

17 September 2025

Department of Planning and Environment

Hunter Indoor Sports Centre

Application Number: SSD-65595459

Submission: Oppose

I am **opposed** to the construction of the **Hunter Indoor Sports Centre**.

The proposal to repurpose the designated green space and parklands of **Wallarah** and **Blackley Ovals** for the construction of an indoor sports stadium, is contrary to environmental needs, and poses a real and serious threat to the area's resilience to **Flooding and Storm Water inundation**.

We are already experiencing:

- Increasing damaging weather events
- Run off, storm water and sewerage surges and
- Damage to roads, property and housing.

This development will only increase the real and present threat to residents, housing, and property in the Lambton and New Lambton areas from **Flooding and Storm Water damage**.

This is the wrong place for this development. This development should be centred in the Broadmeadow Sporting Precinct or another suitable site.

The impact upon the community will be irreparable and destructive; it will be a man-made failure.

Experts simply telling us that flooding will be a LOW RISK as a result of their mitigation plan, does not make it so, and citing use of "historical data" to generate their prevention strategies is flawed, without the "lived experience", of the local voice.

I, like many residents opposing this construction, am not relying on "provided" or "historical data". It is from "lived experience" during each and every rain event that I oppose this application. It is deeply troubling when experts developing a plan have not, by their own admission:

- Seen or walked on the parklands during a rain event to understand the significant role they play in slowing down run-off and how they act as an overflow flood plain during rain events.
- Nor, have they observed first-hand, the drains, storm water channels and canals in the local area to understand how often they operate at capacity and how challenged the storm and waste waters systems already are during rain.

This combined with the fact that all their “historical data” is **with the parks in place. It is not without them.**

These parks act as a sponge, they soak up and slow-down damaging run off; perform as an overflow flood plain for excess water. Under-estimating their value and the gross effect the removal of these “living sponge-like surfaces” will have, flagrantly ignore what is already happening in this community. The removal will set up unprecedented conditions that no management strategy will be able to address.

This makes the presumptions of their flood planning flawed.

Lambton and New Lambton are not low risk areas and this construction will be an irreversible tipping point that could lead to increased occurrences of flooding and inundation; widespread impacts like experienced in the **Pasha Bulker Storm**.

Please consider the following carefully:

- In the last rain event in May this year, Lambton and New Lambton were deemed Local Government Areas eligible for the **Disaster Recovery Payment**. This payment was for areas **severely affected** from weather and **flooding**. Note this was **with** the existing green flood plain of the two ovals, **still being in place**.
- Many residents had storm water and sewerage surges as a result of water not being able to move through pipes and drains to enter the canal system. These were full and water backing-up led to water and sewerage systems failing. The experts were unaware of this issue.
- Such surges require expensive repairs and replacements, and cause damage to properties and infrastructure. This is occurring more often, with greater significance, and will not change without works to manage flow into the canals adjacent and nearby the proposed development.
- I suggest the development itself would have major issues with inundation and potential sub-floor flooding as a result of the low water table in the area and high saturation that occurs during rain events.
- When asked at the community information session, if canals would be widened, deepened, or improved to address current and projected water management, the response was negative.

- No community water infrastructure is to be expanded to address what are current issues for the area or to address what the experts described as, “negligible” off flow from the proposed development.
- There is a “water storage tank” of sorts that was referred to at the community information session. The expert did not know how much it held, and when pressed, agreed it would be released at capacity, into the already strained canal system. Just imagine the inundation impact that this would have on local houses and roadway systems.

It is ludicrous and short-sighted, considering the residential and commercial build-up planned for the **Broadmeadow Housing and Sporting Precincts**. The anticipated density housing and constructions will see even greater demands upon a canal system already challenged during consistent rain and weather events. Yesteryear saw fore-planning around canals always including parklands; these parklands are now under threat of development. Essentially communities are losing their “flood safety nets”. Removing any present, free, open, accessible, breathing and absorption green-space, erases the net and is, neglectful.

Reflecting upon the number of communities that now suffer devastation from regular flooding and damaging weather events, the exorbitant costs these communities and that our community pay to maintain flood and storm water insurance, and the recently released report on our *National Climate Risk Assessment (Sept, 2025)* which references a,

“...climate changing so rapidly that weather records (ie: historical data that experts rely on to project mitigation strategies), will no longer be of use Properties more prone to flooding, and insurance in such areas will be unavailable or unaffordable...”

It is reckless to make a decision that could have this impact and can be avoided.

I understand that the experts (paid by the Basketball Consortium), believe in their planning, but my question is simple.

What if you are wrong?

For the reasons stated above, please ensure you carefully consider this submission, as well as our Local Member’s, and Lord Mayor’s opposition, and all other community and resident submissions that oppose this development.

Thank you.