

Hunter Indoor Sports Centre Proposal – FAQs

August 2025

Why should the community support this proposal?

This facility is critical to meeting the needs of existing and future indoor sport members and the broader community. The project has enormous health and well-being benefits for Newcastle and the region. Social, climatic and development trends are increasing the popularity of indoor sports. Per square meter, an indoor facility can accommodate up to 10 times the activity of outdoor facilities and provide protection from extreme weather. They facilitate community cohesiveness and social connectivity and act as a focal point for the community bringing together a diverse range of users. Once built these facilities are sustainable operations that don't need to be subsidised by the rest of the community.

This is truly a community sport and recreation asset that will provide lasting benefits for the region for decades to come. The opportunity is here and now to achieve a great outcome for the community.

As members of Newcastle Basketball, what can we do to help support this application?

There are many ways you can help show your support for the application. These include:

- Show your support for our State Significant Development Application by making a supportive submission [here](#).
- Consider reaching out to your State Member of Parliament to show your support. These people are:
 - Sonia Hornery MP-State Member for Wallsend – Contact [here](#)
 - Tim Crakanthorp MP-State Member for Newcastle – Contact [here](#)
 - Yasmin Catley MP-State Member for Swansea – Contact [here](#)

What happens if it's not supported, or approval is not granted?

If the project is not supported or fails to be approved, Newcastle and the region will miss out on the benefits of the project outlined above. The current stadium will have an uncertain and short-term future ultimately leading to the loss of an existing community asset that provides significant health and well-being benefits to the community. Over 10,000 existing indoor sport members will have no place to play.

Location

Can't basketball just stay at the Broadmeadow site?

Unfortunately not, the current stadium is earmarked as a 'first mover' site to facilitate the Broadmeadow Place Strategy. That means it is proposed to be redeveloped for housing within the next 5-10 years. Coupled with this, our lease expires in 2028 and we will be required to vacate. The stadium itself is over 55 years old and is well past its useful life.

Is the proposed site the best place to build the Hunter Indoor Sports Centre?

Yes, apart from the fact that there are no viable alternative sites, our consultants have spent a lot of time investigating and planning for the facility design to address site issues. With those issues addressed, the site is clearly the best option for the project due to its size, location and characteristics.

We have looked at multiple other options including detailed investigations at Hillsborough and Glendale. Over three years, we have searched all of the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie LGAs and found no other viable site, there are certainly no others on offer now and not one site that has been mentioned in the public discourse is realistically viable. It's not that we aren't open to alternatives, it's that we have no other choice.

Wouldn't land within the sports precinct make more sense?

Perhaps in principle, but we have not been offered any land within the sports precinct, and current plans and statements indicate that this will remain the case. Therefore, a site within the sport precinct is not an option that is available to us.

Why can't you wait and see if you can find another site?

Given our previous research we know there are no realistic alternative sites, but we also have funding which has a definite time limit. Any change of site will mean the funding milestones within our agreement can't be met and we will be in breach of the agreement. Newcastle would be without a major piece of community sport infrastructure for the foreseeable future and the existing 6,000+ basketball, volleyball and pickleball members would have nowhere to play let alone thousands more that could play in the future.

Community

Will the new facility only be used for basketball?

Our existing facility is already home to Hunter Volleyball and Hunter Pickleball, and we regularly host events that are not related to Basketball. The Hunter Indoor Sports Centre will suit many additional sporting groups, some of which currently have nowhere to play. These include Netball, Futsal, Badminton and Cheerleading, just to name a few. Although we do have the Newcastle Falcons Wheelchair team, the ability of our current facility to cater for events aimed at people with a disability are limited. The new stadium is designed and intended to increase access to indoor facilities for a diverse range of groups within our community, which include those with a disability,

those from a multi-cultural background and indigenous groups. This description of the proposed site below sums it up best:

The Hunter Indoor Sport Centre addresses the chronic shortfall in quantity and quality of indoor courts in the Lower Hunter. The facility will boast state-of-the-art multipurpose indoor sports courts; allied health suites; cafe, social spaces; gym/movement studio, multipurpose function rooms; change rooms; spectator seating for a first-class show court; and car parking.

The design vision is for a multifaceted sports hub which serves the whole community. The indoor facilities will reduce barriers to participation, which are currently preventing people from participating in sport and physical activity. All facilities will be fully accessible and inclusive for all users, regardless of age or ability.

What about the other community sports that currently use this site?

The City of Newcastle (CoN) has worked with football and cricket to identify appropriate sites for their relocation. The current playing fields collect flood water and are not usable during extended periods of rain so it is anticipated that the alternative sites will better meet the needs of current users.

In 2020, as part of the development of its Sports Strategy, CoN identified Wallarah/Blackley Ovals as redundant/surplus to the city's needs, because they:

- Are underutilised – neither oval has full-sized fields for any sport, and they are not the home ground for any teams
- Have major drainage issues, which renders them unusable to sporting clubs and the local high school during heavy periods of rain
- Have low-grade facilities

The ovals are currently used, primarily for training purposes and junior games, by local cricket and soccer (football) clubs. Over recent years, CoN has been working with Newcastle District Cricket Association and Newcastle Football Association to ensure they will have access to new and improved sporting facilities. Opportunities have been identified for relocating to improved venues, with better playing surfaces and upgraded amenities, including floodlighting for evening training and games.

Both Associations have indicated they believe the relocation will be beneficial for their members and have provided letters of support for the HISC proposal.

What about the impact on Lambton High School?

CN has also been working with Lambton High School, which uses the ovals for a variety of purposes, and the Department of Education.

There are alternative ovals adjacent to the site that will continue to be available for student use. We are proposing to include some space near the COLA for ongoing school use.

In addition, the school will have significant access to the outstanding state-of-the-art indoor facilities within the HISC. The two courts on the Western side of the facility have specifically been designed with school groups in mind. They are sectioned off from the adjoining six courts, making them an ideal location for delivery of curriculum, as well as general school sport and recreation activities. Our kiosk will not be open to students during the school day so will not impact the school canteen.

What consultation has occurred?

A comprehensive Community and Stakeholder Engagement program has been conducted as part of the SSDA. The Project Team assembled by Newcastle Basketball has undertaken detailed engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including various community members and groups.

A letter was issued to the 240 residences identified in accordance with Department of Planning and Environment guidelines. The letter invited residents to attend one of two drop-in sessions at the current Newcastle Basketball Stadium. The first drop-in session, on 16 March, attracted 38 attendees and the second, on 18 March, had 32 attendees (some of whom had also attended the first session). We also held a presentation and Q&A session at Lambton High School on 12 March. There were 42 attendees, including representatives of the P&C, members of the school community and local residents.

The SSDA exhibition process facilitated public submissions. The proposal will now be renotified and exhibited allowing further submissions and we will also be running further drop-in sessions for the general community.

Traffic and Parking

Can the issues that have been raised be addressed?

We have spent well over 12 months with our consultants, key stakeholders and government agencies to methodically investigate and plan the project to a point where all major issues have been addressed. The evidence of this suitability has been used as part of our recently submitted State Significant Development Application (SSDA), all of which can be viewed here: [Hunter Indoor Sports Centre \(HISC\) | Planning Portal – Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure](#). Some specific issues are addressed in questions below.

We believe the SSDA process should be allowed to run its course to fully determine if the project is indeed appropriate on the proposed site. With the interest and expected high number of submissions that will be received it will most likely be determined by an Independent Planning Panel. Everyone in the community will get to have their say and it will be considered by the panel along with all of the relevant information.

Is there enough parking?

Our parking plan ensures adequate parking for our week-to-week needs. When we hold major events (such as NBL1 home games) we have prepared event management plans to cater for traffic and parking demands.

Will users of the HISC still be able to park at the new stadium during major events like Knights and Jets games?

We will utilise car park control to ensure HISC users can still access parking during major events. Our parking plan can be viewed in the reports used to support our SSDA in the portal linked above.

How many large events would be held there? What times/days would these be held?

For Stage One of the proposed venue, usage will, largely, mimic that of our current facility, which is home to Newcastle Basketball, Hunter Volleyball and Hunter Pickleball, and is also used by a broad range of other regular community activities. The majority of these activities take place during weekdays after school and into the evening. During the season, we also host weekend NBL1 games for both the men's and women's Newcastle Falcons teams. For stage one, these will still be hosted at the existing stadium.

Once Stage Two is completed, we will be able to host higher level tournaments in our show court facility. To provide an idea of how "large" these events would be, the show court can accommodate 2,400 spectators, compared to the 33,000 who can attend a Knights game at McDonald Jones Stadium. We will also host regional state tournaments which are typically staged over a weekend. Again, these will be coordinated to avoid other major events in the area.

What about traffic congestion on Turton Road?

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) also includes a Traffic and Transport Assessment which addresses concerns regarding increased traffic and parking in surrounding streets. As part of the planning process for the HISC, Transport for NSW requested additional traffic modelling, beyond what is usually required, to determine appropriate traffic management and carparking facilities. An assessment of demand showed the regular/day-to-day usage of the HISC will have minimal impact on traffic flows in the area. The Centre will be accessed off Turton Road, with left turn in and left turn out only, to minimise disruption to existing traffic, and to ensure vehicles are away from Lambton High School. The inclusion of a ring road within the car park to prevent traffic queuing in Turton Road also limits additional traffic on residential streets.

Onsite parking at the HISC will be more than adequate for day-to-day uses, with an allocation of 19 car spaces per court, plus additional allowances for the commercial element of the facility, including the provision of allied health services. To accommodate larger events, Newcastle Basketball has developed an event management plan to manage traffic and car parking for a range of event scenarios.

Environmental

What about flooding?

One of the reasons Wallarah/Blackley Ovals are considered of low value as sporting venues is, they are prone to inundation. The proposed design will actually more effectively manage flooding better than the current situation on the site. The proposed car park design has been developed to assist with managing flood impact, and placement of the buildings mitigates impact on surrounding properties.

The potential impact of the proposed development has been considered in terms of potential changes to existing flood behaviour. The design has been modified to mitigate impacts to point where the post-development change is negligible. At the 1% AEP (2050) event, changes in the modelled peak flood level are effectively contained within the site.

What about public space?

The design revision has created 'public domain' on the Turton Road frontage enabling pedestrian access and space for the public to utilise at all times.