

THE GLEBE SOCIETY INC.

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The Hon Kristina Keneally MP
Minister for Planning and Minister for Redfern Waterloo
Level 35 Governor Macquarie Tower,
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Dear Minister

BAYS PRECINCT COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

I write on behalf of the Glebe Society to express our deep frustration with developments around the Bays Precinct Community Reference Group (Reference Group) and to make some proposals by which the, now fragile, community consultation process might have some trust and capacity restored.

While we had some reservations, based on recent history and your announcement of two contentious Bays projects, the Glebe Society accepted your invitation to join the Reference Group with hope and some optimism. It seemed that, at last, the Government was providing a context in which the community could participate in a rational and integrated planning process for the Bays Precinct looking to the immediate, medium and longer terms.

Like others, we have over recent years made numbers of pleas to the Government to call a halt to ad hoc and non-consultative planning decisions in the Bays Precinct. Most recently, we wrote to the Premier (copied to yourself and Minister Tripodi) in April 2009. In that letter we pleaded with the Government to put in place an integrated planning regime for the precinct which acknowledged: the interrelationship of the harbour and foreshore sites and their relationship with the rest of the city; the needs and wishes of local communities and made proper provision for services, particularly public transport links.

We understood that the Government's Bays Precinct consultation and planning process was an attempt to deliver such an integrated approach and that, with the exception of the Passenger Terminal and Bailey's

Refuelling plant, there would be no further one-off, ad hoc development decisions taken before this new process had completed its work.

Like others in the Reference Group we were therefore surprised and disappointed by Minister Tripodi's announcements in relation to Blackwattle Bay coming as it did only one week after the our first meeting. While we are, of course, aware of the lengthy discussions that had occurred in relation to development in that part of the Precinct and the earlier Rozelle Bay Master Plan, we had understood that the new process provided the first opportunity for proposals for Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays to be assessed in the context of a wider Bays' development plan.

When we and others raised these concerns at the second Reference Group meeting, we were informed that, contrary to previous understandings- and our very clear terms of reference- we were not to concern ourselves with the wider Bays Precinct, but confine our advice to three sites: White Bay, White Bay Power Station and Glebe Island.

This post-hoc redefinition of our terms of reference is both disappointing and insulting. We can understand the position of those on the Reference Group who argue that community members should immediately walk away from a process which appears to be somewhat of a sham. The Glebe Society is, however, reluctant to take such drastic action to abandon the process yet. The site is too important, and the community has lobbied for too long for some input, for us to abandon the process while there is any possibility that it can be retrieved and some trust restored.

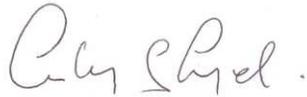
We have discussed options at length within the Glebe Society and with other community colleagues. We believe that if the Government is serious about the consultative process it has initiated, if it cares about generating any trust from the community, there are some actions which could possibly salvage the process even at this stage.

We urge you to consider:

- Accepting the invitation of the Reference Group to attend the next meeting to provide a direct explanation of the process and expected outcomes
- Reaffirming the terms of reference as they were on distribution – ie encompassing an integrated approach to the whole of the Bays Precinct
- Creating a direct link between the Reference Group and the Task Force so that there is some mechanism by which the community can have assurance that their input is appropriately considered in that context. From experience, we know there are various well-tried mechanisms by which this can be achieved. Perhaps the most obvious and straightforward would be some common membership – 2 members of the Reference Group to serve on the Task Force.
- Allowing the Reference Group a more realistic meeting schedule and better meeting procedures so actual debate and discussion of topics and principles are possible
- Ensuring that the process by which a paper from the Reference Group to the Task Force is developed allows a robust review of its contents by the Reference Group. The current process as we understand it, may leave the Glebe Society with no option but to disown the paper and the process.

The Glebe Society is keen to participate in a consultative and constructive planning process for the Bays Precinct. We are very hopeful that you and your Government will act to retrieve the process you announced and into which we and others entered with good faith.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lesley Lynch".

Dr Lesley Lynch
President
The Glebe Society Inc

0416497508

17th August 2009

cc The Hon Joe Tripodi MP, Minister for Ports and Waterways;
The Hon Verity Firth Member for Balmain