Don’t sweep charter of rights under the Carr-pet

I NEVER thought I would ever agree with former NSW premier Bob Carr. In fact, I would point the finger at the very people who would blame me for the ill of this great State. But Carr last week urged the public to oppose moves to introduce a charter of rights.

And that is something I heartily agree with. A charter of rights would shift the power from elected politicians to judges not chosen by the public — and that is a very dangerous step.

Unlected lawyers and legal men, who will tell us they know best and that freedoms will be advanced if we opt for a human rights’ bill. They won’t. What Carr called ‘telephone box’ minorities will end up with more power and rights than they deserve and the majority of us will end up paying. The state of Victoria adopted a charter without any proper consultation — other than listening to the bleating of some very loudmouthed lawyers — who will always want to tell us what is best before gorging themselves on fat legal fees. We already have a democracy based on the principles of common law, parliamentary democracy and freedom of speech.

But he warned, advocates for a bill of rights have realised a change in the constitution is needed, so are now pushing for the ‘softer’ option of a charter of rights. Britain’s Blair government introduced a bill of rights about a decade ago. Since then that country has descended into legal anarchy and has seen greater rights afforded to minorities over the majority.

The author of that system has already admitted the returns’ only benefit has been to import the balancing mechanisms of a growing breed of greedy human rights lawyers.

APN NEWSPAPERS 2009 COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

LATE MAIL

My son should have returned to school today, along with a few thousand other Coffs Coast kids.

Sadly he is being forced to take another day off because teachers gave themselves an Anzac public holiday.

Never mind the rest of us are back at work.

We ordinary folk are left to suffer paying out for two more days childcare while our over-worked teachers take more time off.

■ THE makers of South Park (on SBS) have created a look-alike of British PM Gordon Brown. In a forthcoming episode about the credit crunch, the most hated PM in British history will be seen leading an international party (is Kev in there?) to steal money from aliens to stimulate the economy.

So now we know . . . this is an intergalactic recession which began in outer space.

You really couldn’t make it up, could you.

■ AUSTRALIA was right to boycott the UN conference on racism we all knew was a complete and utter waste of time. After Iran’s president ‘I’m A Dinner Jacket’ launched a vitriolic anti-Semitic attack on Israel, the conference descended into nothing more than a platform for Islamic and African tyrants to pour hatred on the Jews.

■ IT’S OFFICIAL: fatty’s cause global warming on Planet Girth. Being overweight is bad for the environment as well as your health, according to a new study.

Researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found that overweight people were likely to be more responsible for carbon emissions than slim people because they consume more food and fuel.

I wonder who Penny Wong and Bob Brown will fit that idea into the modelling for the planet?

■ SPOTTED on a sign in Thailand recently, advertising donkey rides: Would You Like to Ride Your Own Ass?

Blow me over with a gravestone

I REALLY have heard it all now and, let me say, I have unearthed plenty of politically correct madness in recent times.

But councils in England have spent more than $3 million in the last two years sending health and safety officials to test gravestones. Councils are ‘tole testing’ gravestones in order to ensure visitors to the cemeteries are not injured should one fall over and hurt them. This is public money being used here but bureaucrats know no bounds when it comes to wasting our money. Health and safety is not about wrapping people up in cotton wool — it is about proper risk management and having the best systems in place to protect workers — stupid safety rules don’t help.

Peter Rowe FIGHTING FIT @ 50+

OMING originally from a country that spits at and twists its returning heroes, April 25 for me is one of the very best things about this wide-brown land.

Australians celebrate and remember those who dug the well for us to drink at like no other nationality.

And I love it.

Anzac Day is a very special day on the calendar, a day we pay tribute to those who died at Gallipoli and on the western front in WW1.

In Tobruk and on the Burma Railway during WWII.

And not forgetting battles fought in more recent times, where our own Matthew Locke was killed in Afghanistan.

On Saturday I stood silent and then applauded, watched my young son Harry march with his school and I laughed as a game of two-up took place at my local pub.

I now know the rules but not being a gambler I just stood and watched as some handed over notes of a variety of denominations — while others smiled as they gleefully accepted them.

We got as high as $100 on a head, I’m sure they got higher after we left.

The whole game fascinates me and hearing tales of Diggers betting on the outcome the night before the battle makes me laugh as agame of two-up took place at my local pub.

Many years ago, as a young sailor, I travelled past the shores of Gallipoli on route to Istanbul.

It was dawn on a cool September morning and returning from the galley with freshly baked rolls and a mug of hot sweet tea I was halted by a tannoy alert informing anyone on deck and paying tribute to those fallen heroes of that horrific conflict.

It is a memory I will always cherish, even more now I have since been an Australian — and a proud one at that.

Anzac Day and the spirit of the Anzac is part of our heritage and equally a part of our future.

Last week I had the great privilege to talk to Dorrigo’s VC hero Mark Donaldson.

His act of bravery is something I doubt I would have the courage to ever carry out.

Yet, like many heroes, he does not want to be classed as one. He was only in his words, doing his job.

And he’s right: remember, respect and say thank you.

Anzac Day and all it means — and how it is remembered — is something that marks this nation out as one of the best.

A country fit for heroes and the best bloody place on earth.

■ FINALLY . . . I was reminded of the stiff upper-lipped English padre visiting troops the night before the battle at El Alamein.

He passed through the troops and arrived at the Aussie contingent.

‘Have you come here to die?’ he asked in a typical Pommie matter-of-fact way.

‘No padre, we came here yester-day,” quipped the chirpy little bloke from the EU.

It is an Anzac Day story.

Anzac Day brings out the best in all

Old man’s crumpet . . . Any man older than 45 will probably agree with me that Pommie actress Helen Mirren is a good sort. Dame Helen, as she is these days, was spotted in London last week at the world premiere of new movie, State of Play, with local legend Russell Crowe. Lucky Rusty.