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**Traffic, Transport and Parking:**

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## *Community News*

### **Readings**

Everyone loves Readings! The thriving, iconic store is intertwined with Carlton's history and has a character all its own.



**Mark Rubbo**

Managing director Mark Rubbo is an active CRA supporter and a much loved local legend. He bought Readings from Ross and Dot Reading and Peter Reid in 1976, along with two business partners at the time. The great name and the combination of books and music were a potent force. Over the ensuing 37 years, Readings became Australia's most successful independent bookstore, expanding to encompass six locations across Melbourne.

The statistics are impressive:

- Readings collectively employs 90 full-time staff and up to 30 casuals.
- The Carlton store alone employs about 60 staff.
- 151,366 books are currently in stock across all six Readings stores.
- 800,000 books were sold by Readings in 2012, more than half of them in the Carlton store.

Readings stores have sold \$1.1m worth of their gift cards to date, or 22,000 gift cards in total!

Mark is passionate about encouraging the development of Australian writing and ideas, and supporting local publishers. Readings disseminates some of the greatest ideas and literature, and moves huge quantities of Australian titles. The firm's focus on friendly, knowledgeable customer service, a regular roster of in-store book signings and events, a free monthly magazine and other community-serving initiatives contribute to the buzz and ensure that it is always packed with people.

Readings has always been enlivened by a thriving program of literary and musical events throughout the year. It's not unusual to wander into a Readings shop on a weekday evening to discover a book launch or reading in progress, wine glasses in hands and an author at the microphone, or an in-store appearance by a local or international artist such as Patti Smith, Billy Bragg, Paul Kelly or Martha Wainwright. It is also a gathering place for writers, publishers, artists and intellectuals. Long-time customers include the likes of cartoonist Michael Leunig, actor Sigrid Thornton and property developer Morry Schwartz, as well as a veritable 'who's who' of local writers. Helen Garner, whose novel *Monkey Grip*, set in Carlton and Fitzroy, was one of Readings' most successful titles ever (over 3000 sold), can often be seen browsing the shelves of the Lygon Street store. The success of the store's accommodation window – it is THE place to advertise for a house mate – led Mark to decide that it would be a good idea to ask for a gold coin donation in return to be put back into the community. This collection of gold coins (coupled with donations for gift wrapping) evolved into The Readings Foundation which sees 10% of Readings' profits donated to community, literacy or arts projects.

And let's not forget the fascinating, idiosyncratic people who work for Readings. Mark is amazed by how good they are, especially given that no one works in the book industry for the money.

In 2006 Mark was awarded the Order of Australia medal for service to the community and his support of Australian writers. He still works in the Lygon Street store on Saturdays in order to mingle with the customers.

The distinct community spirit surrounding Readings seems to have shielded Mark from the effort by Borders to squeeze Readings out of the picture and from some of the challenges facing many independent bookstores. Loyal customers are more inclined to buy directly from Readings rather than buy online. Where other more commercial bookstores have failed, Readings has flourished.

What are Mark's predictions for the future of the industry? 'It is a very challenging time for the book industry. For all sectors sales have been in decline for the last couple of years. The collapse of Borders and Angus & Robinson has offered a bit of a reprieve for the booksellers that have survived, but it presents real challenges for publishers who have so many fewer outlets.

The growth in e-books presents problems for bookshops and of course the huge share that online booksellers, especially the overseas ones, have is another challenge. It galls me that these monkeys don't have to collect GST – they rip the guts out of local publishing and bookselling and on top of that they avoid paying tax.

I think there will always be a desire for some people to browse and connect in physical bookshops – but will there

be enough of them to sustain a vibrant bookselling and publishing community and support writers? I don't know. Ultimately it's the community's choice – do they want us around? Their support through the till will determine that.' CRA gratefully acknowledges [www.thedesignfiles.net](http://www.thedesignfiles.net), August 23 2013, as the source of information for this article.

### People Who Work in Carlton *Dani Solomon - Readings Books*

In 2006 Dani Solomon, aged 22, moved from Mt Isa to Melbourne. The decision to move was based in part on her interest in comedy, which saw her making annual trips to Melbourne for the Comedy Festival. As the cost of these trips mounted, Dani decided it would be more economical to live in Melbourne. She arrived without knowing anyone, and without a job or a place to stay.

After a short stint in a print shop, Dani was offered work in Readings, Carlton. Her role in this branch is to dispatch online orders for books, CDs and DVDs. Materials are sent to customers Australia-wide, and also – more surprisingly to an international clientele: Dani has recently posted materials to Scotland, Bolivia and Iran. Dani believes Readings has an international following because, as an independent retailer, the store is able to offer a more varied and more individual choice than chain stores can supply. Readings also offers customers advice over the phone or internet, a service much appreciated by customers here and abroad.

As a prodigious reader with wide literary tastes...tastes, Dani finds herself in her ideal working environment at Readings. She says she benefits from the books and ideas she encounters every day, and from the influence of the knowledgeable staff. Her interests include history, science and literature, but she is not keen to pursue a degree in these areas. Choosing one discipline, she says, is 'too limiting'. Instead, she satisfies her curiosity through wider reading and by contact with experts in these fields. Dani also enjoys writing and appreciates the informal 'creative writing course' offered by the writers and literary experts at her workplace.

Dani also appreciates Readings' involvement in the cultural life of the city through its literary and musical events. Children's book launches are a particular pleasure, as the children are so spontaneous and enthusiastic. They don't feel embarrassed about asking questions, such as 'Why does the person in the cover photo have a different name from the character in the book?' Through her job Dani has also met some of her favourite authors, and has found this 'completely thrilling'.

In Melbourne, Dani misses her family in Queensland and the peace of Mt Isa where she grew up – 'a town the size of Switzerland with only 20,000 people'. She maintains links with her family through shared reading interests, sending books home to the readers in the family. She also competes

with her youngest sister in writing contests, involving their mother as literary critic and judge. Her brother is not a keen reader, but at Christmas, Kathy Kozlowski from the children's book section suggested he might like *Big River Little Fish* by Belinda Jeffrey, a book with a rural setting. He has since asked for more books like this one. Another brother has just begun a seven month assignment in Afghanistan. Dani offers him support – 'a happy task' – by sending him books, CDs and DVDs.

Dani hopes to continue working at Readings, spending her spare time seeing shows and writing. In the future – the next week or decade – she could be an underwater photographer, a marine biologist, a librarian in Perth, a tour guide on Thursday Island, or a hermit writer based in Tennant Creek...

### **Emily Harms - Readings Marketing Manager** *Emily expands on Readings' appeal to local and international customers*

In addition to the reasons mentioned by Dani – the advice offered by the staff via phone and internet, and the 'independent' rather than chain store nature of the stock – Readings has other qualities that make it unique as a bookstore. One is the support given to local writers and publishers by holding self-published books on consignment. Readings, for example, was the first bookshop to stock *The Rug Maker of Mazar-e-sharif* by Najaf Mazari. This book, which tells the story of a refugee to Australia, became a best seller, and is now included on the VCE reading list.

Readings also stocks the work of small and independent publishers including the Small Press Underground Networking Community, or SPUNC. This organisation was formed to support independence and diversity in publishing.

Customers respond to the serious and expert book selection in Readings. A number of staff members are authors and some are so well regarded in the publishing world they act as judges for literary awards. Martin Shaw, head buyer at Readings Carlton for eighteen years, is a judge for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, and has just been named Bookseller of the Year. Emily Gale, the children's book buyer, has just published her second novel for young adults. Kathy Kozlowski, the former children's book buyer, has judged children's books for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and for the Human Rights Commission Book Awards. This section of Readings specialises in all aspects of writing for children, and advises schools on text acquisition.

Buyers in Readings' have established connections with the publishing industry, and consequently advance notice of new publications. Martin Shaw, for example, first encountered Nam Le's prizewinning story collection, *the Boat*, in proof form. Recognising its potential, he ensured Readings had early stocks of this now acclaimed work.

According to Emily Harms, it is this capacity for 'spotting the gems' that helps to distinguish Readings' stock from that of other bookshops.

Readings not only spots the gems but actively promotes them. Readings' latest acquisitions, for example, are reviewed in the monthly catalogue. The reviewers, mostly staff members, have a following among readers, who seek them out for debate and further advice. This catalogue, which includes serious and lengthy reviews, has many of the features of a literary magazine. But this is not to say that staff tastes are imposed on the book-reading community. Although Readings' choices are highly influential in forming opinion and debate, this is not a one-way street. Unlike chain stores, all of whom carry the same stock, all Readings stores have their own buyers, who respond to the interests of the local community.

A recent Readings catalogue advertised the novel *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent, and *Nightgames* by Anna Krien, an investigation of Melbourne's football culture, as 'the next big things'. The reviews of these books by Jessica Au and Margo Lanagan provide background to these works and outline their significance to the reading public.

**Readings Carlton**

**309 Lygon Street**

Hours: Mon-Sat 9.00am - 11.00pm, Sun 10.00am - 9.00 pm

## Topical issues

### **Local Government Electoral Review**

With the dust now settling on the troubled 2012 council elections, a state-wide, independent review of Victoria's local government electoral system is currently taking place. Chaired by Petro Georgiou AO, the Review Panel will consider how to enhance the integrity of local democratic governance, elections and candidate conduct, and how to improve very low voter participation.

The City of Melbourne (CoM) has its own, unique electoral arrangements, which, over time and with a massive rise in resident population, have weakened and discredited local government democracy. Focusing on Carlton, CRA participated in the formal public hearing and prepared a submission to the review. See [www.carltonresidents.org.au](http://www.carltonresidents.org.au)

In brief, CRA advocated:

- that the CoM be once again subdivided into wards, in order to provide fairer and more equitable representation for voters. The immense unsubdivided electorate of Melbourne mitigates against local representation and concerns.
- the reintroduction of attendance voting, with provision for postal voting. This is the familiar arrangement for State and Federal elections. Attendance voting is transparent and conducive to voter engagement and participation. The present postal-only voting process is confusing, open to vote harvesting, and has significantly lower participation rates. Also, Carlton's many

apartment complexes, including Public Housing, are open to addressed mail only. Voters are often uninformed about the candidates' policies and merits.

- Melbourne's voter eligibility should be the same as at all other Australian levels of government and jurisdictions. This would entail discontinuing the present deeming provision, two votes per business, non-resident owner voting, and the requirement of only 30 days occupancy.

The Panel will provide two reports, which will make recommendations to the Minister: January 2014 Stage One will address electoral process, participation and integrity April 2014 Stage Two will address electoral representation. For ongoing information see:

[www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au](http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au)

### Greens Retain Melbourne

At the Federal Election on 7 September 2013, Greens sitting member, Adam Bandt MHR, retained the Federal Seat of Melbourne with a significantly increased primary vote.

Sixteen candidates contested the seat, the largest number for any electorate across Australia. Primary votes for the three major parties were Adam Bandt (Greens) 44%, Cath Bowtell (ALP) 27% and Sean Amistead (Liberal) 21%.

There was a swing of 8% to the Greens and 11% against the ALP. Following the distribution of preferences, Adam Bandt (Greens) held the seat 55% to 45% on a two-party preferred basis against the ALP.



*Adam Bandt MHR addressing the Candidates Forum*

This election result provided another historic win for the Greens, despite the concerted efforts of Liberal, ALP and many other minor candidates to unseat them. Mr Bandt, Deputy Leader of the Greens, is the Party's sole member in the House of Representatives. He described the ALP and LP as the 'Coles and Woolworths' of politics and accused them of aiming to turn Parliament into a 'two-party closed shop' (*The Age*, 15 August 2013).

We congratulate Adam Bandt on his resounding electoral success and look forward to continuing our productive relationship with him as our Federal Member.

CRA again collaborated with the Church of All Nations (CAN), to organise a 'Meet the Candidates Forum' in Carlton, on 26 August 2013. Dr John Evans (CAN) very ably facilitated the Forum, which attracted seven of the sixteen candidates, including Mr Bandt and Ms Bowtell. In a standing-room-only, lively 'Town Hall' style meeting, the quality and passion of many of the candidates were most impressive

## Reference Groups

### Planning and development

#### *Metropolitan Planning Strategy*

Over the past couple of years the State Government and Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) have developed a new Metropolitan Planning Strategy called *Plan Melbourne* (*Newsflash*, Autumn 2012): 'a blueprint of how Melburnians will work and live over the next 40 years'. There has already been substantial community consultation in which CRA participated.

On 9 October 2013 the Government released its final 180-page draft document for public comment, which closes on 6 December (see [www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au) for details). Premier Napthine noted in the Media Release: 'This is an integrated land, transport and economic strategy which will change our thinking about better using city-shaping policies and infrastructure projects to enhance the city's liveability and attract investments and jobs'.

This new Planning Strategy replaces the previous *melbourne@5million* policies of the Brumby Government. Regular changes to Melbourne's planning regime have occurred over the past 40 years, each claiming to be for the long term but often only surviving until the next election. Planning has become highly politicised and uncertain, which adds much confusion and conflict to the process. Long-term planning ideally requires bipartisan support for successful outcomes.

*Plan Melbourne* has many lofty goals which are admirable. Questions remain as to how it will be implemented, the role of a new 'independent' Metropolitan Planning Authority, the influence of councils and developers, how an additional one million dwellings will be accommodated, the impacts of 'fast-track' planning, the need for an integrated transport strategy including improved public transport (despite prioritising the EW Link) etc.

Future impacts of the Strategy on Carlton are unclear. CRA expects that historic Carlton will be protected by a new 'Neighbourhood Residential Zone' with mandatory controls (see *Newsflash*, Winter 2012). Planning experts, such as Professor Michael Buxton, RMIT, contend that 'big retailers, road builders and developers' will continue to shape city development to the detriment of residents: 'This is not a plan. It is a hoax driven by money.' (*The Age*, 10 October 2013). Time will tell!

## Applications

At the beginning of each month, the CRA's planning sub-committee meets to consider the previous month's planning applications for the 3053 postcode area. The committee 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 (chiefly in multi-dwelling developments)

The City of Melbourne has an easy to use online search facility for the Planning Register, which provides up-to-date information on the status of a Planning Permit or current application, searching by application number or address.

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

If you are aware of developments needing attention, please contact the Planning Committee: [planningcra@gmail.com](mailto:planningcra@gmail.com)

APP No./ADDRESS	DETAILS OF WORK/CRA INTEREST
<p><b>Carried Forward from 2012</b></p> <p><b>TP-2012- 1044</b> – 139-155 Queensberry Street- <b>VCAT Issued Permit</b></p>	<p>Construction of a 15 storey apartment building adjacent to the ETU building, CRA and others opposed. CoM refused the application. CRA supported the CoM in its defence of the decision at VCAT, however the applicant's appeal was upheld and a permit was issued. (Read more on page 6)</p>
<p><b>Carried Forward – from January – July</b> Total 72 Applications, 4 Objections (3 upheld, 1 ongoing), 2 subject to monitoring</p> <p><b>TP-2013-63</b> – 183Palmerston St - <b>Application Refused</b></p> <p><b>TP-2013-317-</b> 63 Nicholson St- <b>Objection</b></p> <p><b>TP-2013-397-</b> 44 Barkly St</p> <p><b>TP-2011-805-</b>93 Barkly St- <b>Application Refused</b></p> <p><b>TP-2013-505-</b> 104 Barkly St- <b>Issued</b></p>	<p>CRA objected along with 4 other parties. A revised design was submitted by the applicant, however CoM refused the application.</p> <p>4 storey residence at the rear of the shop on the corner of Faraday St - an overdevelopment of the site, unsympathetic to the Faraday Streetscape and heritage values. CoM awaiting the submission of a re-design.</p> <p>CRA had been awaiting further information. No grounds for objection.</p> <p>CRA had lodged an objection.</p> <p>CRA had been awaiting further information. No grounds for objection.</p>
<p><b>August</b> – 14 Applications – 2 Objections</p> <p><b>TP-2013-574-</b>138-150 Rathdowne St - <b>Objection</b></p> <p><b>TP-2013-630-</b> 15-31 Pelham St - <b>Objection</b></p>	<p>Permit previously issued for 2 storey shops. New application for 3 Storey Retail/Residential development. Only 200 mm higher than proposal previously approved. CRA objected to bland treatment of east elevation.</p> <p>Convert offices to residences and increase existing 4 storey building to 8; CRAs objections included – scale, height, bulk, surrounding heritage considerations including REB world heritage buffer zone, amenity issues for adjacent dwellings.CoM received 60 plus objections.</p>
<p><b>September</b> – 10 Applications – 2 Objections</p> <p><b>TP-2013-709-</b> 100 Drummond St - <b>Objection</b></p> <p><b>TP-2013-736-</b> 152 Queensberry St - <b>Objection</b></p>	<p>Renovations to façade and minor alteration to fourth floor. CRA objected to heritage issues with the proposed treatment of facade.</p> <p>Proposed 16 storey residential building. (adjacent to the multi coloured student accommodation at Cnr Swanston St). CRA objected to excessive height (DDO45-9 storeys) mass, bulk streetscape, internal amenity etc.,</p>
<p><b>October-</b>15 Applications-1 subject to monitoring</p> <p><b>TP-2013-847-</b> 350 Cardigan St - <b>Monitoring</b></p>	<p>Renovation &amp; 2 storey additions - Insufficient information available</p>

### Population Explosion

Victoria's annual population growth is now 100,000, including 80,000 in Melbourne (1500 per week). Melbourne's population has grown by 30% in the past 15 years and will likely reach 5 million by 2020. Around 40% of the increase is from natural growth, the balance is from migration. For Melbourne, the eastern suburbs will accommodate around half the growth expected in areas to the north, south and west of the CBD (*The Age*, 10 October 2013).

The State economy is now largely predicated on population growth and associated services and consumption. Calls to stabilise the population have been rejected by the State Government as 'ridiculous'; yet it has few plans to enhance the infrastructure (e.g. public transport, roads, housing, parkland, health and education services etc.) essential to accommodate the rapid population growth while retaining Melbourne's 'most liveable city' status. Currently, the costly and controversial East West Link toll road is the sole major infrastructure response to these important issues.

### VCAT

#### VCAT May Ignore Objector Numbers

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of Victoria has essentially declared that **the weight of community opposition is irrelevant to the merits of a [development] project**. This test case centred on a gigantic 400 unit development of up to 12 storeys in suburban Armadale. Stonnington Council had refused planning permission; 600 residents had lodged objections. VCAT overturned the Council decision and approved the project. The Council sought a Supreme Court ruling on the legality of the VCAT decision.

As reported in *The Age* on 20 September, Justice Emerton, the Presiding Judge, in supporting VCAT stressed the 'necessity for and relevance of community objections, but they must be more focused ... blanket protests are no longer enough; these must be bolstered with sound reasoning'. Many residents and supporters who had opposed the project attended the Court Hearing; they were devastated by the judgment. Mary Drost, convenor of Planning Backlash, consoled them with the words of Winston Churchill: 'Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts'.

CRA will keep this legal precedent in mind at planning hearings before VCAT. We will need more than objector numbers for success against rapacious developers.

Join or renew your CRA membership online by December 31st, 2013 to receive a **Voucher for a free bottle of quality wine valued @ \$32.00** at DiMattina's Restaurant & Bar, 306 Lygon St when you order two main courses (main courses include any main sized pasta/risotto or dish off the Mains page of the menu).

### Depressing VCAT Decision Regarding 'Transitional Planning Zones'

The VCAT Order delivered by Member Geoffrey Code on the final day of the three-day scheduled hearing ran to 13 pages and is available in full at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2013/1896.html>

The order provides for the construction of a 15-storey, 193-apartment building at 135-155 Queensberry Street to the unchanged design previously rejected by CoM as inappropriate.



#### Proposal for 135-155 Queensberry Street

The Tribunal's decision is concerning in that it gave a strong preference to 'blending with an emerging built form' and 'urban consolidation' over urban design considerations, such as those promoted by CoM and CRA. Namely, that it went beyond its appropriate potential for urban consolidation, that it was too bulky, out of character and provided a poor transition to lower-scale built form to the east.

There is a feeling that this is one of those VCAT hearings that could have produced a different outcome had different, no less (perhaps more) credible interpretations, been attributed to the planning scheme. The real danger is that a precedent has been set and that it could become urban consolidation at any cost.

### Royal Exhibition Building (REB) World Heritage Community Celebrations, May 2014

Next year the CRA will again participate with the other CORBA members and the Fitzroy Residents' Association to celebrate the significance of World Heritage REB and Carlton Gardens, as part of the National Trust's Heritage Festival.

The intention is to build on the success of this year's (2013) first community-driven World Heritage activity, once again working with Museum Victoria (MV) as the responsible authority for the REB, and Melbourne Museum. A very welcome addition next year will be the community's

partnering with Peaches and Cream, a local organisation established to provide extra curriculum activity programs for local schools. The principal theme is recognition of the REB as the birthplace of Australian democracy.

On 9 May 1901, Australia's first federal parliament sitting opened in the Royal Exhibition Building. The opening was accompanied by much celebration, including events for schoolchildren. It is proposed that a program of activities for children from five local primary schools will be worked out between Peaches and Cream and the Museum's education managers. The 2014 program will be drawn from the 1901 record of events and the Museum's and participating schools' current curriculums. The program will probably run for some weeks, culminating in the weekend of 10-11 May, when there will be activities at the REB and the Museum, involving children, parents, the community and, of course, the general public.

There will be updates of the program developments in Newsflash. The aim in 2014 is once again to demonstrate the importance local communities place on having the World Heritage REB and the Carlton Gardens as part of their neighbourhood. The Event Manager is Jennifer Brook, Museum Victoria.

### **Carlton Collaborative Framework (CCF)**

The Opportunities for Carlton project established a range of key relationships and collaborative structures, including a tripartite Memorandum of Association between the University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne and the Carlton Local Agency Network (CLAN). The transition of the OFC project into a community-driven mechanism was a central theme of the concepts for the CCF that were presented to the OFC network in July.

Those concepts are:

- A mechanism for organising collaboration
- Working to a common agenda
- Agreeing shared measurement
- Delivering mutually reinforcing activities
- Obtaining local government support.

The first stage of the transition process has seen consultants, CoDesign, engaged to produce a CCF by the end of December 2013. The team of consultants will be supported by a steering committee consisting of representatives of the University of Melbourne, City of Melbourne and the community, in the development of a consultation strategy to connect with and involve a diverse range of stakeholders through public forums and/or special meetings.

### **Traffic, Transport and Parking: Rail Network Woes**

One of the major constraints on the passenger-carrying capacity of Melbourne's extensive rail network is its

unreliable and antiquated signalling system, particularly for the all-important City Loop. Believe it or not, rail network signalling is controlled by an archaic 1982 computer system, based on 1970s technology. Over the past year there have been nearly 2000 signal failures which have significantly disrupted the metropolitan rail system (*The Age*, 24 October 2013).

While the Napthine Government plans to spend \$8 billion on its top priority transport project, the East West Link, successive Liberal and ALP governments have for decades failed to update critical rail network signalling. Some minor enhancements, planned since 1999, are in the pipeline. However, modern computer technology and selective rail-road grade separations could economically double the rail passenger capacity and enhance the road network in the near term for a fraction of the Link costs (Public Transport Users Association Media Release, 2 July 2013, 'Signalling could boost rail capacity by 50%').

Although the current State Government was elected on pro-public transport policies in 2010, it has delivered minimal improvements and has instead prioritised road construction.

### ***East West Link impacts revealed***

As each month passes, new and ever more alarming impacts of the East West Link (Stage 1) are revealed by the Linking Melbourne Authority (LMA). The final impacts of this \$8 billion project (the most costly in Victoria's history!), including on parkland (Royal Park and Moonee Ponds Creek), suburban streets and property, will remain confidential until after construction contracts are signed in mid-2014. Already 105 homes, 34 commercial properties, 5000 trees (value \$17 million) and a substantial slab of Royal Park (value \$207 million), are earmarked for destruction. The Victorian taxpayer has been required to contribute \$90 million to compensate owners of the EVO apartment building in West Parkville, still under construction, which will be surrounded by major new unforeseen roads. Owners and occupiers of many homes not compulsorily acquired in Collingwood, West Parkville and Flemington will endure intolerable impacts during construction and long-term operation of the toll road. They will likely suffer a major loss of property values and liveability.

Although Premier Napthine has no electoral mandate to build the Link, he continues to extol its virtues in the face of ever more damaging revelations about its flimsy justifications. He ridicules and dismisses any community protests as 'rent-a-crowd'.

The resignation in August 2013 of VicRoads manager of Network Modelling and Analysis, Mr Doug Hartley, attracted new attention to the controversial project. Mr Hartley revealed that confidential traffic projections supporting the Link are based on 'dodgy' computer

modelling that could not withstand peer review and contradict VicRoads analysis (*The Age*, 31 August 2013). Mr Hartley subsequently addressed a public meeting at Melbourne University on these matters and on his decision to resign from his senior position at VicRoads. Premier Napthine dismissed Mr Hartley's contentions but refused to release the Government's 'Business Case' and traffic data to justify the claimed benefit of \$1.40 for each \$1 invested in the project (see *Newsflash*, Winter 2013). Debate on these matters continues unabated, including in State Parliament.

Driven to desperation, residents along the 5km Link route have banded together in an attempt to delay its progress pending the 2014 State Election. The regular picketing of additional core drilling sites, not approved by the City of Yarra, has resulted in major police interventions to support drill operations. Several CRA members have been actively



**CRA member, Ian Bird protests at the Freeway exit**

involved in these protests. Significant media attention has been attracted and issues around the *Trains not Toll Roads* campaign (see recent *Newsflash* articles) have gained wide publicity. LMA ultimately gave up on its core drilling program in the face of ongoing community picketing.

Residents groups are receiving pro bono legal advice from former Federal Court Judge, Ron Merkel QC, and law firm Morris Blackburn, to assess the merits of Federal Court action against the State Government. Misleading and deceptive conduct by the Government in relation to its secretive business case for the Link may have breached national competition laws.

A Comprehensive Impact Statement (CIS) for the Link was announced by LMA on 30 October; comments close on 12 December 2013. A Planning Panel has been convened, chaired by Ms Kathlyn Mitchell, to assess the CIS and make recommendations to the Government by July 2014. The Government aims to close tenders in April 2014, before it receives the Panel Report: 'Road consulting process a sham' (*The Age*, 29 October 2013). The CIS is a substantial document of some 20 chapters and 29 appendices, centred on the goal of building the Link. The Government refuses to

consider any cost-effective alternatives such as the Doncaster and airport rail links, rail-road grade separations, rail signalling upgrade, etc.



**Community picketing of drill-sites in City of Yarra**

Despite ALP and Greens opposition, the Napthine Government's policy is to sign Link construction contracts and begin work prior to the 2014 State Election. Unlike in the case of the failed cross-city tunnels in Sydney and Brisbane, where very optimistic traffic levels did not eventuate, the Victorian taxpayer will bear the 'sovereign risk' on the East West Link. This Government guarantee against construction and operating losses ensures much interest in the project from the infrastructure and finance industry. In late October, the Premier announced the complete East West Link would proceed (Hoddle Street to Western Ring Road), 'Our Mega-Link Premier's plan to win votes with \$14b super road' (*Herald Sun*, 25 October 2013). Despite costly and destructive impacts, estimated at \$200 million for Royal Park alone, and questionable outcomes, the City of Melbourne will not oppose the Link. However, it did resolve (6 votes to 5) on 27 August 2013 'Not to support the East West Link as announced'. City of Yarra actively opposes the Link; Moonee Valley and Moreland now also oppose it.

For further details on the East West Link, CIS and community actions please see:

[www.lma.vic.gov.au](http://www.lma.vic.gov.au)

[www.ycat.org.au](http://www.ycat.org.au)

[www.trainsnottollroads.com.au](http://www.trainsnottollroads.com.au)

**IT'S TIME TO JOIN CRA :  
DO IT TODAY!**

Take a look at the website for up to date information

[www.carltonresidents.org.au](http://www.carltonresidents.org.au)

Now Joining/rejoining CRA is even easier!

Do it online via the following link -

<http://www.trybooking.com/DXAZ>