



The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

A0034345G ABN 87 716 923 898

P.O.Box 1140 Carlton Vic 3053

carltonresidents@gmail.com

www.carltonresidents.org.au

CRA ANNUAL REPORT 2014

CRA is an inclusive, democratic, non-party political, egalitarian community group which acts to sustain Carlton's historic identity and architectural heritage. Our quarterly *Newsflash* publication, website, regularly emailed *eflash* newsletters, *facebook* and letterboxing, continued to provide a regular flow of news and information of relevance to CRA members and the Carlton community during 2014. The aim was to encourage community involvement in and knowledge of significant matters locally and beyond.

Highlights for calendar year 2014

CRA Committee and Reference Groups responded to numerous State Government and City of Melbourne policy documents and proposals, attended many meetings, rallies etc., to advocate for the interests of the Carlton community. We gratefully acknowledge the vital role of Cr Jackie Watts in representing the interests of residents in the business dominated Melbourne City Council.

Substantial progress was made towards realising the *Kathleen Syme Library- Community Centre (KSLCC)* for Carlton during 2014. It is scheduled to open in April 2015 and will offer exciting new possibilities for our diverse community. However, our long-sought large meeting space did not eventuate.

Melbourne's escalating population growth and further off-campus expansion by Melbourne University continued to attract inappropriate building developments in Carlton. Much time consuming response from the CRA Planning Group, including at VCAT, was required. Developers regularly succeeded in overturning the long-established height and heritage overlays, setting new planning precedents. Noise and nuisance impacts of restaurants and local traffic, experienced by residents, were negotiated, documented and referred to the Council.

Successful community activism against the costly and controversial East West Link resulted in it being disbanded by the in-coming Andrews Government in December 2014. Potentially drastic impacts of the Link on iconic Royal Park were cancelled. Financial implications are unresolved.

We collaborated with the Church of All Nations in organizing a 'Meet the Candidates' Forum, prior to the State Election in November. The Andrews Labor Government was elected to replace the one-term Napthine Coalition Government. In a historic result, Ellen Sandell (The Greens) was elected State Member for Melbourne. We hosted a well-attended film night at Cinema Nova in April to view *Si Palo Italiano*, followed by dinner at Jimmy Watson's.

CRA maintained an active role in monitoring and involvement with many major matters in Carlton, including the Public Housing Estates Redevelopment, through membership of the Community Liaison Committee; World Heritage Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens; other parkland areas including Royal Park, Princes Park, Carlton's Garden Squares and the Neill St. Reserve now being re-developed; Carlton's streetscapes; Police Community Consultative Committee; Coalition of Residents & Business Association, Melbourne General Cemetery etc.

Further details on these and other important matters may be found elsewhere in this Report.

CRA continued to operate through a series of Reference Groups which focus the interests and energy of members and spreads the advocacy workload. The Committee met on the third Monday of most months in 2014, at Dimattina's Restaurant. A Members Forum was included at each Committee Meeting for members to raise any matters of concern. Our annual Christmas Party was successfully hosted at La Mama on 15 December.

Community Centre-Library (convenor: Greta Bird)

The \$7 million redevelopment of the former Royal Women's Hospital *Kathleen Syme Centre* to the Council's *Kathleen Syme Library-Community Centre*, is nearing completion. The building is scheduled to be opened in April 2015. Externally it is most impressive: a major restoration of the historic (1869) Primary School building has occurred. Approximately 2/3rds of the building, including the former auditorium, has been carved up into nine multi-use spaces for service provision. There will be small meeting rooms associated with the library. Regardless of demonstrated community need, there will be no large multi-purpose room/auditorium to facilitate the diverse range of events and functions essential to inter-connect residents and to build social capital.

Unlike contracted Service Providers, CRA was not included in planning discussions around design and use of the building. We were unaware of the final outcome until major building works were completed in December 2014. First public site inspection will be in February 2015.

We achieved a long-sought Library for Carlton but there will be no meaningful Community Centre. This is an unreasonable outcome, given CRA's intense campaign over many years for Council acquisition of the building, to include a Community Centre. It is solely due to the CRA led campaign that the Victorian Coalition Government transferred its ownership of KSC to the City of Melbourne, for use as a library and community centre, on 4 July, 2011. At a formal handover ceremony on site, then Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, acknowledged that Council acquisition of the building was solely due to CRA campaigning.

Further information is available on the CRA and Council websites: www.carltonresidents.org.au
www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/kathleensyme

CORBA Melbourne (convenor: Rhonda Day)

CoRBA, a coalition of resident and business groups, has been operating since 2007 to raise issues of concern to the community with Melbourne City Council (MCC) and State Government. CoRBA's primary goal is to bring democracy, equitable representation and good governance to the City of Melbourne. Representatives of key local groups attend CoRBA meetings, held quarterly in 2014.

CoRBA continues to ensure that action and information is shared and that all groups are aware of consultation opportunities and well informed on the issues. Key issues for 2014 included planning, heritage, open spaces and transport.

Issues for action included: the proposed East-West Link including its effects on Royal Park; the ongoing heritage and open space issue of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show; residential zones; planning issues including high rise with strong representation from South Bank; donations from developers to Councillors creating a conflict of interest and the ineligibility of elected representatives to vote on planning proposals affecting the community; planning applications and "flipping"; a request to the State Government for the waiver of VCAT fees for community groups raising heritage concerns; and concerns about lack of consultation on planning and funding for the Queen Victoria project. Sadly, CoRBA member and strong advocate for this issue, Dr John Price, passed away in July 2014.

The first meeting for 2015 continues to deal with a number of these issues and focussed also on evaluation and objectives for CoRBA 2015.

Planning and Development (convenor: Warren Green)

The CRA Planning Reference Group (Warren Green, Ewan Ogilvy, Denis Toth & John Weickhardt) monitors planning scheme amendments and issues of strategic nature. In addition, this Group meets to consider the planning applications for the previous month for the 3053 postcode and is particularly alert to the following:

- overlooking or any other loss of amenity to neighbouring properties
- loss of amenity to the wider surrounding area (bulk, aesthetics, car parking)
- whether the application complies with the council's heritage overlay and height restrictions internal amenity (primarily in multi-dwelling developments)

1. Planning Scheme Amendments

The New Residential Zones

In developing the New Residential Zones, the Council could choose from three options which, among other things, provided for different levels of residential intensity ... from little to a lot ...

- Neighbourhood Residential Zone [NRZ]
- General Residential Zone [GRZ], and the
- Residential Growth Zone [RGZ]

In the Council's submission to the Residential Zones Standing Advisory Committee, the City recommended the RGZ option for the Carlton Redevelopment Areas, and the GRZ and NRZ for the remaining residential areas. More particularly, the "NRZ has only been proposed to be applied to larger areas with streetscapes (street corner to street corner) comprising almost entirely (at least 80%) of lots with one or two dwellings of one or two storeys."

In the event, the Minister did not accept any NRZ zones for the Carlton area, but, did agree that those areas originally proposed for the NRZ option should have a mandatory height limit of 8 m ... imposed through a Schedule to the GRZ.

For the GRZ zone, that applies to most of Carlton [North of Grattan Street], we have at one extreme a mandatory height limit of 8m [about two storeys] and at the other extreme, discretionary heights of from 9 m to 17.5 m and higher [ie 2 to 5 storeys plus], unless the site falls within the Central Carlton North Area, where the 10.5 mandatory height limit applies. This sends a very confused message to both developers and residents, when the same Zone can accommodate such a diversity of building intensities. That this is possible within the one zone also blurs the distinction between the three zones.

Before the last State Election, the Labor Party promised to conduct an independent review to understand what went wrong with the residential zone changes. "The review panel will consider protocols for best practice consultation and the appropriate role of the Minister, councils and the community in the planning process." The CRA will need to monitor and, if invited, contribute to this review process in 2015.

Carlton Connect Planning Scheme Amendment

The University of Melbourne has proposed a major intensification of the site formerly occupied by the Royal Women's Hospital; it has provided no justification for this intensification. More particularly, it is proposing to add more floors to the existing 13 level 3AW block and replace the existing two and three to seven level blocks with structures approximately 13 and 10 levels respectively. To facilitate this intensity of development, the University wishes to be exempted from the provisions of the current Design and Development Overlay, which has a preferred height of 9 storeys.

The CRA is most concerned that this intensification will further degrade the pedestrian amenity of Carlton. The existing 3AW block already casts significant shadows over Grattan Street during the middle of the day for 6 months of the year. Adding extra floors to this building and replacing the two storey A J Cunningham building [on Swanston St corner] with a building taller than the existing 3AW block will not improve the pedestrian amenity of Grattan Street.

The University also wishes to replace the existing Public Use Zone with a Capital City Zone. However, the introduction of a Capital City Zoning [in the manner recommended by the Council] would effectively EXCLUDE the community from ANY further say over the detailed use and development matters. The notice, decision requirements and review rights of the planning act are effectively scrapped for ALL but a limited number of uses. The CRA does not agree with the scrapping of these provisions.

The new Development Plan Overlay includes many laudable objectives, with considerable emphasis being given to the Environmentally Sustainable Design measures [ESD measures]. At the Development Plan level it has been determined to use the Green Star Communities Rating Tool Pilot ... a Green Building Council of Australia initiative. While it is possible that the redevelopment may include cutting edge ESD initiatives, there are no guarantees. If Carlton Connect is to be taken seriously on the ESD front, the DPO must set measurable targets which address the key issues of energy generation and water conservation.

This Planning Scheme Amendment will be considered by a Planning Panel in 2015, where the CRA will have a final opportunity to present its case for a revised Amendment.

2. Planning Applications

Our last General Meeting reported on 5 applications to which CRA had objected, but still remained unresolved. Their relevant outcomes were as follows:

TP-2013-317 (63 Nicholson St) 4 objections. Construction of a 4 storey dwelling at the rear of the medical centre: Protracted negotiations by CoM with applicant, the anticipated redesign never eventuated. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

TP-2013-630 (15-31 Pelham St) 65 objectors. Convert offices to apartments and convert existing 4 storey building at rear to 8 stories by adding 4 new stories: Major streetscape and heritage issues. The CoM's refusal was upheld by VCAT after the applicant appealed CoM's decision. CRA joined with two Owners Corporations and several individual objectors attending the marathon 5 day hearing.

TP-2013-736 (152-154 Queensberry St) 6 objections. Construct 16 stories in an area which has a 9 storey discretionary height control: An inappropriate development on many grounds which was comprehensively refused by CoM. The Applicant's subsequent appeal to VCAT was successful without conceding a thing. Needless to say, all opponents were disappointed and disillusioned by the decision.

TP-2013-893 (106-112 Queensberry St) 7 objections, 6 storey apartment building: Same building envelope as previously approved for a hotel on the site. CRA is concerned about overlooking adjacent residence in Little Cardigan St. Approved by CoM with conditions addressing CRA's concern. Permit issued.

TP-2013-947 (123 -127 Bouverie St / 116 -128 Leicester St) 15 storey student accommodation & retail development by Melbourne University: CRA objected on grounds of excessive height. Subsequent modifications negotiated by CoM (including a reduction in height) generally addressed CRA's concerns. Permit issued.

During 2014 the Planning Committee reviewed 119 planning applications for postcode 3053, most of which caused little to no concern, however CRA did lodge 2 objections, they were:

TP-2013-1059 (932-944Swanston St) Fleming House: Partial demolition of existing building, construction of alterations and additions to existing building and construction of three-storey residential building for student accommodation. CRA objected on heritage, urban design and streetscape issues. Modifications were negotiated by Com which largely addressed CRA's concerns. The CoM's decision to issue a permit was appealed by a neighbour. The resulting VCAT hearing triggered a challenge by the applicant (Newman College) to object to a condition to the permit relating to provision for bicycle parking. The hearing is imminent; CRA will not appear but has submitted supporting the CoM's permit condition.

TP-2014-59 (205-223 Pelham St) Reece Site. Construction of a 15 storey building for the purpose of dwellings and a ground floor shop, with dispensations from the loading and car parking requirements associated with the shop: CoM refused the application and the Applicant has appealed this decision. The revised design prepared for the VCAT hearing attempts to address the CoM's grounds for refusal, however CRA believes that the new design does not go far enough and still objects on the grounds of height, inadequate setbacks, excessive bulk and overshadowing. The VCAT hearing is scheduled for 23 Feb. 2015, CRA will attend.

The outlook for 2015 does not look particularly attractive with 2 objections lodged already.

The effect of objections from individuals, adds considerable weight to an objection lodged by CRA, so we encourage all members to keep this in mind when inappropriate development is proposed. Outright victories may be rare, but serious concessions are often achieved.

Further information on the above applications should be available on the CoM website.

www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/BuildingandPlanning/Planning/Pages/PlanningRegisterSearch.aspx

Planning Committee monthly reports and summaries are available on the CRA website:
www.carltonresidents.org.au/referencegroups/Planning.html

Police Community Consultative Committee (convenor: Richard Tisher)

PCCC, which encompasses Carlton, Parkville, North Melbourne and Kensington, has continued as a flagship for other ailing PCCCs in response to a recommendation from Police Region 1 command that PCCCs be disbanded. The PCCC is now known as the *Melbourne North Police Community Consultative Committee* to highlight the fact that it contains a wide variety of groups and organisations drawn from the region. There are approximately 26 PCCC members at the present time and discussions are being held as to whether there are other groups that should be invited to belong. The committee met monthly in 2014.

PCCC has developed a Mission Statement which asks each organisation to specify what it expects from PCCC. Also an adjusted version of the PCCC Constitution has been adopted. Senior Sergeant Troy Burg from North Melbourne Police wants to streamline the manner of communicating through PCCC members information regarding crime in the area and the policing approaches being adopted to cope with this.

Through support from PCCC Leading Senior Constable Nick Parissis continues to conduct the annual camp for kids programme and PCCC has once again donated \$500 for the purchase of items for the annual food/toy drive.

At the December meeting, Senior Constable Haworth of the Melbourne Highway patrol provided information in regards to their emphasis on cyclists and related issues, particularly with safety and enforcement of road rules. In the previous year up to 31st of October there were 209 injury collisions involving cyclists in the City of Melbourne; 39 of these involved motorists opening doors on cyclists. Senior Constable Haworth also mentioned that inconsistencies in road design/markings can also play a part in collisions, dangerous behaviour. PCCC has also noted that a white ribbon day events was held on 21st November at the Carlton public housing estate and was a great success.

Public Housing Estates Redevelopment (convenor: Julie Harrison)

Carlton Public Housing Estates redevelopment began in 2006 and is drawing to a close. It has involved major buildings works on the three Housing Estates: Elgin-Nicholson, Lygon-Rathdowne and Keppel-Cardigan.

The Carlton Residents Association has continued to be represented on the Community Liaison Committee. This group was established by the State Government to provide advice on the major redevelopment of public housing estates in Carlton. The most significant change is the introduction of large tracts of private housing (800 units). Current committee membership includes public housing tenants, The City of Melbourne, representatives of the private developers Australand and Citra, community service providers and DHS staff.

There have been a number of key developments in the redevelopment of the public housing estates this year. A Chapel building (Keppel-Cardigan) has been converted into a community facility and will provide much needed accommodation for the Carlton Toy Library, currently at Trades Hall. An attractive refurbished park is also being developed in Neill Street by the Council. The State Government's longer term plan is to introduce place based management where an integrated approach will be taken to promoting the health and wellbeing of both private and public housing residents on the estates.

Newsflash & Website (convenor: Lyn Cracknell)

The Newsflash was published three times in 2014. Julie Harrison and Robyn Dalziel have continued to contribute editorial assistance. Lyn Cracknell has worked as Reference Group convenor. For most editions, 300 copies have been printed and distributed to CRA members and members of the community.

The aim is to always include information from Reference Groups, along with stories relevant to the Carlton Community. The production of the Newsflash relies entirely on CRA members and Friends contributing copy.

The Reference Group also manages the website. An up-to-date website is an important record of current issues and an archive for past activities.

The CRA Committee made the decision to redesign the website – this is approaching fulfilment. There are still a few problems to overcome. Before the website can be launched the information must be updated. It is vital that Reference Group convenors revise the information and send to Lyn Cracknell via the secretary: carltonresidents@gmail.com

There will be some changes in 2015 – one is that Reference Groups be renamed Working Groups.

Contributions to and comments regarding the website and Newsflash are always welcome.

Parkland & Public Land (convenor: Ian Bird)

Neill St Reserve

The \$3 million re-development of the Neill St Reserve commenced in mid-2014. These major works are scheduled over 2 years and will add to accessible parkland in Carlton near the Public Housing Estates and many other dwellings.

Royal Park

Following extensive lobbying and submissions, Royal Park was included on the Victorian Heritage Register in October 2014, with significant exemptions to accommodate the proposed EW Link, now disbanded. These parkland exemptions are yet to be rescinded. Sportsgrounds, wetlands, underground water storage tanks, 5000 trees etc are now saved on Royal Park.

To accommodate the EW Link on the Park, the Council was granted \$14 million from the Linking Melbourne Authority to relocate significant areas of sportsgrounds from west Royal Park (Ross Straw Field etc) to elsewhere in Royal Park and Princes Park. The Council's role in expediting this work as a priority in 2014, despite doubts over the future of the Link, has been widely condemned.

Large areas of Princes Park are currently being converted to exclusive sports use, including lighting for night sporting activities. Local residents objected to this rapid change of use, particularly the unscheduled lighting.

Garden Squares

Carlton's historic Garden Squares: Argyle, Lincoln and University (Barry) were subject to review in 2014. Each has been compromised by inappropriate development and 'activation' over the past decade. The concept of passive green space seems unacceptable to Council officers. Currently, University Square is undergoing 're-imagining', upgrade and activation. CRA members have participated in 'consultations', particularly regarding the desolate northern area above the University underground carpark. A formal submission was made. The outcome was unclear at end December 2014. As the University now owns all the buildings around the Square, parkland areas may accommodate yet further off-campus excursions for sports, recreation functions etc. It already utilises the Grattan St frontage for large and intrusive self-promotion advertising placards.

Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens (convenor: Brian Falconer)

On 9 May 1901, the Royal Exhibition Building hosted the opening of the first Federal Parliament. In 2013 and again this year, a celebration of democracy has been held as part of World Heritage Community Day, to see stories and creations of local primary school students, to hear speeches about world heritage during the public forum and to tour the Building and Gardens. This event was again presented by the Coalition of Residents and Business Associations (CoRBA) in City of Melbourne and Fitzroy, in collaboration with Museum Victoria.

Friends of REB & Carlton Gardens

About 2 years ago, this coalition of like-minded communities formed a new group convened by Margaret O'Brien, called the *Friends of Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens - Your World Heritage site* (FREBCG). It was set up to fill a perceived gap in the public's recognition of Melbourne's only World Heritage site. The goals of the FREBCG, were to work toward increasing the public profile and understanding of the world heritage significance of the REB, and CG as the site of the industrial exhibitions, and Australia's first parliament and the significance of the surrounding world heritage precinct. In reality, the FREBCG only has a nucleus membership. However, the FREBCG are currently working on its 3rd World Heritage programme for National Trust's 2015 Heritage Festival. As in 2014, the aim in May 2015 is to target even more local schools and with the Museum, and increasingly with the local communities, extend the recognition of the world heritage values that make Carlton (and West Fitzroy) unique even among Melbourne's other heritage suburbs. Our 2015 world heritage community and democracy day is on the 3 May.

The initiative shown by the community aroused the interest of our Federal member, Adam Bandt, MP. He successfully in persuaded the Government to provide \$20m in 2011/12 to Museum Victoria as a contribution to towards the protection and promotion of the World Heritage listed REB. However this has not been rewarded because the community has only scarce knowledge of progress being made. It was reported though that the re-opening of the external walkway around the circumference of the Dome is still 'a year away'.

Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS)

The City of Melbourne disbanded the Events Advisory Group (EAG) after more than 10 years. There is now no community consultation process for the MIFGS. The International Management Group (IMG) has applied to Heritage Victoria for a permit for the MIFGS 2015 in the southern Gardens and around the REB. A number of community associations and individuals, including the CRA, objected to the permit. The application is for the gardens to be closed to the public for 25 days, in addition to the weeks required for construction and demolition and repairs. We are very aware of the increasing numbers of people using the gardens and the overall impact of the event to the gardens and the neighbourhood. We continue to lobby local representatives for changes to MIFGS.

Streetscapes (convenor: Ian Bird)

Council's Urban Forest Strategy continued to foster tree planting in Carlton. The aim is to double the tree canopy cover to mitigate urban heat-island effects, create healthy ecosystems, and to replace trees nearing the end of their life cycle.

Annual unrest over street trees in Lygon St was again generated by a few vocal restaurateurs. There is widespread support for the trees which significantly add to the ambience and shade cover of the street. The Council is responding to claimed allergies from pollen, seed pods and falling leaves. Noxious exhaust gases from busy Lygon St. traffic seems of no concern to the minority voices negative about trees.

We participated in consultations over the Council's *Walking Plan* and drafted a submission (see website). The Plan aims to make streetscapes more pedestrian friendly and to encourage more walking. We suggested further traffic calming in the Lygon St Precinct and improved street safety for pedestrians, including auto-on pedestrian lights and Pedestrian Crossings mid-way between the major light controlled intersections. Footpath congestion from outdoor dining, motor bike and cycle parking and advertising hoardings, was also included. Additional public seating would also be welcome, particularly for elderly pedestrians. We also lobbied for an improvement to the pedestrian entrance to Carlton from the tram terminus in Swanston Street (along Faraday St).

The costly and never-ending cleanup of graffiti 'tags' and street rubbish dumping continued around Carlton, despite the best efforts of the Council and police to deal with the problem.

Transport, Traffic and Parking (convenor: Ian Bird)

East West Link

Activism against this costly (\$1 million per metre) and controversial project continued throughout 2014, right up to Election Day on 29 November. It was a major election issue. The ALP finally came out in strong opposition to the Link during the election campaign, in response to on-going widespread community angst. The Greens always opposed it. The election of the Andrews Labor Government ensured demise of the Link, and the subsequent disbanding of the Linking Melbourne Authority (LMA). The secret Business Case was revealed by the new Government following the election. It documented the projects long-suspected manifold failings which were widely reported in the media and by CRA in *Newsflash*, *eflash* and website.

CRA was heavily committed to submissions, letter writing, lobbying, community information stalls, meetings, street rallies and drill-site pickets. We attended and made submissions to the Comprehensive Impact Statement Assessment Committee which continued from early March 2014 to mid-April. We collaborated and worked with Protectors of Public Lands, Royal Park Protection Group, Yarra Campaign for Action on Transport, EW Link Community Forum, Tunnel Picket Group, Public Transport Users Association, Trains not Tollroads Campaign (City of Yarra) and various transport academics and commentators.

The Napthine State Government signed secret contracts with East West Connect Consortia prior to the State Election. It largely ignored Assessment Committee recommendations, and disregarded political (Labor & Greens) opposition, and intense community lobbying for better public transport. Several court cases failed to gain traction against the Government's secretive Link policies.

The Link has been widely assessed as irrelevant to Melbourne's long-term transport needs. It was not part of any transport plan or road reservation process. Compulsory property acquisitions continued unabated in the run-up to the election, causing much community trauma.

Controversy continues over cancellation of the Link project, including financial implications for the State and the extortionate \$1.2 billion tender cancellation fees secretly agreed to by the former Napthine Government. Specific legislation may be required to deal with compensation. The issue will continue in 2015.

Project 10,000: a new Transport Plan for Melbourne

Election of the Andrews Labor Government provided a mandate to implement its \$multi-billion *Project 10,000* Transport Plan. This Plan includes several major projects:

- Remove 50 of our worst level crossings,
- Build Melbourne Metro Rail,
- Get 5000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge,
- \$2 billion for suburban and country roads,
- Create 10,000 construction jobs.

Melbourne Metro Rail is the centrepiece project. Initial design work on this \$9 billion proposal was completed under the Brumby Government's, Victorian Transport Plan (2008). It enjoys the imprimatur of Infrastructure Australia and would significantly enhance the entire rail network, including doubling the capacity of the City Loop. Five new stations are proposed: Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South, and Domain.

Long-sought rail lines to Doncaster, Airport and Rowville are now off the agenda. Without Doncaster Rail, traffic congestion will continue to grow at the Eastern Freeway exit.

Major works associated with *Project 10,000* are scheduled to begin in 2015.

Ian Bird
Report Editor

Presented at the CRA 19th AGM, 23 February 2015