

Tomaree Headland Concept Plan Released

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By Marian SAMPSON

THE future of the iconic Tomaree Headland is now one step closer to being one which fits the aspirations of the Port Stephens community.

Tomaree Headland is the most visited attraction in Port Stephens and during 2018 recorded over 200,000 visitors.

The Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc (THHG) commissioned Landscape Architects to develop a Strategic Concept Plan for the potential adaptive re-use of the iconic Tomaree Lodge site in Shoal Bay which is listed on the State Heritage register.

The concept plan has been developed with the financial support of Port Stephens Council and the Shoal Bay Resort and Spa.

The development of this Concept Plan is to demonstrate the potential opportunities which the site offers to both the Port Stephens community and the authorities.

The concept plan delivers a design framework based on a set of planning principles as well as identifying the constraints and opportunities for the site.

One of the key important matters highlighted in the Concept Plan was the Architects' in-principle support for the reinstatement of the Jetty to allow public transport such as a ferry service as an opportunity to reduce the reliance on parking.

THE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES:

- For the NSW Government to commit and complete transition of the Tomaree Lodge site to the Port Stephens Community by ownership or by way of a long term lease;
- That an appropriate ownership/ management model be established for the adaptive re-use for the Tomaree Lodge site (e.g. a Trust or similar);
- To have finalised and adopted a Master Plan for the adaptive re-use of the Tomaree Lodge site ready for progressive implementation within the next few years;
- To have reinstated the Jetty/Pontoon to provide public transport access/egress to the Headland summit, also to the recently commenced Tomaree Coastal Walk, Zenith Beach;
- To have in place a Visitor and Information Kiosk (including amenities) at the entry/egress point to the Lodge site.

THHG has kept an open mind on the types of future uses for the site, as the community ideas put forward over the last four years have been extensive with a general focus on education, tourism, history and cultural activities.

It is also well recognized that WWII military history has a significant presence on the Tomaree Headland and there is a strong view from the community that this deserves recognition in the future of the Tomaree Lodge.

The concept plan emphasises the appeal of the Headland's unique natural beauty, environmental and historical significance and why it needs to operate under the stewardship of the Port Stephens community.

THHG continues to support the establishment of a Management Trust as the future managing authority with broad community and government representation.

THHG President Peter Clough Told News Of The Area, "During the last four years of community engagement it has become very clear that the Port Stephens people are passionate about the future of the iconic Tomaree Lodge site which was a major consideration when deciding to produce a Conceptual Planning document which hopefully will serve to whet the appetite of the community.

"The Tomaree Headland is one of the most iconic sites on the eastern seaboard of Australia and therefore we should be shooting for something world class which will inspire people by attracting their interest and attention," he said.



Tomaree Headland Heritage Group President Peter Clough at Tomaree Lodge.

Photo: Marian Sampson.