



THE CARLTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSFLASH

Summer 2009

IN THIS EDITION

AGM Report
Mentors and Home Tutors sought for African Families
Victorian Transport Plan
Report from CoRBA
Community 'bits and pieces'
Update on the Kathleen Syme Centre
Planning Issues
Demolition of Rathdowne and Queensberry Streets site
University of Melbourne draft Master Plan for Carlton
CRA Membership
'Meet the Candidates' Forums
Friends of CRA
Schedule of CRA Meeting Dates 2009
CRA Christmas Party

Watch the CRA website
www.carltonresidents.org.au/ for
future events.

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AGM Report

Approximately forty members of the Carlton Residents Association attended the Annual General Meeting, held at DiMattina's on Monday 16 February. The convenor (Jackie Watts) and vice-convenor (Greta Bird) reported on the events and issues of the past year. Many of these issues are on-going and are regularly reported on (as in this edition of *Newsflash*, the quarterly newsletter, and on the CRA website). The CRA has an important role in making residents aware of issues and advocating on their behalf. This involves making representations to Local, State and Federal Government members; organisations such as the Heritage Council and VCAT, CoRBA, University of Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Hospital; writing numerous letters and submissions on a variety of issues such as housing development, transport, traffic speed, streetscape greening, parklands, community safety, need for a community centre, etc.

The current 'flattened' structure of Reference Groups within the CRA allows for strong community involvement – **however, more people are needed for these Groups. In particular, the Planning Committee needs new members and a convenor, and the treasurer would like to have an 'understudy'.** And as always, CRA welcomes new members – not least because it is from membership fees that the major finances of the CRA come!

(Continued page 2)



CRA members at the recent AGM – l to r, Greta Bird, Anne Ritter, Cr Peter Clarke, Terence Lane

AGM Report continued...

The guest speaker for the evening was Cr Peter Clarke, recently re-elected to the City of Melbourne (CoM) council. He provided interesting personal comments and insights - into the 'unique' system of voting for the Council, the 'makeup' of the Council (with 6 new members), current issues facing the Council, and the new Council structure. Cr Clarke believes that the new Council is still feeling its way (it is 'still 9 individuals, not yet a team') and learning about the issues. From the CRA's point of view, this is then a good opportunity to be involved in 'shaping the agenda' in the early period. However, he feels that within Council, there is agreement on issues such as: safety within the city needs to be improved; Melbourne needs to be a sustainable and greening city; reviews of the planning systems and electoral processes. The new Committee structure within the Council reflects the 'future Melbourne' framework. (These new committees are mentioned in the later report from CoRBA). Cr Clarke also believes that there is a greater degree of scrutiny and consideration about issues coming before Council; issues will not just be pushed through. A key issue that the CoM will face in the near future will be its finances. The major base of Council's finances is through rates and parking fees/fines, and because of the current economic situation, he does not believe that rate payers will (or should) accept rises in either areas. As well, Cr Clarke believes that it is important for Councillors to continue the consultation with community members (as they did extensively prior to the elections!) and to have the structures and conduits to do so (eg having councillors to represent geographical regions since there are no 'wards'), rather than just responding to issues.

Mentors and Home Tutors sought for African Families

The Church of All Nations (CAN) has launched a **Carlton Employment Opportunities for African Families** project and is seeking support from residents who would like to volunteer to provide mentoring or become home tutors to African families in Carlton. CAN, a congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia, is located at the edge of the Carlton Public Housing Estate in Palmerston Street and has a history of social justice involvement in Carlton.

In an innovative approach that goes to the heart of addressing the disadvantage experienced by the refugee and African communities, CAN proposes to broker opportunities with employers and develop partnerships at the community level. We are seeking volunteers who are friendly, supportive and empathetic to families in the African community. There are many ways of fulfilling the role. Participation by volunteers can involve informal chats over coffee (not difficult in Carlton!), to teaching conversational English in the home.

Africans facing significant barriers.

The need to support African job seekers is great. A research project conducted by the church showed:

- Two-thirds of the Carlton Public Housing population are currently not participating in the workforce.
- Two-thirds of residents were born overseas. The largest overseas-born group on the estate is the Horn of Africa community, consisting of migrants from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan. This group makes up approximately one-third of the total Estate population

Home Tutors

Many African women on the Estate have completed training courses and gained formal qualifications in areas such as child care, aged care and community welfare. CAN is hoping to match these with employers, initially pursuing aged care providers in the inner city to offer opportunities to qualified African women. To be successful in the job market, these African women need additional community support.

A key part of the training and job support will be to raise language and literacy skills for African job applicants. It is hoped that home tutoring by Carlton resident volunteers will be a significant help to African families in achieving their goals.

Role of Mentors

A survey of skills and qualifications on the Estate discovered that there are also overseas-born residents with professional qualifications (many from Australian universities) in Engineering, Accounting, Computer Science, Agriculture, Science, Education, Finance and Information systems, Business, and Community Development.

Mentoring becomes a crucial means to creating pathways for these African job applicants. CAN will help match unemployed African households with mentors from Carlton with related skills, qualifications and experience. There are many Carlton residents with the relevant background and experience to become outstanding mentors to African job seekers. Typical roles for mentors of African job seekers include:

- building their understanding of the Australian labour market
- enhancing their understanding of the Australian work and business culture
- providing community support for unemployed African households

Can You Help?

In seeking volunteer mentors, CAN believes that there is much potential within the local community for involvement and support. Potential mentors will be drawn from the congregation, the Carlton Residents Association and other relevant community organisations.

The program is likely to commence in April and interested volunteers can contact at CAN: Sarah Howe, ph. 0431 313 518 or Paul Madden, ph. 0419 313 518.

Victorian Transport Plan

With much fanfare, the State Government unveiled its \$38 billion Victorian Transport Plan (VTP) in mid-December. Unlike the earlier (and now defunct) 25-year transport plan 'Meeting our Transport Challenges', which was released in 2006, VTP did not involve consultation outside the narrow confines of the Roads lobby and State bureaucracy.

VTP arose in mid-2008 as a response to growing community alarm over public transport overcrowding and road congestion. The Government began a \$1 million advertising campaign called 'It's part of the plan' to allay public disquiet over the unsatisfactory transport situation. According to The Age (Dec 15, 2008), consultants had advised the Government that such a campaign would convince the community 'something was being done' and stem unrest until after the 2010 election. According to Professor Nick Low (Melbourne University), VTP is a 'grab-bag of promises and re-announcements'. Professor Nick Economou (Monash University) says 'while the transport plan could be good politics, much of it was empty promises'. The Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) describes the plan as 'nothing more than getting people off buses, trains and trams and into cars'. Melbourne will continue to be dominated by cars regardless of the environmental (global warming) and economic (peak oil production) consequences.

The general consensus is that Melbourne could have a world-class transport system for a fraction of the unfunded, \$38 billion plan now on the table. Costly 'mega' projects identified in the plan are not an efficient or sustainable use of public resources for either public transport or roads. Global financial turmoil will probably mean nothing much will happen in the foreseeable future. More information is available on the VTP [website www.transport.vic.gov.au/vtp](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/vtp) and PTUA website www.ptua.org.au www.ptua.org.au

CRA member Mac Nicoll, has provided a copy of The Melbourne Times, April 24, 1974, with the front page headline 'Moves to link Eastern Freeway with Tullamarine Freeway'. The article quotes Peter Sanders (CRA Life Member), then Carlton Association Traffic Convenor, as saying that 'private commuter traffic should be kept to a minimum on the Eastern Freeway -- allowing an extension of the Freeway would be little short of criminal'. Little seems to have changed over these past 35 years!

Report from CoRBA- Melbourne

CoRBA is encouraged to find that its campaign to have the Minister for Local Government Richard Wynne establish an independent and objective review of the Council structure and electoral system has the support of the new Council. The Councillors honoured election promises and at the first Council meeting passed a resolution to ask the Minister to call a Review. (See http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/opm/bc/CTEE/meetings/C4_minutes_200812160530.pdf) We are yet to hear the Minister's response and are concerned that another four years will pass before any reforms occur. It is essential that the outcome of a Review be made public before the State election campaign so that the electorate can evaluate the changes.

The Lord Mayor met with CoRBA before Christmas to discuss matters of concern across the community, the most pressing being the need for a new and more effective Council structure designed to encourage genuine responsiveness to community concerns by Councillors and Administration. CoRBA members were keen to learn of the new Council's strategies. Council business is conducted through a 'portfolio' arrangement of sub-committees chaired by various Councillors. Community members can address sub-committees directly. Matters then go before full Council each month. The Lord Mayor decided against a quasi-Ward system, in favour of a new set of sub-committees, which broadly align with the Future Melbourne report. It remains a concern to CoRBA that none of the precincts in our municipality had, or will have, a useful conduit to Councillors or Staff under the old or the new sub-committee system.

The new sub-committees are as follows: Connected City; Docklands Coordination; Eco-City; Finance and Governance; Inner Melbourne Action Plan Implementation; People and Creative City; Planning; Prosperous and Knowledge City.

The Terms of Reference for each sub-committee are available on the MCC website and we understand that the community may comment on the most appropriate allocation of responsibilities within sub-committees. The initial allocation is puzzling in some instances. For example, current responsibility for libraries lies within the 'People and Creative City' sub-committee – why not the 'Prosperous and Knowledge' sub-committee? And why is responsibility for 'Parklands and Open Space' delegated to the People and Creative City sub-committee rather than the Eco-City sub-committee?

Check the CoM website www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm and email The Lord Mayor Robert.Doyle@melbourne.vic.gov.au with your views.

CoRBA – Melbourne meets fortnightly at the Town Hall. CRA members with concerns about matters which relate to the municipality as a whole are encouraged to contact Jackie Watts who represents CRA on CoRBA. Contact Jackie on jackiewatts@netspace.net.au

Community 'bits and pieces'

Harmony Day Celebrations

This year, a Carlton Community Day is being held at Melbourne University on **Sunday 1 March** from 10am – 2pm as part of Harmony Day celebrations. Activities include basketball and soccer clinics, face painting, art competitions, drumming performance and workshop, tours of Melbourne University. Finger food will be provided by the Sorghum Sisters. Entry is via Tin Alley.

Further Harmony Day celebrations will be held on **Thursday 19 March**, on the grassy area between the Carlton Public School and the Church of All Nations.

Community Papers

The Melbourne Times is highly appreciated by many CRA members as a source of local news. To restore delivery (which ceases from time to time) you can contact the following people:

Neale Heard Neale.Heard@fairfax.com.au or Sharon Butcher sharon.butcher@fairfax.com.au

Information Kit for newcomers

What do you think of the idea of compiling an 'information kit' for newcomers to Carlton, containing the 'unusual' things that official City of Melbourne publications don't include? What information would you include? Some suggestions are: you can obtain bike repairs and advice each weekend at the Carlton Gardens; the City of Melbourne will provide free, matching paint to quickly paint over graffiti; there is a fresh fruit and vegetable market every Thursday morning behind the Church of All Nations; you can join the Melbourne University mailing list for notification of public lectures and concerts, etc, etc.

If you are interested in helping to compile this Information Kit, or if you have 'useful' information you would like to include, please contact the CRA on secretarycra@gmail.com

CRA Book Group

How do you think a CRA book group would work in our area? Is this a way of involving people in the community? Are there book groups already established? Are you interested in joining one, or forming one? Again, let us know – at secretarycra@gmail.com

Formation of a Carlton-Parkville Probus Club

The Rotary Club of Carlton is establishing a local Probus Club to serve the needs of residents of Carlton and Parkville, as well as surrounding areas. This is a community service program established by the Rotary Club of Carlton for active retirees to enjoy fellowship through monthly meetings that will attract great speakers on a broad range of topics. Members will also have the opportunity to participate in additional leisure activities if they so desire.

(Editor's note: A Community Interest meeting was held on the 10 February as this edition of Newsflash was being compiled. If you are interested in further information about this group, please contact Ian Jungwirth at probuscarltonparkville@gmail.com

Best wishes

CRA member Elaine Tisher suffered a stroke in September whilst holidaying with Richard in Jordan. After a traumatic trip home, Elaine received excellent treatment at Epworth hospital. Daily physio and speech therapy are ensuring a very good recovery. We wish her well. (*Editor's note: It was great to see Elaine at the recent AGM, looking so well.*)

Art Exhibition

The City of Melbourne Community Cultural Development Program invites you to celebrate 'link', an artistic collaboration with Carlton Housing Estate residents and visiting UK artist Michael Needham. This project is part of the Carlton Flats Arts Project and will be held beside the Carlton Primary School (at the end of Drummond St) on Friday 27 February, between 4 and 6pm.

Accommodation for international students

If you are interested in supplementing your income (perhaps in the wake of the falling value of investments!) and at the same time, would like to assist in providing much needed accommodation for local and international students who are attending local tertiary institutions, please go to the following websites. Registration is free:

- RMIT – www.rmit.edu.au/housing
- University of Melbourne – www.services.unimelb.edu.au/housing

Update on the Carlton Community Centre/ Library (Kathleen Syme Centre)

Progress on the CRA campaign to acquire the Kathleen Syme Centre (KSC) as our community space/ Library is set to surge forward in 2009. We are campaigning on a number of fronts:

Melbourne City Council - the news is good. During the election campaign, we won in-principle support from many of the newly elected Councillors including, of course, those sympathetic Councillors who voted in favour of the project under the previous Council. With luck, some of the local infrastructure dollars may find their way into our precinct. The new Lord Mayor Robert Doyle campaigned strongly on his ability to liaise with State Government and so we are hopeful that he can successfully resolve this matter.

University of Melbourne - a worry. Melbourne University (MU) has to some extent 'jumped the gun' in that its published Master Plan (2008) clearly indicates an intention to acquire much of Carlton, including the KSC. (*See the article on the Master Plan*) It seems that MU wants the entire RWH site including the KSC.

This makes the University a formidable competitor for the CoM, should the KSC end up on the open market. A sale to MU would actually present rather a tidy option for the vendor given that MU wants the entire site and has vast financial resources.

State Government - less than encouraging. Late in his term of office, John So and the CoM CEO Dr. Kathy Alexander met with the Minister for Health, Daniel Andrews, to discuss the process by which the CoM could actually acquire the KSC when it became available in due course. No joy there. The Minister apparently continues to refuse to commit to any special consideration for the unique and the special needs of Carlton – one of Melbourne’s most disadvantaged communities and one without a community meeting space and no library! The CRA has long argued that the responsible Minister can, and should, deviate from the ‘party line’ in this instance; the ‘party line’ being that such assets are disposed of according to a specific process. As soon as it is vacated by the tenants of the RWH, it will be declared ‘surplus to needs’ and offered first to all other State Government departments and then, if no department wants to occupy the building, it will be sold on the open market.

This is particularly disappointing for the entire Carlton community. This site is uniquely suitable, in size and location, for our community needs and therefore special consideration should be given to the CoM offer to purchase the building for Carlton. In fact, the building should be ceded to the CoM for community use. It is a public building and ‘maximising’ the public asset by placing it on the open market is an inappropriate response by government. At the very least, the CoM (a local government body after all) should be offered the site on an equal footing with any other arm of government.

The Royal Women’s Hospital - an unknown quantity. Over many months, CRA has been puzzled by the reluctance of the RWH to allow the CoM or the CRA to even visit the KSC site or to seriously discuss the matter. We were pleased that the Chair of the Hospital Board, Dr. Rhonda Galbally and the CEO of the RWH, Ms. Dale Fisher, finally agreed to meet with the CRA prior to Christmas to discuss the matter. Their response was most sympathetic once it became clear that the Carlton Community was extremely diverse in socio-economic terms and amongst the most disadvantaged postcodes in the State. However, it emerged that the RWH may itself wish to retain use of the KSC long-term and may well be one of those government ‘departments’ which will be competing for use of the KSC.

Our local member, the Minister for Education, Bronwyn Pike - ever hopeful. The CRA will meet once again with Minister Pike on 25 February to discuss ways

in which our local member can attempt to influence her ministerial colleague in support of our campaign to acquire the KSC for the Carlton community. We will argue that a range of community needs remain unmet and many of them fall into the category of educational needs. The Kathleen Syme Centre is the most promising venue for the provision of such services and would be readily accessible to a range of community members. We have located the ideal site, our Council is prepared to pay -- all we need now is for the State Government to acknowledge the need in our community and to get behind the KSC Project by removing bureaucratic obstacles.

Planning Issues

i. New car parking proposals for Carlton

Residents were invited to make submissions on the proposed City of Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment (amendment C133). ‘The Amendment seeks to introduce a discretionary maximum rate of on-site parking of 1 car parking space per dwelling for Carlton, Southbank and parts of North Melbourne, West Melbourne and East Melbourne. This means that for new dwellings, parking will not be required to be provided and that where it is provided not more than one space per dwelling is preferred.

‘The proposed planning scheme requirement of one car space per dwelling *will apply to on-site parking for new residential developments only*. The amendment *does not relate to on-street resident parking permits*. Unless they redevelop their site, the car parking spaces residents and property owners currently have on site as well as any on-street resident parking permit they currently have, or are eligible to apply for, will not be affected by this Planning Scheme Amendment.’

Below is an excerpt from the submission made by Victoria Hamer, a Carlton resident and architect:

‘In summary, the proposed amendment:

1. Fails to adequately consider the likely impacts on the amenity and heritage character of Carlton.
2. Fails to treat Carlton in a consistent way with other comparable Inner City areas of the Municipality, specifically East Melbourne and Parkville.
3. Relies on a lamentably superficial appraisal of the quality and availability of public transport in Greater Melbourne.
4. Will considerably reduce the diversity of the residential population of the Inner City by making residence more difficult for any but those on high incomes.
5. Makes unrealistic assumptions as to the continued demand for car ownership amongst City residents.
6. Fails to take into account the long-term value of off-street parking by means of increasing the amenity of the suburb.’

ii. Housing development between Berkeley and Elizabeth Streets

The Planning Reference Group was alerted to an application for an 11-storey, affordable housing development on Berkeley Street (TP-2008-591). Although it falls within postcode 3000, the building will impact on postcode 3053 residents living on the east side of Berkeley Street. From their point of view, the planned building is a gross over-development in a streetscape of two- to four-storey buildings. And in terms of affordable housing, it exhibits a woeful level of amenity for future residents. If it is indeed aimed at single-parent families, it is hard to understand how the developer can defend the total absence of off-street play areas. Courtyard buildings, which provide a safe, green social space inside the boundaries of the development, are the humane option, but because they mean a loss of usable floor space, they are not popular with private developers. The worthiness of the objective – affordable housing for the less affluent – should not be used as an excuse for riding roughshod over general neighbourhood amenity. Ideally, this kind of housing should not be left to the private property market where quality is always in danger of being compromised by the desire for maximum profit margins. We urge the state government to impose strict planning guidelines on affordable housing to ensure that these developments do not become tomorrow's ghettos and slums.

Demolition of Rathdowne and Queensberry Streets site

In early 2008, the CRA and the Carlton Gardens Group formally objected to a large-scale residential development on the corner of Rathdowne and Queensberry Streets on the grounds of its impact on a heritage streetscape and the environs of the World Heritage Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Building. Objections were subsequently submitted to VCAT, the Heritage Council and Heritage Victoria. All to no avail.

A 1915 'C' classified building has now been demolished. The developer, Piccolo, did not need a demolition permit because the Heritage Overlay had been removed through error.

This development will reduce one of the most significant vistas to the Royal Exhibition Building. Such vistas, along with the perimeter and a buffer zone surrounding the Gardens, are due to be included in the World Heritage Environs Area Plan. The Plan, which is still awaiting Victorian Government approval, is required by UNESCO in order to protect the remaining heritage values of the area.

A number of developers petitioned the Heritage Council to minimise the proposed environs area and associated protection, because of its potential to restrict their future development opportunities.

University of Melbourne draft Master Plan for Carlton

In October 2008, the CRA was appalled to learn in *The University of Melbourne Draft Master Plan 2008* of intentions to continue a long-term policy of off-campus expansion into historic Carlton. It was particularly alarming to read that the University 'aims to acquire the former Women's Hospital site' with particular mention of Carlton's first primary school: the historic and iconic Kathleen Syme Centre (KSC). This is despite discussions and correspondence between CRA and the University where we clearly stated Carlton's dire need for a long-sought, centrally-located Community Centre / Library.

The proposed Master Plan must take account of the community in which the University operates, especially in its off-campus incursions into historic Carlton. We expect nothing less from the 'public-spirited institution' the University claims to be.

Previous University expansion has ravaged Carlton. Recent experience includes the 'Melbourne University Private' fiasco on historic University Square, which undermined the Square's entire heritage streetscape. The northern half of the Square, the earlier site of the Victoria Bowling Club, is now the bare, paved roof of an underground car park, dominated by exhaust stacks.

Another example is College Square. The University employed a high profile legal team against CRA, the City of Melbourne and the National Trust (Victoria) in a six week battle at VCAT in 2003 to acquire a permit for College Square on Swanston. Established heritage, height and amenity overlays were overturned to force this high-rise student housing ghetto on Carlton. Concessions gained at VCAT saved the terrace houses, which were later sold for restoration. CRA argued at the time the precinct should have been retained for University purposes.

Sold instead to hundreds of strata title owners, College Square is a blight on the pedestrian entrance to Carlton including from the University. This 36m (11-storey) high building is a daily reminder to the thousands who pass it or who use the tram stop on Swanston Street of how the University rode rough-shod over the general 10.5m height overlay which generally applies throughout Carlton. Ironically, the building overshadows the University's proposed new ceremonial entrance.

Melbourne University is aware of the detrimental impact on the Carlton community of its large-scale off-campus developments and incursions into historic Carlton. We urge the University to reflect on its obligations as a good corporate citizen and to recognise community priority for long-term use of the KSC building.

Meet the Candidates Forums

Prior to the Melbourne City Council elections last November, CRA members participated in the organisation of two Meet the Candidates Forums. The first was at Federation Square on 13 November where Mayoral and Council candidates were informally available for discussions with voters. The second was a 'Town Hall' style meeting at the Church of All Nations (CAN) on 17 November, where Mayoral candidates (representing all parties) addressed and were questioned by the Carlton community. This very lively Forum was ably chaired by Rev Dr John Evans (CAN). Both forums were most informative and were well received by the public.



Rev Dr John Evans introducing mayoral candidates to the Carlton community at CAN.

Friends of CRA

During the Lygon Street Festa, the CRA set up a publicity and information stall at the intersection of Lygon and Faradays Streets, to raise the profile of the CRA with both locals and visitors. The idea was to recruit additional CRA members from the Carlton community and to offer a new membership option, 'Friends of Carlton', to those who have an attachment to Carlton but live outside Postcode 3053. We found that there were many such people, who were born or raised here, or had studied or worked here. As well, many North Carlton folks still see themselves as part of Carlton! We had fun extolling the virtues of Carlton with the many would-be Councillors too! The Festa, held in the middle of the Council election campaign, meant that many candidates attended. Around 40 new members were signed up during the Festa. The stall also provided a venue to sell copies of our book 'Carlton: A History'. We are most grateful to the CRA members who helped set up and operate the stall. It proved a great opportunity to fly the CRA banner and gain useful local publicity for our activities.

If you know of anyone living outside 3053 but who has an attachment to Carlton, please encourage them to become a 'Friend of Carlton' in 2009 (\$15).

CRA Membership

To join the Carlton Residents Association, please see www.carltonresidents.org.au/ for a membership form.

(Continued page 8)

Schedule of CRA Meeting Dates 2009 (March – June 2009)

MEETING	DATE
PI Planning Committee	Monday March 2
Committee Meeting	Monday March 16
PI Planning Committee	Monday April 6
G Committee Meeting	Monday April 20
PI Planning Committee	Monday September 1
Committee Meeting	Tuesday September 16
PI Planning Committee	Monday May 4
General Meeting	Monday May 18
PI Planning Committee	Monday June 1
Committee Meeting	Monday June 15

Venues: The Planning sub-committee will meet at 170 Cardigan St.
General meetings will be held at venues to be advised, and commence at 8:00 pm.
The Christmas Party is held at La Mama Theatre.

Friends of CRA article continued...



CRA members at the publicity and information stall.



Large crowds at the Lygon Street Festa enjoyed the dramatic re-enactments of Carlton's Italian heritage.

CRA Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas Party was held at La Mama on 1 December. As always, this was a well-attended and happy social event which concluded a busy and eventful year for the CRA. Deputy Convenor, Greta Bird, briefly summarised activities during 2008, including the battle to save La Mama Theatre. Dr Liz Jones, La Mama CEO and Artistic Director, proposed a toast to CRA and thanked all who helped save the historic theatre. The photo collage captures the festive spirit of the evening.



CRA members, Colin McNamara and Jackie Watts, welcome people to the Christmas Party.



CRA members hard at work at the Christmas Party!



CRA members enjoying themselves at the Christmas Party



CRA members enjoying themselves at the Christmas Party