

**President's Report for period from August 2010 to end December 2010**  
**The Glebe Society Annual General Meeting**  
**Benledi Meeting Room**  
**28<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

This report covers the period from the 2010 AGM until the end of the year.

General Glebe Society (TGSI) business continued as usual and several long term major issues re-emerged.

**Harold Park.** The first City of Sydney public consultation on Harold Park had been held in December 2009. As there were many aspects of the initial Government Architect's Office proposal that greatly concerned the community, we initiated, and sustained throughout 2010, a well organised and strongly supported public campaign to achieve changes to that proposal.

This campaign entered a new stage in the last quarter of the year drawing us into a renewed flurry of activity.

The Council and the NSW Harness Racing Club reached agreement about major contended elements of the proposal. This allowed the formal process to proceed another step. We tracked this through the council planning committee and the Central Sydney Planning Committee meetings to ensure our documented position was noted and understood.

The resulting draft planning controls and the draft planning agreement for Harold Park went on exhibition on the 17<sup>th</sup> November with opportunity to respond by 15<sup>th</sup> December. This was our last intervention point to achieve movement on the proposal.

The Harold Park working group of the TGSI again analysed the voluminous planning and background technical documentation, met with council planning staff and called our third Harold Park public meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010. That meeting endorsed a detailed public resolution which we submitted to Council on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

This achieved movement on a few critical points. Most importantly it persuaded Council to reduce the space for retail activity by 50% and incorporate specific prohibitions on individual large scale retail developments. We also got some amelioration of the impact of building heights - although we failed to have the height of buildings reduced to a maximum of 5 storeys - and we got a requirement for a heritage interpretation strategy to be developed.

In summary: I think we did well in this campaign. We did not achieve the outcome we regarded as best for the community - most significantly the height of the buildings and the residential density are too high and the traffic implications pretty horrific - but I have no doubt the outcome would have been much worse (and much closer to the original proposal of the Harness Racing Club) without our efforts. We have achieved another large addition to our community's open space and this will include an all-weather sports field; we have blocked the possibility of inappropriate, large scale retail activity; we do have land allocated for affordable rental housing and we have secured 500 square metres of the tramsheds for community activities.

While rightly congratulating ourselves, it must be acknowledged that the determination of the Lord Mayor and the Council to protect the 35% public space and the affordable housing and the heritage status of the tramsheds was critical to this positive outcome.

**The City Plan** emerged in draft form after a long period of silence. This is not an easily accessible document, but it is a critical long term planning document for the Sydney LGA. It will be the major planning legacy of this Council. Its development has been a major enterprise and the Glebe Society worked closely with Council during the early phases. While there is much that is excellent in the Plan, at the end of 2010 the Glebe Society had major concerns about some aspects of the draft. While some of these related to errors and problems that had been previously identified, the biggest issues resulted from State Government intervention and overlays. These concerns are shared by other community groups across the LGA.

**Affordable Housing Project Cowper Street** TGSI got the first intimations that a renewal project which we strongly supported in principle might be about to go seriously awry under the auspices of the Housing Department surfaced.

**The Bays Precinct** The Government continued its silence on its reaction to the input of the community through the Report of the Bays Precinct Community Consultative Group in March 2010. We had to wait until February 2011 for their very disappointing response. The only positive was that it was too late for them to act on their response. During this period of silence we had to live with more one-off development decisions in the Bays Precinct which ignored the community planning principles. (eg design of the CPT in White Bay, the now aborted decision to move the heritage fleet to Blackwattle Bay).

**Non Planning Matters** TGSI was very active on other fronts – particularly with the ever vibrant social events program, the documentation of existing (and potential) plaques project initiated in partnership with Council and with Erica and Peter Robinson taking a leading role; ongoing activity in the biodiversity area and successful Glebe walks and harbour cruise on the Waratah.

**Glebe Society Christmas Party on the 10<sup>th</sup> December at Fishermans Wharf.** Another great success.

**State of TGSI** In January I handed over the President's role to Liz Simpson Booker who was willing to step up, yet again, for the Society and take on the role until a President was appointed at this AGM.

TGSI remains a healthy and active community body. Its range of activities is broad and growing. The compulsory replacement of the President every two years is a wise renewal strategy for the society – and, with a few delays here and there, continues to work well. It is, however, balanced by a continuity strategy through other positions, and particularly the Secretary's position which Liz Simpson Booker held for 10 years. This position is the public officer for the society and has an important role in its activities. Since Liz stepped down from the role we have not found anyone willing to take it on as an ongoing activity. This is not an optimal position for the society.

Surely in this room today we have someone who would be willing and game enough to make a spontaneous community minded decision and put their hand up for nomination as Secretary.

Finally: I had a fantastic two years. It was an eye opener to experience first-hand, the dedication, energy and professionalism of the TGSI management committee. As a bonus, I have a transformed relationship with my locality and quite a few more friends.

Two necessary tributes: I think we are very fortunate in our Council- though it is not yet perfect. I also found our MP Verity Firth to be an exemplary local member. Sadly more than I could say for our then State Government.

I now hand over to Liz to give the main report for 2011.

Lesley Lynch