



TRRA Management Committee 2011/20 – Personal Biographies

Ben van der Wijngaart

(President)

Nelson Bay

Ben spent 33 years of his early working life in the RAAF, serving overseas and at a variety of Australian mainland locations. His final appointment was as Commandant of the RAAF Staff College in Canberra.

On leaving the RAAF in 1998, he worked for 9 years as a Principal Consultant with a Canberra-based consultancy firm providing advice to senior management within Federal and State government departments and industry, in Australia, Aotearoa NZ and the US, on change and project management.

He was politically active in Australia for several years, running for seven Federal, state and council elections and from 2008-2012 was a councillor and Deputy Mayor of Kiama Municipal Council on the South Coast of NSW. Since then he has been a company managing director and subsequently a trustee of a sustainable living land development project in Aotearoa New Zealand. He and his wife Sharon moved to Nelson Bay in 2017 and are involved as volunteers with Marine Rescue, St Vincent de Paul, Orange Sky, ORRCA, Port Stephens Koalas as well as TRRA.

John James (Vice President / Research)

Nelson Bay

Grew up in Ballarat where he developed a love of local history and good architecture.

After studying Applied Physics and Meteorology spent 33 years with the Bureau of Meteorology in a range of positions in Sydney and since 1998 as the manager of the Williamstown Meteorological office providing specialised forecasting services to the Fighter squadrons. John regularly gave weather updates on the ABC and commercial radio and interacted with the SES and Marine Rescue.

Since retiring in 2015 John has spent time traveling throughout Australia and overseas and enjoying the beautiful environment of Port Stephens.



Geoff Washington (Media)
Nelson Bay

Geoff retired to Nelson Bay in 2007 and immediately became involved in a range of community activities including the East Tomaree Precinct Committee. He was a founding member of TRRA and has served previously as President and Chairman.

Starting his career as a secondary school teacher, Geoff has worked as an economist and regional planner in Australia and Canada, and as a policy advisor in the Commonwealth and NSW State governments.

Geoff worked for ten years in tourism as Director of Research and Development in the Australian Tourist Commission, and subsequently as Assistant Secretary in the Commonwealth Department of Tourism and Recreation. In 1969 he worked as a consultant on the development of a prospectus for the establishment of the Myall Lakes National Park.

He and his wife Judy have always been active in their community organisations including Parents and Citizens Associations, Lane Cove Historical Society, an Afghan Refugee Support Association and the Lane Cove Council Cultural Planning Group.

Denis Pittorino (Treasurer)
Nelson Bay

Denis was born and educated in Sydney. He worked in the public sector for most of his career and studied Public Administration at the NSW Institute of Technology. The first half of his career was spent in auditing (both internal and external) followed by a move to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. His role included managing a database of financial data provided by the broadcasters and producing statistics on the broadcasting sector and viability studies into the capacity of markets to support new services. In later years, he commenced a small computer accounting and bookkeeping consultancy. He moved to Nelson Bay 11 years ago and has an interest in maintaining and sustaining the ecological beauty of the area.

Nigel Waters (Planning)
Nelson Bay

Nigel has been a resident of Nelson Bay for 20 years, and is recently retired from a 35 year career in information policy and privacy, as a regulator, consultant and advocate. He has also been active in consumer protection NGOs both in Australia and internationally.

In an earlier career in the UK and US, Nigel was involved in urban and regional planning. He holds Masters degrees in Geography, Planning and Journalism.



Nigel is active in many local community organizations including EcoNetwork Port Stephens and Climate Action Port Stephens, and is an active member of The Greens NSW. He was a volunteer with Marine Rescue, including as Lifeboat crew and skipper, for 19 years, and attempts to play golf and tennis.

Geoffrey Basser (Strategy)
Salamander Bay

Born & educated in Lithgow NSW, Geoffrey spent time in the family retail business before moving to Sydney in 1957 where he worked in sales and marketing primarily in the manufacturing & retail sectors for a number of years, before establishing his own menswear business. Following this he became involved in the Insurance Industry and Risk Management Practice, once again in Marketing & Sales.

For over 50 years Geoffrey has been involved in Community Service, through Apex Young Men's Service Clubs, and Rotary. For a number of years he was a member of the Board of the Montefiore Homes Aged Care Group in Sydney which was responsible for the lives of 750 residents & 900 staff in four Campuses.

Geoffrey retired from full time employment in 1998 but has continued with some Business Management consultancies. After visiting the Tomaree Peninsula for 45 years, he and his wife Nanette settled here nine years ago and are very active with a number of community groups.

Robyn Williams(Membership)
Salamander Bay

Robyn Williams moved to Port Stephens in 1997 after previously moving to the Blue Mountains for 8 years after her children finished there schooling in Nelson Bay. Robyn has worked for Harbourside Haven as well as the Port Stephens Council in the holiday parks. Robyn has had a lot of communications with the local council in her many volunteer environmental roles and has a good rapport with many of the staff

Currently Robyn is:
 Secretary of the Soldiers Point Landcare Group
 Treasurer of Port Stephen Greens
 Treasurer of Tomaree Peninsular Photographic Club
 Committee member Salamander Community Group

