



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Irregular no. 45; March 1972

This is the Unpublished version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1972) Irregular no. 45; March 1972. Irregular (45). pp. 1-7.
(Unpublished)

The publisher's official version can be found at

Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/17096/>

(An irregular publication for members of the Townplanning Research Group:
not for publication or republication)

This issue:-

1. Free Public Transport---How Dinkum is Clark ?
2. MMBW Regional Plan (Contributions)

Free Public Transport---How Dinkum is Clark ?

"Yophs" and "Huls"

Mr. Nicholas Clark, head of the Transportation Section of the Department of Engineering, Melbourne University, has emerged as a father-figure of charity and humanity on behalf of the transport-deprived.

At a Labor Party seminar on 21/11/'71 organised by the Melbourne Federal Electorate Assembly he distributed a roneoed paper "Transport Policy for Cities" in which he advanced the idea of free public transport for "Yophs".

On page 16 "yophs" are defined to cover:-

- "y" = young
- "o" = old
- "p" = pupils
- "h" = handicapped
- "s" = sick

But there are 5 things worth examining before you clap and cheer:

- (1) Are there other transport-deprived?
- (2) Do the poor have different transport needs to the rich?
- (3) What quality and quantity of free public transport is there to be?
- (4) Who is to pay for it ?
- (5) Will the "yophs" be really better off?

Question (1)

Are there other transport-deprived?

Yes, there are ! There are "huls"

A word on each letter:-

- "h" = housewives
- "u" = under-age teenagers
- "l" = low-income workers
- "s" = sensible commuters

"H"---housewives residing at some distance from tram or train who are transport-deprived for five days of the week if their husbands and/or children use the family car/cars to go to work. This is not a matter necessarily of domestic morality: the selfish husband deliberately leaving his enslaved wife trapped, as if womens lib. is all that is needed to effect an adequate reform !

Clark with his tendentious surveys (pp 13-14) comes up with the concept of people (yophs) who are "captives of public transport", but nowhere comes up with the twin concept of "captives of public transport" Nevertheless, a hard fact of outer-suburban life, especially where the husband works also in the outer suburbs, is that husbands (and grown sons and daughters) must in practice use their cars to get to work, leaving their wives (or mothers) a captive of public transport, but extremely ill-served by it. Such a family, as a whole, is a "captive of private transport" (Incidentally, many more married women, some of whom are suffering from "housewife neurosis" could enter the workforce if there were efficient public transport)

"U"---"Under-age" Teenagers. That is, "under driving age. Clark has "young" as one of the "yophs", but it is not clear how young he means. He also has "pupils", but this category, one would think, refers mainly to primary school pupils below the age of puberty; certainly not to university attenders who are usually described as "students", and dubiously applicable to secondary scholars

For 5 years at least teenagers cannot legally drive cars (quite apart from the economic ability of their family to support an extra car, or any arguments of social desirability; two factors which mean that many 18 or 19-year-old teenagers may not yet own their own car)

"L" -- "low income workers" Strange indeed (until you know the answer) that Clark has not included in the "yophs" this very significant category.

Unskilled and semi-skilled workers (many of whom, incidentally, are migrants) and even many skilled workers, cannot support a car. Even among the CBD workers, there are thousands of shop assistants, typists, clerks, cleaners waitresses and others who cannot afford a car, and who have not been included by Clark among his "yophs".

Moreover thousands of industrial workers travel by public transport to the CBD and out again (Fishermens Bend for one example)

"S" - Sensible Commuters. The commuter who owns a car but deliberately chooses public transport can be regarded, in the context of Melbourne's 1970 deteriorating public transport conditions, as performing a public service. Yet he is a "sensible" traveller, because he is choosing "horses for courses", that is; public transport (if at all convenient) for work, and private transport for recreation.

Clark, with his trend-thinking, does not believe there is such a person. "A person will only go to a place if he can go there by car" is a Clark aphorism, but there are "sensible commuters, despite Clark. Such persons are also "transport-deprived" to the extent that the service they patronise is overcrowded, uncomfortable, infrequent and slow. The more sensible commuters there are the better, because the more demand there will be for better public transport, and the more frequent, comfortable and convenient this can become for the benefit of all the yophs and all the huls.

Why has Clark "forgotten" about the "huls" whilst his heart was bleeding for the "yophs"? Obviously because the transport-deprived "yophs" are off-peak travellers, but the equally transport-deprived "huls" are mostly peak-hour travellers or potentially such

Why Clark separates the two soon becomes apparent when we ask the second question, namely:

Question (2)

Do the poor have different transport needs to the rich ?

Clark says: "--the vocal public transport lobby in Australia is affluent, middle-class and politically powerful. They wish to obtain public funds for transport improvements to subsidise their choice of outer suburban living. There is little public pressure to improve public transport services from the yophs. Completely different policies are required for these two different roles of public transport. The outer suburbanite wants fast luxury express services direct to the city at peak hours. The yophs require frequent cheap stopping services in the inner and middle suburbs, and more often local bus services than train services" (p.17).

The Metropolitan Transportation Committee's estimates she says "--indicate that most of this increase of public transport trips will occur on the railway system, with very little increase on the tram-bus system. Clearly it has been assumed that the function of public transport is to serve the outer-suburban areas and not the transport poor, the yophs, who are mainly in inner and middle suburbs " (p.17)

What utter rubbish !

"Yophs" --- young, old, pupils, handicapped and sick --- live all over Melbourne. Maybe there are more "old" in the inner and middle suburbs, but, if so, there are more "young" and "pupils" in the outer suburbs ! !

In Melbourne there has been next to no "vocal public transport lobby" at all, still less a "powerful" one. What poor incipient elements there have been have certainly not come from the "affluent middle class and politically powerful" outer suburbanites, but from industrial workers up and down the Upfield line; from a group of (mainly) professionals on the Country Planning Association who live all over Melbourne and hardly any of whom are CBD workers, and from another group of (mainly) professionals in the inner areas in the Committee for Urban Action ! !

And if there are relatively affluent wage and salary workers

who travel from Balwyn, Beaumaris or Mt. Waverley, are there not even more, though less affluent, workers from Glenroy, Fawkner Reservoir, Ferntree Gully, Clayton or Moorabbin? In any case, Clark's so-called "affluent" are hardly "middle-class", if by middle class is meant those who own their own businesses, who must surely number an insignificant proportion of public transport travellers? Clark's distinction is really within the class of wage and salary workers between those who are better-paid and those who are poorly paid

In any case, some "yophs" and very many "huls" need both express services and frequent-stopping services, depending on where they live and the purpose of travelling. Not only do they need both types of transport, but they need them both at peak hour and at off-peak.

Why has Clark produced the double fiction of:

Rich versus Poor
and Express versus Frequent-stopping

and wrapped it up in the concept of "luxury peak express travel for middle class outer suburbanites versus frequent-stopping off-peak travel for "yophs" living in inner and middle suburbs" to support his theory of two different public transport policies?

The reason becomes clearer when we seek answers to the third and fourth questions.

Question (3)

What Quality and Quantity of Free Public Transport is there to be?

It is not easy to answer what Clark proposes by way of quality and quantity of public transport because he sets up no standards of public transport service. Fundamentally, he does not agree with transport as a public service. Like a conservative politician of the Government party, his answer, in effect, is: we will give the public by way of transport, whatever the public is prepared to pay for.

This, of course, is done in the name of "economics", as if that removed all argument (except maybe a counter economic argument)

So, we will move straight on to the fourth question and show how Clark determines the quantity and quality of public transport, not by standards where he commits himself to value-judgments, but in reference to "economics"

Question (4)

Who is to Pay for "Free" Transport?

The answer is: the ratepayer!

"The peak costs should be met by the peak users, the operating costs should be met by those who benefit from the existence of the service" (p.18)

So we see, at once, why Clark has gone to so much bother to create fictions of affluent peak users and poor off-peak users: there would be no other way to justify two different methods of financing public transport.

"The appropriate maximum levy for peak travellers can be established easily from economic theory: it is the cost of providing an additional service at the peak. That is, for example, the cost of providing an additional train and any track or other costs associated with that additional service, divided by the number of passengers it will carry. The levy need only be paid by passengers joining crowded services at the points where they are crowded, **in other words on entering or leaving public transport vehicles in the city**. Passengers using peak services between intermediate points would not be charged the levy as their use of the service is virtually free of cost to the public transport agency".

So, "economically", we learn that peak hour users are the beneficiaries of peak public transport services and should pay, but only for the peak element of the service.

Strangely, off-peak travellers are not conceived as beneficiary beneficiaries of off-peak transport.

"That portion of the costs of metropolitan public transport not covered by peak levies should be recovered by taxes on land or property, but not as a general rate applying equally across the city. The beneficiaries of the metropolitan public transport service are not the users but those who live or have businesses close to the routes of these services. These beneficiaries may never, or only

rarely use the public transport services and consequently pay little towards their costs. The public transport tax should be graded also according to the frequency of services on those routes----". "----Since off peak and uncongested peak services would be free, the effect of the tax would be to issue everyone in the city with a free annual transport pass. Economists and politicians will recognise an automatic mechanism is created to determine whether to increase the frequency of off-peak services or develop new services within any area. It will depend on the residents of that area being willing to accept the necessary higher rate of public tax---" (p.19)

So there we have it ! A system more diabolically devised to "kill off" public transport (already half dying) in double quick time is hard to imagine.

City workers (and no others) are to pay the whole cost of peak public transport. Obviously, rather than encourage people to use public transport to the city, such a policy is more likely to induce them either to find employment anywhere but in the city, or use levy-free private transport to the city.

But what about the "yophs" ? Any of them simpleton enough to live near public transport routes with a good frequency would be forced by high rates (or if they were tenants by high rents) to move to where rates and rents were lower, well away from public transport routes ! So much for your tender heart, Mr Clark ! The same would apply to "huls".

That entire section of the public which most needs public transport, in fact, would come to live further and further away from any part of it with a reasonably high frequency, so that, in effect, more public transport than would otherwise be necessary would have to be supplied, to get them from where they live by bus or taxi to the station or tram stop, and in turn, from the station or tram stop to their ultimate destination. So the "free annual transport pass" would have to include free feeder buses and free feeder taxis. Once these services became reasonably frequent, up would go the rates again of anyone living anywhere near these routes. A "yoph" trying to take advantage of Clark's charitable system would be like a dog chasing his tail ! There is a built-in contradiction to the whole idea: either you have "ordinary" rates, free transport but a lousy service, or you "pay through the neck" with very high rates, which many "yophs" could not afford.

Moreover, factories and shops would tend to shift away from well-served public transport routes for the same economic reasons, thus driving more and more of their employees to rely on cars or longer journeys to work, and making necessary more and more of the most expensive type of transport, namely, free buses and free taxis.

But whether these extended free bus services and free taxi services or more frequent and more comfortable trains and trams are to be implemented is to be determined by a local vote of ratepayers the majority of whom are car owners !!

To cap it all, we learn that it is economically wicked to ask for any Federal funds for public transport. "It would effectively benefit an affluent section of the community, but more importantly, it would remove the need for residents of large cities to meet the external diseconomies created by their own large size. Federal subsidy for metropolitan public transport is a subsidy for the cities. It would run counter to the policies of every major political party for decentralisation " (p.20)

What poppycock ! Subsidies proliferate, both city and country. Country rail freights have been heavily subsidised. City freeways are being heavily subsidised. But not city public transport ! Heaven forbid, or rather economics (Clark brand) forbid !

But the cat is out of the Clark bag of tricks at last. Just how, we come to in the fifth issue.

Question (5)

Will the "yophs" really be better off ?

Under the Clark scheme all "yophs" and "huls" and other public transport users, in order to effect improvements would have to fight, municipality by municipality, in a community whose majority already have car habits, for the increase of rates to support the basic free operating services. Surely a most chancey political proposition ? Failure to win agreement for rate increases would

be tantamount to a further deterioration in transport services and the "yophs" and "huls" would be worse off, and the freeway lobby better off.

All "yophs" and "huls" who continued to live close to well-served transport routes would have to pay more for their accommodation, so that, in effect, instead of enjoying "free" public transport, the very ones who need it most and can afford it least would be contributing! And even more ludicrous: the further the poorer people moved away from good public transport, the more the community would have to pay to get them back to it! We ask the reader to judge whether the Clark scheme, professing a concern for "yophs", would not (if ever it could be operated) have the opposite effect of leading to an artificially-induced sharp deterioration in public transport, so that the "yophs" who most need it would be the very ones who would most suffer.

Clark's sudden new-found concern for yophs appeared when he addressed a Labor Party seminar. When he addressed Hamer's "workshop forum" sponsored by the RACV to discuss transport aspects of Melbourne's future growth at Latrobe University on 7/10/1967 before an audience consisting of public authority representatives, planners and professionals, he showed no such touching concern for "yophs". Forecasting the transport future for the 1980's, he said everyone would have a car and the demand for public transport would vanish, except---

(i) where there was very high density and where therefore parking space and access were too expensive (ii) for the aged, infirm and for children and (iii) as an emergency for motorists whose car had broken down; and he contemplated the "phasing out" of some sections of railways and tramways and (interestingly, when you consider the "yophs") that the inner areas may have to be abandoned except for an occasional high-rise offices or flats, to allow parking. He called for early construction of freeways along the growth corridors, and forecast "express buses on freeways"

Of course, in four years anyone can change their views. But Clark has not changed. He is not a champion of "yophs". If he were one would have expected him to advocate Federal finance, say, at the very least, to give an initial capital boost to the basic off-peak operational transport system, such as nationalisation of the bus services, instead of leaving it all to be borne by local ratepayers.

But no! He is more concerned with proving that "big cities don't pay", and the "yophs" so far as he is concerned, can be denied transport justice indefinitely (unless they can convince the local ratepayers to pay for it), just so long as Clark can "prove" that if ratepayers don't like having public transport charges added to garbage charges and sewerage charges, then "big cities don't pay" (i.e. their further growth leads to "diseconomies")

Actually, it proves nothing of the sort; but that is what he says it would do, and what he obviously hopes. Clark is hardly concerned with whether his scheme could actually come into operation, because what he is really concerned with is a scheme which fits in with pet theories held jointly by himself and his father, Colin Clark, and which are actually the Clark value-judgements, but which they invariably present loftily as incontrovertible predictions based on scientific analysis.

These value judgements run something like this:-

(i) "A man will not go anywhere he cannot go by car" is a trend which is good, and therefore the whole metropolitan area including the inner areas and the CBD should be made accessible to the car by a close network of freeways.

(ii) To allow such a freeway network its optimum workability is therefore good, and this involves technically:-

(a) a low but even residential density throughout the metropolitan area.

(b) a CBD limited to its present workforce, or even with a reduced workforce, and to enable access and parking, extensive city redevelopment and inner suburban redevelopment, which involves

(c) opposition to any public transport improvements, except buses on freeways; and more especially opposition to those improvements which serve the CBD whether express services, or the underground loop, or car parks at suburban rail stations

(d) maximising decentralised centres within the metropolitan area to take up growth (which could otherwise have occurred, with public transport, in the CBD) evenly spread to optimise the freeway

(iii) To base urban settlements exclusively on the motor vehicle and without any railed public transport at all is good, and therefore:

- (a) new cities of 500,000 maximum
- (b) contain Melbourne's growth.

In a word, the Clarks are theoreticians whose theories give maximum pseudo-scientific backing to the automobile industry.

(For more on this, and with quotations from C.Clark's Tewksbury opening overture, see "Irregular" No.35 Aug.1970 pp 2-6 Ref. 3.35.0 and 10.35.0. Also "Irregular" No 38 Dec.1970 p.7)

In line with the above very strong pro-freeway, anti-rail and anti-tram thinking of the Clarks is the rest of N.Clark's contribution to the ALP seminar.

He dares not openly advocate freeways as good (although this is his real position) so he "sidles" into the problem under another humanistic slogan "road safety". He comes to the conclusion that "the only really safe road is the freeway". He notes of freeways (as GMH do with their 'metro-mobility' scheme) "the contribution they make to better public transport by providing high-speed routes for buses" (why "better"?) and he attempts to justify the staggering costs of freeways by stating (without proof) that the cost of improved traffic management and road-widening on arterial roads to improve the accident problem "are of the same order of magnitude as the cost of the necessary freeways" (p.4)

Having taught us the immorality of opposing a \$2616 million freeway scheme on safety grounds, and after a spate of useful road statistics, including the level of Federal grants (taken from the Australian Roads Survey), Clark then, predictably, concludes: "the city road construction programmes are not unreasonable in the light of the contribution made to vehicle taxation by city road users--" (p.9)

Strange that he does not follow the same logic, and oppose all Federal and State money for roads, as he does for public transport! Come, come, Mr Clark, would it not be better to load the whole of the freeway costs onto rates, in order (to use your own words) "to remove the need for residents of large cities to meet the external diseconomies created by their own large size" Why is it, Mr Clark, that Federal grants for metropolitan public transport is a subsidy for big cities, but for private transport not so? When his argument is boiled down it emerges that he is really interested not in small cities, but in the automobile industry.

His final argument is a warning against using petrol taxes or other taxes on cars for public transport purposes (p.25) and he also argues against limiting the capital cost of road expenditures by the level of taxes on cars (pp 20-21). Nothing, just nothing, is to hinder financing of roads!

Mischief

Not the least of the disservices done by N.Clark's proposals are that they present a set of divisive and disruptive obstacles to anyone whose real concern is to assist the movement towards improving public transport; and whether this is an accident of his twisted logic, or deliberate mischief-making is beside the point.

Instead of one broad lobby intent on improving the public transport system for the city as a whole, and including car drivers as well as public transport for the "yops" and the "huls" there could be created separate lobbies, the difference of each from the other being emphasised instead of their common interests. Even the sources of finance for the different interests would be different and competing ones, and as no standard of transport service has been proposed it would be war to the end of each group against the other.

Thus:

- (i) the "luxury" (?) travel of "affluent" (?) CBD peak workers versus non-CBD peak workers and off peak travellers
- (ii) public transport travellers financed by rates versus private transport travellers financed from general revenue.
- (iii) transport needs of capital cities (except roads, of course!) versus the claims of decentralisation.

Typically, Clark attacks certain views which are obviously

intended by him to be identified with the policies of the Town and Country Association. This Association proposed amendments to the Transportation Plan by priority attention to public transport, and elimination of the inner ring freeway designed to serve car commuting to the CBD (without eliminating by-pass freeways to reduce congestion in the CBD) and provision of car parks at rail stations, outside the inner areas and "right down the line" to attract commuters to leave their cars at these carparks instead of parking all day in or near the city, where all day parking should be discouraged. This would free the city for motorists who do not leave their cars parked all day while they work.

Clark misrepresents this case by substituting the term "city motorist" for the all-day parkers, and making out that the station carparks proposed are only at outer suburban stations which he says "will be only of marginal advantage as many of the travellers from outer suburbs now use public transport". These misrepresentations enable him to conclude that restrictions of general car travel to the CBD (which was not proposed by the TCPA) would reduce the amount of activity of the central city, encouraging business and employment to relocate in other parts, "----which would be harmful both to the CBD and to public transport" So here is another twist of Clark "logic": the more public transport to the CBD will mean the less public transport! Its a wonder he doesn't coin a slogan: "Those who want better public transport should campaign for priority for freeways!"

The TCPA proposals may constitute only a starting point in what is required for a broad popularly-based movement for improved transport in which public transport is given a prominent and proper place. But, at least, unlike Clark, it starts with a set of propositions that see the CBD and inner areas as worth preserving, and tries to integrate road and rail transport within this purpose, rather than set them at odds.

Further, the TCPA is concerned that there be one "transport" fund, so that transport planners can phase different sections of the the transport plan in the correct priority (which will have to mean very considerable increases in Government finances for public transport), and it conceives public transport as a service to the whole metropolis, and not, as with Clark, piecemeal handouts to be fought over by sectional interests according to the strength of their "demand".

Indeed, "yophs" and "huls" need concessions on public transport. Under the Clark scheme, they could get worse and worse public transport, and pay for it, indirectly, into the bargain. Under the false slogan of "free transport", Clark's formulas would cripple public transport, and scatter those championing it into warring and disconnected groups. Clark is "dinkum" all right; but not for the "yophs" or the "huls" or any of the real needs of industrial or brightcollar workers!

MMBW Regional Plan

We asked for it---and we got it! "Irregular No 44" invited contributions to the public debate proceeding on the MMBW plan, and here we give the first of the contributions to reach us:

A.C. . . I regard the limitations in the M.M.B.W. plan more as a result of the terms of reference imposed on the Board than as a deficiency in the Board as planners.

The terms of reference presumably ruled out consideration of whether it is desirable for Melbourne to expand at all, and how, probably limiting the depth of planning making the plan no more than a land usage appraisal.

In so far as the plan seeks to establish an absolute demarcation for all time between rural and urban areas it is good and certainly an advance on all previous policy

However it must be regarded as a first stage land usage plan only, to which must be added planning in depth if there is to be any marked improvement in urban environment.