COMMUNITY ACCESS TO PEAT ISLAND FOR FIRST TIME IN A CENTURY

The public will soon have recreational access to what’s considered to be the gateway to the Central Coast for the first time in 100 years.

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, said concept planning into the future uses of Peat Island at Mooney Mooney will begin next week with the start of community consultation.

“This is an exciting opportunity for a development that will allow a mix of uses and most importantly involve the opening up of foreshore areas, currently inaccessible, to the public,” the Minister said.

“I hope this finally puts to an end the political scaremongering which occurred late last year, where it was claimed the island may be used to accommodate asylum seekers.

“As I said then and say again, the Federal and State Governments have never entertained such a ridiculous proposal.”

The precinct, including the island and other adjoining land, has been used for mental health care purposes for many years but the previous occupier, Ageing, Disability and Home Care, has relocated its services.

Mr Kelly said the State Property Authority, a division of the Land and Property Management Authority, is responsible for the concept planning.

“Community consultation is an important part of this process because any future development would take into account the needs of the public, the protection of natural environments and employment opportunities,” the Minister said.

“Some ideas include tourism and recreational facilities, open space, residential development, aged care and other supporting uses.

“Important sites, such as the chapel, will be retained.

“The Authority will follow stringent planning practices during the project and any proposed future development would be required to meet appropriate development controls.”

Member for Gosford, Marie Andrews, welcomed the news and said letters will start to be sent to residents late next week providing details on how feedback and comment can be made.

“The concept plan will take around two months to complete at which time the community will have another opportunity to have its say,” Marie Andrews said.