

Reconstructing the policy path of urban transport

Nicholas Low

Public transport: oh dear!

Train-starved suburbs to now lose bus lanes

Timna Jacks
Transport Reporter

Residents of train-starved north-eastern suburbs will lose dedicated bus lanes that are key to making their lengthy commute manageable.

Bus lanes on Williamsons Road and Fitzsimons Lane in Templestowe, built in 2014 under a \$5.8 million project to make buses more reliable, will be removed and given over to cars.

The lanes, which also double for cyclists, give priority to nearly 400 buses a day. This includes the Melbourne's busiest bus routes - SmartBus routes 901 and 902 - which carry nearly 13,000 people daily.

Nearly one in 10 people in the Manningham Council area, which takes in Templestowe and Doncaster, rely on buses to get to work.

This is more than any other suburb, and compares with an average of 1.5 per cent of people using buses

At the time, VicRoads said the new bus lanes would help buses "bypass queued traffic for more reliable service times, especially in the morning and afternoon peaks".

Public Transport Users Association spokesman Daniel Bowen said removing the lanes would mean see "buses run slower, which means some passengers will give up and drive instead, making traffic worse for everyone".



interchange with the Eastern Freeway and most likely on the Eastern Freeway.

Doncaster Park and Ride will also be moved to the Koonung Reserve during construction, which will increase travel times as buses face three extra sets of traffic lights.

Opposition public transport spokesman David Davis said the bus lanes were "another casualty" of the North East Link project.

"The community are entitled to ask why dedicated bus lanes funded by taxpayers are being torn out by Daniel Andrews," Mr Davis said.

However, in 2011 the Baillieu government removed bus lanes on Stud Road in Rowville that had been installed by Labor 18 months earlier.

Manningham Mayor Paula Piccinini said the council generally supported "greater prioritisation of buses on the road network", but did not yet have a formal view on the Fitzsimons Lane project.

Car parks ripe for pork barrel

ANALYSIS

Clay Lucas



The once unheralded station car park was thrust into the national political limelight this week when, midway through his budget speech, Josh Frydenberg made a new leap for a federal treasurer.

Rather than big vision, the Treasurer signalled the Morrison government was going deep into the small picture. "A \$500 million commuter car park fund that will improve access to public transport hubs and take tens of thousands of cars off our roads," promised Mr Frydenberg, putting the deeply local issue of finding a parking spot onto the national stage.

Bentleigh, Croydon, Ferntree Gully, Hampton, Mitcham and Ringwood stations would, between them, get 2093 new parking spots at a cost of \$68 million. Neither the state government nor, in large part, local councils could say where the expansion would occur.

For two decades, building extra station parking has been viewed by

"We're delighted to get \$4 million from the federal government," says Michael Heffernan, Bayside Council mayor and a former Liberal candidate for state Parliament. He declined to answer questions over when or even if the council had asked Canberra to fund more parking.

The local neighbourhood association also supports more parking around Hampton station but doesn't know where it will go. "We asked the council 'Where are these car parks going?' They had absolutely no idea," says Hampton Neighbourhood Association president Tony Batt.

How did we get here?

"Station car parking, unless it's multi-level, is shovel ready - so you can announce it and build it really fast, in hard hats and high-vis vests. You can't do that for a bus service," says Liz Taylor, a Monash

'Station car parking ... is shovel ready - so you can announce it and build it really fast.'

Dr Liz Taylor, Monash University

The North East Link

Nine MCGs lost: the toll of the North East Link

Clay Lucas
Timna Jacks

The \$15.8 billion North East Link will cut through native vegetation spanning 52 hectares and remove open space and recreational areas the size of nine MCGs.

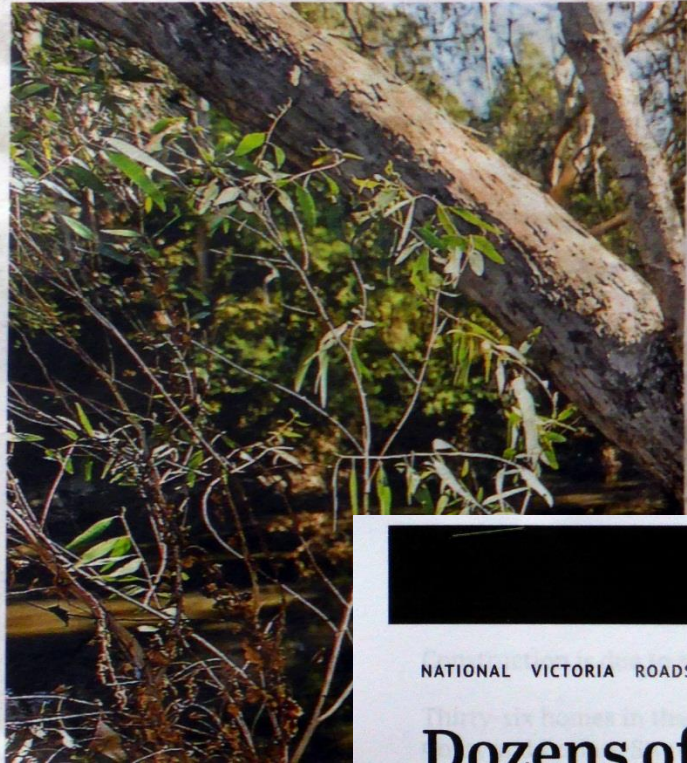
The extent of the North East Link's environmental impact was revealed for the first time in a voluminous Environment Effects Statement released by Transport Infrastructure Minister Jacinta Allan last week.

been a menacing presence in our thoughts for most of that time."

The 26-kilometre North East Link, set to carry 135,000 vehicles daily, is designed to fill this "missing link" in Melbourne's ring road, taking thousands of trucks off congested arterial roads in the north-east.

It will take seven years to build, with construction to start next year.

It takes decades to



THE  AGE

NATIONAL VICTORIA ROADS

Dozens of homes, more than 100 businesses to be acquired for North East Link

By Timna Jacks, Clay Lucas and Adam Carey

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Path dependence

- A situation where a certain kind of policy setting, once established, keeps delivering short term rewards (what economists call 'increasing returns') in terms of what the public and politicians believe to be valued.
- 'Path dependence' is a term for a mind-set. Set minds which do not change.

Economics being trumped by politics

COMMENT

Ross Gittins



The popular view of infrastructure is that we don't have nearly enough of the stuff, so the more we spend the better for the economy. The sad reality is that every year huge amounts of taxpayers' money is wasted on infrastructure - and much of the damage is begun in election campaigns.

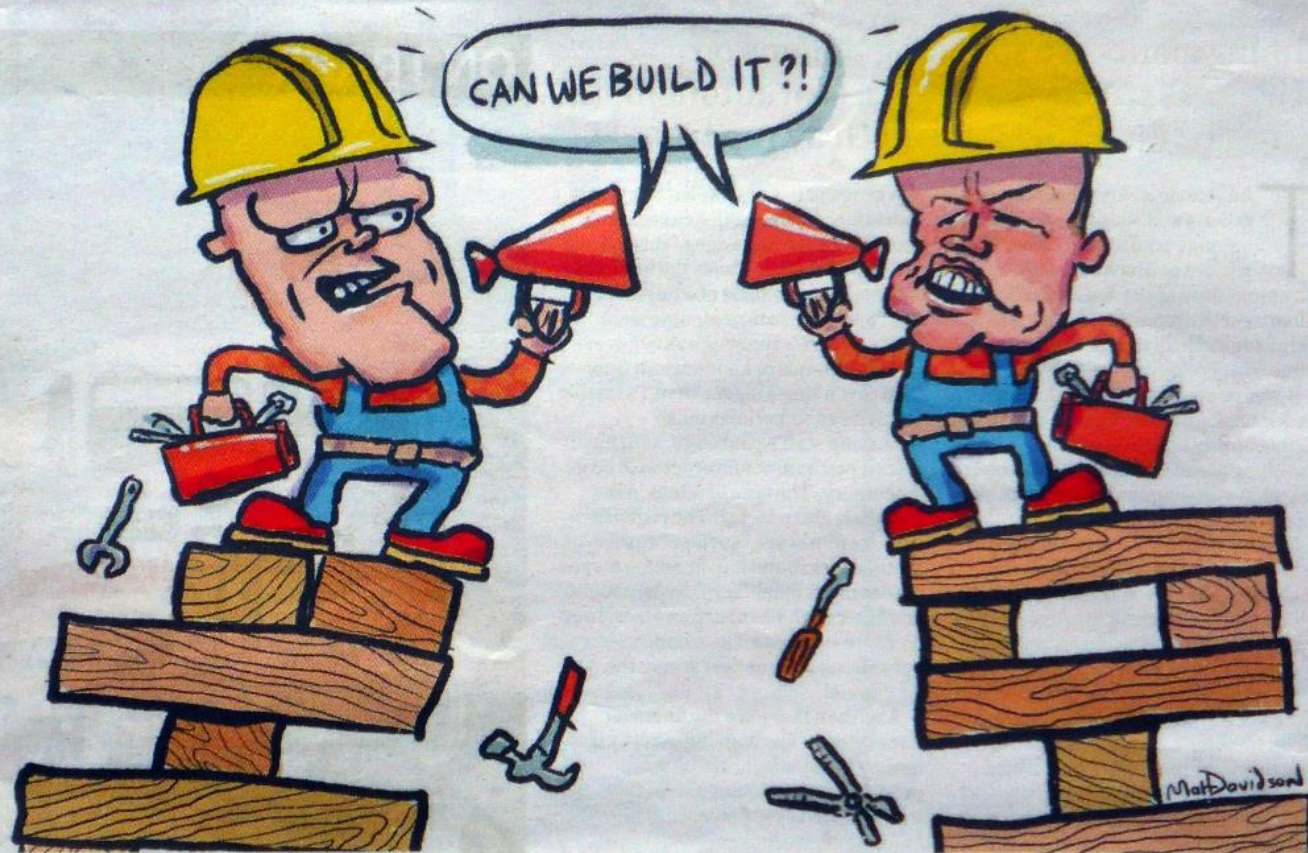
This is not to deny that well-chosen and executed infrastructure projects contribute significantly to improving the productivity of the economy - its ability to produce more goods and services *per unit* of inputs of economic resources.

It may even be true that we have a backlog of projects we should be getting on with. But that doesn't mean we're not wasting a shedload of money - mainly by building the wrong things in the wrong places.

Sadly, in our messy world, shortages of infrastructure can exist side by side with waste and extravagance. The more money we waste, the bigger the shortages.

Why does this happen? Often because good economics gets trumped by expedient politics. Often what's good economics lacks sex appeal - spending enough each year to ensure roads and rail lines are well maintained, for instance - whereas politicians are irresistibly attracted to projects that are new, flashy and appeal to the unthinking (radio shock jocks, for example) as just what they think we need.

And because political parties mostly want



compare the various options by making the best measurement you can of each one's costs and expected benefits to the community, then pick the option where the benefits most exceed the costs. (There may well be some unquantifiable considerations that also need to be taken into account.)

Huge amounts of taxpayers' money is wasted on infrastructure.

That's just 4 per cent of the Australians who travel to work by public transport. And, they note, there's no guarantee the extra parkers would be people who'd no longer go to work by car. Studies suggest a lot of them would be people who formerly walked, cycled or bussed to a different station (where the

The policy path

- A well-established path has to be accepted, but may be re-construed and reconstructed.
- The main features of the Australian transport policy path:
 - individualised over collective mobility: cars, taxis, uber, cycling, walking over trains, trams, buses.
 - Big infrastructure will win elections, sometimes.
- If the path won't change perhaps it can be reshaped,
- The question to be asked continually is: **What will make individualised transport flow better, with more predictable journey times, in a city of 5-8 million?**
- Politicians will go on answering **'infrastructure'**. To which we have to be able to respond, **'Yes, but what else?'**

Dislocating the policy path

- If the path won't change, then perhaps it can be reshaped, or as one political scientist says, 'dislocated'. So how?
- What will make individualised transport flow better, with more predictable journey times, in a city of 5-8 million?
- Politicians will go on answering '**infrastructure**'. To which we have to be able to respond, '**Yes, but what else?**'

Rail Futures Institute

Get airport link right and rest of rail will follow

Bill Russell



In mid-2018 Premier Daniel Andrews committed to building a new airport railway from the CBD to Melbourne Airport via a new super-hub at Sunshine, with a \$5 billion state contribution.

Subsequently, the Prime Minister announced support for the Sunshine route with a matching \$5 billion contribution. Then followed the AirRail consortium's offer to build the project – starting from Southern Cross, Sunshine and Melbourne Airport in not much more than 15 minutes. It should operate every 10 minutes, 24/7 using a dedicated train fleet with ample space for luggage.

Travellers from Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs coming via Melbourne Metro would interchange with airport trains at Sunshine, as would many from

Soon afterwards, the state government also announced a Western Rail Plan, including electrification of existing lines to Wyndham Vale and Melton, extra tracks to segregate metropolitan

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from regional express trains and the medium-term prospect of faster trains to Geelong and Ballarat.

These announcements have been strongly supported by the Rail Futures Institute and all can neatly dovetail into a well-integrated implementation program. But first, it is critical that we get the airport link right. It will be pivotal in maximising potential benefits from all these projects, not only for airport travellers, but also for western suburbs residents and regional passengers.

The airport link needs to be a stand-alone railway offering direct transit between Southern Cross, Sunshine and Melbourne Airport in not much more than 15 minutes. It should operate every 10 minutes, 24/7 using a dedicated train fleet with ample space for luggage.

Travellers from Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs coming via Melbourne Metro would interchange with airport trains at Sunshine, as would many from

Bill Russell



network, buses, taxis, ride-share pick-ups and car parking. Southern Cross already provides much of this connectivity.

From Southern Cross, the new line should be underground to West Footscray, continuing on the surface to Sunshine, then on the existing reserved alignment direct to an

additional train capacity between Southern Cross and Sunshine.

These will not only carry airport trains, but also have ample capacity to provide the first section of infrastructure needed for fast trains to Geelong and, in future, Ballarat.

Some of Melbourne's fastest-growing suburbs would further

Heathrow airport today. Heathrow will soon be served by three separate rail lines. Let's not delay Melbourne's first any longer.

Dr Bill Russell is secretary of the Rail Futures Institute, an independent group formed to advocate sustainable rail solutions.

Rail Futures Institute: Melbourne Rail Plan to 2050

1. Making the existing system and assets work better.
2. Creating a multi-modal grid network of high frequency services.
3. Completing high capacity rail links to the CBD and providing seamless cross-city trunk routes.
4. Maximising potential of the tram network to provide middle and inner suburbs to CBD connections, cross suburban journeys and links to rail interchanges.
5. Extending electrified rail coverage to outer growth areas.
6. Developing new medium capacity (including light rail) cross-suburban transit corridors.
7. Connections to and between National Employment Clusters and major activity centres.
8. Redesigning the bus network to effectively complement rail and trams.
9. Strongly facilitating active transport (cycling and walking) to and from public transport.
10. Improving accessibility of services to less able people meeting DDA compliance. The keystone of the Melbourne Rail Plan is to transform the current radial network into a connected cross-city grid network.

Locals thought it was horrible, but now:



**Sky rail
no more
the tracks
of their fears**

Dianne L
daughters
Florence. Photo J

The Rail Loop

Shorten to pledge \$10 billion for rail loop

From Page 1

Melbourne as well as the new airport rail link - comes with two caveats: the money will only flow when construction commences in 2021, and it would be spent over 15 years.

"I know it's a big project, it's a lot of money, but this is what you can do when you close loopholes for the top end of town and make multinationals pay their fair share," the Labor leader said.

The cash is on top of federal Labor's pledge to spend \$5 billion on the airport rail link and \$2 billion to help deliver the Melbourne Metro Tunnel.

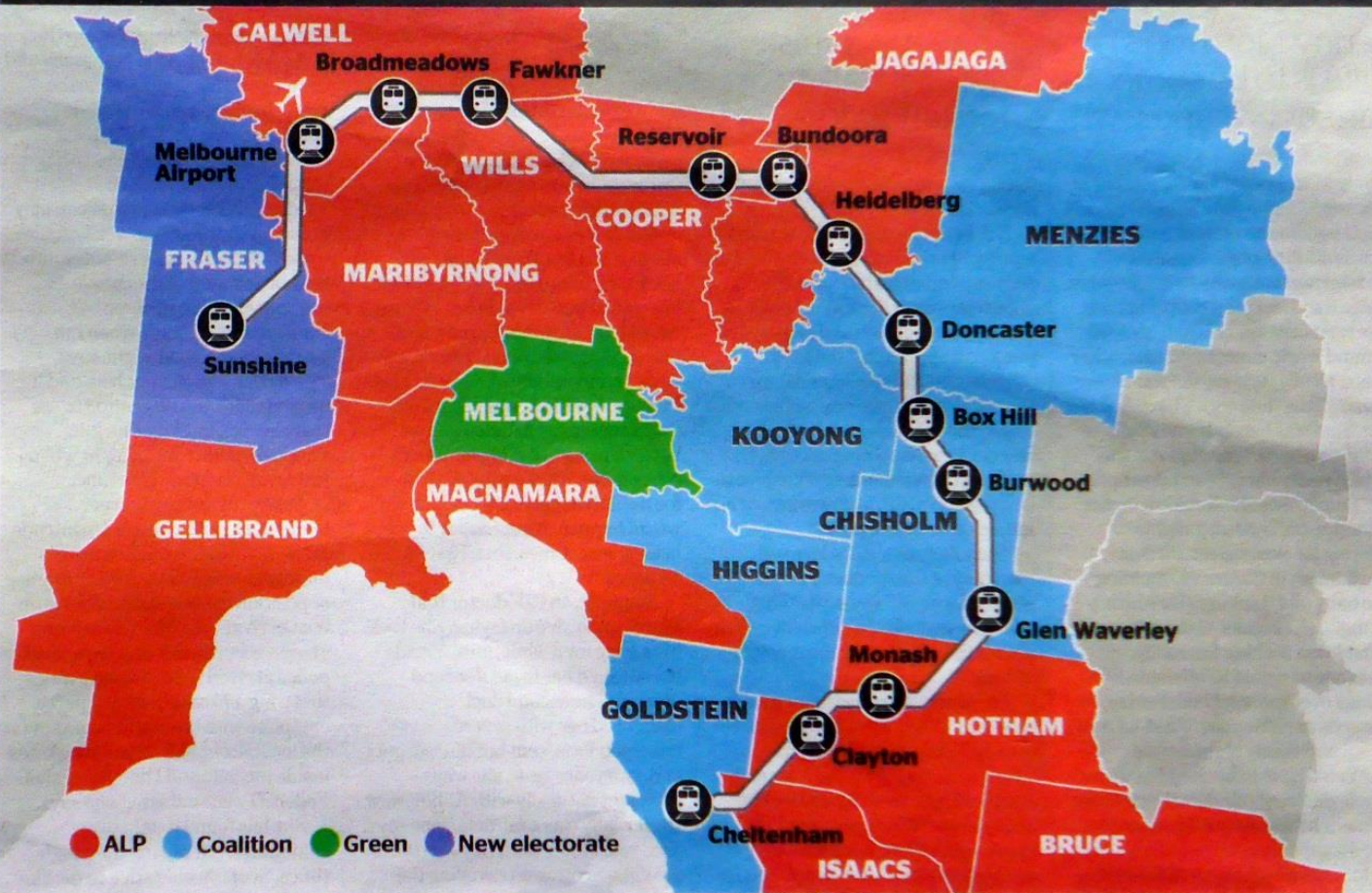
The party is now going to Saturday's election promising at least \$18.4 billion towards transport projects in and around Melbourne.

Mr Morrison has promised \$2 billion towards a high-speed rail line linking Melbourne and Geelong and has signed an agreement with Victoria to also provide \$5 billion towards the airport rail link.

The proposed suburban rail loop would pass through the Labor-held seats of Isaacs, Hotham, Jagajaga, Cooper, Wills, Maribyrnong and Gellibrand, as well as through or near the boundaries of the Liberal-held electorates of Goldstein, Chisholm and Menzies.

But Labor strategists believe the

PROPOSED RAIL LOOP THROUGH FEDERAL ELECTORATES



The City of Melbourne's defence against congestion-pollution

