

PRESIDENTS REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
1st November 2023

Key Funding Received during the last 12 months:

- **Royal Australian Historical Society** - received a **\$5,000** grant towards the development of a Military History Book on the Tomaree Headland and the Tomaree Peninsula
- **Port Stephens Historical Society Inc.** - received a **\$5,000** donation towards the development of the Military History Book on the Tomaree Headland and the Tomaree Peninsula
- **Donation** from David Gray of **\$1,000**
- Membership renewals

Community Engagement:

- Periodic Help Desks at Salamander shopping centre - setting up a desk on many occasions during the year
- Video Clips x (3) Three: Produced/Photography by Brent Mail on Tomaree Headland site
- Help Desks at the Tomaree Headland – Key Issues: Toilets and lack of direction and information
- Presentations and working with around 20+ Community organisations this year
- Media Coverage - It has been a struggle to obtain the coverage we have been seeking but nonetheless we had many media articles and interviews during the last 12 months
- Public Access to Port Stephens Council -On the future of Parking and Traffic Management in Shoal Bay and its linkages with the Tomaree Headland
- We had a Member meeting in the Library complex during September with 35-40 in attendance which was unanimously concerned about the lack of progress with the transition

Key Outcomes:

- **Amenities Block** - Commenced operating just before Easter this year
- **Video clips** – There were three (3) which were developed by Brent Mail Photography with funding from AGL
- **Completed an extensive Data Base** of documentary materials from 15 repositories in Australia on the Tomaree Headland and its role in defence in preparation of a Military History Book of the Tomaree Headland and a draft manuscript has been completed as we await the outcomes from Grant applications. **Judy Washington (Archivist)** has done an outstanding job in gathering this information including preparation of a Bibliography
- **Planning Instrument** - We developed a Planning Instrument called 'Potential Planning Pathway for the future adaptive reuse of the Tomaree Lodge' 'Pathway for the way Forward' which was provided to the Minister
- **Expressions of Interest from particular organisations:**
 - **University of Newcastle (UoN) Interest** – The UoN has had a number of site visits and is considering approaching the Government about occupying a small section of the site for a small campus primarily for Marine Science and Tourism and Hospitality faculties
 - **Ecology Centre** - Dr Reginal Roberts
 - **Tomaree Cultural Development Group Inc** - Performing Arts Centre, Art Gallery and related activities
 - **Tomaree Museum Association Inc** - Museum and Interpretative Centre

Government Position:

We have had extensive written communications with the Minister responsible for the Tomaree Lodge site – Kate Washington MP, who is also our local member.

We also had a meeting with her on 30th August this year when we sought the current status of the transition process.

We were informed that she had sought a report from her Department primarily to obtain information about the constraints and what were the types of activities that would be permissible on the site.

We encouraged her to:

- Seek from her Department potential costs would be to bring the site up to operational standards so that any future operator would have full knowledge of these costs and be in a position to develop a Business Case
- To advise the Community the current status with the transition of the site to the Port Stephens community

As yet we have not received a response to either of these requests.

University of Newcastle:

- We engaged a **3rd year Marine Science student** (Toby Parsons) for 3 months **to undertake a project** on the possible **impact of reinstatement of a Jetty/Pontoon** to allow water access to the Tomaree Headland to reduce the need for motor vehicles at the headland which already has constricted parking and traffic management. This was carried out under the Mentorship of Iain Watt who is one of our Board members.
- We have made a further **application to the UoN** - the Business School on **preparation of an indicative Business Assessment** on potential business activities on the Tomaree Lodge site

Possible Future Tomaree Lodge Site Management Model:

- We continue to believe a **Management Trust** is potentially the best model for the future Management of the Tomaree Lodge site, and this would include representation from Government authorities (including Port Stephens Council) as well as Community members, accompanied by specialist expertise such as Planning, Tourism, Business Management and Heritage.

Tomaree Coastal Walk:

- Was officially opened at the Birubi end on 1st September 2023 albeit it remains unfinished particularly the Tomaree Headland where significant funds are required for completion.
- **We continue dialogue with the NPWS** particularly about the Headland section of the Walk.

Finally, a big thankyou to our Board. I have had weekly consultations with Geoff Washington and Dennis Corr who have been by my side all the way along.

Where we need help:

- **We continue to seek funding (including potential benefactors) to ensure our voice to the Minister on behalf of the Port Stephens community is heard**
- **We are investigating opportunities to secure support from relevant high profile identities and would welcome help**
- **Social Media Management including our website**
- **'Help Desk' support which has proved to be very successful and valuable in engaging with our community and visitors**
- **Public Relations / Media Management**
- **Financial Management**
- **Membership Development and Management**



Peter Clough

President – Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc.

1st November 2023