



The Carlton Residents Association Inc.

A0034345G ABN 87 716 923 898

10th Annual General Meeting, 20th February 2006

Acting-President's Report

A major challenge for CRA this year was the resignation in May of Sue Chambers following her decade long role as President. Sue had worked tirelessly on behalf of CRA in the interests of the Carlton community across a vast range of issues, in particular in the areas of planning and development, and the publication of "*Carlton, a History*". We formally farewelled Sue and Don Chambers (who was our Heritage Consultant) at our Christmas Party, and acknowledged the exemplary contributions both have made to Carlton.

Sue's resignation was unexpected and unplanned. It required me as Vice-President to act as President without preparation, trusting that someone else would take on the position permanently. I was faced with immediate issues of architectural heritage, streetscape, town planning, controversial transport, traffic and car parking, unscrupulous developers, equally unscrupulous arms of government, endless meetings, planning hearings – all too vital to let slide. Additionally there is ongoing pressure to generate ideas, report writing, negotiating with bureaucrats and politicians on a wide range of issues.

CRA is fortunate to have a deeply committed membership, which has allowed the development and empowerment of sub-committees to broaden the intellectual input and to spread the workload. There is now far less emphasis on the office of President.

Many issues face the Carlton Community. Heritage is under constant challenge from developers and those with short-term profit motives. CRA members play a vital role challenging this. Our diverse community and historic streetscapes are our strengths.

CRA Committees and representation with local Community Groups are currently:

Committee: Greta Bird (Acting-President), Jackie Watts (Vice President, Minutes Secretary), Anne Ritter (Membership Secretary), Warren Green (Treasurer), Murray Dovey, and Robyn Dalziel

Planning and Heritage: Robyn Dalziel, Murray Dovey, Warren Green, Victoria Hamer, Dennis Toth, Greta Bird. There is vacancy for someone with heritage knowledge.

Carlton Local Agencies Network (CLAN): Greta Bird, Jackie Watts

Carlton Gardens Group: Anne Ritter

Heritage Advisory Committee: Anne Ritter

Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC): Peter Allen

Public Housing Redevelopment: Jackie Watts, Greta Bird

Traffic and Transport: Ian Bird, Neil Poole

Liaison Officer between the University of Melbourne and CRA

Professor Loane Skeen is providing a communication link sorely lacking in the past.

Newsflash/Newsletter Editor: Vacant

Webmaster: Vacant

CRA COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATION

Planning & Heritage

This sub-committee meets monthly and reviews planning applications for postcode 3053 – a vital task, as some developers push development envelopes without concern for community, heritage and streetscapes. Nevertheless, contrary to local perceptions, the Committee objects to less than a quarter of all planning applications. Objections are typically for extensions to existing dwellings which overlook neighbours, or are not respectful in form or materials to the heritage context, also to inappropriate signage and roof furniture.

Recent examples of planning objections include:

- a red Coca Cola advertisement was recently painted onto the entire Elgin St face of the Intersection Café (cr. Lygon & Elgin Sts). No planning permit had been sought. MCC has issued notice to have the sign removed and the previous heritage colour restored.
- redevelopment of Shakahari restaurant in Faraday St. The planning application was for an addition of two stories, four apartments, and waiving of parking requirements. CRA objected on heritage, streetscape, bulk and engineering grounds; MCC has rejected the application.
- Still pending is a decision on an application cr Drummond and University Sts, for conversion of the office building to a 6-storey complex of units. CRA and others objected on the basis of height, bulk, and waiving of parking requirements. MCC is currently seeking a legal opinion on building height. The applicant (Ron Walker) is using a possible legal loophole, in that the building's hipped roof is above the height restriction.
- 864 Swanston St: CRA (Don Chambers and Peter Sanders) was party to a successful appeal to VCAT against the applicant's proposal to demolish a c.1860's timber cottage of 'B' graded heritage significance in Level 1 heritage streetscape. Proposal to construct 2 and 3 storey student accommodation. Co-respondents with CRA were Melbourne University, Heritage Trust plus five private respondents. A valuable heritage home saved!
- The Lemon Tree Hotel: a VCAT appeal has been adjourned while an alternative application for a childcare facility is being discussed.

Carlton Local Agencies Network

CRA participates in this important local initiative, which provides a forum where local agencies and groups can share information, maximise the potential for residents to access local services, identify local issues, lobby, advocacy, coordination of services etc. CLAN is very active on the housing estate and those in need.

Heritage Advisory Committee

Provides advice in relation to a range of heritage matters including the formulation of new heritage policies and guidelines, the preparation of heritage studies, and specific major projects. Anne Ritter took over from Sue and Don Chambers in October, when a Heritage Precincts and Policy Review Project was nearing completion. Recent topics of discussion have been advertising on tram and bus shelters in heritage areas, and Consultancy Contracts Performance Assessments for Heritage Advisors.

Police Community Consultative Committee

Consults with circa 16 local community groups on a wide range of safety and crime prevention concerns. A current initiative is to encourage residents to organise a street party as a way to celebrate and get to know their neighbours. Funding is provided by MCC and includes insurance and equipment such as barbecues and gas bottles, first aid, safety, road closures, signs and barricades. An *Information Kit* is available on request.

Public Housing Estate Redevelopment

In an apparent attempt to draw attention away from the Commonwealth Games Village fiasco, Housing Minister Candy Broad announced the Government's intention to demolish about 200 old

walk-up public housing units in Rathdowne Street, and replace them with smaller modern apartments. The Government will pay a developer \$50 million, and include 45 units of “affordable” housing on the Queen Elizabeth site in Swanston Street, opposite Melbourne University. In a controversial deal, the Bracks Govt. will hand over four hectares of immensely valuable public housing land (estimated value \$20m) to a \$200m private development of 550 units to be sold for private profit.

It is important to note that there will be no net increase in public housing.

CRA is pro-actively seeking an increased input to the redevelopment at State level through the Office of Housing, and with MCC City Projects.

Traffic and Transport

Since Sue Chambers’ resignation, Ian Bird from CRA has represented the Coalition of Residents Association (CoRA) on the MCC Melbourne Transport Committee (MTC). The committee has an important role in the development of the Melbourne Transport Strategy. CRA’s response to the extensive draft strategy documentation was compiled by Neil Poole and Ian Bird. The strategy was generally in line with CRA expectations. However, last August a pet project of the roads lobby, a \$10 billion “big idea” roads and tunnel project to extend the Eastern Freeway to Deer Park, was pushed onto the agenda by the Committee for Melbourne. Several members of the MTC, including CoRA, successfully turned around this unsustainable proposal. The strategy is now centred around public transport, cycling and walking, and is open for comment on the Council’s website. The State Government has funding responsibility for major transport projects and it remains very pro-roads. We are in for challenging times on transport policy.

Carlton Car Parking

There are currently 2000 on-street parking spaces available to residents in Carlton and around 6000 resident owned vehicles to be parked. Residents living in houses built long before the advent of cars complained of lack of convenient parking space. Clearly we had a problem. The Council found it impossible to effectively police the previous parking regime, which was widely rorted and unsustainable. The new street car-parking regime, which MCC began introducing in July 2005, is similar to that already operating successfully in the City of Port Phillip. It aims to achieve equitable and sustainable car parking for Carlton. The issues had been widely discussed since 2002 at Community Forums attended by residents and traders, and in MCC brochures, CRA emails and newsletters. To date it appears to be working well and is receiving much praise and few complaints. The strategy is currently under review by MCC Consultants.

Heritage listed Carlton Gardens

The Carlton Gardens Group is seeking to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan for the World Heritage listed Carlton Gardens. This implementation is circumvented by extensive damage caused annually by the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, which in turn sets at risk the Garden’s heritage status. CRA, the Carlton Gardens Group, Residents 3000, East Enders, and others, objected to the commercial garden show being again held in the Gardens. MCC approved this event, despite being presented with photographic evidence of massive damage. Further, Council staff successfully lobbied Planning Minister Hulls to amend the Melbourne Planning Scheme for commercial events on public parkland to be approved without planning permission. This removes our democratic, third party appeal rights to VCAT!

CRA GENERAL ACTIVITIES

C60 Planning Amendment for the revised Municipal Strategic Statement has received Ministerial approval, however without the disability access for which we had campaigned in conjunction with Coalition of Residents Associations.

Res3 Zone is a ministerial amendment whereby Councils define limited areas within established suburbs for rezoning to a 9-meter maximum height limit. However, MCC will allow free reign for developers within areas where the Council considers heritage to have been substantially destroyed.

This policy takes no account of adjoining areas of high heritage value, or where nonconforming buildings exist. CRA joined the North & West Melbourne and the Parkville Associations in unproductive meetings with MCC Planners to address this inequitable and destructive situation.

Centrally located community meeting space/library

CRA continues to lobby strongly for this much needed facility in Carlton. Both Lord Mayor John So and Councillor David Wilson assure it is high on their list of priorities.

Greening of median strips

The University of Melbourne has offered its Eastern Precinct Cardigan St. underground car park for public use, excepting 72 spaces for unit owners. CRA took the opportunity to seek streetscape improvements around the high-rise student housing development by lobbying Council for greening of median strips on Faraday and Cardigan Sts next to the complex to soften its horrendous impact. Crs Catherine Ng and Fraser Brindley responded positively in support of this initiative through a feasibility study now in progress.

Lygon Street Plane Trees

You may have noted several press articles featuring demands by The Carlton Business Assn that the 180 plane trees in Lygon Street be removed because they drop pollen in spring and leaves in autumn. The headline was "Chop them down" (Herald Sun 13.1.06). Memories are short: twenty years ago eucalypts were removed because they lost foliage all year round. The Carlton Business Association has organized a petition to pressure MCC to remove the trees and replace about one-third with Olive trees or vines.

At the same time *Melbourne Leader* (11.1.06) published a survey of restaurant patrons praising the plane trees, their ambience, atmosphere, shade, beauty, blending quality. I have received numerous telephone calls from people living outside Carlton, who voice horror at the possibility of their loss. In response I, Joanna Pacé and other members of the business community will meet with Cr Fraser Brindley, Kate Wright (Place Worker) Ian Harris (Manager, Parks and Recreation) and botanist Ian Shears, to seek a solution by which the problem of allergies can be alleviated while the trees are retained.

"Piazza Italia" at Argyle Square

Argyle Square is the last of Carlton's four historic garden squares to have been substantially paved during the past decade. Here is another example of a lengthy struggle by CRA resulting in only partial success. Our efforts achieved some modification of the original environmentally destructive proposals. The Italian community claimed Argyle Square was a gift to them from Premier Kennett, and proposed paving the entire northern section. Funding was from a compulsory levy paid by developers for community facilities. CRA objected vigorously to the loss of green space. After much heated debate and with the considerable diplomacy of MCC's Director Design & Culture, Rob Adams and his staff, the design was modified to include lawn and a surround of shade trees. The piazza now blends better into Argyle Square.

Carlton Gardens and Neill St Primary Schools

We are acting in support of parents in the future development of both the above. In July the former was given some assurance that closure is no longer threatened.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A sincere thanks to the Committee, sub-committees and other active members for their highly valued contributions, dedication and innovative ideas to CRA.

Grateful thanks also to Brunettis, who provide delicious suppers for our general meetings and Xmas party, to La Mama Theatre for our Christmas party venue, and to The Royal Women's Hospital for continuing to provide us with a meeting room at the Kathleen Syme Centre.

Greta Bird
Acting President

PUBLICITY

In recent weeks CRA has had excellent and regular coverage in the media, particularly in *The Melbourne Times* and *Melbourne Leader*, on a range of issues, e.g. Carlton Gardens, Traffic, Lygon St trees, Public Housing Development. Our comments have drawn respondents such as Bronwyn Pyke and Catherine Ng. This coverage, as well as letters/e-mails to politicians and councilors, are highly effective, and all members are encouraged to contribute. Please, to maximize impact on issues, contact Members of Parliament, Local Councilors, the press and radio on important local issues.

Contacts

State & Federal Government: Members for Melbourne

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CITY COUNCIL

Lord Mayor, The Hon John So Councillors: Catherine Ng (Planning); Fraser Brindley (Environment); David Wilson (Community & Culture); Gary Singer (Deputy Mayor); Peter Clarke; Carl Jetter; Fiona Snedden; Brian Shanahan
Phone: 9658 9658 – ditto for all City Services.

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Kate Wright, Place Manager for Carlton/Parkville katwri@melbourne.vic.gov.au

NEWSPAPERS

The Age Letters: letters@theage.com.au Reporters: Royce Miller, Dan Silkstone,
Liz Minchin Ph: 9600 4211

Herald Sun Letters: hsletters@heraldsun.com.au Reporter: Ashley Gardiner Ph. 9292 1226

The Melbourne Times

Letters: letters@metmedia.com.au Reporters: Simon Kidd, Michelle Draper
Ph: 8417 7000

Melbourne Leader

Letters: Melbourne@leadernewspapers.com.au Reporter: Maria Bervanakis
Ph. 9489 2222

TALKBACK RADIO

ABC 774 John Faine 1300 222 774

3AW 1278 Neil Mitchell 9696 1278

Schedule of Meeting Dates 2006

MEETING	DATE
Planning Committee	Monday February 6
Annual General Meeting	Monday February 20
Planning Committee	Monday March 6
Committee Meeting	Tuesday March 21
Planning Committee	Monday April 3
Committee Meeting	Tuesday April 18
Planning Committee	Monday May 1
General Meeting	Monday May 22
Planning Committee	Monday June 5
Committee Meeting	Tuesday June 20
Planning Committee	Monday July 3
Committee Meeting	Tuesday July 18
Planning Committee	Monday August 7
General Meeting	Monday August 21
Planning Committee	Monday September 4
Committee Meeting	Tuesday September 19
Planning Committee	Monday October 2
Committee Meeting	Tuesday October 17
Planning Committee	Monday November 6
Committee Meeting	Tuesday November 21
Planning Committee	Monday December 4
Xmas Party	Monday December 11

Venues: Unless otherwise notified, the Committee will meet at 9 Lt Elgin St. The Planning Sub-committee will meet at 170 Cardigan St. The venue for the Christmas Party is La Mama Theatre.

General meetings are held in the Kathleen Syme Building, Cr Cardigan & Faraday Sts. and commence at 7.30pm. Committee and Planning Committee meet at 8pm.