

I am writing to submit my **OBJECTION** to SSD-65595459 Hunter Indoor Sports Complex (HISC), and have highlighted the reasons below that have not been sufficiently addressed by the applicant:

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**Traffic impact:**

Appendix L shows Traffic and Accessibility Impact. The initial survey was performed 4-6 April 2024, where there was 3 days of heavy rain and advice to avoid driving unless necessary (<https://weatherspark.com/h/m/144563/2024/4/Historical-Weather-in-April-2024-in-Newcastle-New-South-Wales-Australia>). Despite the requests from TfNSW to address some areas of major concern, there was not additional traffic survey performed. The modelling for the amendment report was done on the same dataset, even though there were limitations in the camera coverage and quality of the videos, and many assumptions were made for the modelling. The Turton Road/Griffiths Road right turn bay, which experience significant delays during peak periods required mitigation. However, the SIDRA report only proposed signal optimization and no geometric upgrades are required, which may not fully address these delays (Appendix L Section 5.1).

TfNSW, in their response to the EIS, stated that "Boom gates or manned entry would likely create queuing onto Turton Road and would not be supported". I believe that Newcastle Basketball's amended report does not address this issue, instead replacing boom gates with parking attendants, therefore creating the same queueing problems and does not provide any mitigation strategies (Appendix S Section 4.6). However, this contradicts the information in the Traffic Management Plan (Appendix O), which states there will be boom gates in place in the Turton Road entrance of HISC (Appendix O Section 17.2).

The modelled queue lengths at several intersections fall outside acceptable ranges (Appendix L Attachment D), which may indicate potential inaccuracies in the traffic model. Additionally, the values of the modelled queue length have changed from the initial EIS document (Appendix P - Traffic Impact Assessment), even though no additional traffic surveys were performed.

I would like to highlight some discrepancies that I have found in the amended reports. In the RTS and Amendment Report Section 3.3.5, it is stated that the deceleration lane has been removed from the proposal as part of the amendments (pg 31). However, Appendix L – Traffic and Accessibility Impact has multiple references to the deceleration lane as part of the design throughout the document (Section 5.1.2, 5.3).

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**Parking impact:**

The capacity of this parking has been considered on the basis of an average car occupancy of 3 or 4 people which would provide parking for between 660-880 patrons (Appendix S Section 4.6) However, the average car occupancy in NSW varies between 1.21 persons per vehicle during the morning peak and 1.32 in off-peak times, according to Australian Transport Assessment and

Planning (ATAP) data (<https://www.atap.gov.au/parameter-values/road-transport/3-travel-time> Section 3.1.4). The adequacy of the 240 parking spaces upon completion of Stage 2 of the build requires further justification, compared with similar sized builds, including Ballarat Sports and Events Centre (8 Indoor basketball, 1 Centre show court with 3000 seats), which has 300 carpark spots.

There are concerns about traffic during large events as well. In these amendments, overflow parking during large events relies on nearby streets, Monash Road (140), and McDonald Jones Stadium (>900), Young Road, southern side of Womboin Road and along the sports pitches on Wallarah Road (Appendix S Section 4.6). However, this report has not considered residents parking on the street, and no traffic and parking surveys have been performed on these streets. Additionally, there still is no formal agreement between Venues NSW and Newcastle Basketball to allow for McDonald Jones Stadium to be used for overflow parking.

I am also reiterating this point as I am not confident that the applicant has addressed this in their amendments. The proposed site for the stadium is heavily reliant on the provision of overflow parking during major events (Appendix O Section 17.7), which states there is a large off-street parking area associated with the McDonald Jones Stadium on Turton Road opposite the subject site. However, under the draft Broadmeadow Place Strategy published between 12 June to 24 July 2024 (<https://haveyoursay.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/broadmeadow-place-strategy>), the forecourt of McDonald Jones Stadium is to be rezoned from RE1 Public Recreation to E2 Commercial, which means that the 900 car park spots referenced above will not be available to Newcastle Basketball patrons, in addition to the lack of formal agreement between Venues NSW and Newcastle Basketball on the use of the McDonald Jones Stadium carpark as overflow parking spots.

It is also interesting to note that other event and overflow parking solutions are Richardson Park (1.9km from proposed site), Wanderers Oval (1.6km from proposed site) and Newcastle Entertainment Centre (1.8km from proposed site). All of these supposed parking solutions require walking along busy main roads, Lambton Road (regional) and Griffiths Road (state), which have no dedicated pedestrian walkways, effectively making people walk along the main road. There is currently no access or discussion with the relevant owners on the usage of these sites as overflow parking. Additionally, these options cannot be used in wet weather (Appendix O Section 17.7). There is a component of human nature which is not assessable, in which humans value convenience above all else – and basketball patrons will just park on residential streets during a major event as it is the most convenient option.

City of Newcastle council has also requested that this project formalise existing parking spaces on Monash Road, as well as the existing pedestrian bridge leading the pedestrian path, to the footbridge over Lambton Ker-rai Creek to Monash Road (RTS and Amendment Report Section 3.3.5). However, Newcastle Basketball claims that as these spaces are not for the exclusive use of the existing ovals, nor will they be managed and for the sole use of visitors to the HISC, that Newcastle Basketball will not be providing upgrades required to Monash Road. However, they are quick to claim the 140 parking spaces on Monash Road for overflow parking during large events

(without approval from the owner, City of Newcastle), and I think this shows utter selfishness and disregard for the impact this will have on the surrounding neighbourhood.

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#### **Social impact:**

The applicant acknowledged in Appendix DD that reduction of green space is of the most concern in the submissions raised during the EIS period. One of their amendments to overcome this concern is to provide a grassed swale adjacent to Turton Road, a main road with heavy traffic. The dimension of this swale is not provided, but it is only to function as a drainage swale to address flood management and provide a visual buffer between the HISC and Turton Road, NOT for public recreation (Appendix DD Section 6.5.2). In fact, there has been a complete elimination of open space in the amended design compared to the design that was displayed during the EIS. Another response by the applicant to the concerns about reduction of green space is that existing green spaces in proximity to the proposed site, including Arthur Edden field and Lambton Park, are available to the local population for casual and passive recreation (Appendix DD Section 6.5.2). In reality, Arthur Edden Oval is classed as a District level facility and used for elite National Premier Leagues Northern NSW games and has never and is NOT open for casual recreation by the general public. Additionally, Lambton Park is 1.5km (20min walk), and not in close proximity, to the proposed site.

While the HISC amendment claims consistency with the Better Placed Strategy's "Better for Community" objectives through Indigenous consultation and cultural design elements, I believe that this interpretation fails to address the strategy's requirement for creating inclusive, connected and diverse environments that tackle growing economic and social disparity and inequity (<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/government-architect-nsw/policies-and-frameworks/better-placed>). The Better Placed Strategy explicitly calls for incorporating diverse uses to support the communities, yet the proposed sports complex represents a single-use facility that does not address broader socioeconomic needs of the community. Furthermore, despite claims of community consultation, the focus appears limited to Indigenous cultural elements while lacking evidence of meaningful engagement with the broader community regarding potential detrimental impacts such as increased traffic and parking, or displacement of existing community uses. The amendment to the project has failed to show how it will create equitable environments for all community members, suggesting a superficial application of the Better Placed principles rather than genuine alignment with the strategy's vision for inclusive community development.

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#### **Flooding impact:**

According to Appendix I – Flood Impact Risk Assessment, at the 1% AEP (2050) event, this proposed development can cause a localised increase in modelled peak flood level of 20-30 mm, mostly within the proposed site but with some extension off-site for around a 100 m length of Lambton Ker-rai Creek and Monash Road (Appendix I Section 5.3). At the PMF (Probable Maximum Flood) event, there is a modelled increase of peak flood level of 60-70 mm between

approximately the Harker and Ford Ovals to the west and Marina Avenue to the east (Appendix I Section 5.3). This exceeds the City of Newcastle ideal threshold of 50mm, and the increases are at the upper limit of acceptability.

The NSW guidelines emphasize that impacts should be assessed based on whether they result in relatively minor impacts beyond the development site or have detrimental impacts that affect other land or the community more broadly (Flood Risk Management Guideline LU01 (Section 3.2.2)). The Flood Impact Risk Assessment concludes impacts are 'minor' and 'negligible', but the off-site flood level increases of 60-70mm at PMF and velocity increases in Turton Road and Lambton High School suggest impacts extend beyond the development site. The significance of the flood impact is heightened due to the fact that these increases affect existing residential areas and critical evacuation routes, making them more impactful than increases in undeveloped areas would be. Based on the images I have attached of Turton Road, which is in front of the site of the proposed development (Figure 1), I believe it is remiss of the applicant to claim that these impacts are considered minor and have negligible change in flood risk to existing property and infrastructure (Appendix I pg 41).

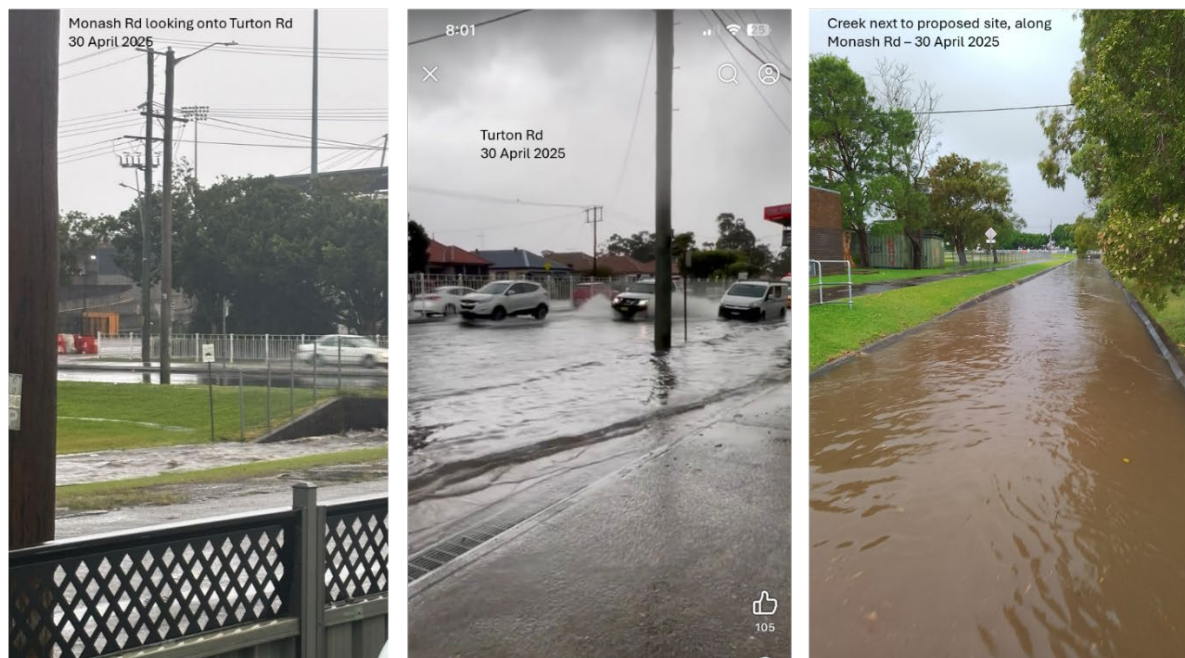


Figure 1: Pictures taken during the East Coast Low (30 April 2025) showing increased water levels in Ker-rai Creek along the proposed site on Monash Road, and flooding on Turton Road, where the entrance to the proposed stadium would be.

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#### **Loss of green space:**

Within the RTS and Amendment Report, Newcastle Basketball claims that their existing stadium is within the boundary of the land subject to the Broadmeadow Place Strategy, that their lease ends in 2028 and they will need to vacate the site, and that it is critical that a new facility (HISC) is developed prior to this date. However, in Newcastle Basketball's public submission to the Broadmeadow Precinct Rezoning Plan (<https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master->



[test/fapub\\_pdf/Broadmeadow+rezoning+plan+submissions\\_redacted.pdf](#)), they stated that Newcastle Basketball have a current lease with an option to extend to 2038. They also stated that they currently have <\$25M, which is only adequate for 6 courts and not to fully replace the current stadium, and will have to still operate out of its current facility. This effectively means that should this SSDA be approved, Newcastle Basketball will continue to operate out of its current facility and HISC at the proposed site, occupying multiple Crown Land sites. It seems inequitable that one organisation should be allowed to destroy precious greenspace for Stage 1 of a build that they currently do not have full funding for, hence the public's interest in the availability of Newcastle Basketball's funding for this project.

In the same report, Newcastle Basketball notes that local residents will be able to access nearby Ford Oval and Kentish Oval (and surrounds) for open space purposes, whilst Lambton High School will continue to have access to Arthur Edden and Harker Ovals, and provided Figure 8 Green space proximity to the site (Figure 2). However, I would like to highlight Figure 3, which shows the actual green space remaining for recreational and unstructured outdoor activities, and cross out the 'green space' purported by Newcastle Basketball to be accessible to the community – New Lambton Bowling Club (requires membership and only for lawn bowling), Harker Oval (District level facility, locked and not for public recreation), Arthur Edden Oval (District level facility, locked and not for public recreation), McDonald Jones Stadium (NRL, A-League and major events stadium, definitely NOT for public recreation), Knight Centre of Excellence (owned by Newcastle Knights and used as a training facility, definitely NOT for public recreation), Newcastle International Hockey Centre (premier hockey venue, definitely NOT for public recreation), Newcastle Harness Racing Club (used for touch footy and harness racing, possibly used by the community), and Go Karts Go (go-kart racing track, not green space, and definitely NOT for public recreation).

Figure 8 Green space in proximity to the site

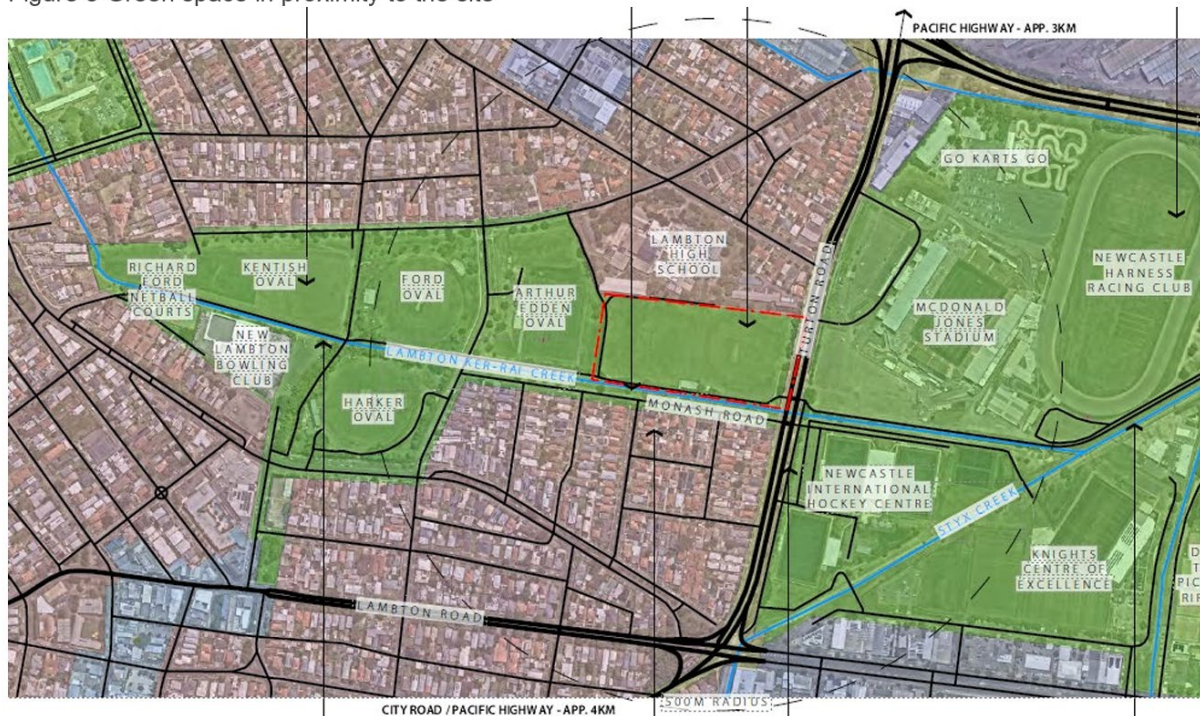


Figure 2: Figure from RTS and Amendment Report, supposedly showing all the available green space around the proposed HISC site for use by the community.

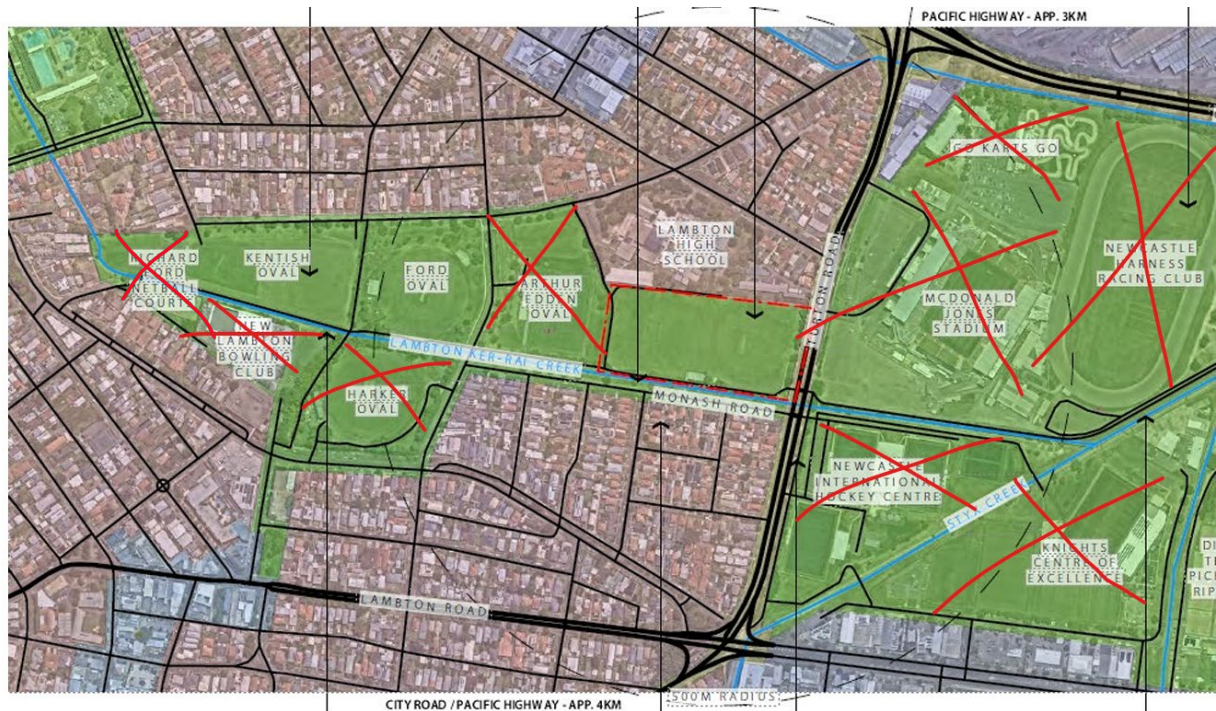


Figure 3: ACTUAL green space left for the community, with all non-accessible ‘green space’ crossed out. Note the distance between Lambton High School and Ford/Kentish Ovals, which will have to be the school’s evacuation zone if the proposed HISC proceeds. The crossed out ‘green space’ purported by Newcastle Basketball are: New Lambton Bowling Club (requires membership and only for lawn bowling), Harker Oval (District level facility, locked and not for public recreation), Arthur Edden Oval (District level facility, locked and not for public recreation), McDonald Jones Stadium (NRL, A-League and major events stadium, definitely NOT for public recreation), Knight Centre of Excellence (owned by Newcastle Knights and used as a training facility, definitely NOT for public recreation), Newcastle International Hockey Centre (premier hockey venue, definitely NOT for public recreation), Newcastle Harness Racing Club (used for touch footy and harness racing, possibly used by the community), and Go Karts Go (go-kart racing track, not green space, and definitely NOT for public recreation).

#### **Lack of community engagement:**

There has been a critical lack of engagement and community engagement between the applicant (contracted to LGC Solutions) and local community. In the 9 months between the submission deadline of responses to the EIS in November 2024 and the publication of the amendments, Newcastle Basketball had not engaged with the community in any form. There are now two ‘community drop-in sessions’, one of which is 2 days before the amendment submission deadline, which are open to the both the community and Newcastle Basketball members. However, the Newcastle Basketball Town Hall, held 2 weeks before the amendment submission deadline, is exclusively for members of Newcastle Basketball, and have options to attend in-person or online (Figure 4). I believe when the applicant claims that adequate community engagement has been performed, the ‘community’ that they are referring to is the basketball community.



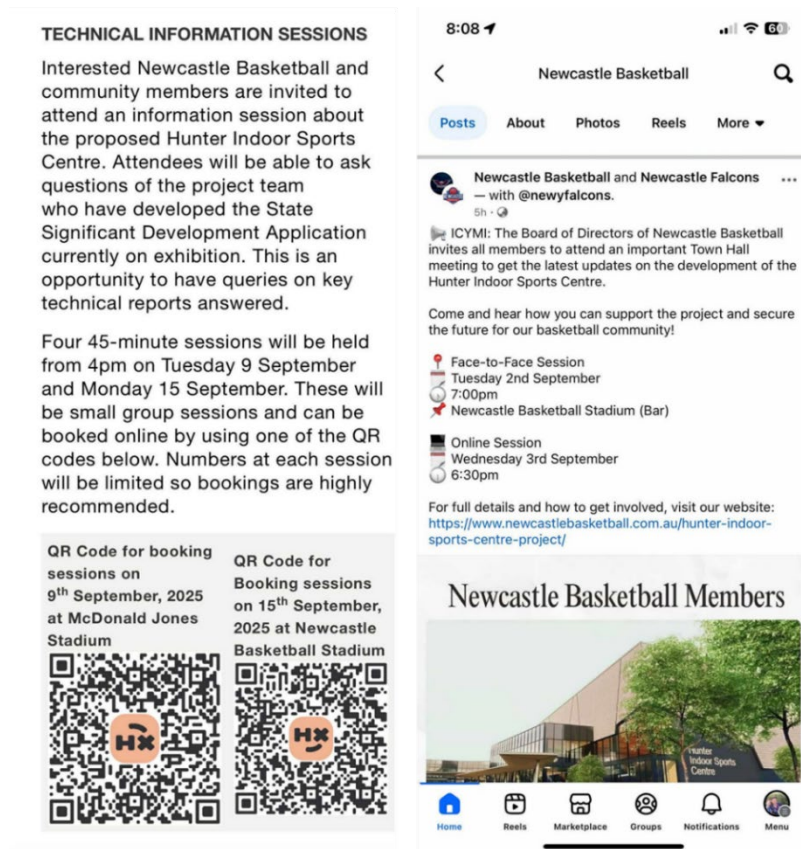


Figure 4: Differences in level of engagement with community (left) and the basketball community (right).

### Concluding statement and personal impact:

Since the announcement of the proposed build on Wallarah and Blackley Ovals in March 2023, there has been ongoing unrest within the community, as there was no evidence trail of the ovals being proposed as the site for the Newcastle Basketball stadium until it appeared in the front page of the Newcastle Herald on 22 March 2023. This prompted me to start a Facebook group in December 2023 to rally support and provide a platform for concerned members of the community to share and obtain information regarding the traffic and flooding impact this proposed build will cause. The amount of work and time I have invested in this has been immense, causing significant disruption to both my studies and family life, and generating a great deal of personal stress and anxiety. There was also a financial cost in obtaining documents relating to the choice of site through the GIPA process. Countless hours have been spent reading environmental impact statements and subsequent amendments, liaising with councillors and MPs, and engaging with the wider community, all to ensure that our voices are heard and our concerns are taken seriously. I believe that my submission, and of others, will show that detrimental impacts far outweigh the positive impacts that the proposed build on Wallarah and Blackley Ovals will have.