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No consultation over floating Sydney Harbour heliport

ENVIRONMENT 5 DEC 12 @ 06:05AM BY ZILKA GROGAN

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Sydney Seaplanes near Lyne Park, Rose Bay. Picture: ALAN PLACE



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THE state government failed to consult with Sydney Harbour's largest aviation operator over plans for a floating heliport just offshore from their seaplane base.

Sydney Seaplanes managing director and owner Aaron Shaw is the latest stakeholder to speak out about the government's lack of community consultation on plans for a floating heliport to shuttle tourists and business executives between the airport and the city.

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Trade Minister Andrew Stoner announced the heliport, set to be operational this month, in a press release in November.

One of three helicopter operating areas, marked on a Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) map obtained by the Courier, is to the east of Shark Island - about 1.5km from the Sydney Seaplanes base at Rose Bay.

Mr Shaw said this was the corridor where "virtually every flight" exited the base.

"There was no consultation whatsoever from RMS or any agency, which surprised me considering we are by far the biggest aviation operators in the harbour," Mr Shaw said.

"I have contacted both RMS and NSW Trade and Investment but we are yet to hear back."

Two other locations - one to the east of Fort Denison and one to the west of Bradleys Head - are marked on the map, which also shows a 600m buffer zone around parts of the foreshore.



The RMS map. Areas marked in purple are helicopter operating areas and yellow is the 600m buffer zone.

RMS granted a license to Newcastle Helicopters last month to operate the heliport, a decision which residents, community groups and several harbourside councils see as an irreversible decision.

A spokeswoman for Mr Stoner said RMS had advised "relevant councils" of the proposal in October.

She said the heliport would operate in agreed locations remote from residential areas.

Woollahra Mayor Andrew Petrie said residents who fought plans to expand the Rose Bay Marina would not support a local heliport.

"This certainly might benefit the people coming in by way of helicopter, being tourists and commuters, but I can't imagine how it is going to benefit residents of the harbour," he said.

Sydney Independent state MP Alex Greenwich called on the government to establish a central line for noise

complaints and said it seemed the decision had been rushed through without any consultation.

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