



A GAMUT Position Paper

A Report of the GAMUT Public Forum on Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure

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GAMUT

Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport

GAMUT is a collaborative research centre dedicated to promoting and supporting sustainable urban transport in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

Based at the University of Melbourne, GAMUT works with a network of researchers to focus attention on the need for innovative institutional design for integrated transport systems.

GAMUT is one of a global network of Centres of Excellence in Future Urban Transport created by the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations, an independent research and educational institution.

Website address

<http://www.abp.unimelb.edu.au/GAMUT/>

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This study and the Public Forum on 'Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure' was supported by GAMUT and the Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne.

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DISCLAIMER

Findings, views, and opinions expressed in this report do not purport to represent those of GAMUT, the Centre for Public Policy, the University of Melbourne, or the VREF.

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Introduction

As is clear from its title, GAMUT (The Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport) has a vital interest in transport governance, and it was resolved to mount a forum to canvass a wide range of views on these central issues as part of the stocktaking after the initial round projects had been launched. This was to be both a full national GAMUT forum and was to include interested parties from across Australia.

Governance is concerned with the structures of accountability and management, and is not a commonly used term. Inevitably any discussion on the subject would need an introductory structure of briefing speakers, which would inevitably be followed by a combination of specific projects and issues, as well as views on the appropriate ways in which they should be structured and made accountable to all relevant parties.

GAMUT's broad interest in governance is one that requires encompassing many different perspectives, views and voices. Such debates are an important part of addressing and communicating the issues of transport without necessarily adopting any one of them. Encouraging a dialogue between divergent views, in a transparent and accountable manner, is part of governance. Tapping into a range of views is an important part of maintaining direction, and ensuring that the work of the Centre is both relevant and in touch with the divergent views. The national structure of GAMUT, which includes researchers in Perth and Brisbane across a range of relevant disciplines, makes GAMUT an ideal base to auspice such controversial debates, and a sound framework to build on the outcomes.

The importance and relevance of these issues is not confined to Australia: GAMUT is one of a global network of Centres of Excellence funded by the Volvo Research and Education Foundation (VREF). These Centres meet and collaborate to give grounded global outcomes from their combined programs.

This particular Forum broke new ground for the GAMUT Centre in bringing together the different people in the Centre across Australia, using Access Grid technology to enable the several groups of people to interact in a natural and effective manner. It worked as envisaged and enabled people from across Australia to participate in a manner that made all participants feel part of a single team. Using this communications technology required careful support from the University eScience technical team, who made this a seamless success. The significance of this innovation is that for future forums across GAMUT, the other VREF Centres and other interested parties can now be included in just the same way. Increased frequency and indeed informality of such exchanges bodes well for the development of a coherent outcome from the work of these different centres.

The structure of the Forum and the framework in which it was set up was well received by the participants, and will now form a key tool to support part of GAMUT's operations and outreach.

Further forums will follow this one, and one useful result is that more frequent general meetings of GAMUT using Access Grid are now seen to be practicable and effective by all the participating parties.

The organizing committee,

Carey Curtis, Leigh Glover, Crystal Legacy, and Marcus Wigan.

November, 2008

Governance Forum Schedule

1.15 - 1.30pm	Welcome - Prof. Bill Russell, GAMUT
1.30 - 1.45pm	Opening Address - Prof. Philip Goad, Director, Melbourne School of Design
1.45 - 2.05pm	Key Note Speaker: Prof. Brian Howe, A.O.
2.05 - 2.25pm	Key Note Speaker: Jim Betts, Secretary, Dept. of Transport (Victoria)
2.25 - 3.10pm	Session "Key Governance Issues From Experience" Chair: Assoc. Prof. Carey Curtis, GAMUT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prof. Marcus Wigan, GAMUT• Cr. Janet Rice, City of Maribyrnong• Kenneth Davidson, <i>The Age</i>• Prof. Graeme Hodge, Monash University• Dr. Max Lay, A.M., Director, ConnectEast and Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne
3.10 - 3.30pm	Coffee Break - Outside Room 103
3.30 - 4.45pm	Discussion Groups by Key Governance Issues
5.00 - 5.30pm	Discussion Group Summary Session
5.30 - 5.45pm	Closing
5.45 - 7.00pm	Drinks & Light Snacks & Informal Discussions - Outside Room 103

Welcome Address

“GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE”

Prof. Bill Russell, GAMUT

Acknowledgement of Country:

I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, on which this meeting takes place.

Video Conference:

GAMUT is a national body with Australian Partners in Perth and Brisbane. The matter discussed today fits within a wider debate going on nationally regarding infrastructure governance. Therefore interest in this forum today spans across the country. This event is therefore being teleconferenced to the University of Western Australia and to Griffith University to allow interested parties at these two locations an opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Due to the high level of interest in this forum, and the limited space available in this room, several of the participants today are taking part via video conferencing at 723 Swanston Street.

Introduction to the Forum:

Major infrastructure projects and coherent transport and planning strategies are difficult to set up. Managing these projects in a context of climate change, oil scarcity and population growth is critical. This forum focuses on issues of governance and management including accountability, transparency, information mediation and planning. These issues have been raised in response to the ongoing national initiatives currently under way for investment in transport infrastructure, the impending national action on climate change, and, in Victoria, the publication of the Eddington Report.

This Forum is a way of using the independent position of the University and GAMUT to explore what people with experience in the area regard as the key issues.

The forum is intended to provide a platform for the national debate on infrastructure governance, identifying key issues, providing a critique of current practices, and considering ideas for improving governance.

The forum offers an opportunity to explore a range of perspectives on better governance in a way that takes account these perspectives and moves the debate forward.

This forum will contribute to the national debate on infrastructure by identifying key issues and needs, providing a critique of current practices, and considering ideas for improving governance.

Infrastructure investments, especially in transport, are contentious, difficult and lead to great community stresses and expenditures. Good governance is the key to mediating these stresses and achieving effective results. This forum enables the general public to raise what they think are key issues regarding the governance of transport infrastructure. Ideas for addressing the key concerns which arise in the discussion will be encouraged.

Expected Outcomes of this Forum:

Participants will be able to discuss best practices and experiences and provide a venue for networking.

GAMUT will use the forum as an opportunity to gather information from an array of perspectives as part of its on-going work in promoting improved governance of infrastructure development in Australia.

The results will include a better level of understanding of what needs to be addressed and the key measures to deploy.

This meeting will also provide a platform to strengthen links with executive bodies, provide a way of carrying the results forward, and reporting them in an open manner as progress is made.

Make up of Audience:

The forum comprised of MPs, state and local government officers, community groups, academics and researchers, business representatives, consultants and non-government organizations, and interested members of the community.

**Welcome to Participants on Behalf of the Faculty and the University of Melbourne
Prof. Philip Goad**

Key Note Speakers

Hon. Brian Howe

A synopsis of Mr. Howe's presentation:

The Hon. Brian Howe A.O. presented a detailed account of Commonwealth involvement in urban infrastructure during the 1990s. Having served as the Deputy Prime Minister during the Kennett years (1991–1995), Howe reflected on the *Better Cities Program* which provided capital grants (\$816 million) to State and Local Government, in accordance with population, for capital works projects from 1991–1995. During this period the Commonwealth, through the National Capital Planning Authority, exercised an active role in monitoring progress of Area Strategies against strategy milestones. Area Strategies were linked to a pool of government funds, however funding would be suspended for an Area Strategy if progress was inadequate.

The *Better Cities Program* was designed to improve the efficiency of investment in Australia's urban infrastructure. In *Better Cities* the Commonwealth argued for urban consolidation in the inner city and rail based corridors as the basis for urban expansion. The success of significant initiatives carried out in cooperation with the States and Local Government in inner city areas in Brisbane (Teneriffe and Fortitude Valley) Sydney (Ultimo Pyrmont) Melbourne (Flemington) and in Perth (Subiaco and East Perth) were significant in creating a climate which is driving inner city renewal across Australia today. The focus on rail-based corridors providing the opportunity for higher density suburbs has also provided an important model evident in the Brisbane to Robina rail line as in the Dandenong to Cranbourne line in Melbourne. However, it is possibly in Perth that this model initially supported by the *Better Cities Program* provided a framework for that cities suburban expansion.

The program required cooperation and financial contributions by all three levels of government. It was designed to demonstrate a new model of governance at a time in which governments were recognising that if they were to get the results desired they would need to give much attention to implementation strategies. Although the *Better Cities Program* was only a demonstration program it provided a model of shared governance between the tiers of government. The limited life of this program suggests that a non-partisan program may ensure continuity between elections.

There is a need for a shift from the dominance of hierarchical bureaucratic structures to more complex models of governance. This process is characterised by a broad dispersion of power and responsibilities in society. No one controls all the tools or possesses all the levers to address the complex issues that people really care about. It is necessary to share power more widely while seeking to do it on the basis of shared values and policies. Shared governance is the management of non-hierarchical relationships among multiple actors. The *Better Cities Program* represented an early example of this new approach to government and governance.

In this conference, which focuses especially on governance and transport, these issues are very important. In the *Better Cities Program* the Commonwealth tried to demonstrate some examples of where the provision of transport infrastructure might be used to shape the pattern growth of cities in ways, which were closely linked and integrated with broader planning objectives. In other words: to seek to realize broader social, environmental objectives in addition to improved travel times or improving individual choice. For too long in Australia the planning exercise is a separate process for investment decisions. This has often led to the expectation of investment in a corridor or connecting a community into the system only to recognise later that budgets are formed out of a different and perhaps competing strategy. It is this sense of looking for ways that the provision of transport might be better integrated with the planning of urban systems that lies behind this conference.

Finally, what are some of the things to be learned from the *Better Cities Program*?

- It is both very important to have programs with multiple objectives but it is very important that all of those objectives are understood and are given weight in implementation.

- Fundamental to the *Better Cities Program* was the concept of Area Strategies. This device was linked to the pooling of funds so that the focus was on realizing the objectives of the Strategy.
- The Commonwealth in the *Better Cities Program* operated with very limited professional planning staff and relied heavily on the National Capital Planning Authority. The Commonwealth tends to be spatially blind and does not assess the impact of decisions it makes on urban or regional areas. This tends to limit the extent to which the Commonwealth will think in terms of integrated outcomes.
- The very limited life of the Program underlines the importance of achieving cross party support for programs such as this that depend on continuity to make a difference. The *Better Cities Program* was designed to be a demonstration program showing how the Commonwealth might cooperate across government to achieve objectives in the long-term interest of Australia.
- The opportunity for this program was an outcome of a more positive climate in Federal State relations in the 1990's but, of course, this climate was not especially welcoming to local government. It is important to include local government as an initiating partner in the strategy.

Mr. Jim Betts

A synopsis of Mr. Bett's presentation:

Mr. Jim Betts, Secretary of the Department of Transport (Victoria), described the need for government to deliver a high quality network of urban transport. He asserted that governance covers the structures, processes and accountabilities surrounding transport delivery, but it is also important to adequately fund public transport to change the culture and social climate around it and to have talent and will to transform.

Transport is a network, so governance needs to be related to moving people and goods, regardless of how. To focus on this objective, there is a need to break down silos and barriers between transport and land use policy that determines where new Victorians live and work – and consider that transport shapes land use. Land use planning is critical – we need to blend DPCD and DOT work, and get meaningful clusters of local governments. At the top tier of a transport system you need an overall land use strategic framework. At the middle level you need tactics to achieve it, and a lower level – the operations level – to support them both.

Models of governance can include a monolithic or small specialised function to oversee the network. The Zurich model is a small lean organisation that sets standards and coordinates services. French models are helped by having a hypothecated tax so the authorities can be more independent. There is also a need to involve local government around station amenity improvement – but local government in Victoria is too small to make a big difference, and has no funds to upgrade public transport, therefore we may need to cluster local government efforts to improve public transport. Whatever model is used, there are difficulties, for example in getting public transport its share of the pie, guiding and constraining land use so it supports the transport system, and making hard choices, such as parking constraints.

Reflecting on the Sir Rod Eddington Report (released April 2008), Betts described how release of this report has provided a spotlight on the pressures facing the transport network (including both public transport and roads). Emerging as well from this report has been issues of financing and delivery of major infrastructure projects. The debate has now shifted from the need for investment into transport infrastructure, into a debate about what transport infrastructure projects should appear first on the government's agenda.

Recently, the Commonwealth Government has promised \$20 billion to the Building Australia Fund. Signaling its intention to fund major urban transport projects, including large urban rail projects aimed at alleviating congestion in our major cities. This is something supporters of public transport have been demanding for decades. Infrastructure Australia has been created to prioritise infrastructure decisions. This agency will be chaired by Sir Rod Eddington. This announcement by

the Commonwealth Government was followed by a commitment to subject projects submitted to Infrastructure Australia to rigorous scrutiny and cost benefit analysis.

The State Government of Victoria is currently in the process of responding to the Eddington Report as well as developing an integrated transport plan which will determine the direction for the Victorian transport network for the next 25 years. The State Government is currently consulting widely on this plan which will be released in late 2008.

Betts explained that the department and the government must frame its response to our key transport challenges by:

- Thinking of network solutions;
- Linking transport decisions to land use planning and population growth – not just the size of the growth, but where Melbourne can accommodate one million extra people; and
- Recognising the realities of the carbon constrained world we are entering.

Panel Discussion Session

Five panel presentations were made by distinguished individuals with significant experience in the area of governance and management of urban transport. Each speaker was allocated five minutes to reflect on their experience and one slide to visually illustrate their points. This format enabled speakers to present their viewpoints without being tied to a particular party or organizational mandate.

The following is a reproduction of summary points presented by each of the five speakers.

Prof. Marcus Wigan

- The levels of education and information access of the community have risen substantially, at the same time as the sharp growth in outsourcing of expertise from government: this demands a different model of community engagement
- Evidence based policy can all too easily fall into the UK disease of 'policy led evidence' by carefully circumscribed Briefs and even edited outcome reports
- Consequently, contestable evidence-based policy is now needed, and is now possible due to (1) above
- Information and analysis helps set the framework for the complex and rapidly changing interactive environments now upon us. All of the above need to be addressed to enable us to address them successfully

Cr. Janet Rice

- A vision and long term transport plan for sustainable and equitable transport, with
 - A transparent and collaborative process to develop this plan
 - A commitment to implement this plan
- Effective transparent and accountable management and governance mechanisms. A Melbourne wide transport authority that links to a regional planning authority seems to be the obvious mechanism
- Transparent and accountable processes for decision making

Kenneth Davidson

- Melbourne's urban rail system is not meeting the growing demand from commuters which is caused by increasing road congestion
- Is the primary constraint on the ability of the urban rail system to meet the existing and future challenge of additional demand for services due to bad management or lack of capacity on the rail system?
 - This is the fault of the Bracks/Brumby government which has refused to have an expert enquiry into the core issue of why the City Loop is a bottleneck preventing more intensive use of the existing system
- It can only be resolved by an independent and open enquiry by experts in timetabling and engineering to see where the real constraints are
- Until such an enquiry is complete, plans to extend the existing franchise system should be suspended and any plans to implement the Eddington proposal to relieve the pressure on the Loop by investment of \$8.5 billion in a new central rail tunnel should be put on hold

- A decision to go ahead with the Eddington road and/or rail tunnels without an expert and open public enquiry first, would probably delay upgrading and extension of the existing rail network for at least a generation. It would be a corruption of the process of good government. And, given the likely policy responses imposed on government by angry commuters, Peak Oil and climate change, lead to a change of government at the next election

Prof. Graeme Hodge

- Need a long-term vision emphasising that too much emphasis is placed on major transport events
- Need for coherence in governance, management and service delivery
- Two questions to be pondered during the breakout group discussions:
 - What do we need to do to reclaim professional and transparent transport governance?
 - How can we ensure powerful conflicts of interest are visibly clear?

Dr. Max Lay, A.M.

- The need for a clear urban transport policy, in terms of achievable and measurable outcomes, and consistent with other government policies in areas such as budgets, land use and population. This "task" would be the role of government acting as an informed specifier, purchaser and user. The next four "tasks" would be delivered and implemented outside of government
- The creation of a program to implement the above policy and deliver its proposed outcomes, within its budget and time-frame
- A published pipeline of forward projects within the program, with nominated budgets, implementation periods and outcomes, and which have all passed through first-stage benefit/cost and feasibility filters
- A process for delivering and implementing the projects, which is separate to the operation of the transport system
- A continual feed-back loop between operations, and user needs, policy development, program implementation and project assessment

Summary of Participant's Discussion Sessions

The second half of the Governance Forum enabled participants to reflect on the experiences presented by the two keynote speakers and the five panelists. Forum participants were randomly selected to participate in one of five breakout groups. Each breakout group was facilitated by a GAMUT partner. The purpose of the exercise was to give space to each participant to reflect on the ideas presented by the speakers and based on their own experience, identify what other governance issues they feel need to be addressed. To assist with the discussion, the breakout session was structured around four key questions. These questions are as follows:

1. What do you see as the key issues surrounding governance for transport infrastructure?
2. What are the main barriers to good governance?
3. How can we overcome issues preventing good governance for transport infrastructure?
4. What can we all do in the future to help overcome the barriers?

The following is a canvass of the range of issues raised including examples and specific issues discussed. It is important to note that this is a summary and not every item discussed is included specifically as some similar topics and themes have been combined. The catalytic factor was the Forum focus on the management, accountability and transparency of the processes involved.

Note that in general greater attention was given to Question 1 and there is correspondingly greater number of issues identified and considered.

Question 1

What do you see as the key issues surrounding governance for transport infrastructure?

The first breakout discussion question raised concerns over current governance procedures and practices at the state and national level. This included philosophical and pragmatic issues and consideration for future improvements.

Synopsis

Concerns were raised over governance procedures and practices at the state and national level. These included the exclusion of community from decision-making for major infrastructural projects. Local governments are often left out of infrastructure planning and out of routine land use and transport planning at the state level. A loss of credibility and legitimacy for planning by the general public on political, social and technical grounds has resulted. Therefore, a culture of inclusive and legitimate planning is needed.

Large projects are too frequently identified as 'special' and outside normal activity and therefore require the use of special processes. What results are large infrastructural projects evolving into mega 'events' for the state government. This represents a failure of objective planning. Participants cited the Eddington Inquiry as an example.

Participants expressed doubts over the abilities within existing planning structures to deal with these issues. Further, the current urban planning model in Victoria can be characterised by crises management. The need for more robust plans was stated reflecting the failure of growth management strategies in the major cities to stop substantial growth on the urban fringe and associated reliance on private motor vehicles.

Key Issues

An absence of 'transparency' in decision-making and planning processes and frequently poorly developed mechanisms of public accountability

The frequent lack of openness in decision-making was flagged as a major governance issue. Public agencies have failed to act openly and have not acted in the boarder public interest, but as supporters for project development. This contributes to a lack of public accountability of those

involved in infrastructure projects. A reasonable goal for planning and decision-making by governmental bodies for infrastructure projects is a fully transparent and accountable process. Additional formal regulation may be necessary to ensure effective reporting and accountability by public agencies.

Excessive use is made of 'commercial-in-confidence' provisions and 'Cabinet-in-confidence' status (even to the extent of delaying access by the Auditor General). Public agencies have opportunities to exploit their position through meeting the legal requirements of information disclosure, but manipulating the timing of information releases so as to inhibit scrutiny and independent analysis (such as by the Auditor General). The use of confidentiality should be minimal and exceptional.

There is a lack of legitimacy in current infrastructure provision activity and an absence of legitimate planning. This partially results from the neglect of public transport customers/ consumers' experience relevant to transport planning. Regular checks are needed to ensure that corporate governance policy reflects current needs and that all relevant public sector staff, including those new to the entity, are regularly made aware of the requirements/guidelines/and standards.

Lack of Public Engagement and Community Consultation

Public bodies have frequently failed in their responsibility to consult with the community. There are often considerable barriers to public involvement and public debate over infrastructure which often occurs in the latter phases of project development when many of the big decisions have already been made. General recognition that the community as the 'ultimate consumer' is needed and therefore a push should be made to encourage project proponents to engage with end-users. It was concluded that working with the community is a fundamental requirement of governance.

Lack of Information for Planning Purposes, with Specific Identification of Public Transport Modeling and Population Forecasting

There is currently inadequate information on which to make decisions over transport infrastructure (such as public transport models). Additionally, there are inconsistencies in the available data sets (such as travel information) and inadequate funding support for data collection (and maintenance).

Population growth in major cities and regional centers is a major determinant of infrastructure demand, yet many planning jurisdictions seem to be constantly 'surprised' by population growth, suggesting that population growth is poorly understood and/or poorly forecasted. Therefore, greater consideration needs to be given to the role of population growth and moving from a 'reactive' response to population to a planning response for anticipated growth.

A Need for a Vision Regarding Infrastructure Planning and Provision

Currently, there is a lack of vision for the infrastructure program and provision. Rather, state governments have concentrated on the short-term at the cost of considering the longer-term impacts. States have focused excessively and almost exclusively on 'big projects' and assumed that this amounts to infrastructure provision and planning ('too much big projects and too little big picture').

Longer-term infrastructure planning and implementation is required in Australia and project proposals should fit and comply with an established longer-term plan. Inconsistencies in infrastructure development and inappropriate and controversial projects could be reduced by having a credible and established framework. Project proposals should be presented to the community in the context of the relevant longer-term plan and planning process.

'Planning-to-Practice' Gaps: Failure to Implement Existing Plans and the Implementation of Projects Outside of Existing Plans

Ad-hoc decision-making dimensions in infrastructure provision is common; there is a frequent absence of orderly and planned infrastructure provision and furthermore, there is a tendency to fall into a cycle of dispute—paralysis—ad hoc single project development. A major problem is not the absence of urban plans and strategies per se, rather it is that actual ‘development on the ground’ that is contrary to these plans that is allowed to occur.

When development practices produce outcomes significantly different from those anticipated from urban planning, the legitimacy of the planning process is undermined and this fosters cynicism over the value of planning. As an example, there is dissatisfaction with the performance of the *Melbourne 2030* strategic plan, especially in its implementation. There is a concern that political interests have intervened to stymie or circumvent urban planning. In addition, political cycles have also distorted legitimate planning outcomes; i.e., the ‘reward’ from voters to elected representatives who deliver projects in their term.

A Lack of Targets and Indicators

A need was expressed with regards to the importance of developing new project assessment and methodology for transport infrastructure projects. This includes better indicators for implementation. Indicators are significant as they illustrate a story of what is being delivered.

Land-use and Transport Integration

There is a failure of land use and transport planning integration which includes provision for a tightly coordinated urban land use planning. An improved understanding of the importance of land-use and transport integration needs to be built into organizational structures.

Improved land-use and transport integration is essential for achieving more sustainable transport. Greater attention must be paid to public transport services, as well as the recognition of all modes (roads, rail, footpaths, cycle ways, and footpaths) and their relationship to land use.

Lack of Funding

The uncertainty over medium and longer-term funding for infrastructure has eroded infrastructure planning. Transport infrastructure has been under-funded, with a particular neglect by the federal government to address urban public transport and for rail freight. In addition, state governments have not been willing and/or able to provide sufficient financial resources for this infrastructure. This problem is compounded by the appearance that funding for infrastructure is decided on a case-by-case basis at irregular intervals.

Lack of Mix-use Development

Greater consideration needs to be given to the location of employment centres the cities, as these are strong influences on overall transport demands. Overall, urban land use planning and zoning has generally failed to produce the types of land uses that reduce the demand for lengthy, car-based travel and promote active and public transport. Closer co-location of residential, service (e.g., educational, medical, governmental, and retail), and employment land uses can reduce the length and number of journeys. Perhaps there is a role for more interventionist planning.

Problems of Government ‘Silos and Tiers’

The departmental ‘silos’ which exist limit the opportunity for a coordinated government response particularly the challenges associated with transport-land use integration.

There is a lack of coordination and collaboration between the tiers of government. For instance, the Commonwealth is not interested in the notion of continuous planning and this is compounded by the fact that they are also spatially blind, nor do they worry about the consequences of their policies on other levels of government. An effective interface between the tiers of government is required. Until this happens, the lack of interface will remain a barrier. It is important to note that 'mega-departments', which can produce deep division within departments, are not necessarily the solution to these silos. Rather, better vertical communication is required to draw local government into the collaboration as they are the implementers of many planning decisions.

The concern surrounding how to integrate local government planning into state and federal planning was expressed by participants. There is a further need to investigate regional clusters, e.g. LeadWest.

Other issues identified included the need for further effort into Smart Growth Communities, modeling that is accessible to local councils, and the encouragement of the Australian Accounting Standards Board to progress their work on performance standards for governments at all levels (local, state, and federal).

Local Government Challenges

It was questioned whether individual Councils have sufficient resources to address these issues. It was also questioned whether Councils might be too big or too small to be effective. A coalition of local governments may assist with addressing some of the barriers.

Local governments need to become professionalized to be more informed.

Lack of Expertise

There was a concern expressed over a lack of expertise of professionals dealing with infrastructure design, development, appraisal, management, and implementation. Some professional routines and practices are outmoded or inappropriate to changing circumstances and new agendas. It was suggested that professional groups needed to improve their skills to deal with a new agenda and a new approach. Many of the responses to issues has involved narrowing down complex problems and giving these to small professional groups when what is needed is for solutions to be generated by teams or groups with broader professional expertise.

PPPP (Private-Public Partnership Problems)

With regards to public-private partnerships, there is a concern over the application of PPP models for infrastructure development. The concern is that the PPP model promotes short-term returns and profit-making over and above longer-term community interests.

Specific Neglect of Transport Needs of the Freight Sector

Transport systems are too often considered and planned with freight and passenger demands considered as independent and separate. Freight issues tend to be seen in a narrow local context and therefore ignore the role of regional resources and demands. To address these issues, there needs to be more environmentally sustainable modes to transport freight. The aggregation of freight hubs would allow these to be more effectively served by rail; or link sea routes which can be more efficient than over land.

Tension between Cars vs. Public Transport

Transport infrastructure provision across Australia has given far greater support to road-building than to public transport, as made evident by the notable expansion of urban freeways in the larger cities. Comparatively, urban public transport infrastructure and rural and inter-city rail freight services has generally not been greatly expanded since the 1930s (with a few exceptions, such as in Perth in the last decade). Commonwealth funding for transport infrastructure is highly unbalanced with roads being funded and public transport being left to state governments. This federal funding imbalance is reflected in the major cities' neglect of investment in public transport infrastructure. As an example, there is a concern that VicRoads and the PTC in Victoria might still be largely independent in outlook and functioning, despite the opportunities for communication at the senior executive level.

Question 2

What are the main barriers to good governance?

Synopsis

As might be expected, many of the main barriers identified picked up themes from Question 1, but covered these in greater depth. Topics ranged from the obvious issue of inadequate funding, to discussions over democratic ideals and planning systems, to matters of strategy and tactics, such as the role for leadership and a critique of current funding arrangements. These were interesting discussions of the complex issues of culture and behaviour as barriers to change.

Key Points

Lack of Funding

Funding structures were identified as the greatest barrier. There is inadequate funding and inequitable distribution of funding in infrastructure. Thus there is a need to both broaden the funding stream, and to also encourage more federal dollars into the funding for more public transport. Whereas the road lobby has alternative funding sources, public transport does not.

Treasury expectations and methods of assessment pose a problem for obtaining adequate funding for public transport. This is further complicated by the ad hoc and politically motivated way in which dollars are spent. Furthermore, investment poses a barrier as it creates an imbalance in funding arrangements, e.g., funding for roads not public transport.

Lack of Leadership and Federal Involvement

Better leadership is required to help manage transport infrastructure. What is also required is more federal interest in urban planning.

Democracy vs Good Planning

Populist democracy is being misconstrued as good governance and good planning. While regulating car use in the centre of the city may be political suicide, the need to reduce car access to the city is a key component to promoting public transport use.

Cultural and Behavioral Challenges

From a bottom-up perspective, the required behavior change needed to shift transport modes away from the car will be difficult. While dense living and transit-oriented development models are favored, it really is up to the individuals where they choose to live.

Many of the issues which pose a challenge for planning do not resonate with the general population. There is this unfounded expectation that professionals will work out solutions to the problems. It is

not until the issue hits crisis proportions that the general population will get switched into the debate.

It might be useful to undertake before and after surveys of public attitudes and support levels for different programs and policies. This will be an interesting way to learn how knowledge, perception and acceptance shift during a process of problem solving and policy implementation.

Information Transfer

There is a concern surrounding the commercialization of internal data transfer even within a department like Victoria's VicRoads.

Not Asking the Hard Questions

Public debate on many of these issues is inadequate; there appears to be a reluctance in the public sphere to identify and debate the 'hard questions', e.g., there is often no real questioning or discussion about car use, but this is an important issue over how to best determine what the options are for the future. What is also required is pre- and post-intervention evaluation of infrastructure projects (covering both intended and unintended policy impacts) for social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Question 3

How can we overcome issues preventing good governance for transport infrastructure?

Synopsis

Several themes emerged in response to the key issues and barriers raised above. Discussions were wide-ranging on how to address these barriers, covering the themes of goal-setting, leadership, institutional design, public participation, project performance monitoring, research, and education and learning. The following is a list of themes and a brief description of the ideas that participants gave to support them.

Key Points

Leadership

Inadequate leadership, from both the state and federal government, was a strong sentiment conveyed by forum participants. To overcome the lack of leadership by the state government, it should develop a strong vision, engage more widely with the public in a sophisticated debate and engage in evidence based research to support decisions. Stronger federal leadership could be achieved via tax and trading schemes which could offer alternative ways to fund infrastructure projects. Long-term funding should be allocated to link with long-term plans.

Institutional Consolidation through Creating a Single Agency

To address issues of fragmentation of governance between local government initiatives, coordination would be improved with the inception of a regional coordinating agency. This agency would be integrated and would allow for initiatives to be coordinated between local government, and further provide a forum for collaboration between local government to take place.

An independent agency to act as an arbitrator between tiers of government and designated Minister would encourage the presentation of sound evidence to support investment into infrastructure. The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) is a structure proposed as a way of integrating transport and land-use planning and addressing challenges associated with funding.

Improved Sector Coordination

Somewhat related to the ideas of a regional coordinating agency and an independent agency is the suggestion of better integration of the departments and agencies involved in infrastructure planning, development, and operation. Sector integration would allow different collaboration on policies and program. Better sector integration would enable information sharing and better communication between sectors of various successes and failures.

Role for Public Debate as a Part of Policy Refinement and Evolution

An on-going dialogue is required to ensure that debate is continuous to allow for new variables to be integrated into the discussion as they arise. Knowledge and information will always be evolving and changing as the political, social, environmental, and economic context evolves and changes. This on-going dialogue needs to be inclusive, enabling equal opportunity for participation.

Need for a 'Paradigm Shift' in Policy and Planning

It was the view expressed by some participants that a transformational change (i.e., a 'paradigm shift') is required. Rather than relying on an incremental approach, a more fundamental shift needs to occur.

Usefulness of Demonstration Projects

Demonstration projects can be developed to provide a place where many of the complex effects created by transport infrastructure can be identified and analysed. This would provide a living model of the vision that the wider region wants to achieve.

Setting Reasonable and Achievable Targets and Yardsticks for On-going Performance Assessment

Too often large infrastructure projects produce 'surprising' failures – sometimes these are greater than need be or could have been avoided altogether, if there had been adequate performance assessment during the project. Setting small targets should be a priority. For instance, all infrastructural projects should be subject to critical path analysis with key points of performance which is tied to particular timeframes. Regular reporting of performance should be made mandatory.

Research and the Creation of Knowledge Networks

Investment into research would assist in creating knowledge networks between sectors (i.e., academics, bureaucrats, professionals, consultants, etc). Research would provide a way of delivering evidence of successful policies and failed programs from which we can learn. This can help facilitate good governance decision-making.

Modeling and Forecasting of Policy Proposals

Modeling exercises provide a valuable resource to forecast policy impacts.

Role for Education

Educational programs are required to better articulate to the public how plans will impact their regions.

Learning from Best Practices and International Experience

Australian cities are very insular and often do a poor job at looking elsewhere for inspiration and examples. We need a better way to inform the public discourse about what is going on in other places and draw from those experiences and apply the lessons here.

Need for 'Operational Vision'

An operational vision is required which specifies how the city functions. This will include its inefficiencies, what work effectively and what needs to be approved.

Question 4

What can we all do in the future to help overcome the barriers?

Synopsis

The following ideas emerged in response to the barriers discussed under Question 3. Fewer items appear here as a result of the inevitable time constraint facing the final theme in a comprehensive set of discussions, rather than any waning of interest in this question. Many of the themes identified pick up those identified earlier, such as the role of public debate, promoting greater openness in decision-making, selecting opportunities for timely intervention, and the role of learning.

Key Points

Greater Public Involvement in the Debate

The state government needs to ensure that the public is involved in the debate (including through forums such as this one). There needs to be greater acceptance by project proponents of the necessity of engaging with participants and end-users.

People also need to be encouraged to become involved. Communities need to take advantage of the formal opportunities for consultation involved in the planning process, including making responses to project briefs and Terms of Reference (e.g., The Eddington Inquiry).

There needs to be clarity over the design and purpose of public consultation, including a description of how the government and/ or project proponent will use the public input.

Encouraging Transparency

All parties must commit to supporting the concept that real transparency is in the best interests of the community.

Processes and Purposefulness of Participation

Many of the issues raised indicated a tension between rapid clarification of government intentions and rapid project completion and the all-too-evident need for the community to participate at an earlier stage, even as early as brief formulation.

It is important to consider the issues of the evaluation of different approaches to addressing infrastructure problems and issues (i.e., the 'pre-proposal' stage), rather than using public consultation to refine a final project proposal that has been selected for development. Often the cases of the strongest community objections to projects cannot be resolved through changes to, say, the project's design, because the community rejects the project as a whole (usually in these cases, the community believes that alternatives to the project should have been adopted or at least

publicly considered). Such problems indicate the value of public involvement in genuine evaluation of alternatives.

Developing Cultures of Trust and the Goal of Probity in Dealing with the Community

Many members of the public regard the use of public consultation cynically and with good reason. For future consultation to be successful, governments must work to restore community trust in the value and worth of community consultation through strict adherence to the goals of dealing fairly and openly with the public. Governments need to ensure that the highest standards for community consultation are met and when government is itself the developer/ proponent, than it must establish procedures that ensure the independence and legitimacy of public consultation processes. There is a case for considerable reform in this area.

Examining, and Learning from, Past Failures

We need to understand and learn from past failures. We also need to look at why things did not happen in the past, e.g., corruption.

Discussion

Overall, the discussions focussed on the common belief that current practices of governance for transport infrastructure are inadequate and need to be improved, and that there are a number of ways in which this could be achieved.

The issues raised were predominantly process oriented rather than objective or criteria oriented. This underlines the value of focussing on *process failures* when such a divergent set of values are present: exactly as they are in the community as a whole. It is perfectly clear that when governance is absent, issues associated with the essentially political nature of balancing different interests, objectives and pressures, cannot be solved. However, this system itself (governance) can readily improve the signals between government, stakeholders and various interests affected.

Improving these signals has become increasingly important. The increasing uncertainties of even the short run futures involve major, and not easily reversible, capital commitments. Unlike the last century, the window to be able to determine if progress is being made, or if these investments will prove to be effective is now very short, certainly shorter than the timetable for completing any one of the many major investments now under consideration.

More transparent and effective governance will have two major effects:

1. Engage the communities involved in the outcomes (good and bad) to a greater degree; and
2. Enable more rapid responses by government, without the autocratic overlay usually associated with 'streamlining'.

Throughout the discussions and amongst the discussion groups, several topics featured prominently:

- *Values*: Of those expressed in current arrangements and practices and those neglected (notably sustainability and social welfare)
- *Knowledge*: Of information and interpretations used in governance and of important issues in which governance had an inadequate understanding (linked to the need for research to address knowledge gaps)
- *Democracy and community involvement*: Public participation in contemporary governance arrangements was consistently criticised as inadequate; current governance has paid insufficient attention to democratic principles
- *Accountability*: An absence of accountability by all spheres of government in infrastructure governance was highlighted
- *Federal system of government*: A crucial feature of infrastructure governance is the federal–state–local division of roles and responsibilities
- *Institutional design and practices*: Agency coordination, agency cooperation, agency hierarchies, exclusion, resource allocation and funding, decision-making processes, and relationships between agencies and elected officials were identified and discussed, and
- *Plans and strategies*: Value of and need for, performance evaluation of existing plans, processes of plan making, effectiveness and influence of, were discussed in principle and in detail
- *Resources*: Infrastructure financing and assessment of different financing models and approaches
- *Politics*: Role and place of elected officials, influence of the electoral cycle, role of the media, value of NGO contributions, difficulties facing NGO inputs and of the relationship with public expectations

This diversity of views expressed by the forum participants is in itself instructive, especially considering that many of the participants are also players in the government processes, and is indicative of the complexity of the community response to these issues. Although the problems identified do not have simple remedies, these discussions were able to identify a number of ideas, proposals, and ways of thinking that could become part of the solutions. Such resolutions to these problems feature the idea that good governance for transport infrastructure involves putting the community back into governance.

Appendices

Appendix I - Circulation List from Registrations

Kate Alder	Ian Jones
Ron Amor	John Kneen
Greg Aplin	Heinz-Josef Kreutz
Geoff Baker	Max Lay
Ali Barr	Crystal Legacy
Colin Bates	Oliver Lin
Douglas Bell	David Littlewood
Jim Betts	Chris Loader
Ian Bird	Clay Lucas
Russell Bittner	Ian Manning
Scott Bloodworth	Jose Mantilla
Keith Brewis	David Mayes
Denisse Briceno	Jodie McFarlane
Mark Burton	Dale MacKenzie
Ian Butterworth	Scott McKenzie
Fiona Calvert	Peter McIntyre
Bernie Carolan	Jenny Morris
Felipe Carvajal	Naomi Mullumby
Hamish Christie	Leanne Murphy
Ashley Cook	Josephine Neal
Brigitte Cucinelli	Annabelle Ong
Daniel Cucinelli	Stuart Outhred
Carey Curtis	Robert Pearce
Kenneth Davidson	Bill Pemberton
Jim Dixon	Tim Petersen
Birute Don	Euan Ramsay
Peter Doupe	Amanda Reid
Peter Elliott	Janet Rice
Elliot Fishman	Julie Rudner
Brian Fitts	Bill Russell
Charlotte Fliegner	Caitlin Ryan
Martin Foley	Julia Smith
Ashley Gardiner	Melissa Sparrow
Tom Garrish	Cameron Stewart
Leigh Glover	John Stone
John Harland	Russell Thompson
Danielle Hearn	Kerry Todero
Aaron Hemsley	Simon Verey
John Hennessy	Sean Walsh
Derrick Hitchins	Kelvin Ward
Graeme Hodge	Carolyn Whitzman
Skye Holcombe	Marcus Wigan
Brian Howe	Rebecca Wigan
Ian Hundley	Tina Wigan
Nicholas Hurley	Elisabeth Williams
Rebecca Jenkins	Rebecca Yuen
Xiaohua Jin	
Victoria Johnson	

Appendix II - Organizations Represented

Astucia (Aust) Pty Ltd
Austraffic (member of AITPM)
Bus Vic
Centre for Public Policy, University of Melbourne
City of Boroondara
City of Maribyrnong
City of Melbourne
City of Wyndham
City of Yarra
ConnectEast
Department of Transport, Govt. of Victoria
Department of Planning and Community Development, Govt. of Victoria
Dept of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Melbourne
Eastenders and Residents 3000
EPA Victoria
GRIMSHAW Architects
Herald Sun
Hyder Consulting
Institute for Sensible Transport
IXC Intermediary
Knox City Council
Manningham City Council
Maunsell Australia
MetLink
Monash University
Multi-modal Transport Solutions
Municipal Association of Victoria
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc.
RMIT Centre for Design
Sinclair Knight Merz
SKM
State Parliament of Victoria
State Services Authority
University of Melbourne Student Union
VicRoads
The Age

Media Release

Available for immediate release

Attention: Newsdesk/News editor

Issued: Monday 28 July 2008



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Transport infrastructure and governance under the spotlight at public forum

The University of Melbourne's Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT) will explore the key issues relating to Australia's transport infrastructure and related governance at a free public forum on Friday.

The forum, 'Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure' will continue GAMUT's contribution to the national transport debate on infrastructure by identifying key issues and needs, providing a critique of current practices, and considering ideas for improving governance.

Professor Bill Russell, Co-Director of GAMUT says the forum will provide the centre with an opportunity to gather information from an array of perspectives. "Major infrastructure projects and coherent transport and planning strategies are difficult to set up. Managing these projects in a context of climate change, oil scarcity and population growth is critical.

"This event will take the debate on governance and transport infrastructure forward on neutral ground, and offers an opportunity to explore a range of perspectives on better governance. That the forum is being networked across Australia and outside to other parties is proof of the intrinsic importance of such a debate."

"Infrastructure investments, especially in transport, are contentious, difficult and lead to great community stresses and expenditures. Good governance is the key to mediating these stresses and achieving effective results, and we want the community to have their input on it."

GAMUT was founded by Volvo Research and Educational Foundation (VREF) to address Governance issues in urban transport- this subject is rarely discussed by active participants. It is one of Australia's peak bodies for commentary on urban transport issues.

"The issues we are tackling at the forum have been raised in response to the ongoing national initiatives currently under way for investment in transport infrastructure, the impending national action on climate change, and, in Victoria, the publication of the Eddington Report."

EVENT DETAILS:

'Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure'
Friday, August 1 – 1pm to 6pm
Architecture Building Room 103 (eZone)
University of Melbourne, Parkville
Campus

Appendix IV - Forum Advertisement



“Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure”

Date: Friday August 1st, 2008
Time: 1pm to 6pm
Location: University of Melbourne, Parkville Campus
Architecture Building, room 103 (eZone)

Speakers: Prof. Brian Howe A.O.
Jim Betts, Secretary of Dept. of Transport
Prof. Marcus Wigan, GAMUT
Cr. Janet Rice, City of Maribyrnong
Kenneth Davidson, The Age
Prof. Graeme Hodge, Monash University
Dr. Max Lay A.M., Director of ConnectEast, Professorial Fellow Melbourne University.

This forum will discuss major governance issues raised by the Eddington Report, the Garnaut Climate Change Review, and Infrastructure Australia.

The target audience is MPs, state and local officers, community groups, academics, researchers, business representatives, consultants, non-government organizations, and interested members of the community.

There is no charge for the forum. Refreshments will be provided by the hosts: the Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT) and the Centre for Public Policy.

RSVP is essential as seating is limited. To RSVP please contact Leanne Murphy at lmurphy@unimelb.edu.au by Friday July 25th.

Appendix V - Forum Discussion Questions

“Good Governance for Transport Infrastructure” Public Forum

1 August 2008, University of Melbourne

NOTE: One GAMUT partner will be facilitating the discussion, and another GAMUT partner taking notes. Please nominate someone from the group to report back on the following discussion points.

Each group will be provided 5 minutes TOTAL to report back to the wider group during the Summary Session from 5 - 5.30 pm.

Breakout Group Discussion Questions:

1. What do you see as the key issues surrounding governance for transport infrastructure?
2. What are the main barriers to good governance?
3. How can we overcome issues preventing good governance for transport infrastructure?
4. What can we all do in the future to help overcome the barriers?