

3rd November 2024

HUNTER INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE (HISC).
APPLICATION NUMBER: SSD 65595459

Attention: PLANNING COMMITTEE

This is a formal objection against the proposed construction of the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre planned to be constructed on the Wallarah and Blackley Ovals in New Lambton. There are so many points which need addressing in this lengthy development application and I am sure they will be covered by many members of the community.

Appendix C: Environmental Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures combined with

Appendix P: Traffic Impact Assessment

Parking and Traffic issues:

We have been very fortunate to have first class performers willing to come to Newcastle and perform at McDonald Jones Stadium, as well as many soccer and football games, however the lack of parking and traffic issues have become a serious problem in this location. Quite often this area is choked with parking problems and becomes very dangerous with many cars driving around trying to find a park and often parking in inappropriate spots out of frustration due to lack of parking. This causes traffic bottlenecks and also requires people trying to cross many local roads in dangerous areas when they are walking to the stadium. As there is only one exit and entry point into this new planned facility it will further impact on the already extremely busy Turton Road and create even more dangerous traffic flow problems. The single entry point into the planned building is only via Turton Road and heading north as there is a centre island opposite the planned entry which does not allow traffic to enter the planned facility coming from the north. Parking around this planned facility will further greatly impede parking for the people who reside in this vicinity, this is already being experienced even before the complex is built. Unfortunately the present parking problem has become so bad that on one occasion ambulance access to a home was greatly impeded, due to parking issues, when called during a time when there was an event being held at McDonald Jones Stadium.

Appendix AA: Long Term Environmental Management Plan

Health/environmental risk.

As stated in the report "Risk could potentially develop if the capping layer is disturbed e.g. by erosion, flood impacts. As this building will be in a flood zone, there is no guarantee that the capping material will remain in place following adverse weather conditions, leaving exposed hazardous material to both flow into the stormwater drain causing possible water pollution and become a problem for the community.

Appendix CC: Flood Impact and Risk Assessment

Flood zone problems:

By stating in the report that alternative mitigation options can be implemented, including the provision of a bollard arrangement along the boundaries of the car park area to prevent vehicles from being washed into the Lambton Ker-rai Creek, is an indication that flooding is expected to occur, therefore this is an acknowledgement there is a flooding

problem. Many references can be made to the problems which have occurred many times due to flooding on this particular site. Many families suffered great losses during the last flood and this can be seen as a potential high risk problem for this planned building. Building so close to a stormwater canal, which is a collection point for runoff from many kms away, and the probability of more extensive flooding in the future, would require very extensive mitigation. The cost to try to resolve the flooding problem would come as a major expense with this project and will not solve the issue in the long run. Building on a designated flood plain in a residential area would be not approved under normal circumstances.

Appendix II: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Green space loss:

As stated in this assessment, the physical health benefits generated by meeting or exceeding activity guidelines and playing sport are well document. This includes improved physical health, reduced risk of chronic and acute disease and improved mental health.

For many families who reside in the area these ovals are an integral part of their lives where both adults, children and visitors can play safely and enjoy the open space. It is a sad outcome that future generations of children and families will be denied the experience of a large expanse of green open space with lots of grass to be able to run free on, play together, exercise and benefit mentally from having this current space to use. Unfortunately once these green spaces are removed they can never be replaced. The current Government has made many references to these losses and are trying to plan for more open green space for the future. This Government is constantly touting its feelings on the importance and need for green space. This space belongs to everyone and should remain so. This seems very ironical and hypercritical. Removing 30,000 square meters of established green space that is highly utilised already to build on and then look for more green space area!! . It is astounding that Newcastle City Council has considered this land for building this facility without taking into account all the negative effects this will have on a community and surrounds. There are many other suitable areas within the Newcastle region which would accommodate this facility without destroying a green space and local community.

The admission of the reduction of open space and the social impacts (Scoping Report 5.1.2 and 6.1.7) is contrary to Government policies re green space requirements. For years many members of various sporting clubs as well as primary and secondary schools totally utilize this green space. There are always sporting events including soccer, league, cricket, cross county and school activities that frequently use these fields. The local high school will also lose its sporting fields as well. It is astounding that a planning committee can deny the use of such a community based area and replace it with a structure that is designated to one particular sport. This is a very biased plan to satisfy the needs of one specific sport and denying the many other sports that have already been utilizing the space. Have the committee members who have made this decision been in attendance at the ovals when they are in use by all sporting activities. This decision will put pressure on all the sports affected to find alternative venues which then creates a further problem with trying to accommodate extra games and practice venues to existing venues that are already stretched to the limit. There is no doubt that the basketball community need to have a new facility, however further consideration is needed for a more suitable location.

As quoted on the Newcastle City Council website - "City of Newcastle issues call to arms for more green thumbs" (23 April 2024): City of Newcastle is inviting Novocastrians to spend time enjoying Newcastle's natural areas and help improve "treasured" green spaces by joining forces with Landcare groups and school students to plant more than 15,000 native grasses, shrubs and trees." Would it not be a better option to improve this "treasured" green space and rebuild on unused and more accessible land!!!!

Location misrepresentation:

There is a problem with the original media releases stating the proposed vicinity of this building. There was a belief that this project was planned for the existing land where the older basketball stadium is currently located at Broadmeadow. Many Novocastrians were dismayed when they found that this was not the case. The proposed area had been advertised as in the "Broadmeadow" precinct, however this location is in New Lambton. False advertising I would have thought was illegal and misleading.

Many people were not aware that this project will remove very important green space which we all know is a very precious commodity in our daily lives. Whilst all sporting facilities are of benefit to the community they should not be approved in an area at the expense of already very well utilised and established facilities, as referenced in the Scoping Report 5.1.2. Most sporting families are quite used to travelling to different venues on a weekly basis therefore this new planned basketball stadium could be located outside the New Lambton area and still not be a problem with travel for participants.

Previous planning applications:

On the Newcastle City Council Media Statement re the Newcastle Basketball Stadium it states.... "this was originally planned to be built on a site on Hillsborough Road, Charlestown however this proposal was refused by the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel on the grounds of adverse traffic impacts on local residents". Obviously Newcastle City Council do not think that there will be a problem with traffic impacting on the New Lambton residents!!!! Has this plan really been undertaken with full consultation with Transport NSW and the local community? I note in the Scoping Report, Item 5.1.1 - Representatives from the local community seem to be omitted from the list of stakeholders consulted.

Also there is a question about what happened to the plans for the Stadium to be approved in the Glendale precinct? The General Manager of the Basketball Association stated "that plans are well underway with the alternative Glendale site and he expects to have a development application lodged in the coming month". (quoted from the 2HD site, 11th May 2022).

This current planning application appears to be a quick fix to allow funds which have been previously allocated to be used. I agree there needs to be a new basketball stadium however the location needs to be further explored so that all communities are not disadvantaged. The costings for this project have now blown out of proportion from the original costings and money approved. Original funds approved were \$25 million, however the final costings are reported to be at least 3 times this amount. This will create a heavy burden for the community and council to bear. A clear final costing of this application should be made public so the community is aware of the expense shortfall from the originally costed application as being well below the final predicted costings.