

Monday 13 January 2019

COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF KATOOMBA AIRFIELD LEASE DECISION

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has declined an application for a lease at Katoomba Airfield in response to community feedback.

The Department's Deputy Secretary of Crown Lands Anne Skewes said there had been overwhelming community opposition to a proposal for helicopter charter flights due to concerns about potential impacts on the Blue Mountains region.

"In direct response to feedback from the community, the Department has declined the application by FlyBlue to lease Katoomba Airfield at Medlow Bath to use as a recreational aviation hub," Ms Skewes said.

The lease was publicly exhibited for eight weeks from June to August and attracted 1,582 submissions, with more than 85 per cent opposing the application and only 13 per cent in support or offering conditional support.

"Among concerns raised were noise pollution, preserving the appeal of the Blue Mountains as a peaceful environment, potential pollution of water supplies, and protecting Aboriginal heritage interests," Ms Skewes said.

"We've heard loud and clear that proposal shouldn't go ahead and we are working with FlyBlue to determine the future use of the site."

The applicant's current interim licence will cease on 28 February 2020 and a new interim licence will be issued that prohibits helicopter flights.

The airfield will remain open to emergency services.

The community consultation summary report can be found at www.industry.nsw.gov.au