

18th September 2025

Rob Dwyer
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Attention: Tessa Gizzi

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Teresa

RE: Letter of Objection to Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC) Project (SSD-65595459)

I wish to raise my objection to the proposed Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC) Project (SSD-65595459). My objection to the Project centres around the following matters.

Lack of any formal decision by City of Newcastle in identifying the site as surplus to it's (and the community's) recreational and sporting needs

The site is Crown Land under the care and control of Council. A media release from Council dated 12 December 2023 stated that the Community and Recreation team of Council has been working closely with local sporting groups and Lambton High School to ensure that should the NSW Government approve the development of the proposed basketball stadium at Wallarah and Blackley Ovals, new playing locations would be secured.

The Project Scoping Report dated 23 December 2023 stated on page 4 that Council has confirmed that this area of land can be used for the development. Written evidence of Council's confirmation is not provided. On page 20 the Scoping Report noted that Council is working with affected local sporting groups to find alternative locations for their sporting activities.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on page 9 and page 29 states that prior to the commencement of this SSD process the Council evaluated options within the local government area and determined that the current site could be made available for the project. Again, written evidence of this evaluation by Council is not provided.

The Project documentation / application should provide evidence of Council's careful consideration (via a Council resolution or via a document under staff delegation) of the environmental, economic and social considerations of the site not being used for the current sporting activities. In the absence of evidence of this the Scoping Report, the

EIS and Response to Submissions and Amendment Report lack credibility, as the original source containing Council's decision to support the site for the Project has not been revealed.

Insufficient evidence with respect to plans and the assessment of said plans to upgrade parking within Monash Road.

The EIS and Response to Submissions / Amendment Report state that parking for the Project will be within the proposed on-site car park with overflow on adjacent streets. Council in its response to the exhibition of the EIS recommended that the Applicant be required to upgrade the northern side of Monash Road as additional overflow parking to ensure adequate parking is available. Council stated that the use of Monash Road for additional parking would be acceptable on the basis the Applicant includes this area as part of the proposed development, including upgrades to the existing pedestrian footbridge. In response the Applicant does not acknowledge that there will be an increase in visitors using the parking on Monash Road to attend activities at the site and at McDonald Jones Stadium. No plans have been provided showing how the upgrading of Monash Road could occur nor assessment of the impact of the upgrade on stands of existing mature native trees within the road reserve. Plans for the upgrading of Monash Road parking and the pedestrian bridge are required for a complete assessment of the Project. Production of these plans are likely to result in the need for an updated Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) assessment and an expanded updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Community Response to the Project

The Response to Submissions and Amendment Report states that a total of 677 submissions were received in relation to the Project, including 173 in support, 495 of objection, and 9 providing comments.

Clearly the vast majority (i.e. 73%) of the large number of submissions objected to the Project. With such a large number and large percentage of objections to the Project it would be logical to assume that considerable discussion would be dedicated within the Response to Submissions and Amendment Report as to the reasons why so many objections were received and what would be the root cause of the objections. Unfortunately, the Response to Submissions and Amendment Report disproportionately focus's attention on the perceived positive social impacts at the expense of a greater analysis of the negative impacts.

The public interest

It is in the public interest that the application and documents clearly identify the original source where Council formed the view that site was appropriate for the Project. The environmental, economic and social impacts of the site not being used for the current

sporting activities, including impact on existing residents, sporting groups and the wider community, should be made clear. It is also in the public interest that a greater analysis of the negative impacts is carried out.

In the absence of such information, it can only be concluded that the Project would not achieve an appropriate balance between relevant environmental, economic and social considerations and that approval of the Project is not in the public interest.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RDwyer', written in a cursive style.

Robert Dwyer

Consultant Town Planner

Fellow Member Planning Institute of Australia (PIA).