

**MEDIA RELEASE****July 23, 2009****EVANS HEAD AIRPARK BID STEPS UP**

A high profile consortium has been given the green light to submit a detailed proposal on its plans to purchase and redevelop Evans Head Aerodrome on the far north coast of New South Wales to create an industrial aviation hub, a residential component and a museum at the 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.

Former Olympian Grant Kenny, who co-owns the Curry-Kenny Aviation Group – Australia's largest privately owned aviation fleet with more than 110 aircraft – has pledged to establish a business on site, providing a crucial drawcard for other associated services.

Evans Head Airpark Pty Ltd was one of three companies to respond to an advertisement from Richmond Valley Council for expressions of interest in developing the heritage-listed aerodrome into a residential air park and aviation hub.

Mr Kenny said the consortium was thrilled that the council had supported its submission and taken the process forward.

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

The consortium is headed by Waratah Coal CEO Peter Lynch and also includes Red Bull air race pilot Matt Hall and Sunshine Coast-based aircraft maintenance service proprietor Mark Radford.

“We think the redevelopment provides enormous opportunities for the aviation and tourism sectors and business generally,” Mr Radford said.

Mr Hall said: “The development of a thriving aviation hub at the historic Evans Head Aerodrome would complement our future business and lifestyle well.”

The Evans Head Airpark proposal acknowledges the significant role the aerodrome played in the training of pilots during World War II.

The group is proposing to construct a museum on site, with the initial focus being the sole remaining Bellman Hangar which would be restored as part of the plan. An RAAF F-111 fighter bomber is also proposed to be displayed on site, once the aircraft are decommissioned in 2010.

A boutique motel and convention centre as well as camping facilities will also be established to provide further options to pilots and aviators, while still servicing the mainstream tourism custom.

The airpark would continue to offer vital community services to the residents of Evans Head, including maintaining existing air ambulance and fire fighting facilities as well as charter and general aviation related businesses. Regular public transport services are also planned to be established at the airstrip.

Mr Lynch, who is an active pilot, said the consortium was excited about having the opportunity to develop a strong aviation hub along the Northern Rivers coastline.

“We are a group of passionate aviators and supporters of the aviation industry and we believe we can reinvigorate the aerodrome while providing a diverse range of economic and employment opportunities in aviation, hospitality and tourism related businesses,” he said.

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Media inquiries to Andrew Crook 0419 788 431

Website [www.evansheadairpark.com.au](http://www.evansheadairpark.com.au)