

OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Newsletter for all city residents

No. 35 — OCTOBER 2007

• EastEnders • Residents 3000 • Hardware Street •

If you want to help keep your neighbourhood pleasant, friendly and liveable, join a residents group



Walking together for Melbourne

Human feet are made for walking – not for pushing accelerator pedals.

Surely we must start seriously considering reducing the volume of motor traffic in our City. Some of the items below are good news, some bad.

The APEC meeting has been laughed at for responding to global warming by having “aspirations”, rather than actually doing something about it.

But has Melbourne even got that far?

Bikers and Hikers

Recently every newspaper seemed to take up the cause of cycling as a means of transport, especially, to and around the City. Even better, a recent issue of “theage (melbourne) magazine” has suggested making Melbourne a car-free pedestrian paradise when they published a dramatic digital image of Swanston Street grassed over with lush lawn!

The idea came from Trafalgar Square in London which was turfed over for two days in May this year. There were deckchairs, family picnics, and people just lazing around. After the two days, the turf was rolled up and replanted in various London parks – but one hopes the idea lives on!

One of the objections to street closures and “pedestrianisation” is that retailers and businesses will suffer. But reports from a “de-carred” section of Vienna give the lie to this – after all, shoppers are pedestrians! (Only drug-dealers do business from cars)

Melbourne too is moving to encourage “City bikers and hikers”. It is great that our Council has introduced the much-lauded “Copenhagen solution” to a strip of upper Swanston Street, from RMIT to Melbourne Uni. This provides a bike track between the road and the footpath, separated from both by kerbs of an adequate width – a real separation of traffic, the only final solution!



Please, if you have not seen this innovation, go and see it. It really works (but we have to admit that one pedestrian reports seeing a cyclist defiantly riding the footpath along this route!).

R3000 strongly supports cycling and walking. We need to think more about encouraging both – while we avoid the car drivers who drink coffee, talk on a mobile, smoke a cigarette, change the CD, eat a big Mac, look for a parking spot and run the red light all at the same time. Mind you, some cyclists seems to be similarly self-absorbed – riding on the footpath, ignoring traffic lights and ped crossings, one way streets, and more. One cyclist was seen walking a dog by riding against the traffic along a one-way street, with dog off the leash. So sad – when most of the community are trying to do the right thing.

If cyclists and pedestrians could get together, we might yet save the world!

Wheels and Heels in North/West Melbourne

Working closely with local communities, Council has now endorsed the North and West Melbourne Wheels and Heels Plan.

This plan includes:

- improved residential parking; and provides Visitor Vouchers for residents;
- developing car-sharing services;
- reducing speed limits;
- reducing traffic lanes in Arden Street and introducing a treed median strip;
- making traffic lights more “pedestrian friendly”;
- more bike parking hoops;
- a Copenhagen style bike lane to the City;
- upgrading public transport information.

This plan shows how the community and the Council and other authorities can work together for everyone's benefit.

What makes a high-quality street?

Once again, the UK organization called Living Streets can give us some lessons.

On their website www.livingstreets.org.uk they have tried to identify what makes a quality street.

Some of the criteria they suggest are:

- High quality materials;
- High standards of maintenance;
- Footpaths wide enough for all users;
- Smooth, clean, well-drained surfaces;
- Enough crossing points, in the right places;
- Traffic levels not excessive;
- Good lighting;
- Sense of security;
- No graffiti or litter;
- No signs of anti-social behaviour;
- Good signage, landmarks and sightlines;
- Public spaces along the street;
- A pleasant place to be.



No Car Free Day?

Representatives of the Centre for Sustainability Leadership recently won the support of the Council's Planning Committee for a "Car Free Day" in major CBD streets in 2008! They quoted a successful Vancouver initiative which won 95% support when it was launched a few years ago (2002).

They could also have referred to a report in Living Streets in UK (see below). The Westminster Council (the Local Government area for Central London) is planning to block-off some side streets in the major retail area of Oxford, Regent and Bond Streets, to create an "unsurpassed retail environment". The Living Streets movement is suggesting an even more radical change – to make this western part of Oxford Street completely "pedestrians only".

The Melbourne proposal calls for a one-day trial by the closure of the central sections of Bourke, Collins, Elizabeth and Swanston, Spring and Spencer Streets

Of course Melbourne retailers and motoring organizations immediately began screaming. They still don't understand the key role of "pedestrianism" in the economy of our cities. Public transport should bring suburban shoppers to the City; they then become pedestrians, able to access shops, cafes, restaurants, theatres and other entertainments – or simply walk around. You can't indulge in "impulse buying" from a car!

Unfortunately the State Government and the Lord Mayor also immediately rejected the idea out-of-hand. But they do support the present studies to determine what "Future Melbourne" should be like – the only word we seem to hear from them is that we want a "VIBRANT" City – whatever that means!

KEY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency 000
(police, ambulance, fire)

Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000
(information about criminal activity)

Your State Member
(The Hon Bronwyn Pike MP) 9328 4637

Your Federal Member
(Lindsay Tanner MP) 9347 5000

City Council HOTLINE 9658 9658
(for any questions, complaints, guidance)

POLICE – Inspector Chris Duthie
and new Precinct Officers 9650 7077

POLICE REPORT — from Inspector Chris Duthie

The end of the financial year has gone and by the time you receive this, the Chief Commissioner will have released the state crime figures. Unfortunately the City of Melbourne has seen an increase in total crime of 9% over last year. This is after decreases in crime for the previous three years.

The biggest increases were in the areas of Assault – Residential Burglary (primarily Carlton) and Theft from Cars. However we also had substantial decreases in Commercial Burglary and Theft of cars.

- Licensing patrols and enforcement given a greater priority and maintaining the zero tolerance to offences by licensees
- Street-craft training for all our newer and inexperienced staff in order that they may respond to your call with an improved ability to deal with the situation.
- Negotiations are also underway to have a Police Station/community centre at Southbank hopefully open 16 hours a day.

How you can help!

- Report suspicious activity or crimes being committed to your local Police Station or 000 in emergencies.
AT THE TIME YOU OBSERVE IT
- LOCK your car and residence/business. Do NOT leave valuables in your car.

The Commitment from Victoria Police is to provide the best service we can to the community and our staff have been instructed as such. Have a little patience if you call for assistance as sometimes it does get busy and we have to prioritise. If unfortunately you get poor service do not hesitate to ring your Local Senior Sergeant or me as below.

Naan with that?

Yes please! An issue or two ago we asked for suggestion for a new “Cultural Precinct” to add to Chinatown, the Greek Precinct (Lonsdale Street) and little Italy (Lygon Street). The quick, unanimous response was – an Indian precinct – marking the rapid growth of eating places offering the cuisines of Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan..

Suggested names were “Bollywood”; “the Subcontinent”; “Saritown” and many others. The other issue is what area of our City would be chosen? “Indian” restaurants have grown rapidly all over the place – perhaps with an emphasis around some of the language and training institutions. But oddly, the upper section of Bourke Street (above Russell – the Paris-end!) seems especially blessed with that mouth-watering smell of spices and herbs and even the odd tandoor.

If you haven't had a thali or two, get going! Try a Rogan Josh using goat meat, with a Bhaja Moong Dal, and a roti . Mmmmm.

Friends of Carlton Gardens – our World Heritage site

We are pleased to say that both the Council and the Museum are beginning to get serious about plans and action in the Carlton Gardens, Royal Exhibition Building and Museum area.

There should be some good developments there over the next 6 to 12 months. If you are keen to help, a Friends of Carlton Gardens Group has been formed to support the work.

To get involved contact Denise Underwood at siteone@netspace.net.au

Where to from here?

- Melbourne Police are getting back out on foot patrols during the week and their presence has already been felt with a substantial number of offences being detected in the first week.
- Our public order operation (Cabool) is running at night time every weekend until the end of the year, with significantly more resources.
- The trial of the Police “Golf Buggies” around the CBD giving police a quicker response to some of the out of the way areas.

Oh NO John, NO John, NO!!!

The turmoil in the City administration continues. Now we hear that the very successful “Place Manager” program has been dropped. Why?

We have not been told, what, if anything, is replacing the invaluable services provided by these staff. All the residents groups throughout the Municipality found them an invaluable link with the various branches of the Council – and especially where complex issues were involved. One terrific project we got up with the help of our Place Manager was the “raingarden” in Davison Place, which involved cooperation between the residents and the bodies corporate nearby, staff from at least two departments in the Town Hall (engineering and parks) and Melbourne Water. Everyone's positive involvement was essential for such a project – and it was achieved!

What of the future? At the moment we don't know. But we will certainly be working hard to get Council to set up another mechanism for enabling people, organizations such as ours, and the Council to work together. Working together is not easy with such a diverse set of people/organizations, which is frequently required.

And what else is happening in the structure of the Council? Who knows? This is the sort of uncertainty which bedevils badly-managed reorganisations in any sphere.

The Council staff made their views known at the full Council meeting on 28 August – with catcalling, boos and interruptions! Especially when the Council seemed to be saying that it wasn't their fault – the responsibility lay with the Chief Executive Officer. It sounded like a media report of a failing company – **the directors say it wasn't their fault, it was the CEO!** (Does that sound familiar, John? Or do we mean the other John?)

Election fever

Yes, we had a State election in November last year, and we look like having a Federal election around November this year.

And in 12 months time (November 2008) we will have a Local Government election – oh, and the US Presidential election too.

For most people, the importance of the election of a new City Council ranks below the others we've mentioned.

But it is important

We are not lobbying (yet) – but as soon as the Federal election is over, Melburnians must start thinking about what we want the next Council to do, and which nine people we believe can do it. (We have a Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and seven other Councillors.)

It will help potential candidates and clarify the way we decide to vote if we work out our "wants" early on.

Give us your ideas! And we will publish the most frequent ones (anonymously) to get the discussion going.

Since Ward Councillors were abolished by the State Government some years ago, we have had very little direct representation of residents.

So think about how we can improve



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199 FLINDERS LANE
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Battling Litter

This is another aspect of building a great "Future Melbourne".

As we have reported, the State Government recently called for submissions on the development of a "Litter Strategy" – we made a comprehensive submission.

The Government has now issued a summary of the submissions they received.

The key themes were:

1. The central development of legislation and enforcement, programs, measurement, education and campaigns with one central agency to oversee implementation of the strategy.
2. Local governments accepting responsibility for management of litter but wanting to make cost savings in this area and move to focus more on prevention.
3. Industry, particularly brand owners, needs to take greater responsibility to prevent litter, and where necessary, clean up its brands in the litter stream.
4. The community needs to accept responsibility and actively become part of the solution.

The summary deals with each of these. Some interesting aspects are:

- 24% of respondents called for the introduction of a container deposit system;
- a tax applied to products that are likely to result in litter;
- a levy on all tobacco sales;

- buy back schemes – such as advance disposal/recovery fees for items such as mattresses, e-waste, black goods, white goods, oil and paint.

Cigarette Butt Litter

There was overwhelming support for further action to reduce butts and concern for the impact of the smoking bans for licensed premises.

Some suggestions were:

- butt-out bins that do not catch fire;
- identifying who is responsible for preventing butt litter and cleaning it up if it does occur, eg businesses to manage butt litter;
- a statewide mass advertising campaign (TV/ radio) to change smokers behaviour;
- periodic patrols/blitzes against "butters";
- legislation/planning controls governing public space should allocate responsibilities keeping it clean.

Fast Food Outlets

Should....

- reduce packaging, use recyclable materials;
- stop the use of styrofoam cups and expanded polystyrene packaging;
- take responsibility for the cleanliness of the immediate vicinity, and encourage customer "non-littering" through advertising on packaging and contribute to related statewide advertising campaigns.

These are all good ideas – lets do it!

You can find a full report on www.sustainability.vic.gov.au



Future Melbourne

As you may know, the City and Melbourne University are working on a "Future Melbourne" project.

You can contribute on www.futuremelbourne.com.au and go to eVillage.

Of course one feature of Future Melbourne must be to become a mainly car-less City – with dominance given to pedestrians and cyclists, effectively separated. Service delivery vehicles should be limited in terms of times – this is mainly a matter of good management and organisation.

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Reminders

A few reminders about what we have on our doorstep!

Our Town Hall – a great building – so take a free tour – book on 9658 9658 or townhalltour@melbourne.vic.gov.au – including the Grand Organ, first installed in 1872, destroyed by fire in 1925, replaced in 1929 and rejuvenated in the 1990's. It's a great sight and produces magnificent music.

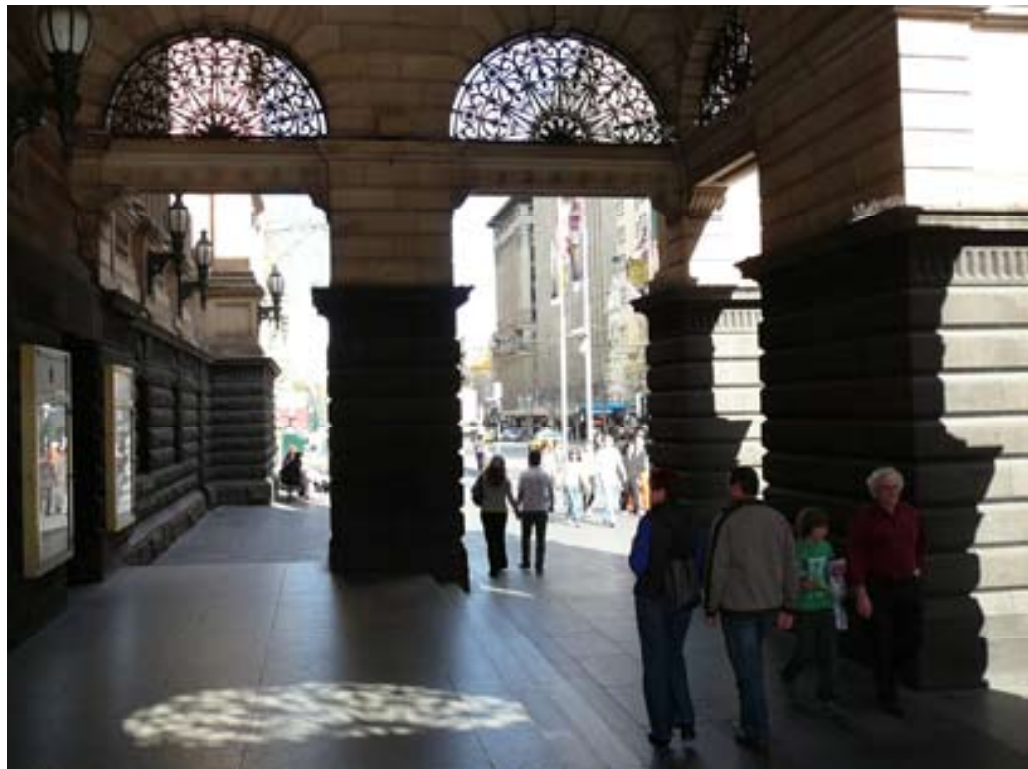
Our City Baths/Gym – near RMIT in Swanston Street – offers every service for all ages from "Fatburner" to wireless internet (9663 5888 – www.melbournecitybaths.com.au)

Our City Gallery – don't miss this – go through the "HalfTix" door in the Town Hall on Swanston Street. – it's free and ranges over Melbourne's artistic, cultural and historic life. Sometimes moving, sometimes hilarious – the exhibitions are always worth seeing (they change every few months)

The Free Shuttle bus – especially useful if you have visitors. The bus does a round the City tour (including Carlton) with a useful, minimal commentary.

Walking/Jogging – we know all know about wonderful parks and gardens. But did you know that the City produces a small guide, "Walking and Jogging Tracks", which takes you round eight suggested routes? This little booklet includes diagrams to guide with suggested routes, marked distances and a "diary" for you to record the dates of your walks/jogs, their distance and the time you took! A very useful aid to gentle, sensible exercise.

When you are in Swanston Street it only takes two minutes to duck into the Town Hall Front Desk (enter between Metcard Shop and Half Tix) and pick up a wide range of excellent information leaflets of all kinds – ranging from graffiti, to children's playgrounds, to guides for the frail/disabled and a whole lot more activities (usually free).



It's AGM time

Both Residents 3000 and EastEnders will be holding AGMs in the next couple of months. So get your diary out.

EastEnders will hold their's on Tuesday 23 October at Coopers Inn, cnr. Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets.

Meeting begins at 6:30 pm

R3000 is looking at Tuesday 30 October (to be confirmed). In addition to the usual AGM agenda (reports, finances, organization) R3000 will have a guest speaker. It's a secret, but he is Australia's most famous magician! We were going to ask him to appear in a puff of smoke (as magicians do) but of course since 1 July smoking indoors is outlawed.

Taking Action ...

.....to change the culture. The problem of alcohol abuse is being raised everywhere – and we have been active in the CBD in trying to work with the Government and the Council to rationalise the number, location and size of late night drinking places*.

The Community Alcohol Action Network (CAAN) founded by the Australian Drug Foundation, has produced a useful small booklet, "Taking Action.....to change the culture" – you can check it on www.caan.adf.org.au.

We need a whole of Government/Community response to all drug issues, including alcohol. Policing is necessary but is largely a last resort, especially in terms of managing our "booze city" problem.

Interestingly, the British Government has identified part of the problem of a culture of "DRINKING TO GET DRUNK". When all the people who come into the City on Friday or Saturday night are out to do this, we really do have a problem.

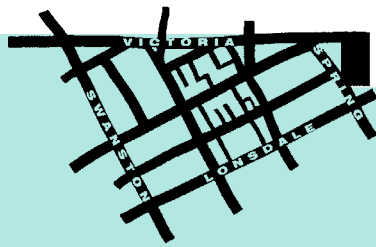
Your ideas for alleviating these problems will be welcome by Our Neighbourhood and will be passed on to the Council and the Government.

** We have asked the Premier to get together with his ministers covering liquor licensing, planning, police, and with the Council and community, to develop a "whole of community" approach to these issues. Research in two states has demonstrated that the density of late night bars is directly related to the incidence of street and domestic violence.*

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EAST ENDERS INC

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ABN 11910607307

EastEnders is the residents association for the neighbourhood bounded by Spring, Victoria, Swanston and Lonsdale Streets

The Committee is:

Michael Kennedy — *President*
Karin Dixon — *Vice President*
Vacant — *Secretary*
Prudence Willsford — *Treasurer*
Vacant — *Member*

**For information and membership
write to us or see
www.eastenders.com.au**

Our formal purposes are:

1. To be concerned with the advancement of the wellbeing, amenity and environment of residents;
2. to consult with and advise the City of Melbourne and other authorities, businesses and persons in relation to 1. above;
3. to promote and encourage good relations between all residents, businesses and occupiers within the area; and
4. to undertake such activities as considered appropriate by the Committee of Management, or the association in a properly convened Annual or Special General Meeting to achieve the above purposes.



Residents 3000 is a community association to promote the wellbeing, amenity and environment of CBD residents. We consult with the City Council, other levels of government and with local businesses.

**For information and membership write to us
or see www.residents3000.net.au**

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Peter Matthews — *President*
Vacant — *Vice President*
Anne Emery — *Secretary*
Sean Kenyon — *Treasurer*
Wolfgang Jacobs — *WebMaster*
Yolande Leonardi



OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD
Editor: Peter Matthews
supported by a Community
Information Support Scheme Grant

HARDWARE PRECINCT RESIDENTS AND TENANTS ASSOCIATION

**If you would like to participate
please email on:
hardwareresten@yahoo.com.au
We look forward to hearing from you**

Hardware Precinct Residents and Tenants Association

This Association covers the area bounded by Queen, Elizabeth, Bourke and La Trobe Streets. At the heart of our area is the vibrancy of Hardware Street, its surrounding areas, and all the fabulous little lanes crossing Little Bourke, Bourke, Little Lonsdale and La Trobe. We like to think that our area has a unique feel, a village feel, with cafes and retail shops, but also necessary retailers for residents such as shoe repairers, hairdressers, chemists, dry cleaners and all the businesses and services that you need in your daily life.

JOIN A RESIDENTS GROUP NOW!!!

Talk to a Committee member – see above for contact details

cityFolk #7

Mark and his wife Tamara are refugees from the leafy suburbs – East Malvern to be exact.

Why? Well, Mark says that they seemed to spend most of their time in the City anyway. They have both worked in the CBD for the last five years and they found that most of their other interests in life brought them into the City too frequently to be bothered with the curse of travelling to and fro for everything they wanted to do.

Yes, they miss the garden, but are looking forward to establishing their rooftop garden when the water restrictions are lifted.

Sounds like a very compelling case to move!

And, yes they are happy here. Even though they live in a very active and noisy part of the CBD – they are surprised at how quiet their place is. Near Swanston Street, across the road from a few bars, adjacent to one of our lanes known for its high level of activities of the least desirable kind. But, with their neighbours, if they have problems, they do something about it. Mark is active in attending relevant meetings and consultations set up by the Council; and in keeping R3000 well informed of about life in their area, the good and the less good. They are ideal “new” residents and typical of good citizens anywhere – they enjoy life and get in involved.

Interestingly, their initial attraction to city life was born when they travelled in Europe for six



months. They got a feel for cities like Berlin, Paris and Copenhagen. They enjoyed the vibrancy, the eclectic mix of people, the street art, the formal art galleries and live music / spontaneous concerts they'd see on the streets, just wandering around.

Oddly, they find themselves eating out less now than when they lived in East Malvern but they find they know more about the “right” places – from Supper Inn to Ezard's and everything in-between.

Mark is a project manager in a pretty big enterprise. So we will certainly be getting him involved in some of Residents 3000's issues and projects. Tamara leads a busy team of IT recruiters and has extensive business networks.

In May, after a short time living in the city, they sold their one and only car and never looked back. They use Flexicar which is conveniently located in the City Square Car Park.

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F A M O U S



This is the name an excellent exhibition of photographs at the State Library of Victoria, on show until 11 November.

The exhibition presents a wide variety of great celebrity portraits by Australian photographer Karin Catt. Not only is the range of subjects varied – but so is the style.

In around 90 photographs, the portraits include an enormous range of “celebrities” such as actors Eric Bana, Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Magda Szubanski (dressed as a golden Buddha!); musicians Elton John, Lou Reed, AC/DC, Elvis Costello, PJ Harvey, Eminem; and others such as Muhammad Ali, Yoko Ono, George Bush Snr and Mikhail Gorbachev. And the rest!

Karin Catt was born in Newcastle, NSW; went to Sydney and has been based in the US since 2002. Her work has appeared in Rolling Stone, Vogue, Harpers Bazaar and other major magazines, and was included in the 2003 National Portrait Gallery (Canberra) exhibition, “Australians in Hollywood”.

The SLV says of her that she “has focused her lens sharply on the world of contemporary celebrity, capturing its glamorous and powerful inhabitants in stylish, intimate and often humorous images. Her work explores the way in which magazine-based portrait photography shapes our view of the world.”

This is a varied, witty and exciting exhibition. AND IT'S FREE!!!