

# Media Release

## Carlton Community Centre Rally

A rally organised by the Carlton Residents Association (CRA), on Saturday 11 September, in front of the vacant Kathleen Syme Centre, was part of a long-running campaign to acquire the historic building as a Community Centre/Library for Carlton.

Speakers included Cr Peter Clarke (City of Melbourne), Matthew Guy MLC (Shadow Planning Minister), Brian Walters SC (Greens candidate for Melbourne), Lloyd Jones (La Mama Theatre) and Mark Rubbo (Readings Bookshop). Apologies and messages of support were received from Lord Mayor, Hon. Robert Doyle, and Carlton Business Association President, Gino Francese. Speakers were universal in their praise and support for the proposal to develop the vacant KSC, Carlton's first Primary School (Cnr Faraday and Cardigan Streets) as a long-sought Community Centre. Indeed all expressed complete dismay at the way in which the Brumby Government has failed to properly utilise this publically owned building for so long.

Speaking for the CRA, Greta Bird reminded the rally that Carlton has no town hall, no public meeting place and no library; nowhere at all for the community to gather. Cr Peter Clarke reaffirmed Council enthusiasm for and formal commitment to acquiring the Kathleen Syme Centre for the community. Matthew Guy and Brian Walters respectively pledged ongoing whole-hearted support from Liberal and Greens politicians. Mr Guy described the project as a "no brainer" for the Brumby Government. He questioned the logic of their protracted resistance to such an excellent project which has such obvious benefits for the Carlton community.

Greta Bird told the rally that Member for Melbourne, Hon. Bronwyn Pike, declined an invitation to address it or to send a representative. Ms Bird said the Brumby Government has refused to engage with the Carlton community over several years to progress the project, for no self evident reason. She added "Ms Pike's boycott of the rally today was a further example of her disengagement from the Carlton community, even in the run-up to the State election". Speakers expressed disappointment at Ms Pike's absence and lack of interest and support for such an important community initiative in her electorate.

"Carlton has every right to community infrastructure which is taken for granted elsewhere" Ms Bird said. "KSC is a public building, its available and Carlton needs it, now".

The rally unanimously adopted the resolution "We want the Kathleen Syme Centre as a Community Centre/Library for Carlton. The State Government has the power to facilitate this project and has the moral obligation to do so". A petition in support of this resolution is being circulated for presentation to Parliament by Matthew Guy MLC.

The Carlton Residents Association intends to step-up its campaign for a Community Centre/ Library prior to the State election in November.

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