

# CONNECTING THROUGH CHOICE

September 2023 - Volume 1, Issue 5



## Message from our President

*I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands and seas where Glasser Australia (GA) members live, work, play and connect, I pay my respects to elders' past, present and future. I am proud to share these amazing lands and seas with the oldest living culture on earth.*

Quality is not perfection. It is constant improvement. Whether it is in our personal life, our families, community or organizations. It consists of our capacity to be really clear about what we want, which can change as we gain more information about things. It is also the ability to self-evaluate by asking what are we doing to get what we want? Is it working and is there anything we can do differently to achieve our goals more effectively?

Our newsletter demonstrates that there has been a lot of reflection, self-evaluation and activity within GA and WGI, to determine how we can understand each other's Quality world pictures and self-evaluate, within the context we find ourselves. How we can be more effective as individuals as well as collectively? As a result, as Dr Glasser says we can change the Quality World pictures, change what we are doing or change both.

Our Face-to-Face meeting which was the first in four years gave us the opportunity to build a cohesive team with our new Directors, identifying our strengths, how they could be utilized to improve the Quality of our organisation and build on the work and efforts of our previous Board. More details are in Board Matters.

Training continues to grow. Our next Certification will be held on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Certification provides an opportunity to celebrate your personal growth in deepening your understanding and application of Dr Glasser's work. The Quality work presented by participants are always rich and varied. They range from how the knowledge and skills learnt provided quality and empowerment in their personal or professional lives or deepened their understanding of self or improved relationships. Others developed a resource that assisted them in their field of work.

One of our participants explored how Choice Theory from a Christian world view. A discussion that has often come up in some trainings. As a result of this work, she has offered to facilitate a discussion group for those interested in discussing this topic. Invitations will be sent out for the first meeting for Monday 16th October, 7—8 pm. We encourage opportunities for others to share their interests and knowledge to build a connected community.

Our stakeholders group formed to strengthen the human services sector of Counseling, Psychologists and Social Workers has met regularly. Thank you for all those who answered our recent survey. Our next step is to talk with those who indicated that they would like further contact by running an information gathering focus group or an individual phone call to clarify the needs. A report will be available soon, which will inform the direction of our strategic plan in this area.

**Susan Fleming**



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## BOARD MATTERS

<p><b>15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Meeting</b></p>	<p>This meeting was the first Face to Face Board meeting this year. With many new board members this was an opportunity to build connection and cohesiveness of the board.</p>
<p><b>What was on the Agenda</b></p>	<p>Board Member connection and relationship building            What are our collective strengths, skills, opportunities, areas for growth            Visioning for Glasser Australia            Ways of working            3 year strategic plan            Board member role statements            AGM process and preparation            GA Constitution</p> 
<p><b>What we achieved</b></p>	<p>Clear identification of the strengths of the team            Review of the GA vision and strategic plan            Cultivation of a clear culture of operation for the board            Clarification of roles and expectations for board members            Identification of clear priorities for the 2023 – 2025 period            Consistent understanding of the AGM process            Greater understanding of existing GA constitution</p>
<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>	<p>The Board will be working on streamlining processes and updating key information for Faculty and Members            The board is investigating opportunities for directors and office bearers to attend professional learning to enhance competence in serving on the board. (Number of Board Members completing will depend on training location, availability, and cost)            There will be a review of the current strategies for communicating with members (especially following Board Meetings). This will include some investigation into the effectiveness of the current newsletter. We want to be efficient in messaging and delivery of information in a way that is effective for our members            There will opportunities for consultation and feedback</p>
<p><b>What is coming</b></p>	<p>Updated training manual that will align with WGI and include guidelines / checklists for training implementation.            An updated Glasser Australia Strategic Plan with clear priorities and intended outcomes</p>
<p><b>Additional information</b></p>	<p>The President of the Board acknowledges, values and appreciates that all Board members contributed 2 ½ days of their personal time to contribute, collaborate and plan for the leadership of Glasser Australia. The Board is committed to working collaboratively to create and support quality conditions for optimal organisational effectiveness.</p>
<p><b>AGM</b></p>	<p>26<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 7pm</p>
<p><b>Next Board Meeting</b></p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023.</p>

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## Faculty News

### Quarterly Faculty Connection Meeting – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

It was wonderful to have the opportunity to host our second faculty connection meeting at the beginning of September where I was joined by nine fellow Glasser Australia members to listen, liaise and learn. Following a short introduction where we got 'up to speed' with the happenings of the group and the wonderful experiences of Choice Theory occurring across the country, we settled into the topics of the evening.

We were very fortunate to have a personal tour of Ivan Honey's latest publication 'Strategies for Creating the Self-Managing Classroom' where we could ask questions and clearly understand his vision and motivation for the book. I have no doubt that this will be a welcome addition to many teaching practitioners. Thank you to Ivan for writing this book and for sharing it across the Glasser Australia community (free of charge for a limited time); this is very generous of you. Please [click here](#) for your copy



Switching gears from conversations about classrooms to Michelle Sandri who presented what she is working on whilst completing her university placement with Glasser Australia. Michelle is currently undertaking 500 hours with GA for her Master of Social Work. It's a huge commitment with most people completing their degree online needing to give up their current employment, so this is a wonderful and unique opportunity for both Michelle and GA. Michelle goals for this project are:

Create a sustainable online group for certified social workers, counsellors, and other human service providers trained in Choice Theory / Reality Therapy

Identify and analyse the barriers to involvement with Glasser Australia and provide insights/advice re: strategic plan pillar no.2. This pillar aims to enhance member relationships, and foster growth in training and faculty.

Develop skills and knowledge in virtual technology to develop quality communication.

Determine what steps are needed to obtain recognition of Choice Theory / Reality Therapy training by the AASW and to develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

Michelle's first survey has now been sent to all faculty, members and participants of training from the last 3 years. We strongly encourage you all to complete this.

We ask that you take a few minutes to complete our survey. Your ideas shape our direction; this is your chance to be a part of our next BIG THING! All survey participants will have the opportunity to connect and drive change by joining a series of Focus Groups.

[Click here](#) to complete the survey

**Our next meeting will be held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December from 6:00-7:30pm (AEST) and will be hosted by Rob Stones. An invitation with agenda will be sent to all faculty members a few weeks prior to this date... We look forward to connecting with you!!**

Jane Newman

# CONNECTING THROUGH CHOICE

## Conference 2024 News

**News from the Glasser Australia (GA) 2024 National Conference committee**  
**Choosing Well-Being – A mental health and wellbeing conference like no other!**

- Venue:** Mantra Twin Towns Gold Coast Australia.
- Dates:** Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024 – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- Overview:** This 3day conference will explore ‘Choosing Well-Being’ from a range of perspectives. Whether you are new to Choice Theory, or have been working with Dr Glasser’s frame works for years, this conference will create a space for you to increase your knowledge and skills to improve your mental health and wellbeing, both personally and professionally. Delegates can elect to attend the entire conference or select specific days that suit them. Everyone is welcome.
- Accommodation:** Registration fees do not include accommodation. You are welcome to book at Mantra Twin Towns or elsewhere.
- Theme:** ‘Choosing Well-Being’ hinges on the belief that by taking responsibility for our personal choices we can develop internal psychological strengths for lasting wellbeing in an ever-changing world.
- Keynote Speakers:** We have confirmed the following keynote speakers:  
Dr James Kirby  
Hon. Emma McBride  
Prof. Zoltan Sarnyai  
Kari Sutton
- Call for Abstracts -** From Dec. '23 ~ Feb. '24, we will be seeking Expressions of Interest from speakers in the following areas:  
GA Members – Keynote speakers (45 ~ 60 minutes)  
Plenary workshop presentations (60 ~ 90 minutes)  
It will be essential that all presentations encompass the four pillars of the conference:  
Well-Being in Education  
Being Mentally Healthy  
Well-Being of Children and Families  
Leading with Mental Health and Well-Being in Mind

**Conference Brochure:** From Dec. '23 we will commence promoting the conference with a brochure outlining conference information, confirmed keynote speakers, registration fees (including dates for early bird rates 31<sup>st</sup> May '24 etc.)

**Full Conference program:** April '24 – Promotion will continue with the full conference program including all keynote speakers and workshop presentations.

Maureen Sansom



# CONNECTING THROUGH CHOICE

## William Glasser International (WGI) Update

### *HR update*

The treasurer position is not filled yet. WGI are still looking for a suitable candidate to take on this volunteer position. If there is anyone amongst our Glasser Australia community who would be interested please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Dr Ahmed Alshatti from Kuwait has been serving on the finance committee for the past two years and has offered his services in the interim.

***Glasser Quality Schools*** - Susan Fleming, Gwen Sands, Christine Duffield and I met with Bette Blance (GQS Chair) to finalise the Glasser Quality School report. This was presented to the WGI board at the last meeting. ***WGI*** will now share this with all members for feedback and consultation. If anyone is keen to be involved with this energetic international committee, we meet on the first Friday of each month at 9am (AEST).

### **Noteworthy:**

A good deal of time, thought, and energy has been put in by WGI board members to work through a process around the Organisational Culture of WGI. This work is being led by Lynn Sumida, with her inspiration being “Tribal Leadership” and unpacking the stage of growth for our organisation. We have engaged in group discussions with a desire to gather and understand feedback from our member organisations – You! We are excited to take on this type of consultation to get a temperature check on the organisation and moving intentionally to the authentic **‘WE’** in the future.

**Jane Newman**  
International Representative



### Memberships 2023

Reminder: Memberships with Glasser Australia run from 1 January—31 December 2023 .

If you are Faculty and currently training in Australia you will also need to join WGI as a registered Faculty member.

To renew your membership with Glasser Australia please follow this link.

[Membership Levels | Glasser Australia](#)





# CONNECTING THROUGH CHOICE

## Training News

### Reflection of Training

Entering the Advanced Intensive training with Maggie Bolton in mid-June I had mixed feelings. It had been over two years since I had completed my Basic Intensive which was my first entry point to Choice Theory, so I certainly didn't enter fresh. More experienced friends and colleagues had assured me that the training would be demanding. I was comfortable with that, I wasn't engaging in the learning to be pat on the head and sent on my way. My intentions were clear; I needed to learn more, refine my skills, and, as I was entering with a group of colleagues from my workplace, to altruistically develop our collective capacity to work together with a shared vision.

The training wasn't just a stand and deliver experience, it was an intimate invitation into a way of being, an insight into a life and wisdom experienced through an intrinsic lens, and the creation of a sensitive needs satisfying environment with scope for addressing our own needs. This experience has been something unique to Choice Theory, where the focus is on developing myself, an investment in me. There was no agenda to conform to an externally imposed expectation. It remains striking, and feels somewhat self-indulgent, this is all about me!

We all know that this warmth and sensitivity by no means suggests that it wasn't a rigorous learning experience. Maggie deftly guided us through a myriad of learning experiences tailored to our individual needs, whilst maintaining the group cohesion. My growth is hard to quantify, with numerous concepts resonating daily still well after completing the training.

The skills and knowledge acquired through the training continue to be refined and implemented in my life, such as embedding connecting habits into my daily work, and principles of lead management. I've seen a shift working with my colleagues where my lens on developing their capacity and empowerment is much clearer. I still struggle with my propensity to want to fix situations, however through my greater awareness and increasing skill I can see more clearly how I have inadvertently undermined the autonomy of colleagues by depriving them the opportunity to come up with their own solutions. It's a challenging path, but a much clearer one now thanks to the Advanced Intensive training.

My mind is buzzing and the practical applications are now evident. Before the training I sat in the space where I knew something had to happen, that things weren't quite right, now I have the clarity to know what I can do and the path I need to walk. And I know what is my responsibility and what is not. Thank you Maggie for your generosity and sharing your life with me and our team.

*Paul Laing has worked in Public Education in NSW for over 20 years in urban and rural schools and attended the Advanced Intensive Training with Maggie Bolton in June 2023 with a team of teachers the school where he is currently the principal.*

To view all Trainings for 2023 please visit our website  
<https://glasseraustralia.com.au/events-list/>  
**Bec Lane**  
**Training Officer**

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## Living in ‘The Gap’

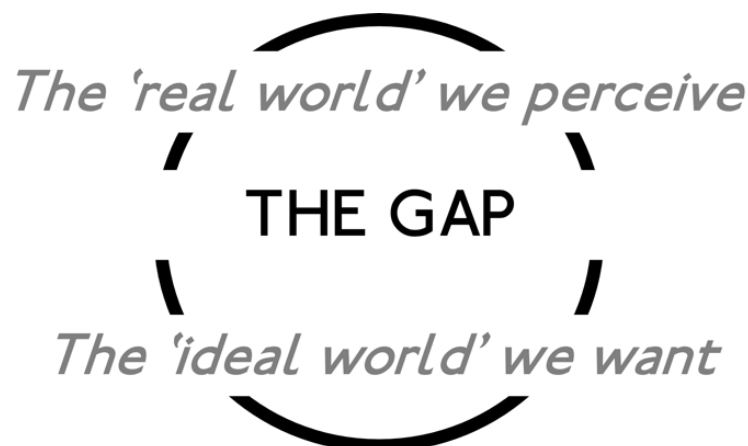
We all live our lives in *the Gap* between ‘the real’ and our ideal. On the stage of life, *the Gap* is the backdrop against which we make our choices.

Whoever we are and whatever we are doing, this comparison between ‘how things are’ and ‘how we would like them to be’ is an abiding constant. Although we are not always aware of it, *the Gap* is ever-present.

Every day we choose the thoughts and actions that we believe will narrow *the Gap* - that will lead to more of what we want in life. In our attempts to feel ‘in control’ - to be the willing architects of our own well-being - our choices are the tools with which we shape our individuality and strive for achievement and fulfilment.

And because pain and the threat of suffering are an inevitable part of living, we make choices that we hope will avoid or minimise discomfort.

It is very rare for us to sustain the sense that things are completely ‘right’ for any length of time. *The Gap* is our inescapable inheritance, the dubious gift bestowed on us by our humanity - by the ways in which our brain is wired.



Whether our *Gaps* are huge or tiny, they create an itch that we are constantly scratching as we try to make the best of our lives.

### *The Gap* Presents Choices

Because we are persons, human organisms with a mental control system, *the Gap* is intrinsic to our motivation. Everything we do comes from weighing our present experience against how we want things to be, and then behaving in order to reduce the difference. We are only occasionally doing this consciously or reflectively, but our brain activity is always pursuing its imperative - to protect and serve us by adjusting *the Gap*. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we are always making choices: seeking a way to behave that will bring our experience of life closer to one or another detail of our personal ideal.

# CONNECTING THROUGH CHOICE

## Living in ‘The Gap’ cont’d

We have not evolved or been created to be lotus eaters. An idyllic life would rob us of the impulse to learn and grow. *The Gap* provides us with problems to solve and choices to make. It is the source of all our motivation and growth.

Choosing, then, is the ubiquitous activity of the mind. Comparing our present circumstances with our preferred ideal - and selecting a response - is our constant companion as we weave our pathway through life. We are shaped by the choices we make as we respond to *the Gap*. The different ways in which we see the world and the diverse choices we make individuate us and distinguish us from other humans. No person is a clone of another. The permutations of choice and experience are too great to permit sameness.

Who we are now, and the life we presently lead, are largely the consequence of choices made at some time in the past. Although genetics and circumstances play a role in moulding our life’s journey, we are all shaped by the options we take in the face of the events and experiences that we encounter.

In the same way, who we will become, and the degree of well-being and freedom we will experience in the future, will be the result of choices we make now and in times ahead. *The Gap* may be our burden, but it also emancipates us. Because we always have choices, and will always need to make choices, our choices matter!

‘Living in the Gap’ is an extract from ‘Minding the Gap’, a recent publication by Rob Stones (Senior Faculty).

To purchase ‘Minding the Gap’ (or any of Rob’s other publications), please visit his website at [www.futureshape.com.au](http://www.futureshape.com.au) and follow the links.



### Statement of Strategic Intent 2021 – 2023

Reviewed 25 May 2022

#### Purpose

To build a better world through quality relationships.

#### Guiding Principles

Accepting, Negotiating, Listening, Encouraging, Respecting, Supporting & Trusting

Strategic Pillars	Collaborate, Lead & Influence	Governance	Support Training and Faculty Growth
Aspiration	Glasser Australia will utilise our strategic pillars to promote quality training and enhance relationships with members, strategic partners, and wider communities.		
Strategic Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow quality relationships with members.</li> <li>Clarify Glasser Australia’s place.</li> <li>Demonstrate credibility through a content marketing strategy.</li> <li>Grow revenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a lead management aligned governance structure to meet organisational, legal and ACNC requirements.</li> <li>Ensure compliance with ACNC.</li> <li>Produce an Annual Report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop flexible learning options.</li> <li>Engage faculty in professional development opportunities.</li> <li>Promote Glasser Quality Schools accreditation program.</li> <li>Manage access to training programs in collaboration with trainers.</li> </ul>