



TRRA INC NEWSLETTER

October 2024



Flannel Flowers, Tomaree Coastal Walk

October Annual General Meeting & General Meeting

These meetings will be held on Thursday 10 October 2024, commencing at 7.00 p.m. in the Crows Nest Room of the Nelson Bay Bowling Club.

Only financial members are eligible to vote at the AGM. Renewal of TRRA's membership fees fell due on 30 June, 2023. If you have not already paid, see TRRA website for how to pay – [HERE](#)

[JOIN/RENEW Membership HERE](#)

Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME | default : "TRRA Member" }}

AGM Message from the TRRA President

Our success as a community advocacy organisation takes on an ever more important relevancy. Over the past year our Council has shown its willingness to listen to the community.

Our submissions on issues are increasingly valued by a greater number of Councillors. The ongoing operations of the Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) and the Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) are evidence of this.

TRRA welcomes the newly elected Mayor and Councillors (see Newsletter item below) and looks forward to a productive relationship over the term of this Council.

The opportunities for TRRA to influence community outcomes keep improving. We just need more people willing to participate in the process. In particular, we need people to help with the Media and Social Media roles, but there are a wide range of other tasks to fit your interests and expertise.

Richard Davis Acting President TRRA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024 AGENDA

Thursday 10 October 2024 – 7.00 pm

Crows Nest Room, Nelson Bay Bowling Club

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. President's Annual Report and Presentation by Committee members on the Year's Issues
3. Confirmation of AGM Minutes 9 October 2023 (Posted on TRRA website)
4. Matters Arising

TRRA GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA

Thursday 10 October 2024

Crows Nest room, Nelson Bay Bowling Club
(following AGM)

1. Report
2. Reports Attendance
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of the previous meeting 3 June 2024 (Posted on TRRA Website)
5. Matters Arising
6. Correspondence
7. Treasurer's
 - Congratulate and welcome new and re-elected Councillors (President)
 - Report on Jet-ski control meeting with NSW Maritime (Irene)
 - TRRA position on Shoal Bay Road erosion and alternative access issues (Nigel)
 - Council Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) – update (Nigel)
 - Council Communications and Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) - update (Ben)
 - Tomaree Headland Heritage Group (THHG) – update (Geoff)
8. Planning Issues
 - Soldiers Point Marina building extension – update on new DA and GIPAA request for relevant documents (Irene)
 - Commencement of apartment building at 17-19 Yacaaba St, NB – TRRA querying compliance with conditions (Nigel)

See the Newsletter below for written reports on many of these items, which need not take much time at the meeting – questions can be asked and answered.

9. General Business

Next meeting: General Meeting & Christmas Drinks – Monday 9th December 2024, Nelson Bay Bowling Club 6.30pm – followed by drinks and/or a meal in the Bistro.

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Council Election Results (Declared 3 October)

TRRA congratulates Cllr Leah Anderson on her election as Mayor of Port Stephens.

Congratulations are also due to East Ward candidates who have been elected. They are:

Roz Armstrong (Labor)

Nathan Errington (Liberal)

Mark Watson

TRRA looks forward to constructive engagement with all members of the newly elected Port Stephens Council.

The first meeting of the new Council will be on Tuesday 22 October, at the Council Chambers in Raymond Terrace, commencing after any 'public access' presentations from 5.30 pm. We encourage members to observe Council meetings either from the public gallery or via the [live online webcast](#)

Report on 'Meet the Candidates' Forum

On 29 August TRRA held a 'Meet the Candidates Forum in the lead up to the 14 September Council Election. All candidates for the office of Mayor and for the East Ward participated.

Mayoral and East Ward Candidates introduced themselves and provided a brief statement of their priorities for the coming term of Council.

They each answered three questions posed by TRRA and other questions raised by community members who were attending.

Feed-back received from Candidates and the 110 members of the audience indicated a consensus that the forum was well conducted and helpful to voters.

Council Advisory Groups

We look forward to confirmation that the 4 existing advisory groups established in the last Council term (Environment, Heritage, Comms & Engagement and Homelessness) will be continuing. Agendas, minutes and terms of reference are [HERE](#).

Environmental Advisory Group (EAG)

The meeting of the EAG on 14 August received updates from Council staff on a range of matters:

- Coastal Management Plans
- Vegetation Mapping
- Cool burns

The presentation on stormwater management to the Marine and Water sub-group has been distributed to all Group members – the sub-group has recommended further community education.

The Biodiversity and Greening sub-group reported on its discussion on street trees and greening more generally.

The Sustainability sub-group reported on its discussion of the potential for Town Teams being established by Council to play a role in sustainability education.

Communications and Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG)

The last meeting of the Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) for the term of the previous Council was held on 17 Aug 2024. The TRRA representative, Ben van der Wijngaart, attended that meeting.

A number of items were discussed at that meeting, which we will itemise at the General Meeting following our AGM on Thursday 10 October. However, the summation at that meeting of the first year of the CEAG's operation was a very positive one from both Council staff and the community representatives. While it was acknowledged there was always room for improvement, there was a consensus by CEAG members that the level and openness of Council communication with ratepayers and residents had improved markedly over the last term of council, particularly in the last year. Council staff responsible for this function indicated that their ability to perform their role had been notably enhanced as a result of CEAG's input.

Our representative believes that the CEAG meetings have all been positive and council staff have demonstrated a genuine intention to better involve

community views in decision making. He strongly encourages TRRA's continued participation

Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group (HSAG)

At the June meeting, Deputy Mayor, Leah Anderson, spoke about the work that the Council's Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group (HSAG), comprising 18 core members, including the Member for Port Stephens and Member for Paterson, NSW Police, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, key community sector organisations, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and 2 community members.

- HSAG, formed after a motion from Cr Anderson, seeks 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.

Leah spoke about the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness in Port Stephens, saying that current data indicates that over 450 people are without secure housing in the area.

She welcomed the attendance of State Housing Minister, Rose Jackson, at the May meeting of the group and spoke about the twelve months of planning goals, that has not only included advocating for resources from the State Government but achieved the practical results of directing used furniture from Council-owned holiday parks to Port Stephens-based community service organisations and charities. It has also developed an emergency food and crisis relief calendar outlining where to find food, vouchers and rental support across the community

Other Groups

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group (THHG)

THHG continues with its representations to the NSW Government and its authorities having responsibility for the Lodge site to implement earlier undertakings to ensure that the site is retained in public ownership and that there is a masterplan for the adaptive reuse of its heritage assets.

The recent announcement of the establishment of a Tomaree Lodge Community Engagement Committee, to be convened by the Department of Communities and Justice, was welcomed by THHG. This Committee is

charged with the task of investigating preferred uses of the site and oversight of the preparation of a masterplan for the future use of the site.

An application by the President of THHG (Peter Clough), for membership of this Committee has been accepted.

THHG has continued to work with the University of Newcastle School of Architecture in the design of certain 'Meanwhile' developments such as the conversion of the change room building at the lodge entrance to a coffee shop/information kiosk.

A major initiative of THHG, the production of an authoritative military history of the Tomaree Headland, will be launched on 14 October. The book, entitled *Paradise Interrupted: Tomaree Headland Port Stephens in World War II*, written by historian Judy Washington after extensive research, will soon be available for purchase. Watch [THHG website](#) for details of availability.

THHG continues to offer a 'help desk' facility during peak holiday times at the entrance to the headland. Information is provided to visitors to the Lodge site and the National Park. Visitor numbers (200 per hour this week) are recorded and opinions on their experience are surveyed.

South Tomaree Community Association

TRRA continues to work closely with the STCA, and other Anna Bay residents, on planning issues for Anna Bay, Boat Harbour and One Mile Beach (see Planning Matters report below)

Fingal Bay Community Association

TRRA is liaising with the FBCA on matters of common interest, including the issue of road access to Shoal Bay and Fingal Bay (see below)

Jetski Regulation

An update on PWCs (Jet Skis) from Maritime (Transport for NSW)

TfNSW Maritime is proposing to introduce a PWC/Jet Ski prohibition zone at Dutchmans Beach, Nelson Bay. This zone will incorporate the length of Dutchmans Bay and expand approximately 200m from the foreshore/beach. However, the proposed implementation of restrictions at Dutchmans Bay has been postponed pending further stakeholder consultation.

In addition to this, TfNSW Maritime is working on introducing a 200m Restriction Zone for the entire waterway of Port Stephens. This approach requires legislative changes that TfNSW Maritime has instigated and is looking to have this restriction in place ASAP.

A 'PWC Restriction Zone' means a person must not operate a personal watercraft in an *irregular manner* on any navigable waters in the personal watercraft restriction zone that are within 200 metres of a riverbank or shore.

TfNSW Maritime will actively promote a communications strategy for users of PWCs/Jet Skis, other waterway users and general public. It is envisaged that this will involve print media, social media, signage and Boating Education Officers at relevant boat ramps.

In the meantime, NSW Maritime and Water Police will continue to manage the influx of PWC operators this summer, focusing on the safety of navigation

Planning Matters

Shoal Bay Access

The long running issue of road access to Shoal Bay and Fingal Bay has been given a new urgency by the storm on 1 August that swept away much of the foreshore pathway between Anzac Park and Government Road, undermining some Council infrastructure and leaving an unstable 'cliff' only metres from Shoal Bay Road carriageway opposite Shoal Bay Avenue.

Council has carried out some emergency works involving movement of large quantities of sand to provide immediate protection, but this can only be a temporary solution.

These events have heightened awareness of the wider issue of road access to Shoal Bay and Fingal Bay in the longer term and have revived calls by some parties to re-consider the need for an alternative road. Inexplicably, after a major consultation on alternative access in 2020-21, the State Government appears to have lost interest. The TfNSW website page on the Fingal Bay Link Road states that 'No further planning for investigations are currently proposed for the project'.

Meanwhile Council's recently adopted Coastal Management Plan (CMP) has three clear 'actions' that relate to the erosion threat and alternative access, but the timescale for these is years away. The State Government has yet to approve the CMP, and only then can Council start to apply for grant funding.

TRRA believes that these levels of attention are grossly inadequate and that urgent attention to the issue is required, but that calls for a new road are premature, with many factors to be considered. Our position is set out in a paper [now on our website HERE](#)

Private certifiers

It has long been clear that the current system that allows developers to hire their own certifiers to monitor compliance with conditions of DA consents is fundamentally broken. Even if you can identify and contact the certifier for a project, they often refuse to respond to enquiries, and there can be no confidence that they are properly supervising projects and ensuring compliance.

The issue has been highlighted by the case of the site at 17-19 Yacaaba Street in Nelson Bay, which has approval for a 9-storey apartment building. The tightly constrained nature of the site, with the dead end of Tomaree Street providing the only access to the 100-unit Aqua Mantra apartments, and the one-way Yacaaba Street taking much of the northbound traffic into the town centre past the busy Service NSW and Centrelink offices, will pose a major headache for construction traffic. We have all experienced the disruption caused by the current work on 'Angelina Apartments' at the other end of Yacaaba Street, even though there is much more room there for construction traffic and where traffic control has been well managed.

Site work at 17-19 Yacaaba appears to have commenced, without any notice of the private certifier or evidence that the conditions relating to planning for construction and traffic management are being met. TRRA is making active representations to ensure that we can have confidence that the project proceeds safely and with minimum disruption.

Developments at Anna Bay

TRRA has been supporting a group of concerned Anna Bay residents in their opposition to a 47-lot subdivision and housing development 'Anna Bay Rise' at 263 Gan Gan Road. Council refused the DA in May 2024 on multiple grounds – including the unsuitability of the flood prone site. The proponent appealed and there was an initial Land and Environment Court hearing on-

site on 3 September, at which 5 locals outlined their concerns. We await the formal proceedings, probably early in 2025.

Proposals for a much larger residential development on adjacent land north of Gan Gan Road, presented to Council earlier this year, have not progressed - hopefully because the Council's adopted Housing Strategy does not identify the site as suitable.

At the other end of Gan Gan Road, there has been public concern about the dramatic felling of dozens of trees on the corner of the roundabout with Nelson Bay Road (which has also further exposed two ugly derelict billboard frames). TRRA is supporting concerned local residents in questioning whether this clearance was authorised and what plans the landowner might have for the sit

Members and others are invited to ask questions about any of the matters reported above at the General Meeting on Thursday 10 October at the Nelson Bay Bowling Club (from 7pm), or by contacting secretary@trra.com.au

Geoff Washington
Acting Media Officer
October 2024

TRRA Inc

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