

# Path dependence in transport and transformational change

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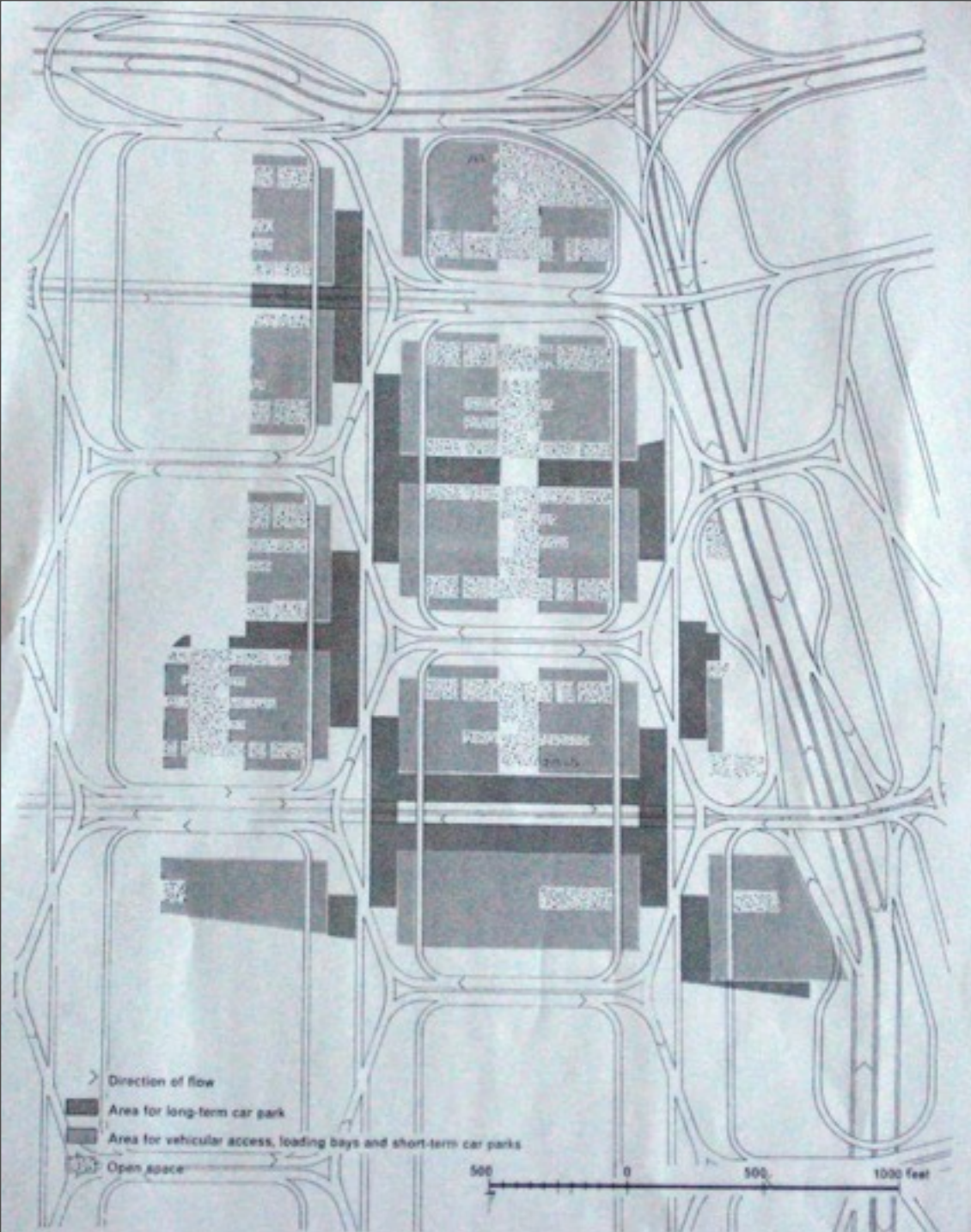
Curtis, C. and Low, N. (2013)  
Institutional Barriers to  
Sustainable Transport, Farnham  
UK: Ashgate

Low, N.P ed. (2012)  
Transforming Urban Transport,  
The ethics, politics and  
practices of sustainable

# Back to 1963

Building London out of congestion

From the UK report  
1963 'Traffic in Towns'  
(The Buchanan Report)



# Back to 1969

Building Melbourne out of congestion

From the  
Melbourne Transportation  
Study Volume 3:  
*The Transportation Plan*

- The Plan included three large new railway extensions, including the railway to East Doncaster.
- The plan was for Melbourne up to 1985







Massive additions to City Link

2013

A key Melbourne public transport interchange:  
Huntingdale station



Bicycle danger: Port Melbourne



# City Link

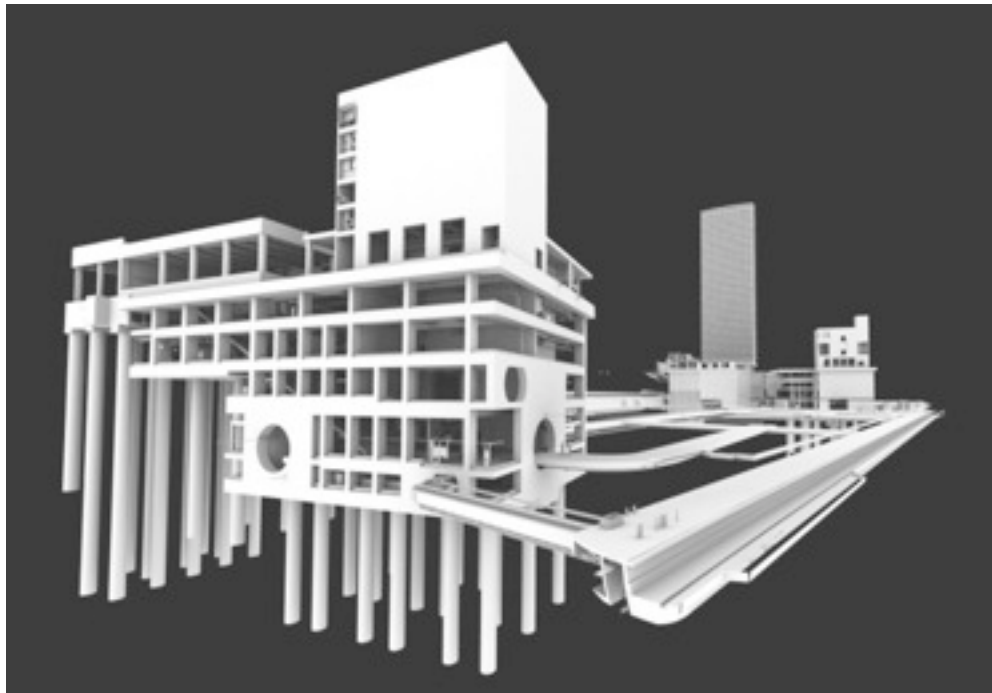
- City Link was predicted to ease congestion and speed up traffic.
- Despite massive subsequent investment in the City Link roads, traffic flow across the system was slower than before City Link was built.

(LOW, N.P. and ODGERS, J. (2012) Rethinking the cost of traffic congestion, lessons from Melbourne's City Link toll roads, Urban Policy and Research 30 pp. 189–205)

- Why? Melbourne grew!

# •London's CROSSRAIL

- The massive project aims to overhaul the capital's rail system and improve speed of commute
- It will open in 2018, incorporates 37 stations and could add £42billion to the economy (Daily Mail online)





# Where will the new Crossrail stations be?



Crossrail

Route Connections Map



From Maidenhead

To Shenfield



New Crossrail stations will be built along the central route at Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel and Canary Wharf. Crossrail is keen to get the internal design of stations right as they have been designed

to last for the next century. The new stations need to cope with large numbers of passengers and also be easy to navigate. To create this transport legacy for London it is essential that every fixture is fit for purpose, cost effective and built to last.



# The East West Road Tunnel

- This is the maddest road project ever to be promulgated in Australia.
- It will do nothing but generate more congestion.
- It will make rail freight to Hastings a fading prospect.
- It locks in a future of more and more motorways while nothing is done to improve public transport which could ease traffic congestion.
- It will destroy Melbourne's inner urban environment.

# Path dependence

- Originally a theory in historical economics about how the production of certain types of goods gets locked in to a path determined by early decisions and chance events (Brian Arthur).
- Transferred to institutions, and how certain types of policy paradigm get locked in to a path determined by early decisions and chance events (Douglas North).

# Path dependence

## Two types of path dependence:

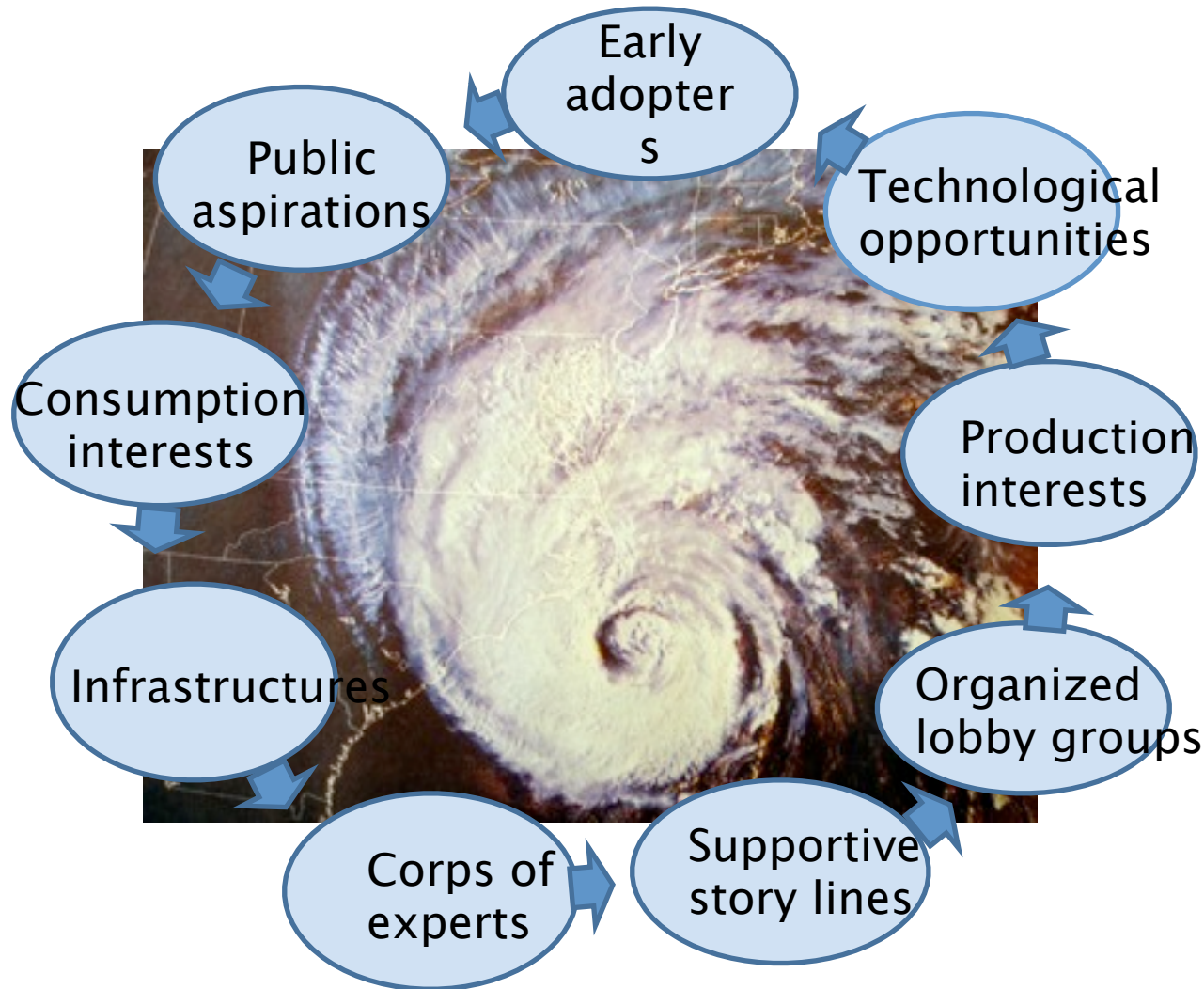
- Technical path dependence (e.g. the ‘hardware’ of city structure)
- Institutional path dependence (the ‘software’ of policy production)
  - Organizational aspect (Transport agencies and networks)
  - Discursive aspect (the stories the transport people tell each other and the public to justify policies)

# Path dependence: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Automobility

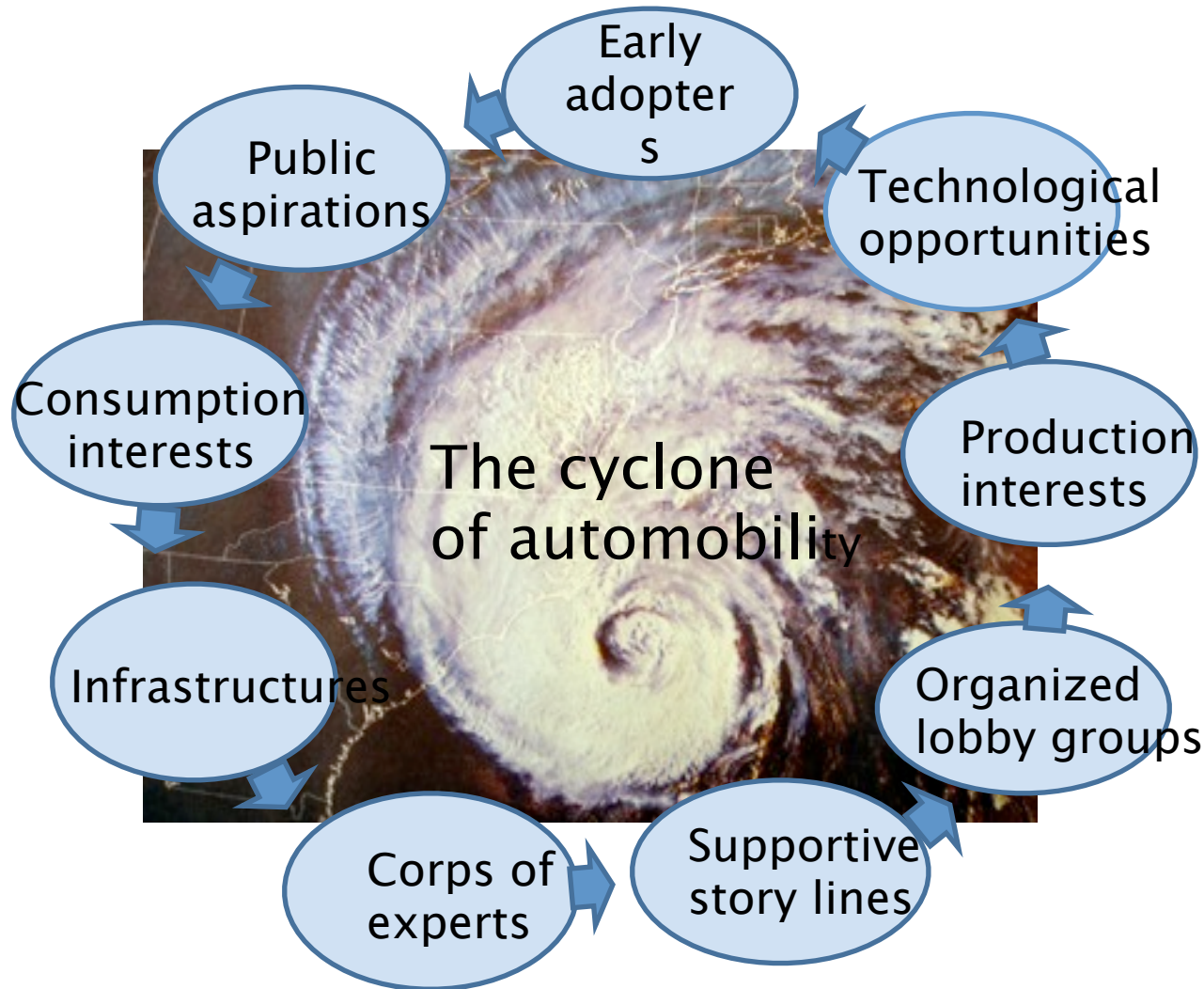




# Path dependence: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Automobility



# Path dependence: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Automobility



# The path of automobility

- Fossil fuelled transport is a major contributor to global warming.
- 98% of the world's transport is dependent on fossil fuel.
- There is no cheap substitute for oil.
- Oil is getting scarce and the climate is warming.
- This path must change. But how?

# The nature and conditions of transformative change

(Ch 12 of Institutional Barriers)

- How does **change** of path occur? Can change be deliberately shaped?
- The theory of path dependence itself holds that new paths emerge at 'critical junctures' in which chance events play a role. Is the government's adoption of the EW road link tunnel a new 'critical juncture'?
- We argue that change occurs as a result of individuals acting together to articulate and press for change where external circumstances are throwing the policy path into question (p.200).



# Elements of a program of action

drawing on Dudley, G. and Richardson, J. (2000) Why Does Policy Change? Lessons from British transport policy 1945–99 London;

- The construction of immanent critique of the conventional wisdom.
- A coherent and well-articulated alternative paradigm.
- Politically effective individual actors.
- The mobilization by these actors of networks of people with the capacity to exert influence.
- The existence of (or creation of) authoritative institutions standing outside and above the existing bureaucratic apparatus.
- Matching the timing of action to the

What might be the role of Engineers Australia in building a broad-based constituency for change from a paradigm of 'automobility' to one of 'sustainable transport'?

Rather than push on with a lecture and have some discussion at the end I'd prefer to have some discussion after talking about each heading

# Immanent critique

- Identify the main story lines supporting the automobility paradigm as they evolve. Subject them to intense critical scrutiny, bringing evidence to bear to demolish the core arguments.
- Make these arguments open and transparent and demand transparency of the conventional arguments. Use open source modelling to counter conventional four step models.

# Examples

- Work of Paul Mees showing that networked transport could deliver high quality public transport for dispersed suburbs.
- SACTRA and other work in the UK demonstrating 'induced traffic'.
- Perth 'rail versus bus' arguments.
- Melbourne: critique of fractured institutions, and rail operational failures, but not enough critique of the irrational bus system.
- Note how story lines change. 'Predict and provide' is almost dead, so the story has shifted to, 'We must have motorways to improve freight productivity'



# A coherent and well-articulated alternative paradigm

- Develop the idea of ‘sustainable transport’ creating a new paradigm of transport and mobility for this century.
- Disseminate the paradigm as widely as possible amongst political and professional actors, especially those with power and influence.
- Find or create concrete examples of the new paradigm in practice.

# Examples

- The ‘vision’ of ‘sustainable transport’ GAMUT sought to promote is simply this:  
‘Seamless public transport networks, even for dispersed urban areas, a reduced role for the private car for routine city trips, greatly improved facilities for walking and cycling, and real integration of land use and transport planning to reduce travel distance and support non-car modes’.
- Melbourne: we need a working model of integrated transport to embody this vision for Melbourne’s transport system. This model must be easily ‘readable’ by opinion leaders and the general public.



A train-bus interchange in low density Zurich

# Politically effective actors

- Change agents in the community should build broadly based advocacy coalitions to bring irresistible pressure on governments.
- They may be elected to power themselves and/or forge alliances with government actors, helping them to construct their own identities around the new vision.

# Examples

- There are good examples internationally and locally. The most effective actors are able to move amongst the community, the bureaucracy and the political tier (Michael Harcourt and Harry Lash in Vancouver).
- Take care to note the context. Switzerland has the referendum, the UK has public planning inquiries (used by John Tyme), Jaime Lerner in Curitiba had the support of an authoritarian government.
- In WA Peter Newman found allies in the government: Julian Grill and Allanah McTiernan at political level, Stuart Hicks in

# Building networks and advocacy coalitions

- Change agents must forge powerful and extensive actor networks to develop and support the alternative paradigm and vision.
- Change agents must interpret the alternative paradigm in ways that are compatible with the values and interests of key groups: in local government, in the bureaucracy, local resident action groups, business and professional groups.
- Change agents should seek ways of establishing the legitimacy of opposition coalitions through broad representation of interests, and/or through electoral support.



# Advocacy coalitions

(Dudley and Richardson building on the work of Sabatier (1993))

- An advocacy coalition is more than just a network, it is an overarching organization of special interest groups.
- ‘The breadth of an advocacy coalition allows it to campaign in a wide range of policy arenas’ (Dudley and Richardson, 2000: 31)
- ‘Advocacy coalitions will share a **deep core** of fundamental beliefs, a **policy core** of basic strategies and policy positions, and a **set of secondary aspects** comprising a multitude of instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement the policy core in a specific area’ (ibid).

# Example

- The opposition to the EW Link provides an opportunity to build a powerful advocacy coalition (let's for now call it **Building Effective and Sustainable Transport BEST**: hence BEST practice!). Some elements:
  - Affected, fearful and angry resident groups (Western Suburbs Truck Action Group).
  - Public transport advocacy organisations (PTUA, Melbourne Transport Forum, Rail Futures Institute)
  - Local councils, inner and outer, e.g. Yarra, Melbourne, Manningham, Mornington Peninsula, Whittlesea, also umbrella groups VLGA, MAV, Interface Councils of Victoria.
  - Social welfare, health and education groups with concern about opportunity costs for social services (VCOSS, Heart Foundation)
  - National organisations (National Growth Areas Alliance, Australian Council of State School Organisations, Public Health Association of Australia)
- BEST must try to penetrate road and rail bureaucracies and find allies within.
- BEST must appeal to and provide ammunition for political oppositions, and seek political champions (at present in the ALP).
- BEST must avoid divisive public arguments amongst its

# Institutions standing outside and above the normal

- Change agents should seek out institutions outside the normal bureaucratic structures to advance their case for a new paradigm.
- Where possible, change agents in positions of influence should help to create such institutions such as public inquiries, parliamentary commissions and community forums.

# Examples

- Institutions ‘without rules’ or outside the rules are important because bureaucratic silos and their inhabitants are part of the path dependence problem.
- In the UK, town planning public inquiries are a case in point, and also the Standing Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA).
- Mr Napthine must have read our book and is seeking to close down such avenues for public expression, knowing that they can let in new ideas.
- If it wins office in Victoria, the ALP could promise to institute a public inquiry to investigate best practice for public funding of infrastructure, which could become a forum for investigating the EW Link. Professors Bill Russell or Ross Garnaut to chair.
- Could the ALP be persuaded to drop EW Link even if contracts are signed? Compensation might be due but that would be much less expensive than proceeding with an \$8–12 billion cost.

# Timing of interventions

- Change agents should not expect a smooth and continuous process of transition to a new paradigm but should maintain pressure over long periods in which the dominant paradigm is stable.
- Change agents should pay particular attention to signals that a critical juncture is near in which opportunities for a radical shift may present themselves.

# Example

- Dennis Napthine claims that the 2013 federal election result is a vindication of his EW Link. But consider this:
  - Of seven electorates east of Melbourne the swing to the Liberals was just about the average nationwide: 3.8% (Menzies, Deakin, Aston, Chisholm, Bruce, Casey, La Trobe). This is all much **less** than the average swing in Victoria which was over 5%.
  - Casey managed a swing of just 2.79%. La Trobe: 2.42%
  - The only seat the Liberals won, Deakin, could only manage a swing of 1.67%
- The Victorian ALP has adopted a policy of opposition to EW Link. Now the BEST Coalition must quickly provide the ALP leadership with a broad based story line for the whole of metropolitan Melbourne so that the public can get behind it and provide electoral support.
- The EW Link fiasco is the trigger for action. It will also linger on from one disaster to another creating a period of transport and urban chaos over three or four years. **Now is the time to start the process of 'path dislocation'.**



# Thank you



Posters advertising the Liberal Party in, YES, Hoddle Street!

Wednesday, 9 October 13