

# Proposed Hunter Indoor Sports Centre report

This submission supports the project

## Broadmeadow and Hunter Park

The Broadmeadow precinct is the most significant urban renewal project in Greater Newcastle. The NSW Government and the City of Newcastle have produced the *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*, a 30-year blueprint to transform government-owned land around McDonald Jones Stadium into a vibrant precinct of homes, employment and entertainment<sup>1</sup>. The strategy identifies the Hunter Park sub-precinct, comprising McDonald Jones Stadium, the Newcastle Entertainment Centre and the showgrounds, as an economic driver. Upgrades to sports and entertainment facilities will reposition Broadmeadow at a national and international level, with stadiums and entertainment spaces capable of hosting more than 30 000 people and a mix of residential, commercial and tourism uses<sup>2</sup>. This rejuvenated precinct will deliver thousands of new homes, jobs and public spaces and is expected to attract 1.8 million visitors annually<sup>34</sup>.

The Hunter Indoor Sports Centre (HISC) is a critical component of this vision. Newcastle's existing basketball stadium at Broadmeadow is more than 55 years old and its site is earmarked for high-density residential development under the Broadmeadow strategy<sup>5</sup>. Basketball Association of Newcastle Limited (BANL) has more than 6 000 members and turns away around 500 players each season because there are not enough courts<sup>6</sup>. Newcastle has a chronic shortage of indoor courts, around 20 are needed to meet demand<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. City of Newcastle, 2025, lines 106–114.

<sup>2</sup> City of Newcastle. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. 2025, lines 3211–3221.

<sup>3</sup> Novo News. “Hunter Park project set to transform Newcastle.” June 2021, lines 85–103.

<sup>4</sup> Novo News. “Hunter Park project set to transform Newcastle.” June 2021, lines 110–119.

<sup>5</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 27–40.

<sup>6</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 32–39.

<sup>7</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 37–40.

The HISC proposal, therefore, seeks to provide 12 indoor courts, including a show court for 2 500 spectators and car parking<sup>8</sup>.

## Synopsis of the Proposal

The HISC design envisages a multi-purpose, inclusive sports hub. It will include multi-use courts for basketball, netball, volleyball, futsal, badminton and pickleball, allied health suites, a gym and movement studio, café and social spaces, multipurpose function rooms, accessible change rooms and spectator seating<sup>9,10</sup>. The facility will have modules allowing different activities simultaneously and has been planned to serve schools, sporting associations and the general community. A public exhibition process and consultation have produced amendments to the design to address flooding, traffic and urban-design concerns<sup>11</sup>.

BANL's project team has prepared a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and supporting reports. Agency advice led to modifications such as widening footpaths, reserving a 10 m corridor for future cycleway expansion and designing a ring-road within the car park to prevent queuing on Turton Road<sup>12</sup>. Event Traffic Management Plans prepared by specialist consultants ensure that major events at the facility will not rely on parking at McDonald Jones Stadium and provide updated traffic modelling<sup>13</sup>. Peer-reviewed flood assessments show that the car-park design and building placement mitigate flood impacts and that changes in peak flood levels in a 1% AEP (2050) event are contained within the site<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre State Significant Development Application*. 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Frequently Asked Questions." 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 69–83.

<sup>11</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 85–104.

<sup>12</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 70–76.

<sup>13</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 85–104.

<sup>14</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Traffic & Parking Information." 2024.

## Opposition and Key Concerns

Several residents and local stakeholders oppose the development. Their objections, captured in submissions and local media, cluster around several themes:

1. Loss of green space and sporting ovals. Wallarah and Blackley Ovals are currently used for junior cricket, soccer training and Lambton High School activities. Opponents argue that losing these ovals will deprive young players and students of accessible playing areas and force them to relocate to distant suburbs<sup>15</sup>. They also complain that the site forms part of the area's emergency evacuation and muster point<sup>16</sup>.
2. Traffic and parking. A submission opposing the project claims the proposed development does not provide sufficient on-site parking and will clog local streets with vehicles, especially when events at the stadium clash with events at McDonald Jones Stadium or the hockey centre<sup>17</sup>. Critics also allege that the traffic modelling commissioned by BANL underestimates existing congestion<sup>18</sup>.
3. Flooding. Opponents state that the ovals currently act as a flood overflow and that development will exacerbate flooding risks, referring to past storm events that inundated nearby homes<sup>19</sup>.
4. Consultation and process. Wallsend MP Sonia Hornery, while supporting the idea of a new stadium, opposes the chosen location. She cites a lack of initial consultation, loss of green space and playing areas for other codes, loss of amenity for nearby residents, insufficient evacuation space for Lambton High School, severe flooding impacts and traffic issues on Turton Road<sup>20</sup>. She notes that in the initial public exhibition 658 submissions were received, of which 484 opposed the development<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 154–178. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> *Newcastle Weekly*. "Hornery supportive but critical of stadium site." 30 August 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 10–34. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 62–70. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 94–147. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> *Newcastle Weekly*. "Hornery supportive but critical of stadium site." 30 August 2025.

<sup>21</sup> *Newcastle Weekly*. "Hornery supportive but critical of stadium site." 30 August 2025.

5. Financial viability. Some opponents question whether Newcastle Basketball can afford the build, suggesting it will need further public funding<sup>22</sup> and pointing to cost escalation from the abandoned Hillsborough proposal (approximately \$19 million) to the current scheme (\$82 million)<sup>23</sup>. They argue a non-profit organisation should not “confiscate” Crown land for a stadium<sup>24</sup>.

These concerns are genuine and deserve respect, but they often ignore the broader strategic context and benefits of the project. They also tend to equate any change near their neighbourhood with a negative outcome, a classic Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) response.

## Assessing the Concerns

### Green space and community sport

City of Newcastle’s sports strategy identified Wallarah/Blackley Ovals as redundant/surplus because they are under-utilised, lack full-sized fields, have poor drainage and low-grade facilities<sup>25</sup>. The ovals are used mainly for training and junior games. The city has been working with cricket and football associations to relocate these activities to improved venues with better playing surfaces and upgraded amenities, and both associations provided letters of support<sup>26</sup>. Hamilton Jaffas seniors, who play nearby, expressed no objections to the proposal<sup>27</sup>. Lambton High School will retain alternative ovals adjacent to the site and will have access to two courts designed specifically for school groups, as well as 4 500 m<sup>2</sup> of new open space next to the school’s covered learning

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<sup>22</sup> *Newcastle Weekly*. “Hornery supportive but critical of stadium site.” 30 August 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 181–191. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Submission opposing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre, lines 206–214. NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Newcastle Basketball. “Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space.” 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Newcastle Basketball. “Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space.” 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Newcastle Basketball. “Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space.” 2024.

area<sup>28</sup><sup>29</sup>. Prior to Stage 2, the school and community will have access to 22 000 m<sup>2</sup> of retained open space<sup>30</sup>.

### Traffic, parking and flooding

Under the SSDA process, Transport for NSW required additional traffic modelling and an Event Traffic Management Plan. The project's traffic plans, prepared by consultants familiar with McDonald Jones Stadium, do not rely on the stadium's car park and include measures like a ring-road within the site to prevent queuing on Turton Road, widening footpaths and allowing for future cycleway expansion<sup>31</sup><sup>32</sup>. The parking plan allocates 19 spaces per court and uses car-park control to ensure users have access during major events<sup>33</sup>. For large events, BANL will coordinate with Venues NSW to co-use the stadium car park, which will also ease parking for major events at the stadium<sup>34</sup>. The Environmental Impact Statement includes a Traffic and Transport Assessment showing that regular day-to-day use will have minimal impact on traffic flows; the centre's access is restricted to left-turns from Turton Road to avoid congestion<sup>35</sup>.

Flooding concerns have likewise been addressed. Wallarah and Blackley ovals are prone to inundation and currently collect flood water<sup>36</sup>. The proposed design manages flood risk more effectively than the existing situation; the car-park layout and building placement

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<sup>28</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Consultation & Lambton High." 2024.

<sup>29</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Open space and community benefits." 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Open space and community benefits." 2024.

<sup>31</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 70–76.

<sup>32</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 85–104.

<sup>33</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Traffic & Parking Information." 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Traffic & Parking Information." 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Traffic & Parking Information." 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space." 2024.

mitigate impacts on surrounding properties, and the flood impact assessment found that changes in peak flood levels during a 1% AEP event are contained within the site<sup>37</sup>. The EIS also includes a peer-reviewed Flood Emergency Response Plan developed with the State Emergency Service<sup>38</sup>.

### Consultation and process

BANL undertook a community and stakeholder engagement program as part of the SSDA. It issued letters to 240 residences, held two drop-in sessions, and hosted a presentation and Q&A at Lambton High School<sup>39</sup>. The SSDA process requires public exhibition and submissions, and the response to submissions and amendments have been made publicly available. While early communication could have been better, the structured planning process now provides transparency and an independent assessment.

### Financial viability

BANL received \$25 million from the NSW Government in 2019<sup>40</sup> and has spent around \$1 million on alternative site investigations<sup>41</sup>. The State Government's support for Hunter Park, including \$6.7 million to develop the precinct's business case<sup>42</sup>, demonstrates a commitment to co-funding major sports infrastructure. The HISC will create approximately 260 construction jobs and 91 ongoing jobs<sup>43</sup>. Event visitors (estimated at 35 000 annually) will spend money within the local government area, with forecasts suggesting one-third of visitors will come from outside the LGA and spend about \$144 per

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<sup>37</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Traffic & Parking Information." 2024.

<sup>38</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 40–55.

<sup>39</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Consultation & Lambton High." 2024.

<sup>40</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 41–43.

<sup>41</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 43–45.

<sup>42</sup> Novo News. "Hunter Park project set to transform Newcastle." June 2021, lines 51–53.

<sup>43</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 117–123.

person<sup>44</sup>. These figures represent tangible economic returns that help justify public investment.

## Why the HISC Matters

### A response to demand and community health

Indoor sports centres deliver up to 10 times more activity per square metre than outdoor facilities and protect users from extreme weather<sup>45</sup>. They act as focal points for diverse user groups and foster social cohesion and health<sup>46</sup>. Without a new facility, Newcastle's existing indoor sport members, around 10 000 people, would have no place to play once the current stadium's lease expires in 2028<sup>47</sup>. The HISC is designed to be inclusive and accessible; it will reduce participation barriers for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and older adults<sup>48</sup><sup>49</sup>. Its multipurpose courts will also support netball, futsal, badminton, cheerleading and wheelchair sports<sup>50</sup>.

### Aligning with the Hunter Park vision

The Broadmeadow Place Strategy positions Hunter Park as a world-class sports and entertainment precinct capable of anchoring Newcastle's economic future<sup>51</sup>. Concept plans envision thousands of new homes, more than 8 000 construction jobs and 1 000 ongoing jobs at completion<sup>52</sup>. The precinct could produce an estimated \$3.7 billion in economic output during construction and attract almost \$55 million annually from the NSW

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<sup>44</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 110–117.

<sup>45</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Frequently Asked Questions." 2024.

<sup>46</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Frequently Asked Questions." 2024.

<sup>47</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Frequently Asked Questions." 2024.

<sup>48</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space." 2024.

<sup>49</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Consultation & Lambton High." 2024.

<sup>50</sup> Newcastle Basketball. "Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space." 2024.

<sup>51</sup> City of Newcastle. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. 2025, lines 3211–3221.

<sup>52</sup> Novo News. "Hunter Park project set to transform Newcastle." June 2021, lines 85–103.

Government<sup>53</sup>. The HISC helps realise this vision by seeding an indoor sports hub at the doorstep of McDonald Jones Stadium, catalysing year-round activity, offering employment for allied health and hospitality professionals, and boosting visitor numbers. Integrating the centre into the broader precinct ensures synergy with future facilities such as a new multipurpose arena and regional aquatic centre<sup>54</sup>. It also frees the existing stadium site for housing, supporting the precinct's housing objectives<sup>55</sup>.

### Public space and resilience

Contrary to claims of green-space loss, the proposal includes 4 500 m<sup>2</sup> of open space adjacent to Lambton High School and retains 22 000 m<sup>2</sup> of open space until Stage 2<sup>56</sup>. Designers incorporated water-sensitive urban design and reintroduced natural elements along Styx Creek as part of the precinct plan<sup>57</sup>. The Hunter Park strategy calls for flood-mitigation works including detention basins along Turton Road and the raising of Griffiths Road<sup>58</sup> – infrastructure that will protect residents and the HISC alike. Transforming underutilised, flood-prone ovals into resilient facilities with improved open space serves both community safety and recreation.

## The bigger picture – NIMBYism and economic development

### Understanding NIMBYism

“Not-in-my-backyard” (NIMBY) attitudes are not unique to Newcastle. The University of the Built Environment notes that NIMBYism surfaces when developments such as affordable housing, transport links, shopping centres, factories, renewable energy projects or social initiatives are proposed<sup>59</sup>. Opponents typically cite fears about traffic congestion, declining property values and changing community character<sup>60</sup>. Such arguments are often repeated regardless of the project's merits. An NAHB commentary summarises the phenomenon:

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<sup>53</sup> Novo News. “Hunter Park project set to transform Newcastle.” June 2021, lines 110–119.

<sup>54</sup> City of Newcastle. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. 2025, lines 3292–3315.

<sup>55</sup> Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Team. *Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Project Summary*. November 2024, lines 27–30.

<sup>56</sup> Newcastle Basketball. “Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Open space and community benefits.” 2024.

<sup>57</sup> City of Newcastle. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. 2025, lines 3256–3267.

<sup>58</sup> City of Newcastle. *Broadmeadow Place Strategy*. 2025, lines 3298–3311.

<sup>59</sup> University of the Built Environment. “What is NIMBYism (and is it a problem?).” 7 May 2025, lines 130–145.

<sup>60</sup> University of the Built Environment. “What is NIMBYism (and is it a problem?).” 7 May 2025, lines 158–181.

most people agree that more housing is needed, yet when presented with a specific project they fear undesirable people will move in, traffic will worsen, or neighbourhood character will disappear<sup>61</sup>. Traffic impact analyses often overestimate vehicle trips and undervalue alternative transport, reinforcing NIMBY concerns<sup>62</sup>. These fears can stall or derail projects that comply with planning rules and meet community needs.

### NIMBYism and anti-intellectualism

Commentary from the *Area Development* magazine describes a shift toward “NEW NIMBYism,” where opposition is fuelled not just by local concerns but by distrust of expertise and an unwillingness to accept facts. The article observes that public meetings have become hostile arenas where experts are shouted down and legitimate information is rejected<sup>63</sup>. This “No Expertise Wanted” attitude threatens the economic vitality of communities; standing still is death for any community, especially in rural areas<sup>64</sup>. The author notes that NEW NIMBYism often conflates independence with the rejection of expert advice and that such attitudes are concentrated in declining communities where population loss, ageing and poverty are already eroding opportunities<sup>65</sup>. The lesson is that delays and indecision borne of anti-expert sentiment can undermine regional competitiveness and drive away investment.

### Who are the NIMBYs?

Contrary to perceptions that most residents oppose new housing or infrastructure, evidence shows that NIMBYs are a vocal minority. A UK study by consultancy Public First (2025) found that 55% of adults support more development in their local area, with young people and left-leaning voters most likely to be “yes-in-my-backyard” (YIMBY)<sup>66</sup>. The same research notes that planning systems tend to overestimate opposition because public hearings attract predominantly older, homeowners who are more resistant to change<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> National Association of Home Builders. “Confronting the Challenges of ‘Not In My Backyard’ Attitudes.” 2025, lines 64–102.

<sup>62</sup> National Association of Home Builders. “Confronting the Challenges of ‘Not In My Backyard’ Attitudes.” 2025, lines 86–95.

<sup>63</sup> Everett, Jacob. “NEW NIMBYism: A Threat to the U.S. Economy.” *Area Development* (Q4 2024), lines 205–284.

<sup>64</sup> Everett, Jacob. “NEW NIMBYism: A Threat to the U.S. Economy.” *Area Development* (Q4 2024), lines 293–357.

<sup>65</sup> Everett, Jacob. “NEW NIMBYism: A Threat to the U.S. Economy.” *Area Development* (Q4 2024), lines 293–357.

<sup>66</sup> Public First. “The Quiet Yes: local attitudes to development.” August 2025, lines 50–76.

<sup>67</sup> Public First. “The Quiet Yes: local attitudes to development.” August 2025, lines 64–92.

Canadian polling likewise reports that 74% of residents support local housing development and 78% believe new housing increases diversity and vibrancy<sup>68</sup>. Only 31% of homeowners worry that new development will reduce their property value<sup>69</sup>, and opposition is concentrated among nativists and social conservatives<sup>70</sup>. Academic research from Yale’s ISPS shows that homeowners and renters share similar attitudes toward development and that opposition often arises from symbolic attachments rather than self-interest; highlighting benefits for respected groups like nurses and firefighters increases support<sup>7172</sup>. In the United States, age is a stronger predictor than homeownership: surveys indicate that people aged 56–65 are most likely to oppose new projects, while those aged 21–35 are most supportive<sup>73</sup>. A Boston University study of 2 800 public-meeting participants found attendees were four times more likely to oppose new housing than support it; they were older, whiter and more likely to own homes than the general population<sup>74</sup>.

### Voter priorities and the cost of inaction

Current polling in Australia underscores that economic pressures, rather than preserving the status quo, dominate the public agenda. The August 2025 Ipsos Issues Monitor finds that cost of living (62) and housing affordability (42%) are the top concerns for Australians, ahead of healthcare, the economy and crime<sup>75</sup>. JWS Research’s True Issues 38

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<sup>68</sup> Policy Options. “Canadians say yes in my backyard (YIMBY) and want more housing even in their own neighbourhoods.” March 2024, lines 239–259.

<sup>69</sup> Policy Options. “Canadians say yes in my backyard (YIMBY) and want more housing even in their own neighbourhoods.” March 2024, lines 239–259.

<sup>70</sup> Policy Options. “Canadians say yes in my backyard (YIMBY) and want more housing even in their own neighbourhoods.” March 2024, lines 266–277.

<sup>71</sup> Harrison, Rick. “New Research Unveils Why NIMBYism Alone Can’t Explain Anti-Development Sentiment.” *Institution for Social and Policy Studies*, Yale University, 10 February 2025, lines 94–108.

<sup>72</sup> Harrison, Rick. “New Research Unveils Why NIMBYism Alone Can’t Explain Anti-Development Sentiment.” *Institution for Social and Policy Studies*, Yale University, 10 February 2025, lines 119–158.

<sup>73</sup> Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer & David Glick. “Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes.” Boston University Initiative on Cities, 2019, lines 74–80.

<sup>74</sup> Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer & David Glick. “Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes.” Boston University Initiative on Cities, 2019, lines 82–85.

<sup>75</sup> Ipsos. “Ipsos Issues Monitor: August 2025.” August 2025, lines 199–203.

report from September 2025 shows that cost of living remains by far the number-one issue, with a majority (52%) of adults naming it in their top three concerns and 76% selecting it in their top five<sup>76</sup>. Housing supply and affordability has surged to become the second-highest priority, with 51% citing it and 60% of 18–34-year-olds urging government action<sup>77</sup>. These polls reveal a populace focused on affordability, jobs and economic opportunity. The cost of delaying necessary projects, through endless hearings and litigation, falls on ordinary households through higher rents, fewer jobs and lost investment.

### Implications for Newcastle and Hunter Park

The macro evidence shows that NIMBY activism can stifle economic activity, delay essential infrastructure and undermine regional competitiveness. For Newcastle, embracing the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre aligns with the majority’s priorities: creating jobs, improving health and providing affordable, accessible recreation. Broadmeadow’s transformation relies on timely delivery of projects like the HISC; prolonged opposition risks forfeiting government funding, delaying housing supply and weakening Newcastle’s ability to attract events and investment. By recognising NIMBYism as a social phenomenon, often driven by a minority of older, well-housed residents, and by trusting in planning processes and expert assessments, the community can avoid the pitfalls seen in other cities and harness the full potential of Hunter Park.

Opposition to the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre has raised legitimate questions around consultation, traffic, flooding and community use. Many of these concerns have been addressed through rigorous planning, independent assessments and design refinements<sup>78</sup>. The project sits within a wider vision to transform Broadmeadow and Hunter Park into a connected, mixed-use precinct that generates jobs, homes and world-class sporting and entertainment experiences. Rejecting the HISC would not save pristine parkland – it would perpetuate the underuse of flood-prone, poorly drained ovals<sup>79</sup> and deny thousands of residents a place to play. It would also risk forfeiting State funding and delay the transformation envisioned for Broadmeadow.

As a proponent, I argue that the HISC is exactly the kind of project Newcastle needs. It addresses a critical shortage in indoor sporting infrastructure, promotes health and

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<sup>76</sup> JWS Research. “True Issues 38: Cost of living still leads; housing surges as top concern.” 12 September 2025, lines 100–103.

<sup>77</sup> JWS Research. “True Issues 38: Cost of living still leads; housing surges as top concern.” 12 September 2025, lines 105–111.

<sup>78</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment. *Agency Advice – Response to Submissions for Hunter Indoor Sports Centre*. 2024, lines 85–104.

<sup>79</sup> Newcastle Basketball. “Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – Alternative sites and green space.” 2024.

inclusivity, integrates with the broader Hunter Park vision, and delivers tangible economic benefits. By investing in first-class facilities now, Newcastle future-proofs its capacity to host regional and national events, creates long-term jobs in sport, hospitality and allied health, and gives young people a safe, weather-resilient place to train and socialise. The project's design offers accessible amenities for people of all ages and abilities, ensuring that participation is not limited by mobility, income or cultural background. It also dovetails with the 30-year Broadmeadow plan, catalysing adjacent housing and retail developments and signaling to investors that the city is committed to modern, mixed-use precincts rather than clinging to under-used flood-prone fields. By embracing change instead of succumbing to NIMBYism, Newcastle can secure a vibrant, resilient and prosperous future built on opportunity, community well-being and responsible growth.