

September 2025

Thank you for accepting my submission for SSDA number : 65595459

As a concerned resident I wish to voice my opposition to the proposal to build the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre on No1 and No 2 Wallarah Ovals and Blackley Oval in New Lambton.

The plans were proposed by Newcastle Area Basketball Limitedin all further references in this submission being called " Newcastle Basketball "

The site is outside Hunter Park on the western side of Turton Road. Access to the site is from Turton Road as well as a footbridge from Monash Road over Ker-rai Creek stormwater drain in all further references in this submission the site being called " the 3 ovals "

The proposed stadium has been named the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre ... in all further references in this submission being called the " HISC "

On 22 March 2023 a media release was convened on Blackley Oval, New Lambton, where it was announced that " A basketball stadium will be built on these Broadmeadow ovals " We were completely blindsided as this was the first time that any residents had heard of this project despite being told through the press release, on that day, that all parties being sports, school and affected residents had been consulted.

There was, in fact, very limited consultation with affected residents in the surrounding areas of Lambton and New Lambton. .

" The purpose of engagement with the community and key stakeholders is to share information and consult to collect information and insights "

Instead, we have been told -

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

I'm very confident it WILL have an overwhelming impact as this is a proposal to build a very large and intrusive 17 metre high stadium on free and open green space zoned RE1 for public recreation.

Surrounding residents now fear the loss of their residential liveability caused by a significant increase in traffic, cars constantly gridlocking their narrow residential streets restricting traffic flow to a single one way direction and, the most stressful of all, the constant fear of flooding of their homes coupled with the loss of irreplaceable green space on 3 established ovals.

The concerns are real and have been evidenced by community involvement displayed by signs on homes, letterbox drops to provide information to residents and numerous requests for further clarification by many residents.

Please find following the significant concerns that my opposition is based on.

Parking

Given that the total capacity of the completed carpark is only 240 car spaces, it is to be expected that a large portion of attendees will simply choose to park in the surrounding residential streets.

- This will make it very difficult for residents to park in front of their own homes
- This will make it extremely difficult for emergency vehicles to access homes
- 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 to their cars at night
- **This just robs all residents of their well earned liveability**

I would be extremely disappointed if I was a basketball player, parent or spectator trying to find a parking space on a busy school day afternoon or night and was confronted with a lack of parking coupled with traffic congestion. It is very hard to see how they will be able to safely enter and exit the carpark through the single access point on Turton Road between the busy hours of 3 to 9 pm, as this time coincides with the busiest time for all traffic on Turton Road. To enter the carpark and then find no parks were available and have to exit and negotiate the traffic again would be very frustrating and stressful.

I really hope Newcastle Basketball see how much the parking and traffic issues will affect them and reconsider the suitability of these 3 ovals as a site.

Their current site has more than one access point and still suffers congestion. This HISC site will be much worse.

The Department of Roads acknowledges the traffic problems, obviously, as on event days signs are erected in all directions within 1 kilometre of the 3 ovals advising all sporting patrons of the predicted traffic congestion and recommending traffic takes an alternate route to travelling along Turton Road this is not encouraging for players and parents and spectators alike. On event days online Live Traffic advises patrons that "parking will be limited" and patrons should park in the streets.

With regards to parking, many of the streets in the blocks facing the 3 ovals are very narrow and when cars are parked on either side of the street it leaves a space of only one car width in the middle, thus reducing traffic to one way only.

An elderly lady lived near me and on two occasions in 2020 she needed to be transported quickly to hospital. Unfortunately, it coincided with an event being held at McDonald Jones Stadium which resulted in cars attending and parking in her narrow street right to the edge of her driveway making it impossible for the attending Paramedics to access. Unnecessary distress was caused to her when she had to be loaded into the ambulance in the middle of the street. I shudder every time I think about it. At 98 years of age she certainly deserved better access to and from her own home. A bit personal, but just an example of the negative effects of grid locking. She did say to me several times that she was lucky it was only a heart attack and not her house on fire, as the Fire Rescue wouldn't have fitted in the street !!

The 80 year old streets are just too narrow to cope with any extra traffic now and difficulty with access, like above, will be experienced by both residents and sports patrons as well as emergency vehicles attempting to enter gridlocked streets every day ! So very dangerous !! Large fire fighting vehicles would certainly face severe difficulties.

All of these negative aspects relating to parking for the HISC members and spectators are based on the proponent's calculations

The proponents have stated that 240 car spaces will be adequate for day to day operations.

I disagree with this assumption and question their calculations which I believe are basically flawed.

To quote the proponent's response to available car parking spaces -

“ The analysis of on street parking provision contained in the SECA Solution Traffic Impact Assessment (Appendix L) identifies that there is sufficient on street parking in combination with the 240 spaces in the carpark to accommodate parking demand for day to day operations, low impact events and medium impact events)

There are 2 very considerable inaccuracies in the calculations :

- The proponent's numbers are based on an average of 3 to 4 people per car when the recognised Australian average is only 1.8 people ranging to 2.5. which means 4 is a definite miscalculation and underestimation of the number of cars seeking to use the actual stadium carparks.
- Using Newcastle Basketball's supplied numbers of 700 patrons, 4 people equates to 175 carparks required, whereas 2 people equates to 350 carparks required an underestimation and will require more street parking even in day to day operations.
- Needless to say, their numbers for low and medium events ranging to 1,700 people will drastically increase street parking required to over 600 car spaces.
- Secondly, the number 140 for car spaces on the northern shoulder of Monash Road has been used in all of the proponent's calculations.
- This means that these 140 spaces have, in fact, become an extra carpark.
- It must be remembered that this is a residential street, not just a street for parking with availability for use from 7am to 10pm. The 140 car parks are used in all calculations from day to day operations up to medium impact events.

The Traffic Impact Assessment p14 (Appendix P) states from Newcastle Council -

“ Due to the proximity of Monash Road to the site and the pedestrian footbridge connection, CN recommends the Applicant be required to formalise this northern road shoulder adjacent to the stormwater channel, comprising road pavement, kerb and gutter, stormwater drainage, vehicular barriers. “

BUT, The proponent has stated that it is not proposed to upgrade these spaces !

So, it appears that they have included 140 Monash Road spaces in their calculations to demonstrate sufficient parking but **not** in their duty of care to members and spectators of the HISC by formalising the parking spaces in response to CN requirements.

In addition, Construction workers have been instructed to park on the northern side of Monash Road. This requires vehicles to angle park at 90 degrees to the stormwater drain. Construction working times are advised as between 7am and 6 pm on Monday to Friday and 8 am to 1 pm on Saturday.

Traffic access to the site

Traffic access to the site on the 3 ovals is via Turton Road, with a single side by side entrance and exit. **Most concerning is that there is no designated emergency entrance and exit.**

This access will only be available to traffic travelling from the southern direction.

Any traffic from the north, east or west will not be able to directly access because of the concrete median strip on Turton Road. Vehicles will be required to use the recommended "ring road of Young, Wamboin, Wallarah and Monash roads" all residential streets.

And yet, knowing this, the Monash Road and Turton Road intersection was not considered in the study of affected intersections between Lambton Road and Griffiths Road.

This must make the traffic studies of all the Turton Road intersections invalid.

As well, on event days Venues NSW traffic controllers block access to both Monash Road and Young Road for several hours affecting all traffic wishing to enter these roads from the northern and eastern direction. No warning is ever given to the residents of the time this will occur.

Flood Risk Impact and Assessment

The stormwater drain along the southern side of the 3 ovals is the path a creek once took. This creek is now named Ker-rai Creek. As well, there is a natural spring that runs continually into the drain from the confines of Arthur Edden oval.

The green space of the 3 ovals is integral to managing flood water by absorbing rainwater and reducing runoff into the stormwater drain, thereby slowing down the flow.

They are, in fact, like giant sponges as nature fully intended. Ker-rai Creek flows into Styx Creek so any overflow has repercussions further down, including the area of Hunter Park which is a section of the proposed Broadmeadow Concept.

To cover these 3 ovals with concrete would have serious impacts !!

Flooding of the Site

The resident's fear of being flooded because of the construction and poor location of the HISC is very real. Major damage and loss of property, as well as a tragic loss of life, was experienced in June 2007 in the streets surrounding the 3 ovals.

This has resulted in dramatically increased insurance costs. Several insurance companies have refused to give the Flood Cover option on Home Insurance policies as we are now considered to be in a high risk flood zone.

We live in constant fear of the stormwater drain overflowing and flooding our home again and consequently are on watch every time we have a continued heavy downpour.

If this disaster occurred when the 3 ovals were grassed and green and absorbing rainwater, then **the effects of rainwater runoff will be magnified many times if the 3 ovals are covered in concrete.**

Flood risk mitigation

Rainwater collection tanks are to be installed on the western side of the proposed stadium. This, according to calculations, will be inadequate in a rain storm of greater than 7mm per hour and the overflow will be directed to the Ker-rai Creek stormwater drain resulting in an instant rise in water level in the drain !!

The safety of patrons and players is outlined in the Flood Emergency Response Strategy as “ The flood refuge area is the first floor level of the building. With an available floor area of around 2000 square metres, the Flood Refuge can accommodate up to 2000 people potentially on the site”

As well, the stadium design now incorporates a swale at the eastern boundary between the carpark, which they have now lifted in height, and the Turton Road footpath. Swales are considered ineffective in urban settings. It has the potential to be unsightly and unsafe and boggy.

Sadly, the swale will now destroy the last 19 metres of open free green space !!

My concerned understanding of the above measures by the HISC management planning to evacuate patrons to the mezzanine floor must mean that the flood mitigation measures being planned are acknowledged as being potentially and obviously inadequate. It is indeed an acknowledgement from the HISC management of the definite probability of a flood event occurring in the surrounding residences.

It would be difficult for surrounding residents to see the benefit to the community of the HISC when their home has been inundated with rainwater that had run off the HISC roof and surrounding hard surfaces.

In short, it appears that these measures are to protect players and spectators in the event of a major flood event and very little consideration has been given to control the impact on the surrounding residents and their homes.

These residents living close to the stormwater drain have years of experience regarding the water levels and flows but, not once have they been asked for their input ... disappointing !!

Instead, it appears that there is an absolute reliance on “ modelling “ trends by 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 can all have a major influence on the water level and flow

Loss of open green space and social impact

The most important thing I can say is “When it’s gone it’s gone forever “ !!!!
Green space has to be defended for our future generations at all costs.

At the present time, all children have the opportunity to run and kick a ball, play, and socialise on the free and open green space these 3 ovals offer them. Newcastle Basketball says the courts will be available to all, **but neglect to say at what cost.**

We must take into serious consideration that not all parents are in a financial position to pay membership fees for their children to play out of school hours sport. With the destruction of these 3 ovals they will miss the opportunity now available.

This can, and will, cause serious social and mental health impacts for families and must be considered with the projected population growth within the many additional housing units to be built on the present basketball stadium site. An estimated 20, 000 new families will be in residence to begin with.

These families must be considered, as this green space belongs to everyone.

On the other end of the scale, open and available green space has been found to be essential in delaying the onset of dementia symptoms and general wellbeing, particularly important to be taken into account with the aging population living in our inner city suburbs.

Importantly, the 1200 students of Lambton High School must be considered as well. The 3 ovals are the only direct access they have to play outdoor sport, conduct PE lessons and gather for school evacuation should the need arise. The importance of free access to green space for their physical as well as mental health can never be underestimated. Originally, approval for construction of the school was granted on the grounds that these 3 ovals were readily available to the students and maintained. In fact, the school has paid a fee for years to Newcastle Council for their maintenance

Lambton High School P&C have outlined their concerns, ranging from construction noise and activity to shadowing and loss of access to the 3 ovals. Like everyone, they agree that Newcastle Basketball needs a new stadium but, on an appropriate site.

Originally, approximately 19 metres of open grassed space was designated for the western end of the stadium. However, because of very realistic fears of flooding from the front carpark, the entire building was moved 19 metres to the west. So, the last remaining open area planned to house outdoor basketball courts was lost, as detailed previously.

The 3 ovals, as they presently exist provide a pathway to disperse the crowds from large events held at McDonald Jones Stadium. With many more events being scheduled for here and the proposed Entertainment Centre, very large crowds will be unable to be concentrated on the cycleway/pathway.

I acknowledge that Newcastle Basketball do need a new and state of the art stadium.

There is no doubt that their players and spectators would benefit from this.

BUT, they need to give this so much more thought

They need a site which offers adequate room for expansion as their membership grows
They need a site where they are not immediately near a school precinct
They need a site where possible and probable flooding is not a risk to attendees
They need a site that doesn't displace other players from their sporting grounds
They need a site that does not destroy developed green space which is free for all
They need a site that does not disrupt the students in their education pursuits at LHS
They need a site that doesn't damage local liveability, health and property values
They need a site where noise, light and visual pollution doesn't affect residential liveability
in short,
They need a site in a location free of the limitations and problems that these 3 ovals present

A more appropriate site for their much needed HISC and the retention of free, open and available green space on the 3 ovals must be Newcastle Basketball's goal. In our vibrant Newcastle city that prides itself on environmental sustainability I cannot believe this is not possible.

I have been looking at the entire Hunter Park Plan proposed by the NSW Government and the Newcastle Council

- The overall site size of the Broadmeadow Concept is reported as 313 hectares including Hunter Park and the size of the site of the HISC is 3.75 hectares.

- It's hard to believe that, by my calculations, just 1% of the Broadmeadow Concept Plan needed for the HISC cannot be found within the Hunter Park area to preserve and leave the very valuable 3 ovals to be free for all.
- Surely the HISC could be included in the plans with minimum fuss and would co-exist with the planned Entertainment Centre, McDonald Jones Stadium, the Hockey Centre and Rugby League Centre of Excellence. This would be an excellent sporting hub within the Hunter Park without the division caused by an extremely busy Turton Road.
- This would be a small effort for such a large benefit for all the sports teams that use the HISC, residents now and in the future that use the 3 ovals and the high school students who need the 3 ovals on a daily basis.

There are way too many social impacts if we do not get this right. Future generations of residents and basketballers alike are relying on us all.

Finally,

To quote **Newcastle 2040** - (a vision for the future liveability of our amazing city)

Enriched neighbourhoods and places

“ Places are well planned to be meaningful, engaging and accessible to all. Sustainable, healthy and inclusive streets, open spaces and neighbourhood centres and heritage are important. We value public places supported by planned infrastructure that bring people together for active living “

Accessible to all - streets and open spaces bringing people together for active living sounds like a perfect vision for our local Lambton and New Lambton suburbs surrounding the 3 ovals as a recreation precinct. We must protect and enhance our green spaces.

For all the previous reasons, and more, this is just not the right location for the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre.

Thank you for reading my submission