

'Get on with the job'

EXCLUSIVE
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A CONGESTED level crossing the federal government promised to remove at the last election is facing a \$150m funding black hole, and work will not start unless the Commonwealth stumps up more cash.

The Herald Sun can reveal removing the Glenferrie Rd crossing in Kooyong will cost at least \$410m, according to a business case prepared by the

Residents want action on crossing removal

state government, which is unwilling to chip in as it focuses on its program of 85 other crossings.

Hundreds of millions of dollars more will be required if the federal government wants to remove two other crossings on the Glen Waverley line, with major complications emerging in a year-long planning process it funded.

Local residents are demanding action on the Glen-

ferrie Rd crossing, more than two years after the Coalition pledged \$260m.

The crossing is one of three left in Melbourne that trains, trams and cars all use, and the boom gates are typically closed for a third of the morning peak.

While the business case is complete, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said it had not been provided to the federal government.

"If there are conclusions

around the cost of the project in the business case ... then we would consider them at the appropriate time," he said.

He said he had raised the crossing "in nearly every conversation" with Premier Daniel Andrews and Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas, and he looked forward "to their co-operation in making this project a reality".

The Boroondara Residents' Action Group called on the

state government to "get on with the job" at Glenferrie Rd and complained of "political inertia".

A state government spokeswoman said Labor was focused on its own crossing removals, and 10 more were added to its list last month. She said work was continuing on the business case and feasibility work on removing crossings at Tooronga Rd and Madden Grove.

While it would make sense

to remove all three crossings in one project to limit disruption for commuters, the Herald Sun believes a series of planning issues have emerged.

At Madden Grove, there is an adjacent stabling point that would be difficult to move, while its proximity to a bridge over the Yarra River may prevent lowering the track at the crossing. The Tooronga Rd crossing is also on a curved section of track and next to a railway station that would have to be redeveloped.

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AZ wins battle of vaccines

A STUDY examining the effectiveness of Covid vaccines found AstraZeneca was the best at preventing hospitalisation and deaths.

Researchers in Bahrain and at Colombia University found only 1.52 per cent of people who were administered the Oxford-made vaccine in the Middle Eastern country were admitted to hospital after they caught the virus and only 0.03 per cent, or one in 3000, died from the disease.

The study, carried out between December and July, also found the Pfizer jab was the second best at prevention with 1.99 per cent hospitalised and 0.15 per cent dying after they contracted the virus.

But whether the study reduces the hesitancy on AstraZeneca in Australia, where changing health advice and conflicting political messages about the risks of contracting a rare blood-clotting condition has led to a slow uptake of the vaccine, remains to be seen.

Initially, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommended AstraZeneca only be given to people over 50 then it increased it to over 60.

However, since the Delta strain found its way here, the advice changed again with GPs now allowed to administer AZ to anyone aged 18-59.

The unvaccinated are at the greatest risk, with 13.22 per cent with the virus hospitalised and 1.32 per cent dead.

VACCINE RACE GIVEN A SHOT IN THE ARM, PAGE 8



Best buddies Misty and Jax are thriving after being taken in by Lamb Care Australia. Picture: Nicki Connolly

YOU CAN BET WE GAMBOL RESPONSIBLY

FRIENDSHIP comes in all sheeps and sizes, especially for these lucky lambs.

Misty and Jax were recently handed in to Lamb Care Australia by a farmer after they were found huddled together in a paddock.

Lamb Care Australia operations director Robyn Cochrane said the pair were recovering very well.

"We're not sure if they're brother and sister but they're very closely bonded and hate to be apart," Ms Cochrane said. "They love to jump around and snuggle together."

Unfortunately Misty had to have her tail amputated.

Ms Cochrane said removing tails is not the usual practice of the charity.

but little Misty had fallen victim to an attack - most likely from a crow - and her tail had been injured beyond repair.

She is doing very well post-surgery and is bouncing back to her happy, hungry self.

GRACE BALDWIN

lambcareaustralia.org.au

DV program aimed at reoffenders

JADE GAILBERGER

A DOMESTIC violence program that slashed intimate partner violence at a site in the US will be used as a model for an Australian trial this year.

The program will tackle repeat offenders because, in Australia, 50 per cent commit a further domestic violence offence within four years of the first. The shocking number is at the heart of the federal government's decision to commit \$4.2m for the trial.

"The rate of domestic violence reoffending in Australia is absolutely unacceptable," Women's Safety Minister Anne Ruston said.

The co-ordinated Enforcement and Support to Eliminate (CEASE) program is modelled on the US Intimate Partner Violence Initiative, which aims to deter offenders by reinforcing they are being closely monitored and any crime, including theft or driving charges, will have "severe consequences".

The Australian Institute of Criminology will run the trial, with police to refer perpetrators who are then ranked on the severity of violent history.

Those who reoffend will be upgraded on the hierarchy, monitored more closely and required to intensively use behavioural change services.

Three years after a trial at High Point, North Carolina the rate of domestic violence reoffending, as high as 80 per cent throughout the US, was about 16 per cent for those in the program. Homicides also dropped from at least three a year, to three in seven years.

Shift-work study a wake-up call

MELBOURNE researchers will seek to make emergency workers safer by studying how shift work and disrupted sleep affects their responses and decision making.

Experts from Monash University's Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health will analyse frontline workers' lives. About 42 per cent of emergency workers are on rotating shifts with many

reporting poor quality sleep.

The research will focus on paramedics and will simulate shift work and sleep loss. The study will then examine the effect on workplace performance, decision making and their response to stress.

Turner Institute sleep researcher Alexander Wolkow said emergency workers' effective decision making was vital to the delivery of their essen-

tial services to the public.

"Emergency workers are required to make critical decisions that affect the health and safety of the public, as well as themselves and their colleagues during each shift they work," Dr Wolkow said.

The project has been awarded funding through the Australian Research Council's Discovery Early Career Researcher Award program.

Coalition falls as Morrison rises

POPULAR support for the federal Coalition has fallen to its lowest level this term with a swing to fringe minor parties amid record Covid-19 cases and debate over bringing an end to lockdowns.

But personal support for Scott Morrison has lifted as the Prime Minister seeks to wrest control of the national agenda with almost 60 per cent of the country's

population living under some form of social restriction.

An exclusive Newpoll for The Australian shows the Coalition primary vote falling three points to 36 per cent.

This would mark the lowest primary vote for the Coalition since March 2019, more than two points down on the May 2019 election.

Support for Labor lifted a point to 40 per cent,

according to the Newpoll conducted between Wednesday and Saturday.

On a two-party preferred split, Labor leads the Coalition 54-46 per cent.

The Greens fell a point to 10 per cent and Pauline Hanson's One Nation held firm at 3 per cent.

Support for other minor or fringe parties lifted to 11 per cent.