PLANNED PROCEDURE: MUDGEE HOSPITAL HLS OPERATIONS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Reference: NSW Health Policy GL2018_010 Guidelines for NSW Hospital HLS

Background

A helicopter landing site (HLS) Safety and Compliance Audit was conducted on the Mudgee Hospital HLS in late January 2017. The Audit was conducted to ascertain the continued safe operations of rotary wing retrieval operations and where applicable, against the specifications and requirements of the document that became Reference A.

It was evident during the audit visit that the best approach/departure paths were to the cleared area to the north of the existing HLS. This was to avoid overflight of existing hospital infrastructure.

The Procedure is prepared for the State Significant Development Application and has been prepared in accordance with Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements which states "Drawings identifying location of any Departure and Approach Procedures for helipads on the site".

Procedure Development

In late November 2017, an incident occurred where a wall collapsed in the vicinity of the HLS due to an unorthodox flight path by an approaching helicopter. From this incident a procedure was developed that would result in the limitation of helicopters flying over the hospital site.

The outcome was to approach to and depart from the hospital area from a site immediately to the north of the HLS where there are more approach/departure direction options without hospital infrastructure or natural obstructions. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Preferred approach/departure point for Mudgee HLS
Figure 1 details the use of the cleared area to the north of the existing HLS. The area with the red dashed line, is sufficient for an AW139 to approach from a number of directions (yellow arrows) and then hover south to the existing HLS.

**Procedure**

The procedure involves the following:

1. Pilots approach/depart from the area indicated by the red dashed box shown in Figure 1.
2. On arrival:
   a. The pilot would stabilise the helicopter in a hover and hover-taxy up the corridor indicated by the black line to the Hospital HLS.
   b. The pilot would then land the helicopter on the HLS.
   c. The patient transfer activity would then occur.
3. On departure:
   a. The pilot would lift the helicopter to the hover above the HLS and hover-taxy up the corridor indicated by the black line to the departure area (red dashed box).
   b. Once established clear of the treeline either side of the corridor, the pilot would conduct a normal departure.

**Mudgee Hospital Construction Works and Helicopter Operations**

Figure 2 shows the Mudgee Hospital site with the procedure overlayed. The significance of this procedure is that the greatest downwash (caused by the approach and departure) occurs away from the work sites around the Hospital AND the helicopter DOES NOT fly over the construction areas.

*Figure 2: Works helicopter operations procedure*
Further Operations Documents

There is a requirement to develop an operations procedure document for the construction site that will inform all personnel onsite of the concurrent operations of the HLS and construction activity and detail site discipline, communications protocols and site coordination with regard to helicopter operations.

This document will also assist the site planning for roads, positioning of cranes and other vertical obstructions, the use of flood lights at night and site discipline near the HLS for loose objects that could be caught up in helicopter downwash.

In Summary

Continued operations into/from the HLS should be able to occur during construction if this procedure is followed.

The site will require a helicopter construction operations plan to be developed to ensure this concurrent activity occurs with everyone’s safety in mind.

All areas near the HLS will be subject to some downwash as the helicopter hovers to/from the HLS. Sites need to observe loose item discipline.

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