marshalltown Road through to Lower Duneed Road.

Feedback on Stage 1 Construction

Level Crossing Removal

The PTUA is disappointed that the level crossing near Station Road, Marshall (previously crossing Barwon Heads Road) is still active on the rail network. The bridge might reduce delays for road traffic but does nothing to improve the reliability of the passenger rail services. The crossing was to be removed fully but, due to construction complications, has so far remained open for local access to Norcott Road.

The crossing should be decommissioned to remove all potential at-grade crossing disruption to services at the site.

Bus Stop Closure

During construction of Stage 1, stop #45392 Breakwater Rd/Barwon Heads Rd was closed for the entire construction period, leaving bus passengers without access to the area surrounding South Barwon Reserve. That stop is quite isolated, with no nearby alternatives available to passengers. It was disappointing that access to the area was compromised for public transport users during the entire construction period. If the works require temporary closure of other stops, we urge the team to ensure alternative stops are provided.

Concerns with Stage 2

Increased Journey Times on Route 55

This project along with the continued greenfield development along the Barwon Heads Road corridor will increase travel times for passengers of the Route 55 bus service. Currently timetabled to take 60-70 minutes from Geelong Station to Ocean Grove via Barwon Heads we expect that to increase by up to 20 minutes during and after the completion of the project, due to the increased traffic the wider road will induce, a greater number of signalised intersections, and the lack of priority for buses.

Slower services are less appealing to travellers and will result in more people abandoning the bus and opting for private cars, taxis or rideshare services. That will increase traffic levels and use any road space less efficiently, meaning slower journeys for both motorists and bus users.

Major Road Projects must at least provide bus jump lanes at traffic signals to allow buses priority, so they can better match the journey times of cars, and help make up for dwell times at bus stops.

Location of Bus Stops

Bus stop locations must be closer to intersections, and pedestrian crossings must be provided on all sides.

Currently, bus stop locations along the corridor are less than ideal for passengers. At Warralily Blvd there is a 135m walk to the outbound bus stop from the suburban footpath (see photo). Ideally, this bus stop would be relocated to the other side of the intersection, because there is no residential catchment on the southeast side of the intersection and will likely never be, due to the creek. That would not only reduce the walk from 135m to 60m but also allow the provision of a bus jump lane to prioritise bus traffic through the intersection.



Bus Stop Infrastructure

The scope of the project should be expanded to ensure that DDA-compliant bus shelters are provided at each stop along the route, with seating, bike racks and rubbish bins, allowing greater comfort and convenience for passengers.

Shelters should be oriented correctly, providing shelter from the prevailing winds by having their backs to the south or west, and be lit at night to ensure greater safety for users of evening bus services.

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