

Tomaree Lodge Progress Update

December 2025



Welcome to the final edition of the Tomaree Lodge Progress Update for 2025.

The feedback period for the preliminary Connection Concepts has come to a close, with over 6000 visits to the Tomaree Lodge webpage, 120+ visitors to the on-site Information Centre, 86 online submissions and strong ongoing input from Worimi Elders, leaders and community members.

DCJ is now working alongside SHAC to incorporate community feedback into the final Concept Masterplan, ahead of release in early 2026.

The project team is taking a short break over the Christmas period, and we will return in February 2026 for the next edition of the Tomaree Lodge Progress Update.

Bunya Cone Harvest

Bunya pines (*Araucaria bidwillii*) are an ancient Australian native with cultural significance for Aboriginal groups along the east coast. They have been around since dinosaurs walked the earth, and their giant cones can weigh up to 10 kilos! The pines outside the Information Centre were having a bumper crop (which only happens every 2-3 years) so for safety reasons, specialist arborists removed the cones and left them on the path for visitors to inspect. The seeds found inside the cones are edible, and can make anything from a flour substitute for baked goods to pesto!

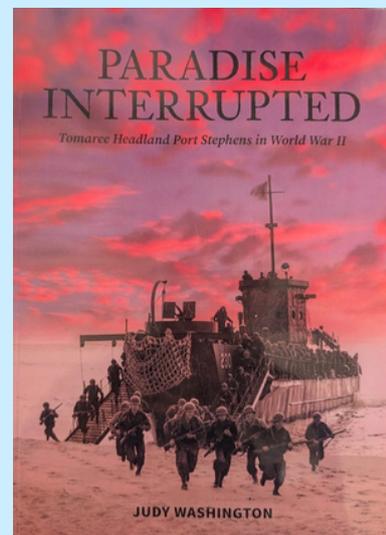


Congratulations to local historian Judy Washington



Judy Washington recently received a prestigious Australian Society of Archivists' Mander Jones Award for her book *Paradise Interrupted*, a comprehensive record of the WWII Military History of Port Stephens, and of Tomaree Lodge.

Fort Tomaree (established on the Tomaree Headland) had an important role in the defence of Australia and providing materials for the war effort.



Congratulations to Judy on this recognition of her hard work and dedication. The initial publication run of 500 copies of *Paradise Interrupted* have been sold, however a reprint has been undertaken with copies available at the Nelson Bay Visitors Centre, Fighter World Williamtown and Readers Retreat at Salamander Bay.

You can also view a copy of *Paradise Interrupted* and view photographs from the publication, taken by local photographer Jennifer Newman, on display at the Tomaree Lodge Information Centre

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Holiday Notifications



We wish locals and visitors a wonderful and safe summer holiday season.

Friendly staff will be welcoming visitors at the Information Centre throughout December and January, except for the following closure dates:

- Thursday, 25 December 2025
- Friday, 26 December 2025
- Monday, 29 December 2025
- Wednesday, 1 January 2026

Port Stephens Council is trialling a holiday period shuttle bus around Tomaree Headland between 24 December and 4 January (excluding Christmas day). The 45-minute round trip will run on a continuous loop between the hours of 9am and 4pm.



Stops will include the Visitor Centre, Halifax Holiday Park, Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay, Tomaree Headland and the Nelson Bay Depot. Visit [Port Stephens Council](#) website for more details.

A word from Friends of Tomaree National Park

Sue Olsson, Friends of Tomaree National Park and Community Engagement Committee member, writes:

“[Friends of Tomaree National Park](#) marked five years of bushcare this October, and like all youngsters, we’ve grown considerably. Keen to improve the integrity and resilience of Tomaree’s habitat, our groups remove significant weeds and garden escapees. We delight in enabling native plants to regenerate and recover, and a cuppa and chat. We plant endangered species, and inspire people to enjoy Tomaree’s spectacular wildflowers.”

Our partners help us increase our effectiveness, reaching out to community through our events like the Picnic for Nature and Tomaree Forum, park clean-ups, corporate volunteer days, community days. Thanks to a BUPA landcare grant we are going to restore habitat at the Boat Harbour north and south accesses to the Tomaree Coastal Walk.

Come on the journey with us and make a difference too, whether individually, as corporate groups, or as partners.

Email Sue at tomaree-np-friends@npansw.org.au ”

