

Carlton Alliance

**John Young Presentation, George Harris Room, Carlton Football Club
Visy Park, Royal Parade, North Carlton
Sunday October 16th, 2011**

John Young, MCC Town Clerk until 1994, outlined the political history that lead up to North Carlton being excised from the City of Melbourne.

Non-labour Councils had relied on mal-apportioned wards since pre-war years. By 1970, a Flemington/Kensington ward had four times the number of voters as one of the CBD wards, each electing three councillors. Ward boundaries were adjusted, reducing the mal-apportionment to 3:1, and labour's hold on Carlton and North Carlton had been lessened by non-party/resident councillors being elected. The ruling Civic Group lost control of the Council, and planning decisions gave developers less than they wanted. The Strategy Plan (1976) and Council's successful campaign to reduce the underground railway impost from 25% to 10% lost the Council sympathy from the State government.

In 1979, the government replaced the elected Council with commissioners. In 1982 a Labour government brought back councillors, but elected from wards with boundaries clearly inimical to the CBD. Overconfidence was accompanied by the endorsement of some unsatisfactory Labour candidates, and non-party councillors were elected and held the balance of power. BOMA and the Melbourne City Chamber of Commerce persuaded the Liberal opposition to trim down the Council's boundaries to put business voters in a controlling position. In 1992, the Liberal/National government installed commissioners and passed an Act to excise Flemington, Kensington, North Melbourne (part) and North Carlton from the MCC. However business demography had changed; there were fewer small businesses (and voters) because of amalgamations and a property crisis in the 1980's had been resolved by changing business properties to residential apartments, putting more residents on the voters roll in the business sector's heartland. The franchise arrangement of no wards and full postal voting, diminishing the role of local government, was intended to dissuade under-resourced candidates from starting. With all these advantages, the business-endorsed candidates won only two positions on Council.

The scheme was misbegotten: conceived in bad faith and with no hope of a viable offspring. It deserved to be scrapped and the MCC put under comprehensive reform. Part of that means restoring Carlton as one suburb, uniting North and South Carlton.