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Community resources for Carlton?

It is a travesty that unlike surrounding suburbs, Carlton has no library, no public buildings, no town hall. Thus our leviathan campaign over many years for the Kathleen Syme Centre, so that Carlton would, like other communities throughout Victoria, gain these fundamental community resources. However, Council identified alternative uses for KSC, to provide space for a range of specialized local council services. **It is a travesty that intense community competition has been encouraged by the Council for the limited space of KSC. Resources are direly needed in Carlton for the entire community.**



Matthew Guy addresses the KSC Rally, September 2010

Without reference to the community, Melbourne Council has unveiled four possible models* (see below) developed for the Kathleen Syme Centre, Residents and service providers are to be consulted as to which council model is preferred. Two models (C and D) now include a library, whilst model D has full library facilities. This will force a choice between comprehensive library facilities for the entire Carlton community, or space for services for Carlton's disadvantaged. KSC cannot accommodate all the identified facilities and services required for Carlton.

CRA proposed to Council a solution to avoid this conflict – that it acquire the vacant Carlton Police Station. The building has been declared surplus to police needs, is ideally situated, and eminently suitable for adaptive re-use by a range of local community organisations. Federal Member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt, has flagged federal funding possibilities for refurbishment. This provides a rare opportunity for Council to acquire additional, much needed space, to fulfil all of Carlton's needs and provide services currently available in all surrounding suburbs.

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CRA has urged Council to acquire the police station to house urgently required community resources.

CRA would prefer not to be constrained to just the four options offered by the council. A combination of models C and D would provide the most viable outcome, i.e. a comprehensive library with the auditorium to provide space for a wide range of community activities.

*The four models announced by Council last November are: (A) a health and aged services model with a GP, counseling, and aged and disability services; (B) a children and youth services hub with a kindergarten, youth services and counseling, and a small library; (C) Library, arts and youth hub with a library (as in East Melbourne), art studios and community art programs, and youth services and counselling; (D) a Lifelong Learning hub with a comprehensive library (approx. 75% size of the city library), community education classrooms, and neighbourhood house.

KCS – the case for a library

National Year of Reading 2012 - CRA demand for a Library for the community at the KSC is 'spot on'

This special year will focus attention on the shaky state of Australian literacy. Data from the ABS is disturbing:

- Around 46% of teenage and adult Australians have poor literacy
- literacy underpins achieving a citizen's social and economic potential
- literacy increases labour force participation by 15%
- literacy begins at birth: children who are read to regularly before age two, have a vocabulary of 500 words, if not - about 50 words.

Literacy means you can read the media, screens, dials, instructions, as well as a novel or an e-book.

William McGinnes, actor, author, patron of the National Year of Reading, (*Life Matters*, 24 Jan 2012) describes the year as dedicated to 'literacy as the survival of a most crucial talent'. Reading is habit of mind and if mastered, a pure pleasure, a key to understanding where you've come from and what the future holds. It engages the brain and imagination, enhances wellbeing and gives access to all forms of knowledge and opportunity. A public library is a community resource, a treasure trove where people develop the joy of reading and can engage with their community.

In a community such as Carlton, recognized as one of Victoria's most disadvantaged areas, literacy is of vital importance to achieve empowerment for young and old. There are many forms of poverty, and literacy can help them all.

It is a disgrace that we do not yet have a library in Carlton. Experts agree that a public library is an essential and powerful community resource to counter deprivation.

AGM Report

The Kathleen Syme Centre was the venue for the Annual General Meeting of the Carlton Residents Association on Monday 20 February. It was a joy to meet once again in this special place. The auditorium is a great community asset and ideal for a function of this nature. The CRA Annual Report outlined the activities of the Reference Groups, showing the diverse range of issues in which the Association is engaged. (The report can be read in full on the website www.carltonresidents.org.au).

The Treasurer reported that, with increasing costs, it is absolutely essential that membership be increased and recommended that this be a priority for 2012. The need to find ways to encourage membership amongst younger people in the community was raised.

Social reform or anarchy?



Dr Toscano speaking at the AGM

The guest speaker, Dr Joseph Toscano, introduced his address to the meeting with the statement 'People and Societies change – NOTHING – is set in concrete.' He then lead us through some times in history, demonstrating how important people power can be, especially in the quest for social justice. 'The problem today', he said, 'is that there is no diversity of opinions. What we can achieve as a group is only limited by our imagination....we used to be forced to interact with a diversity of people, and now, we all listen to the same media output'.

He then expanded on his ideas for simple, peaceful reforms which can have a profound impact on society by the redistribution of wealth through taxation – 'It worked in the past, why not now?'

In closing he said:

'As society changes, in fact we are moving from abundance to scarcity, the same structures cannot necessarily deal with both states.'

There was animated discussion over supper following his address.

Thanks were extended to Brunetti's for providing the supper and to City of Melbourne (CoM) for making the Kathleen Syme Centre available.

JOIN THE CARLTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership subscription!

Full member (if you live in 3053):

Single \$25 Family \$40

Concession: Single \$15 Family \$25

Friend (if not in 3053): \$15

EMAIL: Membership Secretary:

membershipcra@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.carltonresidents.org.au

Vale Gilbert Kerr.

Former member of the CRA Gilbert Kerr passed away on December 21 last year. Gil was born and raised in Alberta, Canada, and came to Australia forty years ago. Following his retirement from the Ministry of Education, he and his wife Nano moved from Geelong to Carlton to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Gil was an enthusiastic Carlton resident and was a regular walker in the Carlton Gardens and surrounding areas. His retirement interests included working for several years as a volunteer in the Ornithology Department at the Melbourne Museum cataloguing bird and egg specimens. He was also a keen lawn bowler, and a member of the Fitzroy Victoria bowling Club with his good friend Richard Tisher until his illness prevented him from participating. Gil is survived by his wife Nano (still a Carlton Resident), one son, two daughters and eight grandchildren.

Reference Group Reports

VCAT Presentations

CRA is currently engaged in an ongoing hearing for 69-71 Drummond Street, another controversial overdevelopment with heritage issues.

Planning and Development

Each month, the committee considers the current planning applications for 3053 postcode, addressing issues that threaten 'loss of amenity', eg. car parking, compliance with heritage overlay, residential diversity etc. Access up-to-date information on the status of a Planning Permit or current application at:

<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/BuildingandPlanning/Planning/Pages/PlanningRegisterSearch.aspx>

If you are aware of developments which may need attention please contact the Planning Committee: planningcra@gmail.com

STOP PRESS February 29: A planning application has been lodged for a gaming venue at Cnr. Queensberry and Swanston Sts. CRA will be lodging an objection. To lodge a personal objection, refer to www.carltonresidents.org.au for information on relevant grounds for objection.

APP No./ADDRESS	DETAILS OF WORK/CRA INTEREST
October – 13 Applications; 1 objection 93 Barkly Street CARLTON VIC 3053 (Zone HO1)	Partial demolition and construction of a three storey addition to the existing dwelling Objection on 2 grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdevelopment and visual bulk • Development not respectful of streetscape
November – 6 Applications; 0 objection	
December – 9 Applications; 0 Objections	
January - 1 Application; 0 Objections VCAT hearing – TP-2010-319 69-71 Drummond St (Cnr. Queensberry St)	CRA attended 23/1/2012, the hearing is on going The CRA supports the City of Melbourne on the grounds for refusal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height • Amenity • Heritage

CoRBA- Coalition of Residents and Business Associations

CoRBA-Melbourne is to be congratulated on successfully pressing the State government and the Council to agree to the current Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) review.

CoRBA sees the review as one small but vital step towards the City of Melbourne Council being entitled to the same level of scrutiny and review, accorded to all other municipalities.

Having wrangled this opportunity out of the authorities, after years of effort, it is important that as many people as possible put forward their views. For further information:

<http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Melbournerr.html>

The final VEC report, which will recommend changes to our system to the Minister for Local Government, is due for release in late March.

This Election year will be a very busy year for CoRBA members, who will be working to raise the profile of the constituent 'voice'. Those of us who actually live and work in the City of Melbourne (CoM) comprise approximately 40% of the total number of voters. CoRBA intends to ensure that issues and concerns which are shared by constituents across the municipality e.g. transport, traffic, tunnel threat, planning, density, streetscapes, greening, community engagement, and public safety, are brought to the attention of all candidates.

Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building

The highlight of the year for CRA was working with Fitzroy Residents, Residents 3000, Protectors of Public Lands (PPL), and Southbank, to make submissions to the public hearing on the draft World Heritage Master Plan (WHMP). Our federal MP, Adam Bandt, was briefed personally and is committed to raising the public profile of this historical and World Heritage site. A meeting with Minister Guy also raised his awareness of our concerns e.g. the need for formal community representation on the management committee.

CRA's campaign against Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) using the South Garden continued.

For the first time a competitor, Better Homes and Gardens, will hold a show in February using only the Royal Exhibition Building (REB) area, providing an opportunity to compare the two events for impact on the site and to gauge public support.

Loss of use and public amenity is increasingly felt when commercial events control public space. There has been a noticeable increase in use by groups. Alcohol consumption

has also increased including at MIFGS and the pre-Christmas tent nightclub. Possum feeding continues to increase possum numbers and put additional stress on the heritage trees.

Over the past 12 months CoM has improved the standard of care in the southern and northern gardens and this is especially evident in the condition of the lawns and the ongoing replacement and tree management program. Councillor Watts made World Heritage Gardens one of her early priorities. Unfortunately, the green areas in the Reserve, the responsibility of the Museum, continue to be neglected and no heritage trees have been replaced.

Outstanding issues:

- CRA and others raised concerns with CoM, and in WHMP submissions, about the dysfunction of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CoM and Museum Victoria. The MOU is intended to deliver a cooperative approach to management and care standards for the whole World Heritage site
- CRA and others also raised, with CoM and Museum Victoria, the apparent lack of Heritage Victoria planning permits for event use in the Reserve's open spaces. Permits are required to ensure compliance with World Heritage uses and protection
- Improving the public's awareness of the World Heritage citation for the Carlton Gardens, REB and the surrounding World Heritage precinct and what that means for its use, care and future
- Encouraging government interest in increasing the public profile of the World Heritage site e.g. through increased public information
- Improving access to decision making bodies via formal community representation. CRA and other community representatives attend Museum Victoria's four monthly briefing sessions on the event program.

Notable media coverage included:

- REB as the site of Australia's first parliament, with photos of Alfred Deakin's descendants, Adam Bandt MP and community representatives
- CRA and Fitzroy Residents Association (FRA) initiative to reopen the REB viewing promenade to the public (Roam the Dome)
- Restoration of the Western forecourt transforming the western (Rathdowne Street) frontage to the REB. It was the Museum's first significant implementation of its master plan.

Faraday Street Carlton– famous for:

189 CO.AS.IT	199 Museo Italiano
198 Brunetti	205 La Mama Theatre
King and Godfree	235 Carlton Moviehouse
249 Kathleen Syme Education Centre	

Carlton Police Station **Vulnerable but Resilient**



The Historic Police Station is suffering from neglect

The vulnerable state of the now vacant Carlton Police Station in Drummond Street was amply demonstrated through the recent theft of copper pipes and fittings from the building. Though it is now in the 'ownership' of the Dept. Treasury and Finance, having been ceded by the Department of Justice, it appears that Victoria Police are still responsible for its care and maintenance. The CRA has made representations to the authorities reminding them of their responsibilities.

The demand for space for community resource groups remains high. Many groups have now lent their support to our campaign for the acquisition of the Police Station by City of Melbourne. We understand that an expression of interest has been made by the council to Treasury and Finance. This is an encouraging first step in the acquisition process.

It is interesting to note that the original architectural plans for the Carlton Police Station, copies of which we have obtained, were also used in the building of stations in Geelong, Kyneton, and more locally, in Richmond. The Geelong station is now a private home and thanks to the current owners we have been able to see some of the interior architectural features restored to their early glory. It is to be hoped that the Drummond Street buildings can be equally restored during any adaptive re-use. However, this requires better security than now provided so that further theft does not rob the buildings of whatever heritage still remains.

Carlton Police Station is more than the Hawthorn bricks and mortar, the bluestone and basalt of which it is built – its added charm and historical importance is enhanced by its remaining internal design and décor.

We encourage community groups (services or arts) seeking

space for their projects to contact the Association in support of our campaign.

Further to the above

Minister for Planning Matthew Guy MLC has encouraged CRA to pursue use of the Police Station as a community facility for Carlton. He writes that at this stage his intervention in the site's sale or lease to the City of Melbourne is premature. The Assistant Treasurer is currently assessing the site.

The Carlton community is deeply appreciative of all the support Mr Guy provided in our long-running campaign to acquire the vacant KSC building as a community centre / library for Carlton. He gave generously of his time, provided invaluable advice on how to successfully run our campaign, including recommending a rally which he addressed. He spoke on the issue to Parliament, and questioned the logic of the then Brumby Government's protracted resistance to an excellent project which has obvious benefits for the Carlton community.

PCCC - Police Community Consultative Committee

PCCC members participated in and assisted with funding the Carlton Local Agencies Network (CLAN) "Harmony Day" held on the Carlton public housing estate to celebrate multiculturalism.

- The PCCC community patrols project began in the Carlton housing estate in July. Volunteers were called for, and will receive training from Victoria Police, in response to detecting suspicious behaviour and acting on suspicions
- In August, participation with Drummond Street Services in the coordination and running of the Ramadan youth soccer tournament
- PCCC collaborated with University of Melbourne security to conduct a bicycle safety and marking day at the University of Melbourne with a view to reducing the incidence of theft of bicycles from the University
- A Community safety forum was held in Carlton to address the rise of robberies in the area. In excess of 70 people attended
- PCCC has collaborated with Carlton Rotary Club to launch a breath analyser project in local licensed venues
- In November the Carlton PCCC/Melbourne North Police Camp for kids was held. Sixteen children from the Carlton and Kensington primary schools, accompanied by three police members and a local youth worker, attended the weekend camp. The camp focuses on team building, consequences of actions, problem solving and resilience

- In December the PCCC/ Melbourne North toy/food drive was undertaken for the ninth year. Donated items were passed on to the Church of All Nations support agency in Carlton, Ronald McDonald House in Parkville, and the Vinny support service in Kensington
- In February (as in previous years) PCCC members will conduct presentations to newly enrolled (local and international) students at the University of Melbourne. Presentations focus on safety, responsible behaviour, responsible consumption of alcohol and driving laws.

As a post script it is appropriate to note that the PCCC membership is expanding with new members including the Carlton Football Club, Urban Communities, and North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre.

Opportunities for Carlton (OFC)

OFC entered its third year, and the outcomes captured in the OFC project's midyear report show over 40 initiatives have been generated in the community, with over \$160K in OFC grants and over \$450K in additional government funding to Carlton based projects. These many initiatives have included:

- A focus on digital inclusion with the new Carlton community website now sustained through local business sponsorship (www.carlton.vic.au) and the initiation of a project to recycle ex-government computers for resale to low income households
- A formal partnership between University of Melbourne, Carlton Local Agency Network, and City of Melbourne to respond to Carlton community needs
- Bendigo Bank involvement in projects around employment, environmental action, community training, skill development, and social connection, including the Carlton Men's Shed and Carlton Connected Communities.

The project conducted major community network meetings in 2011, the first in March focussing on Sustainability in Carlton. Ideas from the community featured in the Council's Key Strategic Activities for 2011-2012, with Council trialling a sustainable living and behavioural change program within the Carlton precinct (Eco Carlton).

The November network meeting included 90 participants discussing transition for the project, particularly mechanisms for community participation in decision making. The network identified ideas on the skills and governance structures needed to support ongoing community action. In 2012 the group will look to establishing revised strategic governance structures for the Carlton community and stakeholders.

Take a moment to visit the Carlton Community Website

<http://www.carlton.vic.au/>



Emerging Issues Housing shortage?

Successive State Governments have claimed housing developments must be expedited outside regular planning processes as a response to a perceived housing shortage and for economic growth. This policy has major impacts on Carlton.

Planning Minister, Hon Matthew Guy, is presently considering "consultant" proposals to significantly restrict appeal rights over developments. These proposals would seriously jeopardise CRA's ability to object to developments on the grounds of heritage, streetscape and neighbourhood character.

Recent reports (*The Age*, 26 Jan 2012) suggest a rise in the apartment numbers constructed, with rental vacancies now increasing to 4.4% in Melbourne. *The Age* (Jan 29, 2012) again featured the projected over supply of apartments and the importance of overseas investors to maintain price levels "the vast majority of these off-the-plan projects were targeted at investors, often from overseas".

Overseas developers now have a major slice (30%) of local apartment construction and are selling properties directly into their home markets. A recent advertisement in Kuala Lumpur, brought to CRA attention reads: "An exclusive

release to Kuala Lumpur: Melbourne Property, Price from \$A399,000, 30% deposit, 70% loan interest rate 2.5%. Property Exhibition, JW Marriot Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Sat 12 & Sun 13 Nov 2011. Sales have begun”

We understand a large proportion of private housing on the Carlton Public Housing Estates has been sold overseas.

Little wonder many families in Carlton cannot afford to buy into the local real estate market.

Wards or No Wards? That is the question **Comment on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) Review Preliminary Report Jan 23, 2012.**

The long awaited and eagerly anticipated VEC interim report was released on January 23. This is a disappointing document. Thank goodness it's an interim proposal, so there is still time to influence the bureaucrats.

Just to re-cap - the City of Melbourne (CoM) is the ONLY municipality in Victoria, which was, up until this point, not entitled to a periodic review of its electoral system. These periodic reviews ostensibly take into account demographic, economic or any other major changes in the electorate, and are intended to permit a review of essentially two aspects of the system: whether municipalities have the right number of Councillors and the appropriateness of the wards structure. Until now, the voters in the CoM, governed by a different Act than all other municipalities in the State, have been denied this right of review.

Full credit to the Minister, Jeanette Powell, who called for the review, which it should be noted, is actually funded by the City Council (i.e. YOU the constituents). This review was our first opportunity to 'officially' complain about the adequacy of the current system. Many in the municipality have formed the strong view that it is unrepresentative and un-democratic and have been staunchly advocating for wards for many years. In fact 17 of the 22 submissions made to the VEC called for wards. Clearly better local representation is high on the constituents' wish list.

So - we have made submissions - but is the VEC listening? Apparently not, since the VEC interim report puts their preferred option as 'NO WARDS' . The CoM is the only example of this form of representation in all of Victoria.

According to the VEC report, its recommendations are based on the following: '*ABS 2006 census community profiles, the Department of Planning and Community Development's projections and voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll*'. In addition, the VEC '*...undertakes field work, viewing current and possible boundaries for each of the options to evaluate their effectiveness*' (Electoral Representation Review, Melbourne City Council, Preliminary Report from VEC, 23 January 2012, p.8). The question arises - How exactly is this "effectiveness"

assessed by VEC? Against what criteria? Clearly the VEC does not place adequate weight on constituent views, nor does it recognize the need to design an electoral system which delivers equitable local representation.

It seems at this stage that the VEC is persisting with the '*old chestnut*' – namely the CoM requiring special electoral rules because of its status as a state capital. This continues to be a nonsensical argument, seeking to expedite state control and continued inadequate local representation for constituents.

The VEC report claims that *[it]* '*draws on its experience in mapping and boundary modelling and also engages consultants with experience in local government to provide advice on specific local representation issues during the review*' (VEC 2012 p.6) .

How can this be when the VEC effectively dismisses the experience constituents have of the current system, which is captured in the numerous submissions calling for wards, and is indicative of the frustrating years under the current flawed system? The 'No Wards' system has clearly delivered poor electoral representation for residents and for local businesses in our municipality.

The VEC advances another '*old chestnut*'- that the introduction of wards would impact adversely on business. Given that the VEC has been contracted by the City of Melbourne to review our current system now, in order to '*provide fair and equitable representation for [all] voters*' (VEC 2012 p.10) for the 2012 election, why is the VEC still proposing an essentially undemocratic system without wards? This system disadvantages those who live and operate business throughout the entire municipality. Not only is there no evidence that establishing wards will actually disadvantage 'big' business, but local businesses, like residents, clamour for greater local representation.

The most important consideration here though is that there can be no justification whatsoever in Australia for this double standard - a two tier democracy. Why should one group in the electorate enjoy a system which clearly disadvantages another? Our democracy should not distinguish between two classes of voter.

We are in the hands of the VEC – and we are assured that it will respond, to a limited extent, to our submissions. All those who actually care about achieving representative equitable democracy in our municipality have been encouraged to make a submission before February 23 - and hope that good sense will prevail. See the website for further information

<http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Melbournerr.html>

The VEC was commissioned to provide a set of recommendations to deliver an electoral system which does not disadvantage any constituents.

Local government requires local representation.

'Lest we forget' - Some local history

The annual commemoration rally of the 1842 public hanging of two Tasmanian aboriginal "freedom fighters", Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheener, was held at the corner of Bowen and Franklin Streets on 20 January. (See *Newsflash*, Summer 2011, for historical background.) Around 100 people including several CRA members attended the rally, which was convened by Dr Joseph Toscano.



Marching to the Victoria Market cemetery site

Aboriginal Elder Caroline Briggs welcomed attendees and spoke of the historical injustice suffered by the two aboriginals, who were the first people executed in Victoria. Aboriginal activists, Robbie Thorpe and Sharon Firebrace, reminded the rally of the on-going injustices faced by aboriginal people and the "unfinished business" which remains between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Councillors Oke, Kanis and Watts promised Council action towards a public monument to acknowledge the events of 1842.

Following the rally, attendees marched silently to Victoria Market, to the site of the burials of the two executed aboriginals, where flowers were laid. The commemoration was a deeply moving event, a credit to Dr Toscano and his committee.

CRA Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas Party was again held in the La Mama forecourt on Monday 12 December, under perfect conditions. Around 100 members, friends and guests intermingled and enjoyed drinks and nibbles. Attendees were welcomed by Greta Bird (CRA Reference Groups Coordinator), who outlined CRA achievements during 2011.

CRA Life Member, Peter Sanders, introduced our guest speaker, Trevor Huggard, former Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Trevor reminded us of the battles undertaken by the Carlton Association in the 1970s against the destructive impacts of the Eastern freeway on Carlton. He warned of the dangers of

the recently re-announced Eddington Tunnel proposal, to extend the freeway further west. He commended the current work of the *Carlton Alliance* to reunify Carlton and North Carlton (excised in 1993) as vital to an effective opposition of the tunnel proposal, in favour of the long deferred rail line to Doncaster.

Other speakers included recently elected Councillor Jackie Watts (CRA member) who also drew our raffle of items generously donated by Carlton traders. Our local Federal Member, Adam Bandt, spoke of his first year in Parliament.

As always, we are grateful to Liz Jones for making the unique La Mama venue available, to Brunetti's for delicious nibbles, and the usual team of CRA volunteers who ensured a successful evening.



Above: Peter Sanders introduces guest speaker Trevor Huggard

Below: Cr Jackie Watts drawing the raffle in the wonderful La Mama courtyard



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