



PRESIDENTS REPORT – TRRA INC – 2022/23

Introduction

TRRA Inc. continued to represent fearlessly the interests of the Tomaree community over the past year in physical and on-line meetings with Council staff and councillors other local interest groups, and members of the community.

Each council meeting agenda and its papers have been reviewed and relevant comments submitted, often in great detail and reflecting a very professional level of research, care and attention to detail. Where praise for Council action has been due, we have given it and where better solutions are evident, we have advocated them vigorously on paper and at public access.

As at last AGM, I would like to cite briefly some of the major issues in which we have been involved and then draw some conclusions from their outcomes.

TRRA's Submissions on Developments, Policies and Plans

TRRA has made submissions on and in many cases met with council staff or made presentations at public access on the following DAs and initiatives in the last 12 months. The list is far from exhaustive, but it gives you some idea of the breadth and depth of what has been tackled this year:

Development Proposals

- A submission on the Little Beach Amenity Development
- 11-15 Church St apartment building.
- Latitude 1 Expansion DA in November and April.
- DA for 4499 Nelson Bay Rd Anna Bay in October for its impact on koala habitat and corridors.
- The new proposed Holcim Salt Ash Sand mine.
- Port Stephens roads rain damage.
- Proposal improvements Gan Gan and Nelson Bay Roads intersection.

- Shoal Bay smart parking proposal.
- The Nelson Bay Pedestrian crossing.
- The reclassification of 109 Foreshore Drive as Community Land.
- Development of accommodation expansion and operating conditions at Koala Pace Boat Harbour.
- Seaham Battery development

Policies and Plans

- Media Liaison Policy in April.
- Amendments to the Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014
- Traffic control / road plan for Nelson Bay CBD
- PSC advertising of development applications
- Climate Change Policy
- Environment Policy
- Tree management and Vandalism policies
- Continued (persistent) pushing on the Gateway to the Tomaree Peninsula

Submissions to State and Commonwealth Government

TRRA has also made submissions to the NSW Department of Planning and the Commonwealth Department of the Environment on the following major development initiatives:

- The State Government EPA Climate Change Policy in November
- The future of Tomaree Lodge site with a submission to the Umwelt Survey in Jan 23
- The Offshore Windfarm proposal in April
- Stone Ridge Quarry development at Italia Road

Time doesn't permit me (you'll be glad to hear) to touch on each of these even briefly. Anyway, those who attend our regular general meetings will be well aware of these issues and their outcomes – although some are still current. My point being that your Ratepayers and Residents association has been very busy again throughout the last year.

Aside from the major submissions and issues I have listed, each and every Council meeting agenda has been examined and in many cases positions offered on agenda items that have been used by councillors.

Changes from Last Year

At last Year's AGM I commented on some substantial improvement observed in a number of areas:

- The new Council taking a greater leadership role in the matter of climate change and .
- Improvements in meeting practice have provided better transparency

I'm pleased to report that these changes appear to have been sustained over the last year and that TRRA has had a consistently better working relationship with Council than in past years. This has, in no small part been due to the hardworking efforts of Cr Leah Anderson who has been a regular attendee at our meetings

It will be important to remember these changes when we again vote for our next Council in September 2024 and seriously consider those Councillors who have and have not represented our interests well.

I must also acknowledge that our working relationship with the new General Manager, Tim Crossdale and his directors Stephen Peart and Greg Cable have also been positive and respectful. This has been manifest particularly in the quarterly catchup meetings we have with them.

Notably, the formation over the last year of two important committees, the Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) and the Environment Advisory Group (EAG) has been equally encouraging. TRRA has representation on both and initial meetings of both groups have been encouraging in establishing a genuine attempt to be effective in their respective roles.

TRRA Communication Initiatives

Website. TRRA continues to host a Website which reports on its activities and comments on major issues. This site also accepts comments from readers which are moderated. I'd like to thank Andre Dussart our Webmaster for providing the much-needed expertise and responsiveness over the last year to keep this vital medium operating effectively.

Newsletters. Thanks to our long-retiring (acting) Media Offer, Geoff Washington, our regular TRRA Newsletters have been circulated to members and other interested parties. Thanks for a great job again Geoff. However, we continue to seek Geoff's replacement in this role.

Media Relationships TRRA also has a sound relationship with the local media outlets and has enjoyed improved publicity through its press releases.

Facebook presence. We also have a Facebook presence, "Tomaree Voice", that has been a valuable tool for mobilising community views, but we have had to control comments carefully for legal liability reasons. I must thank Nigel Waters again for managing this medium.

TRRA's Collaboration with Peak Community Groups

TRRA also continues to collaborate with other peak community groups in the Tomaree - including Business Port Stephens, EcoNetwork, the Koala Koalition, Climate Action Port Stephens the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group and other local groups.

Our 2022-23 Committee

I would like to acknowledge our hard-working Committee.

- Planning Sub-Committee Convenor, Nigel Waters, effectively monitor all planning and administrative issues impacting on the Tomaree, with the help of John James (ex-committee). The professional standard of their submissions is widely recognised. They have been the true powerhouse of our efforts.
- Our Secretary Robyn Williams and Treasurer Denis Pittorino very effectively take care of vital administrative responsibilities.
- I've already mentioned Geoff Washington's invaluable efforts as Media Officer and similarly Andre's work on the Website..
- Robyn Williams for her continued tireless efforts for fostering our membership numbers and work on the Gateway Project., and
- Judy Washington who isn't officially on our Committee but does such a consistently great job in preparing the Powerpoints for our meetings.

Other Support

I would also like to acknowledge the support we have enjoyed from and the regular presence and support from Cr Leah Anderson at our General meetings and at the quarterly 'Catch-up' meeting I have with Council senior staff. Leah is an apology for tonight's meeting for the reason of it being her birthday.

Finally, I wish to thank our membership for their ongoing support and practical assistance when called upon. Could I only ask you all to mention us to your friends and neighbours and actively encourage their membership of TRRA. The larger our member base, the more legitimate our voice.

I am stepping down as President this next term for health maintenance reasons and because of ever-increasing commitments I have to other community organisations, but will remain on the Committee in another capacity as well as continuing to represent TRRA at the CEAG meetings. As the outgoing President, thank you for your attendance and continuing interest.

However, I feel I must finish by asking members to consider seriously the continued unsustainable reliance on a few our membership continuing to do the heavy lifting year after year. If we value what we do in TRRA, we need new blood to start apprenticing key committee roles. This needs to start seriously from now if we do not wish to see TRRA go

the way of many other community organisations. No-one else does the work we do and it clearly makes a difference.

Please consider this seriously and have a chat with me or some of the other Committee members here tonight about how you may be able to help.

Ben van der Wijngaart

President, TRRA Inc.

9 October 2023