

## **Submission Against the Development of the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC)**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC) as a resident living directly opposite the proposed location. Firstly, I would like to address the lack of community consultation about the HISC development proposal or the EIS preparation, as I have never received any communication or notification such as flyers from our letterbox or emails. After reviewing the documents available on the NSW Planning Portal, I believe there are significant flaws and omissions within the EIS that need to be addressed. I respectfully submit the following points of concern:

### **1. Inadequate Assessment of Traffic and Transport Impact**

One of my primary concerns with the proposed HISC development is the lack of thorough analysis regarding the project's impact on traffic and transportation. The EIS does not fully address how the development will affect local roads, and does not evaluate the adequacy of existing transport links, including public transport access, parking, and road capacity - as reflected in the attached modelling (Appendix 1). Given that the development is expected to attract large numbers of visitors (Approximately 27,000 weekly, and 1.5 million yearly) on top of events at McDonald Jones Stadium and the hockey centre, there would be a significantly increased risk of deaths and injuries associated with traffic congestion - in an already hazardous area with the insufficient parking space provided by the HISC development. Additionally, the assessment continuously ignores the surrounding residential streets, focus on the major roads - including Turton Road, not accounting for the impact of construction-related traffic. This would cause massive disruption to the local community.

### **2. Insufficient Social and Environmental Considerations**

Green spaces naturally cool air and surfaces for heat reduction, support water management for flood mitigation for clean air and water; noise reduction; absorb carbon dioxide to offset greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change effects; and biodiversity conservation. Not only do the NSW Government agencies encourage the increase of urban green space, scientific studies and international organisations have also reiterated the importance of green space on people's health, climate change, etc.

The EIS of the HISC development fails to sufficiently assess the potential environmental impacts outside of the concept of threatened species, particularly about local biodiversity, water quality, and air quality. I believe the claim in section 6.9 is false that the development will have no significant impact on biodiversity, as the ovals are consistently home to many native and endemic species including the Australian White Ibis, cockatoos, corellas, magpies, lorikeets, Kookaburras etc. (Appendix 2 and 3) The

removal of these ovals are going to have deleterious impacts and evacuate these species from their natural environments for food and habitat.

There is also a lack of details on the long-term management of stormwater and the exacerbated risk for local flooding. The recent storm on 7 November 2024 that resulted in heavy rainfall over just 10 minutes saw Ker-Rai Creek reach capacity (Appendix 4). Considering these ovals are affected by the Local Catchment Flooding, these open green spaces consistently play a significant flood mitigation role in providing a vital water management role. This raises questions about flood risks to local residents and schools concerning heavy rainfall and storm events, due to the total lack of consideration regarding the current role of the ovals' natural water management ability.

Given the HISC has suggested to be operating for prolonged hours (from 6 AM to 11PM) and use for major events, the EIS does not adequately address the potential noise and light pollution impacts to surrounding residents. As a resident of 20 Gloucester Avenue, the nearby hockey centre and McDonald Jones Stadium is already bringing enormous light pollution as the lights are often switched on in the evening. The light penetrating the bedroom and noise brought by the stadium and its visitors significantly affects my sleep and quality of life. There is no consideration about how such a large-scale sport facility will affect local residents, on top of the existing stadiums and sports grounds. Studies have shown that noise and light pollution significantly affects human health - both short-term and long-term. With the consistent focus on the economic benefits and lack of thoughts and regard around issues such as social and health impacts to the surrounding residents, it is questionable that the benefits of the HISC is focusing on the public's benefit - as mentioned in the EIS repeatedly. The HISC only allows half a basketball court and limited turf space provided to the public, with no mention in the EIS of other provision of community access. How will the HISC ensure the health and wellbeing benefits of sports participation it mentioned to disadvantage groups, when the cost associated with access is likely to exacerbate the inequity with the few publicly available facilities. This compares to the presently freely accessible wealth of public green space for sport and leisure, used by many of the community and our biodiversity at every hour.

## **Conclusion**

When reading through the EIS report, the sustained and consistent mismatch of appendices and details on respective issues such as acoustic assessment and lighting impact assessment, as well as the lack of community engagement raises many questions on the quality of the EIS. While it is undeniable that the current 55-year basketball stadium requires replacement, the flawed and lack of detailed considerations in key areas such as flood risks; social and health impacts such as removal of Lambton High School green space (being the ovals) (Appendix 5); traffic congestion and injuries risks; air, noise and light pollution; as well as sustainability issues has proven that the HISC is not suitable in its proposed location.