

STRATEGIC PLANNING 2013 – 2019: PROGRESS REPORT TO MEMBERS

Every five years or so The Glebe Society prepares a medium term strategy. This is then reviewed annually against contextual changes and results from our actions and activities. Thus annually we review our core business and every five years revivify TGS through an examination of the fundamentals of the Society and its *modus operandi*.

The Management Committee agreed (13/11/2012) that we would complete a strategic review for 2013-2019 before the AGM in 2013. The process involved discussion of probable changes in context¹ and a strategy workshop April 7, which the Management Committee attended along with other members and non-members with special expertise or insights. This discussion paper continues the strategy process. The workshop addressed the major themes of community and influence² under rubrics taken from the City of Sydney *Sustainable Sydney 2030* Plan. The focus was on what Glebe should be like in 2019 and how TGS can influence what happens in our community. The detail of the planning process is contained in a separate file, [Strategy Process and Documents](#).

In the lead up to the workshop, major submissions made by the Society were available on the [website](#). Participants were asked to consider blue sky options; to recognise but not dwell upon TGS successes or failures; to consider future directions of the Society in light of expected contextual changes.

¹ See discussion papers to Management Committee and subcommittee considerations.

² Thematic analysis of all strategy papers back to 1997 revealed that all topics fit within these themes which are true to the constitutional aims of TGSi.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In the lead up to and during the workshop likely contextual changes impacting on Glebe were explicitly acknowledged or implicitly assumed. The main factors have been captured in the following table.

CONTEXT	PROBABLE CHANGES	POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
POLITICAL	Current changes to planning laws will lessen community voice and reduce local government power. The decline in State Agency duties will continue and accelerate. The power of developers will increase.	Increase environment, heritage and planning capability. Involve TGS membership and wider community. Increase marketing capability. Form effective partnerships.
ECONOMIC	The national indicators will grow around the norm. Glebe as a whole will be wealthier but with a widening income gap. Demand for inner city housing will rise.	Define community and focus. Conserve The Glebe Estate and the character of Glebe.
SOCIAL	Glebe will be denser, younger, have more children, more apartment dwellers, be more intrinsically motivated.	Protect community character. Influence infrastructure plans.
TECHNOLOGICAL	NBN will increase broadband speeds, technology uses, innovation and competition for attention.	Increase technology capability. Improve connectedness.

ANALYSIS

The Glebe Society has maintained relevance and influence since 1969 by activism and close attention to its core business of environment, heritage and planning to. This will continue to be so but it will need to increasingly organise beyond suburb boundaries and engage with other community groups. In a very short time (since August 2012) we have seen the heroic growth in size and influence of the Better Planning Network. It intends to disband after the Planning Bills become law but it or something like it will need continuing support and capability.

For the Society to prosper and continue as a significant influence on Glebe’s amenity we need to build our core business capabilities; look to succession plans; increase the involvement of

members; widen our community influence; form effective partnerships; learn from BPN and other networks. Our first consideration must be to keep doing what we do well. This means we should:

- Increase environment, heritage and planning capability.
- Involve TGS membership and wider community.
- Increase marketing capability.
- Form effective partnerships.

Within Glebe there are several overlapping communities. Social planners typify these by the agencies that serve them (with various degrees of effectiveness). So we have FLAG, GYSS, GCDP, Housing NSW, Heart of Glebe, Community Action Group etc. Such a typology is flawed as it defines communities by need and ignores probably the majority of the population. For example there has been a growth in young professionals in Glebe and it will accelerate; how are they to be engaged? Currently the most significant community to TGS is its membership but formal membership will not remain a test of influence during the next 5 years and we need to know a lot more about our members' needs and how these relate to Glebe community(ies). It is likely that growth in Glebe will come from people who do not 'join' community groups but may be 'fellow travellers'. How can they be engaged?

Glebe unites when there is a threat. An example of this was the Post Office campaign. This was chiefly organised by TGS and although we lost the Post Office, Glebe pulled together. It is around such threats that TGS can build its influence and do well for Glebe but it needs to consider its strategy. The Glebe Estate is a prime example of a threat that fits all of TGS aims. We need to:

- Define community and focus.
- Conserve The Glebe Estate and the character of Glebe.

Glebe will be denser, younger, have more children, more apartment dwellers, more intrinsically motivated. We need to:

- Protect community character.
- Influence infrastructure plans.

The National Broadband Network will be in Glebe within 5 years. Innovation and technology diffusion is already very rapid. NBN will accelerate that process as will changes in demographics. Our technology use is currently under review by our Communications Subcommittee and will then be analysed by other users and experts so we recognize our

strategic opportunity and vulnerability. As you read across the likely environmental changes identified above the need to invest in technological capability and use it more broadly is obvious. This means we should:

- Increase technology capability.
- Improve connectedness.

This contextual analysis points to significant questions for TGS on community engagement, connectedness, networks and our core business capabilities. The workshop concentrated upon the first three. The full process will include a capability analysis once members have commented.

WORKSHOP HEADLINES

At the workshop each different group was given a topic to consider strategically. Groups then moved to each of the topical stations and added commentary. After this activity the groups worked to make sense of the commentaries and produced headlines, which are listed below³.

HEADLINE 1: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Increase networking Influence	Continue to provide a linkage for emerging issues. Work with similar groups in other (especially near) areas of Sydney. Examples include other community and heritage groups, BPN, National Trust, surrounding suburbs. Other local groups, e.g. Chamber of Commerce. Actively recruit apartment dwellers – what are their needs?
Collaborate with specific groups	Examples include local narrow (specific, special interest) groups, existing Glebe groups, three tiers of government, local schools. Invite Churches, Residents’ Groups, Schools. Preschools, Local clubs etc. to express their needs to TGS. Utilise local (and wider) media to engage people in Glebe issues.
Partner with educational organisations	Universities – test case for sustainability, innovation, community development. Work with libraries e.g. WW1

³ These are very broad statements but the full set of materials produced at the workshop is retained.

Conserving our heritage – Encouraging a sense of community – Working for Glebe’s future

	Commemoration involves State Library, City Library, schools.
Encourage and support local businesses and influence the promotion of Green Glebe as a cultural hub.	Business is in decline. By 2019 what can TGS do? Court big business how? Trusts, Charities, Aims, Products Attractions to engagement Partnerships for sustainability Eco Friendly Glebe
Work with CoS to increase community involvement	Glebe Town Hall as a hub for partnerships coordinated by TGS The State is emasculating our community representation

HEADLINE2: CULTURE AND INNOVATION

Actively embrace Glebe’s diversity.	Foster participation with activities that encourage wider involvement in TGSi. Support and foster vibrant high street. Foster community interests (not just TGSi members).
Foster infrastructure for creativity (creativity is a hallmark of Glebe).	A theme emerged that creative people and industries are a hallmark of Glebe and that Society could build on this. Consider infrastructure seen as desirable to support Glebe including incubator developments.
Activities and events to bring people together	Glebe Society is part of the existing community not responsible for creating it; therefore build on existing community spirit.

HEADLINE 3: CONNECTEDNESS

Inform, engage and activate through online media. Join a vibrant online community	Electronic way finding connection to facilities, events, free Wi-Fi sites. Social networking to suit young population Community information via social media. Engage & inform community of heritage Online forums – Facebook, Twitter
Involving community in gardens/ planting days / small bird protection	Community gardens, Street verge gardens, Street parties, projects
Ensure activities are planned for all residents,	Publicise and market The Glebe Society as a

including high rise, students, backpackers etc.	<p>Glebe residents group. Establish shopfront hub to advertise Glebe activities, issues, events.(Community Grant). Big Long Breakfast – Glebe Point Road Shop locally – loyalty cards</p>
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HEADLINE 4: LIVELY AND CHANGING COMMUNITY

Consider environmental changes and global issues	<p>Gather range of strategies to make Glebe Green Energy. Engage on Global Warming as local response to global issues (e.g. promote solar for housing, community gardens, Glebe walks to bring people together issue). Multi -Cultural Festival on Green Energy. Improve Biodiversity.</p>
Respond to trends in demographic changes	<p>Target and influence 30/40 year olds with kids (e.g. promote child care facilities in Glebe). Promote Social Networks as done in New York City. Engage Glebe, don’t recruit Glebe, as most are not joiners. Need for succession planning for management committee. Tap into experience and collective wisdom Break down distinction between members and other community. Target representation by considering what can be controlled, what can be influenced, what are TGS concerns. Interactive community, business and residents Promote Village concept, shop local, right business mix Data base of community skills, members and others, multiple applied communication.</p>
Consider changing housing effects	<p>Greater housing density inevitable. More renters likely. Co-operative and shared housing to increase. Encourage bequest of properties to community.</p>

HEADLINE 5:RETHINKING TRANSPORT

Encourage improvements in public transport that are integrated, frequent and accessible.	Promote share cars, cycles, electric charge points. Lobby for retention of Glebe Island Bridge for pedestrian and bicycle routes. Promote Light rail and its future extensions (Glebe Point Rd, Parramatta Rd to Sydney University).
Further development of safe, signposted, pedestrian routes.	Promote safety and access. Use apps.
Target water access	Promote ferries, traditional passive uses. Implement routes to main centres such as White Bay, Barangaroo, North Sydney.
Target disabled access	Promote small buses, share taxis.

CONCLUSION

Our strategy process so far shows us that:

1. TGS core business of heritage, planning and environment will be under considerable threat from state indifference or opposition to community voice, developer influence and changing demographics therefore its strategy must strengthen this core.
2. TGS’s strengthening of its community engagement must increase so that its influence is broader in Glebe and beyond.
3. TGS must strengthen its technology capability and benefit from new technology.
4. TGS is strongest when activist, and must conserve The Glebe Estate and the character of Glebe.

There is much more to do until we can conclude our strategy but the next step is to hear your ideas. You can do this by comment on the website or Facebook. Here are some questions you might wish to address:

1. What strategies do you propose to strengthen TGS’s core?
 2. Should TGS increase its community engagement? How?
 3. What technological problems and opportunities do you foresee?
 4. How do you want to be involved?
 5. Anything else you want to say?
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