

**The Carlton Residents Association Inc.**

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**Response to Draft Walking Plan 2014 -17**

**Overview**

CRA is an enthusiastic supporter of the Council’s Draft Walking Plan which is an important component of the City of Melbourne’s, *Transport Strategy, 2012*, to which we have contributed over the past decade. Current emphasis of the Walking Plan appears to be on the ever more congested CBD pedestrian areas. Melbourne’s population explosion is now very evident on the streetscapes.

Walking, cycling and public transport (particularly trams) are the primary movements modes for 85% of people around the CBD. However private motorists and motor cyclists still enjoy priority treatment within the streetscape and at intersections. The Draft Plan considers these matters but should take a more pro-active stance to prioritise pedestrians across the city. To progressively remove private motoring entirely from the central city area should be the long-term goal eg. extend the existing Swanston St and Bourke St Mall treatments across the area.

The State Government’s *Plan Melbourne* policy document, with its centrepiece East West Link tollroad, encourages a continued growth in private motoring at a time when more sustainable transport modes should be mandated. The Council has a leadership role to proclaim its commendable *Transport Strategy* which is in stark contrast to backward thinking Government transport policies. The current State Government has no discernable transport plan for Melbourne other than a grab-bag of randomly selected major projects, largely road based.

The pedestrian experience is enhanced by attractive streetscapes. Green spaces, shade, seating etc. are important to encourage pedestrians onto the streets. Street closures and the development of attractive small parks are important factors eg. the closure of Franklin St (Victoria to Swanston Sts.), between RMIT and the City Baths, would greatly add to the ambience and tranquility of this high pedestrian area. This is the site of the planned aboriginal memorial associated with the popular Goal Tourist Precinct. The recent proposal to designate Franklin St. for arterial road purposes should be reconsidered in this light.

Carlton residents are concerned about their pedestrian experience within the ‘Golden Mile’ but also their regular walking excursions on the streets of the Carlton Precinct, around Lygon Street. This response to the Walking Plan details several of these specific matters below.

**Walking in Carlton**

In our response to the *Melbourne Transport Strategy* in 2011 we called for due emphasis on walking and cycling, and the need for pedestrian and cycle friendly streets, particularly in the busy Lygon Street Precinct:

* The congestion of busy footpaths by restaurant operations, advertising boards and cycle and motor cycle parking requires regular monitoring and pro-active regulations. The conversion of two car spaces to bike parking outside Lygon Court, originally proposed by CRA, has proved very popular, and has removed substantial cycle parking from the footpaths. Although initially opposed by traders, similar facilities would be welcome elsewhere in Carlton. Formal motor bike parking facilities are also required in selected car parking spaces. These actions would decongest busy footpaths and should be explored.
* Pedestrians should enjoy as-of-right priority at light controlled intersections, as do road users. Manual activation of pedestrian lights should not be necessary. We note this long-argued ‘auto-on’ issue is included in the Plan. It should be a priority in Carlton.
* For the busy Lygon Street Precinct (Elgin to Queensberry Sts.), pedestrian crossings or lights should be provided midway between major light controlled intersections, to minimise dangerous jay walking, to improve street safety in these pedestrian rich areas and to further ‘traffic calm’ Lygon St.
* The lowering of general road speed to 40kph in the Lygon Street Precinct some years ago, as lobbied for by CRA, has been very welcome. It is important for pedestrian and cycle safety. The feasibility of further lowering road speed to 30kph should be considered for the busiest pedestrian areas.
* The major pedestrian entry to the Lygon Street Precinct from the Tram Terminus opposite the University of Melbourne in Swanston Street, along Faraday Street, is a disgrace. We have raised this issue regularly in the past. Pedestrians to the popular Precinct are confronted with a bleak unattractive streetscape dominated by parked cars. The new Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre (KSLCC) on Faraday Street, provides an opportunity to close at least the southern street lanes and central parking strip on Faraday Street and turn it over to secure parkland, playground, shade, seating etc. in front of KSLCC. The northern lanes of Faraday Street could be retained as ‘one way’ motor access to service College Square and nearby terrace houses. This action would dramatically enhance the streetscape experience for pedestrians and provide additional valuable external facilities associated with KSLCC. Its feasibility should be examined.
* Further east along Faraday Street, opposite La Mama Theatre and CoAsIt, a similar partial street closure and parkland piazza option exists (Lygon to Drummond Sts) in this pedestrian rich area.

CRA participated in *The Future of Walking* event at the Town Hall, 26 June 2014, and is keen to be involved in any further discussions on this important matter.

Ian Bird

Convenor

Streetscapes & Parkland Reference Group

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