

Commuters spill around the guard rail the access a tram at South Yarra Station.
Photo: Chris Hopkins



Tram stop barriers

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Safety fences at tram stops designed to herd people onto a pedestrian crossing are frustrating commuters, who say the barriers are making it harder and more dangerous to get on and off trams.

Pedestrian guard rails built by Stonnington Council nearly 20 years ago on footpaths near traffic light intersections in Prahran, Toorak and Malvern, were designed to stop pedestrians from spilling out onto the roads.

But Melbourne's surging population has led to more people using trams on Chapel Street, High Street and Glenferrie Road, and commuters say the fences are trap-

ping them on footpaths and making it difficult to board trams.

Public Transport Users Association spokesman David Bowen said pedestrians wanting to get onto trams were being stopped at the footpath by fences that stretch for up to 20 metres.

Those trying to get off trams were in some cases forced to walk into oncoming traffic to reach the footpath, he said.

Mr Bowen has previously warned the problem extends beyond the Stonnington Council area, with fences at tram stops in the CBD, including one at the intersection of Bourke and Spencer streets, contributing to a peak-hour crowd crush.

"The whole thing is slowing

'doing more harm than good'



down the trams ... it's inconveniencing people having to walk around them and it's slowing down motorists. Drivers are having to wait longer for people getting on and off trams who have to navigate around the fences."

Stonnington Council chief executive Jacqui Weatherill said there were no plans to remove the fences, noting pedestrian guard rails were "reviewed when maintenance or roadwork is required".

"We take community safety seriously," she said.

A 2010 review of pedestrian safety by consulting firm Sinclair Knight Merz in partnership with the council recommended the guard rails be removed within the next year.

It found that fences installed by the council in the early 2000s were designed to ensure pedestrians used dedicated crossings and had the added advantage of creating more space to park bikes.

But they "trap pedestrians" on

the roadway and restrict access to cars, buses and trams, the report stated.

Shelly Xian - a commuter from Armadale - said the fences were an unnecessary barrier.

"It would be more convenient for older people if it wasn't there," Ms Xian said. "It's like a block in front on you."

A Transport Department spokesman said the department worked with "various stakeholders, including councils, to ensure passengers receive a safe and reliable tram service".

The population in the Stonnington council area increased by 13 per cent between 2011 and 2016 and another 31,000 people are set move there by 2036.

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