



**Minutes of General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
**at Nelson Bay Bowling Club**

**Convenor:** Richard Davis

**Meeting Opened:** 7:05pm

**Attendance:** As per signed attendance record

**Apologies:** Bill & Lorence Salter, Nigel Waters, Leah Anderson

**Minutes:** Minutes for previous meeting 11<sup>th</sup> December taken as read.

**Moved that the minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> December be adopted as a true and accurate record:**  
Roz Armstrong **Seconded** Irene Jones. Carried unanimously

**Business arising from previous minutes:** To discussion in reports.

**Reports.**

**Presidents Report:** Richard Davis welcomed attendees

**Treasurers Report:**

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Opening Balance \$ | 2,498.43 |
| Income \$          | 610.00   |
| Expenditure        | nil      |
| Current Balance \$ | 3,108.43 |

**Matters Arising From Treasurer's Report:**

Accounts for payment: Nil

**Moved** - Ben van de Wijngaart **Seconded:** Ken C that the Treasurers Report be adopted

Carried unanimously

**Secretary's Report /Correspondence:** Nil Presented

**Guest Speakers:**

Ben van de Wijngaart and Frank Future spoke on the subject of personal watercraft (PWCs) in particular jet skis and the community's concerns about behaviour of some users. The following issues were noted.

- Lack of speed limits, with the exception of a few 4 knot bouys, on the water for all leisure craft.
- Danger to swimmers because of limited vision area for a driver of a fast-moving Jet Ski
- Destruction of marine life with particular reference to an incident involving black swans during the past holiday period and the danger to dolphins and turtles because of the lack of signature noise underwater.
- Sea Shelter data shows 41 turtles lost in the previous 3 months in an area bordered by Seal Rocks and Newcastle harbour from various factors. It appeared that 17 of these had had shell damage which indicated they had been hit by watercraft
- Increasing need for rescue – up 23% reflecting increased numbers on the harbour
- Calls from people on beaches because of rule breaking behaviour.

The meeting was advised that the number to call to report bad behaviour and or the need for rescue is 131236. Ben added it was important to try and give the crafts registration number.

Frank mentioned that he had discussed the issue with Local Member Kate Washington particularly the need to have a leisure watercraft speed limit on estuarine waterways in NSW. He also mentioned that Kiama Council had recently limited estuarine access for PWC to certain ramps.

After a lengthy and spirited discussion about possible control mechanisms the following motion was passed.

**Moved** Rachel Wallbank and **Seconded** Roz Armstrong.

That TRRA, with the assistance of Frank Future, work with EcoNetwork Port Stephens and the Marine Parks Association to lodge a petition, of 10,000 signatures, to the State Government, via Local member Kate Washington and Minister for the environment Penny Sharpe. The petition was to ask that the State Government legislate a speed limit for leisure watercraft on estuarine waterways in NSW.

Irene Jones advised the meeting that only 500 signatures were required to present a petition to Council and that this should be done at the same time. It should ask Port Stephens Council to limit the access to local waterways for PWCs to ramps that are not alongside family swimming beaches such as Little Beach. Soldiers Point Boat ramp was mentioned as being a likely point.

## **REPORTS:**

**Housing Strategy:** Rachel Wallbank spoke to TRRA's submission to Council on Housing issue and used the Shoal Bay Place Plan and planned State Government Planning Act changes as example of related matters.

**TRRA Membership Recruitment Strategy:** Irene Jones spoke to this matter advising that as soon as she had confirmed 'stall' dates for local shopping Centres she would contact all members to assist in volunteering at these stalls.

**Soldiers Point Marina Land & Environment Appeal:** Roz Armstrong spoke to this noting that local residents, Iain Watt, Bryan Hooks, Carol Ridgeway Bissett, Jean Armstrong and herself had given evidence to the Senior Commissioner Sue Dixon who had reserved her decision. It was not known when this would be handed down. Matters addressed by these speakers included:

- Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage,
- Impacts to aquatic ecology and marine life,
- Disruption to natural water movement and sand erosion.
- And the very complex question of land identification, ownership and related regulated issues such as zoning.
- Traffic Management and Parking
- Overdevelopment and non compliance
- Public Interest.

**Planning:** In the absence of Planning Spokesperson, Nigel Waters, Richard Davis referred the meeting to the TRRA Newsletter for information about current issues. He also thanked the editors of the Newsletter and in particular thanked Geoff Washington for his contribution to TRRA via this role in the previous years.

Richard Davis thanked people for attending the meeting and asked attendees to leave their email addresses on the attendance sheet to receive the TRRA newsletter and encouraged them to join the association and closed the meeting at 8:45pm

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING:** Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024