



The proposed sky rail in Brunswick would mean Emma Crisp's apartment would become unbearably noisy.

Photo: Luis Enrique Ascui

Sky rail plans put station

Patrick Hatch
Transport reporter

Residents in a Brunswick development celebrated for its livability say they are “astonished” by plans to build an elevated train station just metres from some of their bedroom windows.

Brunswick, Anstey and Jewell stations will be shut and consolidated into two new stations when 2.1 kilometres of the Upfield Line is converted to sky rail between Albion Street and Park Street in Parkville by 2030. But the plans announced by the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) last month have sparked concerns over the location of the station along a narrow section of track between Hope and West streets.

About 350 people live in Nightingale Village's 203 apartments and the development has been praised as an example of the kind of high-quality, sustainable and medium-density developments that Victoria should strive to replicate as the state government tries to encourage more housing around 60 transport hubs.

Emma Crisp bought her second-floor apartment off the plan and moved in two and a half years ago, but fears it will become unlivable if the station goes ahead as proposed.

The removal project has not released detailed designs for the new stations. However, based on the width of the train corridor and other sky rail station designs, the residents group Elevating Brunswick estimates that station platforms could

be between one and five metres from Crisp's bedroom windows and balcony.

“None of us are opposed to elevated rail. But the station location relative to our apartments feels really challenging,” said Crisp. Lights, noise from station announcements and loss of privacy are the top concerns.

The residents' concerns have been heightened by the plight of those living in apartments near the new elevated Keon Park station in Reservoir, which opened earlier this year. Platforms are just four to five metres from apartment windows and residents say they are woken by train announcements.

Crisp said she would likely investigate if a voluntary acquisition by the state government was pos-



close to apartment windows

sible, and estimated up to half of the residents in her building, who are mostly owner-occupiers, would do the same.

“The impact on the community would be massive,” she said. “I want to see a great outcome for the suburb. It could be this amazing thing and create new open space that Merri-bek really needs but it could be a huge missed opportunity.”

Geordie Barker, from Elevating Brunswick, which is made up of members living in 20 apartment buildings in the suburb, said residents were “astonished” by the proposed location of the northern station.

“It makes so little sense in terms of transport connections, in terms of access, in terms of the width of the [rail] corridor, that we didn’t even

contemplate that it would be a possibility,” he said. “That’s how terrible and ill-thought-out it is.”

Elevating Brunswick supports the sky rail project because it will create a significant amount of new open space, including an improved Upfield Bike Path and connect two sides of the suburb currently split by the train line.

But it is campaigning to have the station moved 180 metres south, on the other side of Hope Street, where there is a large vacant block on the eastern side of the tracks set to be developed into apartment buildings.

Barker said a new station could be incorporated into the design of those apartments to create a station precinct, which would also have better connections to bus routes and minimise disruption to existing

homes. Doing so would also preserve the popular Bulleke-bek Park, one of the few areas of green space locally.

“Through the consultation process ... the LXP have struggled to justify that station location outside of saying that it is more affordable for them,” Barker said.

Construction on Brunswick’s sky rail will start in 2029 and the project will remove eight level crossings at Albion, Hope, Victoria, Albert, Dawson, Union and Park streets, and Brunswick Road.

A project spokesperson said moving the station south of Hope Street would require additional property acquisitions, and also mean the two new stations would be only 600 metres apart, forcing some people to walk further to catch a train.