

In this edition

Candidates Forum

**Melbourne University:
rates-exempt**

Bike Hire in Carlton

**CoRBA- Melbourne tackles
the Minister for Planning**

**Protectors of Public Lands
Victoria Inc.**

**KSC – Matthew Guy joins the
campaign**

Eddington is back!

Planning Reference Group

**The Melbourne Strategic
Statement**

Planning register on line

PCCC meeting

Community News

**'Conversation' with refugee
lawyer, Michelle Foster**

Elgin-Lygon Street Corner

The Carlton Residents Association Inc.
A0034345G
ABN 87 716 923 898
PO Box 1140
carltonresidents@gmail.com
Secretary: secretarycra@gmail.com
www.carltonresidents.org.au

Supported by the Community
Services Grants Program



Candidates Forum 9 August 2010

More than eighty people attended the Candidates Forum held last Monday evening, to hear from five of the seven candidates for the Federal seat of Melbourne. Candidates had been briefed on the format of the evening: a seven-minute presentation of their policies and goals for the electorate, a time to answer questions from the floor and then an opportunity for a final, one-minute summation. The candidates who presented (in order of appearance on the ballot paper) were Adam Bandt (Greens Party), Joel Murray (Australian Sex Party), David Collyer (Australian Democrats), Penelope Green (Secular Party) and Cath Bowtell (Australian Labor). Liberal candidate, Simon Olsen, declined to attend, but did respond to a request for a written statement about his policies and goals. A summary is included. There was no response from the Family First candidate.



Candidates, left to right:
Cath Bowtell, Penelope Green, Joel Murray,
David Collyer, Adam Bandt

If the audience was hoping for well reasoned, well argued, persuasive speeches on why they should vote for a particular candidate and their opinions on local issues, they would have mostly been disappointed. However, there was more passion and eloquence in many of the responses to questions from the floor. These questions highlighted some of the key concerns of this electorate: climate change, troops in Afghanistan, public transport, stance on nuclear weapons, asylum seekers (although this was not mentioned in any of the candidates' presentations and only addressed when specifically questioned about it). Sadly, the only mention of indigenous issues was in David Collyer's opening remarks, and after that it was not mentioned at all.

Policies in brief:

Adam Bandt - Greens: vision is for a sustainable Melbourne, which is the only electorate where there is a choice between the Greens and Labor;

supports:- improved public transport; directing Federal road money to public transport; improved child care;

opposes:- tunnel - not the answer; will oppose federally as federal money will be needed to do it.

Joel Murray - Australian Sex Party: primary focus on social and civil liberties; formed in response to growing conservatism;

supports:- age-appropriate sex education and ethics-based programs in schools; paid parental leave but fair and equitable in relation to small business; same-sex marriage; royal commission into sex abuse in religious institutions;

opposes:- Internet censorship; school chaplains in public schools.

David Collyer - Australian Democrats – once held balance of power in Senate; by standing, it gives voters a chance to direct first preferences to other than Liberal / Labor; stand is independent centre; free of slogans and baggage; sit left of Labor which adopts conservative economic and moral standards;

supports:- climate change; resources tax; Henry report should be embraced; improved free public education;

opposes:- Internet censorship; HECS fees.

Penelope Green - Secular Party – want to enforce the separation of church and state; responding to rising profile of Australian Christian Lobby;

supports:- universal, secular and free public education; protection of personal freedoms;

opposes:- chaplains in schools; funding of private education; religious tax concessions.

Cath Bowtell – ALP – believes it is a matter of principle to stand on the party platform and that Melbourne is the epicentre of community activism;

supports:- importance of community and charitable organisations in employment; education, training and lifelong learning; price on carbon; an evidence-based policy to grow the city and improve urban amenity; building infrastructure for an aging population; bringing together the layers of government to get the best outcomes; investment in public transport; migrants and vulnerable people.

Simon Olsen - Liberal - recognises that voters are being hurt by increased living costs (rent, mortgages, other basic necessities; promises to end economic mismanagement, pay off debt and help to ease cost of living pressures;

supports: a paid parental leave plan which will offer a full 6 months paid leave, at the mother's replacement wage level, including superannuation; delivery of more services to the community, including health; committed to spend an additional \$1.5 billion on mental health; plans to provide \$3.1 billion in funding for 2,800 new public hospital beds; local communities to reduce crime rates within the electorate;

opposes:- Labor's proposed Internet filter - does not believe it is the most effective way to tackle the problem.



CAN hosts Candidates Forum

Questions:

Who are you giving your second preference to?

Greens – to Labor

Sex Party – to the Secular party

Democrats - to the Secular Party, then Sex Party, then Greens

Secular – to the Democrats, then Sex party, Greens, Labor

Labor – to the Greens

(To Cath) Do you support gay marriage? Will you vote to support gay marriage?

Labor –Yes, supports equal marriage rights; it is part of eliminating discrimination. Will work within the party and in community. Her job is to change the Labor Party platform on this issue. Momentum will build. Will respect the Labor Party process and it is important to be faithful to the party's platform.

Adam - Will vote for full marriage rights

What are your policies on the abolition of nuclear weapons and the removal of troops from Afghanistan?

Democrats – Opposed to Afghanistan. Australia should have followed Canada and said 'no' to the USA about sending troops to Afghanistan in the first place. Uranium - should not be mining it or burying it as waste.

Greens – Against nuclear weapons and mining uranium. Afghanistan – troops doing a brave job but should not have been sent there. Need to have a debate in parliament.

Sex Party– No particular policies. Wants an evidence based decision. People should be able to make own decision.

Secular Party – Troops should not have gone in the first place. Australia needs to think about how to get out. Uranium - No particular policy.

Labor – Has non-proliferation policy. Afghanistan – it is a problem that there was no debate in parliament. Withdrawal leaves Afghans vulnerable and we have obligations there. Need stability in the region. Can't underestimate this. Need to be satisfied that no difficulties are created by the withdrawal of Australian troops.

What is your policy on asylum seekers?

Labor – It is shameful and deplorable that the Liberal party has made it an issue. However, we do need a regional framework to deal with people who flee to this region. This is supported by advocacy groups. Has discussed with Sen. Evans. Regional processing centres – will argue that there have to be places that people can go to quickly, be processed with support and be resettled asap. However, we already have people living among us who have relatives in refugee camps. They are not queue jumpers.

Greens – Disheartened to find Tony Abbott turning this into another 'Tampa' issue. Was happy that Julia Gillard made the comment that it would take 20 years to fill the MCG with people who come by 'boats'. However, she then needed to say strongly that there is no need to fear! And she didn't do this. Values of compassion and decency have been erased from the debate. Need to have a compassionate and humane approach. Progressive voices are being silenced. Our responsibility is based on international law. The Greens believe that the number of asylum seekers should be increased by 20,000, and they should be processed on shore.

(to Cath). Would you cross the floor to bring strong climate action?

Labor - Have independently informed myself about climate change. Disappointed that there is no emissions trading scheme and the Labor party was the only one to support it. Economic reform has to have longevity. All players need to be there – a compromise between a lot of groups. Need to build on that. Labor put it up but couldn't get it through the Senate. Was knocked back by the naysayers. Needs sustainable reform, but reform with longevity. Will argue for a strong ETS. We didn't build a strong enough case for reform. Need lasting reform.

Greens – Didn't support the ETS because it wasn't good enough. Labor chose to negotiate with Libs rather than the Greens. Every major environmentalist had walked away from it. Said couldn't change it in the future. Effect of negotiated deal meant that emission targets wouldn't start to drop until 2035. But we need to have another go.

What are your spending priorities?

Labor – Would drive a focus on spending on early intervention programs – health, domestic violence, early childhood. Put money in preventable issues so don't have to spend on it later on, e.g. juvenile justice. Need to evaluate what you spend, but outcomes of a program are not just about how much you have spent.

What are you going to do about funding for public education?

Labor - Disappointed that review has been pushed back one year. Need a proper funding formula.

Greens – Public education is the cornerstone of education. Labor did not undo the Liberal policies or redress the imbalance. Concerned that the review is being deferred for another year. Want to make public education a number one priority.

Democrats - Have same views.

Final summation

Labor - Intends to be a progressive voice that will work for you, on issues such as paid parental leave, reducing childcare costs, building new public housing.

Secular Party – Is giving you a chance to vote on a specific issue.

Democrats – Liberals have become a hard right group of Nazis.

Sex Party – The Sex Party has important social issues that did not have a voice in parliament – hence the name.

Greens - Labor has lurched to the right and become another Liberal party. We now have two similar parties. Greens have a vision on renewable energy; have values of compassion, sustainability and equality. A new progressive Green voice won't be silenced by the factions.

Join the Carlton Residents Association

Annual Membership subscription!

Full member (if you live in 3053):

Single \$25 Family \$40

Concession: Single \$15 Family \$25

Friend (if not in 3053): \$15

CONTACT: Secretary: secretarycra@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.carltonresidents.org.au

PO Box 1140, Carlton 3053

Melbourne University: rates-exempt

Residents and businesses in Carlton are required to pay City of Melbourne rates as a fair and reasonable contribution to the provision of community services. However, major business entities, such as Melbourne University, enjoy rates-exempt status as 'educational institutions' under the Local Government Act.

As Cr Ken Ong recently pointed out at a CRA meeting, all other ratepayers (including CRA members) subsidise the University by paying higher rates. The voracious off-campus real estate expansion of the University into historic Carlton and Parkville has exacerbated the situation in recent years. Currently, ratepayers in the City subsidise educational institutions, including the University, to the tune of \$7.5 million per annum.

Despite this generous contribution to local academic coffers, little community spirit is demonstrated by the University. In our long-running campaign with the State Government and City Council to acquire the vacant Kathleen Syme Centre (Cnr Faraday & Cardigan Streets), as a Community Centre/Library for Carlton, we face overwhelming competition from the University which claims the building for its proposed Knowledge Transfer and Childcare Centres (University Master Plan 2008).

Bike Hire in Carlton

On 31 May 2010, Roads Minister Pallas launched a bike hire scheme for Melbourne. The RACV has been contracted to operate it. The Scheme will cost \$5.5 million over 4 years; it provides 600 bikes docked at 50 stations around the City. Initially 3 docking stations were sited in Carlton: Lygon St.-Argyle Square, Faraday St.- Dorritt St., and Melbourne University-Tin Alley.



Bike Hire Station near Argyle Square

For an annual subscription of \$50, cyclists will gain keycard access to the bikes in 30 minute time blocks. Daily and weekly subscriptions are also available. Hired bikes can be returned to any docking station across the network.

On the face of it, the Bike Hire Scheme seems to be a good thing from transport and health viewpoints, which CRA supports. However compulsory helmet laws have significantly discouraged bike hire during the first couple of months of operation. The Government believes hirers will adapt to helmet regulations and expects popularity of the Scheme will improve over time. Tourists may have other ideas. For further information please see www.melbournebikeshare.com.au

CoRBA-Melbourne tackles the Minister for Planning

CoRBA (of which CRA is a member) met recently with the Minister for Planning, Justin Madden to express concerns felt throughout the municipality about his questionable planning processes. The meeting was triggered by Council calling upon community groups such as CRA to make submissions on the Council's Municipal Strategic Plan (MSS). This crucial MSS plan, if adopted, will shape the future of Carlton. Since Minister Madden 'holds all the cards' on planning in this State, he can (and does) override Council decisions. CoRBA sought information on the Brumby State Government's Strategic Plan. How would it align with the MSS? CoRBA quite reasonably argued, that before we all devote time to responding to the Council's MSS, the State Plan should be explained to us.

Essentially we acknowledged that we live in a capital city and there is the need to balance the imperatives of government with those of the constituents. CoRBA argued strongly that in recent years under the Brumby government, this balance has been lost.

We asked the Minister :

- **What is the current status of the Brumby government's own strategy document on planning in the municipality and when will it be released?** We await a response.
- **What is the Brumby government's justification for persistently overriding Council planning regulations and decisions?** Given the scale of most project developments in the capital city, the imposition of the \$5 million or 25,000 sq. metres ruling effectively quashes the rights of the residents and ratepayers in Melbourne in relation to planning decisions. Although the Minister has approved appointment of a new joint Council / State Govt Planning Advisory Group, it is merely advisory. Council representatives are out-numbered and, in any case, may only make recommendations to the Minister. We called on the Minister to re-think State government planning structures so as to genuinely reflect the views of ALL key stakeholders and respond *equitably* in the City of Melbourne.
- **What is the justification for continuing the State government's piecemeal approach to planning in the City of Melbourne?** The residents and ratepayers of the City of Melbourne are being disadvantaged in that the Brumby government has encouraged increased density without adequate investment in infrastructure to support this growth. We also argued that significant public land in our municipality is being periodically or permanently lost to the community at the whim of the Brumby government (e.g. Royal Park, Gosch's Paddock, Yarra Park, Carlton Gardens, privatisation of Office of Housing land, freeway access routes and venting stacks, etc).

We called upon the Minister to respect the rights of residents and ratepayers to retain all remaining meagre amounts of public open space. We argued that the

Minister should reinstate planning mechanisms which properly support comprehensive urban planning principles and respect the views of the community, and wrest planning decisions away from project developers.

Why is VCAT dysfunctional? We argued that the VCAT adversarial review system remains inadequate and inequitable in that it continues to favour those with deep pockets who can afford to engage various 'experts' and legal advice to support their submission. The residents and ratepayers of the City of Melbourne are faced with prohibitive levels of individual and/or community expenditure to argue cases at VCAT.

Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc. (PPL VIC)

Carlton Gardens - Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

This report on the 2010 Show in the Carlton Gardens was presented to Future Melbourne Committee 13 July 2010.

Dear Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc. members and friends.

As you may know, PPL VIC has, together with 4 inner city groups, conducted a campaign over the last 3 to 4 years opposing the location of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) in World Heritage listed South Carlton Gardens. This is on the grounds of ongoing damage to the significant trees and on the grounds of public safety, given that the old trees are subject to 'limb drop' and the Gardens are therefore unsafe for an exhibition venue being visited by over 100,000 people in under a week. It is unthinkable that our World Heritage Gardens should be used for private commercial purposes. It was very disappointing that none of the four other groups made a presentation or even sent a message to Councillors for the meeting.

At the Council meeting I quoted the report by David Callow of Land.Hort - 'Summary report for tree health and soil moisture monitoring program during the MIFGS 2010' - prepared for the City of Melbourne. He maintained that the 29 'indicator' trees were in good health. I used one example of a significant heritage tree - the Kaffir Plum - which our consultant arborist Mr. Rob Galbraith said is in irretrievable decline. The fact that the consultant was wrong over one tree casts his whole report in doubt. Cr Brian Shanahan spoke up in support of our argument saying that MIFGS should be moved to the Showgrounds and that MIFGS should be charged a significant fee.

The meeting finally resolved to confirm that the 2011 Show move 40% of its commercial activity to hard stand areas around the Royal Exhibition Building. This is some improvement. But we must ensure that the City of Melbourne properly mulch and irrigate the old trees in the Carlton Gardens to arrest their decline.

Regards

Julianne Bell
Secretary
Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc.
PO Box 197
Parkville 3052

Kathleen Syme Centre – Matthew Guy joins the campaign

CRA has lobbied the Member for Melbourne, Hon Bronwyn Pike, over several years for the Council to acquire KSC as Community Centre/Library for Carlton. She has sent us to other State ALP Ministers. CRA sought, but was denied appointments with all Ministers, including Premier Brumby. We were, however, granted two extended appointments with Shadow Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy MLC. He made several helpful suggestions on how to advance the cause. He raised the future of the Kathleen Syme Centre during the Legislative Council Adjournment Debate on 27 July 2010. The following is the Hansard record of his contribution:

'My adjournment issue tonight is for the Minister for Health and concerns the future of the Kathleen Syme Centre in Carlton.

Carlton is a suburb that houses many people from varied backgrounds. It has a major hospital, a major university, is a major tourist precinct and many businesses are based there, but incredibly Carlton does not have that basic community element that many other established suburbs have - that is, a municipal hall.

Carlton residents believe they have found the solution to this absence of a dedicated community meeting space in the suburb - namely, the Kathleen Syme Centre on the corner of Faraday Street and Cardigan Street; it is one block back from Lygon Street and a block back - the other way - from Swanston Street.

As I have stated, Carlton does not have a town hall or municipal hall, so for the thousands of people who call one of our oldest suburbs home, there is no central focal point for community activities or community interaction. The presence of a community space or a community hall - members can call it a town hall if they like - would be a terrific asset for a suburb whose population is rapidly changing and growing. The mix of long-term residents, new residents and the growing number of families and Victorian students and overseas students creates a huge mix in the local population base. A community meeting space would serve this community well.

The Kathleen Syme Centre is a beautiful building. It is perfectly located and was the first primary school in Carlton. It was ceded to the Department of Health in 1972 and will become available again in 2011, thus presenting an opportunity to acquire this building for our community for the future.

Importantly, the City of Melbourne has thrice stated it wants to acquire the building for this specific use as well as for a new library in the belief that a tool library, toy library, visitor centre, business incubator, arts incubator, meeting space and space for child and maternal health as well as mothers' groups could all happen at this location.

Credit goes to Cr Peter Clark from the City of Melbourne for again moving a motion to state this on 27 April this year to again reaffirm council's determination to provide a community space for Carlton.

Unfortunately there is one roadblock, and it is big. It is called the Brumby Labor government. Despite previous promises to provide a town hall for Carlton, Labor has done a Scoresby and backflipped. Despite the community

wanting the site, the obvious demand and need for it and council offering to pay the recurrent costs of its upkeep, Labor steadfastly refuses to come to the party.

It is a potent symbol of Labor's ongoing neglect of the inner city. It is a potent reminder to all residents in Carlton that Labor takes the inner suburbs for granted. It is a reminder to all inner city Melbournians that if you want to be heard, Labor is not listening.

Tonight I call upon the Minister for Health to do the right thing and begin the process of managing the ownership transfer of this site to the City of Melbourne."

Eddington is back!

In 2008, vocal community opposition to the \$10 billion East-West roads and tunnel project, proposed by Sir Rod Eddington, forced the Brumby State Government to shelve this controversial plan (*Newsflash*, Winter 2008). In early 2009 the Government announced its new \$38 billion, 25 year, *Victorian Transport Plan* (*Newsflash*, Summer 2009), followed by its *Transport Facilitation Bill* (*Newsflash*, Spring 2009).

All this Government activity ensured community protest would not again stymie its massive roads and tunnel proposals, now back on the agenda. These proposals are being aggressively sold to a sceptical community via a \$5.5 million advertising campaign: 'It's part of the Plan'. While the Plan includes a mix of roads and public transport initiatives, it is clear that roads projects will take precedence, e.g. the \$5 billion *Westlink* freeway, despite the urgent need for improved public transport across the metropolitan train, tram and bus networks.

On 12 July, 2010, as Premier Brumby addressed the assembled 300 'transport stakeholders' at a publicly funded luncheon, a number of residents in Footscray and Yarraville (in safe ALP seats) learned, via the media, that their homes would be compulsorily acquired for major road and rail projects. A \$20 million Salvation Army Aged Care Facility, under construction, is also impacted. There had been no meaningful community consultation prior to the announcement. It came as a shock to residents.

Of major concern to CRA is that, once *Westlink* is in place, there will be irresistible pressure to continue it through to Clifton Hill, via Kensington, Royal Park and Carlton, as a 'missing link' in the Eddington East-West road and tunnel plan. Many traffic studies, e.g. *Melbourne Transport Strategy, 2008*, have shown major vehicular flows are to the CBD, necessitating ramp access points to the tunnel, which will have major impacts on properties on Alexandra Pde and nearby. Exhaust stacks will be required to ventilate the tunnel. VicRoads keeps such plans strictly confidential.

Given recent experience in the Footscray area, we can expect minimal consultation and massive impacts, including in Royal Park. The Government is being very careful in its announcements of longer-term transport plans in the run-up to the State Election. For further information on likely local impacts please see www.ycat.org.au and www.royalparkprotect.org.au

Planning Reference Group News

At the beginning of each month, the CRA's planning sub-committee meets to consider the previous month's planning applications for the 3053 postcode area. The committee is particularly alert to the following:

- overlooking or any other loss of amenity to neighbouring properties
- loss of amenity to the wider surrounding area (bulk, aesthetics, car parking)
- whether the application complies with the council's heritage overlay and height restrictions
- internal amenity (chiefly in multi-dwelling developments)
- whether the proposed development threatens residential diversity (e.g. oversupply of student housing)

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/BuildingandPlanning/Planning/Pages/PlanningRegisterSearch.aspx>

Summary

Since the last *Newsflash*, the Planning Sub-Committee has reviewed 20 Planning Applications for Carlton, and submitted 3 objections to the City of Melbourne. (**May:** 12 Applications; 2 objections **June:** 8 Applications, 1 objection) – details are given below.

APP No./ ADDRESS	DETAILS OF WORK/CRA INTEREST
TP-2010-318 / 73-77 Cardigan Street CARLTON VIC 3053	Construction of twelve-storey, mixed-use development comprising 57 dwellings, 2 retail tenancies, reduction in car parking requirements and waiver of loading bay requirements CRA Grounds of Objection: height - over-development of site; car parking - visitor parking not addressed; heritage - abuts heritage buildings.
TP-2010-319 / 69-71 Drummond Street CARLTON VIC 3053	Redevelopment of existing buildings, refurbishment works including basement level CRA Grounds of Objection: parking - no parking provided; amenity - replicates student housing but not acknowledged in application; height - out of scale with existing building; heritage - represents a building form that is conspicuously absent in the Drummond Street setting.
TP-2010-422 / 141 Barry Street CARLTON	Part demolition of existing building and construction of 10-storey student accommodation facility with food and drink premises at ground floor level and car parking to Council's satisfaction. CRA Grounds of Objection: amenity - access to daylight, space in private and common areas, bike storage; height - exceeds Carlton South height limit; heritage - does not achieve the 'partial concealment' required of new additions to a Heritage Streetscape.

The Melbourne Strategic Statement :

A submission has been made on behalf of CRA but submissions expressing individual concerns can also be made. The following questions might be raised in terms of the relevance of the MSS to these issues.

- What changes to height limits are proposed? Are we dealing in 'metres' or 'storeys' and how high is too high?
- What changes to Residential zoning are proposed?
- Are we pro-density in Carlton without improved infrastructure?
- Are all building 'conversions' desirable and what controls should be in place?
- Precisely what constitutes public open space in Carlton? Do we have enough? Should the Cemetery really qualify as recreational space in the equation?

- Is it really advantageous to Carlton that Melbourne University acquire more and more property (especially since they don't pay rates) and do we need more student housing?
- What support does our Council plan to give to heritage buildings?

Information about the MSS is available at www.Melbourne.vic.gov.au/mss.

Refer also to the article in *Newsflash* Autumn 2010 issue. This can be found on the CRA website

www.carltonresidents.org.au

Submissions close 3 September.

Planning register online:

The City of Melbourne has made a change to the format of the **Planning Register Online**

<<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=81&pg=829>> and **Weekly List**.

The change means that all of an applicant's personal details will no longer appear.

Council has made this change to comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*. Publishing personal information online (without informed consent from the individuals concerned) may breach the Privacy Act.

The City of Melbourne will continue to provide Planning Application details in a form prescribed in Section 49(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* for free. To inspect (view only) a copy of applications in the prescribed form, you can visit Level 3, 240 Lt Collins Street, Melbourne during office hours.

If you require clarification about this change or additional information about the **Planning Register Online** <<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=81&pg=829>>, please contact Hugh Kilgower, Business Support Coordinator on 9658 8514.

PCCC meeting

The following key points were discussed at the June meeting:

- The Safe City Camera Program in the city had just been expanded from 23 to 54 cameras, at a running cost of \$750,000 annually. Unfortunately at this time the cost of expanding the number of cameras in Carlton is very expensive.
- Speed Red Light Camera for Lygon Street is not likely in the short term as the current evidence does not suggest that accidents were caused by motorists speeding, or disobeying traffic control signals
- Pedestrian lights timing should be investigated.
- Cyclist safety information is needed and could be placed around new bike stations.
- Inspector Ross introduced himself as the Victoria Police Inspector responsible for overseeing police in the Carlton and the soon-to-be Melbourne North policing response zone.
- The new North Melbourne Police station is due to open its doors on the 16 August 2010. The previous day, 15 August, has been set down as a community



open day, which Nick Parissis (Community Liaison Officer) will be organising. An additional 10 Constables/Senior Constables, as well as two Sergeant positions will also be created to boost the numbers.

- Ramadan soccer tournament will take place during August and September. The program will be a partnership between Vic Police, Drum Youth Services and Carlton YMCA and will involve an indoor soccer tournament at the Carlton Baths sports centre, every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday night from 11:00pm and 2:00am.
- Concerns continue about preventing crime in the Carlton area.

Community News

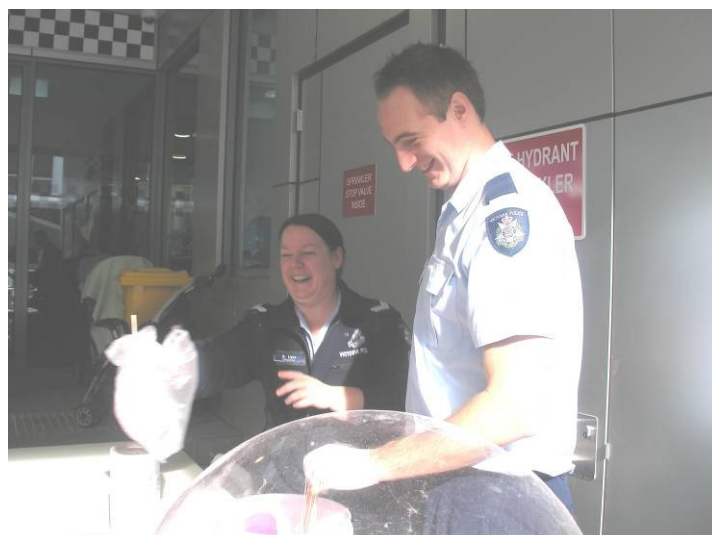
• New 'Opportunities for Carlton' website

Mary Palfrey reports that the Opportunities for Carlton, Carlton Together, Carlton website sub-group has employed a website developer Peter Leman, and he has commenced working on the website. It can be seen at www.carlton.vic.au.

• Carlton Conversations at the Clare

The Church of All Nations has launched a cultural program called Australia Dreaming. Its first offering is a series of 'conversations' with notable public figures exploring 'What I believe and why'. These take place on the **third Thursday of the month** at the Clare Castle Hotel on the corner of Palmerston and Rathdowne Streets, where some very good pub grub and brain food are on offer for \$25 a head. The first one hosted Michelle Foster, a refugee lawyer from Melbourne Law School (see following article). In subsequent months, we'll hear from disability advocate Rhonda Galbally (19 August), peace activist Rev. Simon Moyle (16 Sept), historian and philosopher of science Kristian Camilleri (21 Oct), and Indigenous musician Jessie Lloyd (18 Nov). Bookings: 0423 407 499 or australiadreaming@carlton-uca.org

• New police station opens (Photos below)



'Conversation' with refugee lawyer, Michelle Foster

The first of the 'Carlton Conversations at the Clare' was with Michelle Foster, a refugee lawyer from Melbourne Law School. She was in conversation with Melbourne Uni chaplain Wes Campbell, who interviewed her about her background and upbringing and what led her to become a legal academic passionately defending the wretched of the earth who find precious little sympathy in contemporary Australia.



Michelle Foster—Refugee Lawyer

Foster described herself as naturally optimistic, which contributes to her staying power. Her hopes were raised with the advent of the Rudd Government and its efforts to reverse some of the immigration policies of the Howard years – such as the Pacific Solution and Temporary Protection Visas – which had made Australia an 'international pariah'.

But her expectations were far from fulfilled. Mandatory detention continues, and the thousands of off-shore islands which the Howard Government 'excised' from Australia's international legal obligations remain rights-free zones for anyone washing up there.

Dr Foster painted a vivid picture of Australia as almost alone in a region of non-signatories to the *Refugee Convention*, explaining why refugees who make it to Indonesia are afforded no protection there; no status or support, no means of making a new life. They venture on to a country purporting to uphold their human rights.

Most Australians do not appreciate that the vast majority of asylum seekers arrive by plane, not boat, and live peaceably in the community awaiting determination of their claim. It is a breach of the *Refugee Convention* to penalise them on the mode of their arrival. However they arrive, most are eventually accorded refugee status and their total number is dwarfed by other categories of immigration. 'Boat people' should simply not figure in the population debate.

And so Michelle Foster's struggle continues: defending the *Refugee Convention* from its critics, and inspiring a new generation of law students with her vision of a decent and just world in which people fleeing persecution are met with compassion and protection.

Elgin and Lygon St Intersection. Not a pretty sight or site - in fact - Urban Blight!

We get more than our fair share of both commercial and gratuitous public service signage in Carlton. As a major 'gateway' to the CBD and heavy traffic flow to the CBD, much of this visual blight signage reflects the need to manage traffic. The volume of traffic also attracts high-visibility billboards along major routes. There is 'destination' signage directed at tourists, real estate signage touting new developments, Melbourne University and RMIT buildings are smothered with promotional signage.

Our Council compounds the signage blight by adding a plethora of parking signage, street information 'features' and completely superfluous signage advising folks driving up Lygon St. that they are entering Melbourne!

Much of the signage is attached to poles. And we have a forest of those! The outrageously ugly intersection of Lygon and Elgin is a 'hot spot' in terms of 'poles'.

There are between 31 and 35 separate poles/signs/ at this intersection depending on your definition! Count them.

CRA has lobbied Council in the past to improve this intersection. We have been spectacularly unsuccessful. We suggested a roundabout (trams could run through it as in Elizabeth St.), re-locating the bus stop from the Lygon St. island to Elgin St, reducing traffic speeds between Princes St. and Lygon St., erecting a monument or art work, and a serious 'culling' of the many poles.

While Council readily acknowledges that all of the CRA criticism regarding the intersection is valid, nothing has been done to rectify the problems – with one exception! You will have noticed last March the installation of a very fancy 'pole'. This illumination 'feature' in the middle of Lygon St., on a bus stop island (which we wanted moved in any case), is still not operational and is awaiting an official opening in September!

In the past, VicRoads has been cited as the stumbling block preventing improvements to the intersection. We have been advised that the roads are, in fact, the responsibility of the City of Melbourne and that VicRoads is merely responsible for the signals and that the bus stop island has not been shifted because of operator resistance to the proposal.

CRA is pursuing the matter with the City of Melbourne and has requested that serious and urgent attention be paid to fixing this obvious problem in Carlton.

