



Julia Finn MP Member for Granville

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces / Independent Planning Commission
Consent Authority
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
level 3/201 Elizabeth St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

PAN 155484

Consent authority's ID number DA21/15298

To whom it may concern

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission in support of a proposal for Helipad Penrith Lakes at 89-151 Castlereagh Rd, Castlereagh.

The DA seeks consent for the construction and operation of a Helipad within the Penrith Lakes Scheme, including:

- Maximum of 25 aircraft vehicle movements per day between the hours of 5:30am and 10:00pm with operation above this number of flights and outside these hours if required when undertaking emergency service works.
- Demolition of two single storey sheds and integrated hardstand extending beyond the footprint of the sheds
- Demolition of one small single storey shed and associated pavement
- Removal of one inground water tank
- Removal of one flood light
- Removal of 12 trees
- New concrete hardstand
- Fitout of existing warehouse for helicopter maintenance and storage (hangar)
- Fitout of existing single storey building for use as ancillary office
- New lighting as required for the Final Approach and Take Off (FATO) and
- Installation of small Jet A1 (Avtur) fuel storage tank

I write in support of the application, having known the proponent and their operations while they were based in my electorate for over 27 years. During this time, I have lived within 500m of current site.

About Sydney Helicopters

Sydney Helicopters has been operating for over 35 years. Founded in 1985 they are the longest-running commercial helicopter operator in Sydney. They own Bell 412



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aircraft that are contracted by AFAC for the NSW Rural Fire Service to protect the Sydney Basin. In addition, they have their own dedicated helicopter maintenance facility with licensed helicopter engineers on staff.

They employ permanent full time flight crew engaged in various flying disciplines year-round, maintenance engineers and administrative staff.

I am concerned that rural and regional NSW as well as Metropolitan Sydney will be disadvantaged should Sydney Helicopters cease to operate and be unable to support the State's bushfire response of which they are a critical supplier.

The Company assists with transport to remote communities during flood events like the one that threatened the Mid North Coast and the Hawkesbury region earlier this year. On that occasion, they were contracted to provide search and rescue; and resupply functions to both regions.

Sydney Helicopters has always been ideally placed to support the NSW Government in responding to natural disasters and emergency situations. For example during the 2019/20 bushfire seasons they performed 4,200 flight hours critically supporting the NSW Rural Fire Service and National Parks & Wildlife Service in protecting the lives of people in communities across NSW stretching from Tenterfield to Cooma including townships of:

- Bilpin
- Lithgow
- Mountain Lagoon
- Kempsey
- Taylors Arm
- Taree
- Port Macquarie
- Nowra
- Bawley Point
- Batemans Bay
- Moruya
- Cobargo
- Bermagui

Despite being promised support in October 2019 from Sydney Metro West to relocate, the silence from NSW Government has been deafening. Transport for NSW initially tried to force the Company to relocate to Bankstown Airport. Bankstown is the sixth busiest airport in Australia with significant air traffic and congestion management issues that would detrimentally affect the Company's commercial activities and reduce their swift and effective contribution to bushfires and other emergency responses. Bankstown Airport is hardly the same as a standalone commercial Heliport.

Compulsory acquisition

The construction of the Sydney Metro West project meant that the site was to be compulsorily acquired. The requirement for DA was necessitated only by the decision of the NSW Government to compulsorily acquire Sydney Helicopter's land and the delays by numerous NSW agencies.

In recognition of their capability and investment in specialised equipment, they have recently been awarded two national firefighting contracts to supply crucial aerial firefighting capability in the form of two Bell 412 helicopters to the NSW RFS for the Sydney Basin.

Development Application

The DA for the helipad has been adopted only because helipads are permitted uses under the current Penrith Lakes SEPP. The helipad however does not properly compensate them for their loss of their site in my electorate, which was a DA, approved Heliport.

The Helipad pathway has been adopted by Sydney Helicopters to try and save their business; a business that was profitable and providing tourism and essential services to the people of Sydney and NSW up until the NSW Government acquired their land. In the absence of the decision of the NSW Government to compulsorily acquire Sydney Helicopter's land and the delays by numerous NSW agencies, they would have had no cause to do so.

Sydney Helicopters is now required to make a DA on their land for a helipad, which is a permitted use under the planning instrument.

About DA21/15298

In relation to the main planning considerations for this DA, the EIS prepared by Urbis recommended that the proposed expansion should be approved and found that:

"The construction and operation of the project will deliver economic benefits to the Penrith region and wider NSW through the delivery of 20 full time equivalent jobs during the operational phase, and local employment during the construction phase; contribute to the Penrith Lakes Scheme by directly addressing the objectives of the Tourism zoning by promoting the precinct and wider Western Sydney region; allow for a new strategic aviation asset to be utilised by the NSW RFS in emergency response situations at the foot of the blue mountains; and ensure the future of Sydney's longest running commercial helicopter operator which was displaced as a result of the Sydney Metro project.

Having regard for the biophysical, economic, and social considerations, including the principles of ecologically sustainable development, the proposed development is justified for the following reasons:

- The project is permissible with consent and has been shown to be consistent with the relevant local, State and Commonwealth government planning instruments.*
- The EIS includes a full description of adequate and appropriate operational management measures based on detailed technical assessment carried out in accordance with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements in order to mitigate any adverse impacts of the project on the natural environment and cultural landscape.*
- A range of environmental issues (including noise and vibration, airspace, biodiversity, heritage, traffic and transport, and air quality) were identified and assessed with appropriate mitigation and management measures proposed to be carried through to the construction and operational phase.*
- The Aviation Impact Report prepared in support of the application concludes that there will be no risk to the existing operational airspace of the RAFF Richmond base, and the future Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek.*
- The proposed helipad facility has been assessed with regard to the future operational noise and vibration and the impact this may have on nearby sensitive receivers. The assessment has concluded that the noise levels comply with all relevant criteria's and will not cause undue impact to nearby receivers.*
- The Traffic Impact Statement prepared in support of the proposed development concludes that the additional traffic generated by the project during construction and operational phases will not adversely impact on existing road capacity.*
- Risk of harm to the surface water and ground water environment is low and management measures are proposed to protect the environment on site and downstream.*
- The heavily impacted nature of the existing development footprint concludes that there will be no impact to any items of Aboriginal heritage.*
- There are no items of local or State heritage significance that will be impacted by the project.*
- The project has been informed by extensive pre-lodgement consultation and engagement with the community and key government agencies will continue through the construction and operational phases of the development.*
- The Project is consistent with the principles of ecological sustainable development as defined by clause 7(4) of Schedule 2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000.*
- It has been demonstrated throughout this EIS that any minor impacts associated with the project can be addressed through the implementation of appropriate management and mitigation strategies. Overall, the Project will*

deliver significant environmental, sustainability and public interest benefits. On this basis, we respectfully submit that the proposed expansion should be approved."

The Noise Assessment Report from Acoustic Logic Consultancy Pty Ltd *"reviewed impacts from typical flight movements from various helicopters that are proposed to use the facility.... Results of the assessment indicates that noise impacts will be compliant with the noise emission goals, based on the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority – Environmental Noise Control Manual."*

The Air Quality Impact Assessment report from SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd found *"... no concerns and suggests low risk to air quality and health. The construction works for the site development are small scale and should include standard good practice dust controls and management."*

The Traffic Impact Statement from Urbis concluded:

- *"The proposed development is expecting to generate 12 trips per peak hour mainly in form of private car traffic. This would not impact the performance of the surrounding transport network.*
- *The parking demand generated by the development will be appropriately accommodated by the existing 41 car parking spaces on-site.*
- *The existing standard on-site car parking meets Australian Standards requirements. The existing accessible car parking does not meet Australian Standards requirements because the current shared space does not include a bollard, however, given that this is existing, it can be deemed acceptable.*
- *The largest vehicle to regularly access the site will be an MRV. Based on the swept path test results, this vehicle can enter and exit the site in forward gear and manoeuvre safely around the site."*

It is critically important that Sydney Helicopters obtain development approval for their Helipad DA in order to continue supplying the people of Greater Sydney with essential emergency services capability and any further delays will place in jeopardy these services and potentially the welfare of persons and their property.

This important capability only stems from a viable commercial operation, which Sydney Helicopters has built over the past 35 years, 27 years of those years were spent within my electorate until the NSW Government compulsorily acquired their Heliport at 25 Wentworth Street, Clyde.

The relocation of Sydney Helicopters to the Penrith Lakes precinct strongly aligns with the zoning objectives and land use permissions of the area. The site that

Sydney Helicopters has purchased is suitably zoned for tourism and permits helipads as a use.

I understand that there is strong support from Penrith City Council, NSW Rural Fire Service, the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, NSW Office of Sport through the Penrith International Regatta Centre as well as the largest adjacent landowner, Penrith Lakes Development Corporation.

Sydney Helicopters has demonstrated over a long period the value of their tourism operations and associated services. They have supported events including Vivid, the Sydney New Years Eve fireworks, the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the International Review, Top Gear Festival and Bathurst 1000 Supercars.

The approval of the DA at Penrith Lakes will secure this important tourism and emergency services operator a home from which they can continue to operate due to their being displaced from my electorate.

Yours sincerely



Julia Finn MP
Shadow Minister for Sport
Shadow Minister for Youth
State Member for Granville

1 December 2021