

Shuttle bus trial starts Christmas Eve



By Jacie
WHITFIELD

A FREE shuttle bus service will operate in Shoal Bay and around the Tomaree Headland over the Christmas holidays, offering locals and visitors a convenient way to travel during the busiest time of the year.

Running daily from 24 December to 6 January, excluding Christmas Day, the shuttle will operate between 9.00am and 4.00pm as part of a Council-backed trial aimed at easing traffic congestion and parking pressures in the popular coastal destination.

The initiative was originally proposed by the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc and has been strongly supported by Port Stephens Councilors Mark Watson and Ros Armstrong, before receiving unanimous backing from Port Stephens Council.

Funding for the free service will come from paid parking fees collected in Shoal Bay.

Council says visitation to Shoal Bay and the Tomaree Headland continues to grow year-on-year, with peak holiday periods placing strain on local roads and parking infrastructure.

During last summer alone, tens of thousands of visitors were recorded in the area, contributing to congestion and delayed travel times.

The introduction of the 27-kilometre Tomaree Coastal Walk, stretching from Tomaree Headland to Birubi, has further increased visitation, with walkers, day-trippers and tourists drawn to the region's natural beauty and coastal experiences.

President of the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc, Peter Clough, said data collected through the group's holiday 'Help Desks' played a significant role in shaping the proposal.

"Data collected from our holiday Help Desks has substantially contributed to this initiative," Mr Clough said.

"The shuttle bus trial aims to streamline travel, reduce parking issues, lower the number of cars on the road and create a more enjoyable experience for both visitors and residents during the peak holiday period."

The shuttle will operate on a continuous loop linking key locations, including Shoal Bay and the Tomaree Headland, allowing visitors to park once and travel easily between destinations without adding to congestion.

Council hopes the trial will encourage people to leave their cars behind, reduce traffic bottlenecks and improve safety and accessibility across the area during the busy festive season.

If successful, the shuttle bus could provide a model for managing peak-season visitation in other high-demand areas across Port Stephens in the future.

Residents and visitors are encouraged

□ The Shoal Bay and Tomaree Headland shuttle bus map.



1. Tomaree Sports Complex (Match Field 1)
4981 Nelson Bay Rd

2. Nelson Bay town centre
Donald St bus stop

3. Little Beach/Fly Point
Bill Strong Oval bus stop
(10min walk to Little Beach or Fly Point)

4. Shoal Bay town centre
Bay Village, Shoal Bay Rd bus stop

5. Tomaree Headland
Shoal Bay boat ramp
(3min walk to Tomaree Headland)

6. Fingal Bay Beach
Marine Dr bus stop

7. Fingal Bay shops
Market St bus stop

to take advantage of the free service and help reduce traffic pressures while enjoying everything Shoal Bay and the Tomaree

Peninsula have to offer.

For more information visit www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/services/shuttle-bus.

gov.au/services/holiday-services/shuttle-bus.