



TRRA INC. NEWSLETTER

May 2024

**Our General Meeting scheduled for 3rd June
will be held at the**

**Nelson Room, Ground Floor,
Nelson Bay Bowling Club commencing at 7:00
pm.**

AGENDA
(Newsletter follows below)

GENERAL MEETING
Monday 3rd June 2024, 7:00 pm

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of the 8th April 2024 General Meeting**

3. **Business Arising from previous minutes.**
4. **Correspondence In and Out**
5. **Business Arising from Correspondence**
6. **Treasurer's Report**
7. **Membership Report**
8. **Representatives Reports**

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group (THHG)

PSC Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG)

PSC Environmental Advisory Group (EAG)

Note: Reports about the THHG, CEAG and EAG are included in the Newsletter below.

9. Planning and other matters

Jet Skis concerns

Soldiers Point Marina

Housing Strategy & supply

Other current matters

See detailed background briefing on these matters in the Newsletter below.

10. General Business

Port Stephens Homelessness Strategy Report

NEXT MEETING:

- **Monday 12th August 2024 - General Meeting; 7:00PM**

Conditions on matters raised by members at General Meetings

Consistent with Section 26 (4) of the TRRA Constitution, members are reminded that should they wish to put an item of business before a general meeting, that item needs to be submitted in writing to the Secretary before the notice of the meeting is issued to members (usually 14 days prior) so the matter may be included in the notice.

The Committee may allow exceptions in the case of genuinely urgent issues.

Any motion approved by members at a meeting shall be taken as an instruction to the Committee to investigate further and ensure all relevant facts and the context are considered in any resulting action.

TRRA MAY/JUNE NEWSLETTER

Personal Watercraft (Jet Skis or PWC)



At our February meeting a large group of residents listened to Guest Speakers, Immediate Past President, **Ben van der Wijngaart** and Imagine Cruises owner, **Frank Future**, share their personal and professional experiences of personal watercraft, including Jet Skis, use on our waterways. Frank and Ben's address was very informative and touched on regulations and environmental issues.

Since this meeting TRRA representatives along with representatives of EcoNetwork Port Stephens and The Marine Parks Association have consulted on this matter and a progress report will be given at the next General Meeting in June. In the interim, if you observe anti-social and/or dangerous behaviour call NSW Maritime PWC hotline on **13 12 36**.

Soldiers Point Marina- Land & Environment Appeal



Senior Commissioner Dixon handed down her judgment in this matter on 29th February and ordered:

“That the appeal be dismissed and that Development Application 16-2019-8-1 is determined by refusal of consent.”

You can [read this judgment HERE](#).

TRRA have since engaged with Port Stephens Council about the Commissioner's "reasons" and why reasons for refusal were limited to the matter of parking only and not all of the reasons for which Council refused the development in the first instance. TRRA have been advised, by Council, that this information remains part of Court documents on which they are unable to comment. The TRRA Executive are discussing the benefits of using the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009 \(NSW\) \(GIPA Act\)](#) to obtain this information.

Other Planning Matters

TRRA made a major submission to Council on the draft **Housing Strategy and Housing Supply Plan**, based on our February 2024 discussion paper *The Future for Housing on the Tomaree peninsula*. We think that Council's proposals for new dwellings in Tomaree by 2040 are unrealistic given multiple constraints including a lack of adequate infrastructure to support a major population increase. We have argued for Council to follow the lead of other Councils and 'push back' at the unreasonable demands from the State Government. We acknowledge the desperate shortage of genuinely affordable housing – particularly permanent rental accommodation, but can't see how simply increasing the overall supply of dwelling lots for private sector development will significantly help. We await the report back to Council on the consultation on the draft Strategy and Plan, expected before Council goes into 'caretaker' mode in July prior to the September Council elections.

TRRA and EcoNetwork Port Stephens made a joint submission on draft changes to the **Tree Management and Flora & Fauna** chapters of the Port Stephens Development Control Plan (DCP). These chapters provide guidance for anyone considering tree removal or other changes to native vegetation and wildlife habitat, especially koala habitat. While the proposed changes improve the guidance, it remains very complex and we have questioned how effective it is in affecting the behaviour of landowners who really want to clear trees and other vegetation, whether for development or simply to improve their views. We have made the case (again!) for other changes, including to reporting, compliance monitoring and enforcement, which we think are necessary to 'shift the dial' on maintaining and enhancing tree cover, with all its many benefits.

We attended the information sessions on the proposed **Shoal Bay Town Team** on 16 & 17 May, and will report on these to the next General Meeting on 3 June.

TRRA continues to liaise with **Anna Bay** residents who are concerned about proposals for major housing developments north of Gan Gan Road, on land which even Council has rejected as unsuitable due to flooding and other constraints. The local community will be pushing for a comprehensive review of planning for the locality, to update the 2008 Anna Bay Strategy.

We attended a briefing at the **Fingal Bay Sports Club** on options for future development of the Club land. The Club (now part of the Societie group of clubs) is considering housing, a hotel/motel or serviced accommodation and shops/medical centre as possibilities. TRRA encourages local residents to get involved with the Fingal Bay Community Association fingalbayca@gmail.com for input on this and other local issues.

We attended the information session on the proposed **Shoal Bay Town Team** on 16th May and will report on this to the next General Meeting on 3rd June.

Representatives Report

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group (THHG) - May 2024 Progress Report

Indications of encouraging movements by responsible authorities towards decisions on future planning and management arrangements for the Headland heritage site.

THHG in recent months has received several communications from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) in response to its representations to the Minister (the Hon. Kate Washington] and the Department highlighting the Tomaree community's expectations that there is an urgent need for decisions on the future of the Tomaree Lodge site. These representations drew attention to:

- The fact that the Lodge assets had remained empty for several years and are vulnerable to vandalism and physical deterioration
- The completion of the National Parks and Wildlife \$7m Coastal Track had attracted a huge increase in visitor numbers to the Headland which called for much improved services such as wayfinding signage, toilet and refreshment amenities, information, interpretation as well as traffic and parking strategies. Recent THHG "Help Desk" initiatives particularly over Easter at the entry to the Headland recorded 400 persons per hour entering the climb.
- THHG had received an increasing number of expressions of interest from regional and local community groups for access to the buildings and/or sites within the Lodge precinct. These approaches confirm a more general community expectation for early decisions on the preferred uses at the

Headland and clear indications of a management strategy and future responsibilities.

- The unanimous Resolution of Port Stephens Council on 12 December 2023 to play a leadership role relating to the future off the Tomaree Lodge site.
- That THHG's initiative to produce a Strategic Concept Plan (primarily funded by Port Stephens Council) offered a design framework for the next stages of planning and management of the site. See [HERE](#) (Scroll down to Plan and click to open)
- The DCJ agreed to an onsite meeting/inspection of the Lodge buildings and its assets on 27 March 2024 which was attended by a number of the THHG Board member groups, representatives of Port Stephens Council and other interested parties such as the Worimi, NPWS and Newcastle University. Interested parties were able to discuss their interests in the site, while the DCJ was able to provide further details as to the essential capital works which are likely to be needed to bring the services and buildings to an acceptable and safe condition, such as major expenditure on the sewerage system and on asbestos removal/ management, etc.

Recent advice from the DCJ

In the first week of May 2024 the DCJ advised THHG, that they are preparing a report for the Minister's consideration including the potential to undertake "meanwhile" projects (early high priority initiatives) to allow the project to move forward) and opportunities such as car parking, refreshment, information and showering facilities. A Traffic Management Study was also under consideration to enable temporary use of existing sealed car parking lots within the lodge.

THHG suggested to DCJ the desirability of reconfiguration of the entrance precinct to provide visitors with a 'sense of arrival' and improved wayfinding for the whole of the Headland, e.g. "**Welcome to Tomaree Headland**".

Also, THHG has put forward a Caretaker proposal as an alternative to the current extensive Security and Management costs [\$1m p.a.]. It was suggested to DCJ that the anticipated savings could be put towards the Master Planning process which THHG regards as a priority.

DCJ are also engaging with Port Stephens Council and THHG has been informed that Council Officers would be meeting with the Minister and DCJ reps on 3 May. The outcome of these discussions is not known at this stage.

DCJ has advised that the Government is hopeful of making a public announcement on these matters very soon.

Port Stephens Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG)

This group operates under terms of reference approved by Council and seeks to receive feedback about the way in which Council engages with the

Community.

The TRRA Representative is Immediate Past President **Ben van der Wijngaart** and he will report on the latest outcomes from this group at the next TRRA General Meeting on Monday 3rd June.

Port Stephens Environmental Advisory Group (EAG)

A key function of the EAG is to act as a conduit between Council and community on matters affecting the built and natural environment. The EAG has established 3 sub-groups to progress its work – on Biodiversity and greening; on Marine and water management, and on Sustainable living. This group operates under the [Environmental Advisory Group Terms of Reference](#) which can be found on the Council website.

The TRRA representative on the EAG is Nigel Waters who will report back to TRRA Members on the 8 May meeting of the EAG at the next TRRA General Meeting on 3rd June.

Offshore Wind Farms – recent developments

Meryl Swanson, Member for Paterson, has recently held two information meetings in her office with invited community representatives, including from anti-wind farm groups, to hear from two of the Applicants for Feasibility Licences for proposed offshore windfarms. Vice-president Richard Davis represented TRRA and other TRRA members were also present at both meetings representing other community organisations.

Port Stephens Council Meetings

TRRA regularly provides comments to East Ward Councillors on matters listed on Council meeting agendas. TRRA urges members and others interested in particular items to read the actual agendas and minutes, and/or view the webcast, both available on PSC Council website for full details.

Other Council Activities of Interest

Port Stephens Council Street Party



During **Sail Port Stephens** Council held a Street Party for visitors and locals. A number of TRRA Members attended this and voted it A huge success. A letter was sent to the Council, from TRRA, congratulating them on this initiative.

The Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group (HSAG)

The next meeting of the (HSAG) is on Friday 31st May. Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson, with local MP Kate Washinton and Member for Patterson, Meryl Swanson MP, will be a special guest. The agenda of social and affordable housing, and potential reforms in the short term rentals market such as AirBnB's reforms is chaired by Deputy Mayor Leah Anderson.

To discuss the very prevalent issues of homelessness in Port Stephens with The Minister will be representatives from Hume Housing, Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, Tomaree Neighbourhood Services, Yacaaba Centre, Hope Cottage and the Hunter Tenants Association

The motion to form the HSAG, where all 3 levels of Government in Port Stephens and Patterson electorate sit at the table with the above key stakeholders was brought to Council by Cr Anderson in 2023 to

- Provide Council with strategic advice on homelessness and related issues that can be dealt with at a Local Government level.
- Work with Council to address local issues, develop options and assist in identifying preferred solutions as part of Council's decision-making process
- Advocate community views on homelessness issues.

Deputy Mayor Anderson will be attending the next TRRA General Meeting on Monday 3rd June to update members on the outcomes of this meeting.

For more Information about the HSAG use the links below.

Collaboration to Curb Homelessness in Port Stephens

PSC Committees and Advisory Panels

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