

Our ref: 26/00093#75

Your ref: SSD-65595459

26 May 2026

Subject: Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC)

Dear < Enter a Name or Salutation >

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure – Crown Lands has reviewed the Response to Submissions (RTS) and supporting material for the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre.

Identification and Status of Crown Land

The proposal is wholly situated on Crown land within the Wallarah and Blackley Ovals site, forming part of Reserve 72941 for Public Recreation. The City of Newcastle is appointed as the Crown Land Manager and is responsible for the care, control, and management of the site and broader Crown reserve.

Section 1.2 of the RTS identifies the development site as including Lot 1 DP1304081. Crown Lands has undertaken a search of available cadastral and Crown land systems, and no registered parcel corresponding to Lot 1 DP1304081 has been identified.

Based on available mapping and earlier project documentation such as the Environmental Impact Statement (which refers to an “untitled strip” to the south of the site), this land appears to comprise a Crown road corridor.

The proponent must clarify the correct legal status and description of all land affected by the proposal and provide updated plans clearly identifying all Crown land within the development footprint, prior to determination.

Section 4.2 of the RTS indicates that landscaping and parking on Monash Road will require Crown Lands approval. Crown Lands notes that Monash Road is a local Council road under the care and control of City of Newcastle, rather than a Crown road.

Accordingly, works within this road corridor would not require approval from Crown Lands, but would be subject to approval from the relevant road authority under the *Roads Act 1993*.

Reserve Purpose and Plan of Management

The subject land is forms part of Crown reserve land managed by the City of Newcastle for public recreation purposes under the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* and is covered

by the City of Newcastle Crown Land Plan of Management (2023), with land categorised as sportsground.

While the proposal is broadly consistent with the recreation function of land categorised as sportsground, the consent authority should be satisfied that:

- the scale and intensity of development; and
- the loss of existing open playing field areas

are appropriately contemplated by the applicable Plan of Management framework.

Public Use and Benefit

Crown land must be managed for the benefit of the people of NSW, including maintaining public access and use.

The proposal replaces existing open playing fields with a major indoor recreation facility. While the RTS identifies broader regional recreation benefits, it does not provide detailed clarity regarding the operational model of the facility or the extent to which public access will be maintained in practice.

The consent authority should ensure that:

- public access is maintained wherever practicable; and
- the development provides an acceptable overall public benefit, having regard to the loss of existing open space.

Crown Lands notes that, while the proposal is broadly consistent with the recreation purpose of the reserve, the scale of built development and the associated change in land use intensity, access arrangements and operational model have the potential to shift the use of the land toward a more exclusive or commercially managed facility. It is therefore important that the ongoing use and occupation of the land remains clearly aligned with the reserve purpose and continues to deliver a demonstrable public recreation benefit.

The consent authority should be satisfied that the development does not result in a level of exclusivity or commercialisation that could give rise to circumstances where the land may reasonably be considered not lawfully used or occupied for public recreation purposes, having regard to the requirements of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

This can be addressed through appropriate conditions of consent.

Use and Authorisation of Crown Land

Crown Lands notes that City of Newcastle, as the appointed Crown land manager for the site, may grant tenure or otherwise authorise use of the land in accordance with the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*.

However, any such use or occupation must:

- be consistent with the reserve purpose and applicable Plan of Management;
- be in the public interest and not materially harm the reserve purpose; and
- comply with all relevant statutory requirements, including those relating to native title and future acts.

These matters must be appropriately addressed prior to the commencement of works or operation.

If the proponent requires further information, or has any questions, please contact Mark Grace, Natural Resource Management Project Officer in Crown Lands, on 02 4937 9331 or at mark.grace@crownland.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Draper".

Peter Draper
Group Leader Property Management, Hunter
Crown Lands and Public Spaces