

# THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF URBAN TRANSITION: MELBOURNE'S WICKED TRANSPORT PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

## Research Question

**How should transport planning decisions be made in a highly complex (wicked) environment to achieve 'better' processes?**



Figure 1: London urban planning decision making (Greater London Authority board meeting)

## Methodology

The research uses the case study methodology to explore Melbourne and London transport planning decision making. In Melbourne, the case study investigation includes the historical context to strategic and transport planning that lead to the controversial East West Link project – and the 2014 Victorian election described by the then Prime Minister as a 'Transport Referendum'. In London, the case study investigation includes the historical context that led to the establishment of the Greater London Authority and Transport for London as decision making institutions.

## Results

The research has identified a disconnect between population growth and transport planning practice/policy between the two case studies.

In London, the response included the establishment a strongly authorised and democratically representative Greater London Authority – with Transport for London created as a committee style of decision making.

In Melbourne, the committee style of decision making evident in the historical context has made way for a balkanised system of decision making and a pattern of regular technocratic restructuring and the absence of political imagination. This is despite a succession of Victorian elections that have revolved around transport.

The research suggests the application of the 'wicked' planning framework would attempt to introduce better decision making processes in transport planning.

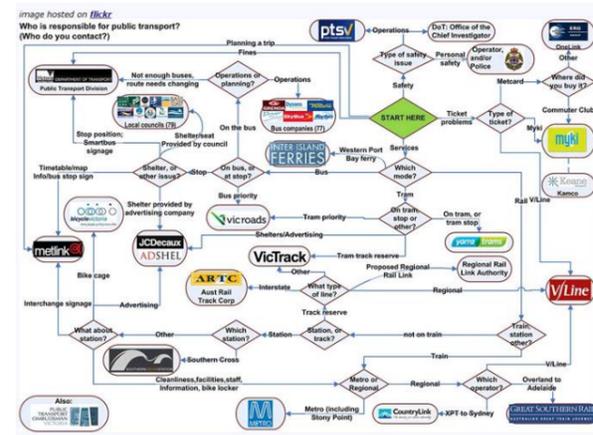


Figure 2: Melbourne public transport accountability (Public Transport Users Association, 2010)



Figure 3: Melbourne's anticipated population growth (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2016)

## Conclusion

Transport planning in Melbourne is complex and balkanised. The thesis concludes that the decision making process in Melbourne has failed to recognize transport as a 'wicked' problem and adopt measures to deliver 'better' outcomes. In London, the transport decision making framework is achieving these 'better' outcomes. To fix the Melbourne situation, improvements in governance will be necessary to manage this complexity and achieve 'better' transport decision-making processes.

## Anticipated impacts

There is the potential to apply the research results to the Melbourne case study through recent reforms to create Transport for Victoria. Since the passage of the *Transport Integration Act* in 2010 successive governments have attempted to create structures to make 'better' transport planning decisions.

The expected benefits of a 'better' decision making framework would include long-term consensus based transport planning that minimises the conflict that was associated with East West Link (or West Gate Tunnel and North East Link) and the establishment of a democratically elected voice for Melbourne.



Figure 4: Melbourne Case Study – East West Link

## Further information

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