

September 2025

Regards: Hunter Indoor Sports Centre SSD 65595459

I am a longtime (54 years for me and my wife) New Lambton resident and wish to voice my opposition to the proposal to build the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre on the 3 ovals comprising Wallarah No1 and No 2 and Blackley ovals. (herein called “ the 3 ovals “)

The increased risk of flooding, increased traffic in our narrow residential streets and cars continually parked in front of our “forever” home will all drastically affect our liveability.

On 22 March 2023 an announcement was made on Blackley Oval that a basketball stadium would be built on this oval and the 2 Wallarah ovals. I was completely blindsided as this was the very first any of the surrounding residents had heard of this proposal. Since then it has caused me worry and stress through having to write submissions and read reports etc in an attempt to retain the residential amenity that we have worked so hard to achieve.

My thoughts concerning the proponent’s plans are as follows:

Flood Risk

This is one of the major effects that I believe still needs much more investigation.

This area has long been recognised as a flood zone.

The southern border of the three ovals is a stormwater drain. This drain follows the path of a natural waterway called Ker-rai Creek. As well, a natural spring flows to the drain from Arthur Edden oval adjacent to the 3 ovals. These ovals act as a sponge and naturally absorb the rainwater which lays there after a rainstorm.

Our fear is that when the 3 ovals are covered with the stadium building and concrete carpark that all of this rainwater that would have previously been naturally absorbed will flow from the roof. It appears that the only flood mitigation measures are merely several rainwater tanks on the western wall of the building to catch this runoff. The overflow from these tanks will be directed to the stormwater drain, rapidly increasing it’s height. Large volumes of water entering the drain from pipes will do so at a larger force than if it was seeping from open green space !! Therefore, the stormwater drain will fill at a very much quicker rate with nowhere to go but overflow into surrounding properties !!

Given the huge hard surface area of the stadium roof we can only imagine the volume of water runoff. With no absorption by any soft grass surfaces we will be constantly watching the drain water level. We have a very great fear that this water will flood our home.

Newcastle Basketball themselves must have a fear of the volume of water too, as they are planning to raise the level of the carpark and will construct a swale between the end of the carpark and Turton Road to supposedly catch the water runoff.

The mezzanine floor of the proposed stadium has also been designated as an emergency refuge area for patrons and players present in the building at the time.

If they are feeling the necessity to plan these measures to protect their members then we must assume that in a heavy rainstorm they expect the measures they are taking will be inadequate and our surrounding homes will be inundated with flood water. The storage tanks will simply not cope with the volume of rainwater.

This is a frightening prospect !! We know how quickly the water level in the stormwater drain rises without coping with the extra runoff from the HISC hard surfaces.

It is obvious that the proponents are very much more concerned about the effect of a rain storm flooding their building and affecting their members than they are about the safety and liveability of the surrounding residents.

Those residents living close to the stormwater drain have years of experience regarding the water levels and flow but not once have they been asked for their input. Instead it appears that there is an absolute reliance on “modelling trends” by the consultants. Therefore there is no evident consideration of the natural factors that will influence the flood risk for example a high tide in Newcastle Harbour or the water backing up against the Turton Road bridge causing a dam effect or collected rubbish in the Styx Creek waste gates which all have a major influence on the water level and flow.... All of these have huge impacts on flooding.

The proponent also has plans to install a “swale” on the eastern boundary between the carpark and Turton Road footpath as an attempt to capture water runoff from the carpark. This attempt removes the very last area of open and free green space on the entire site. It’s effectiveness is not proven in an urban area. and it has the potential to be an unsafe and unsightly boggy area.

Parking

The residential streets surrounding the 3 ovals are narrow with traffic being reduced to one way when cars are parked on both sides.

- This will make it difficult and dangerous for residents to park in front of their homes.
- This will make it extremely difficult for emergency vehicles to access families.
- This will make it dangerous for young children and seniors alike to cross roads.
- This will make it dangerous for stadium members to walk safely at night time.

- This just robs residents of their well earned liveability.

With expected attendances at the HISC of at least 600 players in the peak period after school hours we can expect large volumes of cars attempting to enter the carpark. This time is the busiest time for traffic using Turton Road also. With the only access being enter and exit through the same access on Turton Road, it is a reasonable assumption that patrons will merely use the easy option and park in the residential streets and use the access point via the Monash Road footbridge.

Newcastle Basketball has stated that 240 car spaces in the carpark will be adequate for day to day operations. I strongly disagree with this assumption and question their calculations regarding car parking. Consequently, we can anticipate large volumes of heavy traffic through the narrow streets. Their calculations are based on an incorrect average figure of 3 - 4 people in a car whereas the accepted Australian average is only 1.5 people in a car ... a massive underestimation that will result in a totally inadequate supply of provided parking spaces.

BUT The proponents have stated that the carpark will have sufficient capacity with excess cars parking on streets in the surrounding areas. Such an imposition on the residents and their liveability.

Green space

We must protect and maintain our open green space. These 3 ovals are used every weekend by sporting teams for competition games. Training games are held on week nights after school hours. We cannot swap one group of sports to be held in the HISC by Newcastle Basketball for another group of sports played on the 3 ovals. It is simply not realistic and in the Aussie language, just not fair.

According to CN (Newcastle council’s) 2040 Community Stategic Plan Newcastle’s population is expected to increase by 28,393 people by 2041. With very large unit blocks planned to provide housing in the adjacent Broadmeadow Concept area we will see an influx of many families. These new residents will need open and free green space available at all times. Children need to play and run on grass in the fresh air, and not just in indoor centres which will not be free.

It must be recognised that many of these families may not have the capacity to spend money on membership fees for playing sport.

The growing reliance on electronic devices as a means of entertainment for young children is increasing and so sadly manifesting in an alarming increase in ADHD symptoms.

The elderly need to be able to exercise and walk in open green space too, as medical studies are increasingly showing reduction of dementia and depression symptoms when they do. You just don't get the same benefits being in an indoor stadium.

Lambton High School has direct access to the 3 ovals for sport, PE lessons and evacuation drills. This ability to leave the classroom and exercise is essential for their physical and mental health. They don't need an indoor basketball court, they already have these in their school, they need to play football and cricket and to run and to socialise in their free time outside.

To say there are alternative playing field is not supported by parents as it means students have to leave the school grounds.

The school was built on this site because of its proximity to the open green space and the ease of access throughout the day. They have paid a fee to Newcastle Council for ground maintenance for years.

This space also serves as an emergency evacuation area for approximately 1200 students and school teaching staff.

All these, and so many more, benefits of fresh air and open green space can not be ignored

I will finish with :

- We have lived with increasing traffic congestion on Turton and surrounding roads
BUT, THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT
- We have lived with cars parking in front of our home at all hours of the day and night during event times
BUT, THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT
- We have lived with the surrounding Monash and Young Roads being blocked to westbound traffic from the north for hours before an event at McDonald Jones Stadium by traffic controllers for Venues NSW.
BUT, THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT
- We have lived with arranging our social life around the availability of parking out the front of our home on event days
BUT, THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT
- We have lived with keeping watch on the water level in the stormwater drain during rainstorms
BUT, if there is a very much increased risk of flooding due to the newly built HISC
IT WILL NEVER BE RIGHT

I most definitely acknowledge that Newcastle Basketball do need a multi sport and inclusive new stadium. But they have not thought it through

This is just not the right site or location for it.

They need a better site free of the problems associated with this site as well as giving them room to expand and cater for their increasing numbers of juniors aspiring to further their sporting skills. There is absolutely no room for expansion on these proposed three New Lambton ovals. They are majorly selling their new and present members short and need to work towards a solution.

The perfect solution for the proponent would be an area in close proximity to the proposed Entertainment Centre near McDonald Jones Stadium, the Hockey Centre and the Knights Centre of Excellence to become an important member of this sporting and entertainment precinct of Hunter Park.

I live in a wonderful community and have enjoyed our 50 plus years in this neighbourhood. But, if we have to have the noise and lights of constant traffic and cars parking in front of our home 7 days and nights a week and having to constantly be on flood watch, it will definitely affect our residential liveability that we presently love.

This is not why this open and free to all green space was preserved many years ago it needs to be preserved now for the wellbeing of many more generations to come. In our increasingly busy and ever growing city please help us keep this legacy alive for everyone, as once it is lost it can never be replaced.

This process has caused me and my family stress and used up so much of my time discovering what is involved with the proponent's plans.

I would have really appreciated it if Newcastle Basketball had engaged and consulted with the affected residents from the very beginning of this development. Sadly and very disappointingly they didn't
Instead we were simply told -

“ No adverse environmental, social or economic impacts will result from this proposal “.

This is simply not correct. !!!

Thank you for reading my submission