

Objection

As a 40-year continuous playing member of Newcastle Basketball, and resident of the local Lambton precinct, I object to the proposal on the following grounds:

1. Proposal does not meet and advance the needs of basketball in the Lower Hunter

While a new stadium is undoubtedly needed, this proposal does not meet the requirements or demands of basketball in the Lower Hunter.

Newcastle Basketball's stated requirements (Newcastle Basketball Town Hall, late 2023) are that 20 courts are required in the Lower Hunter to meet current and future demand. This proposal delivers only 6 courts (currently funded, if what is remaining of the \$25 million grant is sufficient for the Stage 1 build). Continually rising building costs suggest this funding may already be insufficient for the 6 court Stage 1 build.

The 12 courts contained in the full proposal, note currently unfunded, still falls well below the assessed demand and requirement of 20 courts.

The proposed location is inappropriate (as outlined further below). Due to the location, should the project go ahead, the user experience of playing basketball in Newcastle will be eroded significantly, impacting participation choice in basketball and reducing basketball participation numbers. The practical inaccessibility of the facility as proposed, due to the location and traffic management proposal of left in, left out off Turton Road only, means that in practice, users the majority of which will occur between the hours of 3.30 to 11pm weeknights, will experience significant challenges in finding a parking spot and getting to the facility due to traffic on Turton Road and inability to access parking when arriving.

Basketball games and training are scheduled at hourly intervals across the afternoon/evening. This means that the vast majority of users are arriving for and also leaving the facility at the same time – within an 10–15-minute window of games finishing and the next game slot starting. This means all users trying to access and egress the stadium precinct and parking at the same time. Arrive too early, the game hasn't finished and so the car park is full, and no parking. Then have to exit the car park, left out only, travel a few blocks to do a u turn, perhaps turn left into Young Road (if not closed due to major event at Macdonald Jones), drive through residential streets Young Road, Womboin, Wallarah, Monash, to

do another left turn in off Turton, to try again. Or, drive up to Waratah, Broadmeadow, all through major intersections each with long waits at lights, to come back on the opposite side of Turton Road and attempt a park in MacDonald Jones (again if not full, as it often is with major events, Hockey centre overflow, parking for John Hunter Shuttle). Arrive too late, again, the car park is full, same issue. Users will thus likely seek to avoid this hassle and the high likelihood of missing the start of their game and will seek to park in residential streets adjacent to the site, more easily accessible – further explored below.

This ‘hassle’ with ‘getting to basketball’ will find many parents choosing not to enrol their kids in basketball, as it’s ‘just too hard to get too’. Adult players will be the same.

The location will also mean a hugely increased ‘hassle’ factor for playing basketball in Newcastle when major events are on at Macdonald Jones Stadium (MJS). This occurs circa 45 times a year and it is understood a DA is currently in play to increase this. This will mean that basketball, on these days, will at best be even harder to access, given how Turton Road and surrounding streets are choked with traffic during major events at MJS; or basketball events will not able to be scheduled on these dates, meaning games missed, postponed, stadium closed, thus less participation, lower value for your membership dollar. This will erode the experience of playing basketball in Newcastle further, impacting playing numbers. Newcastle Basketball recently experienced a reduction in playing numbers in senior social comp from an imposed fee change model and fee increase (via Basketball Connect); the playing community are sensitive to a reduction in value for playing basketball as their form of exercise.

The proposed location is well known to be high flood risk. It thus also requires that flood mitigation strategies be built into the proposal. The stated mitigation strategy is that the proposed car park will be the ‘flood storage’ area. Given this, when heavy rain is forecast, Newcastle Basketball cannot morally and ethically operate their facility and allow patrons to park in the car park, putting their wellbeing, safety and property at risk. It is feasible that the facility will thus need to be closed, or the car park closed, or evacuated, in periods of or forecasted heavy rain, again, reducing playing days and the experience and value for money of members, eroding the experience of playing basketball in Newcastle, impacting playing numbers.

That an indoor sports facility of this magnitude and spend may have to close or reduce operations during heavy rain is incomprehensible. The inappropriateness of the location means that the limited funding available needs to be spent on

mitigating the flooding risk factors; this precious funding should and could be used for basketball and sporting infrastructure, i.e. more courts, in a more appropriate location.

2. Project is unfunded and the applying entity are proven mis-managers of a basketball/ indoors sports facility, and new stadium proposals, risking project failure and the wasting of millions of dollars of public funds

The applying entity, Newcastle Basketball, openly state that they do not have the funds to build the proposed facility. They have openly stated that further public funding will need to be secured to complete the build and project.

The \$25 million current grant has been eroded to some degree by the proposal process. This means that less than \$25 million is available for even the Stage 1 build (6 courts only). With this reduction and the rise of building costs since this funding was secured means Newcastle Basketball's ability to fund even Stage 1 questionable.

The applying entity, Newcastle Basketball, are the same entity that has allowed and overseen the current Newcastle Basketball Stadium to erode and fall into disrepair. In addition, the experience of playing members of the basketball community, has also progressively eroded over the last 20 years.

Any entity with this proven track record of mismanagement of both public funds and an indoor sports facility should not be entrusted with further public monies for the same purpose. Notably and appropriately, they haven't been, despite continual attempts to secure further monies for a new stadium over the past twenty years. Given this track record, it seems unlikely that government will ever grant further monies to this entity, meaning that should the current SSDA be approved, there is a high risk that the proposal will remain unfunded, and thus unbuilt.

This is the fourth, inappropriate location proposed by Newcastle Basketball for a new stadium project in the last 15 years. Circa 2012, \$5 million in public funds was secured by Newcastle Basketball to extend the existing stadium in Broadmeadow to the adjacent lot. The location proved inappropriate as an Aboriginal Land Claim was active on the proposed site. Newcastle Basketball mismanaged this proposal, didn't consult or investigate appropriately, the project didn't go ahead. Money was wasted.

A major proposal was developed for development of a new stadium in the Hillsborough precinct. The location was in/adjacent to residential homes, next to an existing school, causing major traffic and parking influxes to a residential area and local roads, had insufficient parking. There was little or no consultation with

local residents prior to proposed site selection. Ultimately, this site was not approved by the local planning authority due to these concerns and significant opposition by the local residents impacted, as it would destroy the liveability and value of their homes. Millions of dollars were wasted on the development of the proposal in an inappropriate site.

A further proposal was developed for the Glendale precinct. This also did not proceed due to issues with location; further money was wasted on this proposal.

Despite the location issues experienced with all three previous proposals, Newcastle basketball have again proceeded with this proposal in in/adjacent to residential homes, next to an existing school, causing major traffic and parking influxes to a residential area and local roads, had insufficient parking. There was again little or no consultation with local residents prior to proposed site selection, and also with the basketball community on location selection.

The applying entity, Newcastle Basketball has a track record of facility and association mismanagement and inappropriate new stadium location proposals. Given this track record, granting or handing approval of this application to Newcastle Basketball places the project at great risk of failure and risks the future of basketball in Newcastle and the Lower Hunter.

3. Inappropriate location for a basketball stadium of this nature, destroying the liveability of the local precinct and impacting the financial and holistic well-being of local residents and current precinct users

Basketball stadiums of this nature not built in residential areas or immediately adjacent to where people live in Australia or across the world. No basketball stadium of this size has been built anywhere in Australia in the last 20 years in a residential area and/or immediately adjacent to people's homes. This is readily evidenced by review of the location of major basketball stadium builds across Australia for the last 20 years.

There is good reason for this. Basketball stadiums are a nightmare to live next to. Nobody would want to, or can, live next to one, by choice. Basketball / indoor sport stadiums such as the one proposed are:

- Extremely noisy, both from noise inside but also from arrival/departure of users
- Large and overbearing visually, dominating the sight-scape
- highly trafficked and trafficked at times that coincide with traffic peaks on adjacent roads, increasing traffic problems
- require extensive parking, able to be accessed at peak game slot change over times (i.e. all patrons arriving and leaving in peak 20-minute windows)

- displace large amounts of rainfall into stormwater systems
- require lighting and power into evening and nighttime
- peak usage in afternoons, evenings and weekends, impacting privacy and relaxation times of adjacent residents
- significantly de-value property adjacent to the facility

The proposed facility will negatively impact the liveability of residents in the following ways and thus should not be approved:

Traffic danger and impact increased

The proposed facility will bring a large increase in traffic movements onto local roads in the precinct, local roads not designed or classified for such traffic loads or types. The expected number of additional visitors and thus road users the facility will bring to the precinct is well documented in the proposal. The impact of traffic noise on well-being is well known.

As there is no reliable, frequent public transport to the site, virtually all patrons will have to attend by private vehicle.

The proposed access and egress plans for the facility and parking plans will cast a huge increase in through traffic onto local roads in the broader Lambton and New Lambton precinct - again local roads not designed for or classified for carrying the projected traffic volumes.

Note that this section of Turton Road is already choked with traffic at peak times as one of the busiest and major North-South throughfares in Newcastle. This section already becomes virtually impassable and practically inaccessible when a major event is on at MacDonald Jones Stadium and also as it floods quickly with any major rain downpour. This section of Turton Road will not cope with a further 25,000 plus vehicle movements a week at peak times. It will become unusable and prevent practical access for residents who will effectively be blocked out of and locked into their homes.

The Left in- left out only plan off Turton Road means that parking and traffic volumes to the facility at peak user times, i.e. the 15 minutes before a game slot starts where all users of the facility will be accessing and egressing at the same time, will be prohibitive to access to the facility (as outlined above).

Patrons will thus seek to 'short cut' this bottleneck and will avoid Turton Road to access the facility. This means that traffic approaching from the West, of which there will be significant volume given the population growth of the western corridor, will seek to 'short cut' or 'rat run' approach to and access to the stadium via a pre-emptive right turn

at Lloyd or Orlando Road lights to avoid the Griffiths/Turton Road intersection delay (from which they can't access the stadium anyway given no right turn in from Turton Road). These users will the 'rat run' along Young Road, Wallarah Roads and into Monash Road to access the stadium from an attempted left turn into Turton Road from Monash Road. Given the choked nature of Turton Road, there will be a 'queue' of cars doing this at peak times (which again, is when by definition all users accessing and egressing a basketball stadium at the same time slot). The same will occur if attempting to access the stadium by road from the South along Turton Road or the South West. Patrons will seek to 'avoid' the traffic jam in Turton Road (i.e. cars queuing to enter the single lane entry off Turton Road, complicated by the queuing of traffic at the pedestrian crossing at MJS and Gully Line lights) and 'rat run' via Hobart Road, Wallarah Road into Monash, for the left turn into Turton. To avoid these traffic queues preventing them getting to their or their kid's game on time, patrons will end up parking along Monash Road and the narrow, local roads in the adjacent residential precinct.

These routes to the stadium are local roads. None are designed or built for this level of heavy traffic use. They are 50 zones, school zones, and people's homes, including children, the elderly, high pedestrian areas and people with disabilities. Liveability for residents on these roads will be destroyed. Casting these levels of through traffic onto these roads will create much higher risk of major and fatal motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents. Driver behaviour at peak times for events will also increase this risk. People driving to the stadium along these roads will be trying to get to the stadium in time for their game. They will be in a hurry, especially if they 'know' that it's busy and choked with traffic and it's 'hard to get a park' as it will be. People will speed – in 50 zones, local roads, school zones – in order to get to their game on time.

All of the above needs also to be considered for heavy construction traffic if the project is approved. Heavy machinery and trucks on local roads and in school zones are fatalities waiting to happen.

Should the proposal be approved, modification to traffic flows (and construction traffic flows) on these major approaches to the stadium must be implemented to prevent major traffic flow into the local residential streets of Lambton and New Lambton and the destruction of liveability in the precinct; and to save lives. Additional traffic must be siphoned onto the roads built and classified for this degree of traffic, away from local roads, 50 km/h and school zones. As a minimum, the following is recommended:

- No right turn into Orlando Road from Griffith Road when travelling towards Newcastle – *this will prevent pre-emptive right turn into Orlando and then the 'rat-run' into Young, Womboin, Wallarah and Monash for left into Turton or for opportunistic parking along the stormwater drain in Monash and in local roads, avoiding delays at Griffiths /Traffic intersection and left-in only into stadium*

parking. This will siphon traffic from the Western corridor into Turton Road and then into overflow parking at MJS

- Speed mitigation infrastructure on Young Road and Durham Road, Lambton – *this will be essential for safety, many cars will be using these routes to avoid congestion and to access opportunistic parking in Monash Road and surrounding local streets. The nature of these roads see them already subject to speeding and hoon behaviour and speed mitigation here will be essential to prevent this from being worsened by rat-run traffic*
- No entry to Orlando Road at Young Road intersection; exit to Young Road from Orland Road only – *this will prevent further flow of through traffic into residential Lambton and keep any through traffic onto the roads designed for heavier traffic volumes*
- No Heavy vehicles in Young Road, Womboin, Wallarah and Monash Roads
- 30 km/h speed limits implemented in the local road heavy pedestrian areas surrounding the proposed site – Young Road, Womboin Road, Wallarah Road and Monash Roads
- No U-turn at Monash and Turton Road intersection & No entry to Monash Road from Turton Road; exit onto Turton only from Monash Road - *this will prevent dangerous queuing of traffic in Turton Road attempting to U-turn to access stadium entry and also entry to Monash Road to park opportunistically in Monash Road or surrounding streets to avoid stadium car park access/egress congestion. This will assist with siphoning stadium traffic approaching travelling south on Turton Road into the overflow parking in MJS.*

Insufficient Parking, forcing patrons to park in surrounding residential local roads

The 19 spots per court included in the proposal will be insufficient.

Basketball, the main function of the stadium, is played by two teams of up to 10 or 12 players per team. As no reliable and frequent public transport services the site from the population areas of Newcastle, virtually all patrons will attend the stadium via private vehicle. So, this means up to 24 cars per court from 'players' only. Each 'game' also has 2-3 referees; a minimum of two bench officials; then spectators. That makes minimum of 30 patrons per court per game time. With 12 courts proposed, which will all be being used simultaneously in game time 'slots', that makes 360 vehicles likely at any given time. Only 228-240 parking spots have been included in the proposal, which is plainly insufficient.

This means people will have to park 'elsewhere'. MacDonald Jones Stadium parking has been touted for 'overflow' parking. Note, this parking is often already full at peak times - events held at MJS itself (up to 45 days a year); used for overflow parking by the Hockey Centre; it is parking for the John Hunter Hospital Shuttle Bus; used by the on-site café, Darks. So, in practice, all parking spots are not always available there. Also, as noted above, accessing this parking is impractical if an unsuccessful attempt has been first made to park in the basketball stadium car park.

Note also that the basketball stadium car park has been proposed as the 'flood storage' for the development. This must deem that in the event of or forecast of flood-bringing rain, the car park will have to be closed or evacuated as Newcastle Basketball could not willingly direct patrons and vehicles to a location and time of known flood risk.

This all deems that people will try and park by, for overflow, and then by default due to the difficulty experienced in parking at the basketball stadium, in Monash Road and adjacent local, residential roads.

All of this already happens whenever there is any event on at MacDonald Jones Stadium. Local residential roads are choked with traffic and parking. Cars are parked on both sides of these narrow streets meaning residents, and importantly emergency vehicles, can't get through if needed. Cars are routinely parked in resident driveways, on corners impacting visibility dangerously and preventing access. This is poorly and infrequently policed. Should this development go ahead, this street parking scenario will be worsened, and occur on a daily basis, destroying liveability for residents further.

The residents of this precinct put up with all of this to enable the city and all the residents of Newcastle to have a major stadium that can host the Knights, Jets and major events in the City. It is completely inappropriate and unfair to now ask these residents to do more heavy lifting for the City of Newcastle to enable the City to have a new basketball and indoor sports facility. A new basketball and indoor sports facility is undoubtedly needed. Another location, a location where residents are not impacted this heavily, should be the location for this new stadium.

Impact on property values

Basketball stadiums of this nature are horrible to live near and should this proposal go ahead, the value of homes both immediately adjacent, and homes on traffic thoroughfares will be accordingly, significantly detrimentally impacted. This will ruin many residents financially. This should be compensated, by compulsorily acquiring impacted properties at current market value (prior to development approval). If not, legal action will likely be required and undertaken by impacted residents to obtain compensation for this financial impact.

4. Lack of consultation with stakeholders on proposed location

a) With a key stakeholder(s), Newcastle Basketball members

No consultation was undertaken by Newcastle Basketball with members regarding the location of this new stadium. The location was simply announced in the local paper by the then Lord Mayor.

No consultation followed with members regarding the proposal itself. Only 'telling', via one Town Hall broadcast and uploaded on YouTube in late 2023.

The tone of all communication has been 'support a new stadium, we need a new stadium', rather than 'consult with us on a new stadium, tell us what you think and want and need'. Input on stadium location, and on the proposed stadium location, has never been requested or engaged in.

Newcastle Basketball espoused in communications that 'all members are in support of this proposal' without having asked or canvassed support at all. This was acknowledged by Newcastle basketball as unfounded (correspondence copied below).

Silence followed for months. No consultation on the proposal, especially the suitability of this location, or updates.

Requests for consultation ignored with people and communication modalities for consultation put forward unresponsive.

As local opposition to this location grew, a request to support the new stadium (Note: not a request for consultation or input from members on the location and proposal) was made to members via a petition in hard copy at the stadium entrance and via social media.

Next, the SSDA was then announced as formally submitted hastily in the days after the sitting Lord Mayor (who announced the stadium location) was deposed in the local election, with the location of the basketball stadium and the incoming elected Lord Mayor elected with a clear position that this proposed location was inappropriate and unsuitable.

A harried social media campaign badgering Newcastle Basketball patrons to make submissions of support for the proposal has followed at the 11th hour.

Still, till today, no engagement with stakeholders on the proposal and location itself, just requests to support it (blindly).

Newcastle Basketball are having an Extraordinary General Meeting in early December to amend their constitution as, by their own admission, their current constitution is 'preventing BANL's members from having a truly representative voice, and being adequately represented in the governance of the organisation.' This acknowledges that NABL have not and in fact were constitutionally unable to consult with members as stakeholders on this project.

This has not, and does not, constitute appropriate engagement and consultation with stakeholders for the proposal.

b) With a key stakeholder(s), residents living immediately adjacent to and in the surrounding precinct of the proposed development.

No consultation was undertaken by the applicant Newcastle Basketball with residents living immediately adjacent to and in the surrounding precinct of the proposed development prior to selection of this location or announcement of this location. The first residents knew of the proposal was the announcement that the stadium would be built at this location in the local paper by the then Lord Mayor.

No subsequent effective consultation was undertaken during the period when the SSDA was being developed.

A single 'briefing' was held at and for Lambton High which some residents hastily attended given no other consultation or advice was offered.

Drop-in sessions were scheduled (two only) at the basketball stadium. These were not consultative but rather simply advising of the development and what would be involved.

Multiple requests for meaningful consultation by the local community have been ignored.

This has not, and does not, constitute appropriate and required engagement and consultation with stakeholders for the proposal.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: M D <md4th6th73@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, 25 Mar 2024 at 2:55 pm

Subject: Re: Blackley Oval Proposal

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@newcastlebasketball.com.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@newcastlebasketball.com.au)>

Cc: Directors - Newcastle Basketball <directors@newcastlebasketball.com.au>, HISC - Newcastle Basketball <hisc@newcastlebasketball.com.au>, [REDACTED] <infrastructureprojects@bnsf.com.au>

Perfect [REDACTED], appreciate your response. Thank you.

To be clear, I heartily support a new stadium for the Newcastle area, it is desperately needed.

I however believe the proposal to build it on Blackley and Wallarah Ovals is inappropriate. The practical inaccessibility of the location, given the already traffic choked nature of it, and the proposed design's worsening of these factors, will impact the experience of users negatively (compared to current and the competition). This will reduce engagement in the game locally longer term. What I mean is, playing basketball will be 'too hard to get to' compared to other sports. In practice, every day, not on paper. Mum's and Dad's won't say yes to basketball as the stadium is too hard to get to, there's no where to park, too much traffic. That is the reality of this location. This will become the buzz re the basketball here. No games when the Knights are on, or the Jets. Or we have to park 15 mins walk away etc. As such, I don't believe this build will meet the needs of basketball in Newcastle moving forwards.

I appreciate it may be your only option though, and that this is underpinning NBBall's blind pursuit of this option. It is a very tricky position. It is disgraceful that government has painted basketball into this corner in Newcastle.

The development, if it goes ahead, will also destroy liveability for the local residents surrounding the development precinct. The liveability and livelihoods of a group of residents shouldn't be, and doesn't need to be destroyed and sacrificed for a new basketball stadium in Newcastle. Newcastle Basketball and the community needs to ask themselves 'Would I want to have this stadium built next door to me and live next door to it?' That is what you are asking people to do. Big community basketballs stadiums and houses don't mix. With respect, it is plainly not common to build stadiums if this size this close to housing in a residential precinct. Very few, if any at all, of the facilities if this kind built in Australia and proposed in the last 10 years sit this adjacent to residential homes. I'm happy to be shown I'm wrong. Local and state government need to do better to find a suitable location for a new stadium, this isn't it.

Just my opinion [REDACTED], for what it's worth, provided in the telling absence of being asked for it, either as a basketballer or resident of the New Lambton/Lambton precinct.

I do thank you for your responses and ear, one of the few who are willing to engage on the matter.

Please formally note my opposition to the proposal.

MD

On Mon, 25 Mar 2024 at 7:47 am, Mathew Neason

<[REDACTED]@newcastlebasketball.com.au> wrote:

Hi Mario. Thanks for following up.

Your point is well made. It is not appropriate to speak on behalf of all of our members. I

apologise for this. I'll modify communications moving forward so that we don't imply we speak on your behalf.

When we refer to members, it is a collection of players, coaches, officials, who are registered members of Newcastle Basketball. We actually had 5800 members in 2023 plus many thousands more who use the facility without being registered members. Whilst I acknowledge I haven't spoken with all 5,800, of the many I have spoken with, the overwhelming response is excitement for the project. Of course, I do acknowledge that within that 5,800, there are likely others such as yourself who don't support it.

Regarding agencies, as a member association we don't deal directly with Basketball Australia or FIBA. Our point of contact is Basketball NSW. They've identified this as a priority project based off of independent data analysis which indicates a shortfall of 20+ courts to meet the future needs of the sport.

Given that the proposed site is adjacent to the Hunter Park Sporting precinct, this type of location is actually quite common in modern sport facility development.

If you could direct all future correspondence to hisc@newcastlebasketball.com.au so that Joe Lanz who is overseeing engagement and communication on behalf of the project can respond.

Thanks,

■

From: M D <md4th6th73@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 7:11 AM

To: Directors - Newcastle Basketball <directors@newcastlebasketball.com.au>; Simon Haire <infrastructureprojects@bnsw.com.au>; ■ <■@newcastlebasketball.com.au>

Subject: Fwd: Blackley Oval Proposal

Hi ■

Just resending my message below in case you didn't receive

Cheers

MD

----- Forwarded message -----

From: M D <md4th6th73@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, 16 Mar 2024 at 12:25 pm

Subject: Fwd: Blackley Oval Proposal

To: <■@newcastlebasketball.com.au>, Directors - Newcastle Basketball <directors@newcastlebasketball.com.au>, ■ <infrastructureprojects@bnsw.com.au>

Hi again ■ and Team and thank you for your ongoing efforts for Newcastle Basketball, and for your communication.

■■■■, when Newcastle Basketball say/post/publish that 'our 5,000 members are in support of and excited' about the proposed new stadium at Blackley Oval Lambton, what does this mean ?

- who are the 5,000? Is this current registered players/coaches, officials etc ? Or is it some other grouping ?

- when and how and where were they asked, and what were the results ? Where all 5,000 asked; did they all reply; and did they all indicate full support for the proposal as published eg at Town Hall late last year? If not how many were canvassed, how many responded, and what was the support rate ?

The reason I ask is that I don't recall being asked via an email or other survey, or seeing an opportunity to respond at the stadium eg QR code / feedback etc.

I acknowledge I may have missed it! Or I may not be part of the 5,000 as a registered player ?

I understand that there are now mechanisms published to feedback on the proposal, thank you. I'm just curious though on the evidence at hand behind the published claims of 100% unanimous support from the local basketball community. I'd also be keen to understand NSW Basketball, Basketball Australia and FIBA's position on the proposal, which appears unique in being a proposed large community basketball facility immediately adjacent to private residences and homes (somewhat unique I think in the context of basketball developments of this size across the country in the last 10 years - I may be wrong). I will also ask them myself, but if there is any info available on this, would you be able to point me to it please?

Thanks again

Mario D'Amico

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mario + Michelle D'Amico** <mdmldamico@hotmail.com>

Date: Sat, Mar 16, 2024 at 11:55 AM

Subject: Fw: 2024 MJH Winter Club Competition Update

To: M D <md4th6th73@gmail.com>

From: ■■■■ <■■■■@newcastlebasketball.com.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 13 February 2024 5:45 PM

To: mdmldamico@hotmail.com <mdmldamico@hotmail.com>

Cc: Directors - Newcastle Basketball <directors@newcastlebasketball.com.au>; ■■■■ <infrastructureprojects@nsw.com.au>; ■■■■ <contact.lcgsolutions@gmail.com>

Subject: RE: 2024 MJH Winter Club Competition Update

Hi Mario. Thanks for your keen interest in this project and raising some valid queries. The Directors have asked me to respond on behalf of our Project team. I hope the below provides some additional clarity to some of your questions and recommendations.

Newcastle Basketball currently utilise seven external venues including Hunter Sports High and Macquarie College. These external venues are key in allowing us to cater for over

5,000 members. We have been looking to extend our utilisation at some of these external venues, and also exploring opportunities at new venues. Unfortunately, most schools and indoor sports centres don't have a lot of additional capacity either. Even once the full project is complete there is a likelihood that we would still utilise some external facilities for competitions and trainings.

Regarding putting State Government Infrastructure funding towards court hire, unfortunately this wouldn't be an option even if there were courts available to hire. The \$25 million that has been provided by the State Government must be used to building new infrastructure; initially a six-court facility. The completed project will be a 12 court facility, and although we don't currently have funding to complete the full project we remain confident in the both the need and the business case supporting such a facility. The need for such a facility in our region appears to be supported by all levels of Government and we will continue to work with the relevant people to identify opportunities for additional funding.

Whilst the new facility at Blackley oval will play a key role in supporting both the current and future shortfall of courts in the Hunter region, it is not intended to be the sole solution. A much better outcome is to have a range of facilities spread across the Hunter region to support the growth of Basketball and other indoor sports in other LGAs. Newcastle Basketball will continue to work with those LGAs and other stakeholders to advocate for these facilities.

Sincerely,



From: Mario + Michelle D'Amico <mdmldamico@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 31 January 2024 1:46 PM
To: directors@newcastlebasketball.org.au <directors@newcastlebasketball.org.au>
Subject: Fw: 2024 MJH Winter Club Competition Update

Thank you. What a shame that kids in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie that want to play the amazing sport of basketball can't!

There are multiple further basketball courts around Newcastle and Lake Macquarie at schools and other facilities that sit unused after school hours. Why not engage with these schools and secure access to more of these courts so that more kids can play ? It would require some skilled advocacy and some coordination much like many sports do with juggling multiple venues across the city for their participants. 'We haven't got money to hire those courts!' I can hear you say. Well surely the additional fees you'll draw from the additional players that can play would help, or better still, use some of the money being poured

into the ludicrous proposal to build another (only) 6 court stadium at a wildly inappropriate location in Lambton to hire those courts.

Lambton will face massive opposition from local residents and other stakeholders to go ahead, and even in the very unlikely and undesirable event that it does it won't give you more courts anyway, even if you can somehow fund stage two. Even then, by your own admission (in your recent Town Hall), the 12 courts of the full project won't give you the 20 courts for the lower Hunter that have been assessed as the demand. Unlikely then that you can get funding and a site big enough for a 20 court stadium by 2028 or ever, let's face it.

Engaging and coordinating more of the local courts already available across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie is key (with a new stadium in an appropriate location, not Blackley Oval) for a long term, sustainable solution to enable the current and future generations of local kids to play the game we love.

Happy to help by the way if you'd like me to.

Regards

Mario Marc D'Amico

Registered Basketballer at Newcastle Basketball Association

from 1983 - 2024 and still going 😊