N the June 1961 issue of the University of Melbourne student magazine *Farrago*, the university archivist, Frank Strahan, made a call to all readers who might be holding the papers of student clubs and societies: “Have you any Uni. Archives?” Among the first to respond was the Students Representative Council, which would later play a central role in student protests at the university.

Many records of political and campaign clubs and societies were transferred to the University of Melbourne Archives (UMA) in the second half of the 1970s. These collections are among the inspirations for the exhibition *Protest*! Archives from the University of Melbourne, held in the Baillieu Library on the Parkville campus.

An exhibition on protest in the period around 1960 to 1980, drawn from the holdings of UMA, is not confined to records of student clubs and societies. UMA was established in June 1960 for two purposes: to preserve the archival records of the university and to build a broader research collection. The papers of some professors active in this period document not only their roles in teaching and research but also their contributions to reform and campaign organisations. This duality is most evident in cases where the arguments and forms of campaign action were underpinned by academic expertise. The roles of economist Kenneth Rivett and journalist and English academic Hume Dow in the Immigration Reform Group are examples. So too is the role of architectural historian George Tibbits in the environmental and heritage campaigns of the Carlton Association. Recently acquired university records show this campaign as the subject of a student project, triangulating academic expertise, student learning and community action. There are remarkable cases too of scholarly interests casting academics as witnesses to the major protest events of those years, such as French lecturer Stanley J. Scott’s study leave in Paris during the student uprising of May–June 1968. In 1973 new sources on Victorian labour history were brought to the attention of UMA through the research of Melbourne history graduate Carlotta Kellaway. It was previously assumed that the Australian National University’s Noel Butlin Archives would serve as the main repository for union records nationwide. But some Melbourne organisations seemed reluctant to let their records go to Canberra; others were reportedly destroying records. Proximity and direct contact with UMA staff convinced a number of Victorian unions to transfer their records to UMA from the mid–1970s. These acquisitions were consolidated by a wave of deposits following union restructuring in the early 1990s. The theme of protest since the 1850s is central to these trade union collections, but these holdings proved beyond the scope of this exhibition. Less well known are the collections of the community-based organisations supporting protest campaigns, which were identified in part through their associations with archives of the labour movement. Key collections represented in the exhibition are those of the peace movement, critically the Congress (later Campaign) for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD). Research interest in the peace collections was evident from the early 1980s. In 1982, UMA’s annual workshop with the History Department, led by Professor Greg Dening, took the archives of the peace movement as its subject, resulting in a series of catalogues, interviews and student essays.

The photographic and poster collections of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) are central to this exhibition. Initial instalments, mostly pamphlets, circulars and campaign material, came to UMA in late 1975, while another tranche of archival material and ephemeral publications followed the demise and deregistration of the CPA in 1990. The photographic collection of peace activist John Ellis chronicles anti-war and other activism from the anti-Vietnam War campaign of the 1960s to recent times.
PROTEST! Archives from the University of Melbourne

An exhibition held in the Leigh Scott Gallery, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne 20 February to 2 June 2013 curated by Suzanne Fairbanks and Katie Wood

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FROM PAGE 1

The poster collections of Melbourne history graduates, student activist and later mayor of the inner-Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy Ralph McLean, and previous UMA archivist and labour historian Andrew Reeves, add to the striking visual aspects of the exhibition.

The women’s movement was an early contributor to UMA’s collections, and in sufficient quantities for the Archives Board of Management to consider seeking from the National Council of Women a grant to catalogue these holdings. For example, papers relating to the Women’s Electoral Lobby’s (WEL) crucial 1972 federal election campaign came to UMA through the auspices of WEL’s University of Melbourne graduates and other associates as early as 1974. Pamphlets and documents of the more radical women’s liberation movement trickled in from the mid-1970s, relating for example to equal-pay activist Zelda d’Apro. These small deposits were later joined by a substantial collection gathered by the Victorian Women’s Liberation Archive, which began as a reading group in 1983.

The eventual transfer to the University of Melbourne of this collection, which contains a plenitude of banners, posters, T-shirts and badges, resulted from a partnership forged in 2000 and the keepers of the successor Victorian Women’s Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives to preserve this record of women’s activism. This partnership represents an evolution of the community-based archive, in which preserving the story of a movement is a form of activism in itself. This philosophy is still evident in the work of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, based in Melbourne and with strong historical connections to staff and students of the university, following the origins of the gay liberation movement.

Yet it is important to consider the gaps revealed by research for this exhibition. UMA holds little documenting the crucial Indigenous protest movements from the 1960s and 1970s marked by events such as the 1965 University of Sydney Freedom ride, the 1966 Wave Hill pastoral strike, the 1967 referendum campaign and the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy, to name but a few. As archivists we need to engage with the creators and custodians of collections that tell the story of Indigenous rights and protest movements, to find new models of collecting so that these important records can be preserved.

UMA holds evidence of solidarity with the Indigenous rights movement in the forms of posters, badges and photographs. But one voice in the exhibition evokes this above all: a recording of American singer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson’s appearance at a meeting of peace workers in Melbourne, introduced by “peace pastor” the Reverend Alf Dicker.1 The year was 1960 and the meeting was well attended by an enthusiastic if polite audience. Robeson in his engaging speech and unaccompanied song referred to issues of racism and civil rights for Australia’s Indigenous people.

Models of community archiving and partnerships with collecting institutions are being reinvigorated by challenges of the digital age, when the very nature of protest is being shaped by communications technologies of the Internet, social media and cloud computing. Recent examples ranging from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street suggest different ways in which archivists might assist in preserving evidence of today’s community protests and campaigns. While some of the organisational and technical issues are new, traditional issues of community identity, ownership, significance and access remain relevant. A workshop on collecting the archives of protest is a key event among the public programs for this exhibition.

Archives of the University of Melbourne document our contribution to positive social change as well as the difficulties faced by students, staff and the community at large.

The advantage of UMA as both a place for the preservation of historical records about the university and a research collection is the ability to document connections between the university and the community in reflecting on and addressing wider issues. University of Melbourne Archives is always placed as an organisation to preserve those connections and, as a research collection, to respond to new directions for collecting the archives of protest in a digital age.

2 Reference no. 1961.0030, University of Melbourne Students’ Representative Council Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
3 Reference no. 1984.0095, George Tibbles Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
4 Frank Strahan was also a member of the association and the collection following: reference no. 1984.0095, Carlton Association Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
5 Reference no. 1990.0006, Stanley Scott Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
7 Of the 37 unions that were approached, 28 agreed to transfer their archives for loan or copying, or expressed interest in doing so in the future.
8 The trade union collections are recoverable in the online resource Australian Trade Union Archives, www.atua.org.au.
9 These were well represented in a 1984 exhibition, documented in Andrew Reeves and Jennifer Frenney, Peace, progress, unity: Trade union posters and labour celebration, Melbourne: Archives Board of Management, University of Melbourne, and Library Council of Victoria, 1984.
12 This recording was found in reference no. 1979.0152, Campaigns for International Co-operation and Disarmament Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
13 Reference no. 1983.0081, Reverend Alf Dicker Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Front page header image based on John Ellis (photographer), Protest against President of Victoria Jeff Bennett, Melbourne, 1992, 9.0 x 13.0 cm (detail). Reference no. 1999.0081, UMA/I/902, John Ellis Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

1 Badge, Black rights = Black land rights, diameter 4.1 cm. Reference no. 2010.0011, folder 1, Victorian Women’s Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, University of Melbourne Archives.
PROTEST!

Archives from the University of Melbourne

PROTEST! movements—sustained expressions of collective disapproval or dissent—emerged as regular episodes in European public life during the 18th century. The student of Australian history can discern their presence from the very foundations of European settlement: Aboriginal resistance, convict rebellion, trade union organisation. Although protest has been a persistent feature of Australian history, its activity and significance have often been overlooked. This exhibition records the vibrancy and the impetus of Australian protest movements since the 1960s. It gives special attention to the place of the University of Melbourne and its students in these turbulent and fascinating events.

The conditions that incited the protests of the 1960s are well known. Post-war Australia was more impoverished than that of earlier years, but beset nonetheless by serious social divisions. Poverty was persistent, if mostly unrecognised. The Australian government pledged commitment to war in Vietnam and conscripted young men for service. Education was extended, but the experience of mass education was often profoundly alienating. In the mid-1960s only 60 per cent of tertiary students graduated; in 1970, 1,000 of the University of Melbourne’s 14,000 students were living below the poverty line. The university’s resources were insufficient, and the reportedly ‘deplorable’ conditions of the Baillieu Library inspired a protest meeting and a night-time demonstration as early as April 1964.4

Opposition to racism inspired the first serious student activism of these years. South Africa’s Sharpeville massacre of 1960 elicited protest, fundraising and a city procession (all mostly ignored by the local press).5 University of Melbourne students established a new organisation, Student Action, later that year; its members opposed the racially discriminatory policies of both major political parties at the federal election that soon followed. When Prime Minister Robert Menzies spoke at Kew City Hall, 500 students disrupted his meetings and the reportedly ‘deplorable’ conditions of the university’s resources.8

Their resource'.8

Of students’, he explained, ‘their daring, their commitment, their willingness to oppose’, conscription. On 30 September 1971 more than a hundred police stormed the barricaded Union House, looking for four draft resisters who had been offered sanctuary by students who had announced they would be operating a pirate radio station from the university. The raid caused thousands of dollars’ worth of damage, but the four were not among the 200 occupants, having escaped to Adelaide in a week where they were offered sanctuary at both Adelaide and Flinders universities.1

Many Australians were inspired by the cause of peace and opposed to the compulsion to bear arms, and the growing popularity and momentum of these campaigns stimulated much broader activism. Though the worker–student alliance of radical dreams remained largely elusive, there was often cooperation and mutual respect. In May 1969 University of Melbourne students rallied in defence of Tramways Union official Clarrie O’Shea, who had been gauged under the penal powers of the Arbitration Court. O’Shea reminded that workers and students came closer together during this struggle. ‘I have greatly admired the revolt of students’, he explained, ‘their daring, their resource’.1

Members of the university collaborated with trade unions in other ways. In late 1970 a Builders Labourers Federation ban on the building of a warehouse on disused railways land in Carlton—land that was subsequently given back to the people of Carlton as the Hardy-Gallagher Park—became the crowning achievement of the Carlton Association. Formed in the late 1960s to protect Carlton from inappropriate commercial and industrial development, this prototype resident action group benefitted from the expertise of University of Melbourne staff in matters legal and architectural.9 This successful example of resident activism in alliance with building workers spread to Sydney, where the spectacularly successful green bans movement saved many important environmental and heritage sites from destruction in the name of development.10

Students expressed environmental concern by participating in the green bans movement, joining or founding new groups such as Friends of the Earth, or experimenting in alternative lifestyles on the far north coast of New South Wales following the Aquarius Arts Festival in 1971.11

CONTINUED Page 4
When a public march in Sydney in 1978 was violently set upon by police, lesbians and gay men defiantly marched again. In 1981 their repeated claiming of the city’s streets was moved to summertime, and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, as it would become known, became a major public event. In these and other actions, previously private issues were advanced as matters of political argument and collective mobilisation. Activists changed the culture of public life and pressured state and national governments to consider wider reforms.11

Women’s liberationists continued in the 1970s to use unconventional tactics such as street theatre and demonstrations to campaign for equal pay; equality of opportunity; assistance with child care; birth control and legal abortion; and against male violence and sexism. They challenged the official commemorations of Australian military service on Anzac Day with competing protests that drew attention to the use of rape in war. University of Melbourne students also helped establish feminist magazines such as *Is/Is*’s *Voice* and important organisations such as the Rape Crisis Action Group. The more conventional Women’s Electoral Lobby, in which University of Melbourne staff and students figured prominently, became a nationally significant organisation from 1972.12

How should these campaigns be understood? An influential sociological tradition draws a sharp division between the ‘new’ social movements that emerged from P


21 Gay Liberation Front, broadsheet produced by the Gay Liberation Front at the University of Melbourne, 1972.


Poster produced by the Australian Union of Students, No ties with apartheid: *Demonstrate March 21!*, 62.9 x 43.4 cm. Reference no. 1980.0034, item 194, Ralph McLean Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
ACIAL discrimination in Australia, as manifested in what became known as the White Australia policy, had its origins in mid-19th century anxiety among European settlers about Chinese immigration during the gold rush and perceived threats to 'Australian' jobs. During this period and up until 1901, the New South Wales and Victorian governments presented the greatest opposition to non-European immigration, claiming that there would be no place for 'Asiatics' or 'coloureds' in the Australian future. This racism led, at the time of Federation, to the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which aimed to place certain restrictions on immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited immigrants.1

In force throughout the first half of the 20th century, the White Australia policy was initially reinforced by the events of World War II and the threat of Japanese invasion. The arrival of refugees, however, would create the first cracks in the rigorously racist laws, notably with Immigration Minister Harold Holt’s decision in 1949 to allow 800 non-European refugees to stay in Australia. The White Australia policy was not efficient and that it severely affected Australia’s reputation abroad. Publication of the pamphlet sparked a greater national movement, with immigration reform groups formed in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales (the last spearheaded by Ken Rivett after transferring to the University of New South Wales). A broader Victorian group, the Victorian Association for Immigration Reform (VAIR), also formed in 1960. Members of the Immigration Reform Group were influential in founding the organisation Student Action, which was established at the University of Melbourne and spread nationally. Thus what began as an informal study group turned into a successful, influential in national organisation, exerting pressure on government to reform immigration policy. Significant changes to immigration policy occurred during the 1960s and, while a racially restrictive policy remained in place until the 1970s, the Immigration Reform Group sparked debate and challenged attitudes, and therefore played a key part in successfully overturning racially discriminatory immigration policy.

After several meetings the Immigration Reform Group published a pamphlet entitled Control or colour bar? A proposal for change in Australia’s immigration policy.1 This pamphlet, together with a revised edition printed a few years later,2 outlined the history of the White Australia policy. Whilst analysing key objectives and arguing that non-Europeans should be admitted into Australia, the group also maintained that some form of regulation should remain. They argued, however, that the White Australia policy was not efficient and that it severely affected Australia’s reputation abroad. Publication of the pamphlet sparked a greater national movement, with immigration reform groups forming in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales (the last spearheaded by Ken Rivett after transferring to the University of New South Wales). A broader Victorian group, the Victorian Association for Immigration Reform (VAIR), also formed in 1960. Members of the Immigration Reform Group were influential in founding the organisation Student Action, which was established at the University of Melbourne and spread nationally. Thus what began as an informal study group turned into a successful, influential in national organisation, exerting pressure on government to reform immigration policy. Significant changes to immigration policy occurred during the 1960s and, while a racially restrictive policy remained in place until the 1970s, the Immigration Reform Group sparked debate and challenged attitudes, and therefore played a key part in successfully overturning racially discriminatory immigration policy.

3 Immigration Reform Group, Control or colour bar? A proposal for change in Australia’s immigration policy, Melbourne: Immigration Reform Group (printed by Melbourne University Press), 1960.
N 1962 Australia, in coalition with the United States of America and the South Vietnamese regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, went to war against the North Vietnamese communists led by Ho Chi Minh. In November 1964 the Australian parliament passed the Menzies government’s National Service Act, which required all young men to register for the army. The first conscripted servicemen were called up in 1966. Barely 20 years since World War II had ended with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in the midst of the cold war stand-off between the USA and its allies and the communist bloc, another generation of young Australian men went to war.

Conscription was conducted by a ballot process—the draft. All men were required to register on reaching 20 years of age, but only those whose birthdays were selected in a twice-yearly ballot would be compelled to serve two years in the army and five years in the army reserve. This was the generation entering Australian universities from the mid-1960s.

The Melbourne University Labor Club initially led student opposition to the war and its membership grew until it split in 1968 over the question of whether to be an activist or educative group. From this split came the Melbourne University Labor Club and its allies and the communist bloc, the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, which was gathering force and planning demonstrations for some time between April and June 1970.

In March 1970, the organisers of the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign were aware of the possibility that an invasion into North Vietnam was brewing and the use of tactical nuclear weapons was feared. When American and South Vietnamese troops were ordered to cross the border from Vietnam into Cambodia at the end of April 1970 to destroy North Vietnamese sanctuaries, soldiers and arms, public opinion was galvanised. The first moratorium demonstration on 8 May 1970 brought an estimated 100,000 people into Bourke Street to protest against the war in Vietnam.

By late 1970 Australia had begun to wind down its military presence in Vietnam and it continued its troop withdrawals throughout 1971. The last Australian troops came home in December 1972. The newly elected Whitlam Labor government suspended the national service scheme in the same month.
Poster, July 21st: National mobilisation against conscription, 48.0 x 34.0 cm. Reference no. 1979.0152, item 144, Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN’S DAY

DEMAND
end job discrimination
unemployment benefits
free, safe contraception
abortion on request
equal education
child care

FOR ALL WOMEN

March on March 8
10am City Square
WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Suzanne Fairbanks

In the midst of the social activism that characterised the late 1960s, the women's movement in Australia regained the public visibility it had first achieved at the beginning of the 20th century.1 The energy of women's renewed campaigns was directed into strategies of which two stand out: work for equal civil rights through the courts and government; and actions for personal and social liberation through consciousness-raising, direct activism and alternative arenas for self-expression.

The fight for civil equality had a long tradition in the Australian women's movement, but women were becoming frustrated. Following campaigns by unions and women in the post-war period, in 1969 the Arbitration Commission awarded equal pay for women, but only for strictly equal work. The commission's decision would have no impact on women who worked in predominantly 'female' jobs. Taking their lead from the early suffragists, Zelda D'Aprano (trade unionist and communist) and teachers Thelma Solomon and Alva Geikie chained themselves to the door of the Arbitration Commission in a very public protest, which attracted wide media attention.

The success of direct protest action in gathering publicity and support led to these women's forming, with Jessie 'Bon' Hull, the Women's Action Committee (WAC), which engaged in further public protest such as insisting on paying only 75 per cent of the fare on trams as they received 75 per cent of a male wage. Most importantly, in March 1972 WAC founded the Women's Liberation Centre in Melbourne, to provide a meeting place and support centre for feminists.

By 1972 women led by Beatrice Faust, a University of Melbourne graduate and civil liberties campaigner, established the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), which produced a form guide to all candidates in the December 1972 federal election. The results of WEL's Australia-wide survey of candidates' attitudes to child care, equality in education and work and planned parenthood were published in newspapers in November 1972. In Victoria WEL targeted sitting members of parliament in marginal seats on polling day. When Gough Whitlam led the Australian Labor Party to victory, women's issues were firmly to the fore.

At the University of Melbourne, the University Assembly formed a Women's Working Group, which first reported on the status of women at the university in 1975; this report was instrumental in forcing the university to adopt equal opportunity policies. In the Student Union, members of the Women's Liberation Group organised on campus and participated in wider demonstrations reported in Farrago. Marilyn Lake says that the women's movement was intensely literate, stimulated by a torrent of publications. Former student of the universities of Melbourne, Sydney and Cambridge, Germaine Greer, wrote the international bestseller The female eunuch, which pushed feminist debate in the direction of personal liberation, challenging women to define themselves and take charge of their sexuality. This challenge also informed lesbians in the women's movement. As Jean Taylor reflects, in 1973 lesbians began to act on their own behalf in Victoria by questioning discrimination within male gay liberation and the women's movement alike. Lesbian culture, meeting places, publications and social events began to flourish.

As Taylor says, the 1970s might have been 'one of the most vibrant and political decades in women's herstory, but it was certainly nowhere near the finish of either the WLM or radical lesbian feminism'. Indeed, the women's movement and the lesbian and gay movements have prompted some of the most enduring, and as yet incomplete, changes in Australian social life since the 1960s.

2 Lake, Getting equal, p. 220.
3 Lake, Getting equal, pp. 588–679.
5 Taylor, Brazen hussies, pp. 588–679.
6 Taylor, Brazen hussies, p. 677.
Poster, Gay Blue Jeans Day, 1973, 58.0 x 40.5 cm. Reference no. 1980.0034, Item 275, Ralph McLean Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.
Gay liberation

Suzanne Fairbanks and Graham Willett

In 1960s Australia, homosexual law reform was brought to the public arena in response to developments in Britain, initially by those who were concerned with civil liberties and wished to modernise Australian society. Unlike female homosexuality, which was judged sinful but remained legal, male homosexuality was a criminal offence vigorously prosecuted by police.1

In Britain in 1957, the Wolfenden Committee recommended decriminalisation of homosexual activity between consenting male adults in private. This idea was aired at the University of Melbourne when Rupert Cross of Magdalen College, Oxford, lectured at Wilson Hall in May 1962, in a scholarly consideration of the ‘unmaking’ of criminal laws on euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality and suicide.2

There were other early signs that the University of Melbourne was taking heed of the general push to support civil liberties. In 1964 the Debating Union held a gathering attended by 500 students in which an estimated 281 students voted for consideration of the ‘unmaking’ of criminal laws on euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality and suicide.2

In 1969 a lesbian organisation, the Daughters of Bilitis, was formed in Melbourne and in 1971 a local branch of the national Campaign Against Moral Persecution, with both male and female gay members, was established. And then came gay liberation. Dennis Altman, author of Homosexual: Oppression and liberation (1971), sparked the idea at a dinner in Carlton with gay men and women, some of them students at Melbourne. The Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front formed almost immediately and affiliated with the Student Union in August 1972.4

There was a euphoria of gay activism in the university, as ideas current amongst students over the Vietnam War and women’s liberation also entered the discourse of gay students: participatory democracy, direct public action to change society and personal consciousness-raising.5 The Melbourne University Gay Liberation Front was driven, though, by the power of people coming out, speaking and protesting publicly as socially enforced, oppressive silence and shame gave way to their growing gay pride.

At the end of 1972, the Gay Liberation Front sought to broaden its membership beyond the University of Melbourne and moved its headquarters to Carlton, although it continued its presence on campus through the pages of Farrago.6 It participated in Gay Pride Week in September 1973 with a program of events culminating in a picnic in the Royal Botanic Gardens. This proved more successful than the Sex Liberation Dance it held in the university’s Union House, which ended in confrontation between gay and lesbian activists and science-education students.7 Gay Pride marches were held in the capital cities of all of the eastern states, but Sydney’s was marked by police clashes and arrests, events recurring in the first-ever Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in 1978.

The year 1973 marked the beginning of a new type of gay activism: in Melbourne, gay student activism moved into the Australian Union of Students; there was greater willingness on the part of the Whitlam federal government and the state governments to consider homosexual issues for reform; commercial ventures such as clubs and bars opened up new social opportunities; and activism splintered into a multitude of single-issue action groups.8 Nevertheless, in the first decade of gay politics, the gay community had become more comfortable with openness and activism. The movement was able to draw on these strengths in the decades ahead, in its continuing campaigns for decriminalisation and legal equality and when confronting the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS.9
Resident action groups began to surface in Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to a growing concern among many communities that activities of state and municipal governments, along with those of private developers, were destroying the environmental, historical and social fabric of their neighbourhoods. Across Australia, the social passivity of the 1950s was giving way to an era of protest and direct action, with people no longer willing to accept unquestioningly the decisions of those in authority. In Melbourne this was especially felt in the inner-northern suburb of Carlton, with its wealth of Victorian-era architecture. In 1969 the Carlton Association emerged from an upsurge in community concern, to protest against some of the most controversial redevelopment plans of the era.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a period of significant change for Carlton. The previous decade had introduced substantial transformations to the area, which eroded much of its working-class, residential charm. Its characteristic terrace houses had begun to be demolished as part of the Housing Commission of Victoria’s urban renewal plans. The expansion of Melbourne’s central business district, the Royal Women’s Hospital and the University of Melbourne were threatening Carlton’s residential fringes, and a significant influx of young professionals began changing its working-class character. By the late 1960s the combination of these forces led to the formation of one of the most influential and powerful examples of residential action and protest that Australia had ever experienced.1

Largely spearheaded by members of the new professional middle class who had moved into the area, the Carlton Association benefitted from the skills of local academics and professionals, forming an educated, well-organised leadership from the outset. Although the association had little student involvement, it was closely tied to the University of Melbourne through a number of staff members.2 Today the University of Melbourne Archives houses a large portion of records from these individuals, including George Tibbits and Miles Lewis from the Faculty of Architecture and former university archivist Frank Strahan, offering a rich source of information on the Carlton Association and its many battles.

At its peak in the early 1970s the Carlton Association had over two thousand members and was described as ‘the most influential suburban watchdog in Melbourne. It has the biting power of a yard full of Dobermans.2

3 Its concerns ranged widely, from the demolition of houses and the expansion of freeways to the alienation of parklands. It was successful in preventing the Housing Commission of Victoria from demolishing a 200-acre block of Victorian terrace houses, deemed ‘slums’, for redevelopment into medium- and high-density apartment blocks.3 It was the first resident action by citizens Against the Freeway Action Centre, in Peter Yule (ed.), Carlton: A history, Melbourne: Carlton Residents Association and Melbourne University Press, 2004, pp. 156–65.

4 The freeway can be stopped, Reference no. 2012.0288, Architecture Student Projects Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

5 A survey of how Carlton residents perceive the quality of their environment and the effects of traffic generated by the Eastern Freeway (F19), poster project, 1980. Reference no. 2012.0288, Architecture Student Projects Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

2 Professor Miles Lewis, interviewed by Alice Gibbons, 27 November 2012.
5 Richard J. Reddinweg, Green bans: The birth of green bans in Australia to enlist the help of the Builders Labourers Federation, by imposing a green ban in order to preserve some disused railway land for public use and prevent the construction of a warehouse.5 It was also an active force in protesting against the F19 freeway extension through the area. The success of the association can be attributed to its ability not just to protest, but to fight campaigns. In all of its battles it was effective in using to its advantage well-argued reports, correspondence and dialogue with public authorities, public meetings, door-to-door contact and the press. It not only marshalled the support of trade unions, the National Trust, government departments and professional institutes, but also made every effort to involve all of the community in its actions by translating notices and other information into several languages, and distributing them widely. The Carlton Association officially ended in December 1979. By this time many of the major threats to the area had been faced and defeated, and Carlton had been transformed from a ‘slum’ area to a highly desirable place to live. Four decades on from the Carlton Association’s heyday, many of its original members still live in the area.
HE defining character of the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s was the student protest. In the eyes of their elders, these unkempt, long-haired radicals were bent on disruption and destruction. For the protester, they were fighting for a better world and their grand social visions encompassed the universities and their aims. The University of Melbourne had a reputation as one of the quieter campuses, particularly in comparison to its rowdy younger counterparts Monash and La Trobe, but it certainly did not escape the storm.

The student movement inhabited the formal structures of student representation but at the same time was often in opposition to these same structures. This was partly because these bodies reflected what was becoming an outmoded vision of the university community. There were two main bodies of representation: the University Union and the Students Representative Council.

The University Union was established in 1884 under the guidance of the vice-chancellor and was intended to be a social club for undergraduates, staff and graduate students. The Students Representative Council was formed in 1906 out of the Sports Union (which had been a feature of campus life since 1883) and in 1923 was given two elected positions on the university’s governing body, the University Council. The National Union of Australian University Students was founded in 1937, and became the Australian Union of Students in 1970, with a decidedly more radical reputation.

From the late 1960s political groups flourished and as they did, the ubiquitous broadsheet littered campus. Every week, tens of roneoed rants and exposés, foolscap-sized and in every pastel colour, put forth the positions of the student clubs. PAX and Downdraft represented the War Resisters’ International and the Melbourne University Draft Resisters respectively. Catch-22 agitated on behalf of Students for a Democratic Society while the Liberal Students’ Paper Tiger—as well as An OldFashioned Look produced by ‘The Wizard’ (Ian Channel, a counter-cultural icon who disliked most student activists)—filled out the spectrum.

Radical student politics has almost always been a feature of life at the University of Melbourne. Important figures in the history of the Communist Party of Australia, such as Guido Baracchi, Ian Turner and Ralph Gibson, cut their teeth in battles against the university’s conservative students. The reception was not always indifferent; for instance in 1932 a mob of hundreds of students danked two communist sympathisers in the lake (which no longer exists) and ordered them to sing ‘God save the King’. This caused a stir and became just one incident in a long debate over the tolerance of free speech. Such contention largely died away in the 1950s as the complacency prevalent in broader society seeped onto campus.1

By the early 1960s there were signs of a revival in student political activity. Student Action, a protest group that spoke out against the White Australia policy, was formed in 1961. In 1962 the Victorian Premier, Henry Bolte, had his tyres slashed whilst on campus, prompting the vice-chancellor to call for an inquiry into student demonstrations.

But it was in the late 1960s that things began to heat up. Inspired by the direct action of students overseas—including the civil rights movement in the United States and the insurrectionary movement of May 1968 in Paris—the campaign against the Vietnam War and conscription radicalised.2

The year 1971 was the high point of student protest at the University of Melbourne. That year saw multiple ‘lock-ins’ (where students barricaded a building so that staff could not leave) of the Raymond Priestley Building, the administrative centre of the campus, in protest over the university’s admissions policy. There was also a four-day occupation of Union House in support of a number of draft resisters.3 Anti-war activity on campus declined with the announcement of the troop withdrawal and protest against the university itself was somewhat ameliorated by the establishment of the University Assembly (although a few issues remained outstanding, such as the provision of child care). The women’s and gay liberation movements developed, while off-campus, union activity intensified. The legacy of the student movement was to remain in the minds of generations to follow and it changed Australian society for good.

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Slingshot used by students in the May 1968 Paris street fighting, and original leaflets from the movement.

Reference no. 1990.0006, Stanley Scott Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Posters produced by the Australian Union of Students, Support the education mobilisation: All out on April 28, 62.1 x 88.3 cm. Reference no. 1980.0034, item 234, Ralph McLean Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Badges, Education; A fair go for all, diameter 3.2 cm. Reference no. 2010.0011, folder 1, Victorian Women’s Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, University of Melbourne Archives.

Badge produced by the Australian Union of Students, AUS is our union, diameter 4.3 cm. Reference no. 2010.0011, folder 3, Victorian Women’s Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, University of Melbourne Archives.

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PROTEST! Archives from the University of Melbourne — Page 13
The turmoil and questioning of authority that characterised the 1960s were not restricted to events and issues external to the University of Melbourne. As students and staff found their voices on a host of issues, that questioning and the demand for a more participatory democracy found their next target in the university itself.

Parallel to the growth of the social movements, the changing nature of the university prompted introspection. The increase in the number of students and staff weakened the traditional bonds that had maintained the university as a rather close-knit community with informal structures dominated by the professors, albeit one with its fair share of controversy. In the late 1960s calls from non-academic staff (represented by the General Staff Association) for greater input into the running of the university and for better-regulated conditions were also growing. Further to this, the increasing importance of Commonwealth funding encouraged the university to self-consciously articulate its purpose within the national economic and training agenda.

In a sign of the times, a general meeting of students in June 1969 called for a commission to 'examine the nature and structure of the University, including its place in modern society'. But the issue of university governance really came to the fore the following year with the rejection of the transfer application of Albert Langer, a leading activist who had been indefinitely suspended from Monash University. The newly established Students for a Democratic Society campaigned vigorously against the admissions regulations, and found an audience as the political attitude of students and staff became increasingly militant in 1970–71.

On 6 May 1971 a meeting of over 1,000 students carried out a 'lock-in' of the Raymond Priestley Building. The vice-chancellor, David Derham, wrote an open letter to the university declaring, 'Such action can achieve nothing. It can only impede rational discussion and improvement in the management of our affairs'. At a student-staff forum called in the aftermath and attended by 3,000 people, the idea of an inquiry was again presented as a favourable solution to general calls for greater openness from the administration. A month later, the University Council passed a resolution calling for submissions on how to 'organise, fund and conduct' an inquiry into the 'aims, functions and system of government' at the university.

A succession of elected working groups developed their proposals over several years. They grappled with the tension inherent in attempting to radically reshape the consultative mechanisms of an essentially hierarchical institution. The final recommendation shelved the notion of a once-off inquiry in favour of a permanent body with a similar mandate for reform. For the more radical members of the groups this conclusion evaded the question of how to implement change in the very nature of the university, by focusing instead on the question of effective organisation of a consultative body, to be known as the University Assembly. The assembly, made up of 114 members elected directly by staff and students, met for the first time in July 1974. The university’s response reveals its ambivalence towards the calls for democratisation. On the one hand, its acceptance of the University Assembly contrasted with the attitudes of other universities such as Monash, which refused such measures outright. On the other hand, the vice-chancellor was clearly loath to agree that such a body should have significant powers of inquiry.

The University Assembly operated by the method of working groups established on a range of topics. These groups researched and then reported on their issues and the assembly as a whole advocated for the findings to be implemented. This method of working to change the university was a product of the way in which the project had evolved and no doubt reflected the influence of those senior university academics and administrators who were involved.

Despite the difficult relationship between the University Assembly’s radical wing and the university administration, the assembly did achieve a number of important aims during its life span. It influenced significant changes to university policy in fields such as confidentiality of university records; reorganisation of university theatre; establishment of the Office of Prospective and New Students; an organisation for postgraduate students and child-care facilities; and the university’s condemnation of South Africa’s apartheid regime. One of the strongest working groups was the Women’s Working Group, whose two reports on the status of women at the university were instrumental in forcing the university to adopt equal opportunity policies.

The University Assembly was a fixture of campus life for 15 years, delivering into an extraordinary range of topics and practices through its working groups, forums and publications. Many of the key figures of the 1970s and 1980s, both students and staff, feature in its list of elected members. But much as its birth was a product of the heady days of the late 1960s, its death seems to have been a product of the ‘managerialism’ of the 1980s, although the causes of its demise were as much debated as anything that passed through the assembly.

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DON'T LET THE UNIVERSITY CUT CHILDCARE!

The Administrative Committee of the University is considering withdrawing, or seriously cutting, its contribution to the running of the two University Childcare Centres. This withdrawal of funds will seriously impair the ability of many staff and students to work and to study.

Public Meeting To Save Childcare

Wednesday 7th September
1 pm
Theatre B
Old Arts Building

The "Save Childcare" campaign is supported by:
The SRC, Assembly, XFCU, UMPU, Student Union, GSA, MUSA.
Verity Burgmann
Dr Verity Burgmann is a professor of political science at the University of Melbourne. She has published 12 books on Australian history and politics—many of them concerned with labour and other social movements—including *Power and protest* (1993), *Green bans, red union* (1998), *Power, profit and protest* (2003) and *Climate politics and the climate movement in Australia* (2012).

Katrina Dean
Dr Katrina Dean is the university archivist at the University of Melbourne. She has published several articles on the history of science. A co-edited book, *William Henry Fox Talbot: Beyond photography*, on the Victorian scholar and his archive, will be published by Yale University Press in 2013.

Suzanne Fairbanks
Suzanne Fairbanks is a senior archivist at the University of Melbourne Archives. She has an MA on the history of women in the 19th-century British labour movement and an MA in archives and records.

Alice Gibbons
Alice Gibbons is a recent graduate of the Master of Art Curatorship program at the University of Melbourne. She is particularly fascinated by cross-disciplinary collections that include art, ethnographic, natural history and social history objects and has been researching science and medical themes for upcoming exhibitions at Melbourne Museum.

Sean Scalmer
Dr Sean Scalmer teaches history in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He has written a number of books on the history of protest, including *Dissent events* (2002), *Activist wisdom* (with Sarah Maddison, 2006), and *Gandhi in the West* (2011).

Emily Were
Emily Were recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Melbourne, majoring in history and art history. She will begin a Master of Art Curatorship in 2013.

Graham Willett
Dr Graham Willett was until recently a senior lecturer in Australian studies at the University of Melbourne, and is now an independent historian. After many years as an activist in gay, left and trade union work, he turned to researching and writing about gay, lesbian and queer history. He is the author of *Living out loud: A history of gay and lesbian activism in Australia* (2000) and co-editor of *Secret histories of queer Melbourne* (2011). He has been a committee member of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives since 1994.

Katie Wood
Katie Wood graduated with first-class honours in history from the University of Melbourne and a Graduate Certificate of Information Management from RMIT University. She is currently the reference archivist at the University of Melbourne Archives.

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