



CHERS Newsletter

CHERS aim, written into the CHERS rules of association, is to enable public tenants in Carlton area to gain greater control over their own living situations and to take increasing responsibility for the decisions affecting their neighbourhood environment.

In line with this, we have been working simply to restore the *mechanisms* of participation. In addition to participating in the agenda set by those around us, we want to foster tenant creative–and commercial–activities, in order to facilitate capacity building among the Carlton community.

The funding CHERS receive is very modest and CHERS executive committee members do not get paid for their work. So if you have a particular community issue that's important to you, and have some time to give to it, get involved!

City of Melbourne and the Carlton Community

CHERS has participated in a variety of forums organised by the COM that affect the lives of Carlton public housing residents:

- The Community Liason Committee (CLC) that oversees the redevelopment of the Carlton estate
- Weekly Drop-in. Thanks to funding from the City of Melbourne, this year CHERS held a weekly drop in for residents to interact each other, share information and socialise.
- Shape Your Carlton

Management of the community spaces

CHERS manages the community spaces on the estate for the Office of Housing. There are spaces big and small for you to use, at 510 Lygon st, 530 Lygon st, and 480 Lygon st. In the coming year we will see new community spaces opened at 578 Drummond st (the former 140 Neill st) and 38 Elgin st. All spaces have working kitchens. The 510 space is the most dynamic and functions as the cultural hub of the community.

Since the beginning of 2010 the CHERS committee has tried to increase residents' awareness of the spaces that are available to them. We give residents priority when it comes to their use, and there is no charge involved for residents. We also established an online booking system (which can be accessed via the CHERS website) to facilitate access by

different groups of residents. Since we started the online booking system, hundreds of events have been booked and conducted successfully. If you don't have internet at home, CHERS provides free internet terminals.

Carlton Legal Service

CHERS hosts a walk-in legal service every Monday, Wed, and Friday, all year round, run by a senior solicitor, Ian Cunliffe. Ian had a successful career in both government and the private sector before deciding to work with public housing residents on a pro bono basis. For further information, see www.chers.org.au/legal and Ian's own website, www.iancunliffe.org

Internet and Communication Technology (ICT)

- CHERS maintains a website at www.chers.org.au, to which we post a lot of relevant and current info for residents about DHS and COM information session and forums. It also tracks the bookings of the community spaces.
- Via the website you can contact the committee to show an interest in participating or just subscribe to the mailing list to get the CHERS eNewsletter.
- CHERS are in the process of establishing free wifi for residents in the re-landscaped open spaces of the estate, and also in the various community spaces.

- Currently the 510 community space has 5 fully functional computers for use by all residents thanks to Estate Computers in partnership with CHERS. We wish to add free printing to this community space as funds become available.
- Estate Computers, managed by CHERS Secretary Hamdi Ali, sells cheap refurbished computers with licensed copies of Microsoft Windows 7 and Microsoft Office. Contact: Hamdi Ali on 9999 6617 or visit www.estatecomputers.net
- Estate Computers also provides residents free use of the onsite internet, printing and photocopying
- In the coming year Estate Computers hopes to put in place the first stage of a wireless network for each and every level of every public housing building in Carlton...and beyond. Such a project cannot begin until the NBN is connected here. With the help of Adam Bandt's office, CHERS was able to have a question asked in the Senate Estimates Committee of the NBN chairperson as to whether the Carlton Public housing estate would be included the NBN fiber optic been roll-out in 2014. Through our question we advocated that public housing residents in Carlton not to be left behind in the new digital age.
CHERS also made sure that the OoH (as our landlord) registered an expression of interest with the NBNco to ensure the high-rise towers be included in such roll-outs. While Stage 3 of the Carlton redevelopment is NBN ready, building from stages 1 and 2 were not built to be NBN ready.

Carlton Men's Shed

The Carlton Men's Shed is a tool workshop set up under the 510 building, next to Estate Computers. Managed by CHERS, the shed opens on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 – 4pm. If you wish to get involved, or just wish to make use of the tools, drop in or call CHERS on 93476553, or see chers.org.au/shed

This year shedders made a day visit to the home of Joe Ferlazzo, a computer trainer from Victoria University who now volunteers with Estate Computers refurbishing computers for the public residents, and who lives on a property in country Victoria. The men who went loved it and they really appreciated the hospitality shown by Joe and his wife Lisa. We are very keen to repeat the trip and Joe and Lisa said they are happy to receive us again.

Shedders also assisted a public-housing resident, who has disabled children and lives in a house with a backyard, in setting up a swing set that had been purchased for them by the charity organization, Noah's Ark. However, the charity did not have the funds to pay for the swing set to be assembled so they contacted the Carlton Men's shed manager / CHERS Secretary, Hamdi Ali.

The initial team from the Men's Shed who went to see if we could do the job or not included Mr Ian Cunliffe, a senior solicitor who now runs the free Carlton Legal Service.

It took another couple of trips to complete the job but we did it and it was very much appreciated by the family.

Health and Wellbeing

- CHERS facilitated health research by Dr Margaret Heffernan AO from RMIT (research into the HPV vaccine), and Ms Narelle White from Melbourne University's School of Population and Global Health (research into genital cutting). We view our involvement in such research as demonstrating that residents are interested in their own health and able to give feedback about it, thereby changing the general perception of our community.
- CHERS facilitated and participated in research on tenants experiences of the relocation process that took place as part of the Carlton Redevelopment, conducted by Flinders University, VicHealth and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

- The majority of public housing residents in Carlton live in a high-rise and physical activity and access to the outdoors is limited. CHERS facilitated Drummond Street Services in providing weekly ongoing physical activity classes (Zumba, swimming, gym) for adult men and women residents of the estate.

- Living in high rises also means access to community spaces is essential for facilitating communal activities, such as socialising, celebrations, and other needs. CHERS facilitates all such activities through our management of the community spaces on the estate, which has skyrocketed since the revival of CHERS, because of the increased awareness of the availability of spaces and the ease of access provided by an online booking system.

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