



## Annual Report for the Friends of Glenlee Incorporated July 2022-July 2023

- Looking back over the year Friends of Glenlee has had much support from our local representatives on Georges River Council. Georges River Councillors have unanimously declared their support for the preservation and purchase of Glenlee on numerous occasions. Peter Mahoney, our GRRRP Peakhurst Ward councillor has tirelessly worked behind the scenes and has consistently moved motions for council to be more supportive towards securing Glenlee for the community. However, even though we have a Labor Mayor, four Labor Councillors at the local level and a Federal and State Labor government, the process to acquire Glenlee for the community is stalled. Given Labor's vocal support for the purchase of Glenlee prior to the state election, the Friends of Glenlee believe there is some resistance within Council to acquire the property and that as a leader, Mayor Katris could take a more proactive role in securing funds to purchase the site.
- On 19 July 2022, Georges River Council lodged a [submission](#) in support of listing Glenlee on the State Heritage Register: *"The GML assessment recommended that Council list the Site on Schedule 5 of the Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021 (GRLEP), which Council is in the process of implementing by amending the GRLEP 2021 to list the Site as a local heritage item. The GML assessment also recommended that the Site be considered for State heritage listing.*
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- The President's Report at the last AGM in July 2022 noted the achievements of the inaugural committee for the Friends of Glenlee. However, at the end of the AGM several members of the inaugural committee stood down for a range of reasons.
- On 4 August 2022, first meeting of the new committee noted the members. Chris Gambian (President), Megan Argent (Vice President), Susan Ghosn, Caroline Hart, Matt Allison, Sue Emmett, Lauren Stracey. The new Friends of Glenlee Committee began with some cause for optimism. The case considering the DA for Glenlee in the Land and Environment Court was stalled; NSW Heritage had issued an Interim Heritage order over the property; and the Georges River Council was supportive of including Glenlee under Schedule 5 of the LEP (Local Environment Plan)
- On 21 September 2022, The Friends of Glenlee Committee attended a meeting with NSW Environment and Heritage Minister, James Griffin and Oatley MP Mark Coure, alongside the Georges River Council Mayor Nick Katris. Members Megan Argent, Chris Gambian, Susan Ghosn and Caroline Hart were present.

- The aim of the meeting was to discuss collaboration between all levels of Government with Georges River Council to purchase Glenlee. Also present were Sam Kidman Heritage NSW GM, Meryl Bishop Environment officer GRC, Sue Weatherly Acting GM GRC. Sam Kidman expressed the view that heritage status was unable to be conferred due to lack of proper assessment. James Griffin mentioned he had visited the site and generally supported attempts to save it but that no money was available for purchase.
- Council staff, Sue Weatherly claimed GRC would not be able to get a loan for purchase and reiterated the position that Peakhurst ward already had more than its share of green space. Nick Katris affirmed support but also claimed that no money was available. The meeting lasted about 45mins with no resolution. The outcome of this meeting was reported in the local media.  
<https://www.theleader.com.au/story/7936605/war-of-words-over-glenlee/>
- On 13 September 2022, Friends of Glenlee Committee was informed that NSW Heritage would not list Glenlee on the State Heritage Register. The rationale for the decision is documented as follows:  
*“NSW Heritage...Reaffirms its position that the item known as Glenlee at 80 Boronia Parade, Lugarno, is likely to be of State heritage significance; however, **considers that further assessment of the natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the site and a potential amended curtilage and site-specific exemptions are required.** Decides not to recommend the listing at this time, with the intention of reconsidering the nomination at a later date.”*
- On 23 September 2022, Georges River Council amended the Local Environmental plan to include Glenlee under Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage. This inclusion provides some protection to Glenlee as it constrains the type of development that could be considered for the property.
- On 28 January 2023, the Interim heritage Order for Glenlee expired. Friends of Glenlee were asked to write to the then Minister for Environment James Griffin, to urge the government to act to protect Glenlee but in the lead up to a state election there was no response from the Government.
- On 14 February 2023, at a meeting prior to the election the NSW Labor candidate Ash Ambihapahar and the shadow Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe made a commitment to issue a new Interim Heritage order for Glenlee if elected, stating **“Only a Labor government will protect Glenlee”**.
- On 18 February 2023, Friends of Glenlee organised an afternoon with special guest speaker Heather Goodall, historian and author of “Georges River Blues Swamps Mangroves and Resident Action.” The event was well attended by members and other supporters from the Georges River community. Heather spoke in some detail about the history of resident protest movements along the Georges River. She noted that the creation of Georges River National Park and the preservation of wetlands at Lime

Kiln bay was as a result of people along the river acting collaboratively to protect the river and its natural environment. The outcome of this afternoon was positive as Heather was able to reassure the gathering of around 80 concerned citizens that previous resident action movements were often time consuming and difficult but eventually prevailed due to commitment and persistence.

- On 26 February 2023 the Sydney Morning Herald published an article about the threat to Glenlee from development:  
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/historic-property-pitched-to-developers-as-locals-fight-for-heritage-protection-20230222-p5cmjg.html>
- Oatley Flora and Fauna have been a staunch ally and active in support of the campaign to preserve Glenlee. In March 2023, Members of Oatley Flora and Fauna and Friends of Glenlee attended the Nature Conservation Council at Sydney Town Hall. OFF have also organised impromptu rallies with members to keep Glenlee on the agenda with visits to local MP offices including Mark Coure, Chris Minns and Linda Burney.



- In March 2023, during the election campaign Glenlee was offered for sale to the NSW Government and Georges River Council. This offer was not taken up. The original developer had withdrawn, and the property is now back on the open market and being offered for sale by One Commercial.
- On 21 May, the Friends of Glenlee held a rally in support of Glenlee. Mathew Allison, Heather Goodall and David Shoebridge spoke eloquently about Glenlee. About 150 people attended and carried the following resolution unanimously:

“This rally for Glenlee recognises the environmental importance and cultural heritage of Glenlee, and calls on the Minns’ State Government and Georges River Council to work together to bring Glenlee into the public domain.

We call on the State Government to immediately issue a new interim heritage order for Glenlee and to enable the proper site heritage assessments, as they committed prior to the state elections. We also call on them to put a motion in support of Glenlee to the Legislative Assembly, as proposed in 2022.

We call on the Georges River Council to honour its obligation to the decisions made at Council meetings in terms of acquiring funding to purchase the site, and to work with the State Government in doing so. The Friends of Glenlee are committed to continuing to campaign for Glenlee, recognising that it is too precious to lose. “



- Committee members and other Friends have written to many politicians, including Penny Sharpe, Linda Burney and Chris Minns about the importance of Glenlee and urging them to honour their pre-election commitments. We noted that there has been no assessment of the First Nations heritage despite evidence of thousands of years of habitation of the site. Letters were also sent to Minister Tanya Plibersek at the national level, and we have been supported by the advocacy of Senator David Shoebridge. Recently the Updates to members and the facebook and email campaigns have re-commenced.
- A recent response from Minister Sharpe however has indicated that a further interim heritage order is not able to be placed on the site as it is not under “threat of harm”, and that the government will work with Council to consider options for an ongoing, longterm solution.
- Friends of Glenlee Committee asks that members keep up the pressure on our elected representatives by writing emails to let them know that the community cares about the future of Glenlee. Direct your emails to Mayor of Georges River Council, Nick Katris and the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Heritage, Penny Sharpe asking them to secure the funds to purchase the property and honour their commitments to preserve Glenlee.

We also encourage community members to get involved directly by nominating for the committee and signing and sharing the petition.

Here is the link: <https://chng.it/6HfzxByTvW>

You can get a Glenlee sign for your front yard, talk to your friends about why it is important and ask the people you talk to, to join the Friends of Glenlee.

- The committee wants to acknowledge, among others, the following for their unfailing support, including Councillor Peter Mahoney, Councillor Kathryn Landsberry,

Councillor Ashvini Ambihapahar, Kim Wagstaff President of Oatley Flora and Fauna, and Glenyss Barnham. Thanks also go to Brian Rees for his update of the Save Glenlee website.

Sue Emmett  
Friend of Glenlee  
21 July 2023