Need for summit help desk

BY **NEWSROOM**

THE Tomaree Headland Heritage Group has called for a permanent help desk at Tomaree Headland to help tourists at the increasingly popular visitor attraction.

Community volunteers manning the help desk at Tomaree Headland over the Christmas-New Year holiday period were overwhelmed by the record numbers of people walking to the summit.

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group president Peter Clough said the volunteer's experience will provide valuable feedback and data for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Port Stephens Tourism Authority and Port Stephens Council

Mr Clough said the numbers reinforced that Tomaree Headland remains the most popular visitor attraction in Port Stephens.

He said the actual access to the Tomaree Coastal Walk is not signposted at the headland entry and help desk initiative clearly has been a sought-after service by holiday makers to both the Tomaree Summit and Tomaree Coastal walks.

In fact he believes that numbers approaching 250,000 per annum are now accessing this iconic site which is well in advance of the last recorded numbers of 200,000 during 2018 by the NPWS.

He also said almost all new visitors were confused about where exactly the walk started so the Help Desk initiative has been invaluable particularly to first time visitors.

Other concerns expressed were:

- There needs to be a Sense of Arrival including directional signage and mapping particularly for the first-time visitors to Port Stephens for the summit walk at the entry.
- A strong need for information on mobility and animal access as well as the degree of difficulty and how long it takes.
- Many were also interested in the rich military and indigenous history and also the future of the Tomaree Lodge
- Information on the Tomaree Coastal Walk to assist visitors determine how long it takes and whether they can do it in sections including access and egress points.