



YTAA National Committee 2010

EXECUTIVE

Michael de Manincor (President) - NSW
Janet Lowndes (Vice Pres) - VIC
Mark O'Brien (Treasurer) - NSW
Gaynor Austen AM (Secretary) – NSW

VIC

Di Lucas
Anahata Giri
Gita Azar

NSW

Cate Peterson
Alex Grant
Sharon Elias

QLD

Leanne Davis
Tamara James
Suzanne Fletcher

WA

Kate Porotto
Julie Dulaney

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Cherise Vallet
Kate Ireland

Membership Manager

Tanya Davies

Executive Assistant

Kathy Peterson



Michael de Manincor BA (Hons, Psych), Grad Dip Ed, M Psych

www.yogainstitute.com.au

Michael is the Founding Director of Yoga Sanga and the Yoga Institute in Sydney, which are dedicated to teaching yoga in the tradition of T Krishnamacharya. Michael is also co-founder and Director of the Breath Foundation, a not-for-profit yoga based health promotion charity.

Michael has been practicing yoga and meditation for over thirty years, and has been teaching since the mid 1980's. A senior teacher with the YTAA, an accredited Yoga Teacher Trainer with the Krishnamacharya Healing and Yoga Foundation (KHYF) and a member of the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT). As well as his experience and passion for teaching yoga, he holds degrees in Education and Psychology, is a registered Counseling Psychologist, and brings together a range of skills and experience in mind-body health, education and personal development.

"The role and contribution of the YTAA to the ongoing support and professional development of all yoga teachers in Australia, has become increasingly important and valuable in recent years. I am very happy to serve as President, and offer whatever I can from my own professional experience to assist in the continued work of the YTAA for all yoga teachers in Australia."



Janet Lowndes

www.embodymind.com.au

Janet is a Yoga Teacher, Psychologist, and Yoga Therapist who brings her continuing exploration of the yogic life into her classes and individual therapeutic work. Janet undertook her initial Yoga Teacher Training at Swami Vivekananda's Ashram in Bangalore India, continued her Teacher Training with the Australian Institute of Yoga in Melbourne, and has been strongly influenced by further training undertaken with renowned teacher Donna Farhi. Janet has been teaching yoga for 5 years and practicing for 16 years.

Janet is now a teacher on the faculty of the Advanced Diploma of Yoga Teaching (Australian Institute of Yoga) and Graduate Certificate in Yoga Therapy (Australian Institute of Yoga Therapy) at the Centre for Adult Education in Melbourne. Janet is also a committee member of the Australian Association of Yoga Therapists, and a member of the Australian Psychological Society.

Janet is dedicated to exploring the intersection of ancient yogic philosophies and western psychological sciences as a path to holistic wellbeing.



Mark O'Brien

www.qiyoga.net

Mark has practiced Yoga for nearly 15 years, and been teaching since 1996. Born and educated in England, with a Bachelor of Science from Bristol University and fluent in French, he moved to Australia and eventually left a successful career in advertising to follow his heart, opening Qi Natural Therapies & Yoga in Sydney, a chain of 3 successful Yoga and Natural Therapy centres. He has since become one of Sydney's in-demand teachers and is the creator and senior teacher of an internationally recognised Hatha Yoga Teacher Training Diploma (a 12 month course) and enjoys living on the beautiful Northern Beaches of Sydney with his young family.

Mark had a strong meditation practice before graduating from the "Heart of Yoga" teacher training in 1999, (based on the approach of TKV Desikachar). He has since trained with many respected Yoga teachers including further in-depth study with both TKV Desikachar and his son Kausthub. Mark has studied elements of Tantra and Hatha yoga (sometimes called "ISHTA Yoga") and has studied with Rodney Yee and his current teacher over several years is the amazing Donna Farhi.

With a diploma in Remedial Massage and a background in meditation and somatic therapy, he remains in awe of the joyful way that skilful physical movement and attention to the breath can radically improve our moods, energy, health and outlook on the physical world.

Mark has served on the National Committee of the YTAA for the last two years, engaging in much sub-committee work, most notably the Fitness, Insurance and Health Funds sub-committees and now assumes the position of Treasurer. He is glad to donate much of his time to advance the cause of fellow teachers and promote yoga responsibly in Australia, building our reputation for ethical and effective practice.



Gaynor Austen AM

www.turiyayoga.org.au

I am currently Chair of the Teachers Committee of the Turiya Yoga Foundation, whose teachings combine a blend of raja yoga meditative practise with practices from the Tibetan teacher, Tarthang Tulku. I oversee the annual study syllabus for our teachers and senior students and examine our Teacher training qualifications. Until my recent relocation to Sydney, I ran Turiya's Brisbane School. I began practising yoga in 1968, and have taught actively with Turiya since 1980. I am a senior teacher with YTAA. I hold the Turiya Foundation's Teaching Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Kum Nye Certificate. I also have a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) Degree, Diploma of Librarianship and Masters Degree in Business Administration.

I retired early from a management role so that I could devote more time to those things about which I am passionate, especially yoga practise and teacher training. I strongly support the role of YTAA as an over-arching association which can bring together yoga teachers from varying traditions, while still respecting the very individual approaches of each of those lineages. I now have more time to assist the YTAA National Committee, and can bring management and planning experience to this role. I also believe it is highly desirable that teachers from yoga meditative traditions are well represented on the governing body of YTAA, and hope to be able to contribute this viewpoint to Committee discussions.



Di Lucas – VIC

www.gita.com.au

"Yoga is what inspires and sustains me"

Di Lucas is Co - Director of Gita International Yoga. She was trained by Margrit Segesman who in 1983 commissioned Di (and Lucille Wood) to carry Gita as Australia's first full time Yoga Centre into the 21st century. She is co - author of the texts "Yoga for You" and "Meditation - an Evolutionary Journey", co -producer of general Hatha and Pre Natal DVDs and Relaxation C.D.s and conducts Seminars and Retreats overseas, including to date 16 in Egypt & 8 in Bali.

Di is passionate about the YTAA, 'it is our window to the world showing the unifying nature of yoga and our work as Teachers striving to create consciousness that embraces physical health, emotional balance, mental well being and spiritual connection'.

Di brings an academic background from the 1970s covering Theology, Pastoral Psychology, and Education with a focus on Curriculum and Research in the Vic. Education Department to her teaching with an update into Early Childhood Post Graduate studies in 2000 (Melbourne Univ.).

In the decades since 1980 Di has taught classes in Pre Natal, Parents and babies through to school age children and teenagers as well as adult Hatha and esoteric (Yoga Philosophy and Kriya) and Pranayama classes. Providing Yoga Teacher Training and Post Graduate Courses along with counselling and guidance fills the remaining of Di's time.



Anahata Giri - VIC

www.yoga-with-anahata.com.au

*"I practise yoga to enter this river of being,
To taste the essence of things,
To be moved by this world,
To sink into the luminous presence that is right here."*

Anahata's love of yoga and meditation has spanned 23 years and she has been teaching yoga for 7 years. In her first yoga class, at nineteen, she knew she had found "home".

She sees yoga as encompassing the personal, political, social and spiritual aspects of life – in fact, the whole mandala of Life. Anahata has a Diploma in Community Development and a background in peace and environmental activism. She has been influenced by various traditions including advaita Vedanta (non-duality) and bhakti traditions. She has been inspired by: Paul Wooden; Prahlad and Diane Long (long-term student of Vanda Scaravelli). For spiritual inspiration she is deeply grateful to Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma). Anahata currently teaches yoga, meditation, prenatal yoga and yoga of sound courses at The Gertrude Street Yoga Studio.

As a member of the YTAA she aims to strengthen the yoga community in Australia and celebrate the essence of yoga that unites all forms and traditions.



Gita Azar – VIC

www.yogaindailylife.org.au

Gita is Yoga in Daily Life teacher & co-director of the Yoga in Daily Life centre, Richmond, Melbourne. (Part of the International Fellowship of Yoga in Daily Life)

I finally began to practice Yoga in Daily Life when stress and poor health became too much! The personal benefit that I gained from regular practice of Yoga in Daily Life and the spiritual inspiration received from meeting with my Guru in 1996, Yoga master H.H. Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda (Swamiji), turned my life to the focus of sharing these benefits (& more!) with others.



Sharon Elias - NSW

www.centredself.com.au

Sharon has been practicing Yoga since the late 90's and teaching since 2002.

She gained her initial teaching qualification with the International Yoga Teacher's Association (IYTA), and then went on to complete additional studies with the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram based in Chennai, India - and remains strongly influenced by these teachings with continued studies and ongoing mentoring.

Sharon also holds qualifications in Remedial Massage Therapy and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Prior to teaching Yoga, Sharon had a corporate career in Sydney/Melbourne, and as such has a special interest in teaching Yoga as a stress management tool - in both the corporate arena and in the wider area of community and health services.

"I feel fortunate to be able to share my passion for Yoga throughout the wider community in the diverse environments of corporate, community, health services and private classes - and gain a great deal of enjoyment and fulfilment knowing this is making a positive impact on people's wellbeing. I am happy to serve as part of the YTAA committee and be part of an organisation that promotes and represents the united community of Yoga teachers in Australia".



Alex Grant – NSW

www.findyoga.com.au

Alex has been practicing yoga for over 14 years. He currently teaches Ashtanga Yoga in Mullumbimby, NSW. He also runs www.findyoga.com.au, a yoga directory connecting yogis in Australia.

In addition to Yoga, Alex practices Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in the Byron Shire. He is very happy to be a NSW representative on the YTAA, and hopes to help bring yoga to the people of Australia and beyond.



Cate Peterson – NSW

www.yogasolutions.com

I'm privileged to have a history of over 25 years doing work I love; bodywork, therapeutics and community development. Following Andrzej Gospodarczyk's inspired yoga training in 1996, I established Yoga Solutions which was a vehicle to bring yoga into the wider community, in particular the workplace.

Yoga gives us all the tools we need to focus on ultimate health and self-responsibility for our wellbeing. The more people that have access to yoga practice in its myriad forms the better! I hope that I will be able to contribute my energies to YTAA and so support yoga teachers around Australia to move from strength to strength.



Tamara James – QLD

www.yogaphysio.com.au

- Bachelor of Physiotherapy (University of Qld) 1993
- Diploma of Yoga Teaching (British Wheel of Yoga) 2001

I have been practicing yoga since 1993 and teaching since 1998. Over the years I have studied yoga with senior level teachers in the UK, India and Australia. Additionally I am a qualified and registered physiotherapist since 1994. I am a member of the Physiotherapy Pain Association (UK) & the International Association of Yoga Therapists (US).

My area of specialty as a physiotherapist, for the last 9 years, has been chronic symptom management. This year I have integrated my professional life and yoga, ('Yogaphysio'), my first (scary) venture into self employment. My physiotherapy employment history has also involved working with network committees (in the UK, I was the key facilitator in the establishment of a national network of allied health practitioners working with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome).

These are some of the experiences and skills I would like to bring to involvement with the YTAA. I recognise the heterogeneous nature of yoga and value it as a spiritual path with many health and therapy benefits. I would like to see yoga and yoga teachers feel confident in contributing a professional and respected service to the community.



Suzanne Fletcher – QLD

Suzanne has been practising various forms of yoga, stretch and meditation since 1971, and teaching yoga since 2005. Her yoga teaching qualifications comprise a Diploma of Health (Yoga) and an Advanced Diploma of Yoga Teaching. As well, she is a qualified Stretch Therapy Teacher. Suzanne is the owner, manager and a teacher at her yoga studio, Studio Relax, in Chelmer, Brisbane.

Suzanne's main yoga practice and training has been in Brisbane with Ailsa Gartenstein, Swami Chandrika Nirmalananda. Her practice has also included participation in ashram life for several months at Swami Muktananda's Sri Gurudev Ashram (as it used to be known) in Ganeshpuri, India; workshops with respected teachers Judith Lasater, Howard Kent and Dr Swami Shankardevananda and her teacher training with Dr June Henry, Swami Nitya Abhedananda of Yoga Queensland, Toowoomba. She has also completed Kit Laughlin's Stretch Therapy Teacher training.

Appreciative of all the training and knowledge she has received over the years, Suzanne sincerely thanks her various teachers.

Her training as a young adult in accountancy, (Bachelor of Business – Accountancy, With Distinction – CPA) draws her now to teach in styles that are systematic, validated by science including current psychology, and presented in plain English.

Suzanne is strongly committed to professionalism within yoga teaching and is happy to offer her time and energy to support yoga teachers and the YTAA itself in achieving and maintaining this.



Leanne Davis - QLD

Leanne has been interested in yoga since her teens and began teacher Yoga after completing the Sivananda Vedanta Yoga Academy in India 1988.

She is now a senior teacher with the YTAA and an accredited Yoga teacher and teacher trainer with the Krishnamacharya Healing and Yoga Foundation.

Leanne has worked in complementary medicine since 1983 studying and practising bodywork, herbal medicine and Ayurvedic medicine. She has a Bachelor of Health Science in Acupuncture and practices Traditional Chinese Medicine alongside her work with Yoga.

I am most interested in helping YTAA to support its members to continue to advance the quality and recognition of the traditional principles of Yoga teaching so that it may be utilised in the community as a system of physical and mental health care.



Julie Dulaney – WA

I have been practicing yoga for 25 years and teaching yoga for 8 years. I completed two yoga teacher training courses; the first with Friends in Yoga and the second with Tamara Graham (a senior YTAA teacher in Perth). As well as a busy weekly teaching schedule I run regular yoga retreats in Margaret River and this year one in Bali.

I have had lots of variety in my working life; secretarial work, flight attendant, IT consultant, naturopath and now yoga teaching. I love teaching yoga, it's not work, it's a passion and a joy! Yoga has helped me through difficult times in my life, and shown me ways to live with easy happiness. I am so grateful to all my teachers for sharing their passion and sparking my own.

I'm really happy to be a State Representative for the Yoga Teachers Association of Australia.

Kate Porotto - WA



Cherise Vallet - SA

I'm originally from Canada, and have lived in Australia since 1989. My original plan was to spend two years only in Australia, but life had other plans! Adelaide has been my home for the past four plus years and this is really where my yoga journey began in earnest after having dabbled with a home practice for a few years before that. I feel fortunate to have discovered the yoga studio that I did, as the teacher there really inspired me... I literally felt my heart respond in the very first class I did with her, and subsequently did my teacher training at the same studio.

One of the main things I love about yoga is the deep peace that comes when I really connect through my body with what I call my 'inner mover'... For me, this is such an embodied experience of spirit, of coming home to the bigger me that is connected and whole. I currently teach part-time at Yoga Spirit Studios in Adelaide, as well as in a small town south of Adelaide. I'm glad to have the opportunity to meet the wider yoga community through being a committee member for YTAA, and look forward to contributing what I can to the efforts and aims of the association.



Kate Ireland – SA

Kate teaches Kundalini Yoga, Hatha Yoga and is a Children's yoga teacher. Kate studied Kundalini Yoga under Gurumukh in Rishikesh, India and Hatha yoga with Katie Manitsas (Spiers) at Samadhi Yoga.

Kate has participated in programs from a number of prominent yoga teachers from around the world including Sharon Gannon and David Life (Jivamukti USA), Yoganath (Hong Kong), Shiva Rea (USA) and Sharath Rangaswamy (India). She also attended workshops with Donna Farhi (NZ) and Simon Low (UK).

Kate has a broader interest in health and works at an executive level in the health sector. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), a member of the Chartered Secretaries Association (CSA).

She believes in sharing the benefits of yoga with everyone, and believes yoga can be a life transforming practice. She has a strong commercial background, corporate governance experience and is delighted to contribute at a strategic level within YTAA.



Tanya Davies – Membership Manager

I took my first Yoga class at the tender age of 16 and fell in-love with the afterglow of an asana and meditation practice.

I believe that meditation and breath used in conjunction with Asana can transform the inner world which in turn liberates us to live in the outer world with more clarity, wisdom and joy.

My 'real' job as a musician takes me into some weird and wonderful places and yoga has saved me on many occasions.

I consider myself a 'baby' in the Yoga community because although my personal practice has been long standing, I've only been teaching for 4 years which seems like the blink of an eye in terms of Yoga's history.

I've worked for the YTAA for almost 6 years in an administrative capacity. I love to serve the membership and in this way I feel I serve Yoga in all its forms.



Kathy Peterson – Executive Assistant

I began practicing yoga in 2000 sampling many styles including, Ashtanga, Iyengar and Hatha. In 2003 I spent some time at the Sivananda Ashram in Kerala where my passion for yoga intensified, I decided I wanted to teach and share my love for yoga. I undertook teacher training with the Australian Yoga Teachers Network in Melbourne in 2005 and have been teaching since. For the past 2 years I have been employed as the executive assistant to the national committee. I love my job as it allows me to work with likeminded people for an organisation that supports my passion.