Community Communications Strategy

Development Application granted for change of helicopter type permitted to be used at Dyke Point Helipad

Port Authority of NSW manages the navigation, security, and operational safety needs of commercial shipping in Sydney Harbour, Port Botany, Newcastle Harbour, Port Kembla, Eden and Yamba. With over 6,000 visits from trade and cruise vessels to the State every year, the ports of New South Wales contribute billions of dollars to the economy, create thousands of jobs and support countless businesses.

Newcastle is one of the country's busiest and largest tonnage throughput ports, exporting valuable bulk cargo such as coal, grain, vegetable oils, alumina, fertiliser and ore to markets overseas. In Newcastle, Port Authority provides pilotage to the roughly 2,200-trade vessels visiting the port each year.

Helicopters are used for pilot transfers in Newcastle because visiting coal and grain ships can receive a helicopter directly onto their decks. Helicopter transfer is the safest and most efficient way of transporting marine pilots to visiting vessels in Newcastle.

Background

Port Authority of NSW was granted Development Consent (DA21/17874) (New Development Consent) by the NSW Minister for Planning on 1 April 2022 for the "use of twin-engine helicopters for marine pilot transfer operations" at the existing Dyke Point Helipad.

The transition to a new twin-engine helicopter model was required to meet new Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements. Port Authority now performs Helicopter Marine Pilot Transfers (HMPT) using an EC135 helicopter to transport marine pilots to and from vessels both entering and departing the Port of Newcastle.

CASA changed safety standards, limiting the types of helicopters that can perform the HMPT. The single-engine Hughes MD500 helicopter formerly used for HMPT, which was approved under Development Consent (DA98/1262) (Original Development Consent) granted by Newcastle City Council on 2 May 1998, cannot be used under the changes in Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR).

These changes aim to:

- maintain and improve aviation safety performance in Australia
- ensure regulatory actions achieve safety outcomes without impeding industry and
- maintain best practice in the field of over-water personnel transfers.

The transition from a single-engine to twin-engine helicopter commenced on 1 April 2022. Port Authority does not expect this transition to a new helicopter to be noticeable or disruptive to our port community. The DA was supplemented by specialist acoustic consultant reports which outlined and assessed any noise impacts.

Key stakeholders

Stakeholder	Details
Minister	Minister for Planning and Homes, and Minister for Transport and Roads
Local Council	City of Newcastle
Local State Member	Member for Newcastle
NSW Government Agencies	Department of Planning and Environment Environment Protection Authority
Tenants/Customers /key industry stakeholders	• Port of Newcastle (PON) tenants and our customer who currently pay boarding transfer fees • Shipping Australia (SAL) • Civil Aviation Services Australia (CASA) • Air Services Australia (ASA)
Community groups	• Carrington Community • Stockton Community • Honeysuckle Community
Local Community	Residents who may be affected by the noise impacts of HMPTs
Local Businesses	Local businesses and organised business groups potentially affected by noise impacts from HMPTs.
Port Authority staff	Staff who may have an interest in changes to our pilotage regimens
Aviation regulators	CASA and ASA

Communication tools

Tools	Description
Website	Port Authority website updated with information about the change of helicopter type for HMPT.
Email address and enquiries phone line	To receive feedback from the community.
Meetings	Port Authority will provide for the formation of a Community Consultative Committee (to be established by 1 September 2022) to enable community representatives and stakeholders an opportunity to participate in an open communication forum relating to operational and environmental issues relating to the new helicopter.
Project stakeholder database	Port Authority will respond to complaints and inquiries and will record all interactions with stakeholders. Port Authority will manage any complaints in accordance with the Community Complaints Procedure (available in Port Authority's website: https://www.portauthoritynsw.com.au/community/community-complaints-procedure/)
Translation and interpreting services	Should language barriers impede a stakeholder's capacity to understand key messages, the Translating and Interpreting Service National (TIS) can be engaged via telephone and online.

Communications protocols

Complaints procedure
Port Authority of NSW has an established community complaints procedure. This is managed by Service NSW. Complaints and enquiries are managed on a 24/7 basis. As per Port Authority website the process for complaints is as follows:

- **Call our 24/7 community enquiries and complaints line** on 02 9296 4962
- **Service NSW will receive the complaint** and take details of the nature of the call.
  Please provide specific details where possible: date, time, vessel name, etc

- **A verbal response is provided**, including an outline of how the call will be managed

- **Action is taken** by Service NSW depending on the nature of the complaint. This may include contacting our operations team for real time investigation and action if required (e.g. contacting a ship and/or the ship's agent in the event of a noise complaint)

- **Service NSW emails the complaint** to Port Authority

- **Details on the response outcome** will be emailed to the complainant by Port Authority within three working days

- **Complaints will be registered** and allocated a reference number and kept in a central database by Port Authority (Port Authority, 2022)

- **Port related emergencies** should be reported immediately by phone to Triple Zero (000) or by radio on VHF Ch 09 Newcastle VTS or by phone 02 4929 3890