



Safe access over Bell Street Bridge

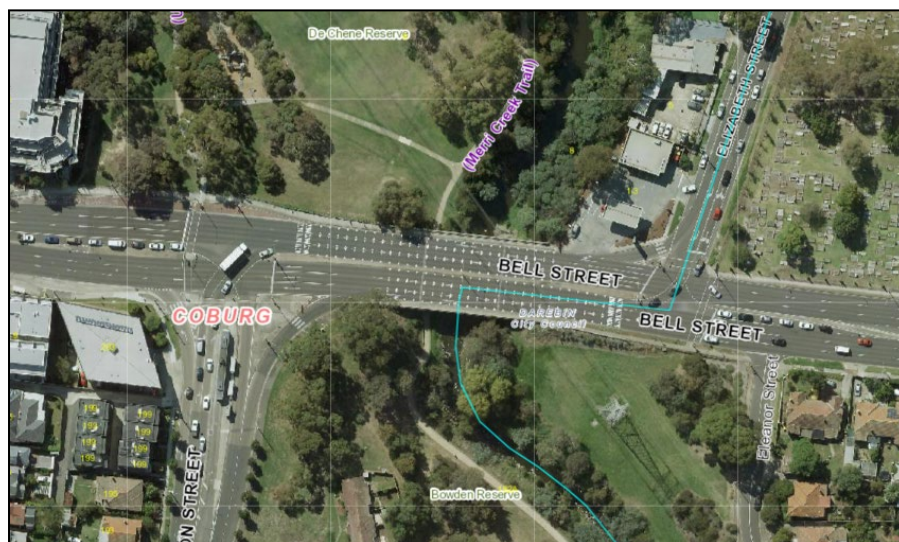
Active transport, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure

Pedestrians and bike riders – including a large and growing number of Coburg High School students – are at risk every day on and around Coburg's Bell Street Bridge.

The risk area, which includes the Bell Street Bridge over Merri Creek, the Nicholson Street intersection and tram terminus to the south, and the Elizabeth Street intersection to the east, is notorious for traffic collisions. In 2021 a Coburg High School student was hit by a car in the risk area.

Bell Street carries more traffic than any other road in Merri-bek, yet pedestrian access on Bell Street Bridge is significantly narrower than other equivalent bridges in the area. This poses an unacceptable risk to safety and accessibility in our community.

Local and State Government must work together with the community to promote safe active travel, particularly for students travelling to and from Coburg High School.



Coburg

Our ask:

Urgent funding of \$250,000 for a feasibility study and designs for safe and accessible active travel options over Coburg's Bell Street Bridge between Nicholson Street and Elizabeth Street intersections.

Our aim:

To address the safety issues of all users of the Bell Street Bridge risk area including pedestrians, bike riders, and public transport users, particularly Coburg High School students, within 12 months of the 2022 State Election.

Bridge safety issues

Safety issues with the Bell Street Bridge include:

- Very narrow footpath on either side (1.07-1.2m southside; 0.9-1.55m northside)
- No setback or separation between the bridge footpath and traffic lanes
- Mountable kerb makes it easy for cars to stray onto the footpath
- Uneven and hazardous path.

The Victorian State Government's [guidelines](#) on pathways, and [AustRoads 2021 Guide to Road Design](#) both specify preferred path width of 1.8m for any footpath.

Bell Street Bridge users

More than 1,000 pedestrians cross the Bell Street Bridge from Monday to Friday in just the peak AM and PM periods – even more use the bridge in a 24-hour period and on weekends.

- 79% of Coburg High School students have used the Bell Street bridge, with 30% using it at least once a week.
- Of these students, 32% have witnessed at least one accident or near miss on the Bell Street Bridge in the past year.

Bell Street Bridge traffic volumes

Bell Street carries more traffic volume than any other road in Merri-bek.

- The average two-way traffic volume for the Bell Street Bridge is 47,000 vehicles per day, including 2,200 trucks per day and multiple bus routes.
- Elizabeth Street to the north and Nicholson Street to the south carry double lanes of traffic in each direction, with average two-way traffic volumes at 11,000 and 27,000 vehicles per day respectively.

Other issues in the risk area

The left-turn slip lane from Bell Street into Nicholson Street does not meet current Department of Transport design guidelines for slip lanes.

- The left-turn slip lane does nothing to stop or slow vehicles.
- Vehicles traverse the corner at high speed, regularly failing to give way to pedestrians wanting to cross the zebra crossing on the slip lane to /from the island.
- The left-turn slip lane at Bell Street into Elizabeth Street has also been the site of accidents and near misses, risking pedestrian safety.

Pedestrians and bikes riders feel unsafe

In 2021, a Coburg High School student was hit by a car in the risk area. Many other people have witnessed vehicle collisions and near misses.

Overwhelmingly, comments submitted via the change.org petition [No More Accidents in the Bell Street Risk Zone: Urgently Meet Pedestrian Safety Standards](#) express how unsafe people feel walking or bike riding on the Bell Street Bridge footpath

Traffic in that area is scary. It does not feel safe to be around there on a bike.

Pauline Galvin

I have a child who travels along this way to get to Coburg High School. I worry for her and all the kids.

Lana Heuvel

It's frightening to walk across the bridge, traffic is so close and going so fast - I have my kids walk single file away from the traffic side. It feels extremely unsafe.

Leslie Daines

As a local resident with children at Coburg High school the dangerous traffic at this intersection causes me daily worry.

Alice Walter

We use this footpath often and always feel nervous that a car could hit us at any moment.

Shanaugh Lyon

I'm worried about kids crossing the road here and have had a near miss recently.

Ron Hooper

Find out more

If you would like further information on this project or would like to request a briefing please contact:

Jenny Hay, Advocacy Lead

Website

www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Email:

jahay@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Phone:

0438 903 166