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## **Business Hunter calls for Budget support for Newcastle Entertainment Centre**

Business Hunter is urging the NSW Government to allocate funding in the 2026–27 State Budget to the long-overdue renewal of the Newcastle Entertainment Centre, supporting the region's growing reputation as a premier event destination.

Business Hunter CEO Bob Hawes said the region's rapid ascent as an events powerhouse – demonstrated by this week's announcement of the upcoming Foo Fighters concert and recent success hosting major international acts such as Paul McCartney, Pink and Elton John – reinforced the urgent need for a contemporary, fit-for-purpose regional events facility.

"We are backing the Minister for the Hunter's call for the project to be the first major infrastructure investment in the Broadmeadow Precinct," Mr Hawes said.

"Newcastle and the Hunter are increasingly recognised as a destination capable of hosting blockbuster events that draw audiences from across the Hunter and surrounding regions.

"These concerts aren't replacing events held in Sydney or elsewhere – they are an addition to the programs of touring performers that creates extra economic uplift for the Hunter and NSW and gives the people of our region the opportunity to see top-line acts in their own backyard.

"To maintain this momentum, we need a venue that matches the scale and expectations of promoters, performers and audiences.

"An investment in a new Newcastle Entertainment Centre will pay for itself in short time through increased revenue and flow-on economic benefits from additional concerts, conferences, sports and community events."

Business Hunter's 2026-27 NSW Budget submission identifies the redevelopment of the Newcastle Entertainment Centre as a priority that will enable the region to fully contribute to the growth of the NSW visitor economy.

Mr Hawes said the Newcastle Entertainment Centre needed an immediate investment similar to the NSW Government's recent \$17 million commitment to progress the redevelopment of Wollongong's WIN Arena and entertainment precinct.

"The new Newcastle Entertainment Centre will be a focal point of Hunter Park and is widely acknowledged as a priority project central to the realisation of the Broadmeadow Precinct vision," Mr Hawes said.

"A site has been identified, a business case has been completed and the project has been listed on the NSW Infrastructure Pipeline. We just need an initial injection of funding to get the project moving."

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