

Floating heliport for Sydney harbour



An artist's impression of the heliport. *Photo: Newcastle Helicopters*

The iconic Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge are to be joined by a new neighbour - a floating heliport designed to attract tourists and business executives.

It is hoped taking helicopter trips from the barge, featuring two helipads, will become as much of a classic Sydney experience as the Harbour Bridge climb.

The heliport will be in place early next month.

NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner said the heliport, the first in the CBD since the late 1980s, confirmed Sydney's place as a "truly international city".

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"The Sydney Harbour Floating Heliport is a new signature experience that will help entice visitors to Sydney and make it easy for them to enjoy a birds' eye view of the harbour," he said.

The heliport will also provide a more convenient way of getting to the CBD from the airport for business executives, he said.

The flat top powered barge, which will feature deck accommodation, takes its place in the harbour in early December.

By the middle of next year, the floating heliport will be a purpose-built vessel complete with meeting rooms, aircraft storage and refuelling facilities.

The move has been welcomed by the transport industry who said Sydney's tourism credentials were damaged by forcing visitors to travel to Mascot, Bankstown or Rosehill to take helicopter joy flights.

Tourism and Transport Forum chief executive John Lee believes it will be particularly welcomed by money-rich but time-poor tourists.

"Many international visitors are interested in visiting regional areas, but they simply don't have the time to drive or travel by coach or train," he said.

The heliport will be operated by Newcastle Helicopters and will be made available to any pre-approved operator during the hours of 7am and dusk.

There was previously a service operating in Darling Harbour but that stopped operating when the area was redeveloped.

Patricia Forsythe, executive director of the Sydney Business Chamber, said the heliport boosted the attractiveness of Sydney as a business destination.

"I'm pleased to see a proposal for a heliport and helicopter flights finally get off the ground," she said in a statement.

"It's a commonsense outcome that puts Sydney in a similar position to other renowned global cities."

London, New York, Singapore and Melbourne already offered heliports, she added.

"As we see Barangaroo come online over the next few years and it grows as a financial services hub it will go hand-in-hand with a direct helicopter service between the new precinct and the airport."

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