



## Botany Bay National Park (Helicopter Base Relocation) Bill.

### Second Reading

**Mr GRAHAM WEST** (Campbelltown—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.18 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Carl Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce this bill, which will allow the development of a rescue helicopter base. This Government is committed to maintaining rescue helicopter services. In 2002 it became apparent that the rescue helicopter services currently provided by the Southern Region (SLSA) Helicopter Rescue Service Pty Limited, referred to as the Rescue Service, could no longer operate from their temporary facilities at the former Prince Henry Hospital site. More than 30 alternative sites were reviewed but all were deficient in some way. A site was finally found within the Botany Bay National Park. However, the National Parks and Wildlife Act does not permit the construction of such facilities in a national park. Accordingly, on 7 October 2003 Cabinet approved the excision of land at Cape Banks from the Botany Bay National Park [BBNP], provided that such excision is only for the purpose of providing rescue helicopter services. By permitting passage of this bill, public safety will continue to be safeguarded.

Issues such as native title, vesting of title and the interest of other competing users of Botany Bay National Park have been addressed. The boundary of the excised area took a considerable degree of time and effort to finalise in order not to include the general car park opposite the pistol club. The car park is heavily utilised by visitors to Botany Bay National Park, providing the only public access to the northern section of the coast track. Anglers, whale watchers and bushwalkers are all regular users. In addition, this area will shortly be gazetted as an Aboriginal place. Accordingly, this section of the park was not excised and remains within Botany Bay National Park; nor does the bill excise the access road that runs adjacent to the proposed helipad site. This road is the main route used by the Department of Environment and Conservation and emergency services to access the coastal section of Botany Bay National Park and is also the main, but not the only, pedestrian access to the coast.

Accordingly, the road has been retained within Botany Bay National Park and is not excised from the Botany Bay National Park by this bill. Instead, the rescue service will have access to the rescue helicopter base by way of easement and licence over this road. This is a necessary and sensible bill that will safeguard the health and safety of the people of New South Wales. It will benefit many hospitals and other emergency services providers, as well as having benefits for park staff and visitors in emergency, rescue or park management situations. The bill will not open up the floodgates for excision of other areas from other national parks. Rather, it will ensure, on this one occasion, continuity in the provision of services, which the people of New South Wales are entitled to expect. It is based on a sensible process that enables the consideration of the competing interests of all stakeholders. I commend this bill to the House.

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