

Sydney Harbour heliport plans on hold



The company that was set to run a heliport in Sydney Harbour says it is putting the project on hold to consider the operation's 'feasibility'.

Newcastle Helicopters, which was set to operate a floating heliport to provide for quick transfers to and from Sydney airport and scenic flights over Sydney harbour, announced on Saturday that it would be halting the plans until further notice.

'Effective immediately, Newcastle Helicopters has put the project of the Sydney Harbour Floating Heliport on hold until further notice, in order to consider the feasibility of the operation going forward,' it said in a statement.

'It is Newcastle Helicopter's intention to address the relevant concerns and queries with thoroughly considered and accurate information, and is taking the appropriate steps to do so.'

The announcement comes after Fairfax media reported on Saturday that the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) landing barge in Sydney Harbour was reportedly approved two weeks before it had asked about air safety or air traffic control regulations.

In a series of tweets earlier this week, Malcolm Turnbull also criticised the operation, saying he was told the decision to approve the helicopter service from a barge in Sydney Harbour was made by the RMS without consulting the premier or cabinet or community.

'Frankly what troubles me most is safety, summer afternoon, harbour full of boats, most with kids, noreaster,,' the federal member for Wentworth tweeted.

On Saturday, Mr Turnbull posted further tweets, urging people opposed to the heliport to sign a petition.

'So the NSW Govt Maritime Services dept only start to think about safety AFTER they have issued the helipad licence,' he tweeted.

A spokesman for NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner said: 'Newcastle Helicopters has advised the NSW government that the Sydney Harbour Floating Heliport project has been put on hold, pending further discussions with relevant stakeholders.'