



THE CARLTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.

# NEWSFLASH

December 2025

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December 2025

## A Message from the President—Trish O’Loughlin



Dear Friends and Neighbours,

As we come to the end of another busy and fulfilling year, we are proud to reflect on how we have continued to live out our values of **Contribution, Communication, and Connection**. Thank you to everyone who has supported the CRA throughout 2025 — whether by attending an event, lending expertise, or simply staying informed and engaged. Together, we make Carlton stronger.

### **Carlton Conversations**

Our most recent Carlton Conversations gathering was a tremendous success — a lively dinner upstairs at Jimmy Watson’s, followed by an entertaining and insightful talk from Nigel, Jimmy’s grandson, who shared history, humour and community spirit in equal measure. A wonderful night out!

### **Full House for the History Walk**

Our local History Walk was completely booked out, with residents and visitors alike spilling into the streets to enjoy a fascinating tour led by our brilliant local historian. It’s clear that Carlton’s stories continue to inspire and unite our community.

### **Heritage & Planning – Staying Vigilant**

Heritage and planning matters remain at the heart of our advocacy:

- Members of the Committee, along with local community leaders, met with the **Hon. Ellen Sandell** to request she raise questions at the Victorian Government Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Hearings, particularly around the \$8.9 million allocated for maintenance and repairs that appears unaccounted for. We will continue to seek transparency and outcomes.
- We also met recently with a new MP, **Sarah Witty MP**, at her Johnson Street office to discuss Heritage protections and the Draft Strategy Plan for the Royal Exhibition Building. We remain deeply concerned about timelines and the path to implementation, and we will keep working hard for a clear, community-focused result.
- At the Melbourne Futures Committee meeting, CRA lodged a submission opposing the proposal at 43 MacKenzie Street, and Council agreed not to support it. A huge relief, and a win for Carlton’s heritage fabric.

### **Strengthening Community Connections**

We have stepped up our outreach this year — engaging more frequently and proactively with residents, local representatives, and organisations. Building these relationships is a core focus for us moving into 2026.

**Spot Us in the New Carlton Directory!** Did you see our fabulous full-page “Welcome to Carlton” spread? A warm greeting to newcomers and a proud celebration of this diverse, dynamic neighbourhood we all love.

### **CRA Celebrates!**

The CRA Christmas celebration, held on Monday 8 December, once again at La Mama, always provides a chance to unwind, share festive cheer, and look forward to the year ahead together. And La Mama is looking forward to a brilliant 2026. Our thanks to La Mama for hosting this event in the forecourt.

Thank you once again for your passion, your input, and your presence. Carlton thrives because of its people, because of you.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a bright start to 2026,  
Trish O’Loughlin, President

**CRA AGM Monday 16 February 2026**  
**The Studio Melbourne Connect**  
**6.00pm to 7.15pm**

## Working Groups

### Planning: Heritage

#### Letter from CRA to the Lord Mayor and Councillors September 2025

**Subject: The Carlton Heritage Review Am C405 – Unfinished Business regarding Statements of Significance**

In a recent issue of *Planning Matters*, the State Department of Transport and Planning announced the Gazettal of Planning Scheme Amendment C405. It was published on the 24 July 2025, [Melbourne C405melb](#). From our review of this latest Heritage Amendment, the Carlton community has been left with significant gaps in the detailed assessment of important and valued heritage places.

**Given the important contribution that our historic buildings, streetscapes and squares make to our community, the Carlton Residents Association requests a meeting with Councillors and Officers responsible for the heritage portfolio, to clarify further work both currently underway and planned by the City in this important policy area. In the Association's opinion the recognition and protection of our Significant Heritage sites requires the availability of current and comprehensive Statements of Significance for all these sites.**

In this letter, we outline some of the key matters which we believe require further work. It is our hope that the Council will acknowledge that the Heritage area remains a contested policy area, and that we as members of the respected community group Carlton Residents Association may be given the opportunity to articulate matters requiring further consideration, including the following:

1. Although the lead Heritage Consultant was NOT required (in the initial stages of this ten year heritage review) to assess those heritage places that were previously accorded State Significance (A) or Regional Significance (B), in our view, these assessments are still required.
2. Members of the Carlton community would be shocked to learn that significant and much respected heritage places like **King and Godfree, Jimmy Watson's** and the **former Post Office** in Elgin Street, along with hundreds of other Significant Heritage Places, have NOT been provided with the key assessment document: a **Statement of Significance**.
3. More specifically, the Carlton Heritage Review [C405] has delivered LESS than forty new Citations for the existing and proposed Heritage Overlays in Carlton. Given that the Carlton Heritage Overlay HO1 includes approximately 580 significant heritage places [Council's Pt B Submission to the Panel Hearing (p 25) 30 Sept 2022] the Carlton community has been left with a serious shortfall of **the** key assessment tool.
4. This lack of site-specific Statements of Significance was one of the key findings from the experienced Am C258 Panel Members:
  - 4.1.1. *There was concern ... about the lack of site-specific Statements for properties within a precinct, particularly now the 'assessed significance' of a place will be a key consideration in dealing with applications for demolition, alterations and new buildings. It was considered the lack of information as to what, how and why a place is significant will make them particularly vulnerable to demolition or unsympathetic alterations / additions.*
  - 4.1.2. *The Panel particularly supports, inter alia: the need to segment the large diverse precincts of Carlton and South Yarra in future work so as to better define the values of the areas in separate Statements of Significance.*
5. Sadly, from Carlton's perspective, this further work was not undertaken.
6. It gets worse. About 63% of the 1566 graded heritage places recorded in the latest Heritage Places Inventory will possess even less heritage protection on account of their **Contributory Status**; these places will, for the most part, never be provided with a **Statement of Significance**. Contributory heritage places, under the revised grading system, are not individually important; that is, they possess **no importance in their own right**. Currently, a contributory heritage place is only important for its *contribution* to a heritage precinct.
7. The decision by the Council [and the Consultant for the Carlton Review] to adopt the NEW Grade of Contributory as the **default conversion outcome for the former "C" and "D" letter graded heritage places** was, and remains, a very contentious decision for the Carlton community. We need to

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remember that many of the much valued heritage places, including the **La Mama Theatre** [Faraday Street]; the former **Carlton Creche** [Neill Street] and the **John Curtin Hotel** were never accorded a heritage grading higher than “C” under the old grading system. **Yet, these SAME heritage places were subsequently re-assessed to be of State Significance, and are now recorded on the Victorian Heritage Register.**

8. Finally, the demonstrably different ways in which different consultants [retained by the city] have approached the Grading Conversion task has never been acknowledged. **In the West Melbourne Heritage Review, almost all of the former “C” Graded Heritage Places translated to the new Significant Grade; whereas in the Carlton Heritage Review, most of the former “C” Places converted to the new Contributory Grade.** That is, Heritage Places that once shared the SAME level of heritage significance, have now, under the new system, “acquired” a different level of significance depending upon where they are located, that is, Carlton or West Melbourne. **We look forward to speaking with you soon to clarify these issues and explore possible ways forward.**

**CoM**

## Nick Reece Lord Mayor of Melbourne writes

### Portfolios:

Infrastructure, Deputy: Finance, Governance and Risk, Aboriginal Melbourne

Whether it’s the beautiful parks and gardens or the hustle and bustle of Lygon Street, there is always something happening in Carlton. As we approach the warmer months and roll into the new year, there’s truly never a better time to enjoy the area - here’s a few recent initiatives around Carlton that you might be interested in.

### Parkville Station

It’s nearly here! After years of digging and disruptions, the new Parkville metro tunnel will open at the bottom end of Grattan Street.

This important link will allow students and health workers to easily navigate to Carlton, and serves as a great way for visitors and residents to venture into the city.

I received a sneak peek in the past few months, and I can’t wait for everyone else to experience this amazing new addition to the area.

### Greening Carlton

One of my great passions as Lord Mayor is growing Melbourne into Australia’s Garden City. The City of Melbourne’s Carlton Urban Forest Precinct Plan 2025-2035 was developed with the community and was formally endorsed by the Future Melbourne Committee earlier this year.

Our Urban Forest Team are now working on implementing year one of the plan, which guides tree planting in streets over a 10-year period. We are prioritising streets with low canopy cover that have not had any new trees planted recently, including sections of Swanston, Victoria, Bouverie and Station Streets, as well as the entirety of Pelham Street.

### Footpaths

As you move around Carlton over the coming weeks, you might notice a few new and improved footpaths along Lygon Street. Council has been busy upgrading 88,000 sqm of pavers as part of our footpath improvement program, making it safer and easier for residents and visitors to get around the area.

Works have also included curb replacements, upgrades to street furniture, enlarging tree plots, replacing the porous paving at the base of the trees and rebuilding access ramps – making a greener and more accessible Carlton for all.

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*Cr Nick Reece Lord Mayor of Melbourne*

*Continued from page 4*

### **Community safety**

Community safety is a key priority at the City of Melbourne, and we want everyone to feel safe and welcome as they make their way around Carlton. Last year, we heard the concerns of several traders and residents about a rise of anti-social incidents around the Lygon Street precinct.

As part of a citywide safety initiative, we have introduced a new team of Community Safety Officers – or CSOs. These CSOs are experienced professionals who provide a visible and consistent safety presence across the city and are trained to respond to antisocial behaviour using de-escalation and negotiation techniques to keep people safe.

Our CSOs will be patrolling in groups of two or three intermittently around Lygon Street. Make sure to stop and say hey if you see them around. They are a great bunch!

### **Safe City Camera Network Expansion**

The City of Melbourne is also looking to expand and upgrade the Safe City Camera Network, which previously rolled out on Lygon Street in 2024. The proposed overhaul would see a further 100 cameras added to the Safe City Camera Network, helping to deter crime and support 24/7 emergency response where necessary.

These cameras have been highly effective in supporting security efforts and providing peace of mind for residents, visitors and businesses in the area.

### **Melbourne City Baths**

Did you know the City of Melbourne is bringing back \$2 swims at all council pools this summer? Beat the heat, stay active and save money this summer at Melbourne City Baths – including Carlton Baths and the iconic City Baths on Swanston Street – with gold coin entry available ALL SUMMER for all City of Melbourne residents!

As we head into summer and embrace the longer evenings and warmer weather, now is the perfect time to start thinking about water safety. That's why we're expanding our free beginner swimming lessons for up to 600 City of Melbourne residents in January at both City Baths and the newly-opened Kensington Aquatic and Recreation Centre, helping you and your family stay safe this summer.

Keep your eyes peeled to City of Melbourne's website and social channels in the coming months as we roll out all the details.

## **Cr Gladys Liu—Councillor CoM writes**

**Portfolios:** Community and City Services, Deputy: Safety and Cleaning



**Cr. Liu**

It's been a year since my election to City of Melbourne, and I'd like to share my priorities for my time in Council with you.

Carlton holds a special place in my heart. It was where I lived as an international student 40 years ago. Back then, it offered everything I needed – beautiful parks, great food and a welcoming community. I'm pleased to see those qualities remain today.

### **Reflecting on one year in Council**

As Portfolio Head for Community, Health and City Services, I'm proud of progress in these areas through initiatives like the Grow Together gardening workshops at Kathleen Syme Library, improving the lighting around Carlton Gardens' basketball courts, playground and picnic area, \$2 Pool Splash in Carlton Baths, and quick waste and graffiti removal. Serving on the Homelessness and Disability Advisory Committees and the board of Invest Melbourne has allowed me to bring insight and guidance into Council discussions to deliver real benefits for everyone in our community.

Having lived with a disability all through my life – a complete unilateral hearing loss – coupled with English as my second language, I understand the challenges different people are facing every day. Being in local government has given me the opportunity to balance different priorities and long-term planning with building community resilience and delivering essential services.

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My personal experience as a single mother and now living on my own as well as coming to a new country as an international student earlier in life, encouraged me to bring addressing loneliness and mental wellbeing to the table. Seeing collaboration between Council, community groups and residents deliver positive change has been inspiring and fulfilling.

I welcome the [Council Plan 2025-2029](#) and its link to the M2050 Vision, focusing on health, wellbeing and inclusion. Currently, City of Melbourne is ranked second most Inclusive City and fourth most Livable City in the world. I'm committed to work that makes us the best and strengthens community connections, creates opportunities and ensures residents feel supported.

Let me share with you some of the Council initiatives in Carlton:

**Improving physical health and wellbeing**

As a fitness instructor, I'm passionate about giving people opportunities to improve their health. We are running a pilot program offering free fitness classes in parks across the city, including Tai Chi in Princes Park on Sunday 14 December at 9am. All fitness levels are welcome – register at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/freefitness](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/freefitness).

**Coming together for food security**

The Carlton Collaboration (a partnership between the City of Melbourne, University of Melbourne and the Carlton Community Network) has identified food security as a major concern. Together, we are developing a five-year Food Security Action Plan to transform how we respond to hunger. For more information, please contact your Neighbourhood Partner Nas, at [nas.mohamud@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:nas.mohamud@melbourne.vic.gov.au).

**Connected Neighbourhood Grants**

Community organisations and individuals can access small grants for projects that build connection and inclusion. Melbourne City Council is proud to support some recent Carlton programs, including La Mama Festival of Mother Tongues, Carlton Neighbourhood and Learning Centre Men's Group, and the Community Cooking Club. Learn more at [melbourne.vic.gov.au/neighbourhood-grants](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/neighbourhood-grants).

**Upgrading Lygon Street footpaths**

We're upgrading the Lygon Street footpath, replacing the tired asphalt with new bluestone between Queensberry and Elgin Streets. This work will be delivered in sections. The first took place in early 2025 on the eastern side of Lygon Street between Queensberry and Pelham streets. The second will take place on the western side of Lygon Street between Queensberry Street and Argyle Place South.

I look forward to meeting more of you during my time as Councillor, and encourage you to get in touch with me at [gladys.liu@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:gladys.liu@melbourne.vic.gov.au) if you have a question or something you'd like to raise.

Wishing you a restful and enjoyable Christmas period with family and friends.

## Topical Issues

### Speed reduction survey Lygon Street

City of Melbourne is planning to undertake a pedestrian safety and walkability study in Carlton in the next 12-18 months.

The study will include engagement with the local community and analysis of transport data to understand pedestrian and vehicle movements. The study will aim to identify opportunities for pedestrian and road safety improvements which will be programmed for implementation over the coming years.

Similar studies have recently been undertaken in Kensington and [North Melbourne pedestrian safety and walkability neighbourhood study](#).

Consideration will be given to installing speed reduction treatments along Lygon Street as part of the study, subject to future funding.

**Alex Gorelik** | Senior Transport Engineer | City Infrastructure | Infrastructure and Amenity |



## A Tribute to Allan Watson and a Look at Politics Past

### Red wine and politics

Words by Martin Brennan,

Vice President, Carlton Residents Association

As I enjoyed a midday glass of red at the launch of 'Allan Watson', celebrating the life and times of former Lord Mayor of Melbourne and owner of the iconic Jimmy Watson's in Lygon Street, Carlton, I was reminded of times past as an elected Melbourne City councillor and the future of democracy in this City.

The iconic Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar goes back 90 years when Jimmy Watson opened Melbourne's first wine bar in 1935. He became synonymous with red wine through the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy Award. Allan has been 'mine host' for over 60 years welcoming patrons and many friends into the inner sanctum of Jimmy Watson's. Allan assumed this role and responsibility following the death of his father in 1962 and took on the role with passion and commitment.

Standing on the step into the wine bar Allan is a well known identity on Lygon Street. He has seen many come over the years, including business and community leaders, film and media celebrities plus political leaders of both red and blue persuasion.

Jimmy Watson's is a place for both red wine and politics!

Allan was a Melbourne City Council tragic! He first stood for council in 1970 as an endorsed Labor candidate but was unsuccessful. But undeterred he stood in 1973 as an independent in a city ward and was duly elected.



*Allan Watson with Martin Brennan*

At the launch former Age journalist Lawrence Money, paid tribute to Allan and the Watson legacy and reminded us that Allan was the shortest serving Lord Mayor having been dismissed along with all councillors in 1993. Like Allan I remember the dismissal in 1993 well.

As the clock ticked past midnight at my home on September 28, 1993 the council provided fax machine, delivered my dismissal notice as a councillor.

The Melbourne City Council was the first cab off the local government rank for the Kennett campaign of reform and retribution. Boundaries were redrawn to excise North Carlton and large swathes of North Melbourne and Kensington from the municipality, the council was reduced to 9 councillors with only 4 single member wards and 5 councillors elected at large, postal voting only and 2 votes for business.

There is much to be written on the intervening years of complicity by both Liberal and Labor governments in supporting a gerrymander and undemocratic electoral provisions that continue to ignore the interests and needs of residents and small traders.

And yes I did vote for Cr Watson as Lord Mayor back in 1993. We mistakenly thought that Kennett could not sack the son and owner of Jimmy Watson's.

Since 1993 reform of the City of Melbourne Act has seen Premiers, Lord Mayors and councillors tight lipped and evasive whilst community concern over the past 3 decades has become ever more vocal. The last Council election solicited support for reform of the City of Melbourne Act by Lord Mayoral candidates including the current Lord Mayor.

But the current Council has been slow and some would say complicitous in maintaining the status quo. In June the Council belatedly and unenthusiastically passed a resolution calling for the State Government to review the Act. It was a bare majority. The Minister for Local Government has failed to respond and it would appear he too would have voted against a review.

The CRA continues to support a review of the City of Melbourne Act and the electoral provisions and calls on the Minister to announce the schedule and terms of reference There should be an open and transparent review of the Act.



## Ellen Sandell State MP for Melbourne writes

### Victoria's historic Treaty with First peoples is here!



*Greens MP for Melbourne, Ellen Sandell with First People's Assembly Co-Chairs Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta, Dhudhuroa and Dja Dja Wurrung woman Ngarra Murray and Gunditjmara man Rueben Berg*

After decades of leadership from First Nations people, Victoria finally has a Treaty with our First People. This is an Australia-first.

In my 11 years in Parliament, voting for the Treaty, and being at the historic official signing, was one of my proudest moments. Bringing my children into Parliament to see the legislation pass, and be part of the smoking ceremony, was something I know they will always remember too.

As a Victorian I am proud that we are the first State to take this important step forward and I hope that other states, territories, and the Federal Government will be encouraged to pursue their own Treaty processes.

So, what does the Treaty Bill actually do?

The *Statewide Treaty Bill 2025* makes the First Peoples' Assembly permanent, as part of a new First Nations body called **Gellung Warl** (Gunaikurnai language).

Gellung Warl will play a vital role in our state and will have powers to decide on things like Aboriginal place-naming and cultural practices, support truth-telling education in our schools, and host events like NAIDOC Week. It will also have the power to question Ministers directly, holding them accountable on key commitments such as Closing the Gap.

Importantly, the Treaty ensures the First Peoples' Assembly must be consulted by the state government on any legislation affecting Aboriginal people, because Treaty is about self-determination, and when it comes to Aboriginal

communities, cultures, and lands, the experts have always been Aboriginal people.

As a mum of three young kids I am so thankful that my children will grow up in a State that has a Treaty with First People. First Nations people have invited all Victorians to walk together with them in this journey to Treaty, to celebrate and share in the oldest continuous living culture in the world. What an incredible and generous gift.

If you have any questions about what Treaty is, or what it will do, as always you can get in touch with my office - [office@ellensandell.com](mailto:office@ellensandell.com)

## Your Carlton Resident's Association

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