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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**SPORTS MINISTER ANNOUNCES LATEST PLANS  
FOR HUNTER INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE**

The Minister for Sport and Recreation, Morris Iemma today announced details of a proposed private sector funded development adjacent to EnergyAustralia Stadium in Newcastle.

Mr Iemma said the 3.3 hectare parcel of land is earmarked by the Hunter International Sports Centre Trust to become the hub of sports administration, education and promotion in the Hunter.

He said the project was expected to attract developments worth in excess of \$50 million and generate more than 500 job opportunities for regional businesses during the development phase.

“As well, hundreds of permanent jobs will be created when the facilities are up and running.

“The vision for this site includes indoor and outdoor sporting venues, with facilities for athletes and spectators, as well as accommodation, sports clubs, gymnasiums, function centres, catering facilities, medical centre and commercial offices.”

Mr Iemma said the Government had worked closely with the Trust since committing \$23.6 million last June for the redevelopment of the stadium to help realise the full potential of the 30 hectare sports centre precinct.

“That funding commitment was a result of strong lobbying by the Government’s Hunter MPs, including Richard Face, John Price, Bryce Gaudry, John Mills and Milton Orkopolous who are attending today’s announcement,” he said.

Mr Face said he and his Hunter colleagues recognised the benefits that would flow to the Hunter by having world-class facilities on their doorstep.

“We congratulate the Trust on their foresight and planning.”

Mr Iemma said the Trust’s plan of management had identified the need for a sports facility to complement the current first class international hockey centre and harness racing complex, as well as the redeveloped EnergyAustralia Stadium.

“The plans earmarked for the entire sports precinct certainly have the potential to make the region one of the leading sporting centres in Australia,” he said.

“The key to the Trust’s plans will be the delivery of a diverse mix of sport and recreational outlets that meet the expectations of the Hunter community now and well into the future.”

The call for development proposals will be advertised nationally by the Honeysuckle Development Corporation on behalf of the Trust.

The President of the HISC Trust, Mr Ted Atchison, described the Call for Proposals to develop and lease the site as an exciting phase in the master plan for the entire sports centre precinct.

“The development of the site is an integral part of the vision for a vibrant sports centre with international facilities,” Mr Atchison said.

“We are particularly excited that the private sector will have the opportunity to submit development proposals that will involve the finance, design, construction and operation of a project that will complement the entire sports centre precinct.

“A development that complements existing facilities will play a crucial role in creating a sports and entertainment hub for the Hunter region,” Mr Atchison added.

Copies of the call document are available from the Honeysuckle Development Corporation and proposals must be submitted by 3.00pm Friday 28 March 2003.

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