

Low-carbon transport symposium

Why does change happen in some places
and not others?

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Common features of 'successful' cities

- Amsterdam, Groningen, Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Zurich and Basel
- Change began in 1970s with popular challenge to car-oriented policies on 'green' grounds
- “Radical change” in political leaders and key bureaucrats
- Mandate for new agenda strengthened over years

Melbourne: pre-war transport institutions

- Powerful rail authority (often stronger than government)
- ‘Perverse’ competition between trains and trams
- Buses: small, unregulated, private companies

Melbourne: 1970s

- Huge protests against freeway plan
- Some success, but no electoral change
- No alliance between road opponents and PT managers to articulate a different future
- Road proponents remain politically active

Melbourne: 1980s

- Plans to slash PT services provoke mass protests
- ALP elected on pro-PT platform
- Protest groups co-opted or marginalised.
- Reform momentum stalls within a year
- New 'unifying' agency comes under control of road planners
- Ultimately, no successes to build on electorally

Melbourne: 1990s - present

- PT as an electoral liability is ripe for the ideologues
- Privatisation undoes beginnings of coordination
- Government sees only electoral pain in PT and continues to seek votes in road projects
- Little change in ideas of PT managers: “nothing to learn”

Melbourne: 2008 - ???

- A new popular challenge to transport policy?
- Can local government provide a platform?