

PAINTED RIVER PROJECT

By Asa Wahlquist



Forest Lodge school students at work on the Painted River project (photo: Asa Wahlquist)

The year six students at Forest Lodge have a tradition of leaving a gift for the students who follow them. The plan this year is for a mural featuring Johnstons Creek, but it is being thwarted by City of Sydney's demand for \$735 to lodge a Development Application.

Forest Lodge principal Stephen Reed said the students wanted to do something on regeneration and sustainability. It is an ongoing theme, with a previous year instituting Waste-free Wednesdays. Mr Reed said the students were interested in regeneration in the wake of the summer bushfires, and the renaturalisation of Johnstons Creek caught their attention.

Sydney Water is naturalising the Creek, replacing the concrete banks with sandstone set at different levels along the sides to

create varied habitats, establishing a wetland, expanding the salt marsh and increasing the number and diversity of native plants along the sides.

The students' project is called *The Painted River*.

Work began during Science Week, when the 36 students gathered by the Creek to study a display of water life put together by water ecologist Ian Wright and to paint what they saw under the guidance of artist Leo Robba. Dr Wright set up a table of samples collected from an undisturbed creek in Pittwater. The display included the stonefly, which he said is 'supersensitive to changes in water quality.' While he admits we will never know what Johnstons Creek was like before settlement, he thinks 'some of these things could be brought back through naturalisation.' Each of the students also completed a painted canvas.

Mr Reed said the project integrates art and science. 'We are seeing the creativity coming out. As soon as they put a brush on their canvas it is just flowing, opening these pathways.'

Dr Robba's students at Western Sydney University will turn the paintings into an artwork that will become the mural. The mural will then be painted on the side of the toilet blocks between Jubilee Oval and the creek. The hope is it will encourage passers-by to reflect on the Creek, on the natural environment and its role in their lives.

But the project has hit a brick wall – the \$735 needed to lodge a DA to paint the mural on the toilet wall. A Forest Lodge parent, Frier Bentley, is the project coordinator. She said the City of Sydney councillors all voted to support the project. But the CoS bureaucracy has been unbudging: the fee cannot be waived and Ms Bentley is now applying for community grants and looking at fund raising to pay the DA fee. She said the P&C is not in a position to help, with COVID preventing their usual fund raising.

Ms Bentley suggests the CoS 'should be having a look at their community grants project. (Waiving the DA fee) is cheap money, it is foregone revenue rather than cash outgoing.' Most of the participants, including Dr Wright and Dr Robba, have volunteered their services, but the person who will actually paint the mural will also need to be paid.

With fourth term, the last for the year 6 students at Forest Lodge, soon to commence, it will be a race to raise the funds and complete the mural before the end of the school year.



Naturalisation of Johnstons Creek in August (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

TRANSPORT, PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Bridge Road pop-up cycleway

By Virginia Simpson-Young

The Glebe Society and Cycleways

The Glebe Society has received some flack for its failure to wholeheartedly embrace the Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway. For 50 years, the Society has promoted cycling, walking and public transport as key to improving Glebe's 'amenity' and, more recently, to reduce carbon emissions. Despite this, the Society has concerns about the cycleway that cannot be ignored. Before considering these concerns further, I think it's worthwhile showing that the Society is serious about its support for cycling.

The Society's Traffic and Transport Subcommittee has advocated for cycling for decades; it's terms of reference state that:

under its Constitution one of the objectives of the Glebe Society is to improve the amenity of Glebe by promoting a better public transport system, both public and private, including facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Objectives of the Subcommittee include 'to maintain and promote transport options suitable for Glebe as a village community best served by public transport, walking and cycling' and 'to reduce the use of private motor vehicles by the promotion of public transport, walking and cycling.' <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/TT-Terms-of-reference-2019.pdf>

A quick flick through some previous *Bulletins* gives a flavour of the Society's commitment to cycling. In October 2012, the Glebe Society made a submission to Transport for NSW on the Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. Then Glebe Society President, John Gray, wrote:

The use of public transport, walking and cycling need to be made attractive options for commuters. In our view this is best done through the development of an integrated and viable public transport system and providing facilities for safe cycling and walking. ... We ask that funding be made available by the NSW Government to put these initiatives into effect. While we recognise that certain road projects will need to be undertaken in Sydney, our view is that investment in public transport and the encouraging of cycling and walking will have far greater long-term benefits.

In an article on the front page of the *Bulletin* in 2017, the Transport and Traffic Convenor wrote:

The cycleways in Glebe and Forest Lodge are not satisfactory. The ones we have are disjointed and often put cyclists onto our busiest streets, where the risk of injury is a major concern.

And, of course, the Society has long fought to save the Glebe Island Bridge to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians (eg. *Bulletin* 9/2013 and the article on p.17 of this *Bulletin*).

The Bridge Rd cycleway has been welcomed by some of the Society's Facebook readers (and condemned by about an equal number). The general tenor of the positive comments was that the Bridge Rd cycleway is sorely needed and even if it's not perfect, it's better than no cycleway:

- *Very glad to hear this. This stretch of road is a real blackspot for cyclists – my husband has almost been hit riding along here several times! And I avoid riding partly because I'm too much of a nervous rider to even attempt this part of the Anzac Bridges Rozelle/Blackwattle Bay loop. Would love it to become permanent!*
- *Bridge Rd should be an arterial road for cars, trucks and bikes. Unfortunately, there is no parallel road that can be used by bikes. I am all for the bike lanes.*
- *Enough negativity over the bike lanes ... Long overdue.*
- *Brilliant news. Too little, very late – but far better than nothing!*

Safety concerns about the Bridge Rd cycleway

The reason that our support has not been wholehearted is that there are serious problems with the Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway that have serious implications. A number of concerns about the cycleway's heavy impact on residents' amenity have been made in our August letter to Andrew Constance, Minister for Transport and Roads and Rodd Staples, Secretary, Transport for NSW (<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/tgs-pop-up-cycle-routes-letter-to-the-minister-for-transport-august-2020/>). Apart from the massive disruption to the lives of people living on Bridge Rd, there are safety issues that cannot be swept under the carpet. The cycleway, as it currently stands, is simply unsafe for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.

There is every reason to believe that the Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway does not conform to the Australian standards and guidelines that exist for cycleways. Generally, during the design process, such standards must be met. However, because the Bridge Rd cycleway is temporary, this requirement does not seem to hold.

Austrroads which is 'the collective of the Australian and New Zealand transport agencies, representing all levels of government' and includes Transport for NSW (<https://austroroads.com.au/about-austroroads>) has produced a document called *Cycling Aspects of Austroroads Guides* which 'contains information that relates to the planning, design and traffic management of cycling facilities and is sourced from Austroroads Guides, primarily the *Guide*



The Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway at the intersection of Bridge Rd and Ross St (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

to Road Design, the Guide to Traffic Management and the Guide to Road Safety.' (<https://austroroads.com.au/publications/road-design/ap-g88-17>). A quick look through these documents shows that the Bridge Rd cycleway does not meet the standards. These guidelines are interpreted in a user-friendly and cyclist-centric section of Bicycle NSW's website called Ray's Corner (<https://bicyclensw.org.au/rays-corner/>). This site also refers to the various Australian Standards that apply to cycleways.

Concerned about the safety implications of the pop-up cycleway, a group of local residents calling themselves 'Bridge Road Friends' chipped in to commission an independent safety audit by Traffic Engineering Centre, a consultancy firm based in Sydney, practicing predominantly in areas of traffic engineering, traffic planning and forensic traffic engineering. (<https://www.trafficengineeringcentre.com/about.html>). This firm numbers Transport for NSW and City of Sydney amongst its many clients. The safety audit was carried out on 6 September 2020 and changes may have been made to the cycleway since then. The report is entitled *Bridge Road, between Wattle Street and Lyons Road, in Camperdown, NSW, with an emphasis on the newly installed pop-up cycleways Stage 5 (existing road) Road Safety Audit* and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4qqymfa>. The report identified 26 safety issues with risks assessed as either 'intolerable', 'high', or 'medium'. An example of an 'intolerable' risk is when the cycleway ends abruptly, potentially bringing cyclists, vehicles or pedestrians into each other's path.

The Safety Audit got the attention of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (and several other newspapers) which ran an article on 23 September by Angus Thompson, entitled: 'Serious injury or death: dangers found on COVID-19 cycleway'. It includes this useful information:

A Transport for NSW spokesperson said the department and council assessed the safety of each route before construction, the cycleways would be monitored throughout their installation, and audits were carried out on other routes to identify safety concerns.

It is not clear whether this has taken place for the Bridge Rd cycleway.

The safety audit commissioned by Bridge Road Friends has been criticised by Bicycle NSW for being 'anti-bike' and 'contained two fundamental mistakes of law'. Whether or not this is correct, it is clear that the cycleway is dangerous and does not meet all safety standards.

Safety concerns are not limited to the 'Bridge Road Friends'. The Society was contacted by a Gottenham St resident on 24 September who said:

There are safety issues. We are in Gottenham St and when turning onto Bridge Rd, the posts are too close and the swept path does not allow a vehicle to turn left without either knocking a post down or making their way onto the path of oncoming traffic.

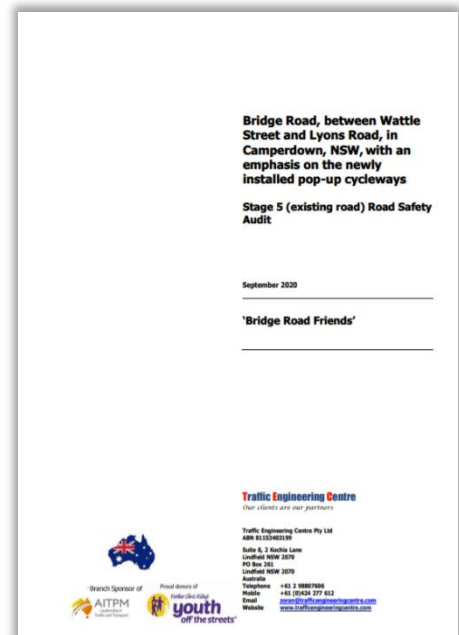
The other issue I have noticed is that due to terrace houses fronting Bridge Rd it is impossible to see cyclists coming without 'nosing' into Bridge Rd because the view is obscured from Gottenham St. This poses a potentially fatal risk to an oncoming cyclist who is travelling along at pace adjacent the kerb on Bridge Rd. Prior to the pop-up cycleway cyclists had the opportunity to veer across towards the centre of the lane away from the kerb and vehicles entering Bridge Rd. Now the cyclists are trapped.

I am not against it, however the council needs to do a full risk assessment and swept path analysis etc by a traffic consultant because it does not work. I am sure it can work with the appropriate level of design and consultation. Further I would hate to accidentally injure a cyclist or worse because of this poorly planned piece of infrastructure.

Only the next day, 25 September, the same person sent another email, saying:

Unfortunately, the inevitable has happened ... A cyclist has been hit by a car turning at Gottenham St.

This intersection was identified as 'high risk' in the Safety Audit. A second accident occurred near here on Sunday 27 September.





Scene of an accident in which a cyclist was hit by a turning vehicle at Tottenham St (photographer's name withheld)

And why has an unsafe cycleway been built? Lack of consultation and rushed planning. City of Sydney has justified these failings on the grounds that the cycleway was urgently needed because of COVID-19 – no time to consult, no time to conduct appropriate studies. In a letter to the Glebe Society dated 17 September (<https://www.glebesociety.org.au/letter-from-lord-mayor-re-bridge-rd-cycleway-sept-2020/>), the Lord Mayor clarified that the cycleway was a joint venture between City of Sydney and Transport for NSW and that

the NSW Government approved construction of the temporary cycleways through the Ministerial Order COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Bill 2020, which is why there wasn't the extensive consultation that the City normally carries out.

City of Sydney's response

Residents have brought their concerns to City of Sydney Council. At the Council meeting on 21 September, Councillor Phelps tabled the privately-funded Safety Audit and outlined residents' concerns; requesting that the City 'liaise with Transport for NSW to close the Bridge Rd cycleway and relocate the Glebe pop up cycleway to a safer, more suitable location as soon as possible.'

The motion was substantially changed with an amendment by Councillor Scully which watered down Councillor Phelps' strongly-worded account of residents' concerns and struck out the request that the cycleway be removed. The amendment noted that Council is responding to community feedback and making changes to the cycleway as required.

Importantly, the motion stated that 'Transport for NSW are conducting a Road Safety Audit in advance of the formal completion of the cycleway'. (It did not specify what constitutes 'formal completion') and committed the City to obtaining the Road Safety Audit for the Bridge Road pop-up cycleway from Transport for NSW once it is completed and making it public. In addition, Council resolved that the City 'liaise with Transport for NSW about the resident-led safety audit of the Bridge Rd cycleway, seeking urgent mitigation of the risks identified'. (<https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=9978>)

Transport for NSW's response

The cycleway is a joint venture between City of Sydney and Transport for NSW, but, as the Society was told in a letter from Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Transport for NSW 'has full control over the design and construction of the cycleway'. Presumably they also have some responsibility for its safety.

According to Bastien Wallace, General Manager Public Affairs for Bicycle NSW, Transport for NSW has not made the design and construction plans for the cycleway available, which makes it difficult for Bicycle NSW to assess the safety of the cycleway.

The NSW government is not living up to its commitment to make roads safer for road-users, including cyclists. The NSW government's *Road Safety Plan 2021* (<https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/road-safety-plan.pdf>) states that

The global trend towards more on-demand services and a delivery culture is making our urban environments busier. Increased numbers of people on local roads, including more trucks, pedestrians and bicycle riders, means we have to design roads to be shared and safe for everyone ... bicycle riders make up 16 per cent of all serious injuries. Most of these casualties occur on our urban streets.

Yet according to Bicycle NSW, the 'State Priority Target to reduce road fatalities by 30 per cent by 2021 (from 2008–10 levels) ... has not happened on bike riders. According to the Centre for Road Safety Statistics fatality rates are increasing' (<https://bicyclensw.org.au/rays-corner/>).

Bastien Wallace told me that cycling advocates face an uphill battle with Transport for NSW, which has consistently prioritised motor transport over human-powered transport and cars over bikes. A good network of cycleways is critical to cyclists' safety, but those cycleways should meet appropriate safety standards.

Damned if you do and damned if you don't

The safety issue is a case of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't'. The Glebe Society (and any other organisation or individual that support cycleways) are damned if we *do* take safety concerns seriously (because it might discourage cycleway development) and damned if we *don't* (because it requires turning a blind eye to potentially preventable dangers).

The need for a cycleway network in Sydney is so strong that some advocates are reluctant to discuss the Bridge Rd cycleway's safety issues in case it leads to the cycleway's removal. Bastien Wallace from Bicycle NSW is leery of any expression of concern from the public about cycleway safety. She said: 'We are very used to anti-bike campaigners pretending to be concerned about safety in order to block bike infrastructure'.

Where to from here?

The article in last month's *Bulletin* by Mark Stapleton outlines the Society's concerns and calls for greater responsiveness by Transport for NSW and City of Sydney. Since that article was written, the safety risks have become more apparent and the need for action more urgent. Action needs to be taken before another casualty occurs.

It now seems that City of Sydney's commitment to making changes as required in response to community feedback may not be adequate to address the litany of issues plaguing the cycleway. We wonder how City of Sydney is able to make such changes, given that, as Lord Mayor Clover Moore has told us, Transport for NSW 'has full control over the design and construction of the cycleway'.

We call on both City of Sydney and Transport for NSW to respond to the privately-funded Safety Audit and, as a matter of urgency, produce another if they do not concur with its findings. The Society is also concerned that a Safety Audit being conducted by Transport for NSW on 'formal completion' of the cycleway may be too late. As a starting point, we would like to know what 'formal completion' means and when it will occur.

We reiterate our request that City of Sydney conduct formal community consultation about the cycleway and suggest that consultation not be left until a decision is made about the cycleway's permanence. We believe that Council and Transport for NSW should conduct community consultation as soon as possible, that includes Bicycle NSW and relevant experts in cycleway design and management.

If you would like to provide feedback to City of Sydney and/or Transport for NSW on the Bridge Rd pop-up cycleway, here are the contacts provided by the Lord Mayor in her letter to the Society:

Transport for NSW: Tyson Kinnane – 1800 573 193; covidpopup@transport.nsw.gov.au.

City of Sydney: Craig Ryan – 9265 9333; crryan@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

1. 'Swept Path Analysis is the simulation of a vehicle moving within a digital design. Its purpose is to create designs (such as roads, driveways, developments or parking facilities) that can accommodate vehicle needs during operation, or to ensure that specific vehicles can manoeuvre through specific routes.' (<https://www.keysoftsolutions.co.uk/>)



Letter to the editor

Mr Mark Stapleton,

As a family that has resided on Bridge Rd Glebe (near Clare St) for five generations, my wife and I are disgusted in the treatment and total lack of open discussion, the disregard of residents needs and the complications of the impact of this 'Pop Up Cycleway' has done. Mayor Clover Moore and certain councillors have hurt their reputations in this hasty decision with NSW Transport.

The majority of Bridge Rd residents, from what I'm aware, are not against cyclists using Bridge Rd (St Johns Rd much safer), but the impact of it now being a 24-hr clearway. The previous 6-10am and 3-7pm clearway hours has worked fine for well over 40 years. Even Councillor Dr Phelps with others presented to Council that it be returned to the normal peak hour times, to no avail?? How can a '24-hour clearway' just for cyclist at times between midnight and 0600 hrs be justified?

One of the most detrimental impacts has been on Emergency Services: Fire, Police and Ambulances responding to calls being caught in traffic jams that are now occurring. Vehicles cannot pull to the kerb to let them pass, and the Services can't cross to the other side of the road to pass because its blocked too.

There are also the elderly and disabled (my wife as an example) who have been forgotten.

Return Bridge Rd to the normal Clearway hours.

Lance & Christine Haigh

[Lance Haigh is Retired Station Officer, Fire & Rescue NSW. He has been Officer-in-Charge of Glebe and Pyrmont Fire Station during his career – Editor]

Housing Diversity State Environmental Planning Policy

By Mark Stapleton

The State Government's approach to a housing strategy for New South Wales is a matter of interest to many who live, work, play and learn in Glebe. This is because many of us believe one of Glebe's strengths is diverse and affordable housing and in principle support an aim to facilitate the delivery of diverse housing that meets the needs of the State's growing population and support the development of build-to-rent properties.

Neighbours and I understand that the proposed Housing Diversity State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing Diversity SEPP) (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/proposed-new-housing-diversity-sepp>) consolidates three current SEPPs and updates some planning provisions in response to community and council concerns about boarding house and seniors housing development. (Changes to facilitate more social housing are also proposed and three new diverse housing types – build-to-rent housing, student housing and co-living – would be introduced to provide more housing options for the people of NSW. We appreciate the government's statement of the intended effect of the new policy.

Focus

I propose that the Government must focus on the need for social housing in our community and across the state. Reduced social housing availability results in further distress for many 'at risk' people in our community. The 'Australian dream' of home ownership for everyone has evaporated to a dual reality where ownership may be relevant for some but rental for most others – particularly younger and older people – is the new reality and future. In Glebe the shortage of social housing availability is clearly evident when residents of Elsie Refuge and Rainbow Lodge, who community members support with Kitchen Starter Packs, are rarely able to 'graduate' to social housing despite being on the priority housing list. Provision of Community Housing for these people is transitional and available for two years only. The current roll out is insufficient to the point of a desperate shortage.

Need

The issues in the residential development sector long predate the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, while references to the economic recovery of NSW following the pandemic are important this is surely not the major driver or reason for reform. The May 2020 discussion paper bears this out by saying 'The NSW Housing Strategy will set a 20-year vision for housing'. The vision and objectives of the proposed strategy are reasonable. What is critical are targeted and scheduled outcomes to address the critical shortage of housing stock in both the social and affordable categories.

I have no argument with support for the recovering economy and the retention and creation of jobs. Nonetheless this policy direction is surely first and foremost about safe accessible housing for people.

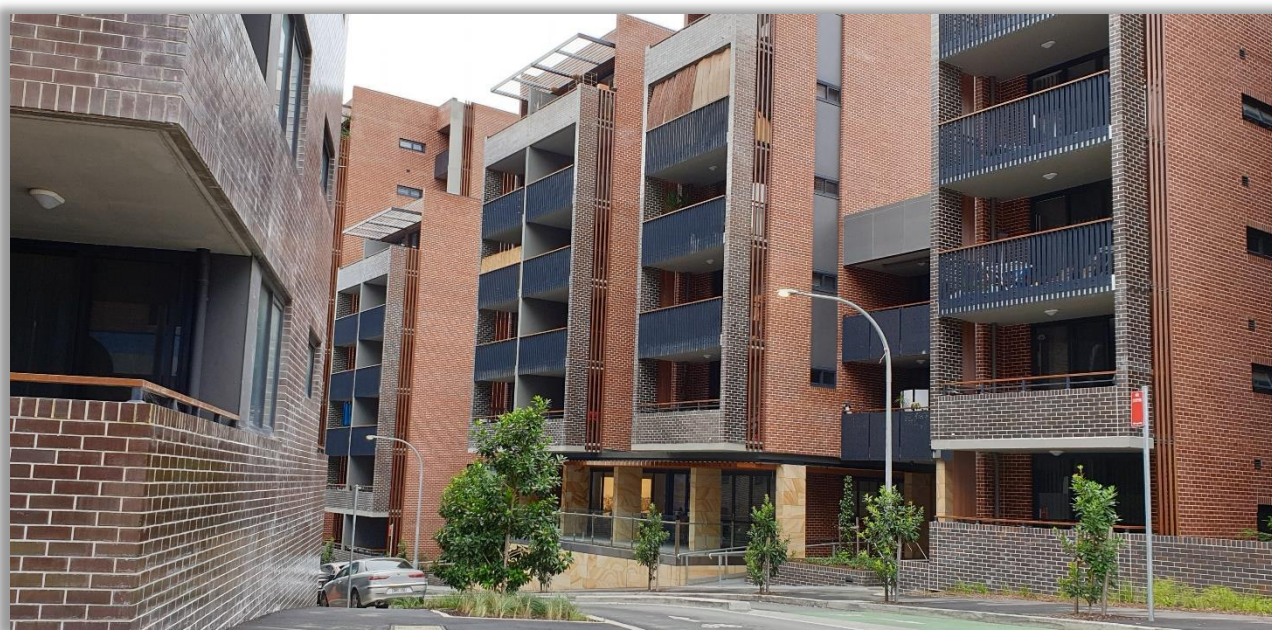
Mixed sector response

I am not opposed to a blend of social, affordable and private market accommodation. However, the provision of social housing cannot be slowed pending the ability of the private market to take up a required share to ensure a return on the investment.

I see no reason why modes of housing, in particular build-to-rent, should only be a private and community sector model. The COVID 19 experience demonstrated that in crises it is government that is actually the most substantial and agile responder. Few could argue that we are not in the midst of a housing crisis in New South Wales. When it is said that it is important to enable the market to develop housing it is important to note that in western democracies the public sector is a significant part of 'the market' in every respect. I suggest that the role of government extends beyond directly intervening or providing appropriate housing when the market cannot or where this will promote best practice (for example, crisis and social housing).

Notwithstanding the observation that 'Data suggests that over the immediate/ short term there will be enough new homes to keep pace with population growth' our concerns include people vulnerable to shortcomings in housing supply; homeless people, older people forced to move away from their communities (a major issue in Glebe), people with disabilities unable to refit their homes or find accessible accommodation within their communities, service workers priced out of their regions of work (the 'job containment rate'), people who are victims of violence and discrimination etc. Again, this is where governments have a proactive role to play in creating supply directly. Developments on state-owned land should give top priority to increasing social housing availability.

I argue that social and affordable housing supply targets could be set as government priorities within Housing Strategy action plans developed by NSW Government agencies.



Social housing in Glebe (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

Public sector roles

I submit that government owned land must be prioritised for social and affordable housing. On balance social housing ghettos are to be avoided. Pathways to affordable housing must be accepted as a social responsibility of every government of the day. For the benefit of city and regional social cohesion, the allocation of social housing must be spread across many areas.

I also note that many community members disagree with the government's proposition that 'The housing system is beyond the responsibility of a single state agency or the NSW Government on its own.' Many members of our community believe that while the private sector plays an important role it is government's role to address market failure.

What is the proposal for increasing the provision of public housing in New South Wales? Will this have outcomes and indicators to measure progress?

I note the comment that 'Government-owned land is being used for social housing and for precinct-based integrated land use and infrastructure planning, design and development.' However we challenge the current proportion of state owned land devoted to social and or affordable housing. In the view of many community members social housing on government owned land should be at least 50% of housing developed on such land. Government owned land must be prioritised for social and affordable housing. The allocation of social housing quantities should be balanced with the infrastructure etc that assists people to grow into affordable housing. If families from one generation to another remain within the social housing band, the social consequences as a whole may reach a point where community divisions are harmful to all members of a community. I also understand that each housing and infrastructure development may have particular nuances that would allow us to vary our assessment of the allocation.

Further the targets of 5-10 percent for affordable rental housing for very-low and low-income earners, where viable in areas of uplift, as established in District Plans is minimal and should be expanded.

I recognise the theoretical observation that 'providing new supply to meet demand considers the availability of land (a finite resource) relative to other land uses.' However, in localities such as Glebe where retail business was previously concentrated on ribbon strip development there is more potential for new use of land. Many commercial properties in our community have been vacant for up to twenty years. Clearly current market settings are not sufficient to encourage property owners to rethink and seek to rezone their property to generate market returns. Part of this issue is the current settings whereby local government is not sufficiently motivated to change the market environment for property owners. Further, the requirement by local Councils that high rise residential developments include commercial and or retail usages on the ground level, reduces the potential for added social and affordable housing within that development and, in the process, dilutes the performance of the existing (and often struggling) commercial and retail business in areas that are zoned for those usages. The requirement of the City of Sydney for commercial usages on the ground floor of a proposed social housing development on Wentworth Park Rd, Glebe is a classic example of inappropriate planning requirements.

Many community members are interested in effective instruments which might revitalise existing commercial uses and or help to free up unused space for housing with appropriate planning controls that address the current crisis.

First Nations

The Strategy discussion paper noted that 'Aboriginal people have a strong connection to Country, and require a supply of appropriately designed and affordable housing, particularly given the growth of the Aboriginal population in regional areas.' This is as true in urban and regional areas and I call on specific attention to be given to First Nations housing here on Gadigal country.

Ageing in place

I agree that 'Helping older people to stay in their local area may require accessibility supports – physical or virtual healthcare or lower maintenance in their own home – and a greater mix of choices near easy-to-access places for people seeking to downsize.' However, a key factor is the availability of social and affordable housing in older people's own community.

Disability

I agree that 'Supply of social housing has not kept pace with demand.' Members of our community see this as a responsibility of government which is part of 'the market'. The straightforward observation that 'If appropriate independent housing is not available, young people with disability may end up living in aged care facilities' calls for some public policy position from one or more levels of government. This situation is not acceptable and requires a holistic and adequate policy response; not merely 'encouraging' appropriate housing design.

Our community leaders support the work of Community Housing Providers and Aboriginal Community Housing Providers. They recognise that their operations are driven by their constituents' needs and that there are issues within these organisations resource constraints as contrasted to other providers drivers of profit/ market return. At the same time there appears to be a little explored dynamic in the relationship between the role of government and the not for profit sector in the generation of new and additional housing stock for social purpose. Further, the observation that 'Social housing has evolved from supporting mostly working-class families to now supporting very-low income and pension-dependent households whose long-term housing needs are not being met in private rental housing' is little interrogated in public discourse. How and why did this happen both in New South Wales and more widely? The shift (or perhaps drift) has led to a situation where 'older detached three or four-bedroom cottages make up a large proportion of the state's social housing, while not necessarily matching the needs of current social housing tenants.' This comment focusses on the extant housing stock whereas the flipside is the focus of current housing policy priorities.



Glebe Social housing from an earlier time (photo: Ian Stephenson)

A number of our community have indicated interest in the potential of 'meanwhile use' i.e., the temporary use of vacant land or dwellings for alternative uses until they are required for their end purpose. Glebe is one of many urban communities where properties used for retail purposes are now underused. Creative approaches to zoning, taxation treatments and other forms of government classification and regulation may foster greater use of infill properties including housing.

I and others support approaches to responsive and resilient housing canvassed in the consultation process. We reject views that the resourcing of social housing needs to choose between a 'basic' supply and one which includes the following which we would argue could become part of the mandatory requirements on all housing developments – social housing included:

- Inclusion of distributed energy and smart technology in new housing development
- Enhancements of the environmental sustainability of existing housing via subsidy and other provisions
- Developing housing and residential precincts responsiveness to natural hazards
- Fostering alternative transport approaches in major centres.

In relation to proposed changes we agree with requiring boarding houses to be affordable. We ask what regulatory and enforcement mechanisms would ensure this?

Build to rent

I respectfully suggest that the claim that 'There are currently no impediments in the NSW planning system to the development of new housing for rental purposes' does not apply to inner city areas such as Glebe. These areas attract high rentals and many areas have lost substantial housing stock replaced by high density expensive developments. Consequently, many people who were born and raised in local communities have been forced out of their own communities. Further urban areas are suffering severe constraints on service works. People from nurses to hospitality and on to creative industry workers squeezed out because they cannot afford housing close to job centres.

A new housing strategy in this state can be positioned within a wider understanding of the role of housing in a modern Australian society and economy. Its laudable that the state proposes to review the provisions of the new SEPP within 24 months of its introduction to ensure they are functioning as intended.

Mark Stapleton

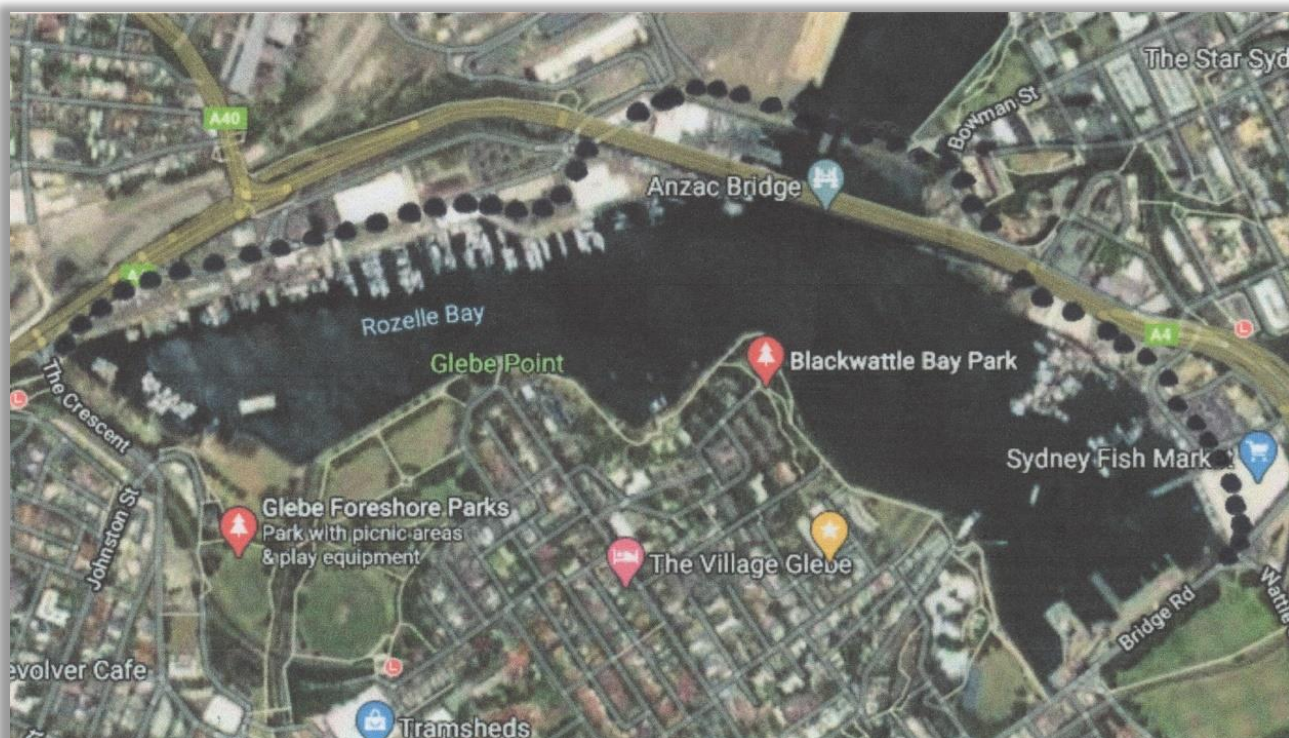
Public Spaces Ideas Competition

By Asa Wahlquist

In July the NSW State Government announced The Public Space Ideas Competition. The competition was prompted by one of Premier Gladys Berejiklian's 14 Premier's Priorities, Greener Public Spaces. It aims to increase the proportion of urban homes within a 10-minute walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023. It is backed by the Committee for Sydney and the NSW Government.

The competition was prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the importance of public spaces in supporting mental, physical and social wellbeing. It called for ideas to reimagine, inspire, create, include and bring awareness to great public spaces across Greater Sydney across five categories including Best Public Facility Idea, Best Open Space Idea and Best Resilient Public Space Idea. Entries were limited to 250 words, with one image.

There will be nine awards, including a people's choice award. They will be announced in October. I entered in the Best Open Space Category¹. The Idea is to create a public walk around the foreshores of Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays.



Asa Wahlquist's entry for the Best Open Space Idea award of the NSW government's Public Space Ideas Competition (photo: Asa Wahlquist)

The proposed walk follows the dotted line, connecting both ends of the existing Glebe Foreshore Walk.

The Glebe Foreshore walk is extremely popular. The COVID-19 pandemic put it and the nearby Iron Cove Bay Run, under huge pressure. There is clearly an overwhelming demand for open spaces, especially by the water, to exercise. Extending the Foreshore walk around Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays and over the restored Glebe Island Bridge would provide an invigorating walkway for the local community, many of whom live in apartments.

The NSW Government, under the Revitalising Blackwattle Bay plan, proposes to build a foreshore walk on the northern side of Blackwattle Bay. But work needs to be done on the Rozelle Bay side. Pedestrians can walk along James Craig Drive, past some waterfront businesses, then along the waterfront in front of the Superyacht Marina. Then the walker must go away from the water along Maritime Court to the locked-off Glebe Island Bridge.

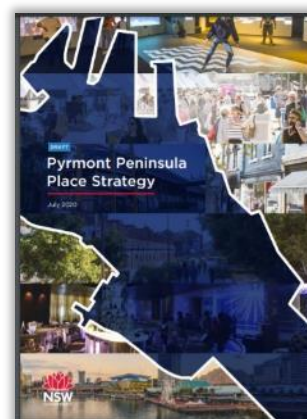
While it would not be possible to walk along the waterfront in front of all the businesses, the path could certainly be improved, made pedestrian-friendly and routed nearer the water. Currently the keen pedestrian must then walk a steep and circuitous path up to the Anzac Bridge, walk along the noisy, narrow bridge footpath, and then wend their way down again, dodging bicycles all the way. Restoring the old bridge would provide a shorter, safer walk, one closer to the Bay and one that could be negotiated with children and by wheelchair.

It would transform the experience of the Bays and be embraced by locals and visitors.

¹ Asa's proposal has been endorsed by the Management Committee for the wonderful idea that it is – Editor.

Glebe Society's Submission on Infrastructure NSW's Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy

Our last *Bulletin* led with an article on the Infrastructure NSW's 96-page draft Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/Pyrmont>). The Society made a submission which can be accessed from our website: <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/submission-on-pyrmont-peninsula-place-strategy-september-2020/>



Light Rail and Bus Interchange

In our last *Bulletin* we referred to the issue of the bus routes 431 and 470 terminating at Haymarket rather than at Martin Place. Our letter to Transit Systems can be viewed here: <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/letter-transit-systems-sept-2020/>; and the response from Jamie Sinclair, Area Manager, Transit System, here: <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/letter-from-transit-systems-west-sept-2020/>

A little snippet

By Phil Vergison,

For illiterate passengers, destinations displayed on Sydney's trams featured the name of the terminal suburb AND a series of colours, symbols and/or shapes to represent that destination. Glebe's 'sign' comprised two red balls, side by side on a white background, as seen here, preserved, at the Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus: 26 February 2012.



From the Sydney tramway Facebook site: 'Somewhat beside the point, but when trams went, so did some of our local sayings. My grandmother used to describe a woman wearing too much rouge as being made up like a Glebe Point tram.'

HISTORY & HERITAGE

A Case Study: Saving A Sydney Suburb

By Ian Evans



Glebe was almost lost to the onslaught of the bulldozers. Former Glebe resident Ian Evans writes a chapter in the complex history of the movement against destruction of the suburb by the Department of Main Roads. Ian and his family lived in Sheehy St and later Mansfield St during the 1970s and 1980s.

It was in the house at 18 Mansfield St that Ian began to explore and write about the distinctive qualities of old houses. His many books have sold some 175,000 copies, providing owners of old houses throughout Australia with the historical and technical information to guide the conservation of the buildings in which they lived.

His PhD in 2010 identified and described the previously unknown history of the practice of magic in Australia in the period 1788 to circa 1935. Ian received a Medal in the Order of Australia for his contribution to the conservation of Australia's historic heritage.

Current residents of the suburb they call a village are perhaps not aware of how close Glebe came to virtual annihilation by the NSW Department of Main Roads.

This is my story of the events of that time – events that shaped the suburb of Glebe as it is today. The Glebe Society and residents of the suburb have their own stories.

In the early 1970s, when Glebe was distinctly downmarket, two expressways were being planned to scythe through Glebe, destroying its village atmosphere and a great many houses.

This story of the way that the suburb was saved is one that weaves through time. It involves two premiers of New South Wales and a building designed by an early Australian architect. It extends over some 150 years and ends with the survival of a suburb that had been marked for destruction by the NSW Department of Main Roads.

The politicians are Sir Robert Askin, Liberal Premier of the State from 1965 to 1975, and Neville Wran, Labor Premier from 1976 to 1986. The architect is John Verge, a star of Sydney's building boom in the late 1820s and early 1830s.



Portrait of John Verge (source: Dictionary of Sydney)

Dr. James Bowman, son-in-law of John Macarthur, built a grand house in 1835 to a design by Verge. It was located on the western outskirts of Sydney with a view towards the town and overlooking the waters of Blackwattle Bay. It was called *Lyndhurst*.

Elegant in its design and furnishings, Bowman's house began a downhill slide after he lost it in the depression of the 1840s. By the 1970s it was a shabby hulk and appeared destined for demolition.

The Department of Main Roads, given its head by the Askin Liberal Government, proposed to ease Sydney's traffic problem by constructing expressways to the north and the west of the city. Both were to pass through Glebe and, in the process, slicing and dicing the suburb into three chunks would destroy thousands of houses and a community in the process.

The north western expressway was at first on course to take out the greyhound racing hub, in what had once been elegant parkland between the city and Glebe. Greyhound racing was still a big deal and its power survived until the 1970s. Representations were made and the course of the expressway was diverted. It would now avoid Wentworth 'Park' greyhound racing centre but *Lyndhurst* was doomed.

Well, not quite. In the process of researching Verge's life and work I found *Lyndhurst* and was soon motivated to see if anything could be done to save it. At *Lyndhurst* I met its only resident, Kevin Garner. Kevin lived upstairs and there ran the *Lyndhurst* Christian Centre, a group aimed at giving hope to some of Glebe's least lucky residents.

Kevin put me in touch with a journalist, Joye Wallace, at The Sun, a Fairfax newspaper of the time. Joye had no power over the main pages of that paper, being part of the team in what was then known as the 'women's pages'.

We had a common goal: saving *Lyndhurst* from the bulldozers of the Department of Main Roads. A community meeting was arranged and, with Kevin Garner's consent, it duly took place in one of the large upstairs rooms at *Lyndhurst*.

The Save *Lyndhurst* Committee was formed with the conservation architect Clive Lucas as nominal chairman. Press releases would be written by me and issued in the name of the Committee. Joye took down the names and contact details of all of the people at the meeting. Sadly, the notebook in which all of these enthusiastic people were recorded was lost within a few days of the meeting.

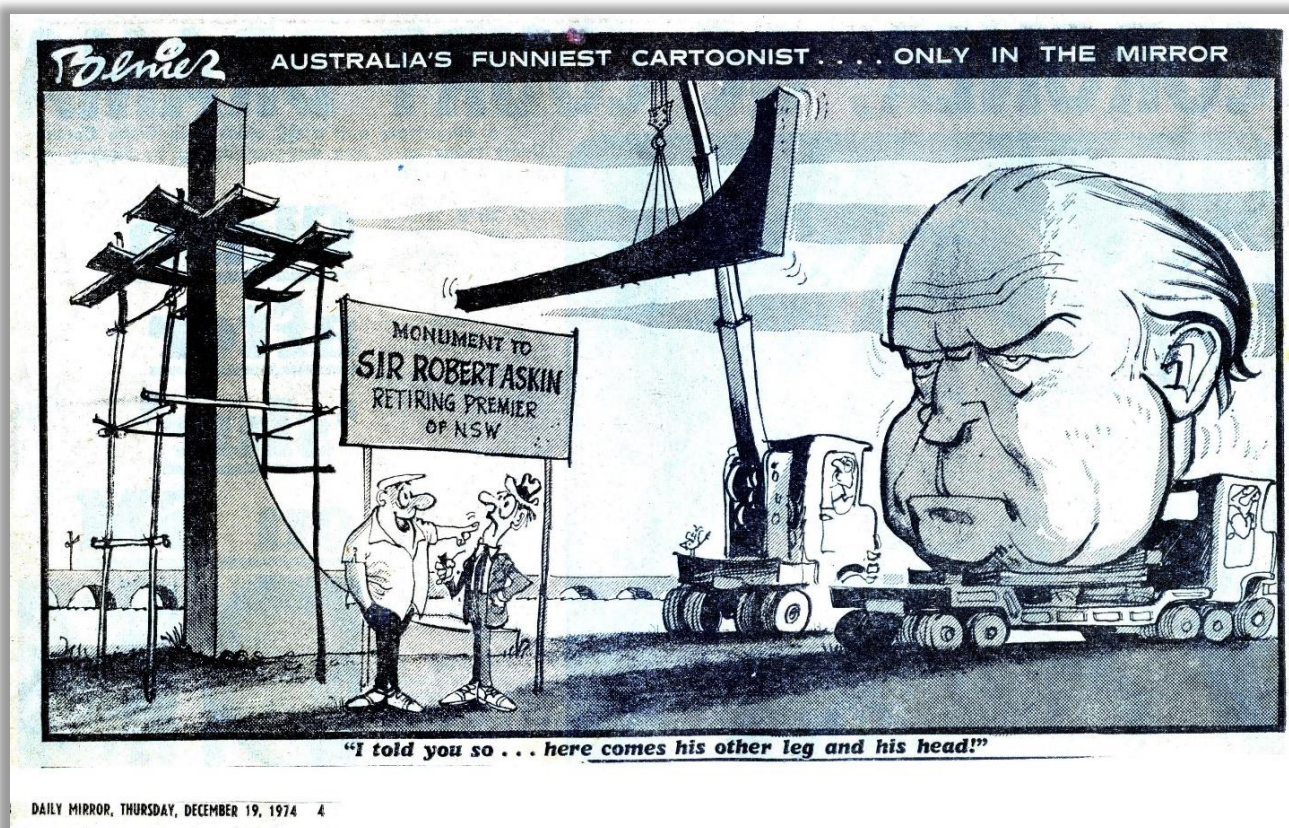
This was a setback ... or was it? I decided to press on without them, unhindered by any need to seek approval for press releases from a large committee. There had been a committee: but I had no idea who its members were.

In the weeks, months and several years that followed I issued a stream of Save *Lyndhurst* Committee press releases – every one of which gained public attention. Clive Lucas was an acceptable figurehead for the committee and was quoted in every press release. *Lyndhurst* became a cause.

Premier Askin, a childhood resident of Glebe, did nothing to help. The expressway would proceed come what may. Wentworth Park's greyhounds, saved from the DMR's bulldozers, would race on.

After Askin left politics, the grateful greyhound racing fraternity arranged for the construction of a memorial to the former premier which was duly erected in the corner of Wentworth Park. Askin was flattered, calling the monument a 'very nice gesture of the Trustees of Wentworth Park.'

The Save *Lyndhurst* Committee's press release, revealing the tacky monument, was issued in association with the Glebe Society and made a front page story in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. At least one newspaper cartoon appeared. Its design was likened to a boot in the gleefully derisory media coverage that followed its construction at a cost of \$2,000.00.



The former premier was mocked. The monument was a political and personal embarrassment and Askin withdrew his blessing. It was swiftly demolished. But a point had been made.

This is a long story, told for the first time, and space requires that it be made short. Some months before he became Premier in 1976, Neville Wran, then the leader of the NSW State opposition, agreed to meet John Morris, Director of the National Trust of NSW, and me. The Trust supported the cause but realising the matter of *Lyndhurst* was in good hands left it to the Save Lyndhurst Committee to make the running. There was immense opposition to the expressway and support for *Lyndhurst* in Glebe and Albert Mispel, a member of the Society, was always involved.

In his office in Parliament House in Sydney's Macquarie St, Wran listened with interest as John Morris and I briefed him on the history and significance of *Lyndhurst*. 'Right,' he said, 'let's go and have a look.' He called up a car and, after John Morris excused himself, Wran and I proceeded to *Lyndhurst*. I had warned him that decades of neglect and ill treatment had left *Lyndhurst* in very poor shape.

Wran was not daunted by what he saw. He made no promises but after he became premier of NSW in 1976, several months after his visit to *Lyndhurst*, the Department of Main Roads found another route for their Glebe motorway. *Lyndhurst* became the headquarters of the newly formed Historic Houses Trust of NSW. And Clive Lucas was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire, one of Australia's last recipients of an OBE. The citation for his OBE referred to his role in the campaign for *Lyndhurst*.

In 1985 I placed the records of the Save *Lyndhurst* Committee in the care of the Historic Houses Trust. These consisted of a cardboard box filled with a large number of press releases, a great many press clippings and correspondence covering the period from 1971 to 1984. I gave these to Peter Watts, at that time Director of the Trust.

The Historic Houses Trust eventually moved to a better address in Macquarie St and lost interest in *Lyndhurst* which was sold to a private owner. All of my press releases were binned but everything else appeared to be safe in the files of the Historic Houses Trust, now Sydney Living Museums – with a single exception.

On requesting a copy of a newspaper cartoonist's take on the Askin monument to illustrate this story I was told that it could not be found. The cartoon was the last straw that sealed the fate of the monument. And it did the government that Askin had so recently headed no good at all. I eventually found it in my own files.

Askin and his government are long gone but *Lyndhurst* survives and so does Glebe – saved from annihilation after a long and bitter struggle involving many people. Residents of Glebe owe a debt of gratitude to the Save Lyndhurst Committee, Neville Wran and the Glebe Society.

I declare a personal connection to this story. John Verge married my great-grandmother in 1858. I'm not one of his descendants but I researched his life and wrote an unpublished biography of him which is held by the State Library of NSW. Had I not explored Verge's life, found *Lyndhurst* and lobbied Neville Wran to save it, Glebe would be a very different place today.

Holed up at home and nothing to do?

by Rodney Hammett

Part of the City of Sydney website includes a fascinating section titled 'Archives & History Resources'.

<https://archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>.

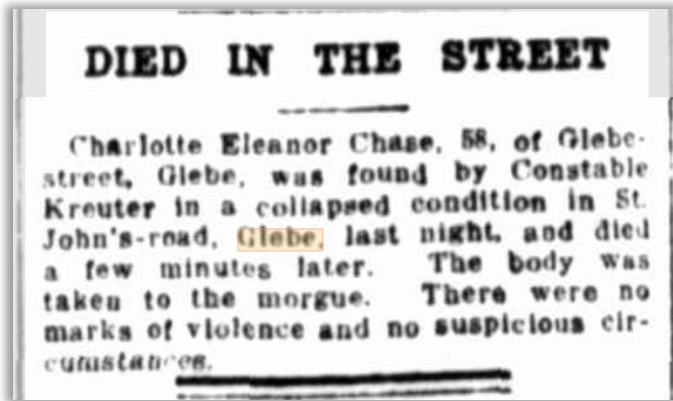
Rummaging around here the other day I found a photo that would have been ideal to include in my recent story of J Meloy, carrier. (*Bulletin* 7/2020). Here is one of his lorries in 1935 loaded with bales of wool at a wharf in Darling Harbour. You can see the firm's name on the tray of the lorry 'J Meloy Ltd Carriers'. Also note the solid rubber tyres; obviously before pneumatic tyres were in common use.



(Unique ID A-00015679; Series: Sydney Reference Collection (SRC) – Photographs)

100 Years ago in Glebe & Forest Lodge this month: October 1920

Prepared by Rodney Hammett



[*Evening News*; Fri 8 Oct 1920, p4]

then in August 1884 he was convicted of stealing a number of trunks of boots. This became known as The Circular Quay Boot Robbery. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The receiver, Joseph Isaac, was sentenced to gaol for four years.²

1. Ancestry.com; State Archives NSW; Series: 3147; Roll: 1785; Registers of Coroners' Inquests, 1821-1937

2. Newcastle Morning Herald; Sat 16 Aug 1884, p4

Charlotte, the wife of Sydney born with Italian heritage Joseph Edward Chase, together produced 12 children. However in 1920 only six were still living. The coroner's inquest into her death was dispensed with after an enquiry.¹

The family lived at 134 Glebe St, Glebe, Joseph being one of the many carriers who lived and worked in the area.

Born in England, the infant Charlotte arrived at Port Philip, Melbourne with her parents William and Jane Matthews in 1863. As an 18-year-old she married 17 year old Joseph in Sydney in 1880.

Joseph had come through the school of hard knocks. By 1880 he already had a police record,



Charlotte Chase (nee Matthews); **Source:** Ancestry.com [Robert Borsak originally shared this on 06 Jul 2020]

GLEBE, NATURALLY

News from the Blue Wren Subcommittee – September 2020

Judy Christie will again organise the Society's spring bird survey commencing in Paddy Gray Reserve, Hereford St at 6.45 am on Sunday 1 November 2020 with breakfast afterwards at a café in Glebe Point Rd. If it is raining, the survey will be postponed to 8 November. Please contact Judy to confirm that you will be attending (judychristie@internode.on.net). We will be following the City of Sydney's COVID-19 safe rules and please bring a face mask, your phone (camera), binoculars, a pen and a clipboard if you have one. In preparation for the survey, why not practise your bird watching skills by joining the annual Aussie Backyard Bird Count from 19 to 25 October 2020? All you need to do is record for 20 minutes the birdlife in your favourite outdoor space and you don't have to leave home – please register at <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>

Thirteen volunteers from The Friends of Orphan School Creek Bushcare Group held a working bee on National Tree Day, Sunday 2 August, and 50 tube-stock were planted; a further weeding and watering day was held on Sunday 6 September was attended by nine volunteers and only one of the recently planted flora had died.

In the Bays' parklands, construction of the new park adjacent to The Crescent has recommenced following the bankruptcy of the previous contractor. The narrowness of the foreshore walkway, especially at the junction of Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays, remains a safety issue with the risks caused by interactions between large numbers of bicyclists and the large numbers of walkers, joggers and dogs. There does not seem to be an easy way to provide a separate bicycle track.

Since January, following months of rain, there has been no need for hand-watering in Paddy Gray Reserve. 100 new native flora have been planted by the National Trust, the City's contractors, and loop fencing has been installed to prevent dogs entering the newly planted areas. Dogs in the Reserve should be kept on a leash but, unfortunately, some local residents have been treating the Reserve as an off-leash area and their dogs have destroyed significant areas of lawn in the western area of the Reserve between the *Glebe Gardens* residential development and the cliff face.

Andrew Wood

Blue Wren Subcommittee Convenor

Palmerston Avenue Park Upgrade

By Anna Szanto

The City of Sydney through its contractors, Regal Innovations, began its works to improve the park land in Palmerston Ave in late July. It should be finished by the end of the year. The plan is multifaceted. It will provide a greener space, remove noxious weeds, improve drainage and allow people to move around more easily.

The result will be better access along Palmerston Ave with new stairs, a concrete path, handrails, pram ramps and more welcoming entry points. A larger entry plaza to the light rail station will be a feature.

More native plants and grasses will enhance biodiversity. And new seating, a bubbler and a tap will make the space more pleasant for people wanting to spend some time outdoors.



The photo shows the land being prepared for the new drainage system being installed Photo: Andrew Wood

EVENTS

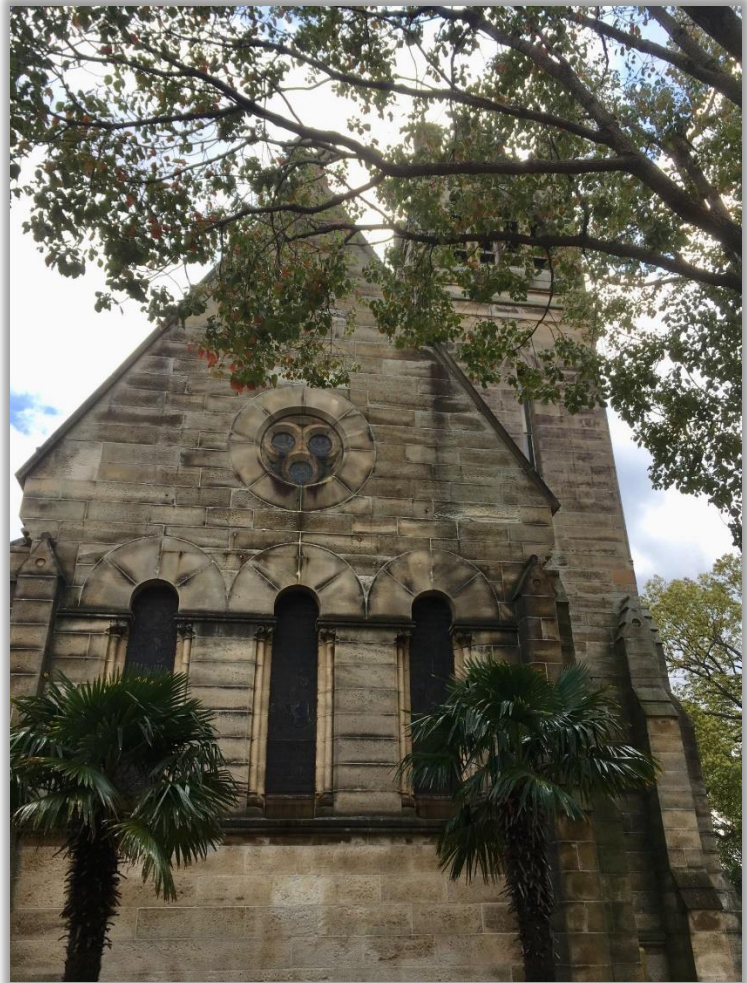
2020 Glebe Society Christmas Gathering

**St John's Church Friday 11
December 5 to 7 pm**

Imagine a balmy early summer evening at St John's Church where you can view the 150 Year's St John's Church Exhibition, wander through church building and the grounds with a glass 'of your choice', savouring canapes and enjoying the great company of fellow Glebe Society members.

Bookings will be available in the November *Bulletin*.

Judy Vergison
Events Co-ordinator



St Johns Glebe (photo: Anne Holmes)

Please join us at the Glebe Youth Service AGM: Tuesday 17 Nov 2020 (6.30 - 7.30 pm)

The Glebe Youth Service (GYS) Board warmly welcomes Glebe Society members to come to their AGM **on Tuesday 17 November 2020 being held at Glebe Youth Service, 84 Glebe Point Rd Glebe.**

Jess Scully, Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Sydney and Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Member for Sydney, will be attending and both will be speaking. You will also hear from young people who use and value the services provided by GYS.

GYS had many achievements this year by way of a pivot in the services offered and also a number of major upgrades to the building and facilities. You will have the opportunity to view the new and impressive indigenous mural room painted by Aunty Katherine and others, as featured on p.34.

The arrangements for the AGM are in line with COVID Safe protocols. You can attend in person or via Zoom. Bookings are essential and will be via Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/glebe-youth-service-annual-general-meeting-2020-tickets-122631308545>). If you need more info please contact Judy Vergison 0417 446 425.

Judy Vergison
Board Member, Glebe Youth Service



Local Young People at Glebe Youth Service and the new mural created by local artist and elder, Aunty Katherine Farrawell. Photographed by Glebe's very own Tom Psomotragos.

Walk for Health with Sydney Inner West Rotary

Bring a Picnic Lunch and we bring the Champers. COST: \$10 towards local youth projects

October 2020

Wednesday 14 October, 9.30am headland walk. Maroubra to Malabar to Maroubra. Coffee on the way, then bring a picnic and champers at Maroubra Beach. Medium walk. Book text or phone Amy 0414 887 001

Sunday, 25 October, 10.00am Stanmore with a local Frank meet at Weekley Park, Percival Rd near the Large Chess Set. Book text or phone Fay. 0418 602 014

November 2020

Wednesday, 04, November, 10am. Lindfield Discover East Lindfield with local Cherylinne. Picnic and champers at Cherylinne's garden. Book text or phone Cherylinne 0403 863 036

Sunday 22 November, 10am. East Balmain, Tom Uren walk by Inner West local Phillip. Meet at The Fenwick café, West St for a coffee. Book text or phone Fay. 0418 602 014

December 2020

Wednesday 9, December, 10.00am. Historic Glebe meet at Foley Park and let the magic unfold. Bring a picnic and lunch at the Fish Market. Book text or phone Fay. 0418 602 014

CREATIVE GLEBE

Would you be interested in joining the Glebe Art Show Committee?

Sadly, the Glebe Art Show will not be held this year due to COVID restrictions but we will have a couple of positions vacant on the Committee next year and we are looking for people who might be interested in joining us.

We are an incorporated non-profit association in a healthy financial position with a mixture of local artists and art lovers on the Committee. Our next Show will be this time next year. The Committee meets about seven or eight times a year, usually with six monthly meetings before the Show (September/October) and a couple after it. Meetings are relaxed wine and nibbles events, nothing too formal.

Our first vacancy is for a new Treasurer. It's ideally suited to someone with an aptitude for figures or some experience managing finances. Our current Treasurer will be available to provide a thorough handover and ongoing support.

If you think you might be interested please contact us at info@glebeartshow.org.au and we will meet up and tell you more about it

Fiona Verge
Secretary



Glebe Art Show 2018 (photo: Phil Vergison)

Players in the Pub



Bleak House

7 pm Wednesday 21 October

Upstairs Toxteth Hotel, corner of Ferry/Glebe Point Rds Glebe

Our second reading under COVID restrictions is Charles Dickens' classic detective novel adapted for the stage. Directed by Lyn Collingwood, with Dereck Cameron, Harley Connor, Alan Faulkner, Nicholas Gledhill, Deb Hunt, Kim Knuckey, Jim McCrudden, Cassady Maddox, Sharron Skehan and Peter Talmacs.

Seating is limited and bookings are essential. We cannot admit walkups. If you'd like to come, please email kknuckey@bigpond.net.au with your name, 'phone number and how many seats you'd like. (We urge friends to sit together so that the audience is closer to the 'stage'.)

RSVP by 5 pm Friday 16 October. We can't guarantee a seat due to limits at the pub, but we'll try our best!

Practicing in the Park



From Jude Paul: These men are part of a group called Narrownecks. They describe their music as 'Old time mountain music with a modern flair'. They practice every Tuesday morning in Jubilee Park (and are available for hire). Check them out at <https://www.narrownecks.com/> (photo: Jude Paul)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The Glebe Society's 2020 AGM was held at Glebe Youth Service on Sunday 20 September. A small number of members were permitted to attend in person due to COVID restrictions and others joined by Zoom.

The guest speaker was Keiran Kevans who is the manager of GYS. Two young people who are involved with GYS also spoke. Video of their addresses to the AGM will be uploaded to our YouTube channel in due course.

All photos below are by Phil Vergison.



Zoom wrangling ...



A bird's eye view of the AGM



Young GYS users talk about their experience.



Lyn Collingwood, on receipt of her Life Membership



Keiran Kevans giving members a run-down on GYS

Presidents' Reports

As three members performed the role of Glebe Society President, the most recent outgoing president, Mark Stapleton, spoke first.

From Mark Stapleton

Hello all.

I am Mark Stapleton, President of the Glebe Society for the last few months. I was born on Gadigal land. I pay respect to the elders of all the First Nations countries that participants are joining in.

Our AGM is an opportunity to reflect on the Glebe Society's work and the role of President as observed over the past two years.

The Glebe Society has a rich history and membership. Behind me is an image of Jack Munday, one of many fearless activists who have done so much to preserve and build the best that Glebe can be for everyone who lives, works, learns and plays here. Recently passed, we are all so pleased that Jack was able to participate in our recent 50th anniversary celebrations. Jack is an inspiration to men and women in communities across Australia.

Society members are active people with strong interests. With a portfolio structure we include people with very specific interests in sub committees and with broad interests on the management committee.

The experience of having several Presidents within 12 months was positive in that people were able to bring energy to the work for a shorter time. Although four people were elected to be president in the end there were three of us. My thanks in particular to Brian Fuller and Janet Wahlquist for doing far more than their share.

At the same time rotation of a Management Committee role is a test for people to keep up and I am grateful for everyone's patience.

This year we mourned the passing of Peter Thorogood who did so much for the Glebe Society and everyone who lives, works, learns and plays in this community. Vale Peter.

We also saw several long-time hard-working people wind up their Management Committee roles this year.

Lifetime member Neil Macindoe brought his planning expertise and experience to the Glebe Society for many years. Planning matters have been addressed by many Society members under the headings of heritage, community and environment. We have talked about new approaches to this area of focus including some kind of 'brains trust' so we welcome ideas from members about how to work on this front. The potential relocation of the Sydney Fish Market, the Bays precinct, revitalisation of old commercial areas like Glebe Point Rd, provision of social, affordable, public, private and community-based housing and safe 'pop up' developments such as bike lanes are all seriously important issues for people in Glebe.

Lesley Lynch will not stand for her role again this year and we thank her for her patience, forensic analysis and solid advocacy on behalf of Glebe. Lesley convened the Bays and Foreshores group since 2012, was President in 2009 and 2010 and became a Life member in 2013. We appreciate the time and effort invested and the patience shown as the political machinations continued. Thanks, Lesley, for your commitment. Lesley has said she will not be a stranger if and when we need to call on her experience and skills.

Janice Challinor will take a break from her Community Development role at the end of 2020. Modestly Janice told me that her work has been 'talking to people'. Actually, Janice has worked tirelessly – with others – connecting the many community groups and precincts across Glebe. Janice is the kind of person who decides to make things happen. Often unsung but deeply appreciated we know the impacts that Janice makes at personal and community levels.

Every community group will see some turnover in roles year by year. We invite members to think about roles that can be played to enrich and protect Glebe's community, environment and heritage.

The Glebe Society is a collegiate body and new members are always given support, advice and guidance. So I encourage members to nominate and be welcomed.

Community organisations are intensely responsive to what happens and is proposed for the area. Glebe Society members network with many people. Many of us look to find out how we can use whatever resource we might have to make a difference.

This is why this year I am so pleased to be welcomed for our Annual General Meeting by The Glebe Youth Service. We are in a pandemic and before this we were and are in a market crisis that fails younger generations of all backgrounds.

Brian and Janet carried the most of the Presidents responsibilities this year so I want to hand over to their reports on the work of the Society next...

From Brian Fuller



Brian Fuller (photo: Phil Vergison)

President's Role Rotated – 2019/20

The Management Committee made the decision to rotate the role of President for the 2019/20 year. This was a first for the Society and a positive response to the desire to introduce fresh thinking with an exchange of ideas across a broader President base as the Society entered its 51st year.

It was also a response to meet the time restrictions experienced by those who felt they could make a contribution albeit for a shorter period than is normally the case.

For the role to be successful during the full 12 months and to ensure the Society maintained reliable continuity to our Members and the Agencies with whom we have a relationship, it was appropriate that the Presidents adopted a consultative approach with each other across the year.

We believe that it was successful, as the Society continued to provide an advocacy role on community concerns whilst demonstrating its adaptability to changing circumstances as and when required.

We would recommend that it could be repeated from time to time as the circumstances deem it beneficial.

Sydney Fish Market

The relocation of the Sydney Fish Market had been mooted for some years.

With the release of the DA and submissions due by 13 November 2019, the Society needed to quickly galvanise the various opinions across the membership and determine the most effective strategic approach needed to achieve the maximum impact within the time frame.

The Society prepared an extremely comprehensive submission highlighting the inadequacies of the proposals in so far as they related to:

- A lack of an acceptable business case that justified the additional expense of building over water
- The early release of the DA prior to the finalisation of the master plan for the Bays precinct and in particular Blackwattle Bay
- The disregard of the current regulations that ensure that the use and enjoyment of the Harbour is for the public good ahead of private interests
- The impact on and damage to the biodiversity of Blackwattle Bay
- The projections in relation to the transport networks did not include all other development activity that will occur in the area in the short to medium term
- The lost opportunity to complete the Glebe Foreshore walk across the head of Blackwattle Bay versus forcing all walkers and mobility impaired people to pass through what is effectively a modern shopping centre.

We very quickly letter boxed all of Glebe and Forest Lodge advising residents of the Society's position and made recommendations for their own submission. We worked closely with Jamie Parker MP and his team to ensure that collectively the messages to the community and the Government were clear and united.

Although the State Government maintains that the relocation will proceed, we believe our submission was respected although not adopted. We continue to solidly represent the Society's position at bureaucrat level and maintain continued dialogue with our State MP and, in the process, ensure we continue with a strong voice on the future of the Bay's Precinct.

City Of Sydney – City Plan 2036

The City of Sydney invited submissions in relation to its draft City Plan 2036. Following discussions with Councilor Jess Scully over a shared concern for the future of Glebe Point Rd, the Society made a detailed submission to the City recommending that it stimulates the commercial activity on Glebe Point Rd towards a more viable future.

The recommendation encouraged the City to vary the planning restrictions on the eastern side of Glebe Point Rd between Parramatta and Bridge Rds, so as to facilitate diversity in the commercial offering and adaptability to meet the needs of today's small to medium businesses, without detriment to the heritage significance of the buildings and the Heritage Conservation area generally.

The City has very recently confirmed that the submission will feed into the LEP which is currently being updated and scheduled to go on exhibition in March 2021. Council has acknowledged the Society's recognition of the situation and a desire to engage in outcomes that meets the needs of a village market place going forward.

Subcommittees

Notwithstanding the decision to rotate three Presidents across the one year, it is the strength of the subcommittees that ensures the continuation of the core activities of the Society across the pillars of Environment, Community and Heritage.

Throughout the year the subcommittees have been the drivers of significant submissions to the appropriate authorities in relation to Blackwattle Bay (in addition to the Fish Market), a fully-staffed Community Centre in Glebe/Forest Lodge, Social and Affordable Housing (including Boarding Houses), Planning Principles and Heritage Protection of Heritage-listed assets or those in the Heritage Conservation Areas.

From Janet Wahlquist

During my time as President (March to June 2020), the COVID restrictions shutdown came into effect. This resulted in Management Committee meetings being conducted by Zoom. Due to the issue of groups of people meeting, the task of packaging and delivering The *Bulletin* went online.

Glebe Town Hall Community Centre

The Society has been promoting having a community centre based at Glebe Town Hall. We have engaged with other community groups in the area about this possibility. To this end, Janice Challinor and I had a meeting with the Lord Mayor. The meeting went favourably and the proposal is being examined by the City of Sydney.

Blackwattle Bay Circular Walk and renovation of Glebe Island Bridge

Once the Covid shutdown commenced, the Parks and walking paths became much busier and new issues arose. It has become increasingly clear that there are not enough facilities for walking and that walking paths were often crowded and not safe when sharing paths with cyclists. Looking at ways that walking experiences could be improved and developed an obvious possibility seemed a circular walk around Blackwattle Bay. A

walk hugging the water around Blackwattle Bay which crossed the bay by Glebe Island Bridge could be a pleasant and attractive walk and cycleway not dissimilar to the Bay Run in Leichhardt/Drummoyne. Glebe Island Bridge has been allowed to fall into neglect and remains permanently open despite having been heritage listed. This would require the State Government and City of Sydney Council to make it happen and the renovation of Glebe Island Bridge so that it can open and close.

The Society had a meeting with Jamie Parker about the demolition by neglect of Glebe Island Bridge. Jamie Parker is keen to push and support action for the renovation of the bridge. Promoting this proposal is an ongoing issue for the Society.

Heritage Buildings falling into disrepair

Another matter the Society raised with Jamie Parker was the failure of the Heritage Council to force owners, be they private or government, to be responsible for reasonable repairs and upkeep of Heritage-listed properties. This is an ongoing problem and Jamie Parker advised the Society it is unlikely to be easily resolved as there is little money or resources allocated to this task by government.

Blackwattle Bay Development Plan

The Blackwattle Bay Development Plan was also released during this time. It allowed for 42-storey buildings and a significant increase in density of population and use which would impact on Glebe/Forest Lodge. The Society, in particular Asa Wahlquist and Lesley Lynch, were involved in meetings with other resident groups, City of Sydney Council and our local member, Jamie Parker, in regard to this development. We also made a submission setting out our opposition to aspects of the development. This is an ongoing issue which we will remain involved in.

Glebe Society honoured

Jamie Parker honoured the Glebe Society with a speech to Parliament acknowledging the contribution and work of the Glebe Society on 3 June 2020.

Janet Wahlquist

Subcommittee Annual Reports for 2019-2020

Bays & Foreshores Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-2020

By Lesley Lynch, Bays & Foreshores Subcommittee Convenor

The past year has been both intensive and possibly the most significant in the 12 years of my engagement with the redevelopment of the Bays Precinct. The central agenda has been the acceleration of planning for the redevelopment of the Blackwattle Bay foreshores as part of the NSW Government's larger agenda for the redevelopment of the Western Harbour Precinct including the Pyrmont Peninsula.

The Premier and Planning Minister are adamant that dramatic change is imperative. Their rhetoric focuses on the area as an extension of the CBD and 'the new frontier' (Premier Berejiklian) and the need 'to amend the planning controls with a focus on jobs and economic activity (Minister Stokes)'.

The Glebe Society has no problem with this broad agenda – though like Pyrmont residents we are very wary of the possible implications of being incorporated into the CBD planning regime – but we have vehement objections to key aspects of the specific plans that have emerged over the last year.

New Fish Market

While supporting the need for a new Fish Market, we opposed its surprise relocation to the head of Blackwattle Bay on multiple grounds - including traffic congestion, technical difficulties and likely greater cost of construction and the loss of opportunity to open the head of the Bay to the public. In November 2019, the Glebe Society submitted an objection to the development application (written by Asa Wahlquist) on these and other grounds. Unsuccessfully.

In May 2020, the Minister designated the Fish Market as a special 'fast tracked' project and its DA with limited amendments was approved soon thereafter. We were correct about our concerns as to the cost of building on the narrow strip of foreshore: it spiralled from the original \$250m to an extraordinary \$750m. This cost to the public purse appears to be one of the drivers for the subsequently proposed over-development of the Blackwattle Bay foreshores. The Fish Market construction is scheduled to commence in early 2021 and to be completed in 2024.

The Glebe Society is now focussed on ameliorating the impact of the relocation – especially in relation to traffic congestion, improved public transport and noise impact on nearby residents and the Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay Campus. We will be alert to any future possibility that changing circumstances will open a further opportunity to rethink and reduce the size and scope – and maybe even the cost- of the planned building.



Demolition of Hansons (photo: V. Simpson-Young)

Hansons demolition

Locals have been fascinated by the slow demolition of the Hanson's Concrete Plant on the site over the last few months. We now have a tantalising but temporary experience of what it would be like if the head of the Bay had been returned to the public as open space connecting with Wentworth Park.

In 2018 the Glebe Society, while not opposing the medium-term relocation of Hanson's on Glebe Island, recommended the Minister take strong and effective measures to minimise the negative impact on the residents and on the environment from the intensive industrial activities being sited there to service the multiple large infrastructure projects nearby. This has now become a significant problem will be an ongoing issue for the Glebe Society to monitor in conjunction with Pyrmont community groups.

Blackwattle Bay Sub-Precinct

In recent months we have had to respond to two separate planning proposals relating to the Blackwattle Bay foreshores.

In the context of the Government's determination to 'revitalise' this new frontier, the Blackwattle Bay foreshore provides the only available large site for

intensive development close to the CBD. It is mainly publicly owned. The Government is clearly determined to fully exploit this opportunity.

Blackwattle Bay Revitalisation Plan

In May 2020 Infrastructure NSW, produced a Blackwattle Bay Revitalisation Plan for consultation which put forward three scenarios as options. The scenarios provided for different balances of commercial/residential development but all had the same overall density, included three high rise towers up to 46 storeys and the same proportion of overall open space (30%).

The Glebe Society response in July (written by Lesley Lynch) while we acknowledged that the scenarios contained attractive elements, we focussed on the core elements. Our main reaction was a strong objection to the over-development of the foreshore and particularly to the three proposed towers. Notwithstanding assurances that their positioning would limit their overshadowing of Wentworth Park and the Glebe Foreshore park they would be out of character with the surrounding areas and would detract from the landmark Anzac Bridge. We argued that the proposed density of residents/workers was clearly excessive and beyond the capacity of transport facilities even with the proposed improvement. We argued for more and better configured green open space and while welcoming the commitment to the foreshore promenade expressed concern as to its width and continuity to the Anzac Bridge.

Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Place Strategy

In July 2020 the Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Place Strategy (PPPS) was released by the NSW Government. It covered seven sub-precincts – including Blackwattle Bay and Wentworth Park. While it is a draft proposal and will go through several stages before finalisation, it is clearly a very significant document that presages a significant shift in planning rules and in particular in relation to high rise development.

This broader plan originated from the Premier's public anger at the refusal of planning approval for the proposed Star Casino's 66-storey tower on the Pyrmont foreshore in July 2019 and her subsequent direction to the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) to do a super-quick review of the suitability of the planning controls and rules for The Western Harbour Precinct including the Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Framework. The Glebe

Society (Lesley Lynch and Asa Wahlquist) made both an oral presentation to the GSC and a written submission in September 2019 in which we expressed our concern as ‘to motive, process and possible outcome’ of the review and suggested it looked as if the purpose was ‘to overturn a totally appropriate’ planning decision the Premier did not like.

The report from this swift review contained some interesting proposals and argued for good planning processes including a strong emphasis on place-based planning with which we agreed. It also found that the existing planning controls for the Pyrmont Peninsula were not appropriate to the Government’s economic and job creation development priorities and provided the Premier’s desired circuit breaker to change planning rules. It was designed to kick-start an accelerated development agenda in Pyrmont/Ultimo – and on the Blackwattle Bay foreshores.

The development of the recent PPPS proposal flows directly from this report and is explicit that its primary objectives and drivers, are ‘to unlock the economic potential of the Pyrmont Peninsula’ with the objective of: ‘positioning Pyrmont to be an attractor for global investment, driven by the connectivity of the Peninsular to Sydney’s CBD, complementing and strengthening its position as a place at the cutting edge of the future of work’. The primary objective for Blackwattle Bay is to create ‘a new urban quarter’ generating jobs and employment. This could include an entertainment, events and cultural space to ‘support a vibrant 24-hour entertainment and cultural precinct’ The proposal includes the three high rise towers from the previous proposal.

The Glebe Society made a submission in response to the PPPS (written by Lesley Lynch) in which we accepted that these are appropriate and potentially beneficial objectives – but with a very large caveat. These priority objectives must be balanced with other social and heritage values and must improve not undermine the amenity of the existing communities. The submission can be read here: <https://www.glebesociety.org.au/submission-on-pyrmont-peninsula-place-strategy-september-2020/>.

In our view many of the proposals in the PPPS do not deliver on this balance. In particular we argue that to gain community support, key proposals in relation to high rise development and population density will have to be curtailed and provision of open space and social infrastructure expanded.

We applaud the commitment to a continuous foreshore walk to Walsh Bay but argue that it should be wider than 10 metres for safety reasons and to create more open green space on the foreshore.

If there is to be residential development on the foreshore we argue for a serious and significant allocation of affordable and social housing in the range of 30-40% of the overall residential provision – noting that most of the land is publicly owned.

We welcome the commitment to ‘*restore/reinstate/interpret the historic Glebe Island Bridge structure to provide active transport access to Bays West*’. What this means for the actual structure of the bridge is unclear – but it does make an explicit commitment to maintain a non-motorised transit route to the Bays West which will be an important link.

Wentworth Park

The PPPS commits to investigate the return of the Greyhound racing track to public space on the expiry of their lease in 2027. We welcome this – although the public has always presumed this would happen – and reaffirmed our conviction that the community would vehemently resist any development (e.g. a major sports arena) of any part of Wentworth Park which would restrict public access.

Wentworth Park Sub-precinct: It is proposed to revitalise an area near Wentworth Park to allow an increase of 1,115 people and 1,200 more jobs with a focus on creative industries, galleries and events. The redevelopment will involve adapting urban warehouses and wool stores for these new jobs and industries. Nothing specific is indicated re heights of adapted buildings beyond the note that ‘building design will take advantage of sloping land between Jones and Wattle Streets’.

With the caveat that little detail is provided for these development proposals, we broadly supported these proposals.

Transport and traffic planning: The most challenging issues around Blackwattle Bay relate to the difficulty – if not insolubility – of the traffic congestion problems and the provision of adequate



A greyhound, racing (photo: Peter Kaul, Pixabay)

transport options to cope with the major increase in people and vehicle movement that will be generated by the major commercial and residential developments that are proposed.

There was a last-minute *Blackwattle Bay Traffic and Transport Strategy* made available to the community in July 2020. It was not a plan but 'a high-level document outlining short to medium term modal strategies to support the new Sydney Fish Market development and re-zoning of the wider Blackwattle Bay. It did include some good and achievable proposals but did not come close to a comprehensive transport/traffic plan.

Both the recent proposals for Blackwattle Bay include a range of proposals to make it 'easier to move around'. These include significant improvements in access to public transport – most notably the apparent commitment to a Metro station in Pyrmont. The PPPs also proposes a new bus route. The community is hopeful that more ferry services will become available. Beyond that the solutions are focussed on promoting active movement: walking, cycling, skating. Parking will almost certainly remain insoluble – although the PPPS proposes some novel solutions including multi-utility hubs situated throughout the Precinct.

At this stage numbers of positive and innovative proposals have been put forward to improve options and ease of moving around, but the transport and traffic problems for the whole Precinct – and particularly Blackwattle Bay – are far from resolved.

Related activities

The Bays and Foreshores role involves a wide range of meetings and interactions. This year, Asa Wahlquist and I have participated in regular meetings with the Blackwattle Bay Community Reference Group, the Sydney Fish Market Community Consultation Group, the Blackwattle Cove Community Coalition, Infrastructure NSW and with our local MP Jamie Parker. We have also written a number of updates on the Bays for the Glebe Society *Bulletin*.

The next stages in the development of the Pyrmont/Ultimo and Blackwattle Bay development plans will be hugely important for Glebe and our Pyrmont and Ultimo neighbours. The future of existing planning controls for communities adjacent to the CBD and the character of our built environment appear to be under serious pressure from Government.

I am not continuing in the Bays role next year. Asa Wahlquist is taking over. I wish her well. I know her to be well prepared. My thanks to the Committee for many very positive experiences over the years and for the opportunity to engage in planning matters in defence of the public good.

I have hugely enjoyed my 12 years on the Glebe Society committee as President and Convenor of the Bays and Foreshores committee - but I am confident I will equally enjoy my liberation from responsibilities.

Lesley Lynch

Bays & Foreshores Subcommittee Convenor



One view of the foreshores (photo: Phil Vergison)

Environment Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-2020

by Asa Wahlquist, Environment Subcommittee Convenor

The proposed new Sydney Fish Market building has been the main focus of the Environment Subcommittee for the past year. I have worked closely with Lesley Lynch, the Bays and Foreshores convener, on this issue. Activities have included attending stakeholder meetings about the proposed plan and lobbying politicians. Brian Fuller, who was president over the critical period, was very supportive. We met with local State Member of Parliament, Jamie Parker, and with Federal Member, Tanya Plibersek.

I have largely worked alone on environment matters, but after the interest expressed by several members, we formed a Fish Market working group.

We realised there was a great need to inform people of the problems that would arise from the proposed building and decided to put together an informational flyer, along with a form letter objecting to the proposal.

The Glebe Society paid to have the flyer distributed.

The real work was responding to the Development Application, a hefty document with a dozen appendices where the real details were revealed.

The Glebe Society understands the need to redevelop the current Fish Market, which is run down, but our preferred option was, and still is, to redevelop on the current site.

Our objections to the \$750 million construction of a new Sydney Fish Market are:

- NSW taxpayer funds are being expended on a commercial venture instead of on essential infrastructure
- The impact on local traffic and parking
- The inadequacy of the proposed promenade
- The profound risk posed by the chemicals, including heavy metals, in the sediment below the proposed site
- The lack of a Master Plan for the Bays Precinct to ensure integrated and strategic planning. Consequently an ad hoc approach is continuing without consideration for the implications of other developments
- The development is against the spirit of the pre-existing zoning controls of the Bays Precinct which did not support the Shopping Centre type food precinct, with food halls and restaurants, in the proposed Sydney Fish Market
- Closing off the Wentworth Park view corridor to Blackwattle Bay

From an environmental perspective the biggest concern was the risk of chemical contamination. The marine life in Blackwattle Bay is recovering from centuries of pollution. Twenty-six fish species and over 50 other organisms, including oysters, shrimp, limpets, sponges and algae have been identified in the Bay. The Glebe Society fears disturbing the sediment to build the Fish Market, particularly its under-water level carpark, would threaten this biodiversity.

The DA identified a terrifying host of chemical contaminants in the sediment, including PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) and TRH (total petroleum hydrocarbons), that were reported to exceed both low and high trigger value that are set to protect ecological communities. The heavy metals that exceed the high trigger values include mercury, lead, zinc, copper and nickel, while arsenic was also found. The past practice in managing these chemicals has been to leave them undisturbed in the sediment.: Indeed, a number of proposed developments in Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays have been rejected for that reason. Our continuing concern is that the toxic sediments could be stirred up, escape the barriers and affect the marine life of the Bay.

183 submissions were made to the DA for the proposed Fish Market. The vast majority of the 150 submissions from the general public opposed the DA, including 15 on the forms we distributed, with many of the submissions from locals raising points that were on our flyer. Only five from the general public completely endorsed it.

The State Government will need to raise \$750 million to pay for this new Fish Market. That money will be raised through developments on the current site. The 'Revitalising Blackwattle Bay' proposes building several 45-storey towers on the current Fish Market site: for reference the pylons of the Anzac Bridge are 120 metres, while a 45-storey building is 156 metres high, tall enough to cast early morning shadows over Glebe. The Glebe Society made a submission objecting to the proposal.

A Blackwattle Bay Reference Group meeting in May was informed this area was seen as an extension of the CBD. Does this mean Glebe is next?

It should be noted that the expansion of the Sydney Fish Market is largely based on the assumption of increased visits from Chinese tourists. The Revitalising Blackwattle Bay buildings are intended to provide between 1,045 and 1,700 homes, and workplaces for between 4,000 and 7,000 workers. The COVID-19 pandemic seriously challenges these assumptions: Chinese tourism has ceased and CBD offices and apartments are experiencing an unprecedented number of vacancies as people work from home and move further afield. If current work practices continue and the tensions between Australia and China grow, Blackwattle Bay risks becoming the site of several State Government owned white elephants.

Communications Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-2020

by Virginia Simpson-Young, Communications Subcommittee Convenor

Members of the subcommittee in 2019-2020 were Ashley Brinson, Tarny Burton, Bruce Davis, Sarah Fogg, Carole Herriman, Allan Hogan, Lyn Milton Virginia Simpson-Young, Peter Thorogood and Phil Young,

During the past year, we continued to coordinate and oversee the Society's various media – the *Bulletin*, websites, Facebook pages, Twitter, YouTube, Update Emails to members and Eventbrite. We have also sought to assist the Society's management committee and subcommittees with their communications.

Website

Management: The Subcommittee was very saddened by the death of Peter Thorogood who has been responsible for the website since its creation. As you can imagine, Peter's death has impacted the 'back end' of the Society substantially. Fortunately, he left things in good order and provided documentation for his successor. The gods were smiling on us because, at the time of Peter's death, the subcommittee's new(ish) recruit, Tarny Burton, was ramping up her role as website content manager. Tarny has been involved in the Society in her professional capacity over the years; first as the designer of the Society's current logo and then as the designer for most of the 50th anniversary material. At the Festival, Tarny offered to continue her involvement with the Society in a non-professional capacity and joined the Comms subcommittee. Being a web designer as well as graphic designer, Tarny has been able to take over the bulk of the work that Peter used to do. Phil Young has been there as back-end back-up and a few of us are upskilling to be able to upload material as needed.

Website upgrade: The comms subcommittee has been threatening to upgrade the website for some years; and we're now well and truly into the process. The website upgrade is being managed by Sarah Fogg, without whom there would probably have been no progress at all. We've completed a consultation stage in which we spoke with a range of users and potential users. This led to some guidelines and principles for the functionality of the new website. The next step has been to create a draft structure for the new website. Basically, the new structure will make it much more intuitive to use – particularly to *find* things. The draft new structure will be put to the management committee soon after which we can begin the design and development, resources permitting.

50th anniversary: Glebe Society Community Festival

It was an aim of the 50th anniversary Festival to make all the material available online. This includes the exhibition content, photos and videos of events and so on. Progress towards this aim has been glacial, but has been happening nonetheless. The starting point for this has been collecting into one location the huge amount of material generated by the Festival. We needed to do this for not only the website, but for the Archives. This task is largely complete.

Uploading all that material so that it is quick to access and pleasant to look at is not as simple as some of us first thought. Now that Tarny has access to most of the material she is designing a part of the website for this material. This is happening at the same time that we are working on the website upgrade, so the task is somewhat complicated. However, it's looking good and members can rest assured that the Festival material will be on our website soon.

The Bulletin

The *Bulletin* continues to be main means by which the Society communicates with its members. Content for the *Bulletin* is provided by management committee members and a handful of regular contributors who are not on the management committee, including Lyn Collingwood and Rodney Hammett. Photos are often provided by Phil Young and Phil Vergison and me. Of course, there have also been occasional contributors throughout the past year. If you are interested in contributing something to the *Bulletin*, don't hesitate to do so. I don't think I, as current editor, have ever knocked back a contribution.

Martin Lawrence retired as one of our proofreaders, but the stalwart Edwina Doe has continued. A callout in the *Bulletin* netted another three proofreaders, Emily Booker, Sybil Jack and Wendy Relf. Wendy has withdrawn due to a change in her work circumstances.

As members will be aware, COVID-19 has impacted how the *Bulletin* has been distributed in 2020. We have kept you up-to-date with the situation. We certainly hope our mail-out team can start meeting again soon so distribute paper copies of the *Bulletin*. When that time comes, if you would like to swap from paper to digital or vice versa, email us to let us know (secretary@glebesociety.org.au).

Each month, the most recent edition of the *Bulletin* is made publicly available on our website and (intermittently) promoted via the Facebook page and Twitter. Copies are always placed in the Society's archives and sent off to various dignitaries such as the City of Sydney Councillors. Copies are also provided to the local library, State Library and National Library.

Facebook

The Society's Facebook pages are also maintained by the Communications subcommittee; these are the main page (www.facebook.com/TheGlebeSociety) and the Glebe Island Bridge page (<https://www.facebook.com/GlebeIslandBridge>). Due to workload on subcommittee members, managing our

Facebook presence has been patchy. If you would like to help out with Facebook, please contact us at communications@glebesociety.org.au.

Our Facebook following has increased to 1,232 from around 1,100 last year. It's always interesting to look at which posts were most popular. Our post in May about the massive overdevelopment of the 'Blackwattle Bay Precinct' proposed by Infrastructure NSW (think 45-storey towers) reached over seven and a half thousand people. Our second most popular post was about Antoine (of *Bellevue Cottage* fame), crash-tackling an armed robber at Baker's Delight in February. And the third most popular post was a photo by member Ted McKeown of Anzac Bridge under construction way-back-when. Interestingly, these three posts cover a good range of the Society's concern, planning/infrastructure, local community and history – with a dash of environment mixed in.

As usual, posts generate discussion, particularly on controversial topics. Facebook is also a means by which members and the public can contact the Society and this occurs quite frequently. Often contacts have a family history flavour, but sometimes they provide useful information to our members, which is passed on.

The Glebe Society Update Email

One of the subcommittee's roles is the compilation and distribution of the *Glebe Society Update* emails that are sent on an irregular basis to those members who have provided us with an email address. The *Glebe Society Update* emails include breaking news that can't wait for the next *Bulletin* and updated information on important issues that the Glebe Society is working on. Over 98% of our members have email and are sent the Update email.

What's next?

As well as the website upgrade, the Comms subcommittee will be actively working to ensure that important digital communications are archived properly. In the past, significant contact to and from the Society were by letter and these were dutifully kept by the Secretary for the archives. Now most is via email, including letters sent as email attachments. Other important documents that may never make it to paper are minutes of the meetings of various committees within the Society. Lyn Milton, our archivist, has been gently pushing the Society to systematise the digital archiving process for some time.

AMENDED Community Development Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-2020

by Janice Challinor, Community Development Subcommittee Convenor

Apologies to the Community Development subcommittee for accidentally removing some text from their report in the last *Bulletin*. The entire report is included here again, for the record, with the missing text in red. – Editor]

This past year the Community sub-group has continued to undertake actions and projects aimed at strengthening links with the wider Glebe community wherever possible. This continues to be one of the guiding principles behind our activities. This report will essentially outline those activities according to the type of activity and the community partner(s) with which we have engaged.

For Centipede at Glebe Public School we hosted the annual Sunset Soirée at the Glebe Rowers Club premises in October 2019. Members of the Centipede Board of Management were very active in ensuring that this event gained traction with families who utilise the service as well, and their success was such that the lessening in Glebe Society membership attendance and support did not result in a substantial reduction in funds raised. As this is the only social function we host which is intended to financially assist our Glebe neighbours it hoped that any future events gain more Society membership support. As members will be aware Centipede at Glebe Public School is an outside school hours and holidays child care service specifically for children who attend Glebe Public School. It is a non-profit organisation that requires both government and additional funds to maintain its service, especially for vulnerable families who cannot afford fees. Friends of Centipede is a Glebe Society initiative to assist this vital local service.



president and sub-group convenor of the Glebe Society to discuss and debate the concept of our proposal. Deputy Lord Mayor Cr Jess Scully tabled a motion in Council to investigate this issue which was passed unanimously. As this activity all took place at the very beginning of the COVID pandemic the City of Sydney has been engaged in responding to immediate issues that have arisen. Consequently, we have been informed that it may be some time before this proposal can be given the public discussion it deserves.

The small group that coalesced around the 'Sewing for Good' ideal was unable to continue to meet, once the Glebe Town Hall became unavailable in early March. This was due to changes of management of the venue brought about by the devolution of the Glebe Community Development Project and COVID closures. Consequently, it is unable to invite people to any publicly available activity. Former members continue to raise funds for the Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown in a private capacity.



Some of the products of the 'Sewing for Good' program during the Glebe Society Community Festival last year (photo: Bruce Davis)

The community group has continued to support Glebe HAPN (Housing Action Plan Now) through participation in their communication initiatives. One was assisting the acquisition of funds for the printing and distribution of emergency and important contact numbers to all social housing residents in our community. This provided timely assistance at the commencement of the 'lock down' period. However, the work of members of that group in engaging with the Glebe Youth service in the provision of food parcels to people isolated in their homes in the community which also began at that time is continuing. They are all to be congratulated on this important community initiative.

The 2019 Glebe Society Christmas Appeal successfully provided a wealth of gifts for people at the supported accommodation facilities in Glebe such as Elsie, Rainbow Lodge, Detour House, the Girls Refuge, Kathleen York, and the Glebe PCYC programme kids. Chris O'Brien Lifehouse Hospital staff also contributed most

generously last year, and given the right circumstances, we hope to engage with them and the Glebe Society members again this year to run this appeal.

Members of our subgroup joined with other subcommittees such as Heritage to voice concerns with respect to two Glebe Housing proposals this year. They are the RJ Williams Lodge refurbishment by Wesley Mission and 2A-2D Wentworth Park Rd/31 Cowper St demolition and replacement by Prince's Trust and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's LAHC. Our group has been particularly concerned that adequate provision of social and affordable housing opportunities are included in these developments.

The subcommittee continues its outreach to the wider Glebe community through Glebe Connected, attendance at meetings of Glebe HAPN (Housing Action Plan Now), COGG and FLAG. These network linkages continue to help us contribute to the wellbeing of our suburban community.



A panorama of the mural at Glebe Youth Service (photo: Phil Vergison)

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

19 to 25 October, Aussie Backyard Bird Count, register at <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>

Sunday 1 November, 6.45am, Paddy Gray Reserve, Hereford St: Spring Bird Survey.

8-15 November, National NAIDOC Week

Saturday 21 November, 3pm. Glebe Music Festival: *Sydney Baroque Players*. Glebe Town Hall

Saturday 21 November, 7pm. Glebe Music Festival: *Thoroughbass*. Glebe Town Hall

Sunday 22 November, 3pm. Glebe Music Festival: *Josie and the Emeralds*. Glebe Town Hall

Friday 11 December 5-7 pm. Glebe Society Christmas Gathering: St John's Church

Mid-December. 150 Year Anniversary of St John's Church Exhibition, St John's Church

Glebe Society Inc. Established 1969

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PO Box 100 GLEBE NSW 2037

No. 8 of 2020 (October 2020)

Membership of the Glebe Society

- Individual member: \$45
- Joint (2 people, one address): \$55
- Household: \$60
- Concession (student or pensioner): \$20
- Institution or corporate: \$110

How to join

- Join online: complete the Membership Application on our website under 'Membership'
- Download a membership form from www.glebesociety.org.au; or
- Write to the Secretary at PO Box 100 Glebe 2037; or
- Email secretary@glebesociety.org.au



GYS (photo: Phil Vergison)