

## The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

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# Newsflash

December 2005

The two months since our last newsflash have been eventful. First, the good news:

### *“Carlton: a history”*

The Carlton Residents Association & Peter Yule (ed) were short-listed for *The Community and Regional History Prize* section of the NSW History Awards. Whilst the prize eluded our book, the honour of being short-listed was well deserved. If you do not yet have it, I urge you to acquire a copy; it will fascinate. Readings have both hard and soft cover editions. Among other things, the book describes changing modes of community activism and the determination of the Carlton Association. In the mid 1960's the Victorian Housing Commission demolished hundreds of C19 Carlton houses to make way for public housing tower blocks. Residents banded together to prevent further 'slum clearance', and membership grew to more than 2000. With the support of the National Trust and the Builders Laborers' Federation, the Carlton Assn was described as "the most influential suburban watchdog in Melbourne". It saved hundreds of houses, was responsible for rerouting the F19 freeway, prevented MU's expansion into residential areas, worked to provide for the needs of residents, and sponsored arts festivals. The corollary of its success was the transformation of a down-at-heel suburb into a desirable residential location.

Subsequently Jeff Kennett split our suburb into North Carlton (in Yarra City Council) and Carlton (MCC) to weaken us. As the Carlton Residents Assn we are now much smaller, but the challenges remain, and we need to continually fight on all fronts to preserve heritage, streetscape, and community.

Thus *our hard-working committees* All planning applications for postcode 3053 are reviewed by our Planning Sub-Committee, and appealed if they fail to comply with heritage, height and bulk standards, and parking requirements. Among recent issues are a proposal to build 4 units above Shakahari, multiple flats and waiving of car parking corner Cardigan St. and University Place, and the highly damaging International Flower Show in the Heritage Listed Carlton Gardens. The Committee actively supports Margaret O'Brien, convenor of the Carlton Gardens Group. Together with committee member Anne Ritter, Margaret made a power point presentation at our last general meeting of the major construction process and the subsequent damage. Additionally, Carlton people are denied access to the Gardens for over one month. MCC argues that "the Show is a hallmark event which attracts around 130,000 visitors over the 5 days as people come from all over the state, interstate and overseas, injecting around \$3.5 million dollars into the State economy". We emphasize that we do not oppose the Garden Show, only the venue. As a very large event, it should be held at a venue suitable for that purpose, such as the showgrounds. Further, the damage sustained may cause the Exhibition Gardens to lose heritage status.

*Res3 Zone.* This new zoning was instigated by State Government - a ministerial amendment whereby Councils define areas of their established suburbs for rezoning to a 9-meter height limit. (In effect, it replicates the Residential 1 zone.) MCC has excised blocks they consider to be over 50% or 75% developed. 'Heritage' restrictions (according to the Planning Dept) will protect any buildings of heritage value. This takes no cognizance of adjoining heritage blocks, or of nonconforming buildings. Further, developers can plead height against heritage. We joined

Angela Williams of North & West Melbourne Assn and Bev Kennedy of the Parkville Association, and met with MCC Planners to address these massive injustices.

*Transport and Traffic.* The sub-committee has responded to Melbourne Transport Strategy, and to the trial implementation of Carlton Parking and Access Strategy (changes are now in place which make the permits more user friendly). Letters have been sent to Minister for Transport and local members on traffic and public transport policy, and a response made to the Committee for Melbourne's \$10billion "big idea" tunnel proposal for the Eastern Freeway. CRA participated in the Coalition for People's Transport rally at opening of VECCI summit (Nov 8) on steps of Parliament House.

A Shuttle Bus recently approved by MCC was a concept originally raised by CRA during Carlton 2010 Community Forums in 2000. Our request to Lord Mayor So and Councillors for community consultation and input to proposals was ignored and no input to the decision-making processes sought. Instead we now have a free tourist shuttle bus service between sites, duplicating existing tram and bus routes, at annual cost of \$750,000. *The Age* (10/11/05) reported that "MCC faces a possible legal challenge over its controversial plan to run a free shuttle around the city's tourist attractions. As Council was preparing to approve the scheme, the owner of an existing service rose and addressed them. His business, *Melbourne on the Move*, covers most of the attractions, and would be destroyed by a free council bus." Our understanding the bus service was that it be aimed at residents so as to reduce local traffic congestion and to cater for the needs of those not well serviced by the existing north-south tram service and bus routes. CRA expressed written disappointment to MCC at the Tourist Bus arrangements.

### *Carlton's unsavory Laneways*

We selected the worst of these, and with Place Manager Kate Wright and Michael from MCC Compliance, walked the lanes, noted and photographed, and sought solutions. Subsequently Kate sent a summary sheet of City of Melbourne actions in response. However, action is not necessarily imminent. Kate noted that the timelines for resolution vary depending on the process required, resources and the businesses capacity, and willingness, to comply. Kate liaised with Michael from Compliance.

Introducing *MCC's Place Manager Kate Wright*. Kate's role is making worthwhile projects happen by liaising between the various branches of the Council and groups such as CRA. In most instances, the answers to community needs run across a number of branches of the Council's work. The Place Manager helps us clarify our ideas and then brings us together with the relevant Council staff, thereby setting the wheels in motion.

*Lincoln Square* - Lincoln Square/Bali victim memorial opened. Whilst the fountains, one for each victim, are beautiful, generous concreting at the Swanston St. end has provided scope for skateboarders.

*Reminder The CRA Christmas Party and farewell to Sue and Don Chambers is scheduled for Monday, December 12 at La Mama, 6pm.*

CRA is shaping up well for 2006, however we need your input and support. Please consider joining the committee, and remember to renew your subscription.

*Merry Christmas and very best wishes for 2006*

*Greta Bird*

Acting-President



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**The Carlton Residents Association Inc.**

A0034345G ABN 87 716 923 898 PO Box 1140

9 Lt Elgin St Carlton, Victoria, 3053

Tel 9349 3615 Fax 9347 1411

[radiotec@hotmail.com](mailto:radiotec@hotmail.com)

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