



Botany Bay National Park (Helicopter Base Relocation) Bill.

Second Reading

The Hon. TONY KELLY (Minister for Rural Affairs, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Natural Resources (Lands)) [3.57 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted

I am pleased to introduce the Botany Bay National Park (Helicopter Base Relocation) Bill to excise 1.38 hectares of land at Cape Banks from Botany Bay National Park for the specific purpose of relocating the Southern Region Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service.

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 [Rescue Service] could no longer operate from their temporary facilities at the former Prince Henry Hospital site.

Over 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 the 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 the 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 the national park.

The bill does not excise the access road, which runs adjacent to the proposed Rescue Helicopter Service base.

This road is the main route used by the Department of Environment and Conservation and emergency services to access the coastal section of the 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 the Botany Bay National Park.

The NSW Golf Club also benefits from the excision, which enables an existing minor encroachment near the 5th tee to be accommodated and access and drainage works improvements to the existing access road from Anzac Parade to the proposed site.

The NSW Golf Club, which leases public land adjacent to the Cape Banks site, had raised concerns with Landcom about risk, safety, noise, visual impact, potential interruption to play and the public image of the golf course as a result of the proposed base at the Cape Banks site.

These concerns have now been addressed.

Landcom has also invited the Golf Club to participate with Landcom and the Rescue Helicopter Service in a Project Control Group.

This group will be responsible for the preliminary planning and design of the proposed base and will determine the best location for the hangar and the landing pad on the site, taking into account noise and risk hazard considerations.

A joint relationship management plan is also proposed to cover the day-to-day operations of the base and the golf course.

There are also six houses located west of the proposed base which are understood to have heritage significance relating to World War II under the control of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

These houses are not in the proposed flight paths.

The Cape Banks site had been occupied and used by the Scouts Association of Australia, NSW Branch.

The scouts have advised the Rescue Helicopter Service that they are happy to work in partnership on the use of the site.

Summary

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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