

13 August 2024

I object to this development 'High Technology Industry Williamtown', and appeal to the planning authority to refuse this application. This submission considers the views of others in the community that I've engaged with on the subject. The proposed **High Technology Industry Williamtown** development does not align to community values nor the expectations of many City of Newcastle LGA constituents. That the City of Newcastle Council (Council) would entertain it, let alone be allowed to proceed is unacceptable.

1. Not in the Public Interest.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, states that the public interest must be considered as part of the assessment (Part 4, Division 4.3, Section 4.15).

The expansion of defence-related manufacturing and software development is antithetical to the public interest.

- Weapons production fuels competition between nations and tragically results in the loss of innocent lives; we are witnessing this occur in nations including Palestine, Ukraine, Lebanon, Israel, Yemen – so few people in this world are safe. Why would anyone want to contribute to that?
- Channeling resources into such endeavours will draw skilled labor away from the essential shift toward sustainable industries and renewable energy sources. There is a much brighter, more positive direction we can take our world and we should. Our children deserve that – something I expect Council to be on board with.
- With time ticking to meet climate goals and facing a scarcity of skilled workers in the Hunter region, prioritising investments in defence contradicts the urgent need for a swift and organised transition.

2. Councils are bound to act ethically.

The Local Government Act states that councils must act ethically in the interests of the local community (Section 8Ah).

Council revenue streams should align to its own policies, and more importantly: its values. should collect revenue from sources that are in line with its own policies. The Astra Aerolab plan is in direct violation of Council's own Investment and Borrowing Policy, which encompasses Environmental and Social Investment Guidelines (7.1.4). These guidelines explicitly highlight that investing in the 'production or supply of armaments' should be avoided as it is considered a socially harmful activity.

Generating income from an unidentified aerospace contractor does not align with the ethical expectations set by the community for both Newcastle Council and Port Stephens Council.

3. Strengthening ties between universities and weapons manufacturers is unethical.

The Environmental Impact Statement highlights the benefits of the 'High Technology Williamstown' proposal as including 'increasing research capabilities' with the University of Newcastle.

Strengthening connections between the university and weapons manufacturers at a time when many of us in the community, alongside students and staff, hold deep concerns about these arrangements in terms of ethics, sustainability, and social welfare. Student movements across Australia are revealing ties between weapons manufacturers and research facilities and will continue to protest against these agreements.

They have my full support – the future belongs to young people.

4. This project is on PFAS contaminated lands within the Tomago Sandbeds Catchment Area – health and environment outcomes must be considered

The independent review into PFAS contamination must be completed before this DA can be finalised. Transparency and diligence in this process are paramount and the long-term impacts on water quality and potential health risks for the local population be considered seriously. There is currently insufficient information for managing PFAS contaminants and protecting the Tomago Sandbeds.