



CLUB HISTORY

Terrigal Wamberal Little Athletics had its inaugural season at Duffy's Oval in 1984-1985. **Estelle Gough** served as President while **Richard Clark** was a founding member and a long-serving Committee member.

David Small, John Bramwell and **David Knox** also had significant terms as President and saw the Club through its glory days in the 1990s to early 2000s - the time period from which a significant number of Club Records still stand and in which a majority of the Club's state level medalists competed.

One prominent athlete, **Mitchell Knox**, won gold at the State Multi Event (now called State Combined Events) five times between 1995 and 2000 and his results include a State Record. He was also a part of the gold medal winning Junior Boys relay team at the 1998 State Championships. **Jade Roughan** is another extremely talented athlete from this era - winning gold and setting a state record and winning one other gold and one bronze medal at the State Multi between 1997 and 2003. During the same time period, she also won four bronze medals at the State Championships. Jade recently returned to the Club as a parent supporting the next generation of athletes.

In 2000, clearly inspired by the Sydney Olympic Games, an all-time high of 25 Club members attended the State Championships. The standout was sprinter **Owen Martin** - a four-time State Championships gold medalist who achieved an Australian record in 2001. Closing out the Club's dominant period, **Warrick Whitmore** received three gold medals in middle distance events in back-to-back State Championships in 2004 and 2005.

Another athlete from this era, **Kylie Palmer**, deserves a special mention as the athlete who still holds the record for participating in the most events on behalf of the Club - 1143 events between 1994 and 2003.

Since its earliest days, the Club has been supported by community sponsors. None was more dedicated than **Harry Comninios** of Freedom Pools. Harry was not only a major Club sponsor for over 15 years but also a Club coach, dedicated Committee member and father of **Aristides Comninios** and **Anastasia Comninios** - athletes whose event count totals remain at third and fourth of all-time more than 20 years after they last competed for Terrigal Wamberal. The Committee has always worked closely with the local Council as well as the Sports Council to improve the facilities at Duffy's and Harry was also instrumental in having the shot put and discus areas concreted 1993, erecting permanent nets around the discus circles in 1996 and building the synthetic triple jump area in 1998. In the early days,

Committee members had to store equipment at their houses in the offseason. Luckily, in 1998 the Club was able to fund an extension to the original small room that served as the Clubhouse to gain valuable storage space. Once again, Harry contributed time and resources to this construction.

The Clubhouse received another renovation some 20+ years later thanks to a **NSW State Government** Grant and additional **Central Coast Council** funding – with upgraded toilets and changerooms, new storage, external and internal painting and new lighting and gutters. Thankfully these changes were completed in time for the start of season 2020-21 (and just before Council's 2020 financial crisis became public news.)

Recognised as a Life Member in 1997 for all his efforts, Harry returned to the Club in 2018 where he remains to this day assisting with coaching and officiating. The Club is very grateful for his contributions.

So many others have contributed to Terrigal Wamberal's overall success. The Committee at times consisted of more than 20 hard-working parents and volunteers - many of whom continued to serve even after their own children had left Little Athletics.

The various Championships are a major highlight for many athletes during the season. Over the years, both the format and location have changed. Originally, the member clubs in the Central Coast Zone took turns hosting the Zone Championships at their Friday night competition location. Later, the Zone Championships would move to Adcock Park and then eventually to its current home at the purpose-built athletics track at Mingara. Early Region Championships were held in Narrabeen as Terrigal Wamberal was part of the Northern Metropolitan Region competing against Sydney-based clubs. This event is now hosted on the Central Coast or in Newcastle. Early State Championships were held at Campbelltown before eventually moving to the world class facilities at Sydney Olympic Park.

The Club struggled with membership numbers for a time in the late naughties and early twenty-tens and was dealt a further blow when Duffy's Oval was closed for resurfacing - forcing season 2014-15 to take place in conjunction with Gosford Little Athletics at Adcock Park. However, **Troy Sheary** took on the role of President when nobody else would and, with a very small group of committed volunteers, kept the Club from going under.

From 2018, the Club enjoyed a period of growth under the partnership of President **Michele Simos** and Vice President **Carmen Fleming**. Supported by a very collaborative, active and growing Committee, the Club added income streams (through grants and sponsorships), expanded training opportunities, energized the volunteer base, substantially increased championships participation, encouraged development opportunities for coaches and officials and embraced the use of technology to promote the Club, eliminate cumbersome manual processes and better engage with members. In 2019, **Izabella Dunne** broke the medals drought from the State Championships, dating back to 2007, by winning a silver. Others soon followed, with **Ava Simos** winning silver in 2021, **Lakin Barber** winning bronze in 2022, and **Ben Sullivan** winning silver and bronze in 2023. With multiple young athletes breaking longstanding Club records – including **Nellie Lowbridge** and **Braxton Dowell** – the future of the Club is bright.

As we start the new season, numbers at the Friday night competitions remain strong. With new leadership and healthy committee numbers, the Club is well positioned to continue its reputation as the best run Little Athletics Club on the Central Coast. The Club has a strong sense of community and we welcome all new members to join in and become part of the Club's longstanding history of hard work and achievement in the sport of athletics.

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