

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

GREG PIPER, MP
MEMBER FOR LAKE MACQUARIE

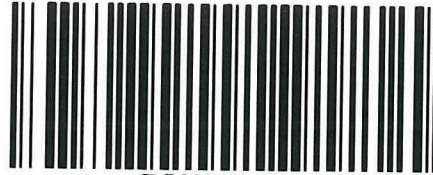
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PCU068788

Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2000



Dear Director,

**Re: Modification for mixed use marina/tourist/residential (Concept Plan)
(06_0309 MOD 3) - Trinity Point Marina Helipad**

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission regarding the proposed inclusion of a helipad at the Trinity Point Marina on Lake Macquarie.

I firstly wish to disclose that I live within the area that may occasionally be impacted by noise to a variable extent from helicopters if the proposal is approved. I was a councillor on Lake Macquarie City Council from 1991 until 2012 and was the popularly elected mayor between 2004 and 2012, the period in which a great deal of the overall Trinity Point development advanced.

Overall, I support the development and believe that it will deliver significant benefit to the local area. As mayor I took the view that the development - should it proceed - should not be unreasonably hindered from success; a failed development of this magnitude is not in anyone's interest. That said, I believe there is a mutual obligation on the proponents that the development not unduly or unreasonably impact on its neighbours. That is in my mind the question in this instance.

I have had considerable feedback on this issue from local residents as well as having been consulted on the proposed helipad site by the applicant. I have concluded that on balance, the negative impacts the noise generated by a helicopter service to the Trinity Point precinct will have on the community outweigh any positives. Further, other issues raised by many opposed to the proposal, including the need to manage an exclusion zone over the lake surface to facilitate helicopter approaches and departures and most importantly, the risk to the environment from any potential fuel spillage, all have merit.

It is not my intention to challenge or discuss the technical aspects of the proposal, although I believe there are some technical issues which need to be closely and further examined. Indeed, despite the complexity of extrapolating noise impacts on various residential areas based on the test flights that were carried out, and

determining whether the expected noise is within acceptable limits for such an operation, the fact remains that every movement will be clearly heard by residents within a significant area.

The noise from such movements in this area will be in striking contrast to the existing ambience and milieu, eroding some of the most valued characteristics of the peaceful and quiet lakeside village.

I acknowledge that the proponent has provided a considerable amount of information to the local community on its application and intentions, however there is a high level of public interest in the proposal and a considerable degree of concern in the broader area that may be affected by noise. No amount of consultation will be able to change the fact that helicopter operations in an out of the Trinity Point development will be anathema to much of the local community.

Those who support the proposal will not perhaps feel adversely affected by noise if approved and certainly not if the proposal does not proceed. Those strongly opposed to the proposal will be highly sensitive to the sound of a helicopter on every movement and this will certainly impact on their sense of well-being and possibly their health.

I believe that the applicant could have better considered alternatives to the need for a helicopter service and helipad.

Several kilometres away from the proposed helipad site is Belmont Airport. It already has helicopter landing areas and is only a short boat ride away from the Trinity Point development. I believe this would present a reasonable alternative for the proponent and would have been far better received by those living near Trinity Point.

Another alternative that I believe could have been considered and put to local residents would be the possible use of seaplanes of which a service already exists operating from Rose Bay in Sydney. While there would be some noise associated with such a service it is to a much lesser level, particularly for landings, and would not require the alienation of other craft for its operation.

I would also note that the proponent's application for a helipad was based on it being included in a concept plan that was approved more than a decade ago. It was lodged at a time when there were no guidelines or bans on such operations because no one ever thought that a helipad might one day be located on Lake Macquarie. If it were lodged today, a proposal such as this would be automatically rejected as Lake Macquarie City Council has established an LEP that prevents helipads being located on Lake Macquarie.

I believe that the majority of residents who live near Trinity Point – at Morisset Park, Bardens Bay, Windemere Park, Brightwaters and in neighbouring suburbs on the Morisset Peninsula - are opposed to this application and I believe that their major concerns about noise, risk to the environment and alienation of waterway to accommodate the helipad and boat exclusion zone, are valid.

3

Given the strong objection from local residents and in my opinion the validity of the issues raised, I would request that the application be rejected under considerations of Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 being:

1. Matters for consideration -

(b) the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,

(c) the suitability of the site for the development; and

(e) the public interest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Piper', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Greg Piper
Member for Lake Macquarie