



THE CARLTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.

# NEWSFLASH

September 2023

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### Carlton Conversations

Monday 11 September Arnold Zable, author and storyteller, took us for a walk around the block in North Carlton, recounting tales of his and his family's early days in Carlton. This is the area giving life to many of his novels and which bears witness to stories handed down through the ages.

Don't miss the next Carlton Conversation email: [carltonresidents@gmail.com](mailto:carltonresidents@gmail.com) to be on the list for information.



### Planning

#### VCAT case 1-23 Rathdowne Street.

The hearing at VCAT begins 16 October and is scheduled to run until 31 October. CRA, along with several other groups and local residents will present a case against the granting of a planning permit for this development. Background information is available on the [CRA website](#)

### Traffic Transport Parking Noise

#### Jury in on e-scooters

The decision of the Melbourne City Council at its Future Melbourne Committee meeting on 15 August to 'provide in-principled support to the on-going operation of commercial e-scooters...should the Victorian Government legalise the use of shared e-scooters beyond the trial' is subject to some provisos.

Whilst the CRA was disappointed at the lack of consultation and transparency in Council decision-making, the provisos do hold out some hope for a meaningful response to the issues that have plagued the trial.

The fulsome but flawed Council report made many assumptions on the trial's efficacy rather than provide evidenced based data. The conclusion that e-scooters reduce car usage and thus carbon emissions is based on a State Government report and is not supported by data.

**The Toilet is open! Watch the video [here](#)**



It is welcome that Council's support for the shared e-scooter scheme is dependent on a State Government handover of e-scooter management to Council. Council will then be able to require the issues raised in the report regarding compliance, to be addressed by the companies through technologies, enforcement and education.

If the Melbourne City Council is to achieve the outcome it seeks from the State Government it will need the backing of the community. Given the reluctance to engage the community more broadly it is now incumbent on the Council to promote its position of support for e-scooters subject to it being put in charge of their use.



## Moving forward! The CRA Mobility Policy



The Carlton Residents Association has renamed its Transport Policy the Mobility Policy to reflect the changing nature of urban transport. The policy now provides a response to how residents, workers and visitors move around the municipality now and into the future and the importance we place on the liveability and sustainability of our suburb.

In essence, good mobility needs to be safe, reliable, efficient, sustainable and accessible. In the longer term the objective should be to work toward Sustainable Mobility recognising the need to address mobility and its impact on climate change.

This will require future proofing mobility by moving to EV vehicles, autonomous vehicles, and freeing up road space for public transport, trams and buses, extending footpaths, introducing shareable streets and increasing green spaces by freeing up road space.

Over the last 45 years our streets have changed dramatically from wide, treeless bitumen thoroughfares to attractive streets with medians and now mature trees.

Through traffic has been reduced by street closures and calming measures such as lane reductions, controlled turns, speed humps. Bicycle and pedestrian paths have been improved and footpaths widened in the commercial areas to allow outdoor eating. The introduction of parklets has resulted in an improvement in outdoor dining, a reduction and slowing of traffic and improved amenity and safety for pedestrians. It has also encouraged patrons to travel by public transport.

Carlton has had good public transport for a long time and improvements have been made such as the underground rail line now under construction. Tram stops have been improved to enable those with a disability, children and older persons to have ease of access and safety. We believe that the remaining step-up tram stops should be replaced with those providing for the access required by all.

There are still areas for improvement and issues of concern that are covered in our Mobility Policy that is now available to CRA members and interested members of our community. For those interested in receiving a copy please send an email to [carltonresidents@gmail.com](mailto:carltonresidents@gmail.com)

### CRA Representatives meet with Deputy Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece



CRA members, Peter Sanders, Warren Green and Lyn Cracknell met for a productive discussion with the Deputy Lord Mayor. CRA raised planning concerns, in relation to the WHEA and the impact on planning decisions. CRA's policies on Escooters and Mobility were also discussed.

### Melbourne University is not an island



#### The Estate Master Plan unveiled

The Melbourne University has unveiled its ‘Estate Master Plan’ with the aim to re-orientate the university to the City, provide more green open space on campus, and open up the University to the community.

The University of Melbourne, Vice Chancellor, Duncan Maskell, says the aim is to make the University campuses ‘more accessible for our staff and students and to transform them into shared places that are more welcoming for all communities. The Master Plan does seek a long-term ‘strategic, academic and research role’ and the CRA welcomes this aim.

Unfortunately the use of the term ‘estate’ continues the ‘ivory tower’ image of the University. The term ‘precinct’ would better reflect the University’s aim to have the campus seen as part of the city.

In CRA’s view however, a Master Plan does not go far enough in opening itself up to the city and the local community and the Association would be seeking additional entry points to the University precinct along Swanston Street, Cemetery Road East and Royal Parade.

The New Parkville Station on Grattan Street has certainly provided the impetus for the opening up of the University to the city. The planned parkway along Grattan Street and the demolition of the 757 Building on the corner Swanston and Grattan streets will provide both access to the University and additional green open space for students and the wider community.

However, the approval of a 15 story development on the corner of Grattan and Bouverie Streets, by the Melbourne City Council in March, will have a negative impact on the area, including Grattan Street, Melbourne University parkland and pedestrian and local amenity.

The University will continue to acknowledge and protect its heritage buildings and where new buildings are proposed to replace existing buildings the CRA believes an independent audit should be required. This will ensure that the repurpose option of existing buildings is carried out independently and transparently. Where buildings are to be demolished and new buildings constructed, the CRA would expect these to be passively designed and carbon neutral in both construction and operation.

The University’s Estate Master Plan is a long-term approach seeking to build a University City, focused on place and purpose. The CRA supports the reorientation of the University to face the City and a focus on its academic and research role. But the Master Plan requires broad and effective Melbourne City Council and community input together with transparency, accountability and timelines for its implementation.

### Topical Issues

**Ellen Sandell, State MP for Melbourne writes:**

#### **Our pressure on Labor to regulate short-stays and address the housing crisis is working**

Carlton is a great place to live. But residents are rightfully frustrated by the lack of affordable housing and the ever-increasing amount of short-stay accommodation dominating our suburbs.

In recent months, the Greens have been ramping up pressure on the State Labor Government to take urgent action to address the worsening housing crisis. With so many short stay properties sitting empty for most of the year, we need urgent action to get more homes into the long-term market so they can be rented to families who need them.

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I'm proud to share that, following negotiations with my Greens colleagues and I in Parliament, the Treasurer has announced a new task force will be established to investigate solutions to the housing crisis.

The taskforce will consider three important issues that the Greens put on the table:

- Stopping unlimited rent increases, such as a cap on rent increases, like already exists in the ACT.
- Regulation of short-stays, such as Airbnbs.
- Strengthening Victoria's vacancy tax, to make more empty homes available for renters or first home buyers.



We've since heard that the Labor Government is considering a \$5 tax per booking for landlords who rent properties out on short-stay platforms like Airbnb, but this won't solve the problem, as owners with multiple apartments will still be able to make significantly more money on the short-stay market and have no incentive to put their properties up for longer-term rental. Instead, we need proper caps on the number of nights a property can be leased as a short-stay per year, in order to get homes back on the long-term rental market.

I first raised the issue of short-stays in Parliament all the way back in 2014, and in May my Greens colleagues and I tried to introduce a bill to Parliament to regulate short-stay accommodation. Disappointingly, the Victorian Labor Government would not support the bill.

But I'm hopeful that with this new taskforce, we might finally be about to see some action.

The Greens plan to regulate short-stays would introduce a 90-day cap on how many nights per year a property can be rented out, along with new rules to allow owners corporations to regulate short-stays in their building. These are sensible measures that mean you can still rent out a room or rent out your home when you go on holiday but would prevent investors from buying up multiple whole apartments just to make mega profits and never renting them out long-term.

While the taskforce is a welcome announcement, it's frustrating that when Labor had the chance to address the issue of short-stays, they refused. And after 9 years of campaigning, I know that the community is sick of waiting for meaningful reforms, but I hope this is the moment where the pressure finally becomes so great that reform happens.

Get in touch: [office@ellensandell.com](mailto:office@ellensandell.com)

## **Friends of Melbourne General Cemetery**

The people of Carlton have a massive potential park on their doorstep. The Melbourne General Cemetery is larger than the Botanic Gardens and was envisaged in the 1840s as a garden cemetery, a place for reflection and recreation. During the recent Covid-caused lockdowns, the cemetery was a very popular destination - families, dogs and bikes were seen all over the place.

For the last two years, members of the Princes Hill Community Centre's Greening the Cemetery Group have participated in working bees in the cemetery on the last Friday of the month. They have propagated and planted cottage garden favourites around the rotunda near the north gate, and near the Dawson angel monument. Anyone interested in joining this group should contact the Princes Hill Community Centre which runs the sessions.

The body responsible for the cemetery, the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, has also commenced an exciting and visionary project in the northern section of the cemetery. Project Cultivate will involve the planting of thousands of indigenous ground cover plants, which will revitalise the landscape, and contribute to the development of a sustainable biodiverse environment.

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*Tea break at the Cemetery*

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The Friends of the Melbourne General Cemetery have been gratified to see this positive project in an area which had been barren. Friends Convenor, David James, said, ‘We are very pleased the Cemeteries Trust has used this state-funded initiative of \$1.5 million in our cemetery. We look forward to future planting, particularly of trees to counter the effects of climate change.’

If you would like to participate in the working bees, phone the Princes Hill Community Centre on 9387 7740.

For further information, check the Facebook page of the Friends of Melbourne General Cemetery.

If you would like an informal walk around the cemetery, please text Jane at 0419 511 844.

**Community News**

**Carlton Traders**

**Mark Rubbo of Readings**

I’ve been asked to do a small series of articles about the local community concentrating on our beloved Lygon street traders.

We first arrived in Melbourne with two small girls about 20 years ago, knowing no one and having no family in Melbourne or even Australia. We were seduced by chickens in the local primary school so put down roots in Carlton.

Our first stop was a beautiful bookstore where the girls were actively encouraged to sit down and read at the back of the store, and where I could finally find great pleasure in buying as many books as I could carry (we had been in China for a long time where this was not so easy). Readings became a home.

Mark Rubbo bought Readings in 1972 from a couple called the Readings (hence the name)...

They were moving to the country. Mark started as a music store and gradually devolved into books and meetings. He stayed in Carlton though has eventually branched out in many other suburbs, (7 stores all over Melbourne) but Carlton is where his heart is. He has decided to move sideways into overseeing the business but allowing his son Joe to take on the reins. Daunting this seems. But not really. The customers who love Readings now, will love Readings in the future and bring future readers there too.

Indeed a couple recently became engaged in the store after meeting a few years earlier at the notice board (also a wonderful icon). As always Mark was happy to help and allowed the proposer to come into the store after work to ask. She said yes.

That’s the thing about Mark Rubbo. He really will listen to anyone and everyone. He is more than happy to support what are good causes. I know he had a program to teach newly arrived immigrant parents to read to their children.

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*Mark Rubbo outside the first shop 1972*

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He has been a massive supporter of the library and also supported La Mama when things were sticky. When I asked if we could hold a Premiers Reading Challenge every year for the two local Primary Schools, and invite the shortlisted authors to come talk with the children and parents, he readily agreed. I remember talking to a parent who was very unsure about entering the bookstore....as if somehow it wasn't for them – and they thoroughly loved it. I think she bought a book a week for the library at school after that.

He's very grateful to the community too – knowing full well that we completely blacklisted a large American bookstore that opened opposite Readings – to fully support our local shop. When the Harry Potter book that year was launched, Readings sold every copy – and it was good bye to the interloper.

It's a bit like that on Lygon Street. People know other people. The traders are our friends and they support each other. Joe, Mark's son and new caretaker of Readings is good friends with the Donati clan down the road.

I did ask Maek about the future – and he looked a little nervous – things change of course – we all do, but if anything can glue a community together, it's a neighbourhood. Readings brings old and young, rich and not so rich. Joe needn't worry. We are all behind him.

Megan Stevenson

## A Carlton Icon

### Museo Italiano 199 Faraday Street Carlton

#### Italian Museum (First published in the RACV Magazine February 2018)

Apart from modern tourism, you don't see any mass migrations from Australia to Italy, or to anywhere else. No big groups of entire Australian families arriving hopefully in Valtellina or Puglia with everything they own in a single case and starting a new life; so a museum in Carlton about traffic in the opposite direction is interesting. Not the big museum in the Exhibition gardens, but a smaller one in Faraday Street, the Museo Italiano. Perhaps fewer people know about that one.

The Museo is not some random assembly of nostalgic artefacts, but an elegantly designed and sensitive installation of objects that reflect the intimate detail of settlement here by different waves of Italian Australians. This movement mostly began in the 1850s gold rush, developed steadily between the wars when America curtailed its migration program, and accelerated after WW2, following instabilities in Europe.

This museum has collected the touching remnants and memorial scraps of elsewhere, the small personal treasures that survive: such as religious tokens and small shrines, dolls, cherished photos of people and places that had to be abandoned; the painful reminders of early struggles with culture and language. There's a christening



dress made in 1916 (and often borrowed back to be used again for subsequent births) by a mother for a child who soon died. Nearby, a cabin trunk that had to be made from someone's family bed. At the entrance, portrait busts of Dante and Marconi begin the permanent display. As background you hear the urgent sounds of adventurous embarkation on a great sea trip; of excited children, of emotional partings. Passengers get some advice about what not to do when they arrive, especially including not to blaspheme because blasphemy was apparently thought to be almost unheard of in Australia.

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Many of those who came from agricultural communities took some of the least popular urban jobs, saved money and meant to go back to Italy. Fortunately most stayed, later sending for other members of the family; but the culture shocks (sometimes mutual) for arrivals during and just after WW2 must have seemed insuperable. Wartime internment in Australia of prisoners of war (plus Italians who'd lived here for years like some European Jews who'd been living in England, designated as aliens, and sent here on ships like the Dunera) complicated the issue. Even some Italians who'd been naturalized were interned, but as the perceived wartime threat to Australia diminished, this gradually changed.

The installation's engaging introduction leads to films, old newsreels and videos (comfortable seating) about the migrant experience, the skills imported and those developed here. A nice selection of specialist tools, musical instruments, restaurant equipment and delicate embroidery make the point. There's something mysterious here that could be either a coffee percolator or a duck press, and there may still be communal wooden tomato crushers like this one. More informative is a thoughtful timeline: three rows of fascinating photographs, each row charting Italian connections either to local, international or Australian events. The most spectacular success stories here are individual: professional, artistic, corporate, but just as remarkable is detail about the diversity of pioneering families (merchants, builders, craftspeople, restaurateurs) who changed for the better the way we live in Australia.



*Memorabilia at Museo Italiano*

Some Melburnians had their first expression of things Italian via an original Gaggia espresso machine (there's one here) or by eating pumpkin ravioli in a Lygon Street cafe. Mine was the approaching four-cylinder music of an Italian Grand Prix Gilera motorcycle, ridden full bore around an airstrip at Fisherman's Bend. Exotic machinery, new tastes in food, wine and fashion, a touch of European sophistication: the rich Italian influence on our lives that's now taken for granted makes it important to see where it came from. To take care of that, this museum, along with the Italian Historical Society, is housed in a large Italian complex called COASIT. This includes a large resources library, specially equipped facilities for activities and support systems relevant not only to Italian heritage issues but to the wider community. There's a comprehensive language teaching program for schools and adults, together with lectures, films, live musical sessions and temporary exhibitions. Of course, there have been and are many Carltons: the early Italian - Australian and

Jewish occupants, many of whom eventually moved out from the inner city; the student and academic Carltons around Melbourne University, the recent down-sizers, the rash of new high-rise apartments as well as some magnificent 19th century architecture; even the chic macaron-from-Brunetti's Carlton. All call for separate histories.

It could all have been very different. In 1676, an Italian priest in Manila who'd been talking to some Dutch explorers, asked Rome to establish a mission settlement in the great south land. He sent a map. It took Rome years to make up its mind, by which time the priest was dead. The idea lapsed, or a mainly Italian Australia might well have been asking for successive waves of Anglo-Celts. Italians then might have considered golf or Cornish pasties as weird imports.

Ronald Millar **Visit the website :** <https://www.coasit.com.au/museoitaliano>  
**Visit the Museum:** 199 Faraday Street, Carlton