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# The Psychology of Communication for Behaviour Change

Alternative Technology Association  
Melbourne Branch Meeting

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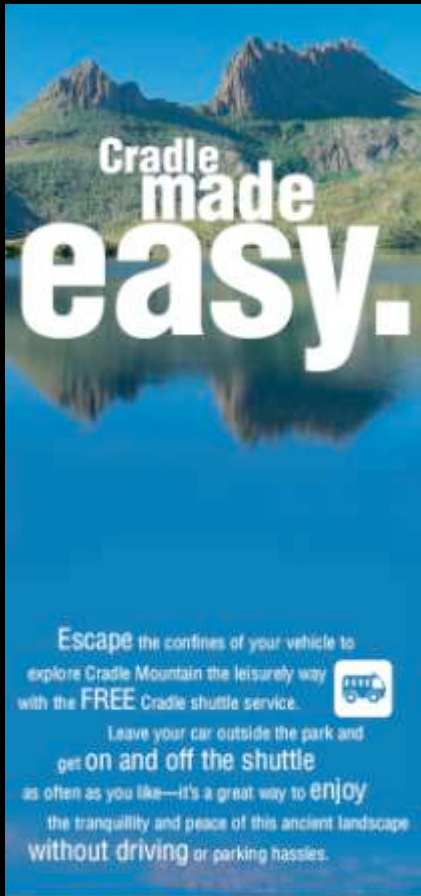






TAY 621






**Cradle  
made  
easy.**

Escape the confines of your vehicle to explore Cradle Mountain the leisurely way with the **FREE** Cradle shuttle service.

Leave your car outside the park and get on and off the shuttle as often as you like—it's a great way to enjoy the tranquility and peace of this ancient landscape without driving or parking hassles.










GROWING A BETTER  
LAWN AND GARDEN IN  
COASTAL  
SOILS

GROWING A BETTER  
LAWN AND GARDEN IN  
WESTERN COASTAL  
PLAIN SOILS

GROWING A BETTER  
LAWN AND GARDEN IN  
CENTRAL COASTAL  
PLAIN SOILS

GROWING A BETTER  
LAWN AND GARDEN IN  
EASTERN COASTAL  
PLAIN SOILS

GROWING A BETTER  
LAWN AND GARDEN IN  
SCARP  
SOILS



## Common communication problems

- Messages often based on intuition
- Failure to understand what factors are important to the target audience regarding the behaviour of interest
- Behaviours are context specific
- Oversaturation and habituation
- Easy to read, but dull

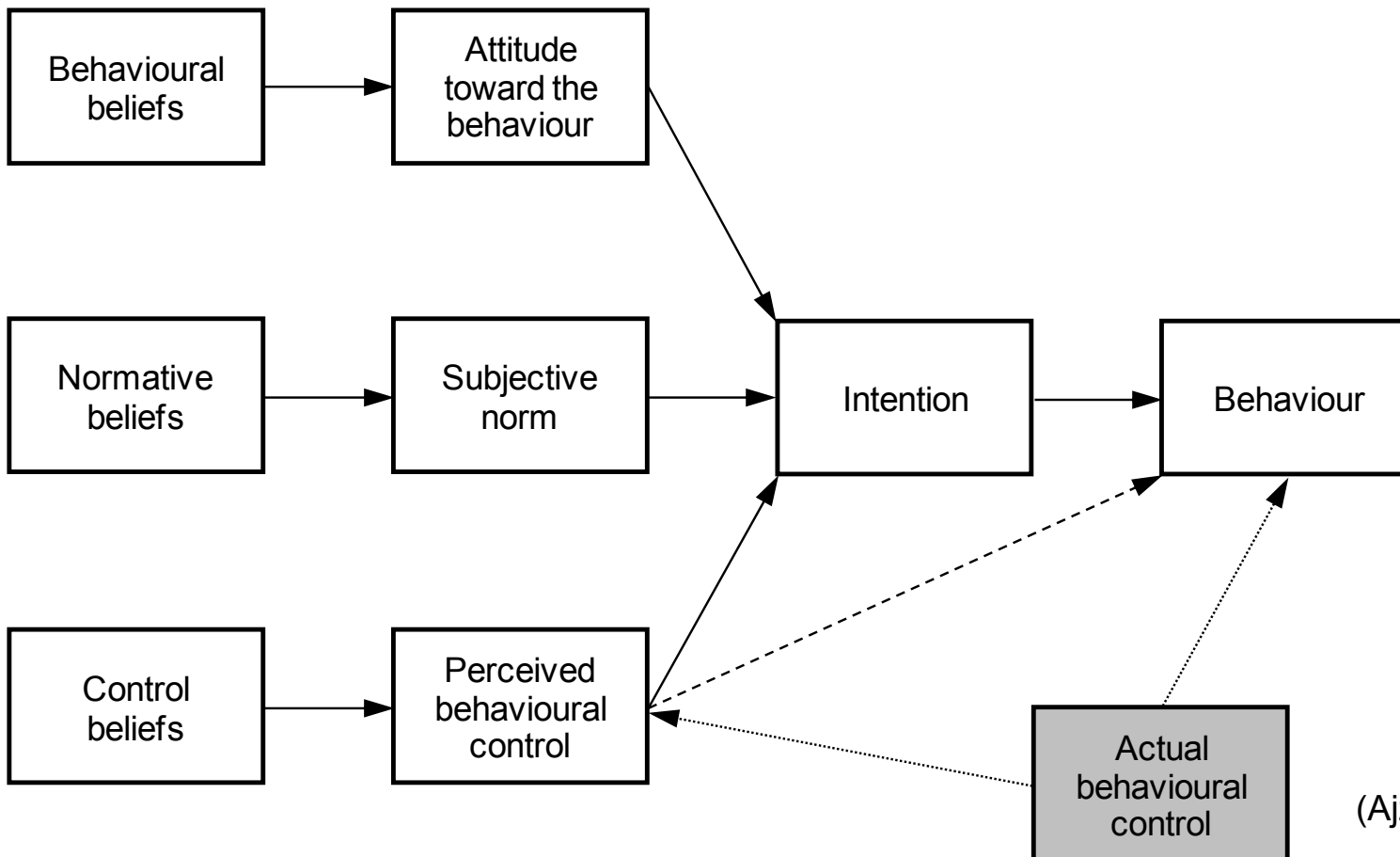


## What makes communication “persuasive”?

- Focuses on understanding the decision-making processes of the audience
- Targets behaviours that are amenable to persuasion
- Grounded in proven theories of behaviour change and communication
- Involves the development of messages that are targeted, engaging and relevant to the audience



# The Theory of Planned Behaviour



(Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005)

## How to develop persuasive communication?

1. Identify the *problem* behaviour
2. Understand visitor beliefs about the *desired* behaviour
3. Identify beliefs to target in a persuasive communication intervention
4. Design and develop persuasive messages
5. Implement and evaluate the interventions

## Using persuasive communication to influence problem visitor behaviour at Port Campbell National Park



**Project Coordinators**  
Sam Ham, Betty Weiler & Sue Beeton



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People*

## Target beliefs

### Primary target belief

- *I will not miss out on better views and photos*

### Secondary belief appeals

- *I will reduce my impact on the environment*
- *I will be safer*



## A Photographer's Letter to Parks Victoria

As a commercial photographer, I want to thank you for putting this walking track where it is. Initially, I worried that I might have to walk off track in search of better photos. But this hasn't been the case. You obviously took the photographer's point of view when you located the track, and I just wanted to say "thank you".

Terry



## Key findings

- Interventions were successful in strengthening the target belief compared to when no intervention was present
- 70% of visitors who admitted to intending to walk off the track changed their intention and stayed on the track





# Influencing visitor use of alternative transportation systems in Australian national parks



## Project Coordinators

Jim Curtis, Betty Weiler & Sam Ham



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People*

## Target beliefs

### Primary target beliefs

- *I will have greater flexibility for doing walks*
- *I will not be able to stop or leave when I want*
- *I will learn more about the park*

### Secondary belief appeals

- *I will reduce my impact on the environment*
- *I will not have to worry about finding a car park*
- *National park staff think I should take the bus (normative belief)*

## Going into the park today?

Be one of the thousands of Cradle Mountain visitors who are raving about the shuttle bus.

*We felt so chained to our car on the first day here. We could only do one walk since we had to return to the car park. On the second day, we took the bus and enjoyed several walks from multiple locations. A big difference!*

Michael and Lisa from England

Parking for your vehicle is *not* guaranteed in this park.

**Enjoy the flexibility of the shuttle bus, and help protect Cradle Mountain.**



Thanks from the Cradle Mountain Park Staff



## Key findings

- “Greater flexibility” intervention was successful in strengthening the target belief compared to when no intervention was present
- 54% of visitors who previously intended to drive their car decided to take the shuttle bus instead
- 72% of visitors who were previously unsure of their prior travel mode intention decided to take the shuttle bus

# Optimising the use of strategic communication to influence user behaviour in the Swan Canning River System

## Project Coordinators

Michael Hughes, Betty Weiler & Jim Curtis



## Target beliefs

### Primary target beliefs

- *Environmentally sensitive fertiliser is hard to find in this store* (control belief)
- *There is not enough information on environmentally sensitive fertiliser in this store* (control belief)

### Secondary belief appeals

- *It will have fewer impacts on the rivers and groundwater*
- *It is safer for humans and animals*

GLASS HOUSE



# Going into the park today?

Be one of the thousands of Cradle Mountain visitors who are raving about the shuttle bus.

*We felt so chained to our car on the first day here. We could only do one walk since we had to return to the car park. On the second day, we took the bus and enjoyed several walks from multiple locations. A big difference!*

Michael and Lisa from England

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Thanks from the Cradle Mountain Park Staff

## 1. Main Title

Poses a question intended to capture attention & initiate elaboration

## 2. Subtitle

Descriptive norm peripheral cue

## 3. Main Message

Personal anecdote connecting the target belief to the desired behaviour

## 4. Parking Disclaimer

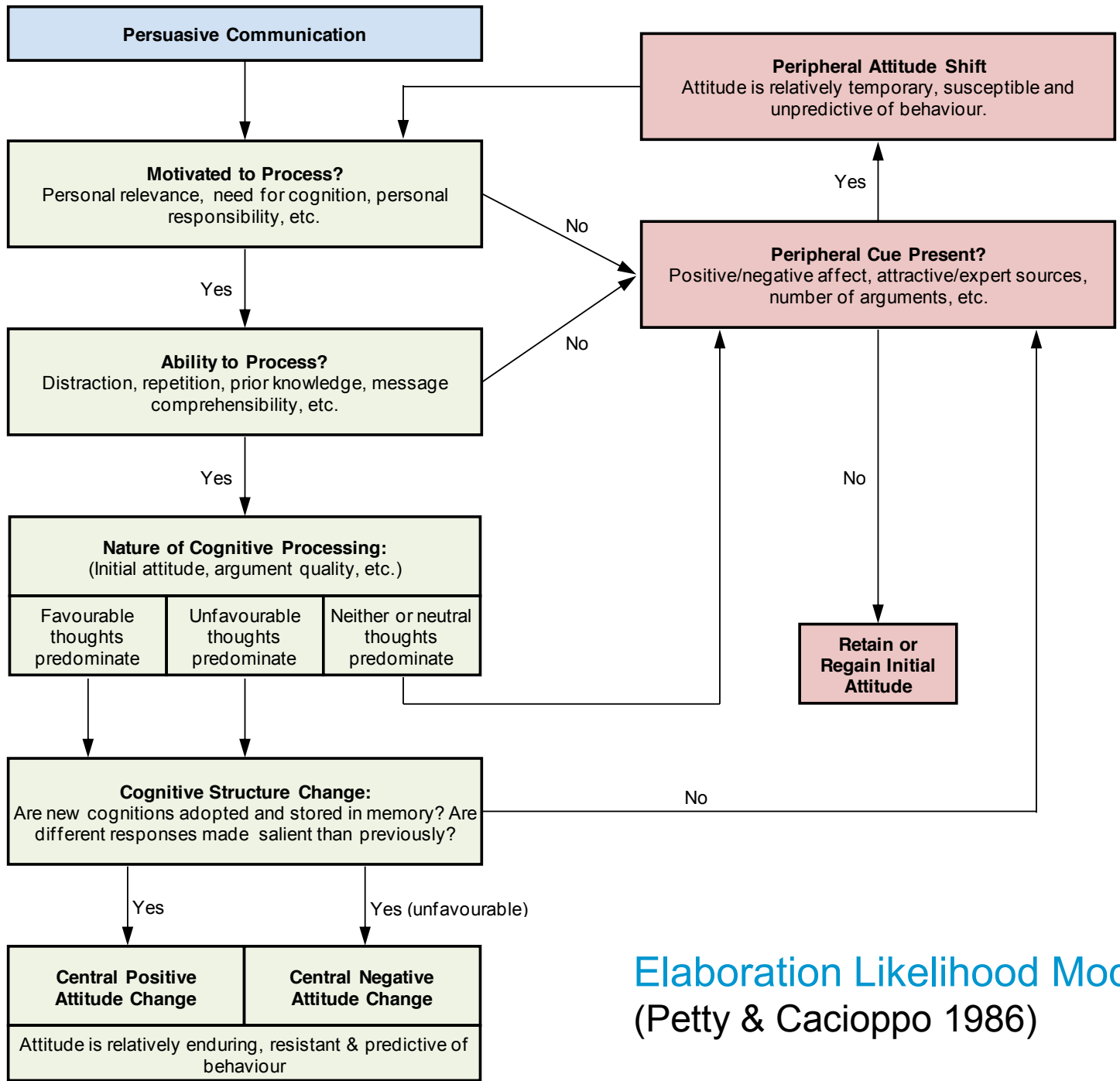
Behavioural belief appeal

## 5. Behavioural Prompt

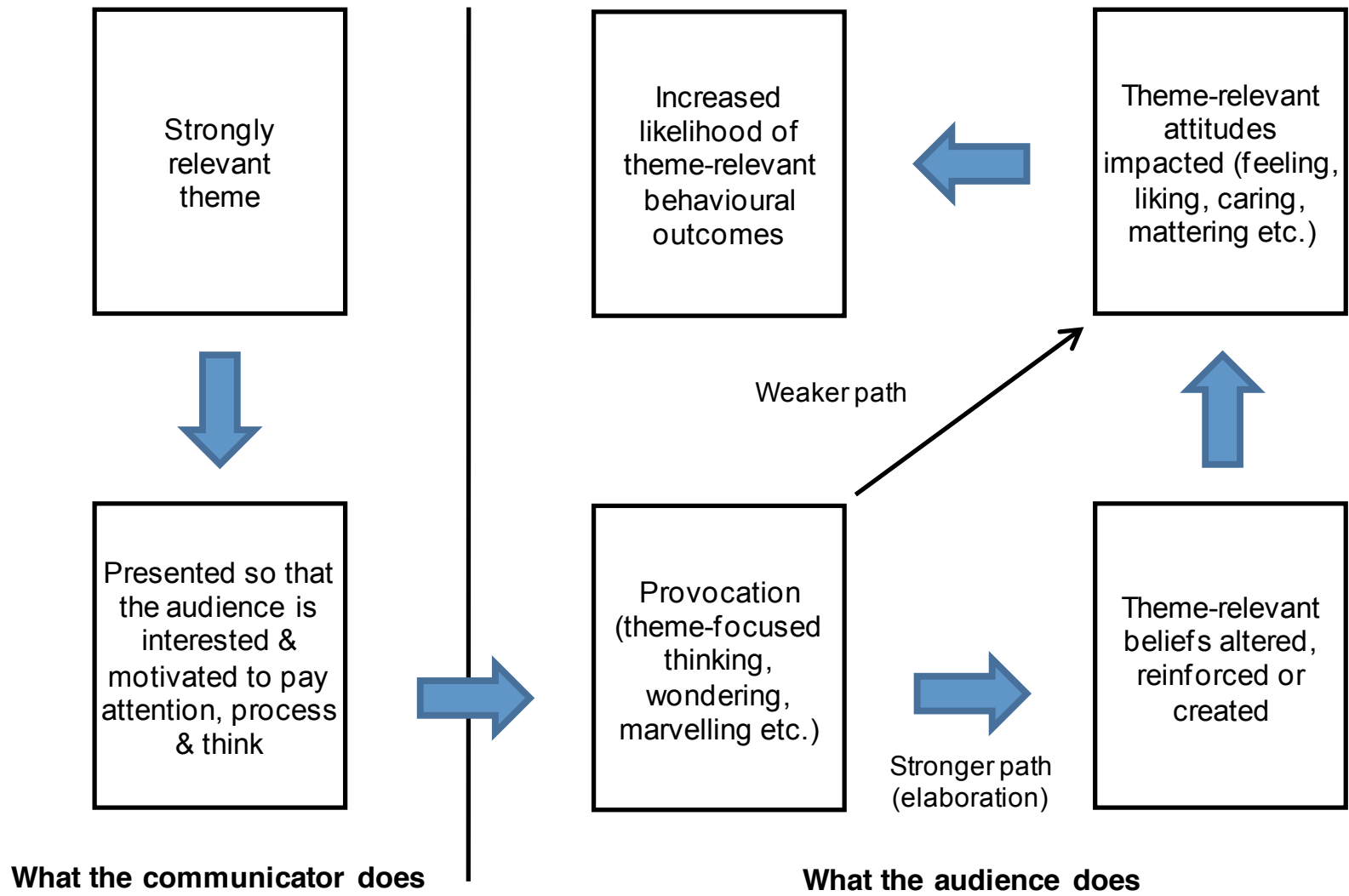
Conveys the target belief & a behavioural belief appeal

## 6. Thank You + Logo

Normative belief appeal & peripheral cue that identifies the communication source



**Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion**  
(Petty & Cacioppo 1986)



The TORE™ model  
(Ham 2007)

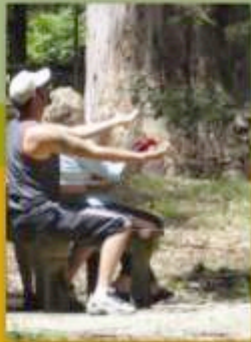
## Implications

- Joins an emerging field of research involving the application of the social sciences to develop communication interventions aimed at influencing behaviour
- Contributes to a greater understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships between persuasive communication and human behaviour in a real-world setting
- Delivery of research methods and practical tools to build on the capacity of management agencies, businesses and researchers to undertake other behaviour modification projects

# Promoting Persuasion in Protected Areas

## A Guide for Managers

Developing strategic communication to influence visitor behaviour.



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Michael Hughes  
Mark Poll

Sustainable Tourism CRC  
Project SR6c: Strategic Communication and  
Visitor Behaviour Sub-Project



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## Thank you

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