

# Looking upwards for transport solutions

March 2 2016, by Anne Rahilly

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Incorporating elevated lines or ‘skytrains’ into the urban landscape can add to the community.

Level crossing removals should be viewed as part of a total picture for an effective transport system and the best way to achieve this is to incorporate elevated lines or 'skytrains', according to Melbourne researchers.

In a major report released today, co-authors Dr John Stone from the University of Melbourne and Ian Woodcock from RMIT University, argue elevated train lines will create a more effective and efficient

public [transport](#) system through better service coordination and more efficient network design.

The report is the outcome of several years of research into better connections between transport and land use planning, [urban design](#) and architecture.

"At present, Victoria has around 170 level crossings and over 100 of them are used by buses. To take advantage of the improvements being made, we need to factor in all the connections," Dr Stone, a senior lecturer in Transport Planning said. "Stations connect the human flow and movement across the main area when we change from being a passenger, to a pedestrian to a commuter," Dr Stone said. "Improving public transport is a high priority for the community but managing road congestion is also important. Stations are key to this and need to be better connected to their communities," he said.

Mr Woodcock, who lectures in urban design, said that in order to capitalise on the substantial investment in the removal of level-crossings, elevating railway lines is a better option.

"If we elevate the railway, we maximise ground level connectivity and open up lots of opportunities to improve active transport options. Access for improved feeder bus services, better bike paths and for pedestrians can all be improved to speed journeys and increase competitiveness of transit trips relative to car-based travel," he said. "Elevated stations can become urban hubs, with increased clustering of new development - through structure planning that reinforces the station's central role in any given neighbourhood.

A well-designed station integrated with retail outlets and service centres is a great addition to any location or neighbourhood," Mr Woodcock said. Elevated stations have long existed in some of the most desirable

suburbs of Melbourne such as Glenferrie and Auburn and elevated rail is found around the world, so the engineering aspects are well known.

"As well as minimising disruption and traffic chaos, elevated rail can offer significant added value to our city. Better station facilities and convenience retail options will drive a new agenda in urban planning and real estate opportunity," Dr Stone said.

Provided by University of Melbourne

Citation: Looking upwards for transport solutions (2016, March 2) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-03-solutions.html>

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