

To:
re Katoomba Airfield
Department of Industry, CROWN LANDS
PO Box 2155
Dangar, 2309 NSW



10 July 2019

To whom it may concern,

I do not think public land should be used for commercial purposes. The tourists from within Australia and overseas have plenty to do in our area without yet another high-flying "amusement" - a helicopter ride. As the land in question is in the general World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park area I feel it should be used only in keeping with it's aims. Native animals rely on their senses for survival and this includes hearing. How can they manage when there are more and more helicopters passing overhead. Where is the real "National Park" when the animals abandon it? It is already a compromise that the helicopters are making emergency trips. However I am approving of this compromise to possibly save human lives.

I would like to see one dirt strip at the airfield for emergency use only. No development beyond this!

Please transfer this piece of Crown Land to the National Park so that it may be protected for a very very long time.

As I enjoy the nearby-to-me National Park immensely I take my residency with gratitude and responsibility. I do what I can to protect it. I do not own a cat or a dog, both of which can be problematic to the bush. I remove weeds on my block of land that compromise it, and when I plant new it is natives. I sometimes give tourists assistance. When I was younger and a little fitter I was also a volunteer on the Bush Care Program in Minnehaha Reserve.

With thanks,





BURKES TRANSPORT (BATHURST) PTY LTD
ACN 002 362 003 - ABN 87 002 362 003

19 VALE RD
BATHURST N.S.W. 2795
PHONE (02) 6331 1755
ADMIN. FAX (02) 6332 1023

OPERATIONS FAX (02) 6331 3825

PO BOX 112
BATHURST N.S.W. 2795



Department of Industry
Crown Lands
PO Box 2155
DANGAR N.S.W. 2309

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to register my opinion on the Katoomba Airfield;

1. The airfield should be kept open for emergency use in the summer months and should be up graded to Emergency Lighting.
2. This is the only Airfield between Bankstown and Bathurst and is vital for aircraft using this route.
3. Having been a private pilot for 30 years and using this route once a week, I can not emphasise enough the safety benefits to any aircraft utilising the Blue Mountains air space.

Regards,



Burkes Transport (Bathurst) Pty Ltd

[REDACTED]
18th July 2019



The Department Head,
Department of Industry,
Crown Lands,

Dear sir / madam,

We are writing to express our concerns over the possible transfer of Crown Land to commercial use in relation to what has been called Katoomba Airfield at Medlow Bath in the Blue Mountains. We are aware that this would involve unspecified helicopter use for commercial purposes into the future.

The Blue Mountains National Park is a World Heritage Area and no part of it should be permitted to be overflown by low flying, noisy aircraft such as helicopters. For a few years in the 1990s the noise of helicopter joy flights was experienced by many residents and the disruption has to be experienced to be believed. Fortunately due to the number of complaints, these joy flights were stopped. They should not be permitted to recommence.

On Thursday morning 18th July we experienced and saw a helicopter flying directly over our home and so low on this occasion, it was almost possible to see the pilot's face. The house shook and the noise was extreme. This has happened many times including at night. Presumably there was a serious reason for this particular event and if so it is acceptable but joy flights are definitely not.

Wildlife in the National Park should not be disturbed, including interference with the nesting of birds. The wilds of the National Park is their territory.

Apart from that, we believe that the residents of the Blue Mountains have not been fully consulted concerning the proposal and any decision should definitely not be made unless it has been done in a satisfactory manner. This would include offering the preference for the airstrip to be transferred permanently into the National Park and only maintained for use as an emergency airfield in times of bushfire and other emergencies.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

All at the above address.

[REDACTED]

12th July 2019

Department of Industry, Crown Lands
PO Box 2155
DANGAR NSW 2309



Dear sir/madam,

REF NO: 602686, Katoomba Airfield

I am writing to express my concern that a long term lease may be granted for aviation tourism at the old airfield at Medlow Bath. While I appreciate that this provides a different tourism opportunity for visitors to the Blue Mountains, I question whether it is the most appropriate, considering that the Blue Mountains National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage-listed National Park.

A commercial airstrip within the Blue Mountains National Park will contribute to noise pollution. Not only will this disrupt the serenity enjoyed by those of us fortunate enough to live in the area, but it will also be noisy for bushwalkers and other tourists who visit the upper mountains seeking peace and quiet. Hence, a commercial airstrip will be counterproductive to attracting tourism to the region.

It is also disruptive for the natural environment, for example, the downdraft from helicopters will cause damage to the bushland and disturb birds and animals in the area. If we damage the bushland (and the National Park), then it will not be attractive to tourists.

Together, these two issues may place our UNESCO World Heritage listing in jeopardy. This is ironic. The UNESCO World Heritage listing is a tourism drawcard – yet, a commercial airstrip in the National Park, pitched as a tourism attraction, would potentially destroy the ability to attract tourists.

It is important that we retain a working dirt airstrip at the airfield for emergency use only, for example, in the event of a bushfire.

However, I object to this public land being used for commercial purposes.

I request that the Department of Industry, Crown Lands, transfer the crown land at the old Medlow Bath airfield to the Blue Mountains National Park so that the integrity of the National Park (and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed site) is retained for future generations.

Yours Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

Attention Minister Pavey
Minister for Crown Lands
Level 17-52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2001

21 June, 2019

Dear Minister Pavey,

Re: The future of Katoomba Airfield

There are many living in the Blue Mountains who are very concerned about a proposal for leasing land around Katoomba Airfield and I hereby wish to add my voice and submission with regard to the future of Katoomba Airfield and the leasing of land for commercial purposes.

As a resident directly underneath and in close proximity to the airfield noise is one of my main concerns. Whilst I can accept emergency helicopters or light aircraft overhead when there is a search, rescue or fire in the area, having experienced their noise, at times, over years, I am very much against any escalation of the noise factor.

We originally purchased our property with the specific wish to find a quiet setting, and, so far so good, but the threat of an increase of ambient noise is horrifying.

Furthermore, I am also living in the Blue Mountains because I value its unique beauty, flora and fauna. Additional noise and other pollution are most unwelcome and threaten a sensitive and fragile ecosystem.

I also believe that what nature has on offer should be *seen and experienced at ground level*.

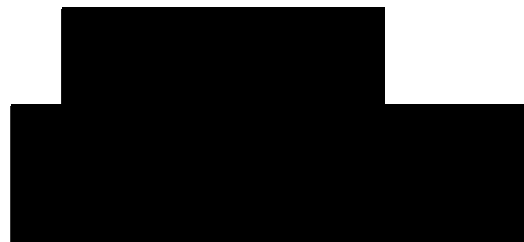
A quick joy flight can only give a cursory overview of the magnificence and does not add in any way to protecting what is so precious.

From my perspective the leasing of the land around the airport is purely for commercial purposes of a small business holding and does not value add to us the environment or, in the great scheme of things, tourism..

Please consider not leasing the land for commercial purposes, include the land as part of the National Park and keep the Airport open for emergency use only.

Thank you,

yours sincerely,



SCANNED
Minister's Office

28 JUN 2019

KATOOMBA AIRFIELD SUBMISSION,

Ref No 602686

MY NAME IS [REDACTED] I was born in Katoomba and have lived in Katoomba for 73 years.

I am a private pilot and hold a PPL, night VFR and instrument ratings with endorsements on multiple aircraft types. I am also a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight.

In 1968 two local pilots Barry Shaw and John Cale conceived and built the Katoomba Airstrip. Lands Department were enthusiastic and our local community at that time was overwhelmingly supportive and grateful to have our own local aerodrome and all the benefits it provided to our community.

Over the last 51 years Katoomba airfield has had several different lessees including a local doctor, several syndicates as well as private lessees. Katoomba Airfield has been in constant commercial use for fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft since 1968 and contrary to some statements Katoomba Airfield has never closed, it has always operated as a commercial airfield and in fact is operating today right now.

I have been flying out of Katoomba Airfield for 32 years and based my aircraft there for quite a few years. I also did a substantial amount of my flight and instrument training from the Katoomba Airfield. I was a founding member of the Blue Mountains Aero Club and am a current member of the Blue Mountains Aviators Club. I have personally conducted at least 20 Angel flights from the Katoomba Airfield.

It's clear that many concerned residents have been deliberately misinformed and have little or no knowledge of General Aviation especially airspace over the Blue Mountains. It's also clear that certain individuals and organisations are conducting well organised fear campaigns against the continuing operation of Katoomba Airfield. These individuals and organisations appear

to be spreading deliberate misinformation and blatant lies throughout the community.

Here are a few facts.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority recently decommissioned Katoomba NDB Non-Directional Beacon. This beacon is located just next to the Emergency Centre in Valley Rd Katoomba. This location is the major navigational waypoint for all aircraft flying over the blue mountains and is known as waypoint KADOM. Every IFR flight path and most VFR flights originating from the Sydney basin flying to the west track direct to this waypoint and directly over the township of Katoomba.

Every flight coming from the west of the state tracks direct to the Katoomba waypoint before tracking east over the Blue Mountains to enter the Sydney basin airspace. All IFR flights are required by CASA to use Katoomba KADOM waypoint. Most airlines travelling at flight levels also track via the Katoomba KADOM waypoint.

THIS HAS BEEN THE CASE FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS.

Every day and every night right here right now there are aircraft and helicopters flying over the Blue Mountains and almost every aircraft is tracking at various altitudes via the Katoomba KADOM waypoint. Emergency Care flight helicopters follow this track at all hours, night and day transporting critical cases from the west to city hospitals. Police plus Search and rescue helicopters are frequently low flying throughout our area as are military helicopters and aircraft.

Let me assure you the small amount of air traffic generated from the Katoomba airstrip is miniscule when compared to the daily air traffic flying over the blue mountains every day and every night 24/7.

Apart from our blue mountains aviation community the Katoomba Airfield is a vital base for all firefighting and emergency aircraft especially during bush fires and other emergencies. It is especially important as an emergency landing area for aircraft experiencing in flight emergencies or stress of weather over the blue mountains.

For the last 51 years various lease holders have spent a great deal of time and money maintain the Katoomba Airfield in a safe and usable condition.
There have been many emergencies over the years and two such emergencies in the last 12 months, each could have ended in disaster and death if the Katoomba Airfield had not been available and operational.

It is my opinion that we as a community are very lucky that Derek and Floyd Larson are prepared to put their time, money and expertise into maintaining and doing much needed restoration work to our local community Airfield.

I would like to register my personal support for their lease application.

[REDACTED]

Monday 15 of July 2019

RE : Katoomba Airfield - REF No: 602686

Dear Department of Industry Friends,

Hi my name is [REDACTED] and I live at [REDACTED] Katoomba NSW.

I am writing to you with concerns regarding the use of the old airfield at Medlow Bath - the possibility of granting a long term lease for aviation tourism.

Katoomba Airfield - REF No: 602686

My first concern is the impact of this lease on the surrounding wilderness? As we are in a World Heritage Listed National Park, will the long term lease have a negative impact on the surrounding wilderness?

- Will the new airfield clear land?
- Destroy trees?
- Destroy animal habitats?
- Disrupt the flora and fauna found within the National Park?

I also object to the use of public land being used for commercial purposes - would it be better to transfer this land to the National Park?

My last concern is noise? How will this new aviation tourism impact the residents within the Blue Mountains? One of the reasons I live here in Katoomba is to escape the noise and the fresh air.

Thank you for your time.
I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]



Monday 15 2019.

Email: [REDACTED]

13 July 2019

Department of Industry, Crown Lands
PO Box 2155
Dangar
NSW 2309



Dear Sir/Madam

Reference No 602686 Katoomba Airfield

It would appear that the Department of Industry established the "Katoomba" aerodrome in 1965, very close to the village of Medlow Bath.

Whilst it is obvious that the Department's job is to establish industry anywhere in the State that they consider a good thing, there is no indication in your Fact Sheet that any consultation with the public for this development was carried out, or any public approval received at that time.

Since 1965 there has been a great increase in population within the upper mountains, and many of today's residents disagree with large commercial tourist operations, especially those that create noisy aircraft operations over otherwise quiet and serene bushland.

Your Fact Sheet states: "any tenant will need to follow and apply strict environmental controls to prevent excessive noise".

This is meaningless, because it is an observable fact that all aircraft generate excessive noise when near the ground, and especially so on take-off, when large energy inputs are required. This will adversely affect all residents of, and visitors to, Medlow Bath.

Your Statement of Frequently Asked Questions states: "the tenant intends to upgrade existing walking trails for general community use".

This also is meaningless, as there are already many popular and well-used walking trails near the "Katoomba Airport", and people will not use them if they are subject to unpleasant noise from low-flying helicopters.

I note also that flight paths occur over many of the popular viewing sites, including Govetts Leap and Evans Head. Helicopter noise at these locations will spoil the quiet enjoyment of these sites for land-based visitors, and also of bushwalkers nearby.

over

It requires no great stretch of the imagination to suspect that once the airstrip is operational the leaseholder will apply for approval to build extra roads, then fuel tanks and refuelling services, hangars for aircraft, a navigation beacon, landing lights for night operation, a passenger terminal, a freight terminal, and even a luxury resort hotel. In other words, develop the operation into a full-time regional airport.

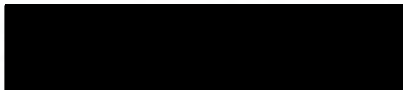
Such developments would greatly increase the footprint of the airstrip, and have much greater impact on the adjacent World Heritage National Park.

This is public land, and the voice of the people should be heard before any controversial use is made of the land.

Indeed there is no good case made by your department as to why a new lease should even be considered.

We strongly object to this proposal, and consider that the land should be gazetted as National Parks land, with approval for emergency aircraft operations only, and no approval for a commercial lease.

Yours sincerely





12 July 2019

The CEO
Department of Industry
Crown Lands
P O Box 2155
Dangar NSW 2309



Dear Sir,

Future of Katoomba Airfield

A local body, the Katoomba Airfield Community Group, is agitating for Blue Mountains residents to protest to your office about the possible commercial use of this facility.

As a Blue Mountains resident, I wish to advise that I have no objection to the airfield's commercial or other use.

On the contrary, I am sure that there are good reasons for developing the site, the most immediate being prosperity for the Mountains. Good helicopter access would attract visitors, including many who would be unable to see the bush otherwise because of infirmity.

Maintaining and improving fixed wing access would also be desirable. The Blue Mountains is a rough area, offering nowhere for aircraft to land in an emergency -.Bathurst in the west and Bankstown in the east are the nearest. The facility should be retained and improved for this reason alone. Some years ago there was an emergency when an aircraft in trouble in the Blue Mountains was able to deploy a parachute and so save the lives of those on board. Access to the landing field at Medlow Bath could also save lives, especially if it were improved.

The airstrip is used when there are bushfires for helicopters to refuel and to refill with water, and can also be used to pick up injured bushwalkers.

The noise hazard is minimal. I have for many years lived near the Katoomba sports ground which is used frequently by helicopters during the bushfire season. Their noise does not constitute significant annoyance. It is also not uncommon for helicopters to fly over my residence, for example, going to and from the hospital. The noise is brief, mild and causes little annoyance.

It is easy for self-interested groups with limited vision to find reasons to oppose development, but in doing so they demonstrate lack of awareness of the benefit to the bush in having a small developed area within the park, for example, in regard to fire control alone.

Yours faithfully

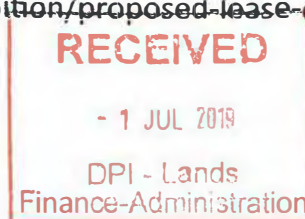


Subject: Reference number 602686

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 27/06/2019, 10:54 am

To: "https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/public/on-exhibition/proposed-lease-of-katoomba-airfield"



Dear Sir/Madam,

I attended the public consultation meetings at the Hotel Blue on Wednesday and the following Tuesday to hear more about what is actually planned by Sky Blue aviation.

At both meetings, it quickly became very evident that the Community as a whole is totally opposed to this proposed lease and this is further evidenced by the petitions presented earlier on containing 12000 signatures opposing it.

This plan by Sky Blue is totally unacceptable for the following reasons:

1) We all really love the peace and quiet we have always enjoyed and are not under any circumstances to have this ruined in daylight hours, 7 days a week by the invasive and incessant clattering of helicopters conveying tourists over our beloved Blueys. Bearing in mind that these helicopters can only convey about 7 or 8 people at a time, then this is a lot of noise for very few tourists and considering that we are so close to Sydney, the entrance to Australia for most of our visitors, the potential for this business to grow with its implications for the shattering of our peace and quiet is truly frightening.

Under no circumstances are we, the Blue Mountains community prepared to sacrifice this important aspect of our lifestyle. This is absolutely NON- negotiable !

2) Those in the know have advised that this operation will have a very adverse impact on the migratory patterns of birds with flow-on effects also applying to the nature chain. And this in a World Heritage area that we are supposed to protect. Most inappropriate!

3) The Blue Mountains is the Mecca of bushwalking in N.S.W. and possibly Australia and each year thousands of bushwalkers come here to participate in bushwalks, ranging from short excursions along the cliff tops to overnight forays into the valleys. They want to experience raw nature in all its glory and most definitely do not want to have the peace and serenity shattered by the clattering of helicopters reverberating off the cliff walls.

4) Tourists and other visitors come up to the Mountains by the bus and trainload to enjoy this serene and beautiful area and will also not appreciate going to one of the many lookouts, only to have their experience ruined by this invasive racket whilst the occupants therein, fiddle with their cameras taking selfies and the like.

5) These traditional tourists and visitors are the lifeblood of the business community up here and these businesses will take a nasty hit if the visitors experiences here are disappointing.

6) Lastly, this will impact adversely on the value of our houses that we have worked to pay for

through no fault of our own and this is absolutely unacceptable and can easily be avoided by refusing this application

The people at these meetings were not simply the vocal minority nor were they what some people might regard as extremist greenies but simply mature aged people expressing their total opposition to what we see as an appalling threat in all respects.

Helicopters have their place up here doing rescues, fire fighting and the like but most definitely not for carting tourists around.

As such, we would be very angry if this application was assepted and in consequence, trust that your recommendations will be made on the wishes of the majority not the other way round.

This is a classic example of profits before people , something we have heard a lot of recently and is unacceptable.

Trusting you will do the right thing by us and thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

15/07/2019

Re: **KATOOMBA AIRFIELD**

Dear Sir or Madam,

With this letter I would like to express **my disapproval** for the possible use of the Katoomba Airfield for such an inappropriate damaging commercial purpose as the potential lease for joy flights.

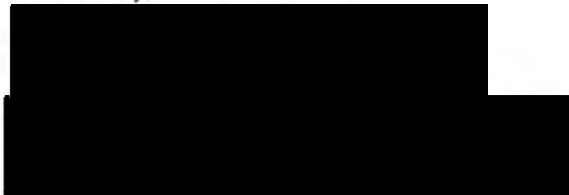
I OBJECT TO THIS LAND BEING USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

I DEMAND THAT THIS LAND BE TRANSFERRED TO THE NATIONAL PARK TO BE PROTECTED FOREVER

THE AMMENITY OF PEACE AND QUIET, REASONS WHY PEOPLE COME TO THE MOUNTAINS TO LIVE OR VISIT, WOULD BE DESTROYED.

THE USE OF FUELS IN SUCH SENSITIVE LAND FOR PLANES OR HELICOPTORS IS INAPPROPRIATE AND DAMAGING

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

RECEIVED
19 JUL 2019
CPI - Linda
Finance-Administration



Blue Mountains Aviators Club

Saturday, 3 November 2018

Department of Industry, Crown Lands
PO Box 2155
DANGAR NSW 2309
Airfield.submissions@crowland.nsw.gov.au

RE: Proposed Lease of Katoomba Airfield - LX 602686

Dear Sir/Madam,

Per the email from Scott Mullen dated 16th July 2019, thank you for identifying our organisation as a key stakeholder in the community consultation for a lease on Katoomba Airfield by FlyBlue Pty Ltd.

Our submission accompanies this letter. We look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultation process and seeing a positive determination made on the future of the airfield.

Yours sincerely,



Secretary/Treasurer
Blue Mountains Aviators Club Inc.

Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: secretary@bluemountainsaviatorsclub.com
www.bluemountainsaviatorsclub.com
P.O. Box 880, Katoomba, NSW, 2780

Blue Mountains Aviators Club Inc.

Department of Industry Crown Lands Proposed Lease of Katoomba Airfield 202686

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Executive summary

The Blue Mountains Aviators Club Inc. represents the general aviation community in the Blue Mountains of NSW. Our members have operated private and commercial aircraft from Katoomba Airfield since it opened in 1968.

Our organisation has been identified as a key stakeholder regarding consultation for approval of a long-term commercial lease on Katoomba Airfield by Derek and Floyd Larsen of FlyBlue Pty Ltd.

We wish to express our unreserved support for the approval of a commercial lease on the property by FlyBlue Pty Ltd. Through our now extensive consultations with the applicant we are satisfied that they are well qualified and possess the experience to undertake the most significant and beneficial investment in the airfield since it was opened in 1968.

Historical context

Katoomba Airfield has a rich history in Australian aviation. Many pilots have trained and operated their aircraft at this unique airstrip. Those same pilots are its dedicated supporters who recognise its critical importance to light aircraft safely traversing the Blue Mountains or visiting the area. It is an essential infrastructure that must remain operational and be respected for the contribution it has made to aviation for the benefit of our community.

Critical aviation locality

This airfield has served as the only approved landing ground for aircraft in the Blue Mountains since 1968. It was preceded by council operated strip at Blackheath constructed in 1939.

Its critical importance to the general aviation sector in terms of safety is undisputed. It provides the single safe landing place for aircraft transiting the Blue Mountains, and has saved numerous pilots and their passengers experiencing problems due to weather and mechanical faults since it was constructed.

Community aviation base

Our members wish to strongly express our requirement for access to Katoomba Airfield for the purpose of physically establishing and maintaining a functional aero club with the amenities that are to be found at any small regional airfield.

It is our intention to support all aviation activities on the airfield, provide aviation access and education to the Blue Mountains community, and support emergency/strategic services users.

Emergency services

The record of the Katoomba Airfield accommodating up to 28 fire-fighting helicopters in recent bushfire emergencies is well documented in local and national media. We acknowledge that Crown Lands recognise this issue and we trust that it is at the forefront of lease determination.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Police Air Wing, Air Ambulance, and a number of other government stakeholders frequently use the airfield for various operations including search and rescue. It also serves as a special military training facility close to RAAF Richmond.

More critically, it remains the only aviation facility in the geographically remote Blue Mountains region that can accommodate fixed wing heavy lift aircraft capable of delivering humanitarian aid in a major catastrophic event such as an earthquake.

Blue Mountains Aviators Club Inc.

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: secretary@bluemountainsaviatorsclub.com

www.bluemountainsaviatorsclub.com

P.O. Box 880, Katoomba, NSW, 2780

FlyBlue's policy and airspace procedures

Our club was invited to participate in the development of a local fly neighbourly policy and airspace procedures by FlyBlue Pty Ltd. The outcome of this prerequisite project is the most significant upgrade proposed in general aviation procedures for the Blue Mountains since the airfield opened in 1968.

As pilots and residents of the area we are confident that the proposed procedures will achieve significant noise abatement, minimise impact on the Blue Mountains National Park and greatly improve local general aviation safety.

FlyBlue's commercial aviation intentions

Through extensive consultation with Derek and Floyd Larsen, our club members are satisfied that their intention to operate a commercial helicopter charter business is an appropriate aviation activity for Katoomba Airfield.

Previous commercial helicopter operators who are also club members (Lee Mitchell of Helicopter Lifting Services) have found the airfield satisfactory for their operations as recently as February 2016. We are not aware of any significant community objection to these operations up until that date.

In addition to the economic contribution a commercial charter operation brings to the region, we also see it as a significant improvement to local strategic resources e.g. search and rescue, fire-fighting, aeromedical transfers.

Objections to the airfield being based

The club rejects the ill-considered proposal by local conservation and residents groups that the airfield be absorbed into the Blue Mountains National Park as an "emergency only" airfield. There is no precedent for airfields being run in this manner.

The operational model outlined by the Commonwealth Airfield Local Ownership Plan (ALOP), in existence since 1958, demonstrably shows that the public or private sector cannot economically operate an airfield without operational revenue.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth government has clearly defined airfields as essential regional infrastructure and the deeds of agreement signed under the ALOP require local governments to preserve them for aviation purposes.

Other small airfields in Australia with commercial charter operations serve communities in close proximity to national parks. One excellent example is Strachan in south-west Tasmania which is surrounded by the World Heritage listed Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park.

Enjoyment of aviation

Prior to the incorporation of our association in 2016, Katoomba Airfield under the management of the late Rodney Hay and previous leaseholders has served as the home for the Blue Mountains aviation community for 50 years.

Our pilots and their families have voluntarily supported the aerodrome operators to maintain the property and support the emergency services during major bushfire events e.g. The October 2013 Blue Mountains Bushfire Disaster.

The loss of this home airfield in the wake of Rod's tragic death has been a difficult time for our community. Being unable to operate fixed wing aircraft from the field has unreasonably challenged our pilots' ability to remain current and enjoy the camaraderie of regular social gatherings at the airfield.

The formation of our organisation has been driven by this turn of events in the airfields history and we believe it demonstrates the local aviation community's commitment to preserve our essential community infrastructure for the enjoyment of the Australian aviation community. To this end, we view FlyBlues' proposed commercial tenure as the most positive opportunity for securing the future of Katoomba Airfield.

24th July 2019

To: airfield.submissions@crowland.nsw.gov.au

Minister Pavey Minister for Water, Property and Housing (Crown Land)

ATT: Mr Glen Bunny

Proposed lease -Crown Land at Medlow Bath known Katoomba Airfield -LX 602686

I would like to OBJECT to the current proposal to grant a long term lease over the site known as Katoomba airfield, located at Medlow Bath.

I am a many decades long resident of the upper Blue Mountains. I live within 1.6 km of the Airfield site, where I have made my home for the last decade. I purchased my home because of its location [REDACTED] walking track which has always been part of my extended family's blue mountains experience.

Before beginning it should be noted that I firstly object to the fact that I am being expected to submit my concerns and comments about a proposal which has no defined boundaries. The situation we are being presented with is not about a straightforward lease - it is about a lease with an undefined potential for damage- as we have no information on the proposed limits to usage eg: proposed upper limits on aircraft movements per day or per week.

There are many reasons for my **objection** - to this - or any COMMERCIAL LEASE

**1: Environmental impact
NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The location of this parcel of land wholly enclosed by Blue Mountains National Park is completely unsuitable for an airfield. It was established in the 1960's for entirely different purposes to what (we can only guess) is now being proposed. It has been used for light aviation and emergency use for many decades. It is located within approx 700 m of the edge of the 'Grand Canyon'. This canyon is one of the most ecologically diverse canyons in the Blue Mountains.

With deep gorge areas, waterfalls, spay zones, sandy beaches, semi submerged river cave environments, deep pools and cascading riffle zones - the multitude of specific aquatic environments alone is vital habitat to numerous species of plants and animals including birds, crustaceans, fish, frogs reptiles etc. Additionally there is cold climate rain forest, drier ridge tops and rock gullies and heath areas. Then we can begin on the numerous cliff faces, rock overhangs and cave shelters providing (other) diverse habitat for birds, bats insects etc.

There is a significant body of evidence on the impact of noise associated with aviation on birds, particularly birds of prey. Many of the ecological functions requiring interactions between bird, insects and other animals rely on sound for breeding and feeding. Given the proximity of the canyon wall to the airfield site they will certainly be disturbed from ANY helicopter movement at the airfield site itself, irrespective of the path they take to and from the site.

Given the increasing importance of preservation of natural areas and the listing of the Blue Mountains as World Heritage Area in 2000, any proposal to grant a long term lease, operate an airfield or in any way develop the site - should require a thorough independent environmental impact assessment.

The impacts on animals (and potentially plants- given ecological interdependence; particularly with insect eating birds and pollinator bird species) is not isolated to the canyon but to all surrounding areas and under any flight 'routes'.

Crown lands do not have the facility in house to determine the likely long term ecological impact of increased aircraft activity at this site.

Crown Lands responsibilities for the people of NSW - enshrined in legislation

Ref 1: Objects of the Crown Lands Management Act 2016

*(c) to require **environmental**, social, cultural heritage and economic considerations to be taken into account in decision-making about Crown land,*

Ref 2: 1.4 Principles of Crown land management

(a) that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land, and

(b) that the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible, and

(e) that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity, and

2: Individuals right to wilderness experience and 'natural quiet' : NEED FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCE SURVEY

In addition to plants and animals relying on these areas of the Grose valley for their existence and well being, many thousands of people walk the Grand Canyon on an annual basis, more than 90,000 per annum. More still walk through Rodriguez Pass below Point Pilcher to the valley floor and to expanse of the Grose Valley Wilderness.

My mother (Ruth Tarn) walked this area of the mountains as a young Sydney University medical student in 1946 <http://old.subw.org.au/archives/POR/PressOnRegardless.html> I was regularly brought to this area of the mountains with my brothers and sisters as a small child. My children grew up regularly walking the Grand Canyon track and often down into the Grose Valley wilderness. These trips provided an important 'outdoor classroom' for them learning about the beauty and importance of the natural world. These experiences would be ruined by the increase and focused occurrence of aircraft noise in this area that commercialisation of the old airfield would bring.

This area of the Blue Mountains is increasingly used as a 'showcase' to international visitors, whether they have come in a campervan or by train, car- whether on their own or part of a tour- showing them the amazing diversity and beauty of Australia's environments. From the Grand Canyon rainforest to the Blue Gum wilderness on the valley floor, my family, people escaping the city, interstate international visitors to scouts groups canyoners, rock climbers or just people visiting a lookout for a 'taste ' of nature - a most important component of their experience is the 'natural quiet'.

This becomes an issue of numbers – many thousands enjoying ‘natural quiet’ of the valley floor, at the lookouts, in the canyon, climbing a rock face, in a local park compared to the VERY FEW who would be arriving and ‘helitouring’ by air.

Crown lands do not have the facility in house to determine the likely impact on Visitor experience, quality of life for locals and cultural heritage of the area

Ref 3: Objects of the Crown Lands Management Act 2016

*(c) to require environmental, **social, cultural heritage** and economic considerations to be taken into account in decision-making about Crown land,*

3: Impact on my local community – economic well being NEED FOR ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

5.2 million visitors to the Blue mountains each year. 1.25 million bushwalkers per annum in the Blue Mountains. Visitors coming for a classic Blue Mountains bushland experience, quaint villages, magnificent uninterrupted views- **peace and quiet.**

Escaping the city for a weekend, week long stay on family holidays- renting houses, cabins, staying at air bnbs. They stay in hotels for one or two nights. They camp or use a caravan park. They shop locally, they eat in the cafes and restaurants. They visit our local galleries. They use the local fruit and vegetable shop, newsagent. They visit our antique shops, they buy some warmer clothes- They drink in our pubs. It is the vast numbers of people who come here, often year after year, that are the backbone of our accommodation, food and service based economy.

Our brand is peace and quiet – slow food- artists- nature based experiences- tranquility.

We know that when we damage that brand - and any proposal to run helicopters in and out of World Heritage Area **will** damage that brand- we lose income.

*Crown lands do not have the facility in house to determine the likely impact on the Blue Mountains ‘brand’ **and any flow on impacts to the local economy.***

Ref 4: Objects of the Crown Lands Management Act 2016

*(c) to require environmental, social, cultural heritage and **economic considerations** to be taken into account in decision-making about Crown land,*

4: Inappropriate land tenure- inappropriate /out of order process TRANSFER THE LAND INTO NATIONAL PARK

Over many years there have been numerous calls from community, Local Council and State Government departments for the site to become part of National Park, including the recent petition of over 12,000 signatories to the NSW parliament.

I cannot understand how the Department of Crown Lands have not asked the community what they want done with this parcel of sensitively located public land. This should have been done before any expressions of interest had been called for.

The question that should have been asked before and is NOW being answered overwhelmingly by the community is what would be the best options for this site?

The answer is obvious- National Park.

It enables multiple use star gazing, bushwalking, picnics, birdwatching, outdoor recreation etc all compatible with surrounding landuse.

Claiming this land as part of the National Park will protect the reputation of the Blue Mountains as a premier tourist destination and most importantly will protect the land for the 'benefit of the people of NSW'.

ref 5: **Objects of Act**

(c) to require environmental, social, cultural heritage and economic considerations to be taken into account in decision-making about Crown land, and

(d) to provide for the consistent, efficient, fair and transparent management of Crown land **for the benefit of the people of New South Wales**, and

REF 6: All principles of crown land management support transferring the land into National Park.

1.4 Principles of Crown land management

For the purposes of this Act, the "**principles of Crown land management**" are:

(a) that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land, and

(b) that the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible, and

(c) that public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged, and

(d) that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged, and

(e) that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity, and

(f) that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principles.

The objects and principles of the *Crown Lands Management Act 2016* require that you look after this land for the benefit of the people of NSW; not for a single company or for the vested interests of a few.

Thank you for looking after this land on behalf of the people of NSW.

I am happy for my submission and name to be public. Please keep my address confidential.

Yours sincerely



Di Shanks



During the first half of the 1940s, I lived in the inner Sydney suburb of Leichhardt. Nobody in the street owned a car. Nobody needed to, as almost the whole of Sydney lived within walking distance of a tram stop. In fact, no motor vehicles appeared in my street at all due to fuel being directed to the war effort. We did have radio. As this medium of entertainment was nowhere near as captivating as TV, at times after dinner in summer we would check-out who might be also at their front fence. Then there would be a crossing of the street for a chat for the adults and some playing around for the kids. For each residential block, on diagonally opposite corners was a shop. The grocer or butcher knew his every customer. There was no garbage collection as we generated almost no garbage. There was, however, the occasional horse-drawn vehicle with the driver calling out; "Bottle-O". And there were, of course, no passenger planes passing overhead.

So, decades later, what is my lasting impression of those days? It was the sense of community, the simplicity and the silence - and that is when I realise that silence, and the calm that comes with it, is a basic human right. It is a right that is constantly, yet imperceptibly abused. The increasing background noise has even narrowed the range of sounds our ears once detected in the 1940s.

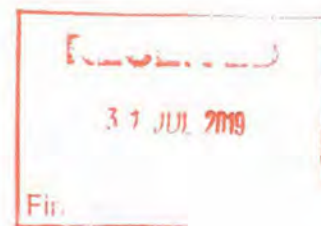
Those days can never return. The tyres on my car make as much noise on the road as every other car. I have even been carried by a jetliner over the heads of those unfortunates living in the Sydney suburb of Tempe. If I am not to be an eccentric, I have to accept what society views as the inescapable noise of modern life. But, if silence is a basic human right, then nobody should accept an extra layer of noise generated by those who care for nobody but themselves. These are the people who leave dogs inside a house to bark incessantly until their owners return from a weekend away. These are the people who determine when the street can sleep, or even think straight, by installing amplifiers for a party. And these are the people who are proposing that tourists seeking the tranquility that only nature can provide, will be walking below the thumping sound of helicopter blades as a handful of passengers above move just the right body parts required to take pictures.

From their verandas our great grand-parents watched the sun go down in silence. After dinner, and before following kerosene lamps to bed, they gazed into the dying flames of the fire mostly in silence. Silence encourages spirituality and a greater sense of self. The pace of the modern world does the opposite - driven as it is by those who believe that something has to be always happening - as if in fear of spending time with the soul.

A thinking society recognizes opinion, exaggeration and guessing when stated as if factual. A thinking society sees through the cloak wrapped around the nakedness of the greed. A thinking society is concerned about the unnatural pace of modern life. A thinking society is aware of the intrinsic spirituality of a landscape that has existed in dignified silence for tens of millennia.



Department of Industry
Crown Lands
PO Box 2155
Dangar NSW 2309



Your Reference Number: 602686
Proposed leasing of Crown land at Medlow Bath
occupied by Katoomba Airfield.

I wish to object to the granting of a commercial licence for the Katoomba Airfield. The land should be placed into the National Park and the airfield used for emergency use only. I base my objection on the following grounds:

1. The Blue Mountains has witnessed unprecedented development over the last few years that has seen the quality of life for residents diminish considerably.

Developments currently in the pipeline that will further diminish the Blue Mountains World heritage area include :

- a) Clarence colliery wishing to transport another 100000 tons of coal by road (on top of the 200000 tons they transport already through the Blue Mountains. This will result in further road noise.
- b) Land clearing at Wentworth Falls with a proposal to build a tourist hotel/fauna park on the failed crocodile park area. This will result in further traffic/noise problems .
- c) Proposal to build high rise units on the corner of GWH and The Mall Leura.

These are just some of the many development proposals in the pipeline for the Blue Mountains. The point I am trying to make is that the Airfield lease proposal cannot be looked at in isolation from all the other intrusions that are degrading the lifestyles of the existing residents as well as lowering the quality experiences of the tourists who visit our area.

It is "death by a 1000 cuts" to the World Heritage Areas (WHA) we know it.

By allowing the airport to operate on a commercial basis devalues in the long term our World Heritage Area as a top place to visit. To be sure the wealthy visitors who can afford to pay for a flight will enjoy it...but it will be at the detriment of the thousands of tourists & residents on the ground who are bushwalking or just relaxing in our WHA.



Visiting the wilderness is not just a **visual** experience – it is also an **Auditory** experience. That will obviously be diminished by helicopter noise saturating the environment regardless of whether the flight paths go over built up areas or not.

I have already experienced helicopter flights over my area (which is not a high urban density area) in 1995. They came over every 20 minutes or so several days a week. The Government banned them due to public opposition. Bob Debus wrote a letter to the local Gazette saying that the tourist flights were banned because of the negative impacts on the thousands of tourists and resident alike (sic).

So if the government regarded that it was valid that these flights should be banned in 1995-- I put it to you that there is greater justification today (given the massive increase in tourism & residents) to ban them once again!

The Blue Mountains is already suffering from over-tourism & over-development. It is becoming more like a Hollywood set in certain towns that detracts from quality living & visitor experience.

When is enough enough?

Thanking you for your time.

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]

29/7/19

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

23 July 2019

Mr Scott Mullins, Project Manager
Department of Industry
Crown Lands
Post Office Box 2155
DANGAR NSW 2309



Dear Mr Mullins

RE: Ref No 602686: Katoomba Airfield

I refer to the proposal for the lease to FlyBlue Management Pty Ltd of the Crown Land at Medlow Bath occupied by Katoomba Airfield.

I object to any commercial lease for this public land.

I would like the Department if explain how it will balance the benefits to a few airborne tourists again the noise induced distress of ground-based tourists and residents.

Although the Department given some information on the flight paths, many pilots will not adhere to those flight paths, and will cause significant noise over residential areas and the Blue Mountains National Park.

Flight paths are not neat. The pilots may stray over the Cascade Dam and cause water supply and environmental damage if an aircraft ditches into the Dam.

No information has been given about projections of flight numbers. This lack of information is a great concern to me.

The noise associated with the flights will damage the residential values of the villages of the Blue Mountains. Who wants to buy a house near a flight path?

There will be a significant impact on the bird life and the bird migration paths.

This airfield should be put into the national park.

I understand, from the information given at the Community Engagement Forum in Katoomba this month, that the Department has not completed a formal environmental risk assessment, and does not have a Statement of Environmental Effects for this proposed lease.

If it goes ahead, many endangered species will be affected by the use of the airfield. It is inappropriate for the Department to proceed with this proposal without the studies of the environmental effects.

Given the international significance of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, and the upcoming review of that status, commercial helicopter and fixed wing aircraft landing and taking off will not be beneficial to such a sensitive area.

Many vehicles, including **aviation fuel tankers**, will be needed for this proposed airfield. Road access to the airfield is via a single narrow road that runs from the Great Western Highway through a small residential village. This poses significant safety issues for the local residents, the motorists of the Highway which is two single lanes at Medlow Bath, and the National Park land.

We must keep the airfield for emergency use only.

I understand that the Department of National Parks and Wildlife is interested in incorporating the airfield into the Blue Mountains National Park. I also understand that there is a NSW Treasury Managed Fund, which has a Bushfire Risk Mitigation and Reliance Fund that could fund up to \$80,000 for maintenance of the airfield for emergency use for fire fighting aircraft. I would be grateful if you were able to provide me with some information on this Fund.

Options Paper

I urge the Department to develop an options paper for public discussion, which would provide a cost/benefit analysis of the social, economic, cultural, indigenous heritage, and environmental impacts of the commercial development and use of the Katoomba Airfield.

Additional Consultations

Once the Options Paper has been created and disseminated, I urge the Department to hold additional community consultations throughout the Blue Mountains Local Government Area.

The four consultations held in June were held in a venue which was not wheelchair accessible, did not have audio equipment or sufficient seating, and

did not have disability accessible parking. Residents in our community who were elderly, mobility impaired, or hearing impaired were disadvantaged by the choice of venue. Somewhere between 80 and 100 people attended the consultation on 25 June 2019. We were left standing for two hours which was most uncomfortable, and straining to see and hear the Departmental officials.

It seemed to me that it was the community consultation that you have when you do not want to have a community consultation. The style of consultation was inappropriate, as residents did not want to have planned one-on-one discussions with Departmental officers. As many of the questions were similar, we needed a "Town Hall" style consultation with questions from the participants, followed by answers by the official representatives. I was pleased that you and your colleagues responded to our respectful requests and conducted the consultation in this manner eventually.

For future consultations, which are essential to maintain public trust in Department decision-making, I would be grateful if you were able to ensure that it is conducted as a Town Hall style consultation, and that you hire a more appropriate venue with disability access, disability parking, audio equipment, visual maps on the walls, not the floors, a Powerpoint presentation, and appropriate numbers of seats. Another "Frequently Asked Questions" information sheet, with the answers to the questions raised at the community consultations would be most helpful.

I am looking forward to reading the Departmental report on the community consultations, which I understand will be completed within about four weeks of the close of the consultation period on 4 August 2019.

I would be appreciative of a written response to my letter.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

Department of Industry, Crown Lands

PO Box 2155

DANGAR NSW 2309



To whom this may concern

Reference number 602686

I wish to object to commercial use of Katoomba Airfield

There should be no Commercial Development in the middle of a National Park, let alone a World Heritage Area.

Joy flights were stopped in 1995 because of the noise, and should not start again.

The noise from helicopters is echoed and amplified impacting on areas outside the area just below. This impacts on visitors and residents.

My concern is not just with this specific proposal, I object to ANY commercial lease now or in the future.

This land is PUBLIC land. A private lease allows changes to be decided behind closed doors. WHO could take over the lease? WHAT could they do in the future? Could it be sold?

There are numerous international studies demonstrating the significant impacts of helicopters on native fauna, in particular on disruptions to bird migrations; also on fauna reliant on hearing for feeding, mating and care of young.

The conclusion of a 2019 ecological study is that the aircraft activity will negatively impact on the internationally recognised migration of honeyeaters through the Blue Mountains. It could also impact other birds inhabiting the diverse bushland surrounding the site.

I would prefer that the airfield land was returned to its surrounding National Park as it was always intended .

A commercial development within the World Heritage Area threatens the integrity of the land, makes it more difficult to manage as a natural area and could even put its status in jeopardy.

We need to stop this threat ever arising again! Protect our World Heritage Area

Keep this public land in public hands and keep the dirt airstrip for emergency landings and firefighting.

Fly Neighbourly Agreements are self-regulated and not enforced by any government agency.
They have not protected the National Park in the past and cannot in the future.

Regards



NSW