

11 November 2024

Submission on Hunter Indoor Sports Centre - SSD-65595459

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Hunter Indoor Sports Centre development.

Venues NSW is the owner and operator of McDonald Jones Stadium, the Newcastle Entertainment Centre and is responsible for the redevelopment of the Hunter Park Precinct, in accordance with the site's approved master plan.

Hunter Park is bordered by Turton Road to the west, Griffiths Road to the north, Lambton Road to the south and Brown and Chatham roads to the east. McDonald Jones Stadium sits adjacent to the proposed indoor sports centre on Turton Road.

Venues NSW recognises the importance of facilities like this to support community sports, however, Venues NSW has serious concerns about the HISC's transport and traffic management plan, which suggests a reliance on the private car park attached to McDonald Jones Stadium. These concerns about the development include, but are not limited to:

- The assumption that overflow parking for the indoor sports centre can be accommodated on the private car park attached to McDonald Jones Stadium;
- The high probability of increased traffic congestion around the Hunter Park precinct and the subsequent effect on attendee experience and stadium operations; and
- That the new development is likely to negatively affect the existing and future Venues NSW operations in Hunter Park.

It is appropriate that the indoor sports centre development proposal includes full and thorough consideration of the Hunter Park master plan. A key feature of the master plan is the relocation and development of a new Newcastle Arena collocated with McDonald Jones Stadium. This important step will concentrate major event activity in the north-west portion of the Hunter Park precinct, closest to the site of the proposed indoor sports centre.

Combined, McDonald Jones Stadium and the new Newcastle Arena will attract new events to Hunter Park, drive the broader visitor economy and increase major sport and entertainment's already significant contribution to the Newcastle economy. The future stadium-arena precinct will also feature commercial developments on the site. This will further strengthen Hunter Park as a major events hub that attracts attendees from the wider Hunter region, the Central Coast, and north-west NSW.

The redevelopment of Hunter Park is well under way with the delivery of the Newcastle Knights Centre of Excellence and the Newcastle International Hockey Centre, which sits opposite the proposed indoor sports centre's Monash Road boundary.

Use of McDonald Jones Stadium Car Park for Overflow

The indoor sports centre development's Green Travel Plan, Event Traffic Management Plan and Operation Management Plan rely heavily on access to the 920 car parking spaces at McDonald Jones Stadium as an overflow provision for major events at HISC.

Access to the 920 spaces cannot be guaranteed in the short-term and will not be available in the long-term. Under its Act, Venues NSW is obligated to develop its precincts and manage its venues on a commercial basis. The first object of the Sporting Venues Authorities Act 2008 (the Act), under which Venues NSW is constituted, is "to enable the efficient and effective management and coordination of entertainment and sporting venues within the State on a commercial basis". Per section 19 (1) of the Act, Venues NSW's principal functions including maintaining and improve our land and promoting its use for commercial purposes.

In Hunter Park, in addition to redeveloping the entertainment centre, Venues NSW will develop the site of the McDonald Jones Stadium car park. Prior to the commercial development, access to the 920 spaces will depend on the stadium's operations and event schedule. There is also significant existing demand from current commercial and community partners, including home teams and codes, site tenants, and important community services such as the John Hunter Hospital park-and-ride service.

The car park is used in its event operational capacity for upwards of 70 days a year, making it unavailable to the casual access proposed in the indoor sports centre's development plans. It is also important to note that Venues NSW prioritises the procurement of more events to continue its contribution to the Hunter visitor economy. This will significantly increase the number of days the car park is in its operational mode. A single event, such as a major concert or motorsport event, requires use of the car park for up to 10 days.

While the event schedules are known some time in advance, late changes or additional events are common meaning that the overflow spaces contemplated in the indoor centre's travel plans cannot be guaranteed.

Newcastle Entertainment Centre Relocation and Redevelopment

The development of the new Newcastle Arena on Venues NSW land is a key part of Broadmeadow Place Strategy and state-led rezoning currently in progress. Once delivered, this new arena will attract an estimated 100 additional major events to the region. These additional events will make full use of the new and existing Hunter Park facilities, including car parking facilities.

Traffic Management

The proposed development's Event Traffic Management Plan uses McDonald Jones Stadium's Traffic Management Matrix to determine appropriate traffic management for a range of given crowd sizes at the indoor sports centre. The matrix was developed based on the volume of car

parking available to patrons on stadium land and requiring access to the stadium site. The proposed indoor sports centre has significantly less car parking available and site access requirements also differ. Venues NSW considers use of the stadium matrix inappropriate and believes the proposed indoor sports centre should undertake an independent assessment of the potential impacts given venue access, parking conditions and event management processes specific to their site.

Further, all plans should factor in scenarios when there is no access to the stadium overflow parking, when events are held at the stadium and/or new entertainment centre and how it will impact ingress and egress and the impact of parking for hockey events which regularly use nearby streets.

Technical Review

In addition to the operational commentary above we have also had our traffic and transport consultant review the documentation. They have identified similar issues, which include:

1. The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) does not include reference to the shuttle bus operation at McDonald Jones Stadium. Recommendation: The impact on the shuttle bus operations and shuttle bus drop-off locations needs to be analysed.
2. The proposed parking supply relies solely on overflow parking at MJS without considering clashes or future development on this site. Recommendation: Analysis of operation of overflow parking when parking at McDonald Jones Stadium is not available and potential clashes during events at the McDonald Jones Stadium precinct needs to be considered.
3. The TIA notes that the area is part of the Broadmeadow Place Strategy however no reference is made to the Reimagining Broadmeadow: Package E – Transport or the exhibited masterplan including future proposed changes to the Hunter Park Precinct. Recommendation: The TIA needs to include analysis on the Reimagining Broadmeadow project and associated land use changes including consideration of the VISSIM microsimulation traffic model developed as a part of this process.
4. The Traffic Event Management Plan comments that discussions were undertaken with Venues NSW. Consultation did take place; however, to be clear, no approval was provided by Venues NSW to utilise McDonald Jones Stadium for overflow parking.
5. Assumptions from the MJS Major TMP matrix have been referenced and applied to the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, which is not appropriate. In addition, it is likely that there will be events at HISC which coincide with events at McDonald Jones Stadium, the surrounding precinct and the Hockey Centre. The assessment needs to use appropriate assumptions, consider concurrent events in the precinct, and prepare appropriate mitigations so that the HISC does not negatively impact Venues NSW operations, now and into the future.

Further detail on this and other areas of concern, are discussed in the attached HISC – Technical Review.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed development.

If you would like to discuss our concerns further, please contact Dean Mantle, McDonald Jones Stadium Venue Manager on 0466 858 592 or dean.mantle@mcdonaldjonestadium.com

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Deirdre'.

DEIRDRE O'NEILL

Group General Manager, Infrastructure Development