

Funding to find harbour heliport

DEBATE over plans to build a heliport on the shores of Sydney Harbour has been reignited with the federal government funding a feasibility study to find a suitable site.

The Tourism Minister, Martin Ferguson, said Harbourside Helicopters Pty Ltd would receive \$65,000 to part-fund the study on the best location from which to operate tourism flights over the harbour and to regional areas including the Hunter Valley, Mudgee and Bowral.

A director of Harbourside Helicopters, Moya Sprod, said Sydney was unusual among major international cities because it did not have a heliport.

While the company was keen for a "harbourside" site, and had already considered several, she declined to nominate her preferred locations.

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To help keep noise down, the company planned to acquire a Eurocopter helicopter which she said was quiet enough to get approval to operate in the Grand Canyon.

A harbourside heliport is strongly backed by the Transport and Tourism Forum, which is pushing the government to include one at Barangaroo.