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Traffic and Transport

East West Link Toll Road Approved

On 30 June 2014, Planning Minister, Hon. Matthew Guy, approved the Eastern Section (Part A) of the East West Link (Hoddle St to City Link) and its connection to the Port (Part B). This decision followed his consideration of the comprehensive report by the Project Assessment Committee (PAC) subsequently released. For details please see: <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/panelsandcommittees/current/east-west-link-eastern-section-project-assessment-committee>



'Trains not Tolls' rally, intersection of Swanston & Flinders Streets

EW Link assessment process

Following the six-week-long Assessment process during March-April 2014, the PAC delivered its report to the Minister on 30 May. During the PAC public hearing process the Napthine Government called tenders for East West Link (EWL) construction and continued compulsory property acquisitions near portals along the Link route. As the \$8 billion EWL project is the centrepiece of the Government's *Plan Melbourne* policy document (adopted in May 2014), it was always clear the PAC report would have minimal impact on design outcomes already decided by the Government, regardless of cost, flimsy justifications or community objections. The Link is the most costly infrastructure project in Victoria's history, yet it was never part of any transport plan or road reservation process, which is why it has drawn so much public angst. The PAC received 1477 submissions; 99% were opposed to the Link. It heard from hundreds of expert witnesses, community and professional groups, and individuals. Its recommendations were based on this extensive evidence.

Planning Minister rejects the assessment

In the event, most of the 43 major recommendations of the Assessment Committee were largely rejected by the Minister, except for the Elliot Ave interchange in the middle of Royal Park (in front of the Zoo). He deleted this massive structure in favour of a new portal somewhere on Flemington Rd., with unrevealed impacts on Royal Park and private property. Rejected by the Minister were alternative less intrusive and less destructive designs for the flyover at Hoddle St. in Collingwood and Part B, the Port connection viaduct elevated above the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor in Flemington and Kensington, close to many homes and public housing.

Reasons for Minister Guy's rejection of most of the Committee's considered and evidence-based recommendations have not been revealed, except for his curious statement 'I do not rely on a Business Case, it is unnecessary for me to do so' (East West Link Blog, 2 July, 2014). Under the draconian provisions of the *Major Transport Facilitation Act, 2009*, the Minister holds ultimate authority over the EWL. Linking Melbourne Authority (LMA) 'reference' design will remain the basis for the Link. Contractors will be required to sort out numerous yet to be clarified details with LMA, including the extent of open-cut construction and flyovers in Royal Park. There will be no further public consultations or supplementary Comprehensive Impact Statement, as called for by the PAC.

Will contracts be signed?

The EWL project is in disarray, driven by the Government's desperation to sign binding contracts and begin construction before the State Election in November 2014. Essential enabling legislation for the Link remains to be passed by State Parliament before it rises on 26 October. Opposition Leader Andrews maintains the ALP, although opposed to the Link, will honour signed contracts under 'sovereign risk' considerations. In the expert opinion of Professor Nick Seddon (ANU), a national authority on contract law, no such risk exists, particularly if due notice is given (*Rescinding the Contracts*, legal forum, Melbourne, 16 April 2014).

EWL construction tenders closed on 28 April 2014. Two final tenderers, Lend Lease and Cintra (Spain) were announced on 24 June. Unsuccessful tenderer, Leighton Holdings, was paid \$12 million for its failed bid. Lend Lease and Cintra will be required to consider a number of PAC recommendations in their final competitive bids for the project.

The Government is undertaking a taxpayer funded \$multi-million TV, print and billboard media blitz to convince the electorate the Link is the top priority infrastructure project for Victoria. However recent polling suggests 85% of voters remain sceptical.

Community activism continues

Over the past 12 months widespread community activism has occurred against the EWL in favour of public transport and less grandiose road projects across the State, not just a

costly and controversial mega-roads project in Melbourne, much of it on parkland. A primary aim has been to delay the signing of Link contracts pending the State Election. The Government was elected in 2010 on pro-public transport policies which it soon ditched in favour of the EWL for which it has no electoral mandate.

Activism against the EWL culminated on Saturday 28 June 2014 with a mass rally *We want Trails not Toll*, including a march down Swanston St. As publicity for the rally and for factual information on the EWL, some 100,000 leaflets were letterboxed and handed out at rail stations and tram stops across Melbourne and in regional centres. The rally unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the Government and Opposition to: *Scrap the East-West Tunnel – rip up the contracts – invest in public transport.*

City of Melbourne questions the process

In an historic vote on 8 July 2014, the Council's Future Melbourne Committee resolved to question the Government's decision to approve the Link while ignoring most of the Assessment Committee's recommendations. It reaffirmed the Council's strong opposition to Part B and questioned the serious lack of clarity in the Minister's decision, including final impacts on Royal Park. The Council insisted the Government delay contract signing, pending the State Election 'until the people have had the opportunity to pass judgement'. Lord Mayor Doyle vehemently opposed the resolution.

The future

The Senate has demanded the secretive Business Case for the entire \$18 billion EWL project (Hoddle St to Outer Ring Road) be tabled prior to approval of the \$3 billion Federal funding contribution promised by the Abbott Government (projects over \$100 million must be documented). An unresolved challenge to the Link in the Supreme Court of Victoria has yet to run its course. Current polling suggests the Napthine Government may not survive the Election. Substantial community pressure is being applied to the ALP to reconsider its accommodation of signed EWL contracts. **Despite Government approval for the Link, the battle for a more balanced approach to transport policy in Victoria will continue. The vigorous community campaign to prioritise public transport over mega-roads projects will continue to build in the run-up to the State Election on 29 November 2014.**

East-West – What is it? What is it for? Why it won't die easily.

Summary of a speech given to the Carlton Residents Association meeting by Dr Sophie Sturup on 14 March 2014.

What is East-West?

The East-West project is a mega project and a road project. That is why my research on the mentalities of mega projects has some relevance to it.

According to my research, mega projects have a couple of salient features:

1. Power in mega projects is based on sovereignty, which is to say that these projects rest on the fact that someone with the authority to do so has declared that they will be done. Thus the legitimacy of the project is directly linked to the people who said it would happen. To question the legitimacy of the project is to question the right of the 'sovereign' to decide things, and this is generally confused with the overall legitimacy of the sovereign. The other thing about this is that everyone operating in the project is entitled to do so solely because of the sovereign decision. Thus they cannot question the project's legitimacy without removing their entitlement to operate in the project.

2. Process in the project is dominated by project thinking. Project thinking is about deciding what needs to be done, and then creating boundaries around that, so that it cannot be interfered with. That is, making the project manageable. This is one of the reasons why consultation looks pretty weird in these projects. By the time the community is brought into the picture, the project has already been decided upon (see 1) and the fact that it is happening cannot be questioned. Project thinking means that the only questions of relevance are those which will 'improve' the project either by reducing its costs or reducing the impact on the community. And the reduction of impact on the community can only be accommodated if it has a positive impact on the costs and duration of the project (duration also affects costs).

3. Mega projects do not come about as a result of first identifying a problem and then applying a solution. The process of creating a mega project includes the problem and solution being jointly conceived. This happens as the stories or rationales for the project, and what can be conceived as being done jointly, emerge – and this brings us to the next item on this agenda: What is the aim of this project?

What is the project for?

The rationale for mega projects needs to make sense if the project is going to be a success. In this sense East–West is a failure waiting to happen. It won't be a failure because it isn't built on time and on budget. The LMA has the competence to ensure that that happens. Unfortunately that isn't what constitutes success in mega projects.

One of the key findings of Omega Project 2, a research project looking at 32 mega transport projects across ten countries (run by the Omega Centre, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London and funded by Volvo Education and Research Foundation (VREF)) was that mega projects are context specific and where they don't have an open and exploratory relationship with the context, they ultimately fail.

My own research, which focused on the Australian cases of Melbourne's City Link, the Perth to Mandurah Railway and Sydney's Cross City Tunnel, found that in Australia we define success as occurring when projects meet their stated outcomes (in transport projects that means traffic numbers) and the companies which build them are successful in financial terms (which of course is related to the traffic numbers being correct).

The reason that East–West will be a failure is therefore because the stated goals are:

- a) Fluffy
- b) Not agreed on
- c) Based on inducing (i.e. generating) traffic, so there won't appear to be any kind of benefit. For example, the modelling shows that traffic along Alexander Parade will briefly decline a bit, but be back at the same level by 2020. This will not look like 30% reduction in traffic on the Eastern Freeway, unless of course the projected induced traffic numbers do not eventuate, in which case there won't be enough traffic to meet that modelled expectation. Similarly, the changes on Bell Street or reduced traffic on the M1 will not be noticeable by the people who are near enough to the tunnel for such changes to make a difference. The fluffiness of the dialogue on the purpose of the project is thus such that if they succeed in getting the numbers they predict, the Eastern Freeway will be horrible and the numbers on Alexander Parade the same, so the predictions will be wrong because there will not be a 30% reduction in traffic. Or alternatively, they won't get the numbers of induced traffic, in which case the tunnel will be seen as a failure because it isn't able to pay for itself (and therefore wasn't really needed).

This leads to the conclusion that whatever the stated objectives in the media (primarily 'reduce congestion') that probably isn't what it is really for. So, are there any objectives that are not quite so fluffy?

The objectives which appear to have teeth are:

- a. Induced traffic – in the form of trucks --onto the Eastern Freeway. This makes sense. After turning the section of freeway between the City Link tunnels and the Bolte Bridge into freeway spaghetti, it is not surprising that B-double truck drivers are less than happy with that route. City Link changed the location of key freight logistics hubs and helped the development of a major one out at Lyndhurst/Dandenong. East Link was built to facilitate this development (among other things). However, the trucks (which represent several cars in terms of traffic volume) have failed to use the road to come to the Eastern Freeway. Why? Because there is nowhere for them to go when they get there. Thus one argument for this road which makes sense is to create a new link for trucks trying to access the port from Lyndhurst. This will have the effect of reducing the cost to the state of East Link (because of increased toll revenue), and thus obliquely help pay for the East–West. It will also keep the truck moguls happy, and reduce truck traffic on the M1 (which is of course Liberal heartland). It is possible to regard this as a source of equity: it will distribute truck traffic, and hence the enormous danger to health and life they present, more evenly around the city, bringing large numbers of B-doubles and their pollution into those eastern suburbs which are currently almost truck free.
- b. One could speculate that another possible reason for the East–West is to provide Liberal swinging voters in the East access to some of the jobs that are coming from the West, in particular the airport. Obviously this isn't one of the things discussed widely in the media, but it would

explain why 'improving access to the airport for those in the eastern suburbs' might make a type of sense. Certainly spending \$8 billion on a tunnel so 'George' can go to the airport twice a year more comfortably, does not.

c A third line of reasoning that makes sense is that this project will be co-funded by the Federal government and there is no money on the table for anything else. It is against all logic in public service not to take up money when it is offered, even when it only represents 18% of the total cost of \$8 billion.

d Finally, the logic of keeping motoring alive and well in the city is also relevant here. Tony Abbott has clearly stated in various publications, including *Borderline*, that in his view, we will have failed as a society if freely available car transport isn't provided.

The other reasons for constructing the road are largely borrowed from the Eddington Report, which was based on dealing with an accessibility and equity problem that was real – the issues of the disadvantaged West and the genuinely congested Westgate Bridge. The rationale in Eddington doesn't make much sense for the East–West stage 1 because it comes from a study centred on Laverton, which only took in the end of the Eastern Freeway. An example of such nonsense statements is the one included in the second newsletter from LMA (before the second half of East–West was announced) which stated that the project was required because by 2031 almost 440,000 cars would be crossing the Maribyrnong River by road (none of course would be in the East–West stage 1 as that project does not cross the Maribyrnong).

Why this project won't die easily

One of the main reasons is that both sides of politics have a vested interest in maintaining the legitimacy of their right to make sovereign decisions. The major parties like to make decisions on such projects and then deliver them; it removes all that messy business of democracy. If the Labor Party were to revoke the contracts it would not only be expensive but they would essentially be admitting that these things should only happen after consultation (which is likely to make it very difficult to get anything done).

Secondly, the Labor Party has linked its policy to jobs creation. Because of the time it takes to get large projects up and running, they will not meet their targets without East–West. Therefore they will not revoke contracts unless forced to do so.

Why do I care?

I believe that we probably do have an infrastructure crisis in this country. Apart from new projects, much of our infrastructure is ageing and needs to be replaced. I also believe we need to massively retrofit our cities for sustainability and even to just accommodate more people. We probably need mega projects to do that.

The problem with this project is that every failed mega project inflates the cost of the next one. You can already see that with the massive cost increases between the Cross City Tunnel, the Brisbane tunnels and this project.

The other problem that this project exposes is the degree to which government has come to the conclusion that community consultation must be avoided. I don't believe this is just ideology, it has also come from bitter experience. If the community is going to insist on being consulted, then it is up to us to figure out how to do that in ways which are productive.

Reference groups

Planning and Development

Plan Melbourne

This is the new 40 year planning regime for Melbourne. It is designed to replace the previous *Melbourne 2030* and *Melbourne @5million* plans of the Bracks-Brumby ALP Governments. These earlier plans were intended to last for 30 years but were cancelled following the change of Government in 2010.

Plan Melbourne was first released in October 2013 following widespread community consultation which began a year earlier. CRA participated in these consultations. Since that time, the Plan has dramatically changed without further discussion. It was released in final form in May 2014:

- The mid-century population target is now 8 million; double Melbourne's current population,
- Its centrepiece project is the East West Link with destructive impacts on Royal Park and elsewhere,
- The influence and application of new residential zones policy is unclear,
- VCAT will remain Victoria's controversial planning umpire,
- How will houses, schools, hospitals, transport and jobs be provided?
- The *Plan Melbourne* committee, under Professor Roz Hansen, resigned in disgust on 30 August 2013 (*The Age*, 13 December 2013).

Planning in Melbourne is now hopelessly politicised. Each new government aims to stamp its mark by introducing yet another new plan. By its nature planning needs to be long-term, predictable and enjoy widespread community respect and support.

Should the Government change in November can we expect another new planning regime for Melbourne?

Planning Committee Report

New Residential Zones

The initial CoM proposal for the replacement of the Residential 1 & 2 Zones within Carlton was based on a strict interpretation of the State Governments criterion, which excluded any of Carlton being considered for Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

The CoM then contended that the existing controls through heritage overlays and design & development overlays would protect neighbourhood character. As a result, Carlton was denied any NRZ precincts, disappointing but not unexpected by the planning committee.

The subsequent 6- week consultative process identified

extensive community concern that neighbourhoods were not adequately protected and the planning officers revisited the assessment criterion and the resulting proposal submitted to the Future Melbourne Committee on the 3 June included several NRZ precincts for Carlton, which were previously destined to be General Residential Zones

The planning committee is pleased that a more liberal interpretation of the criterion has been adopted, but anomalies in the newly proposed re-zonings have been identified. As a result, CRA will lodge a submission with the Residential Zone Standing Advisory Committee, which is responsible for reviewing and determining final zonings for all councils. CRAs submission will be posted on the website upon its completion early next month.

Applications

APP No./ADDRESS	DETAILS OF WORK/CRA INTEREST
<p>Carried Forward - May 2013 - February 2014</p> <p>TP-2013-317- 63 Nicholson St - Objection</p> <p>TP-2013-630- 15-31 Pelham St - Objection</p> <p>TP-2013-736- 152 Queensberry St Objection</p> <p>TP-2013-893-106 Queensberry St- Objection</p> <p>TP-2013-947-123-127 Bouverie St/ 116-128 Leicester St - Objection</p> <p>TP-2013-1059-932-944 Swanston St - Objection</p>	<p>CoM is awaiting the submission of a redesign. There has been no change in the status of this application</p> <p>Permit Refused. The CoM agreed with CRA and 64 other objectors and refused this application. The applicant may appeal the decision of course. The proposal: to increase the existing 4 story building to 8 and convert from office use to residential. CRA considered this to be inappropriate. Major concerns being overshadowing, World Heritage precinct impacts, and local heritage issues. See our website for CoM 'Grounds for Refusal'</p> <p>Permit Issued. The application was originally for the construction of 16 stories. CRA participated in the VCAT mediation, which resulted in concessions by the applicant, including eliminating 2 stories and increased setbacks. A substantial improvement on what may have been.</p> <p>Permit Issued. CRAs concerns were addressed by the conditions imposed by the permit, other objectors concerns addressed through negotiation, VCAT hearing did not eventuate.</p> <p>NOD Issued. An application for a 15 storey development by Melbourne University for use as student accommodation and ground floor retail. CRAs objection was against the proposed 49 metre height which exceeds the recommended limit of 40 metres set by DDO61. Negotiations between. CoM and MU resulted in the elimination of one storey and other design improvements.</p> <p>Alter existing building and construct a new 3 storey building for use as student accommodation. This is the historic "Fleming House" site. CRA expressed concern regarding the impact of the new building on Fleming House and requested that a heritage report be commissioned. This application is subject to ongoing discussions between CoM and the Applicant over the heritage issues. Some improvements are anticipated</p>
<p>February- 13 Applications – 1 Objection</p> <p>TP-2014-59 – 205-223 Pelham St Objection</p>	<p>Reece Site. A 15 Storey apartment building proposed CRA has lodged an objection on the grounds of excessive height, inadequate setback heritage issues and wind effects. Refer to our website for details of the submission. CoM decision believed to be imminent.</p>
<p>March -13 Applications</p>	<p>No grounds for objection identified.</p> <p>A major development at the SW corner of the CUB site in Victoria St will be processed by the Dept of Planning and not subject to 3rd party objections</p>
<p>April - 6 Applications</p> <p>May - 12 Applications</p> <p>June - 9 Applications</p> <p>July – 5 Applications (to 21 July)</p>	<p>No grounds for objection identified.</p> <p>No grounds for objection identified</p> <p>No grounds for objection identified awaiting further information on one.</p> <p>No grounds for objection identified awaiting further information on one</p>

Farewell

It is with regret that CRA is farewelling Victoria Hamer, the longest serving member of the planning committee. Victoria and her partner Bob are deserting Carlton for neighbouring North Melbourne. We can safely assume that Carlton's loss will lead to North Melbourne's gain.

The members of the Planning committee would like to express their gratitude for Victoria's sage advice and bonhomie during her long stint on the committee and wish both, the best of luck for the challenges ahead.

The CRA Committee has nominated Victoria for Honorary Life Membership of the Association, which will be formalised at the next AGM in February 2015.

KSC - Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre

The Kathleen Syme Library project has received a grant of \$288,000 from the State Government Library Services. Although regrettably considerably less than the amount applied for by the CoM, this is a very welcome supplement to the municipal investment. It is interesting to note that community use of the recently opened Docklands Library has within one month exceeded all projections! We can look forward to a similar enthusiastic community response next year when our library opens in Faraday Street in Carlton, where the need for library services has been so desperate for so long.

Streetscapes

Trees under stress

Current projections suggest that 27% of tree cover within the City of Melbourne will be lost over the next decade due to heat, disease and old age. Global warming and drought have exacerbated the problem. Melbourne is now one degree warmer than in 1990. The Council's Head of Planning, Professor Rob Adams, said 'The evidence is so obvious. You don't have to go to the scientists, you just look at the trees in Melbourne' (*The Age*, 14 June 2014). The Council is a 'certified carbon neutral' organisation with a zero emissions strategy. Its strategy starkly contrasts with the denial policies of the State and Federal Governments. Despite its admirable environment and tree policies, the Council has reluctantly accepted Government plans to destroy 5200 trees, along with other extensive devastation in Royal Park and Moonee Ponds Creek to accommodate the East West Link.



Topical issues

New sports fields for Princes Park

The City of Melbourne is undertaking major works on the entire Princes Park sports field area between Oval One and Crawford Oval. This will accommodate the relocation of sporting clubs permanently displaced from Royal Park as a result of the Napthine Government's East-West Link, and close it to general use. The Council has been granted \$14 million to fund this work.

Works to support the use of grounds for organised competition sports will include resurfacing, seating and sports lighting. A multipurpose synthetic sports surface on Crawford Oval will considerably increase its carrying capacity. It is proposed that playing fields will be reconfigured to accommodate alternate summer and winter use. Synthetic turf surfaces provide very durable playing surfaces suitable for use up to four times that of the natural grass surfaces.

Even with these new sports fields on Princes Park, there remains a 30% deficit of such facilities within the City of Melbourne, at a time of major population growth.

Event Advisory Group disbanded

Council has disbanded the Event Advisory Group (EAG) for the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS). CRA has expressed its dismay to Lord Mayor Robert Doyle and councillors regarding a Future Melbourne Committee decision on 14 June to disband the Event Advisory Group. The City of Melbourne seems to have turned its back on community consultation and involvement with this most contentious event.

The EAG was convened initially as a condition of the licence – essentially as a vehicle to ensure that the community and other relevant institutional stakeholders were consulted about the long list of problematic issues related to this commercial event held within Victoria's sole World Heritage site.

Over the years many valuable and positive improvements to the MIFGS have come about through the EAG consultative process. Now, under the new licence, conditions applied as a result of scrutiny by the objective EAG group will no longer be provided. So, where does the informed community take its concerns? Is the media the only arena in which issues and concerns created by the ongoing tension between the commercial exploitation of a World Heritage site can be aired?

The changing demographic is seriously exacerbating the problems of inadequate public open space adjacent to the CBD. With a rapidly escalating population, high-density housing, huge office and apartment towers under construction, loss of a large section of Princes Park to dedicated sports grounds, there is ever-increasing pressure on public open space. This deficit, and the loss of Carlton Gardens for six weeks annually around MIFGS, is ignored, despite there being readily accessible, less sensitive venues available, including Birrarung Marr and the Melbourne Showgrounds.

Councillors, most of whom live outside the municipality, continue to 'turn a blind eye' to the very real problems of open space, especially if its loss generates commercial gain. When will the very real costs to the community be factored into the equation?

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Community News Aboriginal Memorial

Following years of lobbying by respected Melbourne activist, Dr Joseph Toscano, and the local aboriginal community, the Council agreed on 29 April 2014 to erect a memorial to two aboriginal 'freedom fighters', Maulboyheenner and Tunnerminnerwait. These two were publically hanged on 29 January 1842 as 'bloodthirsty outlaws' at a site on Franklin Street, behind RMIT (see *Newsflash*, summer 2012 & summer 2013).

An amount up to \$155,000 has been allocated by the Council to fund the design and installation of a suitable memorial on a sliver of land at the corner of Franklin and Victoria Streets. A Working Group, including Dr Toscano and aboriginal elders, will develop the project. The memorial will be a significant addition to the well-visited Gaol Tourist Precinct nearby. It will be the first major acknowledgement of the 'frontier wars' that occurred during the settlement of Victoria.

Interested in Carlton's History?

Then you might be interested in the Carlton Community History Group.

The Carlton Community History Group arose from the interest of a number of people who had many questions about the history of Carlton. These ranged from the trivial, 'why Rathdowne Street was spelt that way?' to more significant questions 'what it was like growing up, going to school or working in Carlton in the 1940s or the 1970s?'

As we started to explore some of these questions we realised how little we knew. Where were the stories of the ordinary people who inhabited the suburb? We know a bit about the high profile purveyors of coffee or pasta and the writers who call Carlton home, but not much about the people who ran the neighbourhood shops for years and years, who worked in the factories and dairies, who delivered the wood, sold the papers on the street, went to the SP book makers up the lane.

So the aims of the Carlton Community History Group are to:

- preserve the past and present for the future;
- consolidate the records of the many other people and groups who have worked on local history in the past;
- identify significant gaps in the records which cover growing up, living and working in the area and information about changes to the mix of ethnic groups as well as changes to shops, schools, businesses and houses.

Do you know what connects the following, a foundry and forge that operated in Elgin Street in the 19th century and a young man called Lucky or Fortunato, who was raised in a grocery shop in Rathdowne Street?

The answer is the Melbourne Cup: the forge made the horse shoes worn by Archer, the first winner of the Melbourne Cup. Lucky became a silversmith and made a number of Melbourne Cups.



North Carlton Post Office

If you have some stories to tell, or some things to share, please contact us.

CARLTON COMMUNITY HISTORY GROUP

P.O. Box 148, North Carlton, 3054.

Email: carlton@cchg.asn.au Website: www.cchg.asn.au

Or come to our monthly meetings, held on the first Monday of the month (excluding January) starting at 7.30pm, at the Carlton Library, 667 Rathdowne Street (cnr Newry St), North Carlton.

Bring your stories, help preserve the past for the future.

CRA Film Night

A highlight of this year has been the CRA film night in April, a private screening of *Lygon Street - Si Parlo Italiano*, at the Nova Cinema in Carlton. It was followed by drinks and dinner at Jimmy Watson's Restaurant directly opposite the picture theatre. Tickets sold out very quickly. This documentary was particularly relevant for our audience as it looked at the impact of large numbers of Italian immigrants settling in Carlton during the fifties and sixties. At this time, the Australian culture had a very British flavour and there had been little European influence. The documentary highlighted how these new arrivals opened stores and cafés in Lygon Street, which showcased the very best of their home country's traditions. Melburnians from all over the city came to try new Italian cuisine such as pizza and pasta. The Italian immigrants also imported the first espresso machines into Australia thereby laying the foundations for Melbourne's current connoisseur coffee culture.

If you missed the film but would still like to see it, you can buy it on DVD from Readings Book Shop located at 309 Lygon Street, Carlton.

Thank you Philip Watts and Greta Bird for organising such a fabulous evening.

Alan Sanders

Winner of the Frances Pennington Award 2013

In December 2013, Alan Sanders, a resident of the Carlton Ministry of Housing flats, was presented with the prestigious Frances Pennington Award. This prize, named for Victoria's first Minister of Housing, is awarded to a tenant or tenant's group who have made an outstanding voluntary contribution to their communities. Alan Sander's prize was presented by the Minister for Housing, Wendy Lovell. Others attending the ceremony were Elizabeth Miller, chair of the selection committee and MLA for Bentleigh, Ping Vincent from the North Yarra Community Health Service, and Craig Ondarchie, MLA for the Northern Metropolitan region.

Alan Sanders has made a major contribution to his community in the area of building and site safety and maintenance, and by improving security measures on the Carlton public housing estate. He is a part of a team led by Ping Vincent with Miguel Ramirez and several others. Not only has he assisted in setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Committee in his own Carlton estate, but this program may be implemented at other housing developments along with establishing new safety programs. Alan is also a member of the Redevelopment Tenant Network (RTN) which was formed to assist tenants during the recent redevelopment of the Carlton Housing Estate.



Alan Sanders receives his award

Alan became a public housing resident only four and a half years ago. Before that he spent 20 years in the USA, working as a safety specialist with a major construction company.

Alan describes this job as being at 'a high level in the business world'. However, in 2009 he suffered a severe illness, and could no longer work. He returned to Australia, still in very poor health, collapsing at the airport on arrival. His family cared for him during his first months in Melbourne.

Alan was then allocated a one-room bedsit in the Carlton high-rise estate. In his first year of residence his health

problems confined him indoors. But when he was able to venture outside he became aware of a tree removal program in the grounds of the housing development and new fences surrounding the buildings. Alan describes the tree-less estate as 'a bare, prison-like environment'. In order to prevent further unnecessary tree removal he joined the residents' Community Liaison Committee (CLC) to campaign for tenants to be made aware of redevelopment, to receive advice about these events, and to have a voice in their community.

From this beginning, Alan went on to form a safety committee, becoming the tenant safety representative on the CLC. The safety committee inspects, photographs and reports on safety issues in the buildings and grounds. These might be leaking mains, holes in the walls or damaged doors. Graffiti is an additional problem. Through this team, training and purchase of kits is made available so tenants can remove small areas of offensive graffiti from their immediate surroundings.

Another of the team's initiatives was to improve communications between the management of the estate and the tenants. Noticeboards now display information about any proposed developments or changes. These boards also contain emergency phone numbers and contact details for agencies and advice offices. Alan believes this information centre is one way of helping residents to 'take ownership' of their own lives.

Alan learned about the importance of volunteering when he was a boy growing up in Wangaratta, in country Victoria. He recalls weekends away with his father, a first aid training instructor, to teach Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), a new technique at that time. Later, Alan belonged to the State Emergency Services (SES) in Australia, and in the USA he was involved in training teams for relief work. These teams were for local disasters but were sent to New York after the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and later to New Orleans. He also worked with the USN through the American Red Cross in training First Aid and CPR instructors on board naval ships before they were dispatched to the Middle East.

Alan Sanders' own health remains poor, but he continues to work actively with the team, led by Ping Vincent to improve conditions on the housing estate. He says that one can either 'watch, wonder, or make it happen'. Although it is not always easy to maintain motivation, he says the award 'came at the right time' and has been much appreciated. He now has a public profile and he is regularly invited to speak at various agency forums, often involving other housing estates.

He continues to make plans for the Carlton estate, such as modifying the role of the RTN for the future. This tenant network presents tenants' views and concerns to management.

Alan also wants to engage the children in the care of their surroundings, maybe the garden areas as a starting point. 'The future is in the kids,' he says. We must make it safer and better for them.