

## Sydney Harbour helipad a trial: Stoner

**THE NSW government has defended the approval of a helicopter landing barge in Sydney Harbour after federal MP Malcolm Turnbull tweeted his opposition to the decision.**

In a series of tweets, the member for Wentworth said he was told the decision to approve the barge was made by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) "without consulting the premier or cabinet or community".

He said he was troubled about safety when the harbour was full of people on boats, including many children.

Mr Turnbull said "democracy involves government with the consent of the governed", adding that the decision was taken administratively with no consultation.

The approval is for Newcastle Helicopters to operate a floating heliport to provide for quick transfers to and from Sydney Airport and scenic flights over Sydney Harbour.

On Wednesday, Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner defended the approval, saying RMS had followed all usual procedures in relation to the issue of an aquatic licence.

"As required by RMS, the proponent wrote to relevant councils in October outlining the proposal and inviting feedback but received no responses," he said in a statement.

Mr Stoner said that given the licence was issued by RMS last month was only for 12 months, it was effectively a trial.

"We have heard the community's concerns which is why the Minister for Roads and Ports and I have agreed to an impact assessment if the proponent chooses to reapply for a licence in November 2013," he said.

The minister said Sydney was one of the few world cities without a CBD-based heliport and NSW Trade & Investment had helped Newcastle Helicopters with the proposal.



Federal MP Malcolm Turnbull criticised plans for a helipad barge in Sydney, citing safety concerns.

