

REPORT

'HELP DESK'

23 December 2025 to 6 January 2026 (Christmas/School Holidays)
Tomaree Headland Entry Point - Enriching the Visitor Experience
9.00am until 12.30pm daily

NOTE:

(This period coincided with the same dates of the Introduction of the Tomaree Shuttle Bus Trial which was conducted by Port Stephens Council)

WHAT WE DID

We conducted a **Help Desk** at the Tomaree Headland entry over a 13 day period from the 23rd December 2025 until 6th January 2026 inclusive. We have done this for the last three(3) years generally over the key Holiday periods. We had at least **2 to 3 volunteers each day** for approximately 3 hours each day.

Primarily we provided the following services to visitors:



- We actively promoted the PSC Shuttle Bus
- Provided maps of the Tomaree Coastal Walk
- Maps and trails on the Tomaree Headland
- Parking and traffic information
- Updates on the future of the Tomaree Lodge
- Collected data such as hourly number counts
- Provided a friendly '**Sense of Arrival**' for Visitors which included Way Finding and directions
- Provided information about the Military History of the Headland which was a strong point of interest
- We conducted a number of exit interviews and 'vox pop' a few on our Facebook page
- We provided a FIRST AID KIT for minor injuries

KEY OUTCOMES

Very positive feedback from both locals and visitors about the availability of the **Free Shuttle Bus**

- Visitor numbers continue to increase year on year.
- Biggest day was Monday 29th December when we recorded **approx. 600 per hour** visitors to the Headland.
- Overall it was about 300 - 400 people per hour **over the 13 days** identified from our 'Counter Device'. Most visitors by far were:
 - ✓ **Family groups** generally with young children **Young adults** aged 15yrs – 30yrs
 - ✓ Most visitors were from Sydney (90%+)



KEY SUGGESTIONS PARTICULARLY from VISITORS

- 1) More parking at the Headland and Shoal Bay CBD
- 2) Bike rack at the northern extremity of the Tomaree Lodge site
- 3) Café Information Kiosk needed near the entry to the Tomaree Lodge
- 4) Vehicle Turning Circle near the entry to the Lodge
- 5) Shuttle Bus Drop Off area at the entry to the Tomaree Lodge
- 6) Drop off point for motor vehicle passengers
- 7) ***More high profile location of the parking meter*** which will no doubt substantially increase revenue
- 8) Less ambiguous signage re: paid parking
- 9) More ***clearly identified Pedestrian Entry area*** to the Summitt Walk
- 10) Poor presentation of the ***Amenities Block*** on the Tomaree Lodge site – regular ***blockages causing numerous call outs*** and they are generally messy
- 11) More Public Transport options such as jetty access at the headland and Shoal Bay CBD
- 12) ***Tomaree Lodge Information Centre needs to be open on weekends*** and other key holiday periods of the year
- 13) Need for improved Garbage collection at the Tomaree Lodge entry

- Many of these are ***safety issues previously raised***
- Boat Ramp area continues to require upgrading to alleviate congestion
- Cameras at the entry which could be valuable to the Tomaree Lodge facing outwards (i.e south facing) could be advantageous for a number of reasons including E-Bikes, identifying traffic and parking management issues such as safety, peaks and Data gathering



We need to be careful that we are not creating 'Reputation Damage' to the Port Stephens brand at their most popular and high profile visitor attraction.

SUMMARY

1. The Tomaree Coastal Walk is increasingly attracting more users
2. The continued interest and growth in the Summit Walk
3. The potential future uses and activities on the Tomaree Lodge site
4. The ongoing and increasing popularity of Shoal Bay CBD
5. The whole 'Sense of Arrival' at the Headland is very poor

Port Stephens is being actively promoted which is excellent for local employment and the economy but there are all sorts of 'consequences' including infrastructure etc which we believe Port Stephens Council and the NSW State Government need to urgently address particularly at the Headland.

Peter Clough

President - Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc.

11 January 2026