

PORT STEPHENS **N**ews **Of The Area**

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Headland shuttle bus trial

PORT Stephens Council has voted to support a shuttle bus trial at Tomaree Headland these Christmas holidays.

At its meeting on 10 June 2025, Council resolved that the General Manager report to Council an evaluation of a

shuttle bus service, including potential costs, operational options and funding models.

A number of potential operational models were identified for consideration.

These options were informed by learnings from the 2025 Birubi shuttle bus trials, consultation with key stakeholders and a review of existing shuttle bus services in other locations.

Council staff recommended trialling Option 2, which was supported by councillors.

Option 2 includes two buses running every 20 minutes on an approximately 45-minute round trip loop, between the hours of 9am to 4pm.

The trial will run from 24 December to 4 January.

Stops will include the Visitors Centre, Halifax Holiday Park, Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay, Tomaree Headland and the Nelson Bay Depot.

The trial will be funded using Shoal Bay smart parking revenue up to \$31,000, with a full report on the results to be delivered to Council following the peak visitor period.

Councillor Mark Watson, who has been driving this initiative since June, said the trial is an important step in tackling the growing pressures on the area.

"I'm incredibly proud to see this trial go ahead," Cr Watson said.

"During the Christmas period, hundreds if not thousands of people a day

are expected to pass through the headland for the coastal walk and the Mount Tomaree summit.

"This shuttle service is designed specifically to reduce traffic congestion during the peak holiday weeks and create a smoother, safer experience for everyone."

Cr Watson also noted that while securing support for the trial is a major milestone, operational planning is still underway and a procurement process needs to be undertaken.

"There's still work to do to finalise operational details, and staff will continue exploring the best options to ensure the shuttle runs effectively," he said.