

## **Cardinia Ratepayers Residents Association**

### **Annual General Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

#### **President's Report for Year Ended 2005.**

I am pleased to be able to present the following annual report regarding the Cardinia Ratepayers and Residents Association (CRRA) for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

CRRA was formally established in November 2003, by a small and concerned group of ratepayers who had observed local community groups battling against great odds to retain their rights as ratepayers and their residential amenity. CRRA progress was slow at first with minimal support and interest. However, the commitment and perseverance of that original small group has certainly been justified by the events of the past six months as CRRA is now firmly established in its role of providing ratepayers and residents in Cardinia Shire with a means of voicing their opinion and where necessary questioning Council process.

#### **CRRA Meetings During 2005.**

Our Committee met on a bi-monthly basis but in order to provide better communication with Shire residents, a schedule of monthly CRRA general meetings was drawn up on a Pakenham/Out of Town basis to enable those people in outlying townships to attend a CRRA meeting. This proved to be satisfactory and meetings were held in Beaconsfield, Bunyip, Cockatoo and Gembrook townships alternately with Pakenham.

No general meetings were held in October/November due to the approaching Council election. However, a Meet the Candidates evening was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November which was a successful and informative occasion for both candidates and community members. In the lead up to the Council election, CRRA also participated in a Community Forum at Pakenham Racecourse which provided opportunity for residents to hear from election candidates and discuss the major issues.

#### **Interaction with Cardinia Shire Council**

Regular attendance by many CRRA members at the monthly Council meetings proved informative and brought a greater awareness to residents of the problems that existed and the reasons for the various unsatisfactory and serious situations that were occurring.

Council budgetary planning was monitored and criticized by CRRA members and residents on the basis of the enormous debt being incurred by the current 2005 Council and its administration plus the inappropriate major projects and development being undertaken while in some areas road maintenance and drainage problems were not receiving attention. Inequitable distribution of rates revenue was evident.

Submissions were forwarded regarding the 2005/06 Budget, the Local Laws revision and the Waste Management Strategy.

In May, 2005, CRRA members and the wider community were shocked by the action of the Council Chief Executive Officer who subjected a well respected and highly regarded resident to an unnecessary and unsustainable legal action based on a mis-reported version of a question asked at a local town meeting. Individual CRRA members and residents have made a financial contribution to assist towards the costs which the resident was forced to pay, but he could not be compensated for the personal stress and anxiety experienced. Further community concern was raised by another action of the Chief Executive Officer who angrily intimidated a member of the public gallery in the Council Chamber and later when it was reported to the Council, refused to be accountable for his inappropriate behaviour by claiming he was not employed at that moment.

Both these incidents were reported in writing to the Minister for Local Government but no action was taken.

### **Community Issues**

Two of the three major issues confronting various groups of residents were the subject of Ministerial Panel hearings (i.e. Amendment C66 proposed housing development on Pakenham Golf Course and the Readymix Quarry expansion plans and Environmental Effects Statement) and residents and CRRA members put enormous time and effort into written submissions, presentations and attendance at the hearings, both of which are now dependent upon a ministerial decision. The Pakenham 50 m. outdoor pool was the subject of a community rally and petitions totalling over 9,000 signatures requesting its restoration. With the election of new Councillors, it is likely the pool will eventually be refurbished and re-opened.

### **CRRA Newsletter**

A regular informative newsletter for ratepayers and residents "CRRA Chronicle" was distributed throughout the Cardinia Shire during 2005 and I wish to commend the editorial team for the very professional way they have produced it, and I thank them and also the printer assisting them for the time they have contributed to the project. The newsletter will be distributed quarterly during 2006.

### **Conclusion**

I wish to thank the all CRRA 2005 Committee members for their commitment, support, and encouragement during the past year and for their time contributed to all of our practical activities. I also would like to acknowledge the perseverance and dedication of the original 2003/04 Committee who must share the good results achieved.

To the various active members and supporters who have given timely advice, practical assistance and hospitality I also say thank you.

The election campaign proved what can be done by a team of willing people who all want the same outcome and now, due to the willingness of good people to stand for election and also to the good sense and wonderful support demonstrated by the majority of Cardinia Shire residents who voted for them, we have a new group of Councillors who have declared themselves willing to listen to the community who elected them and be responsive to our views and opinions. I congratulate them on what they have achieved to date and particularly on the basis of the ten points put forward by CRRA prior to the election

I urge all ratepayers and residents, whether CRRA members or not, to support and encourage your new local Councillor. Pay attention to Council activities and take advantage of the convenient Council meeting time of 7 p.m. and the community friendly atmosphere.

We must also be mindful of the fact that the previous Council and their chief administrator have left a painful financial legacy which will no doubt result in some difficult decisions to be faced. I would like to think that our new Councillors will trust the ratepaying community and deliver to us the transparency and openness that we have all discussed and agreed upon prior to the election. In this regard, CRRA will be requesting a quarterly ratepayer briefing during 2006

The motto for the CRRA year ahead? Our Shire, our rates, our say!

Gloria O'Connor  
President, CRRA.

16<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

**Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006, 7.30 pm  
Pakenham Public Hall, John Street, Pakenham**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome.**
- 2. Members present – see sheet provided and record name.**
- 3. Apologies.**
- 4. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting October 2005.**
- 5. Financial Report .**
- 6. President's Report.**
- 7. Guest Speaker – Councillor W. Ronald  
Mayor, Cardinia Shire Council**
- 8. Election of Committee**
- 9. Short General Meeting 10.**
- 10. Meeting close – Coffee and tea available.**

