



Big plans for Evans Aerodrome

Richmond Valley Council voted 7/1 (Cr Donella Kinnish opposed) to rezone the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome for a retirement village complex.

The proposal has been heavily criticised by the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Committee president, Dr Richard Gates, who spoke against the motion at the meeting.

"It is very clear that council is planning to shut down the aerodrome for aviation. The retirement home is a Trojan horse for further residential development at Evans Head and what a major loss that would be to aviation infrastructure in Australia...We can have both facilities at Evans Head but the retirement village should not be on the aerodrome," Dr Gates said.

The rezoning proposal will now go to the Minister for Planning,

Kristina Keneally, for approval.

It has also been revealed that former Olympian and Ironman Grant Kenny is part of a consortium that wants to purchase and redevelop the aerodrome to create an industrial aviation hub with a residential component and a museum.

Mr Kenny, who co-owns Australia's largest privately owned aviation fleet, is one of six partners in the consortium, which is being headed by Peter Lynch, head of the mining exploration company Waratah Coal.

"Our vision is to create a thriving aviation community by providing commercial and residential opportunities in the one spot – and all just 400 metres from some of the best beaches on the east coast," Mr Lynch said.

The proposal includes at least 60 homes with

direct access to flying facilities and also to attract aviation-based businesses to the area.

The submission was made in response to the Council's recent advertisements seeking expressions of interest in the site.

Richmond Valley Mayor Col Sullivan said they had received three "very good quality applications" to build an air park on the remaining land.

"We expect to have a report to the June meeting as to who will get the opportunity to develop the air park," he said.

Asked if he thought there could be possible land use conflicts by having an aviation enterprise next to a residential development, Mr Sullivan said no, he thought they could exist side by side.

"We've been through that and had sound people advise us that it wouldn't be a major problem at all."