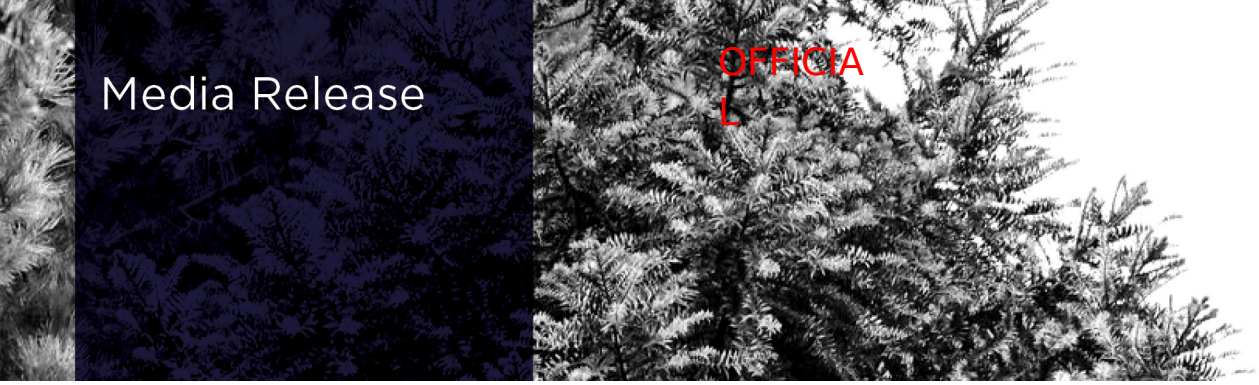


07 August 2026

Growing Avenel left waiting for rail safety upgrades

As Australia marks National Rail Safety Week, Avenel Active, with the support of Strathbogie Shire Council, is renewing its call for long-overdue rail safety upgrades, saying the growing township cannot afford to be left behind any longer.

More than a year after a primary school student was seriously injured at Avenel's Bank Street pedestrian rail crossing, there is still no commitment to deliver the permanent safety improvements residents have been advocating for.

Avenel Active Chairperson Julie Dobbie said the community had spent years advocating for improvements and was becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress.

"Avenel isn't asking for anything extraordinary," she said.

"Our community is asking for the same level of safety infrastructure that has already been delivered in many other regional towns.

"More than a year has passed since a young girl was seriously injured at the Bank Street crossing, yet we're still waiting for a commitment for permanent safety upgrades.

"As Avenel continues to grow, the need for action is becoming more urgent.

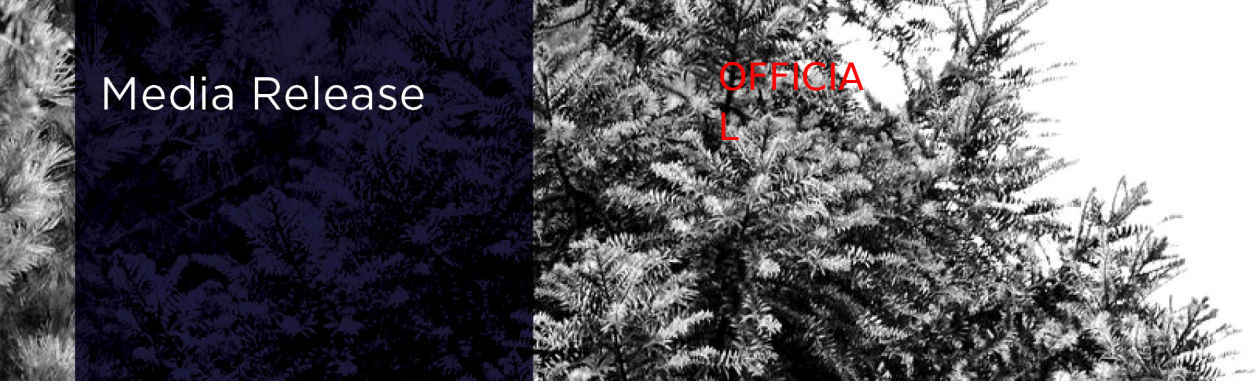
"Our residents have completed surveys, written to ministers, worked with local Members of Parliament, held community rallies and shared their story on national television.

"We've done everything we can to highlight the risks. It's time for that advocacy to be matched with action."

Avenel is one of only four of the 22 main V/Line stations between Melbourne and Albury without an underpass or locking pedestrian gates. It is also one of only three towns where the rail line is the only pedestrian link between the town centre and residential areas, requiring many residents to cross the tracks each day to access schools, shops and community facilities.

Despite multiple passenger and freight trains passing through the township every day, there is no effective physical separation between pedestrians and passing trains at either the Bank Street or Ewings Road crossings.

In April 2025, the dangers of the Bank Street crossing became clear when a primary school student was seriously injured after the front wheel of their bicycle became caught by a passing freight train while they were waiting to cross.



Safety concerns are expected to increase as Avenel grows, with 212 new lots approved and a childcare centre set to significantly increase the number of pedestrians using the town's rail crossings.

Strathbogie Shire Council CEO Rachelle Quattrocchi said Council would continue to support the community's advocacy and urged the Victorian Government to prioritise the upgrades.

"While major rail safety investments have transformed communities across Victoria, Avenel continues to wait," she said.

"Everyone has a responsibility to stay safe around rail, but governments also have a responsibility to provide infrastructure that helps protect communities.

"Council will continue standing alongside the Avenel Active community group in advocating for the upgrades needed to make Avenel's rail precinct safer for everyone."

While the Victorian Government's Big Build has removed dangerous level crossings and upgraded station precincts in communities including Wallan, Nagambie and Mooroopna, and the Inland Rail project is improving rail infrastructure at Euroa, Benalla, Wangaratta and Albury, Avenel continues to wait for investment in safer pedestrian access.

As part of National Rail Safety Week, Council is joining organisations across Australia and New Zealand in encouraging everyone to stay alert around rail crossings and always obey signs and signals.

For more information visit www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au or call 1800 065 993.

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Release ends.

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