

## MEDIA RELEASE

No Commercial Airfield in the World Heritage  
 No Helicopter Tourism and Joy Flights  
 Yes Emergency Services and Community Use  
 Yes **Save Our Skies**

**Blue Mountains residents make their voice heard- Over 12000 people call on the NSW Government to stop the threat of helicopter noise over the Blue Mountains.**

A controversial plan for a commercial heliport inside the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains National Park is set to be debated in NSW Parliament this Thursday 1st August at 4.30pm.

Blue Mountains residents successfully collected more than 12,000 signatures in less than 6 months, opposing the plan. They presented the petition to local member Trish Doyle MP to force the debate and highlight their concerns.

*'A commercial heliport operating right inside the National Park will destroy the peace and quiet and impact on wildlife and wilderness, driving many of the park's more than five million visitors/annum away', says Greg Thompson, a Medlow Bath resident.*

*'The airfield has been a quiet dirt strip for many decades. It is not a suitable site for commercial operations, particularly helicopter scenic flights above favourite bushwalking tracks and sightseeing lookouts.'*

The Katoomba Airfield community group (KACG) say this is not a case of not in my backyard, the National Park belongs to everyone. It's important to NSW, particularly Sydneysiders and also a key destination for interstate and international tourists. Although they couldn't sign the petition to the NSW parliament the interstate and international visitors have been signing up in droves to the online petition and many of them are putting in submissions. Submissions close on August 4<sup>th</sup>. KACG hope that the voice in parliament will alert people to the issue and give them a chance to say no to this, or any, commercial lease over this sensitive land.

*'This old airfield is completely surrounded by the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) and its future should not be determined between a private company and Crown lands, especially in the form of a long-term lease. It needs a whole of Government, whole of community approach to its future. Many thousands of residents and park visitors want to see the land become part of the National Park,' Says Mr Thompson.*

The status of the GBMWhA, already up for review in November, risks being further threatened if commercial helicopter tourism begins operating within it.

*'It is our view that a commercial operation such as the one proposed for the Airfield would have a negative impact on the tourist industry it's designed to support, and on the environment of the World Heritage area which visitors come to experience.'* Dr John Merson, Executive Director, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute.

The community has repeatedly requested economic and environmental impact assessments before any further action is taken.

The Department of Industry - Crown Lands have been unable to provide details regarding the number of helicopter flights that will take off and land from this site, despite being in possession of a business case from the lease applicant.

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