



THE CARLTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSFLASH

Winter 2009

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'Restore Residents' Rights'

This was the rallying call for a large group of residents and councillors from across Victoria in response to the Brumby Government fast-tracking developments outside the regular planning process, in the name of economic stimulus. The rally, held on the steps of Parliament House on 10 June, was organised by Planning Backlash and the Coalition of Concerned Councillors. Speakers expressed outrage at the undermining and bypassing of long established Council planning processes by the Government. The Municipal Association (MAV) was particularly vocal on the issue: *'The MAV does not support the [Planning] Minister removing community input.... The State has revealed its contempt for democracy.... There will be no checks and balances...'*. It was argued that the State Government is much too close to developers and ignores the broader community interest in development matters.



'Restore Residents' Rights' rally on the steps of Parliament House

A few days later, another rally was organised by Protectors of Public Lands outside a \$2000 per head ALP fundraising luncheon (sponsored by Grocon) for development industry representatives to meet with Planning Minister Justin Madden. Former Queensland Corruption Royal Commissioner, Tony Fitzgerald, recently claimed such meetings potentially corrupt the political process. Developers are already generous donors to both major political parties. The impression is that influence can be bought; there is no transparency in the new planning processes.

Planning Minister Madden has now assumed wide-ranging planning controls in Activity Centres, including the 'call-in' and approval of many controversial projects.

Parliament rejected a Government plan to introduce Development Assessment Committees to further expedite the planning process.

In the meantime, Melbourne's sprawl continues, with Government approval for a massive increase in the urban growth boundaries of 46,000 hectares with the consequent destruction of green wedge areas and farmland. It seems there will be no population limits for Melbourne.

CRA members participated in the above rallies because of our concerns at the Government undermining of orderly planning processes, including heritage and streetscape issues which are critical in Carlton.

Graffiti cleanup in Carlton

In mid-July, the City of Melbourne Council adopted a new Graffiti Management Plan following extensive community consultation. The Plan centres on 'eradication, engagement, education and enforcement'. A graffiti 'flying squad' will quickly remove unsightly 'tagging' throughout the City, including Carlton. Already a major cleanup has occurred but taggers continue their vandalism unabated. Crime statistics reveal most tagging is done by teenagers. Problem areas will receive specific police attention.

Lord Mayor, Robert Doyle, said 'Successful graffiti management is about removal on first sight'. Street Art supported by building owners will require Council approval. Tagging is of major concern because of its unsightly impact on buildings, its perception of community disorder, and high cost of removal (\$700,000 last year and increasing). The vandalised back streets of Fitzroy provide examples of the unsightly outcomes when taggers have a free-run of streetscapes.

Observed incidents of tagging should be reported immediately to the police (phone 000) and the graffiti cleanup crew may be activated by contacting the Council (Steve Hall, 9658 9573).



An example of mindless tagging vandalism in Carlton

Public Housing Estates – what's happening?

Many will have noticed major earthworks on Carlton Housing Estate on the corner of Rathdowne and Princes Streets over the past few months. Contaminated soil, present since before the 'walk-ups' were built in the 1960s, **was dug up and then re-buried on site.** (Presumably soil pollutants were the last thing on the State's mind when it systematically cut a great swathe through Carlton 3053.)

For those new to Carlton – in the 1960s, a campaign of 'slum clearance' to make way for public housing was commenced by the then Housing Commission. In fact, the houses were not slums, they were mainly owner-occupied homes. The majority were owned by families of Jewish and Italian origin. They were working and professional people, graduates and students who joined a strong public campaign against terrace house demolitions and subsequent redevelopment in the form of Public Housing Estates (Yule 2004: *Carlton: A History*). Further, the return to urban living had already begun and people recognised the heritage value of the so-called 'slums'. Trevor Huggard (later elected Lord Mayor of Melbourne) played a major role in opposing the 'slum clearance'. He noted that 'the Estate towers housed fewer people than had lived in the area before in small houses'. And, of course, people in these cottages enjoyed the benefits of gardens, privacy and community. (CRA, *Among the Terraces*, 1987).

Since then, there have been social and demographic changes. In the early 1990s, disparate groups of people with entirely different needs from those of the traditional occupants of public housing – low-income families – moved into Carlton. These newcomers included refugees and those 'released into the community' from disbanded Government institutions or previously supported 'special' accommodation. Both groups have chronic and pressing social needs. Poverty on the Estates is endemic and is compounded by substance abuse and gambling. Only 6% of residents are in full-time employment. The social and cultural mix on the Estates is astounding. African refugees make up 35% of the Estates' population of around 4,500; they arrive here from often horrendous situations and are placed together in what some regard as yet another 'prison' or 'refugee camp'. They speak of alienation and isolation, (*Melbourne Times*) and are subjected to racial discrimination.

In June, however, the Brumby Labor Government finally announced its preferred bidder for the \$260 million redevelopment of the Carlton public housing estate, which will deliver 240 new public and social apartments and 500 additional new private homes as a new mixed community in inner Melbourne. (Media Release, *Ministry of Housing*, 5 June, 2009).

The multi-million dollar redevelopment will be a joint venture between Australand Carlton Pty Ltd, St Hilliers Carlton Pty Ltd and the Brumby Labor Government, in what will be 'the largest and most environmentally sustainable public housing redevelopment in Victoria's history'.

Housing minister Richard Wynne said 'these major areas of Carlton will be revitalised into vibrant community precincts with new public parks, a community garden and pedestrian and bicycle pathways. A new community health and aged care centre will also provide aged care services and accommodation'. The 'Wellbeing Precinct' development, managed by Australian Unity, will be based on the Humanitas Model from the Netherlands. Many community services are to be provided at the site, including aged care packages, day respite, in-home respite, transition care.

According to the media release, the high-rise towers near Lygon and Elgin Streets will not be demolished but the redevelopment will significantly improve safety, security and sustainability of the high rise areas.

Design plans for the public and social housing will be reviewed by the Carlton Community Liaison Committee which includes public tenants and local community representatives.

Signage in Carlton

Many of you will be well aware that graffiti is not the only 'signage' issue we encounter in 3053!

Whether your immediate environment is impacted or not, you may be interested in two recent 'signage' concerns – both on-going matters.

- The CRA Planning Reference Group has objected to an application from Piccolo for a large floodlit (6am to midnight!) advertising hoarding around Rathdowne/Queensberry corner construction site.
- In response to CRA member complaints about the huge, seemingly permanent and very extensive Melbourne University signage along Grattan and Swanston Streets, enquiries were made at Council about the legitimacy of this signage. Such signs are, of course, commercial advertising. CRA discovered that in fact, MU *does not have a permit for such signage* and is apparently now in the process of applying for a retrospective permit! CRA is to be kept informed on this matter.

Piazza Italia and Argyle Square

Residents and visitors to Carlton will have observed the construction work taking place in Piazza Italia and Argyle Square. This work is part of the City of Melbourne's

Cultural Precinct Enhancement Program, and the following works are planned:

- Installation of a performance stage, new pergolas, trees and a bocce court at Piazza Italia, encouraging more community activity in the area.
- An additional central path, circular seating and tree planting at Argyle Square South.



Construction work currently taking place in the Piazza Italia and Argyle Square

These are part of the stated aim to 'activate the Piazza Italia through regular activities to strengthen its role as a community gathering space' and to 'provide performance and exhibition spaces so that a program of arts and cultural events can be staged throughout the year.'

A key aspect of the project involves community consultation and the City of Melbourne would support and encourage members of the community to begin considering how it could utilise the stage once it is completed in October 2009.

'Opportunities for Carlton' project report

Our local State Member, Hon Bronwyn Pike, recently announced a grant for \$500,000 to the City of Melbourne (CoM) to assist with funding the *Opportunities for Carlton* (OFC) project on the Public Housing Estates. Deputy Lord Mayor, Susan Riley, said this funding will employ three or more CoM bureaucrats to support *Opportunities for Carlton* projects.

Although the Ministerial Press Release omits specific reference to this, the Minister stated the purpose of the grant when she made the announcement at the OFC Network meeting on 11 August. This Ministerial 'directive' is at odds with the entire concept and spirit of the OFC Network which was specifically convened to encourage and facilitate community decision-making processes.

The funds are ostensibly to generate 'real improvements to the physical environment, as well as social, economic and employment outcomes'. The Network may need clarification on whether the best 'outcomes' require CoM staffing.

However, CRA asks, what about the rest of Carlton? As CRA has long argued, while services on the housing estates for disadvantaged tenants are essential and the State should provide them, so too are services for the wider community. For example, the requirement for a centralised community centre/library where our diverse population, including public housing tenants, can develop as a coherent community. The CRA's Kathleen Syme Centre proposal (with the dream of a library, meeting spaces, displays and community resources, etc) seems as far away as ever. And the clamour for library services escalates. Over 90 toddlers and their carers attend weekly story-telling sessions in the Yarra Library – a great many of whom are from Carlton. We need services but are forced to piggy-back onto other municipalities.

The Brumby ALP Government ignores Carlton community aspirations, as The University of Melbourne firms its plans to take over the entire RWH site, including KSC. If the Brumby government allows this to happen, a unique opportunity to acquire a centrally located public building for Carlton will be lost forever, amid State ALP Government apathy in this long-held ALP 'rustbelt' seat of Melbourne.

Community News

• **National Trust Campaign**

The National Trust has started a campaign to save significant buildings in the CBD. But they need your help! Photos of proposed buildings (such as The Windsor Hotel, Lonsdale House and 80 Collins Street) and suggested letters are available on the CRA website:

www.carltonresidents.org.au The letters could be used as a starting point for your own letters to the Planning Minister, Justin Madden. In that way, some real pressure can be applied to retain Melbourne's heritage.

• **Free performances: 'Cultural intersections' – residency series**

The Cultural Intersections Residency Series explores new creative processes in an intercultural and cross-artform context. Over two nights (4 September and 31 October, 7pm), four groups of artists present their work at the Fitzroy Town Hall after a week of experimental creative development. Free admission, no bookings required.

• **Victoria Police 'Monthly Intelligence & Crime Prevention Bulletin' July 2009**

(These bulletins appear regularly on the CRA website.)

Begging:

- Begging Alms is an offence under the Summary Offences Act 1966 – Section 49A
- If a person who is begging is acting aggressively by being intimidating or violent, police should be notified by phoning 000.
- If the person is begging in a passive manner you may want to give them the 'Helping Out' booklet produced by the City of Melbourne which outlines free and cheap services for food, accommodation and health services.

Refer to the link www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=183&pg=1312 to download this booklet or attend the Melbourne Town Hall to obtain a copy.

• **Princes Hill Heritage Network Inc.**

The Princes Hill Heritage Network Inc. was recently launched at the Princes Hill Secondary College, by Rohan Storey, architectural historian, National Trust of Australia (Victoria). The Network aims to:

- support and conserve the historic and significant heritage aspects of Princes Hill
- lobby for appropriate planning and development in the Princes Hill area and on its boundaries
- advocate that any changes to the built environment be consistent with heritage principles
- involve the community in celebrating Princes Hill as an important heritage area.

For further information about the group, please visit princeshill.heritage@yahoo.com.au

CoRBA-Melbourne Report

CoRBA continues its campaign to achieve electoral reform in Melbourne before the next election. On the other hand, Minister Richard Wynne continues to ignore the requests of Council and community to review and reform the anomalous electoral system.

A critical motion, calling for a return to Attendance Voting in Melbourne elections, went before the Finance and Governance Committee last night (11/8) Although all teams in the last election expressed their support for electoral reform, the Doyle Council backed away from this clear opportunity to reform the system – a reform which is under Council control. While Councillors Shanahan, Clarke and Oke spoke in favour of the Motion, emphasising the urgent need to keep faith with the

voters and to increase civic participation by returning to Attendance Voting, the Lord Mayor and his Deputy, Councillors Jetter, Ong and Louey did not support the Motion. A second Motion calling for a report on variations to the system was passed. Progress may yet be made.

CoRBA members remain adamant that Attendance Voting will reduce the potential for electoral fraud and will ensure greater participation. It will also align the Melbourne election process to those in all other State and Federal elections. CoRBA sees no benefit in persisting with the current 'electoral' experiment unique to Melbourne where voters can ONLY vote by post. The Victorian Electoral Commission and international evaluations point to this being a very flawed system.

The CoRBA campaign for electoral reform will continue until proper democratic processes, fair representation and a system are once more restored to Melbourne.

If you would like to learn more about the CoRBA campaign to restore democracy in Melbourne, see CoRBA's recent submission and other relevant material on the CoRBA website (<http://corba-melbourne.com>) or contact Jackie Watts at jackiewatts@netspace.net.au.

iCAN needs volunteers

iCAN, a new computer centre based at the Church of All Nations in Palmerston St, Carlton, is open for business, with over 80 people attending the official opening in early August.



Mira (local Carlton resident), Jenny Mikakos (Upper House member for Northern Region) and Matt (from the University of Melbourne) cut the 'mouse' to open the new iCAN internet kiosk

It is an exciting new service which will provide:

- computer training and one-to-one personalised tutoring
- free internet access with assistance if required
- re-cycled computers with technical support.

The service is aimed at low income public housing tenants living on the Carlton high-rise housing estate. Service users will include children who do not have a computer at home; older tenants learning about computers and the internet for the first time; and recently arrived migrants, in particular from the Horn of Africa.



Drew shows his father Pat how to use the computer

Volunteers are required between 4pm and 6pm Monday to Thursday:

- Mondays – general assistance in using the Internet; eg to help someone get an email address
- Tuesdays – general assistance as well as one-to-one personalised tutoring
- Wednesdays – kids and parents night; eg to help with homework or teach dad the wonders of the Internet
- Thursdays – general assistance and technical support to tenants having problems with their computer

If you can spare 2 hours a week or fortnight on a regular basis, please contact Steve Dobson on 0412 865 840 for further information.

iCAN update

There have been many 'feel good' stories during its first week of operation:

- many African residents have appreciated being able to read news of their country online
- Mira (and many others like her) have obtained an email address for the first time and been able to make contact with family members overseas
- children have used the internet for homework and school projects
- Melbourne University students who volunteer at the kiosk have enjoyed getting to know the residents of the Housing estate.

Planning Reference Group News

At the beginning of each month, the CRA's planning reference group meets to consider the previous month's planning applications for the 3053 postcode area. The group 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)

- whether the proposed development threatens residential diversity (e.g. oversupply of student housing)

From May to August the sub-committee examined 42 applications, which resulted in the CRA lodging seven objections to the granting of the Planning Permits. (July and August applications are shown here.)

The City of Melbourne has an easy-to-use online Search facility of the Planning register, which provides up-to-date information on the status of a Planning Permit or current application. Searching by date or suburb is also possible. <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=81&pa=829&pg=1659>

ADDRESS	DETAILS OF WORK/CRA INTEREST
48-56 Drummond Street CARLTON VIC 3053 (Zone DDO6-A10)	Buildings and works to extend the existing residential college and reduction and waiver of car parking spaces: CRA objection: on heritage grounds
210-218 Victoria Street CARLTON VIC 3053 (Zone DDO44)	Buildings and works for the development of a 19-storey building with roof plant, use part of ground floor for retail and waiver of car parking requirements. Drapac had an existing permit for a 14-storey building CRA objection: on grounds of poor design for residential building, eg lack of articulation, lack of outdoor areas, lack of car parking <i>(There are two slightly different applications for this property)</i>
1-5 Holmwood Place CARLTON VIC 3053 (Zone HO1)	Partial demolition and construction of three two-storey dwellings CRA objection: 1 Car parking provision does not meet Planning Scheme requirements. 2 The wall proposed on the western boundary of the site abuts the Private Open Space of a neighbouring property and is clearly most deleterious to the amenity of that P.O.S. due to its height and undifferentiated bulk.
12-14 Faraday Street CARLTON VIC 3053 (Zone HO1)	To construct alterations and an extension to the existing dwelling and a new dwelling at the rear of the land CRA objection: An overdevelopment of the site given its placement in a Heritage Area. The bulk of the proposal overwhelms the existing modest cottage and fails to be sympathetic in form & materials as required by the Planning Scheme. This will be particularly apparent given the oblique views of the site that will be obtained down the laneway to the east of the Subject Site.

La Mama Theatre

Welcome to a very Melbourne, very Carlton experience. An intimate space where the actors are as close to you as a conversation, the smoky aroma of many years of wood fires and a theatrical or musical experience that may be innovative, experimental, comic or traditional with a twist that will linger in your thoughts. Add to that the opportunity to gather round the brazier in the courtyard to meet the cast after the show.

This has been Rhonda Day's experience since joining the Committee of Management in May. At the larger venue of La Mama Courthouse, she has seen among other plays the unforgettable script and fine performances of *The Show Must Go On* by Robyn Bishop, a harrowing exposure of 1960s hypocrisy towards single mothers. The play has attracted full houses.

Last year Carlton residents showed how much they valued this historic theatre by their generous donations to purchase the building. La Mama actively supports CRA's bid to gain a community centre and is keen to consider any ideas we might put forward for fund-raising and to ensure CRA members continue to have ready access to its productions. Pippa Bainbridge, Company Manager, and Maureen Hartley, Publicist, would be happy to hear from us.

There is much of interest in La Mama's Spring season. The 'La Mama for Kids' programme is terrific and booked out as soon as it is advertised - an interesting comment on demographics in the inner city. In September, La Mama welcomes a traditional Commedia dell'Arte troupe, Fondazione Aida, to Carlton as they perform *The Happy Prince* (12 September, 2pm) and *Il Segreto di Arlecchino* [Harlequin's Secret] (12 September, 4.30pm) at La Mama Courthouse.

September also sees the opening of the Melbourne Fringe, with La Mama presenting two shows as well as series of play readings as part of the Festival. La Mama is also touring two shows internationally this year. Currently Liz Jones, Artistic Director, CEO and actor, is performing in a joint La Mama - Malthouse production in Denmark.

For detailed information about all performances, or to book online, visit the website: www.lamama.com.au.

VCAT News

An article in *The Age* on Wednesday 12 August ('VCAT chief admits faults, orders overhaul', p3) reported that the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) was likely to be overhauled because of under-resourcing and complicated bureaucracy.

In July, CRA members (along with about 40 representatives of other residents' groups) had met with the tribunal president, Justice Kevin Bell, to speak on issues of concern. Reports from the meeting indicated that Justice Bell showed an appreciation and understanding of virtually each point raised. He did not express specific support or rejection of any point, but frequently probed the issue raised, requested suggestions as to how specific problems could be addressed and asked for comments on measures that he suggested as potential solutions.

A full report of this meeting is available on the CRA website at www.carltonresidents.org.au

Police & Community Consultative Committee News

Below are key points from the meeting held on the 14 August:

- An Open Day will be held at the Carlton Police Station on 4th October, the last one at this site. The program will include food stalls, jumping castles, presentations by Customs and the SES, and information crime prevention lectures by the police.
- June/August 2010 is the expected entry date for the new police station in Wreckyn St. North Melbourne
- The City of Melbourne has endorsed the Driver Education project and will support it verbally, but not in material kind. The RAC will assist with respect to insurance and the YMCA is likely to take the initiative on board by acting as agent for the project.
- Generally there has been an 18% reduction in crime, especially in the Carlton area. Burglaries have decreased by about 37%.
- Police will soon mount operations to target bicycle riders and pedestrians who cross against the lights. There is a high rate of accidents in Carlton!!! There will also be an operation targeting the 40kph speed limit in Lygon St.

CRA Membership

If you are interested in becoming a member (or a 'friend') of the Carlton Residents Association, contact the Membership Secretary at secretarycra@gmail.com for an application form, or download one from the CRA website: www.carltonresidents.org.au.

Victorian Trades Hall

This year, the Victorian Trades Hall is celebrating its 150th anniversary, ie 150 years of occupancy on the site. It is the oldest purpose-built trade union building in the world and was built as a memorial to the successful '8 hours a day' campaign in 1856. (Across the road is the monument commemorating the campaign which had the slogan 'Eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest' – hence the 888 symbol. The globe at the top of the monument represents the fact that those involved in the campaign came from all parts of the world.)

The first building, a corrugated tin and wooden shed with 4 rooms and a hallway, was opened on the 24 May 1859. The main building was started in 1873, with various extensions being built from the 1880s onwards. All of these were built to the original design of the architect Joseph Reid.

The Trades Hall building has a colourful history. Walking up the main staircase, one sees the bullet holes in the wall from a police shooting in 1916; the worn, uneven stone staircase; the chipped stair where a barrel of beer was thrown down in jubilation at Gough Whitlam's election as Prime Minister in 1972. The 'two day weekend' was first debated in the old Council Chamber and many of our existing working rights and conditions (such as 'holiday pay') were first discussed there. The building symbolises the trade union movement in Victoria and Australia which became part of 'social movement unionism', quite different from trade unions in other parts of the world. This concept means that unionism is not just to benefit trade union members but works to improve the rights of all working people. As a result, the Trades Hall has been active, for example, in campaigns for the rights of asylum seekers. Peace marches against Australia's involvement in the Iraq War began from there; the campaign against conscription in World War I was coordinated from there; the Suffragettes met there, and soup kitchens were held there during the Depression years.

It is also reflected in the wide variety of groups who currently have offices in, or meet in the building. As well as being the home and meeting place of the Trades Hall Council, this grand building also houses over 30 tenants (including the toy library, an international book shop and cafe, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Socialist Party, the Combined Pensioners Association, an OHS training unit, a Return to Work unit, a doctor's surgery). It is also a popular venue for Comedy Festival performances which usually take place in the old Council Chambers.

Tours for community groups can be arranged by emailing the caretaker, Jacob Grech, at venues@vthc.org.au.



Trades Hall building

Certificates of Appreciation for CRA members

During National Volunteers Week (June 2009), four prominent CRA members who make 'truly outstanding contributions to the local community' were publicly acknowledged by our local Federal Member, Hon Lindsay Tanner, MHR, Minister for Finance. At an awards ceremony Mr Tanner presented *Certificates of Appreciation* to:

Ms Margaret O'Brien, Convenor of the Carlton Gardens Group, for her advocacy on behalf of the preservation and conservation of the World Heritage Carlton Gardens

Dr Jackie Watts, Convenor of the Coalition of Residents and Business Associations (CoRBA), for her advocacy on broad issues of concern within the City of Melbourne

Ms Victoria Hamer, architect, for her critical work as a member of the CRA Planning Group, in maintaining Carlton's richly diverse Victorian Era architecture and streetscape heritage

Mr Brian Falconer, Carlton Gardens Tennis Club, for his meritorious service to the Club over the past 25 years, including 14 years as President.

Our congratulations and good wishes go to these members for their outstanding contributions to Carlton and beyond.



CRA members, Margaret O'Brien and Brian Falconer, receiving their awards from Hon Lindsay Tanner MHR