

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.

In 2000, clearly inspired by the Sydney Olympic Games, 25 athletes attended the State Championships - the most ever in one year for the Club. Sprinter **Owen Martin** is a four-time State Championships gold medalist who achieved an Australian record in 2001. And **Warrick Whitmore** received three gold medals in middle distance events in back-to-back State Championships in 2004 and 2005.

Kylie Palmer deserves a special mention as the athlete who has competed in the all-time most events on behalf of the Club - 1143 events between 1994 and 2003. Not far behind Kylie is current Committee member Rebecca Knowles who competed in 1131 events in her younger years as **Rebecca Daly**.

Since its earliest days, the Club has been supported by community sponsors. None was more dedicated than **Harry Comninios** of Freedom Pools - a major sponsor for over 15 years. Harry was 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 participated in their last events for Terrigal Wamberal.

The Committee always worked closely with the local Council as well as the Sports Council to improve the facilities at Duffy's. **Harry Comninios** 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 Comninios** contributed time and resources to this construction.

The Clubhouse received another renovation some 20+ years later thanks to a NSW State Grant and additional Council funding – 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 the Central Coast Council's 2020 financial crisis became public news.)

Recognised as a Life Member in 1997 for all his efforts, **Harry Comminos** returned to the Club in 2018 to assist with coaching and officiating and the Club is very grateful.

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).

In terms of Championships, it is interesting to note that the location of the major events has changed over the years. 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 the purpose-built athletics track at Mingara where they still take place today. Early Region Championships were held in Narrabeen (when Terrigal Wamberal was part of the Northern Metropolitan Region) but this event now takes place on the Central Coast or in Newcastle as the Club no longer competes against Sydney-based Clubs. Early State Championships were held at Campbelltown but have moved to Sydney Olympic Park in more recent times.

The Club struggled with membership numbers for a time in the late naughties and early 2010s 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 saw the Club's numbers bounce back to healthy levels once competition returned to Duffy's Oval the following season.

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. Numbers at the Friday night competitions remain strong and athletes are again setting many Club Records. Two athletes, **Izabella Dunne** and **Ava Simos**, have medalled at the State Championships – an impressive achievement given the number of participants now competing in the sport.

In 2021, **Liesl Aulsebrook**, a former Little Athlete with Gosford Little Athletics, took over as President and the Club looks forward to continuing its recent reputation as the best run Little Athletics Club on the Central Coast. A sense of community flows strongly amongst our members 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.