

14th November 2023

MEDIA RELEASE

How to mitigate the high cost of managing Tomaree Lodge

Statement by Peter Clough, President of the Tomaree Headland and Heritage Group Inc

The Port Stephens community is justifiably concerned about the high cost of securing and maintaining the Tomaree Lodge site - \$1.8 million as revealed in budget estimates.

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group [THHG] questions why transitioning the site to the Port Stephens community needs to be further delayed.

The site is now in its third year of vacancy. The annual cost to the people of NSW – \$1.8m for every year it remains vacant – is difficult to justify in the light of proposals for use expressed by various organizations.

THHG has received numerous proposals that we believe have the potential to mitigate the running costs while not compromising the site's constraints and integrity.

The community has also expressly emphasized that a transition to another Government department is not a preferred option given the Government's bipartisan 'community use' commitment.

THHG has fielded representations from the tourism, education, information services, cultural and food and beverage sectors to undertake activities that have the potential to generate income and offset the site costs.

Therefore, it seems appropriate that now is the time to investigate opportunities for a long-term financially sustainable model for the Tomaree Lodge site.

THHG strongly believes that this iconic site offers enormous opportunities for Port Stephens and has the potential to complement the recently opened Tomaree Coastal Walk and the enormously popular adjacent Tomaree Headland summit.

THHG urges the State Government to commence the planning processes by engaging with the community and Port Stephens Council about a way forward. The Strategic Concept Plan primarily funded by Port Stephens Council offers a framework and design opportunity for the future adaptive reuse of the site.

Peter Clough, President

0414 798 195