

# Tomaree Lodge

## Military past and recent history

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*Tomaree Lodge is a place of local and State significance and has significantly contributed to the landscape and story of Port Stephens on Worimi Country.*

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Tomaree Lodge has a long and established connection to the community of Port Stephens and this should be reflected in the future use of the site.

### **World War II Army Garrison Camp**

During the Second World War, Tomaree Headland became a strategic anti-aircraft defence post and was renamed Fort Tomaree.

During this time several residential staff buildings, dormitories and an artillery battery, including gun emplacements, torpedo launch pad and radar station were constructed over two areas known as the upper and lower camps.

Ten structures collectively make up the original section of Tomaree Lodge. These single-storey, timber-framed buildings on the western foreshore of the headland were designed in 1942 by the New South Wales Government Architect's Office.

It remains one of the few surviving Army garrison camps dating from the WW2 in NSW.

It is a heritage listed site.

This recognises it as being of State and local heritage significance with statutory protection under the *Heritage Act 1977* and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

### **Mental Health Facility**

In 1947, the NSW Department of Public Health bought the lower camp of Fort Tomaree to establish the Tomaree Convalescent Hostel for long stay patients with psychiatric conditions.

The former military huts were adapted for use as patient dormitories and staff quarters and the Tomaree Convalescent Hostel officially opened in 1949.

During its operation, significant changes were made to the site including the modification of existing structures, the establishment of gardens with exotic plants and the construction of multiple recreational and administration facilities.

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The facility was renamed Tomaree Holiday Lodge in 1960 when it expanded its operations to include respite opportunities for patients from local hospitals.

In 1992 Tomaree Lodge, which was owned by the Department of Health, was listed on the Heritage and Conservation Register.

At this time the centre was no longer being used for respite care for patients but provided long-term accommodation for residents with intellectual disabilities.

From 2001, Tomaree Lodge operated as a Large Residential Centre until its closure in May 2021 when it could no longer provide residents with the quality of life and community integration opportunities available to the broader public.