

Calls for a tourist development, casino at Tomaree Head

BY SARAH PRICE

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PORT Stephens councillor Bruce MacKenzie wants an eight-hectare parcel of land at the foothill of Tomaree Head turned into a tourist development complete with casino, a five star, multi-storey resort and helicopter pad.

The land which currently houses Tomaree Lodge, a disabled-care state government hospital capable of accommodating between 47 to 60 patients, has immediate waterfront location and pristine outlooks across the entry of the Bay.

"I think we are looking at the greatest tourist development site on the whole east coast of Australia," Cr MacKenzie said at the site.

"It's crying out to be redeveloped."

Cr MacKenzie wants to see buildings up to 25 storeys high and plenty of open spaces which he said would inject multiple millions of dollars into the Port economy, create hundreds of jobs and attract more tourists to the area.

"We are sitting here looking at the land looking over the beach, where else on the east coast can you find this?" he said.

"What better place for a casino?"

Cr MacKenzie told the Examiner he would lodge a notice of motion at next week's council meeting asking the council to write to the premier indicating that the parcel of land is so valuable, a rethink of usage should occur.

The motion would also ask that an investigation into relocating the residents of Tomaree Lodge occur.

Cr MacKenzie suggested the residents could be moved to a rural farm-like property which had farm animals and a vegetable garden where the residents could be more active and interactive with their environment.

When asked if he would have the support of the people Cr MacKenzie said he had already revealed his concept to many who all had a positive outlook.

"I've spoken to a lot of people and they are supportive of my idea," he said.

"The time has come where it should be put into the public arena."

Although he admitted it would be hard to get state government support he would continue to push.

"At the end of the day I am doubtful if any state politician will have the gumption to bite the bullet to do anything about it," he said

"But I would have the intestinal fortitude to do it."

