



Communities  
& Justice

## **TOMAREE LODGE SITE POTENTIAL FUTURE USES**

Community Consultation Outcomes Report

**FINAL**

April 2023



Communities  
& Justice

## TOMAREE LODGE SITE POTENTIAL FUTURE USES

Community Consultation Outcomes Report

### FINAL

Prepared by

Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited

on behalf of

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Project Director: Dr Sheridan Coakes  
Project Manager: Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael  
Report No. 23021/R01  
Date: April 2023



This report was prepared using  
Umwelt's ISO 9001 certified  
Quality Management System.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

*Umwelt would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country on which we work and pay respect to their cultural heritage, beliefs, and continuing relationship with the land. We pay our respect to the Elders – past, present, and future.*

### **Disclaimer**

This document has been prepared for the sole use of the authorised recipient and this document may not be used, copied or reproduced in whole or part for any purpose other than that for which it was supplied by Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd (Umwelt). No other party should rely on this document without the prior written consent of Umwelt.

Umwelt undertakes no duty, nor accepts any responsibility, to any third party who may rely upon or use this document. Umwelt assumes no liability to a third party for any inaccuracies in or omissions to that information. Where this document indicates that information has been provided by third parties, Umwelt has made no independent verification of this information except as expressly stated.

**©Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd**

### **Document Status**

Rev No.	Reviewer		Approved for Issue	
	Name	Date	Name	Date
V1	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	30/01/2023	Dr Sheridan Coakes	03/02/2023
V2	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	07/02/2023	Dr Sheridan Coakes	07/02/2023
V3	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	23/02/2023	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	23/02/2023
V4	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	05/04/2023	Rhiannon Jaeger-Michael	05/04/2023

# Executive Summary

This report documents the outcomes of a consultation program undertaken by Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd (Umwelt) on behalf of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Property Development NSW (PDNSW), undertaken to invite ideas and feedback from community members and key stakeholders on the potential future uses of the Tomaree Lodge site located at 4 Shoal Bay Road, Shoal Bay New South Wales (NSW), in the Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA).

Tomaree Lodge is a heritage listed site that was used as a former Army Garrison Camp in World War 2. The site remains one of the few WW2 garrison camps in NSW and is recognised as being of State and local heritage significance, with statutory protection under the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (DCJ, 2022). In 1949, the site was converted to house long stay patients with psychiatric conditions and the subsequently adapted in 1960 to provide respite care for local hospital patients, followed by long term accommodation for residents with intellectual disabilities (DCJ, 2022). The last remaining residents moved from the site in May 2021.

Further to a commitment by the then Minister for Families and Communities in October 2022, DCJ supported by PDNSW, is looking to redevelop the Tomaree Lodge site for community and recreational use. A consultation program commenced from 31 October 2022 to 6 January 2023, to enable key stakeholders and the local community to have a voice in the early planning and decision making process and provide input on the future uses of the site. Umwelt was commissioned to assist the agencies in undertaking the consultation program.

## Methodology

A number of engagement mechanisms have been utilised as part of the engagement program. These mechanisms included personal meetings and interviews, online and in-person surveys, community pop up stalls, values mapping and the development of a dedicated website and email contact. In total, over 1,660 responses were received from state government departments, local government, Aboriginal groups, community and special interest groups, environmental groups, local businesses, residents and visitors. Quantitative and qualitative information collected through the consultation program has been analysed to identify existing uses, values and aspirations for the site and consideration of potential management approaches, based on other case study examples.

## Consultation Outcomes

Stakeholders identified four key areas of **value** attached to the Tomaree Lodge site.

**Aboriginal Cultural Heritage** – consultation undertaken with Indigenous stakeholders strongly validated a strong ongoing connection to the site for the Aboriginal community, with stakeholders identifying the importance of maintaining the site to ensure that Aboriginal cultural values and the community thrive.

**Architectural and military heritage of buildings** – given the history, and heritage listing of the site, it was unsurprising that high value was assigned to the military heritage of the buildings, with some stakeholders also noting the value of the site as a hospital and residential care facility. Stakeholders suggested that the heritage value of the site should not be undervalued in determining future use.

**Environmental values** – reflected in the sites aesthetic value, native flora and fauna, marine and water access, and proximity to Tomaree National Park.

**Recreational opportunities** – stakeholders reflected on the value the site provides in enabling enjoyment of the outdoors through a range of recreational activities, including walking, fishing, cycling, rock climbing, snorkelling, and swimming, with many residents and visitors utilising the site for these recreational opportunities.

In addition to existing values, stakeholders were asked to consider the way in which they would like to see the Tomaree Lodge site used in the future. **Figure 1** identifies the **desired features / uses for the site**. In summary, there was a high level of support across all engagement mechanisms for continued use of the site for recreational purposes, the inclusion of a café / kiosk, as well as a museum or interpretive centre for visitors to learn more about the key values of the site and surrounding area. Stakeholders also supported the use of the site for educational and research facilities; and identified the need for greater public amenities.



**Figure 1 Potential future uses identified by stakeholders**

Discussions during the engagement program that related to future management and governance models focused on ensuring the involvement of a range of stakeholders in any future management of the site, including local government, Aboriginal groups, community groups and state government agencies, particularly National Parks and Wildlife Services given the proximity of the site to the National Park. A large proportion of community groups consulted would also like to see the development of a Community Management Trust.

Given the level of community interest in the site, it is recommended that DCJ continue to engage with key stakeholders throughout the planning process, and particularly in relation to the completion of key assessment studies to further understand important cultural values and any additional site constraints.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose	1
1.2 Project Overview	1
1.3 Engagement Principles and Objectives	2
<b>2.0 Methodology</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Stakeholder Identification	4
2.2 Engagement Mechanisms	5
<b>3.0 Community Context</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Natural Capital	12
3.2 Cultural Capital	12
3.3 Political Capital	13
3.4 Human Capital	14
3.5 Social Capital	15
3.6 Economic Capital	15
3.7 Physical Capital	16
<b>4.0 Values and Uses</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Values Associated with the Site and Surrounding Area	17
4.1.1 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	19
4.1.2 Architectural and Military Heritage of buildings	20
4.1.3 Environmental Values	22
4.1.4 Recreational Opportunities	24
4.2 Visitation and Use	26
4.2.1 Site Visitation	26
4.2.2 Existing Uses of the Site	28
<b>5.0 Future Aspirations for the Site</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1 Potential Features and Uses of the Tomaree Lodge Site	31
5.1.1 Recreational Uses	34
5.1.2 Arts, Culture and Exhibition Facilities	40
5.1.3 Educational and Research Facilities	44
5.1.4 Hospitality Venues	49
5.1.5 Environmental	50
5.1.6 Jetty / Pontoon	53

5.1.7	Tourist Accommodation	55
5.1.8	Community Housing	56
5.1.9	Access, Lighting and Public Amenities	57
5.2	Challenges and Constraints	59
5.2.1	Parking and Access	60
5.2.2	Funding and Management	62
5.2.3	Environmental Concerns / Constraints	64
5.2.4	Heritage and Cultural Constraints	65
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Potential Management Approaches</b>	<b>67</b>
6.1	Community Identified Management Models	67
6.2	Future Use Case Studies	70
6.2.1	Hungry Point, Sydney	70
6.2.2	Newington Armory, Sydney	72
6.2.3	Busselton Jetty, WA	73
6.2.4	Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum	76
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>80</b>
8.1	Further Assessment	80
8.2	Further Engagement	80
8.2.1	Community Feedback Sheet	80
8.2.2	Tomaree Lodge Working Group	80
<b>9.0</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>83</b>

## Figures

Figure 1	Potential future uses identified by stakeholders	ii
Figure 1.1	DPE's Community Participation Objectives	2
Figure 1.2	IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation	3
Figure 2.1	Key Stakeholder Groups	4
Figure 2.2	Snapshot of Online Survey Respondents	8
Figure 2.3	In-Person Survey Respondent Profile	9
Figure 3.1	Social Locality	11
Figure 3.2	Age Distribution	14
Figure 4.1	Values associated with the site (prompted; hard copy and online survey)	17
Figure 4.2	Importance of Tomaree Head area (hard copy survey respondents)	18
Figure 4.3	Unprompted Values (hard copy and online survey respondents)	19

Figure 4.4	Frequency of Visit (prompted; online survey respondents)	26
Figure 4.5	Days of Visitation (prompted; hard copy survey respondents)	27
Figure 4.6	With whom do you usually visit Tomaree Head area? (prompted; hard copy survey respondents)	27
Figure 4.7	Existing Uses of the Site (unprompted; hard copy and online)	28
Figure 5.1	Support for the repurposing of Tomaree Lodge site (prompted; hard copy survey)	30
Figure 5.2	If the Tomaree Lodge and surrounding area was repurposed, would you use the area? (prompted; hard copy survey)	31
Figure 5.3	Desired features/uses to consider in the repurposing of Tomaree Lodge site (prompted; hard copy survey)	32
Figure 5.4	Desired Features/Uses to Consider in the Repurposing of Tomaree Lodge Site – Community Pop up Stall Interactive Posters, Hard Copy and Online Surveys	33
Figure 5.5	Challenges and Constraints (unprompted; online and hard copy surveys)	59
Figure 6.1	Stakeholders to be involved in the future governance of the Tomaree Lodge Site (unprompted; hard copy survey) <i>Number of respondents (n=26). Multiple responses allowed. Source: Umwelt (2023).</i>	67

## Tables

Table 2.1	Identified Stakeholders	5
Table 2.2	Engagement Mechanisms	6
Table 2.3	Stakeholders Consulted	7
Table 8.1	Levels of Future Engagement by Stakeholder	81

## Appendices

Appendix A	Survey Instruments
------------	--------------------



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This report documents the outcomes of a preliminary consultation program undertaken by Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd (Umwelt) on behalf of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Property Development NSW (PDNSW) to invite ideas and feedback from the community and stakeholders on potential future uses of the Tomaree Lodge site located at 4 Shoal Bay Road, Shoal Bay New South Wales (NSW), in the Port Stephens Local Government Area (LGA). The consultation sought to elicit community perspectives relating to future uses of the site.

## 1.2 Project Overview

Tomaree Lodge is a heritage listed site that was used as a former Army Garrison Camp in World War 2. The site remains one of the few WW2 garrison camps in NSW and is recognised as being of State and local heritage significance with statutory protection under the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (DCJ, 2022).

The site was converted into the Tomaree Convalescent Hostel, opening in 1949 to house long stay patients with psychiatric conditions. In 1960, the site was renamed Tomaree Holiday Lodge and was used to provide respite care for local hospital patients, followed by long term accommodation for residents with intellectual disabilities (DCJ, 2022). The site operated as a residential facility from 2001 until May 2021, when the last remaining residents were moved off the site to facilitate improved liveability and community integration opportunities (DCJ, 2022).

The site has been subject to two Land Claims by the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), these claims dismissed in the Land and Environment Court of NSW in October 2022 (further detailed in **Section 3.2**).

While there is no public access to Tomaree Lodge, the broader site, including the adjacent Tomaree Headland, continues to be heavily used and valued by local residents and tourists for recreational purposes, and for its scenic and natural values.

DCJ, supported by PDNSW, is looking to redevelop the Tomaree Lodge site for community and recreational use. Further to a commitment by the Minister for Families and Communities, DCJ and PDNSW commenced a preliminary consultation program from 31 October 2022 to 6 January 2023, to provide opportunities for key stakeholders and the local community to have a voice in the decision making process and provide input on the future uses of the site. Umwelt was commissioned to assist the agencies in undertaking the consultation program.

Throughout the consultation period, many hundreds of stakeholders and community members shared their thoughts and ideas at face-to-face meetings and events, and online. Shared themes in the feedback include that Tomaree Lodge holds a special place in people's hearts, and there is a high level of interest in planning for future uses of the site.

### 1.3 Engagement Principles and Objectives

The engagement approach adopted reflects the community participation objectives outlined in the then Department of Planning, Industry and Environment’s Community Participation Plan (now referred to as the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)) and in **Figure 1.1** (DPIE, 2019).



**Figure 1.1 DPE’s Community Participation Objectives**

*Source: (DPIE, 2019)*

Furthermore, the consultation program has been developed in accordance with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard and Core Values for Public Participation, as described in **Figure 1.2**.



**Figure 1.2 IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation**

Source: (IAP2, 2019).

In line with the principles outlined above, the objectives of the consultation program were to:

- increase knowledge and awareness of the Tomaree Lodge site
- build effective relationships between DCJ, key stakeholders and local residents
- provide stakeholders with appropriate and equitable opportunities to contribute their views and perspectives in relation to future uses of the site
- develop an open process of engagement to enable key stakeholders and community residents to express their views, addressing consultation preferences where possible
- collect and analyse engagement data to inform future planning and decision making in relation to the Tomaree Lodge site
- ensure Aboriginal views and aspirations for the site are included.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Stakeholder Identification

Consultation involves the cooperation of a number of key stakeholders. As Burdge (2004) outlines, stakeholders may be affected groups or individuals that:

- live, work, or recreate near a Project
- have an interest in the proposed action or change
- use or value a resource associated with the Project
- are affected by a Project/proposed change.

A stakeholder identification process was undertaken in collaboration with DCJ to support the planning and delivery of the community and stakeholder consultation program. A process of ‘*snowball sampling*’ was also used to further identify interested parties in collaboration with stakeholders consulted. Stakeholder groups consulted as a part of the engagement program are outlined in **Figure 2.1**.



**Figure 2.1 Key Stakeholder Groups**

Source: Umwelt (2023).

Further detail of the key stakeholders consulted is provided in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1 Identified Stakeholders**

Stakeholder Category	Organisation
Local Government	Port Stephens Council
State Government	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Aboriginal Affairs Regional NSW Heritage NSW Office of Veterans Affairs Department of Primary Industries
First Nations stakeholders	Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) Worimi Conservations Land Board of Management NSW ALC Worimi Knowledge holders Aboriginal Corporation
Community and special interest groups	Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Tomaree Museum Association Inc National Parks Association Shoal Bay Community Association Inc. Hunter Regional Advisory Committee Nelson Bay RSL Sub Branch Inc Tomaree Cultural Development Group Tomaree Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc. Port Stephens Historical Society Port Stephens Walking Group
Environmental groups	EcoNetwork - Port Stephens Inc. Friends of Tomaree National Park Shoal Bay West Landcare Group Marine Parks Association Inc.
Local business	Destination Port Stephens Business Port Stephens Inc. Oyster Hatchery
Educational institutions	University of Newcastle

Source: Umwelt (2023).

## 2.2 Engagement Mechanisms

Information provision and consultation mechanisms that have been utilised as part of the consultation program are outlined in **Table 2.2**.

**Table 2.2 Engagement Mechanisms**

Mechanism	Targeted Stakeholders	Description
<b>Personal Meetings or interviews</b>	First Nations Stakeholders State Government Local Government Community and special interest groups Environmental groups Educational institutions	In person meetings held with key stakeholders to gather feedback on values, uses, aspirations and future management approaches for the site. Meetings held often involved multiple representatives from each organisation. Umwelt attended all meetings, with a representative from DCJ also in attendance for meetings with First Nations stakeholders, Local and State Government, and some community groups.
<b>Website and dedicated email contact</b>	All interested stakeholders	A dedicated website ( <a href="https://www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/future-use-of-tomaree-lodge">https://www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/future-use-of-tomaree-lodge</a> ) was developed to provide background information on the site, to outline the purpose of the consultation program, to provide a link to an online survey, and a dedicated email address provided for email correspondence and enquiries.
<b>Survey</b>	LGA residents Tourists and visitors Community and special interest groups Environmental groups	An online survey was developed by DCJ to enable stakeholders to provide feedback on values, uses, aspirations for the site. A survey link was published on the dedicated NSW govt website. QR codes directing users to the survey were distributed across the site on posters during the consultation period to capture feedback from users of the site.  A second version of the online survey was developed to capture more detailed information through key stakeholder interviews and pop-up community stalls. A printed version of the survey was also made available to attendees at the pop-up community stalls.  Both survey instruments can be found at <b>Appendix A</b> .
<b>Community Pop up stalls</b>	LGA residents Tourists and visitors	Three Community pop up stalls were held in Shoal Bay. The Pop ups were situated along Shoal Bay Road, near to the site, to obtain feedback from residents and users of the area. Passers-by were asked to provide feedback on potential future uses of the site via interactive posters. Community pop up stalls were held on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunday 27 November, 9 am–12 pm</li> <li>• Wednesday 7 December, 8 am–11 am</li> <li>• Saturday 17 December, 4 pm–7 pm.</li> </ul> A total of 5 interactive posters were at each pop up stall. Four of these posters contained options for potential future uses. Attendees were asked to place a sticker next to the uses they would like to see incorporated into the future design of the site. Each poster contained four options. The final poster was used as a values mapping tool, whereby attendees were asked to write the values they associate with the site on a map of the site.
<b>Values mapping</b>	LGA residents Tourists and visitors	Implemented through Social Pinpoint, an online platform, and via printed maps and stickers at pop up stalls to enable community members to geo-reference key values, potential uses, and issues/concerns/suggestions to inform future planning.

Mechanism	Targeted Stakeholders	Description
Media release	LGA residents	<p>Media releases</p> <p>In addition to a media release issued by Minister for Families and Communities, Disability Services, Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC, there were 2 media releases issued by the Department of Communities and Justice.</p> <p>Departmental releases were released:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 October 2022: announcing opening and details for providing feedback during consultation</li> <li>6 February 2023: announcing the conclusion of community and stakeholder consultation.</li> </ul>
Advertising	LGA residents	An advertisement placed in the <i>Port Stephens Examiner</i> outlining the purpose of the consultation program, and the date, time and location of the Community pop-up stall held on 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Source: Umwelt (2023).

**Table 2.3** provides a breakdown of the stakeholder groups that have participated in the consultation program, and whose feedback and input has informed the outcomes report.

As outlined in **Table 2.3**, the online survey received 479 responses, and the in-person survey received 40 responses. Completion of all questions in the survey was not compulsory, and therefore the number of responses to each question may vary. Survey questions also varied across the two survey instruments (as can be seen in **Appendix A**). Where possible, data has been consolidated across the two survey instruments. However, where this was not possible, responses to questions have been separated.

An additional 62 submissions were received via the dedicated email. Some stakeholders participated in multiple mechanisms including surveys, personal meetings, and in providing email/online submissions.

Quantitative and qualitative information collected through the consultation program has been analysed to identify the values, uses, aspirations and potential management approaches for the site, as detailed in the following sections.









**Table 2.3 Stakeholders Consulted**

Stakeholder Group	Mechanism	Number Contacted	Number Engaged
First Nations Stakeholders	Personal meetings	3	5
Local Government	Personal meetings	1	1
State Government	Personal meetings	6	4
Community and special interest groups	Personal meetings Pop up stalls Values mapping	9	9
Environmental groups	Personal meetings Pop up stalls Values mapping	4	4

Stakeholder Group	Mechanism	Number Contacted	Number Engaged
Local Business	Personal meetings	3	2
	Online survey		
Educational institutions	Personal meetings	1	0
LGA residents	Online survey	N/A	479
	Email/online submissions	N/A	62
Tourists and visitors	Pop up stalls:		
	Values mapping	N/A	9
	Survey	N/A	40
	Interactive posters	N/A	1,051 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>1,666<sup>2</sup></b>

Source: Umwelt (2023).

A snapshot of respondents that completed the online survey is provided in **Figure 2.2**.

INDICATOR / VARIABLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS (%)
<b>Relationship to the area</b>		
 Local resident	318	67.4%
 I am a visitor from outside the area	107	22.7%
 I am interested in the area's heritage and/or conservation values	28	5.9%
 I am interested in the area's Aboriginal heritage and culture	4	0.8%
 I am a member of an organisation that uses Tomaree Head	2	0.4%
 I work at Tomaree Head or near to it	2	0.4%
 I am a student at a local school	1	0.2%
 Other	10	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2.2 Snapshot of Online Survey Respondents**

Number of respondents (n=472)

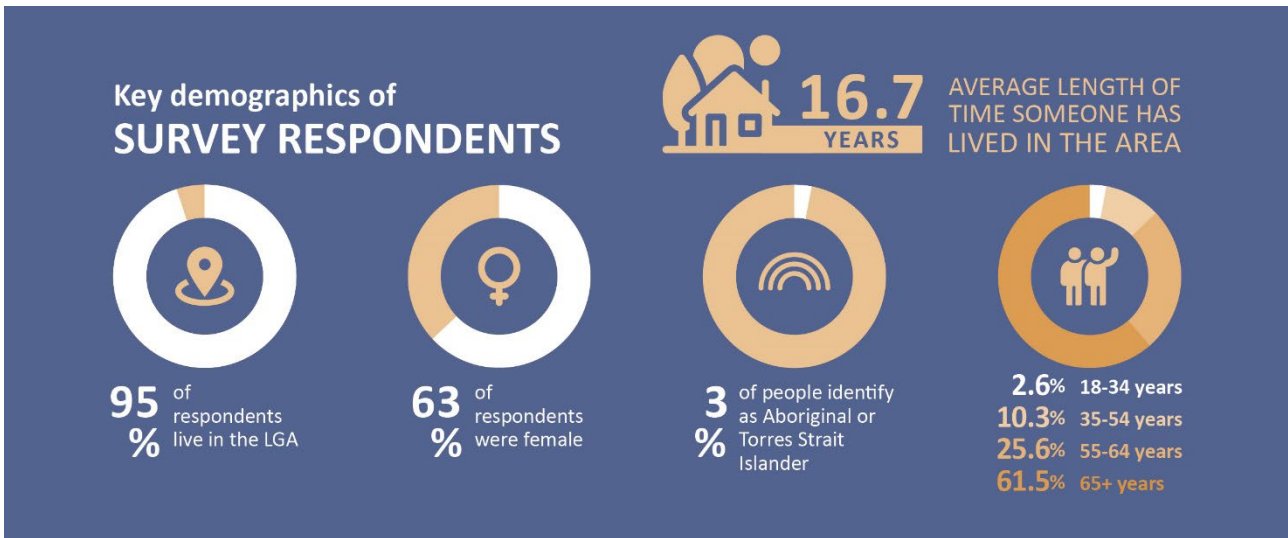
Source: Umwelt (2023).

<sup>1</sup> Refers to number of dots placed on visioning boards, rather than number of attendees. Attendees were not limited on the number of dots they could place across the boards, however, were asked to place only one for each feature.

<sup>2</sup> Some stakeholders were engaged via multiple methods, including personal interviews, surveys, and online submissions. This has not been accounted for in the total number of people engaged.



The in-person survey made available at the pop-up stalls included more detailed demographic questions. A summary of which is provided in **Figure 2.3**.



**Figure 2.3 In-Person Survey Respondent Profile**

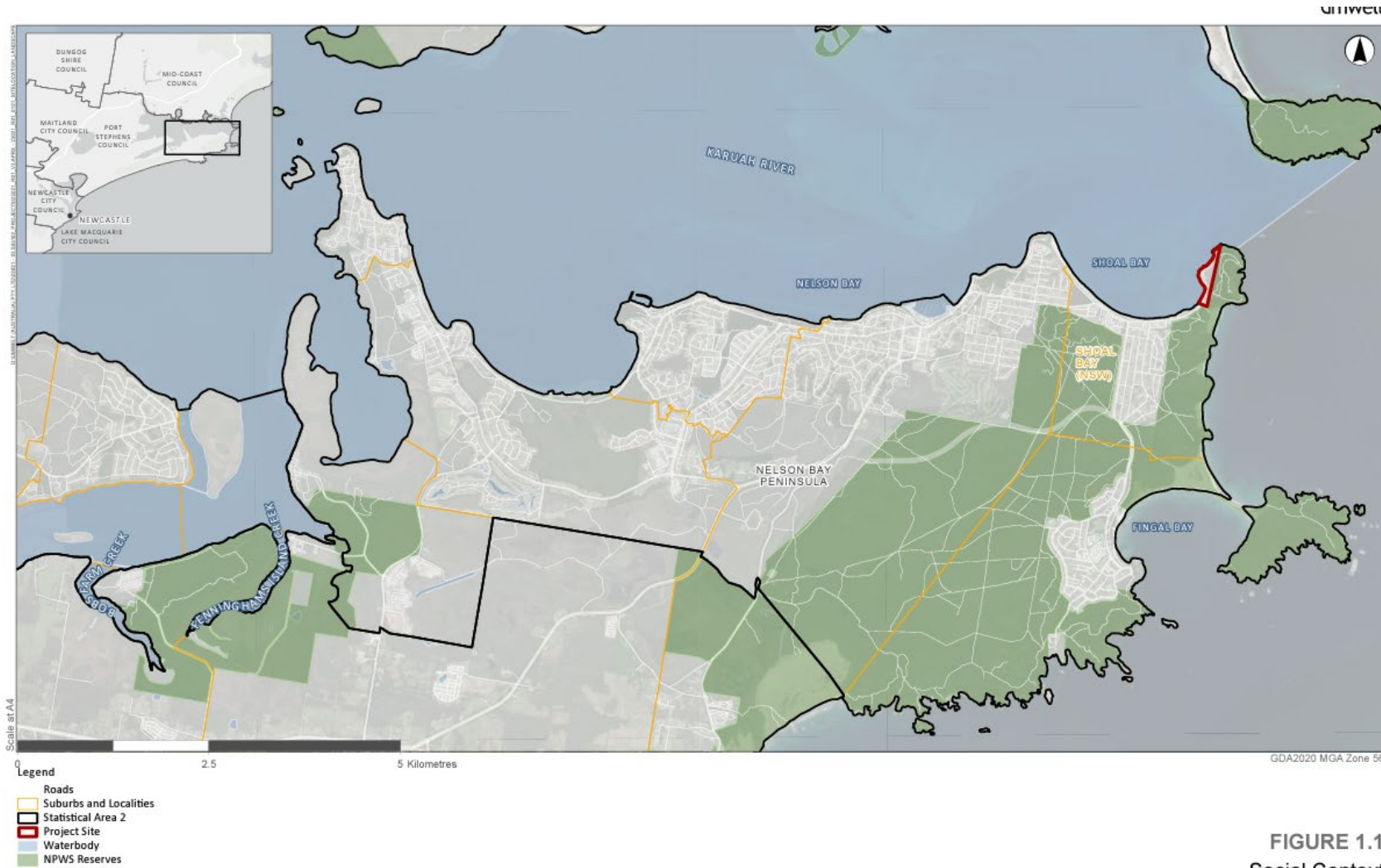
Number of respondents (n=40)

## 3.0 Community Context

Understanding the existing social setting in which a project is proposed is important in providing a basis for which community perspectives can be understood. A social baseline gathers knowledge from both primary and secondary data sources. The community capitals approach (Department for International Development [DFID] 1999) has been utilised as a framework for the social baseline.

The DFID (1999) approach draws on broad categories of community capitals as a basis for identifying and building on community capacity and resilience. This methodology has been further developed by Coakes and Sadler (2011) to reflect the capitals approach - human, social, natural, physical, economic, and political. Each capital area can be assessed through the selection of specific indicators that, together, paint a picture about a community's vulnerability to change, or conversely, their adaptive capacity.

The Tomaree Lodge site is located in the Port Stephens LGA. The LGA covers an area of 979 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 75,276. The site is located within the Nelson Bay Peninsula Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2), which encompasses the townships of Shoal Bay, Nelson Bay, Salamander Bay, Corlette, Soldiers Point and Fingal Bay (refer to **Figure 3.1**). Where relevant, data from the SA2, and Shoal Bay Suburb and Locality (SAL) has been compared with NSW to inform the social baseline.



**FIGURE 1.1**  
Social Context

**Figure 3.1** Social Locality

### 3.1 Natural Capital

Natural capital refers to the natural assets and resources that contribute to community sustainability. Natural capital can include resources such as minerals, land, forests, and waterways, which provide benefit to the community, as well as environmental assets that provide social, cultural, or recreational value. Natural capital can also include other environmental assets that generate tourism such as beaches, waterways and/or lakes. A summary of the natural capital in the social locality is outlined below.

The Tomaree Lodge site borders the Tomaree National Park. The National Park is amongst the top twenty national parks visited within NSW, with the Tomaree Summit Walk attracting over 200,000 people annually (Department of Planning and Environment, 2020). The Tomaree Coastal Walk, a 20 km walk through the National Park, connects Tomaree Head to Birubi Point. The Coastal walk is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in early 2023. The Coastal Walk is predicted to increase visitation numbers to the Tomaree Headland.

The Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park, covers an area of approximately 980 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses the waterways of Port Stephens, extending 3 nautical miles offshore (Department of Primary Industries, n.d.). The waterways offer tourism opportunities, with several whale and dolphin watching cruises operating out of Nelson Bay (Port Stephens, 2023). The Bay is also utilised by a variety of water sport enthusiasts on boats, jet skis, paddle boards and kayaks. There are also various sailing clubs that utilise the waterways, including the Bay Sailing Centre and Port Stephens Yacht Club.

### 3.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital refers to underlying factors that provide human societies with the means to adapt to their environment (Cochrane, 2006). It includes the way people know and understand their place within the world. It may also refer to the extent to which the local culture, traditions, or language, may promote or hinder wellbeing, social inclusion, and development (IAIA, 2015). This section provides a summary of the key characteristics of the social locality from a cultural capital perspective.

#### **Worimi Cultural Significance**

The Tomaree Headland is the traditional land of the Worimi People. The National Park continues to be an important site for Aboriginal People and is recognised as being part of Worimi's cultural knowledge and Dreaming stories (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2023).

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* enables LALC's to claim Crown Land, and have land transferred to them in a freehold title (Aboriginal Affairs, n.d.). The first and second claims, made in 2015 and 2019 respectively, by the Worimi LALC, were refused on the grounds that the land was unable to be lawfully sold or leased under the *Crowns Land Act 1989* or the *Western Lands Act 1901*. Worimi LALC appealed the decisions in 2020, with the Land and Environment Court of NSW handing down its ruling in October 2022 dismissing the claim.

Worimi LALC's vision statement emphasises the LALC's commitment to *improving, protecting, and fostering the best interests of its members and all Aboriginal people within the Council area.* (Worimi LALC, 2014).

Worimi LALC operates the Murrook Cultural Centre, a place to protect, gather and teach Aboriginal Culture; as well as conducting quad bike tours on Worimi Conservation Lands. In partnership with NPWS, Worimi Traditional Owners manage the Worimi Conservation Lands in a manner that protects both the natural and cultural values of the site, as well as ensuring continued recreational use (NPWS, 2023).

### **Military Heritage**

Mount Tomaree is also recognised as playing a key defensive position during WW2. The Headland hosted a range of infrastructure including barracks, torpedo tubes and a radar tower. The military heritage of the Peninsula and Mount Tomaree are commemorated with interpretive signage explaining the military heritage of the elements of the site located at the gun emplacement within the National Park.

The area also houses the Nelson Bay Heritage Walk, a self-guided walk created by the Port Stephens Historical Society that showcases the military heritage of the Nelson Bay Peninsula.

### **Community Arts**

Nelson Bay is also home to the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre. The centre showcases the region's artists and is open to the public 7 days a week (Port Stephens Tourism Ltd, 2023). The Port Stephens Council also has a Strategic Arts Committee, an advisory committee that assists in cultural planning; providing advice on public art and assistance in building relationships with community members interested in local cultural development (Port Stephens Council, 2023).

## **3.3 Political Capital**

Political capital refers to the governing and organisational structures of the population, including formal and informal systems, and existing means for public participation in various aspects of civil life. The following sections outline the governance arrangements of relevance.

The Tomaree Lodge site sits within Worimi country. This area extends south to Stockton, west to Raymond Terrace and north to Karuah. The Worimi LALC was formed in 1984, with the first board of Management elected in 2007 following amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

The site, whilst no longer operational, is currently retained by the Minister for Families and Communities, and the Minister for Disability Services, the Honourable Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC. Ms Maclaren-Jones recognises the importance of the site for the Port Stephens community, and consequently was very supportive of ensuring that the community has an appropriate voice in how the site should be retained for the benefit of the community moving forward.

Ms Kate Washington MP is the NSW Member for Port Stephens. Ms Washington has called for the site to be used as temporary housing, given the current shortage of housing stock - across the region and NSW (News of the Area, 2022).

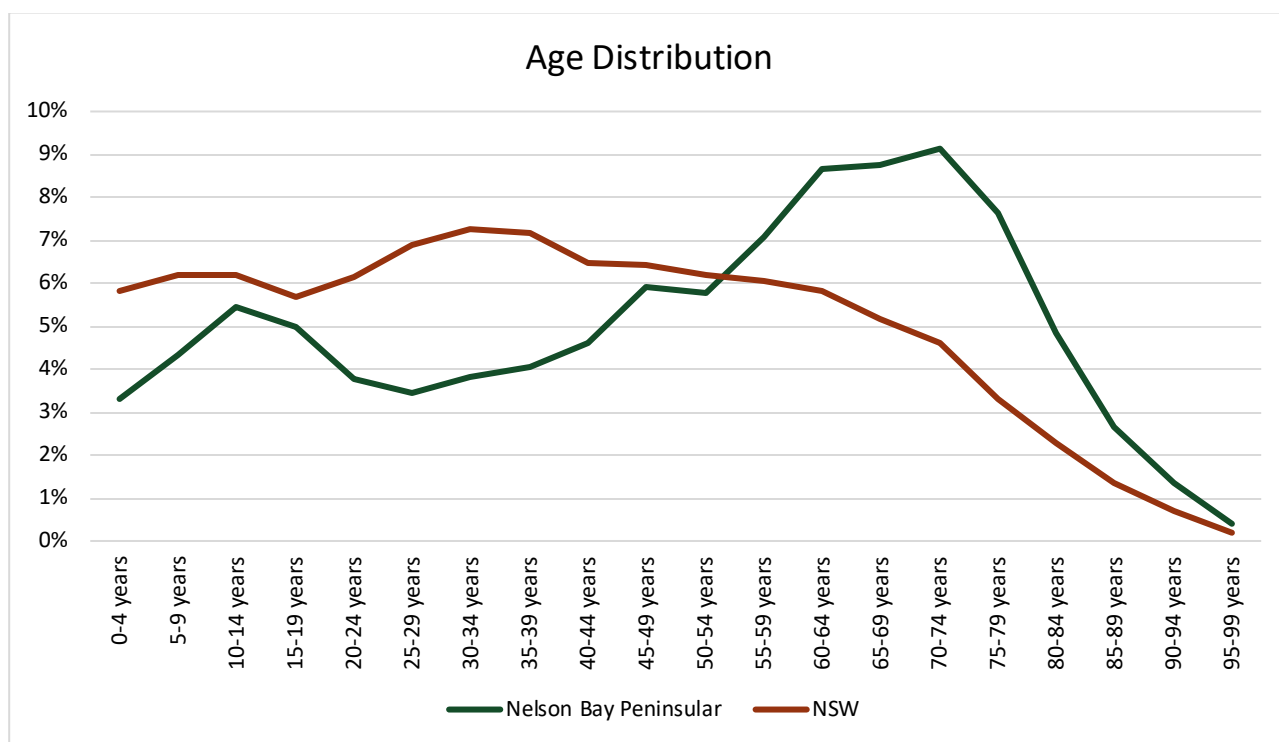
The site is also located within the Port Stephens LGA. - The East Ward, in which the site is located, has three representative Councillors - Leah Anderson, Matthew Bailer and Glen Dunkley. While the site was under its management prior to the cessation of operations, Port Stephens Council commissioned the *Tomaree Lodge Heritage Report to Council*. Delivered in February 2021, the report investigated future potential heritage responsibilities associated with Tomaree Lodge management.

### 3.4 Human Capital

The level of human capital within a community is assessed by considering population size, age distribution, education and skills, general population health, and considers the prevalence of at-risk groups within a community.

The Nelson Bay Peninsula SA2 has a population of 21,972. The median age across the SA2 is 55 years, much higher than the state average of 39 years, with **Figure 3.2** demonstrating that the SA2 region has a significantly higher proportion of people aged between 60 and 89 years, when compared with the state. The SA2 also has a smaller proportion of people aged between 15 and 44 years, compared with the NSW state average.

The Indigenous population of the Nelson Bay Peninsula is slightly higher than the state average, 3.6% compared to 3.4%.



**Figure 3.2 Age Distribution**

Source: (ABS, 2021).

The area is predicted to grow at a faster rate than the state average of 0.95% pa: Nelson Bay Peninsula's population is predicted to increase by 0.97% pa to 27,568 people by 2041, while the Port Stephens LGA is predicted to grow at 1.1% pa.

### 3.5 Social Capital

Various indicators can be used to examine and assess social capital. Such indicators include the level of volunteering, population mobility, crime rates and the demographic composition of the community, such as the percentage of people born overseas, language proficiency etc.

Within the SA2, 16.1% of the population undertook voluntary work, a higher percentage than the state average of 13.0%. There are a range of active community and environmental groups within the area.

Within the SA2, 80.2% of the population had the same address one year prior (state average of 79.4%). The Nelson Bay Peninsula however does have slightly lower proportion of people who had the same address five years ago, when compared with the state (51.5% and 53.9% respectively) suggesting a slightly higher mobility rate than the state average.

Compared to NSW, the Nelson Bay Peninsula is relatively homogenous, with 77.8% of the population born in Australia, compared to 65.4% in NSW. Unsurprisingly, the SA2 recorded a much higher percentage of people who use only English at home when compared with the state (89% compared to 67.6%).

### 3.6 Economic Capital

Examining a community's economic capital involves consideration of several indicators, including industry and employment, workforce participation and unemployment, income levels and cost of living pressures, such as weekly rent or mortgage repayments.

The SA2 has a significantly higher proportion of people not in the labour force (48.3%) when compared to the state (35.5%). There is also a high proportion of people employed part time in the SA2 than the state (39.6% compared to 29.7%), however the unemployment rate is slightly lower (4.7% compared to the state average of 4.9%). Given the high percentage of the population of retirement age (as discussed in **Section 3.4**), this is not unexpected. Low rates of participation in the labour force may suggest individuals have increased capacity to be involved in community consultation. Of those who do participate in the workforce, the top industry of employment is cafes and restaurants (4.5%) followed by aged care residential services (4.5%) and defence (3.4%). These numbers are significantly higher than the state averages of 2.0%, 2.2% and 0.6% respectively.

The Nelson Bay Peninsula is a popular destination for tourists throughout the year, especially over summer. Recent media has commented that occupancy rates in the area have been close to 95% over the 2022/2023 Christmas period, bringing the area back to pre-pandemic visitation rates (Newcastle Herald, 2023). An increase in visitors to the region over the Christmas period was also reported anecdotally to engagement team members by stakeholders throughout the consultation period.

Located within the Tomaree Lodge site is the Southern Cross Shellfish Hatchery Facility. The facility was operational on the site between 2007 - 2022 and provided up to 75% of the industry requirements for hatchery-produced Sydney rock oyster spat in NSW and QLD (Southern Cross Shellfish, n.d.).

Following flooding events in 2021 and 2022, the facility suffered significant damage and is no longer operational, however infrastructure for the facility is still maintained on the Tomaree Lodge site.

### 3.7 Physical Capital

Physical or built capital includes provision of infrastructure and services to the community. Within this capital area, it is important to consider the type, quality, and degree of access to public, built and community infrastructure (including amenities, services, and utilities), as well as housing.

As discussed in **Section 1.1**, the Nelson Bay Peninsula is located on the shores of the Karuah River. In addition to the range of recreational opportunities the Bay offers, a daily ferry service also connects Tea Gardens to the north, with Nelson Bay. The ferry service has been operational for over 25 years and is seen as a way for tourists and locals alike to experience the Bay area (Tea Gardens Ferry, 2022). The service operates from the public wharf in Nelson Bay.

In addition to the public wharf, the d'Albora Marinas, located in Nelson Bay offer a range of services, including berthings, fuel, boatyard servicing and dockmaster assistance for a range of watercraft (d'Albora, n.d.). Shoal Bay also has a boat ramp which is utilised for boat launching.

Foreshore reserves in both Shoal Bay and Nelson Bay, along with a range of beaches, are popular destinations for both locals and tourists. Shoal Bay has one public toilet facility, located along Shoal Bay Road before reaching the entrance to the Lodge site. Additionally, Shoal Bay has a collection of restaurants and cafes.

Also located along Shoal Bay Road is the Shoal Bay Holiday Park. The Park offers a range of accommodation types, including camping and caravan sites, as well as multiple bedroom villas. There are various other holiday parks in close proximity to the Tomaree Lodge site, including the Fingal Bay Holiday Park and Halifax Holiday Park.

Upgrades to the Zenith Beach car park were completed in August 2022. The improvements included the sealing of roads, improved stormwater management, fencing, line marking and improved pedestrian accessibility (DPE, 2022).

The Nelson Bay Peninsula has a significantly higher proportion of homes owned outright (46.6%) compared to NSW (31.5%), however, has a smaller percentage of homes owned with a mortgage than the state (23.2% compared to 32.5%). High rates of home ownership often correlate with the level of interest communities may have in a project, with landholders more likely to be more invested in project outcomes.

Despite high levels of home ownership, there are also high rates of unoccupied dwellings in the area. The SA2 has a total of 28.5% of private unoccupied dwellings, and the suburb and locality (SAL) of Shoal Bay has 45.6% of private unoccupied dwellings, a state average of 9.4% across NSW. Given high rates of tourism to the region, it is expected that these dwellings are predominantly used for short term holiday rentals. Analysis indicates that there are 276 active rentals in the suburb of Shoal Bay, and an additional 564 in Nelson Bay (AirDNA, 2023).



## 4.0 Values and Uses

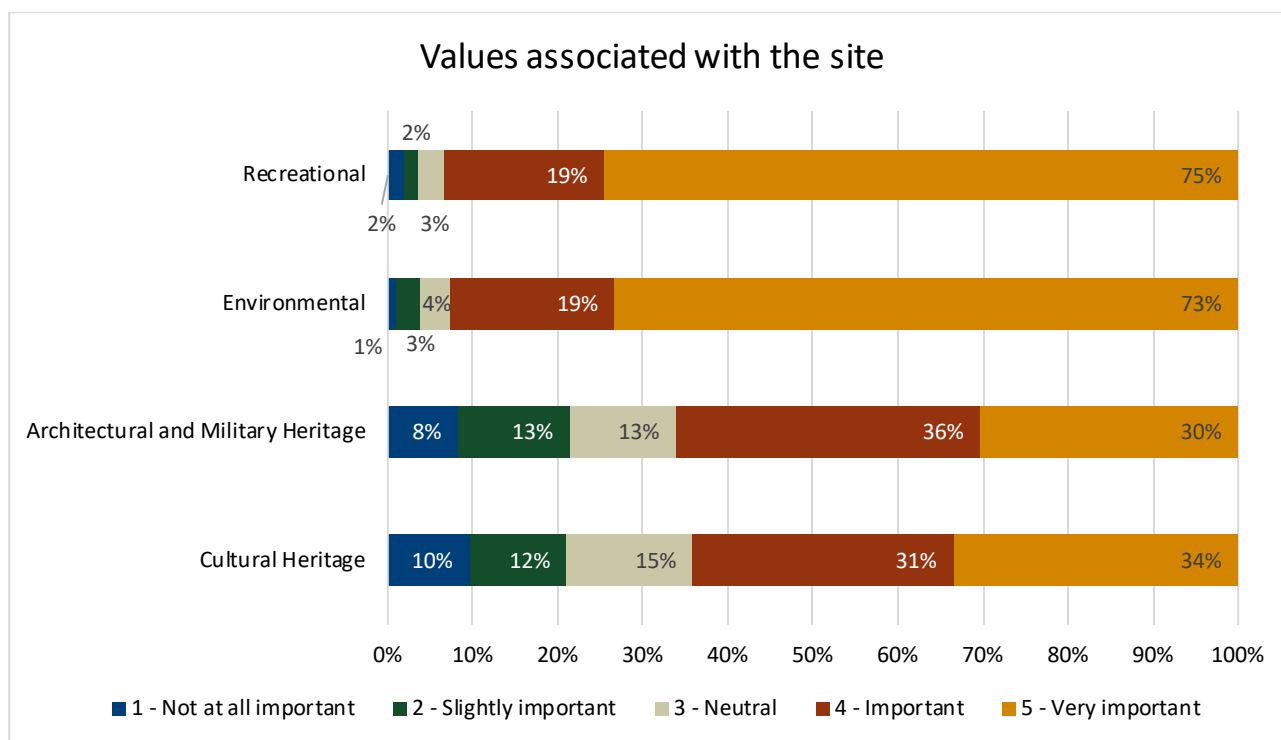
The history and nature of the Tomaree Lodge site has resulted in the site being valued and utilised in various ways. As part of the consultation, stakeholders were asked to reflect on how they value and use the Tomaree Lodge site and the surrounding area.

### 4.1 Values Associated with the Site and Surrounding Area

Respondents to both the online and hard copy survey were asked to consider the importance of the recreational, environmental, cultural and architectural and military heritage values on the site.

**Recreational values were rated most highly**, closely followed by environmental values, with 94% of respondents rating these values as ‘important’ or ‘very important’ (refer to **Figure 4.1**).

Whilst respondents reported lower values associated with the architecture and military heritage, and Aboriginal heritage and cultural values of the site, two thirds of respondents (66% and 65% of respondents respectively) still reported these aspects as ‘important’ or ‘very important’. These values are further discussed in **Section 4.1.1** to **Section 4.1.4**.



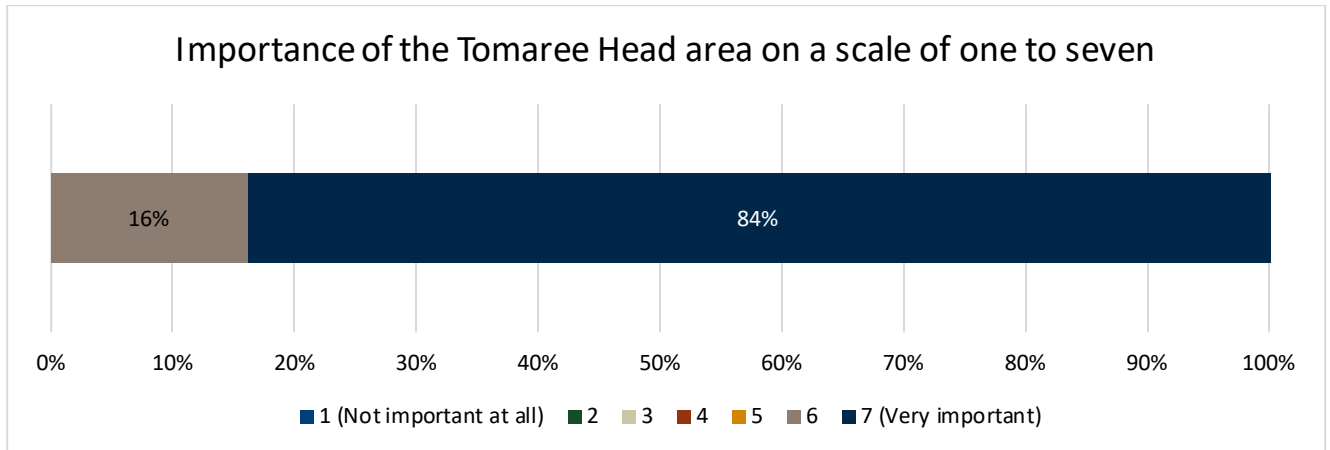
**Figure 4.1 Values associated with the site (prompted; hard copy and online survey)**

Total number of respondents (n=514).

Note: some respondents did not respond to all questions

Source: Umwelt (2023).

Stakeholders who completed the in-person survey were asked to further consider the importance of the Tomaree Head area to them on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 was not important at all and 7 was very important. **The majority of respondents (84%, n=31) stated that the area was very important to them (refer to Figure 4.2).**

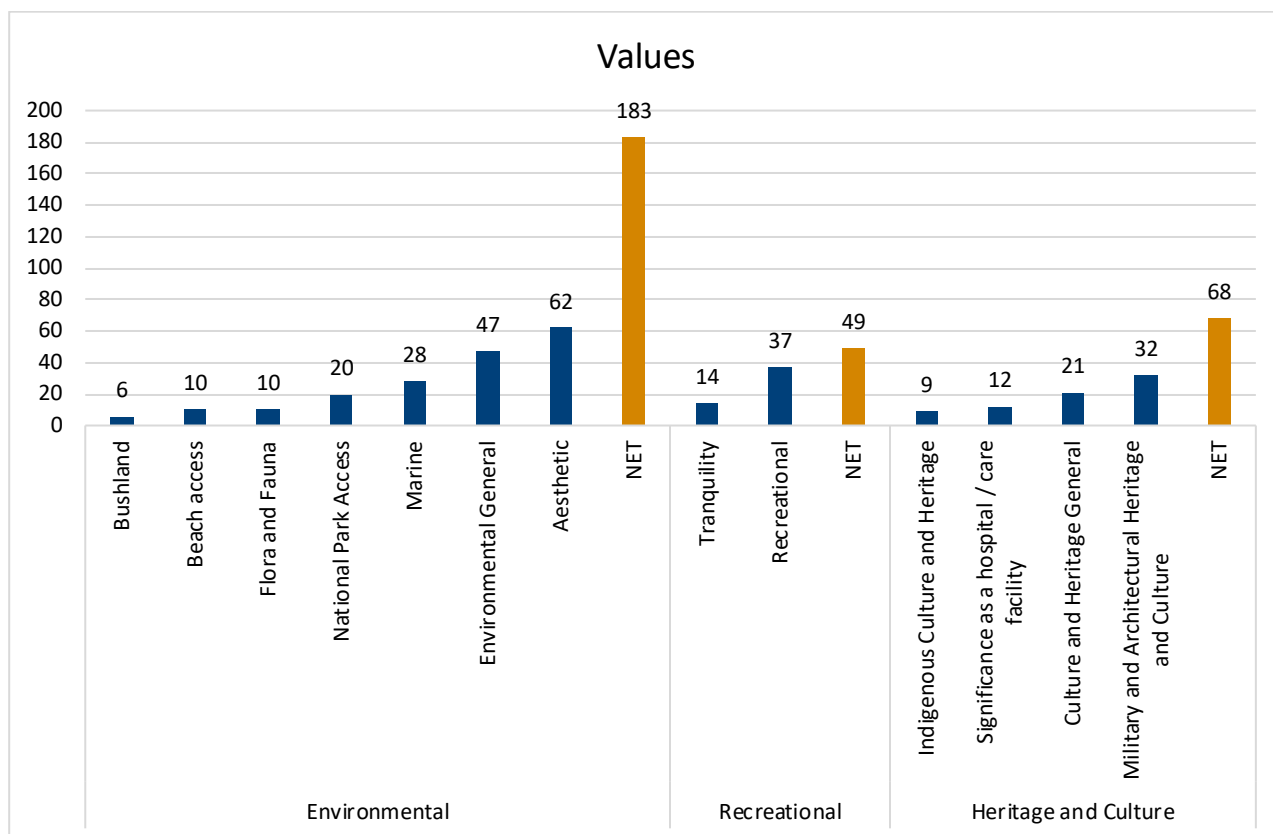


**Figure 4.2 Importance of Tomaree Head area (hard copy survey respondents)**

Total number of responses (n=37)

Source: Umwelt (2023).

Stakeholders were also asked to consider any other values that may be attached to the Tomaree Head area. The following sections provide a summary of each of the values identified by respondents in both the online and in person survey with these also illustrated in **Figure 4.3**. The proportion of respondents noted in the following sections includes those who completed both the online and hard copy survey. This section also draws on outcomes of personal meetings and interviews, and online submissions where relevant.



**Figure 4.3 Unprompted Values (hard copy and online survey respondents)**

Total number of respondents (n=340). Multiple responses allowed.  
Source: Umwelt (2023).

### 4.1.1 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

As noted in **Section 3.2**, the Tomaree Lodge site has been subject to two Aboriginal Land Claims, signifying a strong ongoing connection to Country for the Aboriginal community. Consultation undertaken with Indigenous stakeholders strongly validated this connection, with stakeholders identifying the importance of maintaining the site to ensure that Aboriginal cultural values and the community thrive. Aboriginal people generously shared their ongoing connections to the Tomaree Headland with the Project team, and their willingness to be involved in future discussions regarding future uses of the Tomaree Lodge site.

*The site belongs to part of our cultural landscape and story – Indigenous stakeholder.*

*We have a connection to Country, when we're on Country, both of us will thrive – just watch it – Indigenous stakeholder.*

*There is missing information from our stories, it's like pages missing from a book, you go down to read your kid a book at night and there's pages missing, we need to fill them in so we can pass the stories onto our kids, the site is a part of these stories – Indigenous stakeholder.*

One Indigenous stakeholder provided additional context to the importance of the site to Worimi people reflecting:

*Tomaree and Yacaaba are vitally important to the Worimi people of Port Stephens...*

*It's a sacred site for women, used as a lobster fishing ground, the other side is a men's site, still relevant, my sons don't dare go there at night.*

*It is common knowledge that Yacaaba, on the northern side of Tomaree is also an important birthing site for Worimi women. Tomaree is a highly significant cultural site for the Worimi women. Apart from the lobster fishing grounds, women's business would have taken place here for many thousands of years.*

Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites were also important to respondents who completed the surveys (73% of all survey respondents). A representative of a local environmental group in the area also commented on the “*past destruction of Aboriginal heritage in the area*”, outlining that a lot of Aboriginal cultural heritage has been dismissed in the past, and therefore community members may not be aware of the importance of the site to local Aboriginal people.

Additionally, 9 respondents raised Aboriginal heritage as a value of the Tomaree Head area when reflecting on their values in an unprompted question included in the online and in person surveys. These stakeholders outlined their understanding of the connection Worimi people have to the area, and the importance of ensuring that such cultural values are not impacted.

*The connection to the Worimi people in this space is extremely important – Survey respondent.*

*The Indigenous connection to this site is strong – Survey respondent.*

One stakeholder group commented on the importance of ensuring Worimi Traditional Owners are involved in the process of determining future uses of the site, once again recognising the significance of the site to Traditional Owners.

*Anything would need to be considered in conjunction with Worimi – Environmental group.*

#### **4.1.2 Architectural and Military Heritage of buildings**

The architectural and military heritage of the site was also considered of importance to survey respondents. **Figure 4.2** shows that a total of 66% respondents identified such values as important or very important, with an additional 32 respondents raising military heritage as an unprompted response in the surveys (see **Figure 4.3** Unprompted Values (hard copy and online survey respondents)).

A large proportion of stakeholders also raised the general historic heritage of the site as an important value to them. These stakeholders suggested that the heritage value of the site should not be undervalued, regardless of the outcome of determining future use.

*Heritage aspect is priceless.*

*The history and culture of the area should not be undervalued.*

*Heritage sites are so important to keep the value of an area, value as in the history, so many areas have ruined themselves by removing key sites that remind people of why an area is so special. –*

*Survey respondent.*

Additionally, the military heritage value of the site was also noted by 32 survey respondents (unprompted, refer to **Figure 4.3**). Stakeholders reflected on the use of the site during WW2 for the housing of military personnel, and the presence of infrastructure that was placed on the site.

*WWII History of the area including buildings, radar, fortifications, Torpedo Tubes etc – Survey respondent.*

*Historical significance. Built by American Army WW2, Australian army housed within – Survey respondent.*

*Military history was so important during WW2. It must be preserved and interpreted – Survey respondent.*

Local community groups also reflected on the importance of maintaining the military heritage of the site, stating that more could currently be done to ensure people can continue to access these sites, as well as maintaining safety on the site.

Stakeholders consulted also commented on their current efforts in ensuring the continued interpretation of the importance of the site in WW2, outlining that they are currently seeking to have additional historical military equipment placed on Tomaree Head to further symbolise the importance of the area in WW2. An additional group commented that there is a need for increased funding to support military heritage conservation.

*Military heritage, there needs to be funding to support this – maybe through lobbying – Community group.*

The significance of the site as a hospital and residential care facility was also seen as an important element of the area by 12 respondents). As noted in **Section 1.2**, Tomaree Lodge was used as a care facility, with the last residents relocated in 2021. Survey respondents, and other community members who attended the pop-up stalls reflected on their belief that the site offered the perfect place for people with a disability due to its serenity.

*I valued the important service it provided as a medium- and long-term rest and respite facility – Survey respondent.*

*It's past use for people with special needs was extremely appropriate – Survey respondent.*

*I think there has to be recognition of the people whose home it was – Survey respondent.*

A representative from an environmental group further reflected on accommodation facilities contributing to the heritage of the site, noting their desire to see the “*village element*” of the site retained.

Two stakeholders at the pop-up stall also commented on the heritage trees located on the site, wanting to ensure that these were retained, with a representative from a local environmental group commenting:

*We need to make sure any future uses don't impede on the natural heritage – Environmental group.*

A state government department commented on the importance of ensuring the heritage of the site is retained, regardless of future use or land tenure. This view was also expressed by member of a local community group who also noted that any development should not detract from the heritage values of the site.

*Shouldn't detract from the heritage site, including colours and materials and make sure the heritage buildings remain the most prominent – Community Group.*

Some stakeholders were confident that given the heritage listing of the site, all heritage values would be protected.

### 4.1.3 Environmental Values

When prompted, a significant proportion of survey respondents (86%) stated that environmental values of the Headland area were very important to them (refer to **Figure 4.2**). These high numbers were also reflected in the unprompted responses (141 respondents). Furthermore, survey respondents made specific mention to the sites aesthetic value, flora and fauna, marine and water access, as well as access to the Tomaree National Park.

A significant number of respondents (n=62) raised the **aesthetic value** of the Tomaree Headland, while other commented specifically on the views from the Tomaree Summit, more commonly stakeholders reflected on the general “*natural beauty*” of the area.

*The absolute beauty of the headland – Survey respondent.*

*Just the sheer beauty for ALL to enjoy – Survey respondent.*

*Preservation of access to spectacular scenery – Survey respondent.*

*Natural beauty which people should be able to use and enjoy in a variety of ways – Survey respondent.*

*Beautiful spot to view marine life and the Bay – Survey respondent.*

Some respondents reflected on their desire to see buildings removed to increase the aesthetic value of the site, whilst others commented that should there be construction of additional buildings, but that these should support the existing character of the site.

*Need to have respect for the topography of the site, including the natural beauty. Wouldn't object to the construction of new buildings, but it needs to support the current image and character of the site, and not scar the hillside with large buildings, or platforms like originally proposed in the coastal walk for the headland. Buildings shouldn't be any higher. – Community Group.*

**Beach and water access** was considered an important value associated with the area (n=10). Of these respondents, people specifically noted the beach, snorkelling, and the ocean pools that were once located off the Tomaree Lodge site.

*Proximity to the surrounding beaches, and the headlands are iconic to Nelson Bay – Survey respondent.*

*The area has a Marine Park butted up against a National park, which is both unique and very valuable – Survey respondent.*

One community group expanded on the importance of the beach, and coastline, stating:

*This is an Australia wide value – it's a part of our culture – Environmental group.*

Respondents also made specific mention to the marine life that is visible from the Headland, with a number of stakeholders commenting on the dolphins and whales that can be seen in the area.

*The connection to sea life in the area such as whales, dolphins, penguins and the like as well as boating/sailing – Survey respondent.*

*Peaceful lawns to watch for dolphins – Survey respondent.*

In addition to specific mention of the recreational aspect of the beach and marine life, 28 respondents reflected on the general importance of the **marine** environment.

*The surrounding Marine Park/environment is very important to me. The surrounding Marine environment is one of the primary reasons tourists visit the area – Survey respondent.*

*The marine environment, as part of the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park has incredible value as a local, regional, national, if not international bio-diversity hotspot – Survey respondent.*

A local business consulted also commented on the importance of the marine environment to both the local and state oyster industry.

*[Since 2007], the Company has been the state's major supplier of hatchery produced oyster seed. The Tomaree hatcher.*

*The surrounding aquaculture – Survey respondent.*

In addition to marine wildlife, onshore **flora and fauna** and the ecosystems present on the Headland were also considered to be of importance to 10 respondents who completed the survey. Stakeholders that participated in values mapping, as well as in person meetings, made specific mention of the range of animals, including koalas, echidnas, goannas, wallabies, falcons and pythons.

*Variety of plants, dolphins and sea eagles – Survey respondents.*

*Love the natural flora, fauna – Survey respondents.*

*Environmental values, birdlife, and all other animals – Survey respondents.*

Furthermore, some survey respondents (n=6) commented on the bush habitat of the Headland, reflecting on the environmental values of the bordering National Park and continued access to the Tomaree Headland Summit Walk, which was identified as a key priority for the NPWS.

*Port Stephens iconic view. Tomaree National Park-unspoilt coastal green corridor* – Survey respondent

*Yes the National park with its wildlife* – Survey respondent.

*Ensuring it is accessible and preserved the natural wildlife* – Survey respondent.

A number of respondents also spoke of the “*peaceful bushland setting*”, and the many bush walking opportunities that the Headland offers, with survey respondents also commenting on the need to “*maintain and improve native vegetation*” in the area.

These views were consistent with those of local environmental groups who identified the ongoing need for weed management on the Tomaree Lodge Site and within the bordering National Park, as well as a desire to see continued conservation and rehabilitation.

*The preservation of Flora, Fauna, Marine life and the habitat in which they exist should be of primary importance* – Survey respondent.

*The site needs to be rehabilitated* – Environmental group.

#### 4.1.4 Recreational Opportunities

As demonstrated by **Figure 4.2**, the recreational value of the site was of high importance to stakeholders, with 94% of survey respondents rating recreational value as important or very important. When given an opportunity to reflect on values associated with the site, recreational values were raised by 49 respondents. These responses largely focused on the recreational activities individuals currently undertake in the area, including walking, fishing, cycling, rock climbing, snorkelling, and swimming.

*The freedom to walk around such a beautiful coastal area, with no restrictions* – Survey respondent.

*Peaceful spot with easy pedestrian and cycling access* – Survey respondent.

*Continuous access to rock climbing areas* – Survey respondent.

A representative from a local community group also commented on the value the swimming pool located on the site had once provided for the residents of Shoal Bay, stating:

*The previous winter swimming club, that was popular amongst Shoal Bay residents. A lot of people didn't want to see it end* – Community group.

One local business also commented on diving that occurs off Tomaree Headland, referencing two dive companies that operate out of the Bay area, as well as activities of recreational snorkellers and spear fishers.

*Importance of dive sites around the Headland. There are currently two dive businesses in the Bay, and lots of snorkelers and spear fishers off the site* – Local business.



Some stakeholders also made specific reference to the value the site provides in enabling **enjoyment of the outdoors**, as well as the opportunity to **showcase the area to visitors**, further commenting on the high value tourism experience it offers.

*Always enjoyed access for outdoor activities – Survey respondent.*

*Free outdoor coastal recreation – Survey respondent.*

*Beautiful spot to bring visitors and a significant tourist attraction which is also enjoyed by many residents – Survey respondent.*

*Accessibility for all. Preservation of national parks and wildlife but also making the space useable for recreation. – Survey respondent.*

*Recreation and walking opportunities is currently a major part of the site, and this shouldn't be taken away – Environmental group.*

Additionally, some stakeholders (n=14), valued the **tranquillity and peacefulness** of the area and the benefit this provides to health and wellbeing, particularly mental wellbeing.

*Peace and tranquillity of the area – Survey respondent.*

*Restorative value for health and wellbeing – Survey respondent.*

*Mindfulness experience to sit at crying tree (no tree anymore) – Survey respondent.*

*A sense of peace, to hear the waves crash – Survey respondent.*

*Place of healing – Survey respondent.*

Additionally, some stakeholders reflected on the positive **social value** the site offers, commenting on the positive contributions it provides in creating a space for families and friends to easily access and enjoy time together.

*The grounds are a great open area for family gatherings – Survey respondent.*

*Having easy access to such a beautiful part of our bay is very important – Survey respondent.*

*Site is well loved by locals – recreation on the foreshore and walks to the summit – Community Group.*

One stakeholder who attended one of the Community pop-up stalls, also commented on the nostalgia they have with the site, in particular spending time with their family at the ocean baths that had previously been located on the Tomaree Lodge site.

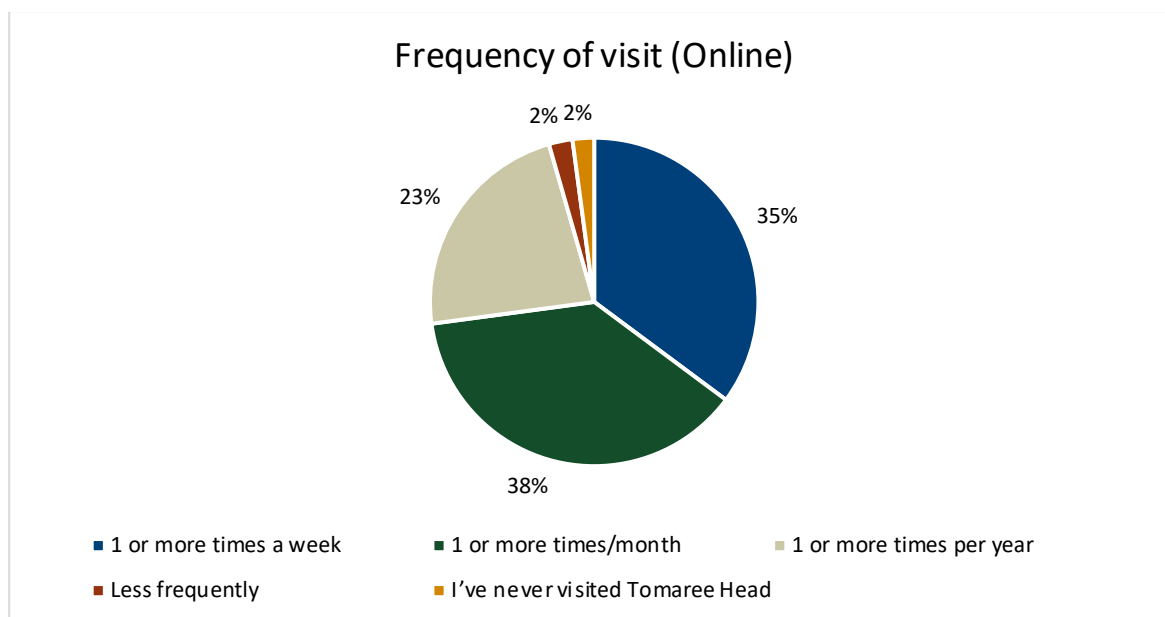
## 4.2 Visitation and Use

In addition to seeking to understand the values attached to the site, another objective of the consultation program was to obtain an understanding of how people currently use the Tomaree Lodge site, so as not to detrimentally impact these uses and to further inform planning and decision-making relating to the site. This section provides a summary of how frequently stakeholders used the site, and the timing of these visits, as well as outlining the ways in which the site is currently used, noting that the site is formally closed from public access, except for the path that winds around the edge of the site, adjacent to the Bay.

### 4.2.1 Site Visitation

Nearly three quarters of survey respondents indicated they visit the Tomaree Lodge site at least monthly, with 38% noting they visit monthly while 35% visit weekly (refer to **Figure 4.5**). Similarly, a large proportion of people (over 80%) who completed the hard copy survey visit the site monthly or more frequently. These numbers indicate that a significant proportion of survey respondents are most likely local residents (as also reflected in **Figure 2.2**).

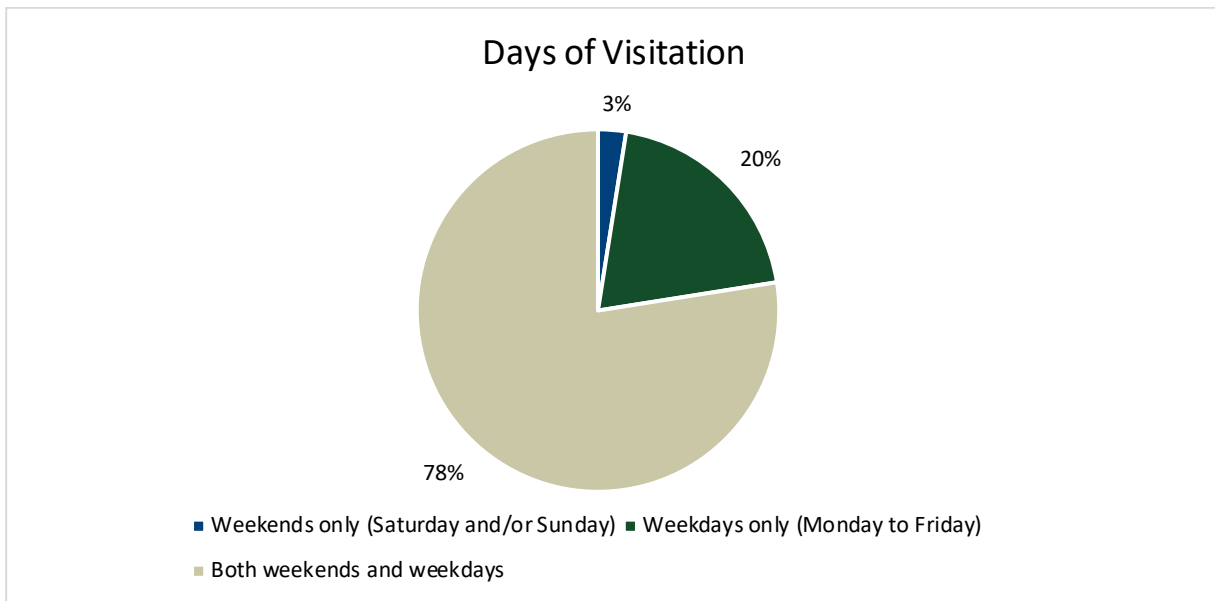
Of those who were surveyed in person, only 1 person visits the sites on weekends only, with 78% of people (n=31) visiting on both weekends and weekdays (refer to **Figure 4.6**). **Figure 4.7** also shows that a large proportion of people visit the area with family (n=28) and friends (n=18), and only a small proportion of people tend to visit the site alone.



**Figure 4.4** Frequency of Visit (prompted; online survey respondents)

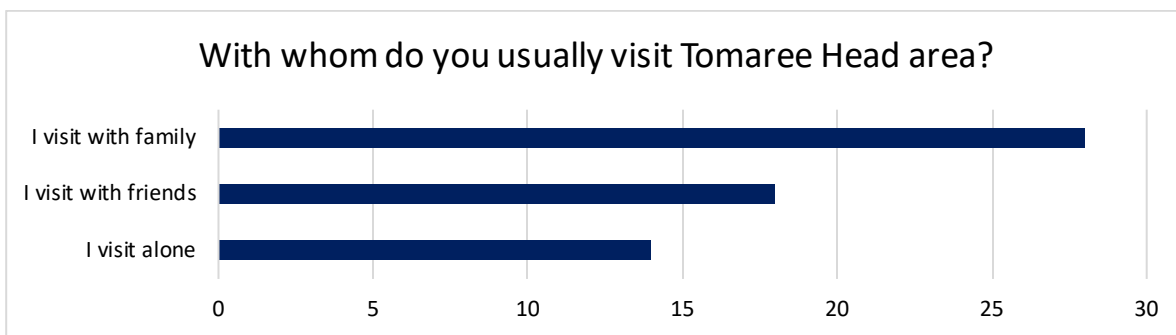
Total number of responses (n=472)

Source: Umwelt (2023).



**Figure 4.5 Days of Visitation (prompted; hard copy survey respondents)**

Total number of responses (n=40)  
 Source: Umwelt (2023).

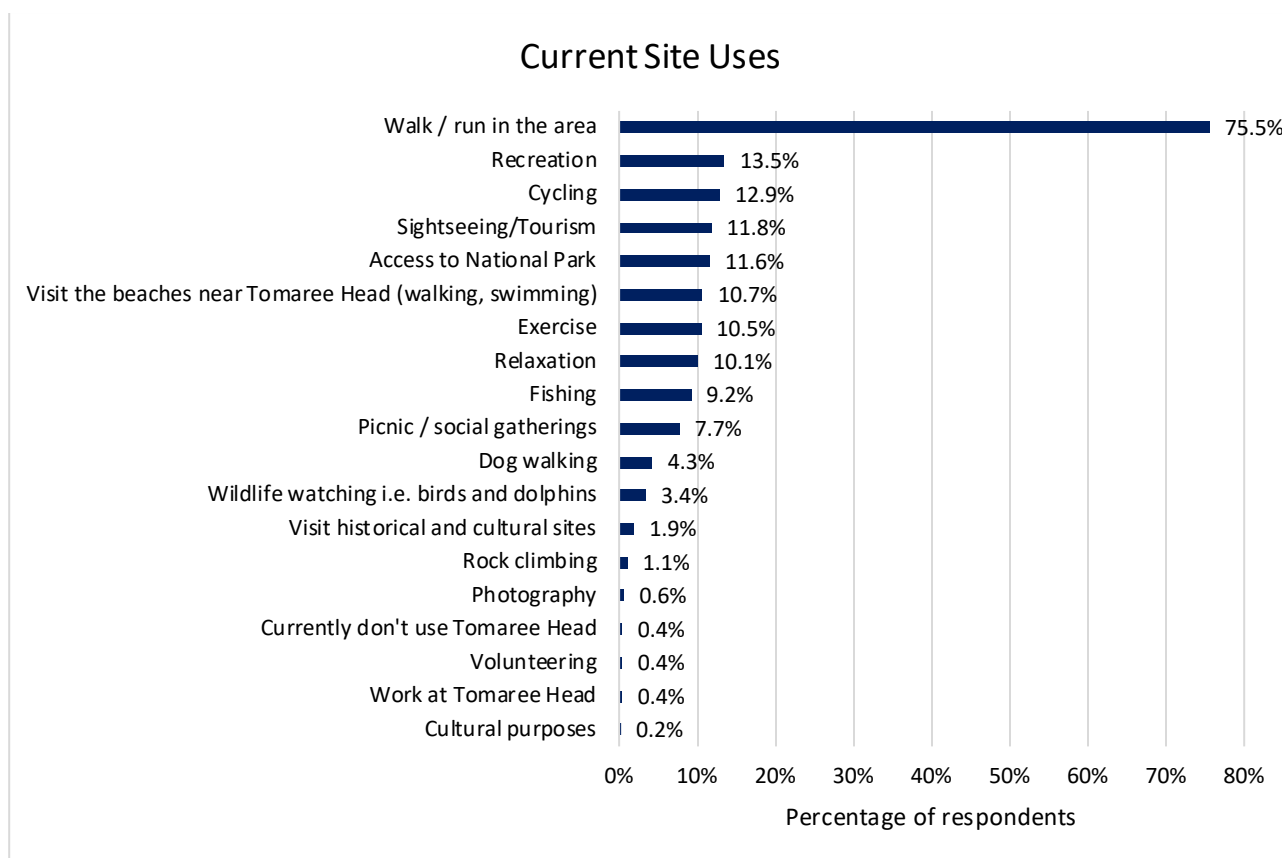


**Figure 4.6 With whom do you usually visit Tomaree Head area? (prompted; hard copy survey respondents)**

Total number of respondents (n=40). Multiple responses allowed  
 Source: Umwelt (2023).

## 4.2.2 Existing Uses of the Site

Stakeholders were asked how they currently use the site<sup>3</sup>. **Figure 4.8** demonstrates the ways in which respondents currently use the site.



**Figure 4.7 Existing Uses of the Site (unprompted; hard copy and online)**

Total number of respondents (n=466). Multiple responses allowed.  
Source: Umwelt (2023).

Across consultation, it was evident that the Tomaree Lodge site continues to be widely used by community members and visitors to the area, with only 2 survey respondents stating that they don't currently use the site.

As noted in **Section 4.1.4**, the recreational values of the site were considered particularly important and was the way in which community members currently use the site. Over 75% of survey respondents use the site for walking and running. An additional 4.3% of stakeholders made specific reference to walking their dogs in the area, while 12.9% of survey respondents noted that they cycle in the area. Another popular use of the Tomaree Lodge site is sightseeing, and as a way to showcase the local areas to visitors.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that responses in the online survey were unprompted, whereas the in-person surveys were prompted.

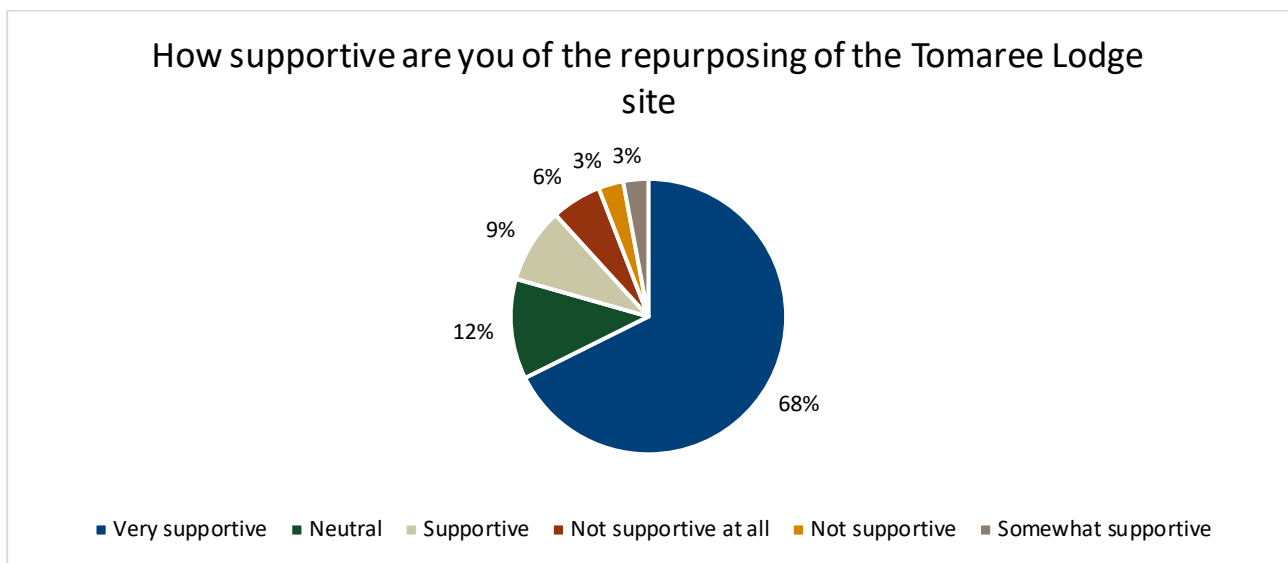
Additionally, 11.6% of survey respondents visit Tomaree Headland to go into the National Park and access the Headland Summit Walk. Fishing is also a popular water-based activity around the Headland (9.2%). Other people access the beaches near the Headland or partake in water-based activities around the Headland (e.g., kayaking and snorkelling) (10.7%). Some survey respondents specified that they use the site for exercise, whilst others commented that they visit the Headland for relaxation purposes and for social gatherings.

Despite a large proportion of stakeholders valuing the environmental aspects that the site affords (as discussed in **Section 4.1.3**), including flora and fauna; less than 4% of people stated they visit the site for wildlife watching, with those who did making specific mention of bird watching, as well as dolphin and whale spotting. However, environmental values associated with the site and the National Park were also acknowledged in the values section, with references made to wildlife, birdlife and marine life in the area.

## 5.0 Future Aspirations for the Site

This section notes community perceptions regarding potential features and future uses of the site. Generally, respondents to the in-person survey and through the interview process (77%), were very supportive or supportive of repurposing of the site, with 12% neutral, and 6% not supportive at all (refer to **Figure 5.1**).

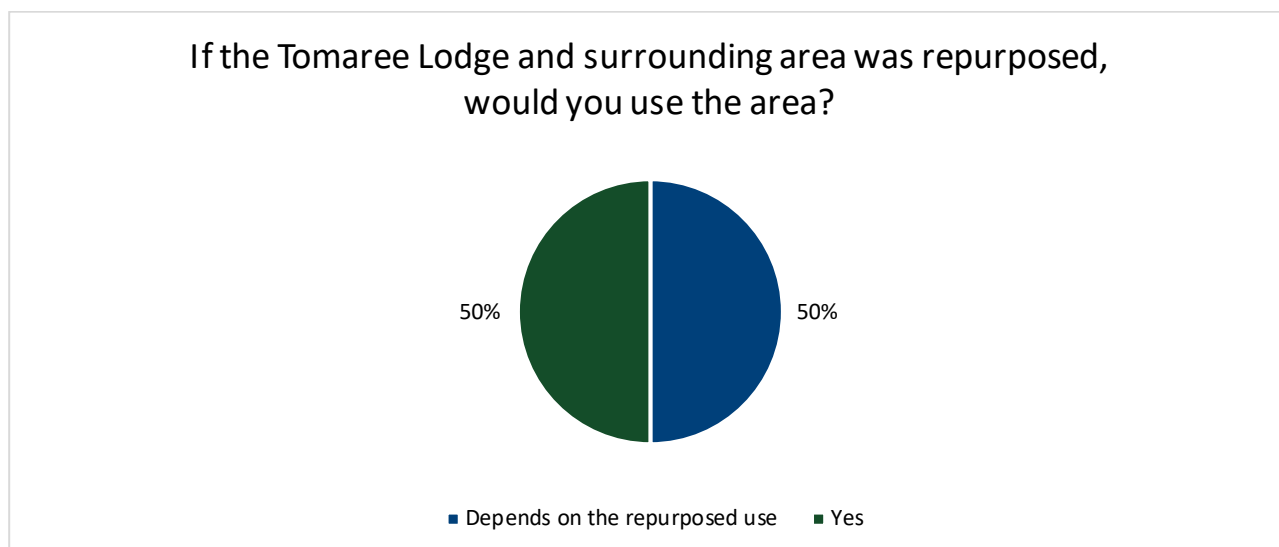
**Figure 5.2** demonstrates that the future uses of the site will influence if individuals use the site. This demonstrates the importance of community consultation, and the need to consider and reflect the desires of community members and stakeholders to maximise the future use of the site.



**Figure 5.1 Support for the repurposing of Tomaree Lodge site (prompted; hard copy survey)**

Total number of respondents (n=34)

Source: Umwelt (2023).



**Figure 5.2** If the Tomaree Lodge and surrounding area was repurposed, would you use the area? (prompted; hard copy survey)

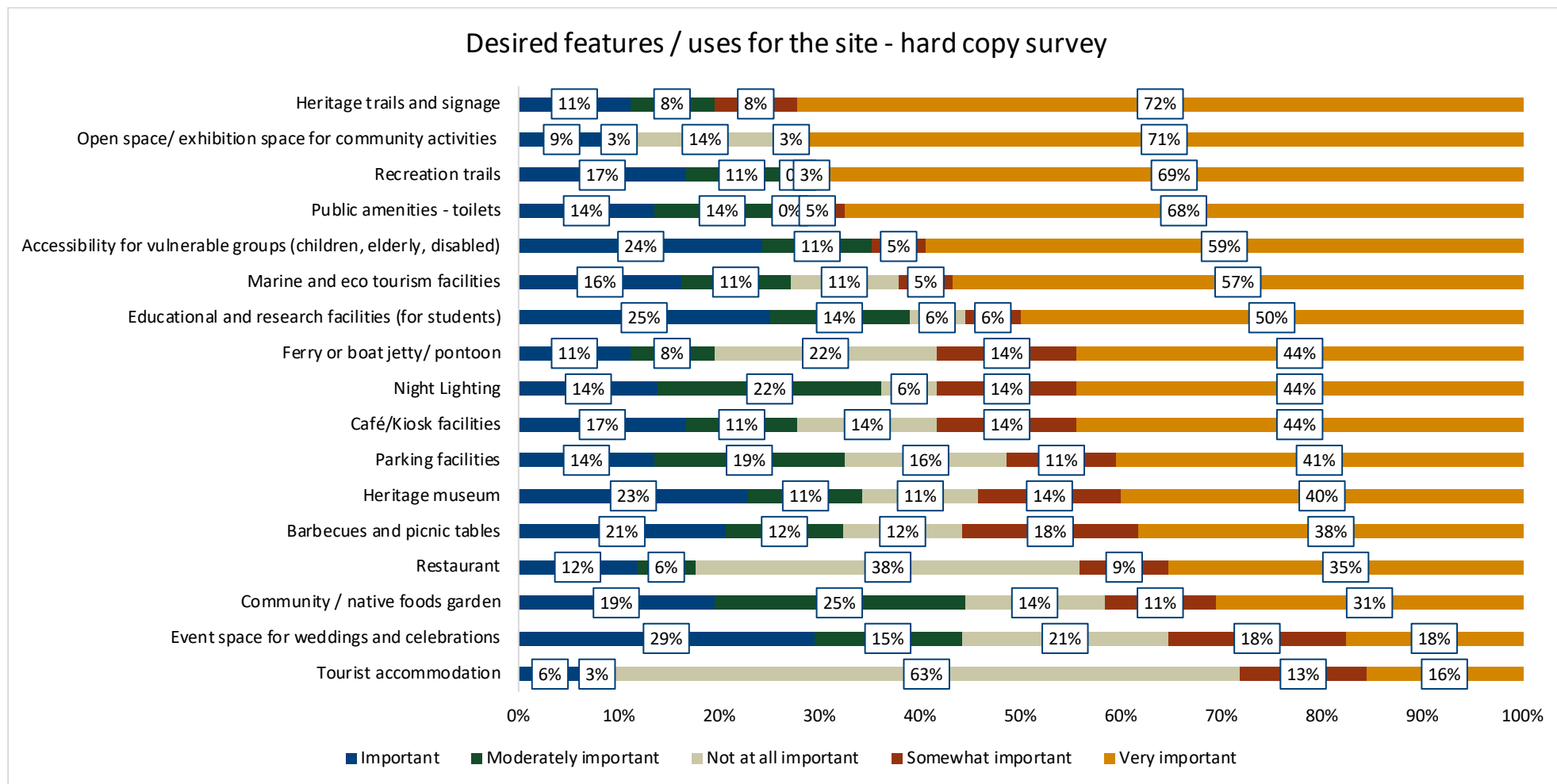
Total number of responses (n=36)  
Source: Umwelt (2023).

## 5.1 Potential Features and Uses of the Tomaree Lodge Site

Through the consultation program, stakeholders were asked to consider the way in which they would like to see the Tomaree Lodge site used in the future. The following sections draw on outcomes of personal stakeholder meetings, community pop-up stalls, survey outcomes and online/email submissions. Stakeholders were very interested in discussing uses of the site, with many ideas and themes emerging.

Respondents who completed the **hard copy survey** were asked to consider the types of features and potential uses of the site. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders considered heritage trails and signage, open space, recreational trails, public amenities, and highlighted a need for appropriate access (particularly for more vulnerable people in the community e.g., the elderly, people with a disability); aspects such as tourist accommodation, an event space for weddings, a community garden or a restaurant considered were less frequently noted (refer to **Figure 5.3**).

As outlined in **Figure 5.4**, community members who completed an online survey expressed support for a range of potential future uses of Tomaree Lodge. Responses received at the community pop up stalls and surveys indicated the most popular potential uses are for a museum/interpretive centre, café/kiosk, recreation opportunities, open space for community activities/events, performing arts and cultural centre and for BBQ and picnic tables.

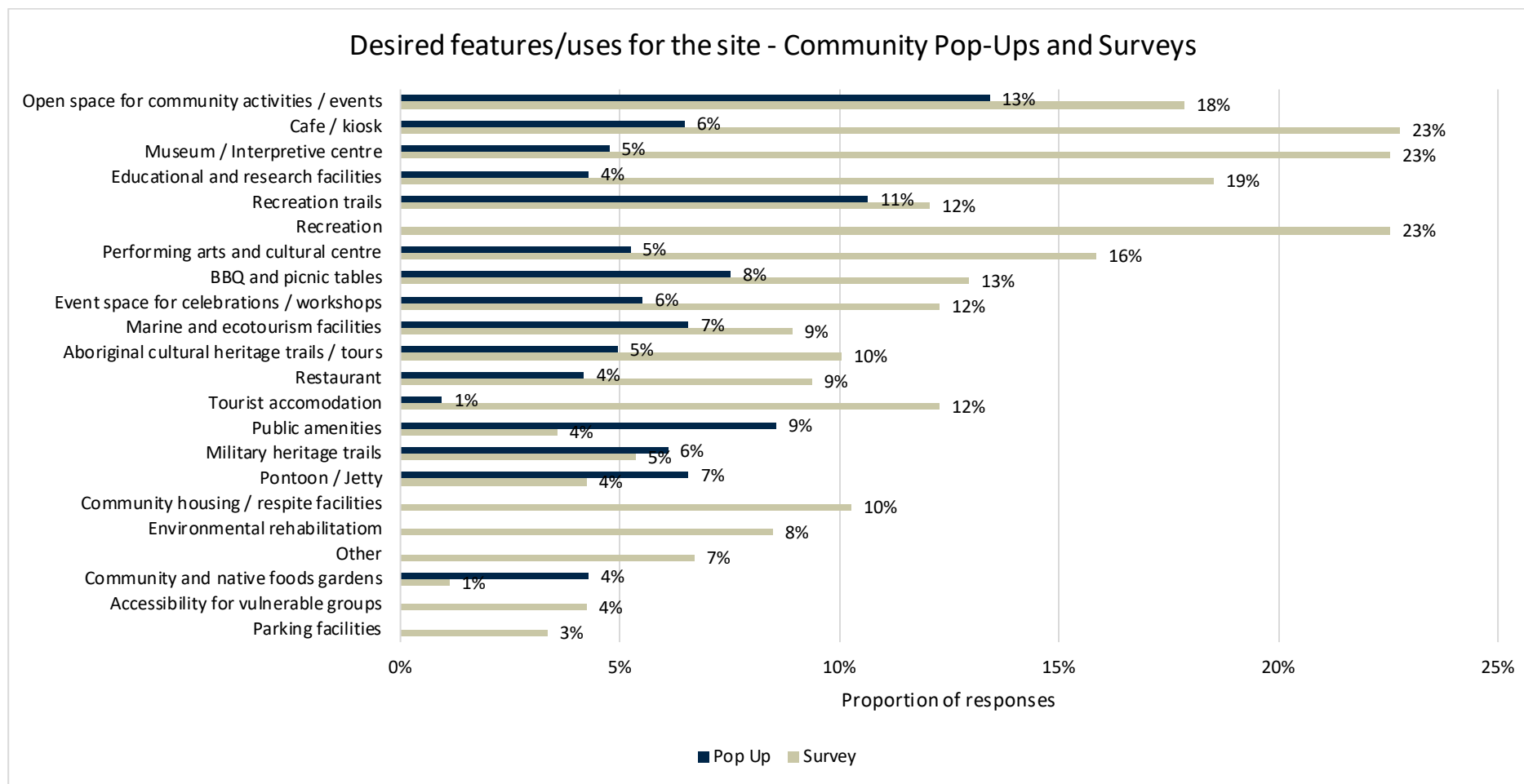


**Figure 5.3** Desired features/uses to consider in the repurposing of Tomaree Lodge site (prompted; hard copy survey)

Total number of respondents (n=37)

Source: Umwelt (2023).





**Figure 5.4 Desired Features/Uses to Consider in the Repurposing of Tomaree Lodge Site – Community Pop up Stall Interactive Posters, Hard Copy and Online Surveys**

Total number of stickers placed across the three pop up stalls (n=1,051), multiples stickers allowed.

Total number of respondents to the survey (n=488). Multiple responses allowed.

Note: Arts and cultural centre was not included on the boards at the first pop up stall.

Source: Umwelt (2023).

In summary, there was a high level of support across all engagement mechanisms for recreational use for the wider community, the inclusion of a café / kiosk, as well as a museum or interpretive centre in any future uses of the site. Stakeholders also supported the use of the site for educational and research facilities; and identified the need for greater amenities on the site, regardless of future uses.

The following sections provide further detail of each of the particular uses/features noted, with further description provided through analysis of qualitative data collected as part of the consultation program.

### 5.1.1 Recreational Uses

Given the emphasis placed on the existing recreational value of the site, as discussed in **Section 4.1.4**, it is unsurprising that a many survey respondents expressed a desire to see the site used for recreation into the future. The specific types of desired recreational uses varied, with a number of stakeholders completing the online survey requesting to see a range of different facilities integrated and opened on the site, whilst still maintaining plenty of space for existing recreational uses, including walking, fishing, and picnicking; with particular trails developed to highlight the important heritage and values associated with the site e.g. aboriginal cultural heritage, military heritage etc.

*Open free space for walking and picnicking. Dog walking should be permitted in this area – Survey respondent.*

*The ability to walk along the site needs to remain – Environmental group.*

The desire for swimming facilities on, or in proximity to, the site was also frequently raised. Some stakeholders recommended the re-development of the site's existing swimming pool for public use; whereas others commented on their desire to see a netted ocean swimming area or ocean pool adjacent to the site. These stakeholders reflected on the positive contribution this would make for both residents and tourists, providing safe swimming options for the community.

*Community use of the existing pool – Community group.*

*Open the existing swimming pool to public use and reinstate the ocean tidal pool – Online submission.*

*Large netted or constructed swim area (shark proof) off the bay side of the lodge – Survey respondent.*

*Increased access to the water such as an ocean bath just before the first buildings or towards the northern end near the covered area similar to Newcastle or Merewether – Survey respondent.*

*Public ocean baths - There's no other baths close by and I think being such a beautiful spot it showcases the beauty by utilising it's current state and not artificially creating something to replace that area – Survey respondent.*



Given the many people who currently use the site for fishing (see **Section 4.2.2**), some survey respondents also commented that they would like to see the integration of dedicated fishing and fish cleaning areas.

*Fishing spots with areas to wash/clean fish – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders also commented on their desire to see a children’s playground integrated into the site to cater for young families, especially during holiday times. One local resident at the community pop-up stall noted that they currently take their family to Stockton to use the playground, as the playgrounds located in the Bay area are rather small.

*Kids playground – there isn’t anywhere around the Bay to take kids that will keep them occupied for long periods of time. At the moment we take them to Stockton – Pop up stall, local resident.*

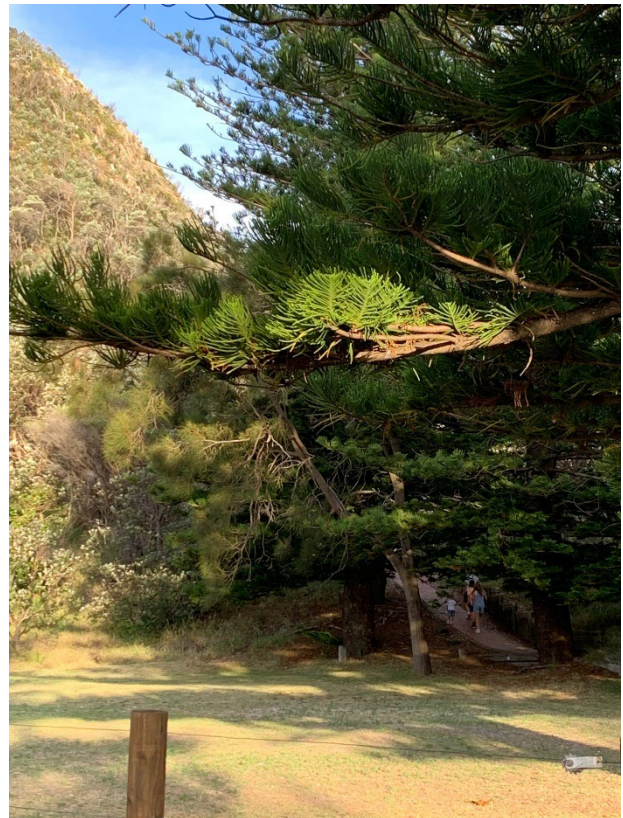
Some stakeholders also commented that the site would be a great space to integrate work out equipment to foster ongoing physical wellbeing of the community.

*The council could engage with 'live life get active' for free bootcamp classes. You could include basic bars for chinups etc – Survey respondent.*

### 5.1.1.1 Recreation Trails

The development of **Recreation trails** was also frequently raised through the in-person survey and by those who attended the community pop-up stalls (refer to **Figure 5.3** and **Figure 5.4**).

While some stakeholders commented specifically on designing recreation trails for walking and running, others suggested that they would like to see trails that are suitable for cyclists. Additionally, some raised the importance of maintaining the existing walking trails for local residents, as was the desire to ensure that they are accessible for all people.



*More walking paths or bike riding paths. There should be a combination of walking paths in the open, and some amongst the bush life – Survey respondent.*

*Walking track-A wonderful free community activity area open to all walks of life – Survey respondent.*

*A peaceful walk and area that all can enjoy, not just people with money It would also benefit the environment – Survey respondent.*

*Public walking space to be upgraded and/or kept simple. Being able to use community space at any time of the day or evening – Survey respondent.*

*Already popular walking and cycling trails – needs to be maintained for locals – Community group.*

Some stakeholders also commented on their desire to see existing trails on the headland maintained and integrated into any future trails on the site, as well as clearer signposting of these walks throughout the site.

*A proper entranceway to the walk with a tourist visitor centre and signage explaining the military history, Indigenous history and whale watching information of the area – Survey respondent.*

*Signage is needed at the site. This should include basic signage for the existing walks, as well as the accessibility of the walks – Community group.*

One local environmental group commented that the site has the potential to house an integrated range of walking routes, including some dedicated to military and nature around the site, with a desire to see these mapped at the entrance to the site. This group commented that these paths should use existing access points around the site, as well as innovative signposting and interpretation, including the use of QR codes, throughout the walks to facilitate education relating to the area.

*Different walking routes that consider different values. Maybe a military walk and a nature walk – Environmental group.*

*Need to make use of the different roads and access points within the site which would help in differentiating various tourism elements – Environmental group.*

*Signposting and interpretive centre – would be good to look at innovative ways to see this done, not just a sign. Interpretive centre beneficial to make the site more accessible. QR codes – Environmental group.*

Community groups also commented on their desire for greater interpretation of the site through the incorporation of additional interpretive signage on the Headland.

*We would like to see signage that interprets the history of the site. A map at that start of the Headland should also be displayed – Community Group.*

Additionally, there was a strong request for trails throughout the site to be accessible for all, and where not possible, additional information/interpretation provided at the entrance to the site i.e. access, level of difficulty of each trail etc.

*Need to ensure it is accessible – different walking routes may not be, and therefore there should be some sort of interpretation at the start of the site – Environmental group.*



### **5.1.1.2 Military Heritage Trails and Signage**

A number of survey respondents (5%) would like to see the military heritage reflected in trails and signage on the site, which aligns with the strong military history of the site and values aligned to this history. These stakeholders largely commented on the educational opportunity on the role the site played in WW2.

Others also commented that they believed the integration of trails and signage would benefit the ongoing preservation and celebration of the site and its artefacts.

*We would like to see interpretive signage of the military history throughout the site for continued education. At the moment there isn't a lot and we want to change that – Community group.*

*Recognition and rebuilding of WW2 infrastructure – people need to see the bigger picture of the role it played in training and active defence of the coast, how it fits with Williamtown, Fort Scratchley and Fern Bay – Community group.*

*Would like to see better preservation of military heritage. There isn't a great history of restoring this heritage on the headland – radar installation was removed and taken to Williamtown – Environmental group.*

*Military history interpretation – Survey respondent.*

*Memorial Walk embracing the military history connecting with the Gun emplacements on the Headland - scaled down model of the first of its kind wartime radar station on the Tomaree Lodge site – Survey respondent.*

*Plinth, to commemorate those that served here during the war. There were a number of soldiers that died due to the strong waves whilst on duty. Further information/plaques along the walk out to the torpedo tube launching pad & gun emplacements – Survey respondent.*

One local community group commented on their desire to see a dedicated historical walk integrated within the site, that would incorporate a range of historical elements of the site:

*Would like to see a 'Historical Walk' rather than a 'Memorial Walk'. A Historical Walk can highlight a range of issues and historical elements, rather than focusing solely on people lost. The RSL would be well placed to provide the military history of the site to be integrated into something like this – Community group.*

*Should contain a list of units that were stationed at the site and commemorate the soldiers who died at the site – Community group.*

Some stakeholders also noted their desire to see the military history of the site interpreted through guided tours. One local community group suggested this may also be a way to increase employment for returned servicemen within the community, should they be given the opportunity to lead tours on the site.



*Education and recreation opportunities WW11 history tours – Survey respondent.*

### 5.1.1.3 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Trails and Tours

As noted in **Section 3.2**, the Tomaree Lodge site has a rich Aboriginal history.

During consultation, the NSW Government met with Worimi representatives who shared their knowledge and stories that reflect their reflecting their long, strong connection to Country. Worimi people expressed their desire to participate in planning for the site, to ensure Aboriginal history and cultural values are reflected.

Worimi aspirations for Tomaree Lodge are reflected in the broader community's feedback about planning for the future of the site. For example, 52 people placed stickers indicating their support for Aboriginal heritage trails and tours on interactive posters displayed at community pop events, and Aboriginal cultural heritage/trails ranked just outside the Top 10 desired features for the proposed future site.

Of those who would like to see a greater presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage within the site, there was a strong recognition amongst some stakeholders that their existing awareness of the cultural values associated with the site is lacking, and they would therefore like to see greater Worimi involvement. Suggestions as to what this presence should look like varied, with some stakeholders suggesting they would like to see Aboriginal cultural tours offered, whilst others commented they would like to see the integration of signs in Worimi language, as well as thinking of new ways to interpret Aboriginal stories.

*Would like to see more emphasis on Aboriginal heritage, with a greater Worimi presence – Community group.*

*Maintain the natural beauty of Shoal Bay while also promoting the local Indigenous community and cultural heritage. I've been coming to Shoal Bay for 10 years and have seen no evidence of local Indigenous culture – Survey respondent.*

*Aboriginal lectures to school groups and heritage tours for all public – Survey respondent.*

*Educate about the indigenous communities that lived on this land. There needs to be Indigenous awareness – Survey respondent.*

*Signs in language – Community member.*

*Interpretation – not just signs, but also think about new ways of telling stories, whether that be Aboriginal, military, and environmental – Environment group.*

Some survey respondents commented on the benefits this would provide in fostering greater awareness to build stronger relationships with the Aboriginal community.

*The future of Tomaree is a unique opportunity for all people of Port Stephens, Australia and beyond, to connect to the ancestral culture of one of the world's oldest continuous civilisations, to be shared and experienced by all – Indigenous stakeholder.*

*From an indigenous perspective, learning about the indigenous history and culture cultivates respect and builds relationships with this segment of our society. This is vital for the well-being of our indigenous peoples – Survey respondent.*

*Be sympathetic to the environment, military history & aboriginal heritage so all parties feel sense of belonging & respect – Survey respondent.*

## 5.1.2 Arts, Culture and Exhibition Facilities

Stakeholders largely supported the use of the site to facilitate performing arts, cultural activities, and public exhibitions. The use of existing infrastructure for the development of a performing arts and cultural centre, as well as the facilitation of community workshops and programs, was seen to be an appropriate use of the site. Many stakeholders also envisaged the use of open spaces on site to be used as exhibition spaces and to facilitate community events including markets, carols and large gatherings.

### 5.1.2.1 Arts and Cultural Centre

A community performing arts and cultural centre was supported by 16% of survey respondents. These stakeholders commented on the positive contribution a centre would provide the local performing arts industry, providing a space for local groups to perform. These ideas were further expanded on, with stakeholders commenting on their belief that this would improve the quality and number of exhibitions coming to the area, and therefore the availability of these to local residents and tourists alike, which would also likely result in an increase in the economic performance of the site.

*A multi purpose space for arts and cultural activities and events – There are currently no spaces for these opportunities – will benefit locally and tourism economic benefit – Survey respondent.*

*An art centre featuring local artists with special attention to indigenous art and culture. Stories / presentations about indigenous lifestyle prior to white settlement would be interesting. Weaving workshops, fine art workshops would be great too. Awareness to local indigenous culture and art as well as supporting the fine art community – Survey respondent.*

*Multi arts performance and exhibition space to enhance the well being and cultural lives of our entire community and visitors – Survey respondent.*



*An art gallery and/or amphitheatre with changing exhibits/performances would provide local and tourist leisure options that are not currently available, as well as being an opportunity to showcase the environmental and historical importance of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds – Survey respondent.*

*Would like to see an exhibition and performance space: Cultural and Arts Precinct with an indoor and outdoor theatre space. A gallery would bring quality exhibitions such as the Archibald Prize. A space for Community Groups to perform (Concert Band, Ukulele, school groups, ballet concerts etc.) – Survey respondent.*

One local community group holds a clear vision for the site to be used as an arts and cultural centre, which would include facilities such as an art gallery and a multipurpose auditorium.



While there was general support amongst the broader community, as well as some special interest groups, other local community, special interest and environmental groups held concerns that whilst such a facility is needed within the Nelson Bay area to benefit the local art industry, they didn't believe this was an appropriate site given parking and access constraints. These constraints are explored in greater detail in **Section 5.2.1.**

*Appreciate arts and culture centre is something lacking for the area, but don't think this is the right spot given its poor access and parking – Environmental group.*

### 5.1.2.2 Community Events and Activities

Nearly 20% of survey respondents expressed the desire that consideration be given to providing open space / exhibition space that is able to host community events. In this regard, there was a desire to see the open space of the site remain, offering a place for locals and tourists to gather and enjoy time together. Some suggested this may be achieved by demolishing existing buildings, and opening up of more general public space, development of an amphitheatre/auditorium and provision of dedicated spaces for pop up community events e.g., markets.

*Basically, turn the whole of Tomaree Lodge into a maintained grassed/tree enjoyment space – Survey respondent.*

*Demolish any unused facilities and develop parkland and green spaces – Survey respondent.*

*I would like to see the site left undeveloped and used purely as a lovely natural, peaceful picnic area in a natural bushland setting - Survey respondent.*

Additionally, stakeholders believed such a space would be beneficial for hosting community events, including markets, Christmas and New Year's Eve events, as well as providing a space for outdoor exhibitions, such as *Sculptures by the Sea*.

One community group raised the existing importance of the site for ANZAC Day celebrations and welcomed the opportunity for the open space within the site to develop, to further benefit these celebrations.



*Place for the celebration of ANZAC – have previously had large turnouts for ANZAC Day – greater opportunity for the involvement of school kids. This should be able to continue, maybe even grow – Community group.*

*Retention of greenspace – but this could still involve pop up installations and markets - Environmental group.*

*Community festival precinct that allows markets, outdoor productions interpretive visitors centre – Survey respondent.*

*Community access to open outdoor sites, perhaps limited to special occasions or events – Survey respondent.*

*Opportunity of for low key, small performance centre for things like new years and Christmas (carols etc), but there are limitations for the site to be used as a cultural centre – it is something that is needed in the Bay, but this isn't the site for it – Community group.*

*Outdoor auditorium for community activities i.e., movies /concerts under the stars etc – Survey respondent.*

*Another option is a community garden or any other community-based programs to bring people together. – Survey respondent.*

To afford community interaction and use of the site by the residents and visitors, there was also a desire by 13% of respondents to see the provision of BBQs and picnic tables for public use.

*Keep it simple. Grass areas and picnic facilities – Survey respondent.*

*Large open grassed area for picnicking – Survey respondent.*

*More chairs along the foreshore as well as tables and chairs at the northern and southern ends to cater for visitors seeking picnic locations – Survey respondent.*

*Install picnic tables and chairs scattered throughout the grounds – Survey respondent.*



*The majority of the area should be turned into grassland for families, picnics, BBQ facilities – Survey respondent.*

*A lot of outdoor seating for people to relax – Survey respondent.*

*Seating along the water would be really good – Community group.*

*Public park. A place for picnics and exercise – Survey respondent.*

*I think this should be a picnic and recreational area – Survey respondent.*

Similarly, one local environmental group commented that whilst there is the potential to increase the number of picnicking facilities throughout the site, they recognised that the Shoal Bay Foreshore currently provides these opportunities.

*Potential to increase infrastructure (i.e. benches, picnic tables), however people also have the whole foreshore to do this – Environmental group.*



A smaller percentage of survey respondents (12%), as well as some local community groups, supported the use of the site for indoor events and workshops. The nature of the types of events and workshops people would support varied, however there was a general level of support for the space to be able to be hired by community groups for meetings, gatherings and workshops. Some of these

stakeholders believed such a space would increase social connection in the community.

*Then a mix of meeting rooms that could be hired by community groups (similar use as the old Maitland Gaol)-Meet the needs of local groups and give them the opportunity to plan services and develop policies – Survey respondent.*

*A boutique conference centre will introduce a much needed facility to the area. This will potentially attract conferences and seminars hosted by academic institutions, local and regional industries, businesses, etc. Particularly those looking for a residential option in a unique and natural setting with numerous breakout facilities – Community Group.*

*Can be used for many community benefits such as: meetings, reading stories library for children, seniors functions, school functions – Survey respondent.*

*I would like to propose that a MIND GAME CENTRE with an area of at least 40 sqm be established in one of the re-purposed buildings on the headland – Online submission, community group.*

*Local men's shed and art room – Survey respondent.*

*Community centre (e.g. Men's shed, yoga studio)-A place for gathering and socialising – Survey respondent.*

*Arts and crafts; men's shed; child care; seniors area – Survey respondent.*

*Community hall for use by sporting organisations such as Port Stephens Outrigger Club – Survey respondent.*

*The centre could have rooms for hire for conferences, yoga and mediation sessions – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders also commented that they would like to see the site made available for private functions, largely focusing on weddings and concerts. Others commented on the positive contribution such a space could serve to create for local artists, and small business owners who offer classes to local residents.

*Maybe even an area for low key concerts and maybe a wedding area – Survey respondent.*

*Place for special occasions such as weddings and small scale entertainment showcasing cultural activities – Survey respondent.*

*Conference centre, space for cultural workshops-A place for the community to enjoy cultural activities – Survey respondent.*

*Opportunity for small businesses with yoga and picnic style painting classes, food and drink stalls etc. – Survey respondent.*

### **5.1.3 Educational and Research Facilities**

There was a strong support for the Tomaree Lodge site to be used for education purposes, support for a **museum or interpretive centre** showcasing the Aboriginal, military and environmental values of the site and surrounds, as well as for an **educational or research facility**.

#### **5.1.3.1 Museum / Interpretive Centre**

Around a quarter (23%) survey respondents commented on their desire to see a museum / interpretive centre included on the Tomaree Lodge Site. Of those who would like to see a museum, the nature of the displays they would like to see integrated into the museum varied and included military, maritime, Aboriginal cultural heritage, surfing history, environment, and a way of preserving the history of the area.

One local historical group commented “*People lose interest if it’s not displayed / locked up. We want people to experience the history of the site*”, emphasising the importance of being able to showcase the heritage of the site.

*A Tomaree Headland Interpretive Museum with a permanent display on the history of the site, of world class standard, utilising state-of-the-art display techniques and audio-visuals. Including Aboriginal and Pre-World War II History of Tomaree, Fort Tomaree – the Upper Camp, The Lower Infantry camp which became Tomaree Lodge, The Radar Station and the adjacent Amphibious Training Centre for the Pacific War – Community Group.*

*The buildings could be used for historical and museum exhibits (maritime & military etc) – Survey respondent.*

*Maritime museum including history of Tomaree gun placements and Fortress Newcastle – Survey respondent.*

*Supplementary display to fit with the marine rescue museum at Nelson Head – Community group.*

*Museum - Aboriginal Heritage, Maritime Heritage, Early Settlers & WWII History. A museum that includes all of these with a room dedicated to each – Survey respondent.*

*A museum exhibition detailing the history of the area from pre-invasion through the war and to its status as a hospital would benefit local knowledge as well as being of interest to tourists – Survey respondent.*

*We envisage the establishment of state-of-the-art interpretive displays relating to the heritage of the site and the marine life of Port Stephens – Community group.*

*Education of community and visitors in the history of first nations people in this area – Survey respondent.*

*Interpretation of early colonial history as well and first settlements – Survey respondent.*

*Community museum – there isn't currently one for the WW2 (only maritime). RSL could do talks to talk about the history – Community group.*

*Heritage / History and new display areas, such as a Surfing Museum, we have a large collection of historic surf boards, publications, and photographs from 1970s to present, of local surfers – Community member.*

Community and environmental groups also recognised the development of a museum as an opportunity to interpret the surrounding marine environment, including the whale migration (to complement the whale watching cruises that operate out of the Bay area), as well as the interpretation of marine ecosystems located within the marine park.

*Interpretation centre: melding of all the cultures and heritage of the site – European and Aboriginal. There has been past destruction of Aboriginal heritage in the area, and there should be recognition of this, and how the two cultures interact now, and historically. Littoral marine ecosystems –*



*interpretation of the coastal environment – Environmental group.*

Additionally, local community groups welcomed the opportunity of greater interpretation of the oyster hatchery that currently operates on the site to further increase tourism to the site.

*Potential for the hatchery to be involved in tourism elements – small tours, selling of oysters. Could lead to greater understanding of the importance of the hatchery, and greater acceptance of its presence. – Local business.*

There was also a level of support for the integration of cultural awareness programs and workshops into an interpretive centre, with some survey respondents wishing to see an emphasis on Indigenous led programs.

Some stakeholders also supported the idea of operating **guided tours** throughout the site, offered out of the museum/interpretive centre as a way of generating income. One community group also suggested these tours would be beneficial in generating employment for veterans, who often find it difficult to find employment in the region; however, as one group noted, these would need to be appropriately managed to reduce any environmental impacts.

In addition to the educational element, the museum or interpretive centre was seen as an opportunity to provide employment within the community, especially when paired with a small café / kiosk. Others envisaged that such a centre would be manned by volunteers, with one stakeholder also suggesting that such a centre may be a way to get local high school students involved in the local community through volunteering and educational experiences.

### **5.1.3.2 Educational and Research Facilities**

Building on the museum and interpretive centre concept, nearly 20% of survey respondents in addition to local environmental groups outlined that they would like to see the site used for educational and research purposes.

*A world class Interpretive Centre demonstrating this interaction and interdependence, closely linked to the field studies centre will provide visitors and students with a comprehensive insight into the natural and cultural history of the area. A well-considered and appointed Interpretive Centre will provide teaching and learning opportunities for students, teachers and visitors – Environmental Group.*

*There are historical, cultural, physical elements which can provide a lot of educational opportunities for many students, both primary & secondary students – Survey respondent.*

*Education is important at any age, and this would be a wonderful place for school children to visit and learn many aspects of their surrounds – Survey respondent.*

*A residential marine educational centre for school children to experience and learn about the marine environment – Survey respondent.*

*An Educational Centre which may consist of Indigenous Education and Learning, a Marine or Geographical Education Centre -By delivering education of these topics it will benefit the community's knowledge and respect of the topics and will allow for widespread understanding, inclusivity, and acknowledgement of any of the topics suggested – Survey respondent.*

*This could be a first-of-its-kind education centre to draw together all those elements that make the place so spectacular, and to highlight them for visitors including school and tour groups. This would bring greater tourism to the area – Survey respondent.*

*The facility could transition into an adjunct of one of the universities that caters for marine sciences, perhaps in conjunction with the marine research centre at Taylors Beach. This could also include facilities for schools to visit with aquariums and touch pools etc. – Survey respondent.*

Additionally, the opportunity for the site to be converted to **educational school camp facilities**, in which school students could visit the site, and stay overnight was considered a positive use of the site. Some stakeholders believed that this would provide income/funding for management of the site and provide further employment opportunities.

*School excursions as the cabins offer dormitory facilities. Education and recreation opportunities – Survey respondent.*

*Schools book to stay and learn about the history and cultures of the area and enjoy the location with activities – Survey respondent.*

*School learning research camp. Schools book to stay and learn about the history and cultures of the area and enjoy the location with activities – Survey respondent.*

*Accommodation to be kept for school groups/ educational visitation in campus style accommodation. This may even bring with it government support for school camp funding. – Environmental group.*

An Indigenous stakeholder expanded on this idea, commenting that the inclusion of an 'on Country classroom' location would be beneficial.

*A precinct for specialised training and development (e.g., TAFE or university) that could benefit from the 'on Country classroom' location – Indigenous stakeholder.*

Additionally, some stakeholders commented on their desire for the site to be used for **marine research**, particularly if there were opportunities for partnership with educational institutions such as local schools or universities. For instance, St Phillips Christian College has subjects in marine science and the University of Newcastle offers courses in coastal and marine science and has a dedicated research group which undertakes research to support the sustainable use and conservation of the living resources and environments of coasts, catchments and marine environments. The group has established partnerships for research and consultancies with state, national and international agencies and community environmental organisations; with external funding also received from local councils, federal and state government departments and numerous environmental committees. The Port Stephens Fisheries Institute (PSFI) is also located at Taylors Beach.

*Developing marine science classes for children, Aboriginal cultural programming for students and visitors to the region, all this could be developed under the right model to deliver significant benefit to community, visitors and the regional economy.*

*The primary use I support is a Marine Discovery/Education/Research Centre.*

*Public awareness and education about the Marine Park and its unique ecosystems. Educational opportunities for high school and university students.*

*The oyster hatchery should stay. It may offer opportunities for marine research – Survey respondent.*

*The facility could transition into an adjunct of one of the universities that caters for marine sciences, perhaps in conjunction with the marine research centre at Taylors Beach – Survey respondents.*

*It also lends itself to supporting independent marine research for all NSW universities, none of whom have access to the range of marine habitat available in the Port Stephens estuary and near offshore for undertaking the research needed to better understand the changes implicated with climate change and other pressing marine research needs.*



It was also noted that existing research had previously occurred on the site, particularly in relation to oyster propagation with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) entering into a collaborative agreement with Southern Cross Shellfish to improve supply of selectively bred oyster juveniles to the NSW oyster industry, given the facility's proximity to ocean seawater. One environmental group expanded on this, commenting that they believed oyster research should continue, regardless of future uses of the site.

*Research is currently undertaken on the site – its not published, but it is used within the oyster industry. It's usually around oyster propagation and genetic research in collaboration with fisheries – Local business.*

One community group commented that they would like to see the site used as a field study centre, like the Great Keppell Island Research Centre, that conducts research and conservation activities with local schools and universities, however they also recognised the shortfalls in this approach in ensuring the site remains accessible for the whole community.

*Field study centre – for community use. Same as Keppell Island – community groups can visit if they are members. Same as Heron Island – this would come with other access issues for community members who aren't members of the centre – Environmental group.*

Two local community groups also saw a benefit in using the site as a maritime training facility and marine craft construction facility in collaboration with TAFE NSW; with a further suggestion relating to ecological research.

*It is proposed to offer entry level maritime industry courses such as, General Purpose Hand, Cox'n and other common elements of commercial and recreational boating courses, e.g. survival at sea, etc. boat construction and design and engineering skills for the marine industry – Community Group.*

*A research facility to care and monitor the bush and animals that live nearby as well as educate about the indigenous communities that lived on this land-Indigenous awareness, eco system awareness as well as maintaining the 'small village feel' that shoal bay provides.*



## 5.1.4 Hospitality Venues

Whilst a significant number of community members involved in consultation did not want to see any large-scale development of the site, 23% of survey respondents and some local community groups would welcome a **café / kiosk** that would provide a meeting place and light refreshments and would complement other facilities on the site e.g., interpretive centre/museum.

*A cafe for locals and tourists to sit, relax and enjoy the beauty of the Bay – Survey respondents.*

*A café facility would complement the introduction of a museum or interpretive centre – Community group.*

*A cafe, for community socialisation – Survey respondent.*

*A café facility would be better than a coffee van in the car park as that comes with its own issues – litter especially – Environmental group.*



Others however felt that if opportunities for pop up stalls, coffee and food vans was available, then this may maintain a less developed feel to the site, as reflected in the following quote.

*Preferably opportunities for local stalls, coffee carts etc as a less permanent fixture, not only creating the feel of a not-so built-up area – Survey respondent.*



A smaller proportion of survey respondents suggested that a restaurant or dining precinct could also be considered, to facilitate employment opportunities and local economic benefits. Some outlined the potential to build on the presence of the oyster hatchery through the development of a seafood restaurant or Oyster Bay. However generally this was not as strongly favoured across consultation participants, with respondents outlining that Shoal Bay already has a range of existing dining options.

*Restaurant – money has to come from somewhere – get someone who will establish a name for the venue, which will attract people, and therefore revenue – Community group.*

*Seafood lunch taking in the sensational waterways. Sunset evening meals would be fantastic – Survey respondent.*

*Wouldn't like to see café / restaurant as it isn't appropriate for the site, and it would be in competition with other businesses in Shoal Bay – Environmental group.*

Other respondents commented that should a restaurant be considered on the site, that it should cater to the needs of the community broadly, in its pricing, not an 'elite few'. There were also suggestions made around integration of a small shop/shops, attached to a museum/interpretive centre, to add to the visitor experience.

## **5.1.5 Environmental**

### **5.1.5.1 Marine and Ecotourism Facilities**

The inclusion of marine and ecotourism facilities on the site was noted by 9% of respondents, who saw it as providing potential to increase tourism to the area, while also providing an educational experience for visitors. Given the placement of the site, it was considered by some to be a perfect spot to have a marine sanctuary.

*Dolphin / turtle sanctuary – Survey respondent.*

*Shop fronts to promote oyster industry, fishing industry, whale and dolphin care and promotion – Survey respondent.*

*ECO-TOURISM HUB; short walks (with or without guides), snorkelling and SCUBA tours – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders supported the integration of an aquarium facility into the space to facilitate both tourism and education, given the location of the site.

*Potentially have an aquarium, and cafe to draw people out to the space. An aquarium/marine rescue centre will educate community and visitors on the importance of marine conservation and use – Survey respondent.*

*An aquarium/marine rescue centre will educate community and visitors on the importance of marine conservation and use – Survey respondent.*

*The primary use I support is a Marine Discovery/Education/Research Centre to increase public awareness and education about the Marine Park and its unique ecosystems – Survey respondent.*

*An aquarium such as the one at Palm Beach Noumea with a turtle hatching ground, touch pools, shark education and a section which showcases the flora and fauna at Fly Point the Southernmost coral reef in Australia – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders also commented that the site could provide facilities to care for other flora and fauna, including Koalas, suggesting opportunities for collaboration with other sanctuaries in the area.

*Ability to stock and preserve Koalas and many other marsupials, and if we now construct the underwater viewing room from there in the appropriate way, (The Anna Bay Koala site might be moved to Tomaree sensibly?) – Survey respondent.*

*I think it could be used for educating our visitors about the special marine environment of the area, the koala populations in the area etc, native plants and other wildlife – Survey respondent.*

*Eco tourism, permanent rangers, learning and educational space – Survey respondent.*



### 5.1.5.2 Environmental Rehabilitation & Preservation

Given the site's high environmental value, 8% of survey respondents wanted to see rehabilitation and preservation of the environment, with some suggesting that buildings on the site without heritage value could be removed to rehabilitate the site to its more natural form. This was also commonly reflected on by local Environmental groups.

*Rehabilitate the land for bushwalkers and animal habitat - Survey respondent.*

*Rejuvenate the area with endemic plants, and the animals will follow – Survey respondent.*

*I would like to see the area planted with trees and shrubs native to the area – Online submission, community member.*

*As for the other buildings, maybe they could be demolished and allow nature to return to these spaces? – Survey respondent.*

*Would like to see some building demolished and not reconstructed. Military buildings should remain and be repurposed – Environmental group.*

*The property should continue to be available for passive community/ visitor recreation with suitable areas considered for regeneration of the area's original vegetation – Survey respondent.*

*Support the planting of additional trees – there was removal of a large tree that a lot of people valued [Weeping tree to the north of the site] - Environmental group.*

Furthermore, a number of stakeholders requested to see the site integrated with the bordering Tomaree National Park, believing this would be beneficial in ensuring protection of the natural values of the site, as well as other heritage values.

*This whole area should be converted to National Park so it can be protected and maintained as a nature reserve with historic and Aboriginal significance – Survey respondent.*

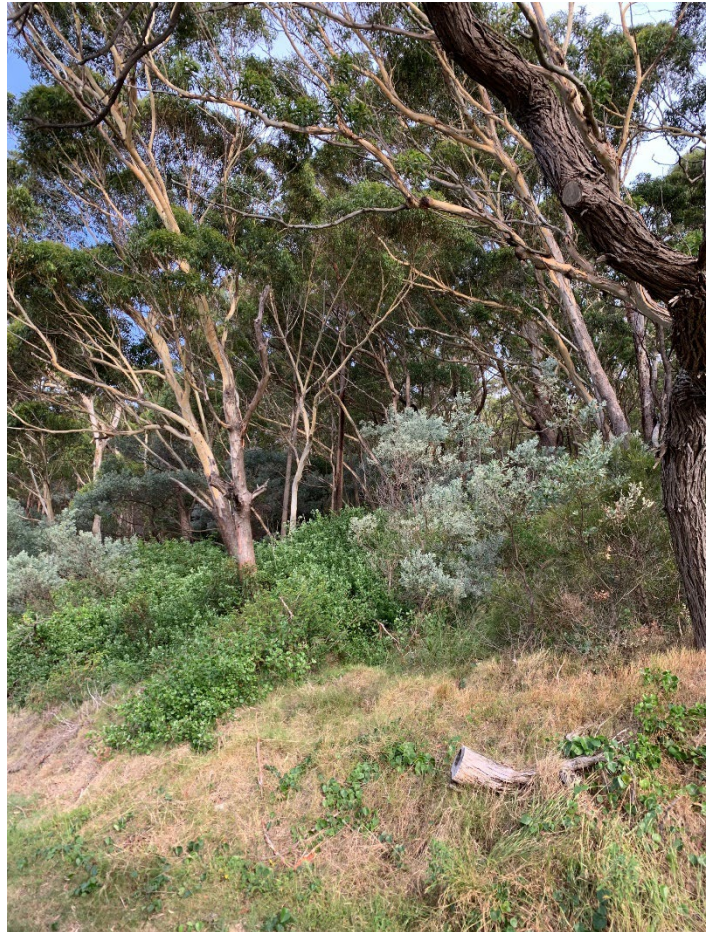
*The land should be incorporated/merged as part of the National Park and funding given to National Parks to restore and maintain the site – Survey respondent.*

Local community and environmental groups commented on the ongoing need for weed management on the site, with one group commenting that this is already a large issue that will need professional attention, rather than relying on local volunteers.

*Will need some sort of contract management for weed control – Environmental group.*

*Bitous bush is an issue in the area at the moment. Some domestic plants have also spread through the site.*

*There will need to be weed management – Community group.*



Some stakeholders also commented on the benefits tree planting could offer in the creation of additional shade along the site for recreational uses into the future.

*Planting of strong substantial trees like those at Little Beach, to provide shade for picnicking and to withstand onshore winds – Online submission, community member.*

## 5.1.6 Jetty / Pontoon

Four percent of survey respondents, and some local community groups also saw potential benefit in the reinstatement of a boat jetty / pontoon to facilitate the operation of a ferry service, linking to the existing ferry service to Tea Gardens and to complement current cruising options in the Bay. A key advantage noted in this regard was reduced traffic to and from the site.

*Reinstate the jetty so people can come to the headland via public transport – Survey respondent.*

*Support the use of a ferry / pontoon – could incorporate with the Tea Gardens route, or even dolphin watching cruises (a pick up/drop off service) – Community group.*

*Perhaps also a private boat jetty for visitors to take boat trips around the bay and Yacaaba- Visitors appreciate the beauty of the area as well as the history – Survey respondent.*

*Access could also be given to water craft via a jetty, which could be available to all non-motorised watercraft and a local ferry operator – Survey respondent.*

*Pontoon would support tourism – Community group.*

While some stakeholders believed that a jetty or marina type facility could increase economic activity in the area, others questioned the economic viability of this option, given the presence of existing services in the area and potential impacts on the marine environment.

*The potential for a pontoon at the start of the site (maybe moving national parks entrance) would be good – Environmental group.*

*Small marina which could charge boats for staying on overnight or similar – Survey respondent.*



*Cost of a jetty – would like to see one built, but this would be a large expense – Environmental group.*

*Pontoon would add to the experience of the site and waterways. Would be concern around if this is financially viable – Lake Macquarie ferry service recently stopped after year trial as it wasn't – Environmental Group.*

*Jetty will only add to ongoing maintenance costs, would also involve a hefty start-up cost. Also brings the question of who will dock there – private companies, open for recreational users (pleasure craft won't bring in a return)? Also question of financial viability - The ferry service to Tea Gardens barely breaks even – Environmental group.*

*I am very much opposed to the idea of rebuilding the pier at the Tomaree Lodge (an idea put forward by the Friends of the Tomaree Headland) and allowing water taxi services to operate. The area is home to small penguins, and many dolphins. Please help us protect its natural beauty and wildlife, which is its biggest tourist draw. It is also a great area for swimming – Online submission, community member.*

## 5.1.7 Tourist Accommodation

The desire for tourist accommodation on the site was considered a favourable option by 12% of survey respondents, however there was strong opposition by attendees at the pop up stall to seeing the site used for tourist accommodation (refer to **Figure 5.3**). Of those who did support the integration of tourist accommodation, there was a strong desire to see the heritage values of the site retained, including key heritage buildings, with The Quarantine Station at Manly, described as a possible example of how this could be achieved.

Boutique, or 5-star accommodation, was perceived by some respondents as a way of increasing tourist visitation to the area and generating income to assist in maintaining the site. Others however were strongly opposed to such an idea, commenting that the site should not be overdeveloped.

*Buildings retained and upgraded for boutique accommodation with profits put back into maintenance and management of the area to attract more visitors and tourists – Survey respondent.*

*A casino or large resort would destroy the history. Would bring more people to an area where the infrastructure is barely holding on, encourage gambling, crime etc – Online submission, community member.*



There was slightly more support for differing accommodation options e.g., backpacker style accommodation, with stakeholders involved in meetings and surveys stating that the existing infrastructure on the site may be more suitable for this style of accommodation. Stakeholders also commented on the positive impact that this may provide for local businesses through local expenditure, as well as additional employment opportunities.

*Perhaps use the site as it always has been – low key accommodation i.e., backpackers or family units. Maybe should be a long-term lease to an operator, or co-operative type ownership with Worimi – Environmental group.*

*A well-planned back packer's lodge would bring some cultural diversity to the area. It would help improve the service culture so badly lacking in Port Stephens. It would provide a strong ROI for the government. Would bring economic benefits by attracting young international visitors – Survey respondent.*

*Possible backpacker accommodation could also assist shortage of hospitality workers for the local tourism economy – Survey respondent.*

Other respondents suggested that some accommodation facilities, such as caravan/camping facilities, may be helpful in catering to people completing the Tomaree Coastal Walk.

*Accommodation for hire as part of the Tomaree Coastal Walk - a final place to stay after the 20 km walk, starting at Birubi Point – Survey respondent.*

*Some sensitive glamping or cabin holiday accommodation an option – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders also wished to see short stay accommodation facilities for community groups, include fishing clubs and seniors groups; whilst a local community group also suggested the development and management of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) supported accommodation that may be more compatible with the natural values of the site.

*NPWS accommodation – similar to Byron Bay where they are really environmentally friendly and built into the natural environment of the site - Community group.*

### **5.1.8 Community Housing**

One-in-10 survey respondents outlined that they would like to see the site used for social housing, or to see the site returned to respite care for people in need.

The use of the site for palliative care and respite or for more vulnerable groups was noted, though some stakeholders identified constraints, particularly access to the site and other services.

*Domestic violence and homelessness shelter – though others are concerned about limited accessibility via public transport – Community group.*

*Tranquil and beautiful hospice or palliative care facility. A beautiful location to spend your last days. A rehabilitation facility – Survey respondent.*

*Respite for ex-military. Mental health hospital. Respite for families with children with disabilities – Survey respondent.*

*An ideal site for ex-servicemen with post-traumatic stress disorder given how beautiful it is – Indigenous Stakeholder.*

The potential use of the site as a homelessness shelter received media attention following Kate Washington, the state member for Port Stephens, publicly supporting this use (as noted in **Section 3.3**). A number of stakeholders, however, saw inherent drawbacks of using the site as a homelessness centre, commenting that there is limited public transport available to connect people with services and facilities within the community and may result in isolation.



### 5.1.9 Access, Lighting and Public Amenities

Given the desire to see more public events and facilities on the site, and space to enjoy the area for recreation, 4% of survey respondents noted the importance of appropriate **lighting** and **public amenities** including toilets and showers on the site.

*Decent public toilets – Survey respondent.*

*Increased quality and quantity of bathroom facilities – Survey respondent.*

For some stakeholders, this need was seen to be exacerbated given the high volume of visitors that access the Headland Summit, as well as an anticipated increase in visitors following the opening of the Tomaree Coastal Walk. Additionally, some stakeholders saw benefit in the introduction of public showers given the location near to the water, and the existing recreational uses of the site.

*Including indoor hot-showers for swimmers/snorkelers/divers – Survey respondent.*

*...Toilets/ showers as an enhancement to the available space! – Survey respondent.*

The need for increased access to rubbish bins was also raised by residents and local community groups alike, who commented on an ongoing battle with litter across the site given the lack of bins currently available, especially with the opening of the coffee van in the car park at the entrance to the Tomaree Lodge site.

*Updated amenities such as toilets and garbage bins so picnics etc can occur at point – Survey respondent.*

*It would also have toilets to accommodate those in need somewhere to drop off their litter – Survey respondent.*

Some stakeholders also expressed a desire for a water fountain located on the site, given the high volume of people that exercise at the site.

*Better toilet and water replenishment facilities could be provided – Survey respondent.*

When considering future uses of the site, the need to ensure the site is **accessible for vulnerable or more marginalised groups** in the community, including children, the elderly and those with a disability, was also raised. In this regard, stakeholders suggested that the site should be developed in a way that would encourage these groups to use the site, through the incorporation of appropriate amenities, golf carts for transport.

*Keep the area as public park space and make it a more accessible for disabled users – Survey respondent.*

*Seating areas particularly for elderly and those with disabilities - Survey respondent.*

*It needs to suit all ages and abilities – Survey respondent.*

*I'd like to see a cafe at the gunnery with a golf cart to pick up the elderly or those with a disability – Survey respondent.*



*There are a lot of old people in the community, we need to make sure they can still access the site – Community group.*

There was also a desire to improve community wellbeing through the provision of fitness and wellbeing classes for the elderly and youth in particular.

*Centre for Yoga, Taichi, Meditation and or other disciplines that will encourage especially elderly people to enjoy classes in a beautiful surrounds... Young Mothers will enjoy a lovely place to encourage their children to love books and the interaction between them with a library just for them – Survey respondent.*

*Health and Fitness centre with indoor and outdoor pool. Classes can be run for the elderly members of the community - Survey respondent.*

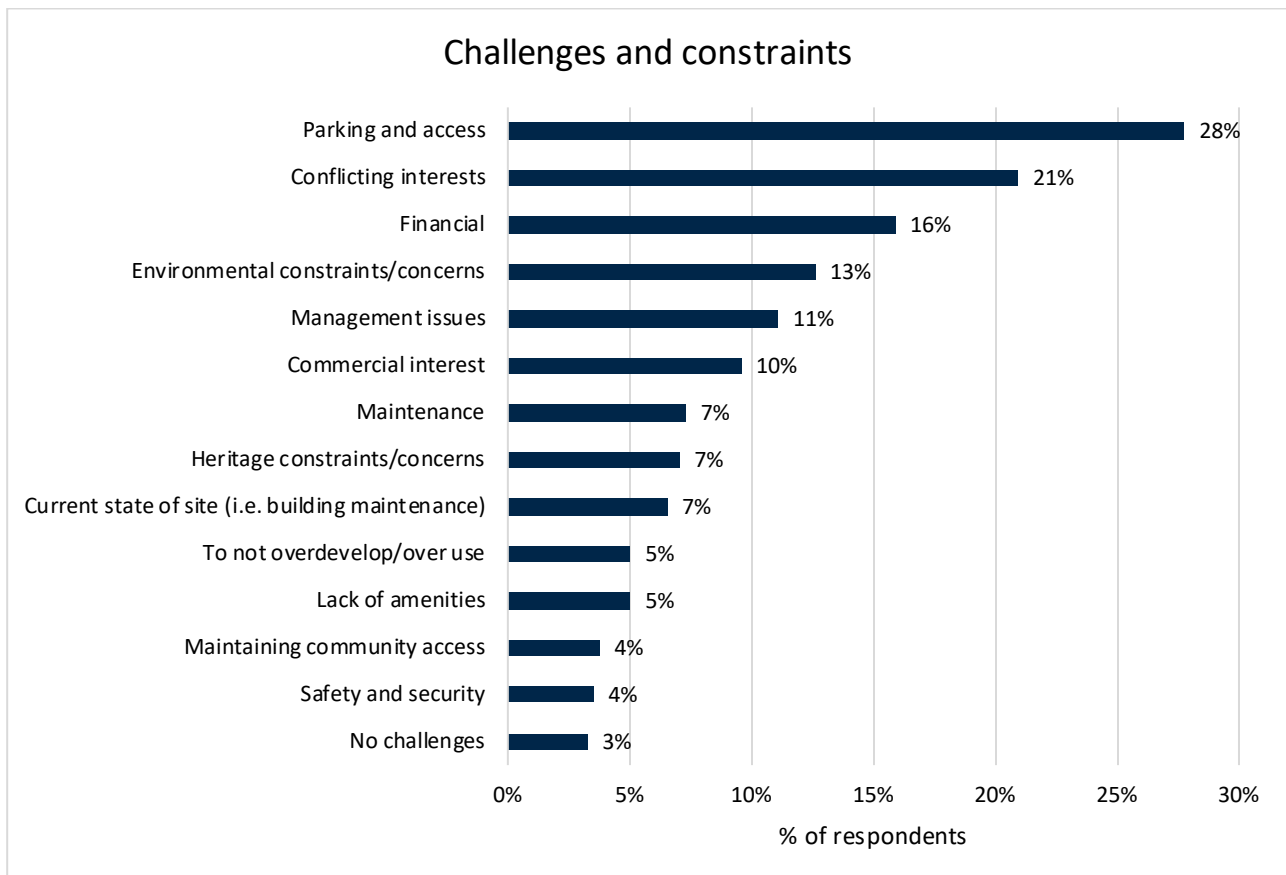
*Our youth will be busier and driven to gather socially with peers in an enjoyable, safe environment. Mental health issues may be alleviated resulting in happier, healthier individuals and families – Survey respondent.*

Overall, it was suggested that the thoughtful integration of these amenities and programs would benefit the mental and physical wellbeing of particular groups, and the whole community.

*Place to improve mental health for all of the community – Survey respondent.*

## 5.2 Challenges and Constraints

Through consultation, stakeholders were also asked to name what they would consider to be the main challenges or constraints that may impact future uses of the site. As identified in **Figure 5.5**, survey respondents identified key challenges including parking and access, conflicting interests i.e., ensuring uses that meet wide ranging community interests, financial constraints (including commercial interests, and maintenance concerns), and environmental constraints and heritage concerns. People also expressed the desire to protect the site from overdevelopment and maintain community access, amenities, safety, and security. These challenges have been categorised, and further explored in the following sections.



**Figure 5.5 Challenges and Constraints (unprompted; online and hard copy surveys)**

Total number of respondents (n=396). Multiple responses allowed.  
Source; Umwelt, 2023.

## 5.2.1 Parking and Access

More than a quarter of stakeholders (28%) identified an existing lack of sufficient car parks to cater to the high numbers of people seeking to access the site. Some stakeholders reflected that the area already experiences high visitation numbers which is only expected to increase with the completion of the Tomaree Coastal Walk, and with any further development that may occur at the site.

*As a local I find I can't visit the site over peak periods as I can't park anywhere nearby and the traffic is a huge issue. I would hate to see that worsen - or see more areas of this beautiful spot become a car park – Survey respondent.*

*There are already a fair number of parking spaces and a few more could be added. Please remember, the road to the Tomaree Lodge is a cul-de-sac, and traffic in the summer is already bad, we do not need anything grand to be built - Online submission, community member.*

*Access is probably the biggest challenge as parking is very limited. The headland including the Tomaree Lodge site already attracts thousands of people every week. Soon the Tomaree Coastal walk will be completed which will attract even more people. Other means of access need to be examined and evaluated – Survey respondent.*

*The Tomaree Headland and Zenith Beach area is already the most visited tourist attraction in Port Stephens and with the introduction of the Tomaree Coastal Walk will provide even greater appeal and challenge. Development of a Public Transport and Parking management plan will be crucial. It will be important to not have large scale events – Survey respondent.*

*Carparking is a challenge. The boom gate needs to be relocated further down the road which would open up carparking availability. Presently many people turn back to Shoal Bay if they don't get a park in the small area out the front entrance – Survey respondent.*

Both parking and access concerns were seen to be exacerbated in holiday seasons and during the summer months, given an increase in the visitor population during these times. In this regard, a number of stakeholders reflected on the challenges currently experienced when moving through Shoal Bay to the Tomaree Lodge site. Stakeholders also commented that should any community events or performances occur at the Tomaree Lodge Site, parking issues would likely be exacerbated.

*Parking – huge problem to attract people, traffic in Shoal Bay chaotic bow in tourist season – Survey respondent.*

*Accessibility. Driving into Shoal Bay at peak season is a nightmare with gridlock traffic. Could another road be developed to take traffic to Fingal Bay this helping shoal bay local traffic. Limited parking may also be an issue – Survey respondent.*

*Access will be a major issue, especially in peak holiday times. The traffic is at a standstill during holiday times. Water access might be a good option – Survey respondent.*

*Traffic and parking – would be chaos if a community event was organised – Environmental group.*

One stakeholder also reflected on the potential secondary issues an increase in traffic in the area would bring, explaining a recent scenario whereby local traffic had resulted in a delay in emergency services being able to access their property.

*There is already inadequate road access to and from Shoal/Tomaree/Fingal Bay for the volume of traffic. Government needs to first resolve the ongoing issue of road congestion before adding new public amenities - as it brings our roads almost to standstill at times. As residents living just beyond Shoal/Tomaree- a personal example of the current impact is the extended time it took for an ambulance to attend my father on Fingal Beach (over an hour) during last Easter holidays... – Survey respondent.*

Given these concerns, it is unsurprising some stakeholders wish to see the site used to increase parking facilities within the area (see **Figure 6.4**). Some stakeholders commented they would like to see existing car parking spaces on the site opened to the public, whilst others wished to see the construction of additional parking. One community group strongly opposed the construction of additional parking, commenting that it would take away open green space within the site, negatively impacting the environment.

Some stakeholders suggested metered parking to help cover the costs associated with the site, with one stakeholder suggesting a parking system similar to Palm Beach, whereby visitors to the area pay a parking fee, whereas the fee is waived for local residents.

*Put in Meter Parking for Holiday Seekers to help cover the costs – Survey respondent.*

Various local community and environmental groups suggested that rather than increasing parking, a bus turn around bay, or a shuttle service should be prioritised and introduced, with the suggestion this should be an electric vehicle to reduce emissions. These ideas are further explored in **Section 5.2.1**, as a way to mitigate challenges and constraints that may be associated with future uses of the site.

*Transport is a massive issue in that part of town – a bus turn around bay would be a good addition – Community group.*

*Wouldn't be opposed to first 100 m of site going to traffic management – perhaps a shuttle, however this would be hard to manage effectively. May require contribution from tourism associated businesses – Environmental group.*

*Small electric minibus (ecofriendly) to minimise need for car parking – Environmental group.*

While some stakeholders welcomed the idea of reinstating a jetty/pontoon from which a ferry service could operate, others saw drawbacks in this approach.

*The plan for developing a jetty also has inherent drawbacks and will have limited capacity for delivering the number of visitors that would be required if the area is to concentrate on being a tourism visitor precinct – Survey respondent.*

Two local community groups commented that they would like to see the development of a traffic masterplan moving forward to ensure traffic impacts are appropriately managed.

*Need to consider future traffic masterplans, but this shouldn't be done before understanding potential uses for the site, and visitation numbers – Environmental group.*

Additionally, stakeholders commented on the **lack of services and amenities** near the site, and the challenges this may create should the site be repurposed to attract more visitors. As discussed in **Section 5.1.3**, stakeholders identified the need for increased access to amenities, regardless of future uses of the site.

*Ensure appropriate and adequate facilities are available. Examples: Toilets, Parking, Seating – Survey respondent.*

*They need more public toilets. We've needed to rush back to the one near the boat ramp many times almost having accidents. As it's at least a 15 min walk – Survey respondent.*

*Provision of suitable facilities such as toilets, shade and picnic areas. Provision of footpaths suitable for people with disabilities – Survey respondent.*

## 5.2.2 Funding and Management

Issues relating to obtaining appropriate funding for site redevelopment was raised as a constraint by 16% of survey respondents. Survey respondents also flagged concerns around maintenance (7% of respondents) and management (11% of respondents). A shared theme in feedback was that the heritage status of buildings on the site made their future repurposing and use a potentially expensive undertaking.

*There will always be need for funding and maintenance of anything that is put there, the more appealing the more people, and hence more and consistent maintenance and funding will be required – Survey respondent.*

*If no commercial use is available then funding any change of use, maintenance and operations will be difficult – Survey respondent.*

*Cost of maintaining existing infrastructure – Survey respondent.*

*Cost and upkeep will be a challenge – Survey respondent.*

*Financial viability. Any future uses would require an initial investment – where is this money to come from? - Environmental group.*

In this regard, some stakeholders felt that there would be a need for some commercial investment, but achieving a balance between commercial activity and community benefit would be a key challenge in planning for the site.

*Finding the finance for necessary improvements and maintenance, without alienating too much of it for private use, and without spoiling the environment – Survey respondent.*

*...There is also likely to be pressure to ensure that the site is capable of producing enough revenue via fees and commercial activities to meet the costs of maintaining and enhancing the site... – Survey respondent.*

*Risk of large-scale development and also endeavouring to make it financially sustainable – Survey respondent.*

*Finances and having the correct investor that has the community's interests at heart. We don't want a big commercial, skyrise building. Rather to preserve the current area with just a few enhancements.*

*Upgrading or development without commercial involvement. There should be no commercial involvement.*

*Keeping profit making entrepreneurs out. Avoiding development other than to enhance what's already here. Vested interests interfering and wanting to over-commercialise and/or re-develop the site which is much loved and cherished by the local community and all our visitors.*

*It is very valuable land that some group may seek to develop inappropriately against the community's wishes.*

*Large corporations wanting to invest with alternative motivations.*

*Such commercial operations may not always be compatible with the heritage and ecological values of the property and may constrain community access to parts of the site.*

Furthermore, conflicting stakeholder interests, and the need to ensure the balance of these interests, was considered to be a key challenge by 21% of survey respondents. The perceived conflicting interests varied in nature, with some stakeholders commenting on the conflicting interests of locals and tourists, whilst others commented more directly on the competing interests of various community groups and prominent figures in the community. There was also a view that government 'red tape' may further hinder development of the site.

*Bureaucratic red tape, dominance of minority groups' views/priorities & state election getting in the way of real & inclusive broad community benefit – Survey respondent.*

*Government bureaucracy and red tape. Getting unanimous agreement on purposeful use for site – Survey respondent.*

*Balancing what everyone wants – Survey respondent.*

*Making a multi-use facility that attempts to satisfy everyone – Survey respondent.*

*Trying to please all invested in it – Survey respondent.*

Throughout the consultation program, participants referred positively to the commitment by the Government to maintain the site in community hands. However, it was emphasised that this needed to be for the benefit of the local community, maintaining access for all, and that any future use of the site should also be determined with consideration of the broader Shoal Bay area.

Further discussion of potential management approaches, as identified by consultation participants, is further explored in **Section 6.1**.

### 5.2.3 Environmental Concerns / Constraints

A total of 13% of survey respondents noted that the site's environmental values could be a potential constraint on the repurposing of the site, emphasising that any future development should not impede the local environment.

*Any development needs to be sensitive to the environment and limit impacts upon it – Survey respondent.*

*Access to the site that doesn't cause environmental damage – Survey respondent.*

*Challenge would be keeping the place as low impact for the environment. We must not do anything to destroy the paradise that is Shoal Bay – Survey respondent.*

*Development will push up prices, push out locals and cause immense damage to the environment – Survey respondent.*

*Balancing the tourist growth and not harming the environment but still gaining enough revenue to support the upkeep of the area – Survey respondent.*

The potential for an increase in tourism, given potential uses of the site, to negatively impact the environment was also noted, with particular reference made to littering, and degradation of the natural environment both on the site and in the Tomaree National Park. Stakeholders outlined the importance of ensuring an appropriate balance to be achieved in this regard.

*Visitation is already high and is already placing pressure on the headland – higher rates of litter and environmental degradation – Environmental group.*

*High visitation numbers are already a concern for the natural environment. People walk off paths and litter – Environmental group.*

*The water pollution & environmental damage if it is over commercialised. Number of tourists visiting the space needs to be controlled – Survey respondent.*

*...Destruction of the wildlife and natural environment and national park area and disrespecting the local community and history with massive tourism polluting the area – Survey respondent.*

*Destruction of the wildlife and natural environment and national park area and disrespecting the local community and history with massive tourism polluting the area – Survey respondent.*

*Rubbish left behind reduction of the peaceful environment for people and wildlife – Survey respondent.*

*Overuse and rubbish left behind. Some groups may use it inappropriately e.g. camping and overnight stays when it's not permitted – Survey respondent.*

*... Keeping it (the area) rubbish free – Survey respondent.*



A number of respondents did not want to see any future potential uses impacting on the tranquillity and peacefulness of the area due to noise pollution (from activities on the site or as a result of increased traffic).

*Remove tranquillity, damage land – Survey respondent.*

*That we lose the natural beauty and quietness by making it a known tourist spot – Survey respondent.*

*...Destruction of the ambience and serenity... – Survey respondent.*

## 5.2.4 Heritage and Cultural Constraints

Seven per cent of survey respondents saw the heritage status of the site as a possible constraint to repurposing or development, with some commenting they would like to see non-heritage listed buildings demolished to ensure a more focused approach to maintenance. Others, felt that adding “modern structures” would “detract from the heritage buildings”.

*I think the most historically significant buildings should be kept and other structures less relevant, or less useful to the community, should be demolished so that maintenance funding can be more focussed – Survey respondent.*

Other stakeholders reflected that there is an ongoing need to ensure infrastructure on the site is retained to reflect the military heritage of the site, however there was a recognition by some that attempting to retain all the heritage value, whilst still allowing access to the site, may become a challenge moving forwards.

*The current dwellings should be retained for their WW2 heritage. Any change or alterations will diminish the memories of the brave men and women that defended Australia during its time of need – Survey respondent.*

*Keeping the culture and military significance of the area maintained whilst keeping it open to the public for use – Survey respondent.*

Whilst individuals recognised the importance of maintaining the heritage significance of the site, others noted the current state of the buildings to be a constraint moving forward, given the need for “major structural repairs” if they are to be repurposed.

*They would need to be completely rebuilt if restaurants / Coffee shops were to be incorporated – Survey respondent.*

*Existing buildings are unlikely to be fit for purpose for a future use and are likely to need to be demolished – Survey respondent.*

*Heritage listing of buildings – will require a lot of maintenance. Some structures already dilapidated. Suggest an effort put into photographing and placing these in an interpretive centre, rather than seeking to maintain all – Environmental group.*

Additionally, stakeholders raised concerns regarding the materials used in original construction of the buildings e.g. asbestos and subsequent costs of removal.

*Significant work to structures. Possibly asbestos – Survey respondent.*

*The mould, the asbestos, the fact it originally closed because of the expenses of keeping the place open – Survey respondent.*

*Architectural design of the site will become an issue – little thought put into it. Also concerned about building material used (i.e. asbestos) – Environmental group.*

This was also raised as needing consideration for any party involved in future management of the site:

*Need to complete sufficient matters of due diligence to ensure that unexpected or unforeseen issues are not passed on to any potential management body.*

Some stakeholders at the community pop-up stalls also reflected that the longer the decision-making process is drawn out, the more this will impact the capacity of the existing buildings to be used given existing and any further degradation e.g., the walkway and rock wall.

Despite recognising the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage associated with the site, only a small number of stakeholders saw this as a constraint to future use. There was a strong belief that appropriate cultural heritage assessments and archaeological surveys should be undertaken, as well as ongoing consultation with Traditional Owners to ensure cultural heritage values are identified and any culturally significant sites and artefacts appropriately managed.

*Archaeological surveys should be done – there would be a lot of things here we don't know about and these should be discovered, and interpreted – Environmental group.*

## 6.0 Potential Management Approaches

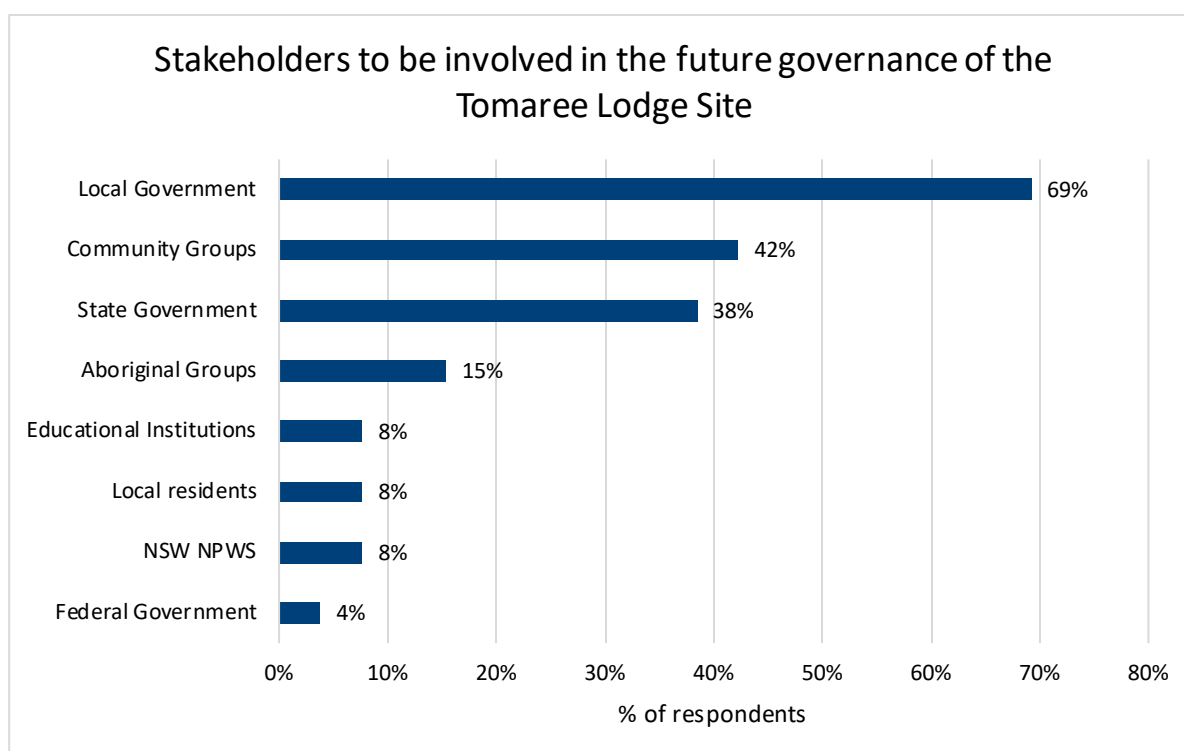
This section outlines potential management approaches, including key stakeholders to be involved, as identified by consultation participants. The section also presents a number of case studies, identified during the consultation process, which have potential synergies with the Tomaree Lodge site, to investigate potential management models and approaches.

### 6.1 Community Identified Management Models

As part of the consultation program, participants at pop-up events were asked to consider how they would like to see the site managed in the future and who should be involved.

As outlined in **Figure 6.1**, people noted local government, community groups and state government as key stakeholders to be involved in the future governance of the site, followed by Aboriginal groups. Support for local government involvement was also reflected in a number of stakeholder meetings. However, there was also a view that the state government should continue to contribute to ongoing maintenance costs and that the site should not be a burden to council or impact on local taxpayers.

*Need to make sure it isn't a burden for PSC. Any Trust should have both local and state government interest / investment - Community group.*



**Figure 6.1 Stakeholders to be involved in the future governance of the Tomaree Lodge Site<sup>4</sup> (unprompted; hard copy survey)**

*Number of respondents (n=26). Multiple responses allowed.  
Source: Umwelt (2023).*

<sup>4</sup> NSW NPWS has been separated from other State Government Departments as they were specifically mentioned, by both respondents to the surveys, as well as multiple community groups.

There was also support by some environmental groups consulted, to see the site **integrated into the Tomaree National Park**, with one group commenting that “*a unified management framework is needed that is seamless across the headland and is compatible with a national park setting*”. While some felt this could be achieved by full integration into the National Park, others felt that the development of a Regional Park may be more appropriate.

*The site should be integrated with NPWS to see it managed as a whole headland, rather than separate entities – Environmental group.*

*Hand the site over to National Parks and incorporate into the Tomaree Coastal walk project – Survey respondent.*

*Perhaps it could be a Regional Park – NPWS would then provide assurance that it is managed in a particular way that would also make sure it’s not a detriment to them – Environmental group.*

The **joint management of the site with an Aboriginal group** was also supported by some community groups, as well as by the Indigenous stakeholders consulted.

*Maybe a cooperative partnership with Worimi – they would have had ideas for the site when they put in the land claim – Environmental group.*

*Co-management with Worimi – to support Indigenous employment. Worimi Conservation Lands is a good example as to how this could be done. Indigenous connection means Worimi deserves more than one seat at the table – important for any sort of social justice moving forward – Environmental group.*

Such a model was also supported by NPWS, who were supportive of seeing greater Aboriginal involvement in parks management.

*NPWS is currently consulting with Aboriginal custodians on a new joint management model that could see title to all national parks returned to Aboriginal custodians over the next 15-to-20 years. This includes Tomaree National Park.*

*NPWS recognises that the Yacaaba Head-Tomaree Head landscape holds deep spiritual significance for the local Worimi people and acknowledge the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council’s desire to take a greater role in managing the Tomaree Lodge site in order protect their Country and benefit the Aboriginal community. NPWS considers that a desirable outcome of the current consultation would be for the Aboriginal custodians to be closely involved in decisions about the future of the site.*

A representative from an Indigenous stakeholder group also commented that they would like to see the site reconnected with land currently managed by Worimi LALC to restore connection to Country.

*We want to restore the connectivity from Worimi Conservation Lands > National Park > Tomaree Head – Indigenous stakeholder.*

A local environmental group also identified the opportunity for further involvement by Landcare on the site.

*Landcare may be interested in taking on some of the areas within the site, but this may require the establishment of another Landcare group in Shoal Bay (there are currently two). East Shoal Bay Landcare currently service the area up to the Lodge's boom gate. There is a lot of community interest in land care, and a lot of volunteers in the Bay. There would need to be collaboration with NPWS – Environmental group.*

A number of community groups consulted supported the development of a **Community Management Trust**.

*Early management arrangement/trust should be put in place. It's currently well maintained and would like to see this continued in the initial stages of planning as well. – Community group.*

*A community trust – then need to have a call put out for the design, construction, and operation of the site – Community group.*

*We're aware that there will need to a professional structure to manage the site – similar to South West Rocks and Diamond Head - Community group.*

The THHG was also supportive of this mechanism, as outlined in their *Concept Management Plan*.

*Establishment of some form of Management Trust [would operate] under the oversight of a State authority with representation from significant stakeholder interests including: Port Stephens Council; NPWS; The local Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council and; Community Organisations represented by THHG.*

Some stakeholders did however hold concerns that a Community Management Trust would struggle with the ongoing costs to maintain the site; with feedback highlighting the need for a reliable income source to ensure the success of this management approach.

*Community trust established – but this will need to make money, so business operation on the site will be essential – Community group.*

*Costs associated with any sort of museum would be a concern moving forward – even if it was a trust, there would need to be a lot of economic generation to make a museum viable as it itself wouldn't bring in enough money – Community group.*

*Site would need a professional management structure – managed by an organisation which would be led by one person, and still be funded by government – Community group.*

It was also noted that there would be a need for a comprehensive management plan and framework for future management be developed.

*Need a comprehensive management plan so people know what can and can't be done with the site. One person responsible for seeing the implementation of this plan once established – Community group.*

*Ensure that a framework for future site management and operations is developed concurrently to provide visibility and awareness of running costs and constraints to any potential management body – Local government.*

An Indigenous stakeholder envisaged that for the repurposing and redevelopment of the site to progress, a working group, made up of various stakeholder groups, should be established.

*That a formal Stakeholder Working Group is created to support a collaborative and inclusive forum, to develop the concept plan for the future of Tomaree. Anticipate this may include NSW Government (e.g., NSW Communities and Justice, NSW Crown Land, NSW National Parks and Wildlife, Aboriginal Affairs NSW), Port Stephens Council, WLALC, Registered Aboriginal Owners, Destination Port Stephens and other representatives of the Port Stephens Community (e.g., Tomaree Headland Heritage Group) – Indigenous stakeholder.*



Various state government departments, including Heritage NSW and the Department of Primary Industries, noted that they would like to be included in any future working group should one be created.

## 6.2 Future Use Case Studies

During consultation, several case studies were identified by participants as examples of effective repurposing and redevelopment of key sites around Australia. Each of these case studies is further discussed in the tables below, with details provided of the site location, history and current use, governance and management models utilised, with key synergies with the Tomaree Lodge site and learnings also identified where relevant.


### 6.2.1 Hungry Point, Sydney

	Description
<b>Site Location</b>	Cronulla, Sutherland Shire LGA, NSW
<b>History and current use</b>	<p>Located on the southernmost tip of the Cronulla Peninsular, the site has a rich Indigenous cultural heritage, with rock shelters and grinding grooves still present on the site. There is also documentation of an Aboriginal burial on the site.</p> <p>The site also has significant European heritage having been listed as a government reserve in 1843.</p> <p>In 1902, the site became home to a marine hatchery, which operated until 1914.</p> <p>Between 1938 and 2011, the site was used for research programs by the CSIR (now CSIRO) Fisheries Investigation Section. In 1985, the site was sold by the Commonwealth to the NSW Governments Fisheries Department.</p> <p>The site was also home to the Cronulla Migrant Hostel, which operated on the site from 1949 to 1967.</p> <p>Pedestrian access has remained on the site since 1977, and the State Government have committed to keeping the site open to the public, recognising it as being an important landmark with rich environmental, cultural and heritage values.</p> <p>Existing infrastructure on the site is currently used by Marine Rescue NSW and the Marine Stewardship Council on a yearly renewal basis.</p>


	Description
	 <p data-bbox="486 779 790 806">Source: (NSW Government, 2023)</p>  <p data-bbox="486 1323 965 1350">Source: (St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, 2017)</p>
<p data-bbox="164 1361 347 1429"><b>Governance and management</b></p>	<p data-bbox="486 1361 1396 1462">The site is currently managed by the Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager (formerly Trust). In 2012, the Hungry Point Trust was appointed to oversee the reserve following its closure as Australia’s first Fisheries Research Centre.</p> <p data-bbox="486 1469 1404 1599">In 2018 the Minister called for nominations to the Board, where he reappointed and appointed new members to the Hungry Point Reserve Trust for a 5-year term. In 2019, the Trust was renamed to the Hungry Point Land Manager because of changes by Crown Lands, and now consists of 11 committee members.</p> <p data-bbox="486 1606 1388 1706">A Strategic Masterplan, developed by the Land Manager and Sutherland Shire Council, has a focus on conserving and capitalising on the reserves environmental, cultural and heritage qualities. The Plan identifies future business planning models.</p>
<p data-bbox="164 1722 434 1789"><b>Synergies with Tomaree Lodge Site</b></p>	<ul data-bbox="486 1722 1412 1872" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="486 1722 1412 1789">• Currently owned by NSW Department of Primary Industries, a state government department.</li> <li data-bbox="486 1796 981 1830">• A rich Indigenous and European heritage.</li> <li data-bbox="486 1836 1077 1872">• Commitment to maintain public access to the site.</li> </ul>

	Description
Key learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents an example of an operating Land management trust, which incorporates committee members from various stakeholder groups.</li> <li>• The development of a Strategic Masterplan, which includes future business planning models, has been useful to understand the opportunities and risks associated with future use, and to ensure there is a clear understanding of the site's potential.</li> </ul>

## 6.2.2 Newington Armory, Sydney

	Description
Site Location	Sydney Olympic Park, City of Parramatta LGA, NSW
History and current use	<p>Newington Armory, located at Sydney Olympic Park was previously a Royal Australian Naval Armament Depot.</p> <p>The site consists of over 100 heritage buildings that include former army and navy ammunition storehouses, offices, and workshops (Lost Collective, 2023).</p> <p>In 1996, ownership of the site was transferred to the NSW Government in preparation for the 2000 Olympic Games. The site has now been incorporated into Sydney Olympic Park. In 2011, the site was added to the NSW State Heritage Register.</p> <p>The heritage of the site is currently on display through a heritage interpretation program, located in one of the heritage buildings. There are also regular tours held throughout the site.</p> <p>The cultural significance of the site was seen as important to retain and conserve throughout site development, as was conserving the natural heritage, enhancing visitor experience through education and interpretation, and enhancing visitor appreciation through improved facilities and access (Tanner Architects, n.d.).</p> <p>The site also contains an arts precinct, which includes an amphitheatre, artist studios and exhibition spaces, as well as an onsite café and recreational features including tunnel slides and a flying fox (Sydney Olympic Park, 2023).</p> <p>In 2013, it was estimated the site attracted roughly 2.6 million people annually.</p>  <p>Source: (Sydney Olympic Park, 2023).</p>



	Description
	 <p>Source: (Museums &amp; Galleries of NSW, n.d.).</p>
<b>Governance and management</b>	The site is currently managed by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority.
<b>Synergies with Tomaree Lodge site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich military history, and current state heritage listing.</li> <li>• Desire to enhance visitor experiences whilst visiting the site, with high tourist visitation numbers.</li> <li>• Represents an opportunity for use of heritage listed building as in interpretive museum, to provide an educational experience for visitors.</li> <li>• Utilisation of space for arts and cultural activities and events.</li> </ul>
<b>Key learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An example of how multiple uses can be integrated into a site, including museum (with tour programs), recreational spaces, arts and cultural centre and café.</li> <li>• Sites that have multiple uses can encourage community visitation, and in turn ongoing appreciation of the heritage of the site.</li> </ul>

### 6.2.3 Busselton Jetty, WA

	Description
<b>Site Location</b>	Busselton, City of Busselton LGA, WA
<b>History and current use</b>	<p>Busselton Jetty is a 1.8 km jetty extending across the waters of Geographe Bay, Western Australia (WA), located approximately 2.5 hours south of Perth.</p> <p>The jetty is the longest timber pile jetty in the Southern Hemisphere and was officially closed in 1973 after being operational for over a century.</p> <p>Following its closure, the state government ceased ongoing maintenance leading to a gradual decline of the jetty, which was further exacerbated by Cyclone Alby in 1978. The Busselton Jetty Environment and Conservation Association (BJECA) was formed to raise funds for restoration and maintenance of the site, raising enough funds between 1987 and 2003 to replace 50% of the jetty structure, establish the train service and construct the Underwater Observatory and Interpretive Centre.</p>

	Description
	<p>In 2011, the site went under a refurbishment equating to \$27 million. The WA Government contributed \$24 million to this amount, with the remaining funds contributed by the City of Busselton and BJECA.</p> <p>The Jetty remains a popular tourist destination and now includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Underwater Observatory – provides the opportunity for visitors to descend 8 m below the surface where the jetty piles create an artificial reef for visitor viewing.</li> <li>• Jetty Train – A 90 seat, solar powered electric tram that transports visitors to the end of the Jetty.</li> <li>• Interpretive centre – located at the beginning of the Jetty, the centre acts as a museum utilising interactive and creative technologies, as well as a gift shop.</li> <li>• Café – located at the end of the Jetty.</li> <li>• Pop up restaurant – the Underwater Observatory has been used for an Underwater Dining Experience for private events.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="486 801 1406 1312" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Source: (Busselton-Dunsborough Mail, 2019).</p> <div data-bbox="486 1350 1406 1917" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Source: (Busselton Jetty, 2023).</p>

	Description
<b>Governance and management</b>	<p>The Jetty is currently managed by the Busselton Jetty Inc, formerly the BJECA.</p> <p>Since its formation in 1987, the Busselton Jetty Inc. has relied on fundraising and donations for ongoing maintenance costs of the jetty.</p> <p>Fundraising has included an entry fee (which continues today), concerts, balls, and Jetty Markets.</p> <p>The Jetty Train also serves to generate income, with all proceeds from the Interpretive Centre and Underwater Observatory continuing to go to maintenance and enhancement of the site.</p>
<b>Key similarities with Tomaree Lodge site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial community involvement and investment in the outcomes of the site, with a clear objective of preservation. Formation of a community group.</li> <li>• Desire to enhance visitor experiences whilst visiting the site, with high tourist visitation numbers.</li> <li>• Opportunities for multiple uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Key learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the importance of having a community invested in ensuring the ongoing preservation and management of the site.</li> <li>• Opportunities to draw on fundraising, including admission fees to markets and facilities, to contribute to ongoing maintenance of the site.</li> <li>• Provides an example of government spending in collaboration with ongoing fundraising to benefit the site and the community.</li> </ul>

## 6.2.4 Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum

	Description
<b>Location</b>	Brewarrina, Brewarrina Shire LGA, NSW
<b>History and current use</b>	<p>The Museum overlooks national and state heritage listed fish traps. Whilst the exact age of the traps is unknown, it has been suggested that they are among some of the oldest man-made constructions in the world.</p> <p>The fish traps used stone walls to guide fish into holding ponds, where they were then caught.</p> <p>Today, guided walking tours are led by local Aboriginal people through the museum, fish traps, and state heritage listed ochre beds, explaining the significance of the site to visitors.</p> <p>The Museum runs programs for school groups, ranging from one-hour tours to weeklong camps.</p> <div data-bbox="486 766 1428 1281" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>Source: (Darling River Run, 2023).</i></p> <div data-bbox="486 1326 1428 1792" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>Source: (Darling River Run, 2023).</i></p>
<b>Governance and management</b>	Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum.

	Description
<b>Key synergies with Tomaree Lodge site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.</li> <li>• Ongoing connection to Country.</li> <li>• Heritage listed sites (cultural value).</li> </ul>
<b>Key learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents an opportunity for Aboriginal cultural tours throughout the site, and ongoing collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.</li> <li>• Opportunity for museum to showcase Aboriginal heritage, designed and interpreted in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.</li> </ul>

A number of the case studies presented have synergies with the Tomaree Lodge site, both in terms of future uses, and potential governance models. The case studies illustrate that:

- Maintaining heritage can be achieved whilst also opening the site for ongoing community use.
- There are opportunities for the integration of multiple uses on the site.
- Ongoing involvement of community groups can be beneficial in achieving desired outcomes.
- Ongoing collaboration with the local Aboriginal community to ensure culturally appropriate interpretations and learning is important.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Through the community consultation program, the NSW Government invited the community, interest groups, Aboriginal people and other stakeholders to share their ideas and suggestions for future uses of the Tomaree Lodge site.

Noting the mandate that the site be retained by the NSW Government for community, key themes in people's feedback include:

- There is a significant level of interest in the site from local residents and community groups, with a number of community groups having collaborated to engage the broader community, and develop future concepts for the site.
- The site is valued highly by residents and visitors to the area, with recreational, environmental, cultural and heritage values most frequently noted.
- Synergies exist across consulted participants in relation to the future use(s) of the site, with an emphasis placed on providing equitable access to all community members.
- There is a preference for the site to maintain its natural and important heritage features where possible.
- When considering what features should be included in the repurposed Tomaree Lodge site, there was no use that was cited by the majority of respondents.
- Strongest support was for:
  - A café/kiosk (cited by 23% of respondents).
  - Museum/interpretive centre (cited by 23% of respondents).
  - Educational and research facilities (cited by 23% of respondents).
  - Open space for community activities/events (cited by 18% of respondents).
  - Performing arts and cultural centre (cited by 16% of respondents).
  - Recreation trails (cited by 12% of respondents).
- Other suggestions included:
  - Existing heritage buildings could facilitate budget accommodation for students, families, backpackers, naturalists, rambblers etc.
  - That the site provides for multiples uses – research, education, community events – with opportunities for pop up style venues and/or development of a more formal amphitheatre.
  - That consideration be given as to how the site could facilitate multiple uses to generate multiple income streams.

- That consideration be given to the development of the old jetty to facilitate access by boat and complement other marine based activities.
- A preference for a management model that is community based e.g. Community Trust, with key stakeholder involvement, including that of Local Council.

## 8.0 Recommendations

Further to the above outcomes, the following recommendations are provided to further progress planning for the future use of the Tomaree Lodge site.

### 8.1 Further Assessment

A key piece of work requiring completion is the commissioning of a Cultural Values Assessment for the site, given the significance of the area to the local Worimi Aboriginal Community. This assessment should be completed in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community, including the Worimi LALC and Traditional Owners. In addition to tangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage should also be assessed.

Further Built Heritage assessments will also need to be undertaken to determine which buildings require restoration given their heritage significance. As previously noted in **Section 1.2**, the site is state heritage listed.

### 8.2 Further Engagement

#### 8.2.1 Community Feedback Sheet

Feedback is an important component of any consultation program, given the time and energy that is often expended by stakeholder groups, particularly community-based groups, and the high degree of community interest in the site. Such feedback assists in building trust in the process moving forward.

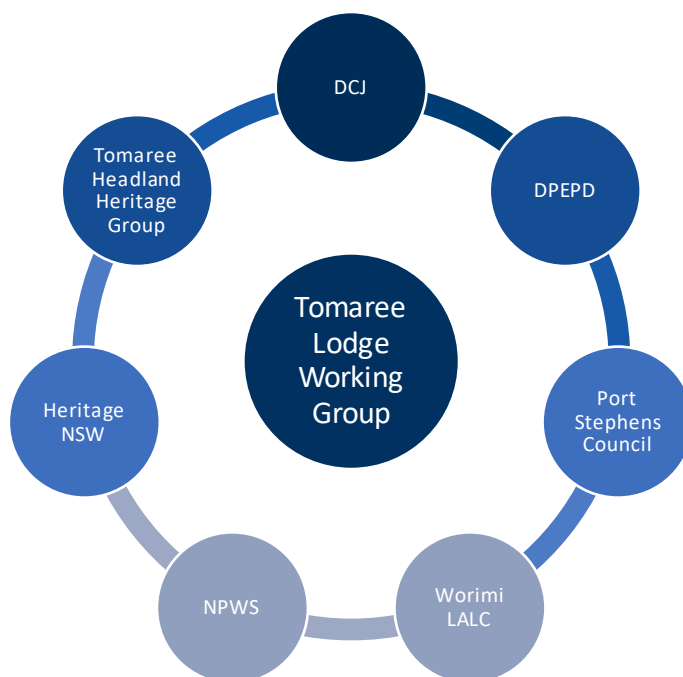
Consequently, it is proposed that a summary community feedback sheet be developed that summarises key aspects of the consultation program, including the themes emerging in relation to values and uses of the Tomaree Lodge site. This information sheet should also outline the next steps, albeit in a general sense, so that stakeholders are aware of next steps in the decision-making process and likely timeframes.

The information sheet should be distributed to all respondents that participated in the online and in-person surveys, personal interviews and through online submissions; with relevant content used to communicate more broadly through media articles/releases e.g., Port Stephens Examiner, to the wider Port Stephens community.

#### 8.2.2 Tomaree Lodge Working Group

It is also recommended that a **Tomaree Lodge Working Group** be established to help inform the ongoing planning for the Site. The working group should be structured to represent local key community groups with an interest in the site and relevant government agencies as depicted in the following graphic.





Given the level of community interest in the site, ongoing communication with key stakeholders is recommended through the planning and decision-making process.

**Table 8.1** outlines, in relation to ongoing engagement, the proposed engagement objectives for each stakeholder consulted as part of the consultation program, utilising the IAP2 framework.

**Table 8.1 Levels of Future Engagement by Stakeholder**

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Indigenous stakeholders	Worimi LALC					
	Worimi Conservation Lands Board					
	Traditional Owners					
Community and environmental groups	Tomaree Headland Heritage Group					
	Tomaree Cultural Development Group					
	Landcare					
	National Park Association					
	Friends of Tomaree					
Local Government	Port Stephens Council					
State Government	National Parks and Wildlife Service					

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
	Aboriginal Affairs Department of Primary Industries					
	Heritage NSW					
	Office for Veteran Affairs					
	Regional NSW					
<b>Local Business</b>	Destination Port Stephens					
	Business Port Stephens					
<b>Broader community</b>	Residents					
	Visitors					
	Tourism operators					
<b>Educational institutions</b>	University of Newcastle Coastal and Marine Science Research Group					

## 9.0 References

- Aboriginal Affairs. (n.d.). *Land Claims*. Retrieved from <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/land-rights/land-claims/>
- ABS. (2021). *General Community Profile*. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/106031121>
- AirDNA. (2023). *Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.airdna.co/vacation-rental-data/app/au/new-south-wales/port-stephens-council/nelson-bay/overview>
- Busselton Jetty. (2023). *BUSSELTON JETTY*. Retrieved from <https://www.busseltonjetty.com.au/>
- Busselton-Dunsborough Mail. (2019). *Village at the end of the Busselton Jetty*. Retrieved from <https://www.busseltonmail.com.au/story/6552308/village-at-the-end-of-the-busselton-jetty/>
- d'Albora. (n.d.). *Facilities and Services*. Retrieved from <https://www.dalbora.com.au/marinas/nelson-bay>
- Darling River Run. (2023). *Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedarlingriverrun.com.au/directory/brewarrina-aboriginal-cultural-museum/>
- DCJ. (2022). *Tomaree Lodge Military past and recent history*.
- Department of Planning and Environment. (2020). *Tomaree Coastal Walk Master Plan*.
- Department of Primary Industries. (n.d.). *Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park*. Retrieved from <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/marine-protected-areas/marine-parks/port-stephens-marine-park>
- DPE. (2022). *Project update - October 2022*. Retrieved from <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/walking-tracks-and-trails-in-national-parks/tomaree-coastal-walk/update-october-2022#:~:text=Improvements%20at%20Zenith%20Beach%20carpark,ped>
- DPIE. (2019). *Community Participation Plan*.
- IAP2. (2019). *Core Values*. Retrieved from <https://iap2.org.au/about-us/about-iap2-australasia/core-values/>
- Lost Collective. (2023). *Newington Armory*. Retrieved from <https://lostcollective.com/collections/newington-armory-gun-powder-magazine>
- Museums & Galleries of NSW. (n.d.). *Newington Armory*. Retrieved from <https://mgnsw.org.au/organisations/newington-armory/>
- Newcastle Herald. (2023, January 6). *Port Stephens: tourism trade bounces back to pre-pandemic levels as Sydneysiders flock to its shores*. Retrieved from

[https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/8038408/bumper-summer-sees-pre-pandemic-trade-well-and-truly-back-bay-by/?src=rssutm\\_email=5363](https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/8038408/bumper-summer-sees-pre-pandemic-trade-well-and-truly-back-bay-by/?src=rssutm_email=5363)

News of the Area. (2022, August 24). *Kate Washington MP Calls To Create Temporary Housing At Tomaree Lodge*. Retrieved from <https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/kate-washington-mp-calls-to-create-temporary-housing-at-tomaree-lodge-98699>

NPWS. (2023). *GUUDJI-YIIGU : A WORIMI WELCOME*. Retrieved from <https://worimiconservationlands.com/>

NSW Government. (2023). *Proposed lease at Hungry Point peninsula*. Retrieved from <https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/whats-happening/notifications/proposed-lease-hungry-point-peninsula>

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. (2023). *Tomaree Head Summit walk*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/walking-tracks/tomaree-head-summit-walk/learn-more#C7EE1E53439D453BB5A42DE5392E2E99>

Port Stephens. (2023). *Dolphin, Whale and Water Cruises*. Retrieved from <https://www.portstephens.org.au/see-and-do/the-water/dolphin-whale-and-water-cruises/>

Port Stephens Council. (2023). *Arts, culture and heritage*. Retrieved from <https://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/community/arts,-culture-and-heritage>

Port Stephens Tourism Ltd. (2023). *Port Stephens Community Arts Centre Exhibitions*. Retrieved from <https://www.portstephens.org.au/events/show/port-stephens-community-arts-centre-exhibitions>

Southern Cross Shellfish. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from <https://www.southerncrossshellfish.com/what-we-do>

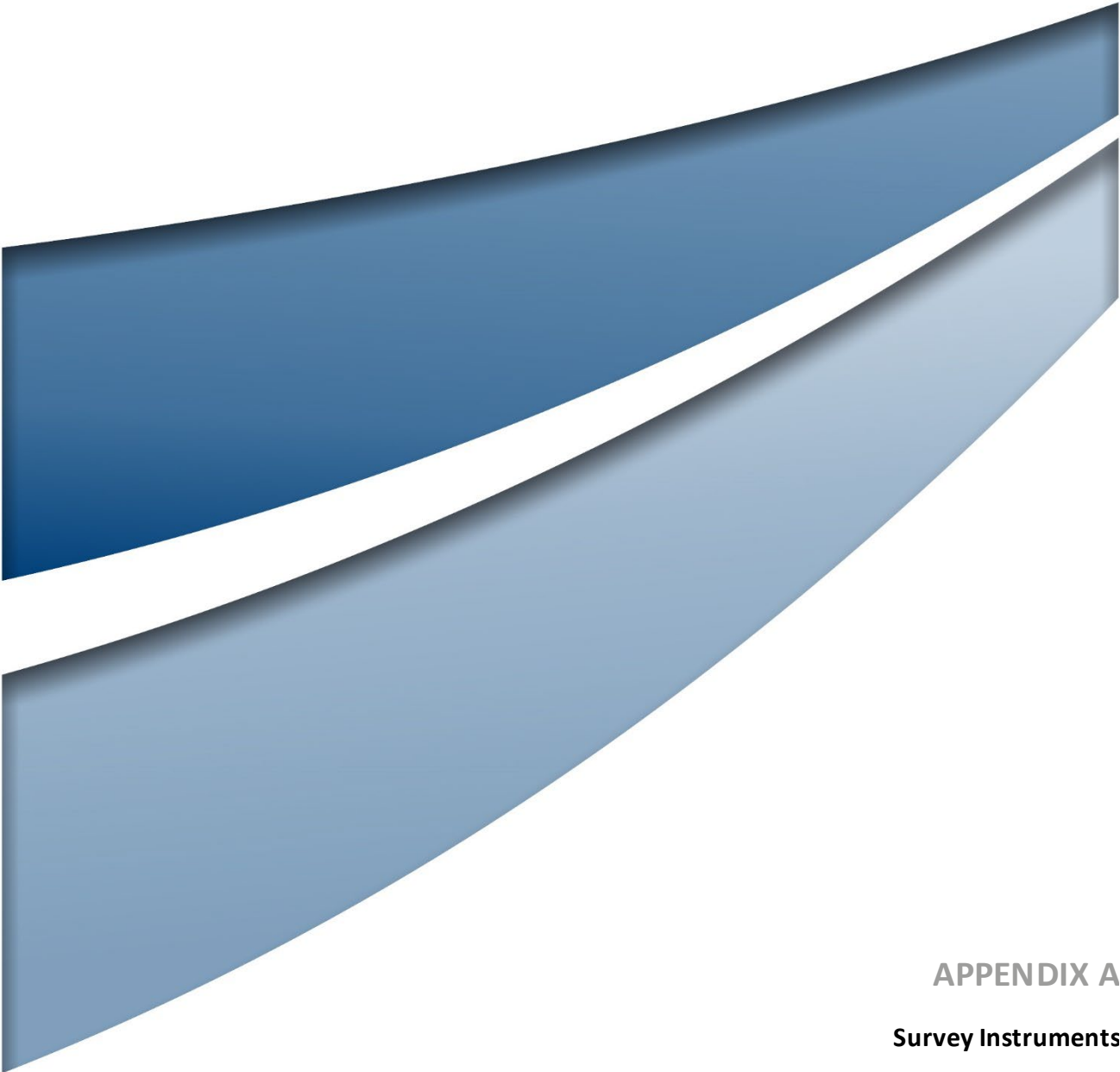
St George and Sutherland Shire Leader. (2017). *DA lodged for first stage of works at Hungry Point Reserve*. Retrieved from <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/4784324/first-step-at-hungry-point/>

Sydney Olympic Park. (2023). *Newington Armory*. Retrieved from <https://www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au/things-to-do/parks/newington-armory>

Tanner Architects. (n.d.). *Newington Armement Depot and Nature Reserve, Sydney Olympic Park - Conservation Management Plan*.

Tea Gardens Ferry. (2022). *History of Port Stephens & Tea Gardens Ferry Service*. Retrieved from <https://teagardensferry.au/history/>

Worimi LALC. (2014). *Vision Statement*. Retrieved from <https://worimi.org.au/about/visions-and-values/>



**APPENDIX A**  
**Survey Instruments**

**1. How frequently do you visit the Tomaree Head?**

- 1 or more times a week
- 1 or more times/month
- 1 or more times per year
- Less frequently
- I've never visited Tomaree Head

**2. What is your relationship to the area? - Selected Choice**

- I am a local resident
- I am a visitor from outside the area
- I am interested in the area's heritage and/or conservation values
- I am interested in the area's Aboriginal heritage and culture
- I am a member of an organization that uses Tomaree Head
- I work at Tomaree Head or near to it
- I am a student at a local school
- Other

**3. How do you currently use Tomaree Head?**

**4. How important to you are each of the following values of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds?**

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites					
Architecture and military heritage of the buildings					
Environmental values – plants, birdlife, koalas and other animals					
Recreation opportunities such Tomaree Coastal Walk					

**5. Are there any other values of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds that are important to you? Please specify.**

**6. What do you think will be the challenges in opening up Tomaree Lodge in ways that deliver community benefit?**

**7. Do you have any suggestions for future uses of Tomaree Lodge?**

**8. What community benefit do you think this use would deliver?**

# Tomaree Lodge Site

## Do you live in the Port Stephens LGA?

Yes  No

If no, where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_  
(suburb/locality)

## How long have you lived in the area?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

## What best describes you?

I am a local resident  
 I represent a community group/organisation

\_\_\_\_\_ please specify name of group?

I own/represent a local business  
 I am a visitor to the Port Stephens area  
 I represent Local Government  
 I represent State Government

## What gender do you identify with?

Female  Male  Non-binary

## What is your age-group?

Under 18 years  18-34 years  
 35-54 years  55-64 years  
 65+ years

## Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

Aboriginal  Torres Strait Islander  
 Both  Neither

## How frequently do you visit Tomaree Head?

Daily  Weekly  Fortnightly  
 Monthly  A few times a year  
 Annually  I don't visit Tomaree Head

## What days of the week do you usually visit Tomaree Head?

Weekends only (Saturday and/or Sunday)  
 Weekdays only (Monday to Friday)  
 Both weekends and weekdays

## Why do you visit Tomaree Head?

I walk in the area  
 I visit the beaches near Tomaree Head (walking, swimming)  
 I work at Tomaree Head  
 Other – please specify? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## With whom do you usually visit the Tomaree Head area?

I visit alone  
 I visit with friends  
 I visit with family  
 Other – please specify? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Tomaree Lodge Site

On a scale of 1 to 7, how important is the Tomaree Head area to you?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7  
 Not important at all very important

Are there any values of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds that are important to you?

Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

How important to you are each of the following values of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds. Using the scale provided, please indicate how important these values are to you personally?

1 Not at all important    4 Important  
 2 Slightly important    5 Very important  
 3 Neutral

Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Architectural and military heritage of the buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Environmental values – plants, birdlife, koalas and other animals	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Recreation opportunities such as Tomaree Coastal Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Are there any other values of Tomaree Lodge and surrounds that are important to you?

Please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The Minister has outlined that any future uses of Tomaree Lodge need to be for the benefit of the community. Do you have any suggestions for the future use/s of Tomaree Lodge, please outline how these would add value to the community?

Future Use	Value-Add
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What do you think will be the challenges in the opening up Tomaree Lodge in ways that deliver community benefits?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The Tomaree Lodge and area could have a range of potential future uses. To achieve the Minister’s objective of delivering community benefit, Government may consider opportunities to partner with commercial entities to deliver community benefits. What commercial activities would you support for the site? E.g. cafe, tourist accommodation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any ideas on what stakeholders should play a role in the future governance and management of Tomaree Lodge? (e.g. Port Stephens Council, state government, community groups or organisations)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# Tomaree Lodge Site

How supportive are you of the repurposing of the development of the Tomaree Lodge?

- Not supportive at all     Not supportive  
 Somewhat supportive     Neutral  
 Supportive     Very supportive

Which of the following features do you think are important to consider in the repurposing of the Tomaree Lodge and area?

- 1 Not at all important     4 Important  
 2 Somewhat important     5 Very important  
 3 Moderately important

	1	2	3	4	5
Café/Kiosk facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbecues and picnic tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public amenities - toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, disabled)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourist accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage trails and signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational and research facilities (for students)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ferry or boat jetty/ pontoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open space/exhibition space for community activities (concerts, markets etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marine and eco tourism facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event space for weddings and celebrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community / native foods garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the Tomaree Lodge and surrounding area was repurposed, would you use the area?

- Yes     No  
 Depends on what the repurposed uses are

If the Tomaree Lodge and surrounding area was repurposed, would you use the area?

- Yes     No  
 Depends on what the repurposed uses are

Are there any other features/aspects that you think should also be considered? (Please specify)

---



---



---

Is there anyone else you think we should be speaking to as part of this process?

---



---



---

Is there anything else you would like to add?

---



---



---

