

# Tomaree report welcomed

NEWS

## Heritage group backs community input

### COMMUNITY

By MICHAEL HARTSHORN

THE NSW Government will have no shortage of community-based ideas for future uses of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds when the community engagement committee meets.

The Tomaree Headland Heritage Group has welcomed the process outlined by Minister for Families and Communities and Disability Inclusion and Port Stephens MP Kate Washington for the lodge and surrounds.

The group said it was pleased the NSW Government's commitment for Tomaree Lodge to being retained for community use and public enjoyment and that the transition process would now commence with continued engagement with the Port Stephens community.

### Highly valued

THHG president Peter Clough said the community consultation report had recognised a number of key areas the heritage group had suggested in its ongoing lobbying for community running and ownership.

Mr Clough said the report recognised that this site is highly valued by the Port Stephens community and visitors and therefore requires significant care when repurposing the site.

He said there were also acknowledgement of the significance of the WWII military history which was the basis for the State Heritage listing of the Tomaree Lodge site.

THHG also welcomed that there was recognition that there was popular support for:

- Café / information kiosk
- Museum / Interpretative centre as well as performing arts and cultural facilities including the Indigenous history
- Education and Research facilities
- Open space for community activities
- Recreational and history trails
- Budget accommodation for visiting students
- Reinstatement of the jetty to reduce the need for motor vehicle traffic and parking which is at a premium on the Tomaree Headland
- The establishment of a Management Model that



Tomaree Headland Heritage Group volunteers Peter Clough, Geoff Washington and Nigel Digue at the site in 2023. Picture by Max Mason-Hubers

is community based which includes Port Stephens Council.

"These outcomes are generally consistent and therefore reinforcement of the

fore reinforcement of the

[THHG] extensive community engagement undertaken over a number of years" Mr Clough said.

Mr Clough said the THHG also looks forward to the development of a master plan for the site following further community engagement which should of course address the need for financial sustainability of the site.

He said a management group would need to be established to facilitate incremental improvements to be identified in the long-term master planning process.