



Former iron man plans to develop Evans aerodrome

Council 'blown away' by quality proposals

By **JAMIE BROWN AND DAMIAN BATHERSBY**

FORMER Olympian and champion iron man Grant Kenny is part of a leading consortium proposing to purchase and redevelop Evans Head Aerodrome, creating an industrial aviation hub, a residential component and a museum at the heritage-listed site.

The Evans Head Airpark proposal includes developing at least 60 exclusive homes with direct access to flying facilities, as well as an industrial complex attracting aviation-linked businesses to the area.

The proposal is one of three presented to the council after submissions closed earlier this month, calling for expressions of interest in developing a residential airpark.

"There is a great deal of uncertainty sur-

rounding existing airport facilities and major issues facing the aviation industry in terms of access to airports," Mr Kenny said. "We are all well aware of the issues at Caloundra (with proximity to residential developments) and cost issues at places like Maroochydore.

"There are significant issues facing businesses at Archerfield and Bankstown as well, so if you are in the industry you start to look around and ask 'where can I afford to be?'

"Basically, aviation businesses are being squeezed out of most existing airports and so we see a need in future for more certainty for people."

Aircraft maintenance, refurbishment and even manufacturing were among the industries

which could be established at the facility, Mr Kenny said.

Richmond Valley Council's director of environmental services, Ken Exley, said he was 'blown away' by the calibre of proponents and hoped to present a report to the May council meeting.

The consortium is led by businessman and aviator Peter Lynch, who currently heads mining exploration company Waratah Coal. He has extensive experience developing large projects, like the Central Queensland mine Oaky North, a \$240 million project.

But the lure of Evans Head has more to do with his interest in aviation and his love of the local area.

"This is a fantastic op-

portunity to develop a strong aviation hub along the Northern Rivers coastline," he said.

Well aware of the planned aged care complex, Mr Lynch said the remaining aerodrome land was suitable for his project.

Mr Lynch said the proposal, for 60 residential homes, with direct access to runways, and 10 commercial sites, was modest in comparison to most existing airparks.

Richmond Valley mayor Col Sullivan said that all the airpark proposals would get an equal hearing.

"It would be unfair of me to comment specifically on one proposal. But I can say we are pleased with the quality of all the proposals," he said.

**WOULD YOU USE
THE PROPOSED
EVANS AIRPARK?
Phone 6624 3266 or
SMS 0428 264 948**



AVIATION AND RESIDENTIAL HUB: The Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome.

FLYING HIGH: Former Olympian Grant Kenny is part of a consortium headed by businessman Peter Lynch to redevelop Evans Head Aerodrome as an airpark.