

## Gold Coast helicopter joy flight business issued show-cause notice after noise complaints

ABC Gold Coast / By Tom Forbes and Nicole Dyer

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The company has been operating a fleet of helicopters on the Broadwater for more than 30 years. *(Supplied)*

A long-running Gold Coast helicopter joy flight business is facing closure after noise complaints prompted the city council to issue a show-cause notice.

The management of Gold Coast Helitours, which has operated on the Broadwater at Main Beach for 30 years, claims to have been blindsided when notified via the media that they have until September 22 to demonstrate they are not operating illegally.

"We're not a new business," general manager Ray Brown said.

"We've had the support of council all along."

### Key points:

- The city council says it believes the use of the premises for air services is not a lawful use
- Gold Coast Helitours has until September 22 to show that it is not operating illegally

The business, which has halved its workforce to 10 people since the pandemic began, operates scenic flights, charters and aerial surveying.

- Council acted following noise complaints from residents living in Southport and Main Beach

Mr Brown said the operation also worked closely with the local film industry.

"We're not doing anything but catering for demand," he said.

Councillor Brooke Patterson, whose division includes Southport which is impacted by helicopter noise, said after investigation, it was council's view that "the use of the premises for air services is not a lawful use".

"Council has issued a show-cause notice as to why an enforcement notice should not be issued pursuant to Section 168 of the Planning Act 2016."



The company has halved staff numbers due to the pandemic. *(Supplied: Gold Coast Helitours)*

Mr Brown said he had not yet sighted the show-cause notice and would work to comply with the council's requirements.

"We're not a coffee cart. We can't just pick up and move it around the corner," he said.

Division 10 councillor Darren Taylor said council was responding to complaints from residents who lived near the Broadwater at Main Beach and Southport.

"At the moment there are two options; either they stop, or submit an application and they will have to go through that process," he said.

"It effectively gives them until September 22 to either stop flying or stop trading ... or they can submit an application to actually provide their services.

"By doing that, it will be an impact-assessable application which the residents would have a say in the outcome."

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## **Residents relieved**

The frequency of joyride chopper trips in the area inspired Don Espey to create a group called the Coalition Against Environmental Pollution.

The Main Beach resident said the company should never have been allowed to operate in such a built-up area.

"This has been something that is totally incongruous, that you can have raucous leaded-fuel helicopters flying around a hospitality, residential and recreational area," he said.

"There is no space for a noisy helicopter operation.

"We are just delighted that common sense is appearing to prevail."

Mr Espey claimed the noise and disturbance to wildlife breached the rules and regulations of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority as well as the State Government lease conditions.

He believed the helicopter business would be better suited near the theme parks located on the northern end of the Gold Coast.