

# No moor room in Port Stephens

By Thomas O'KEEFE

BOAT owners all around Port Stephens have met an apparent dearth of options to moor in local waters, compounded by bureaucratic confusion over how to move forward.

"We are being refused new private moorings, or even being able to move an existing mooring closer to a residence, as that would also be considered a 'new mooring,'" North Arm Cove

resident Jonathon Horton told NOTA.

"Department of Primary Industries - Marine Parks is not issuing any permits for the installation of new moorings in the Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park.

"I have had numerous conversations with Maritime North, NSW Maritime, Transport of NSW, all very supportive, however, their hands are tied - they cannot issue mooring licenses with approval (permit) by



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Department of Industries Marine Parks."

The vaguely Kafkaesque situation sees one

bureaucracy claiming the other is responsible, and vice-versa.

When asked about the

licensing situation, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) told NOTA that it was "a matter managed by Transport for NSW", while Transport for NSW representatives have said, in turn, that DPI Marine Parks issue mooring permits in the Port Stephens Great Lakes area.

Transport for NSW's 'Moorings' webpage has links to maps showing what moorings are available across the State, including how deep the waiting lists are.

In Port Stephens, the longest waiting lists are, in fact, in Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest, with 42 waiting across the three official mooring

locations.

The next most sought-after moorings along the north side are at North Arm Cove, with seven on the waiting list.

Mooring options are so tight at the moment that even a desire to move an existing mooring means first handing in the rights to it, then going to the bottom of the relevant waiting list, just to see the physical mooring anchor moved a few metres.

"Imagine the loss of private boat sales and new boat sales in Port Stephens due to the fact that there is a complete stop on permits/licences being approved for moorings," Mr Horton added.

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