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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 23 JUNE 2023

INQUIRY INTO THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S PROCESS INTO THE PROPOSED ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS PRECINCT IN HOBART

The Committee met at 2:00 pm.

CHAIR (Ms Forrest) - Welcome to the Public Accounts Committee hearing into the Macquarie Point Stadium and the AFL deal. The Committee has revised its terms of reference based on some changes that have occurred since, but there were a number of witnesses we hadn't heard from, including the Aboriginal community and the representatives of the community. We are still taking evidence right across, but we will in the future be focusing more the revised terms of reference.

This is a public hearing. All the evidence you give before the Committee is covered by parliamentary privilege and everything you say is covered but it may not be so when you are outside the Committee hearing. If there was information that was of a confidential nature you wished to share with the Committee you could make that request and the Committee would consider it, otherwise it is all public. It is being streamed and the transcript will be prepared and published once it's available on our website and form part of our deliberations and reporting.

Do you have any question before we start?

Prof LEHMAN - No.

Professor GREG LEHMAN, PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR, ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Members of the Committee are Dean Young, Meg Web and Josh Willie, and Shane Broad is online and Lara Alexander has just joined us as well.

Prof LEHMAN - I am the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership, at the University of Tasmania, but the representation that I make to the Committee today is on my own behalf as a member of the public but more particularly as an Aboriginal community member with a strong interest in the development of Macquarie Point.

What I would like to do is present to you a brief statement which I hope will provide an appropriate background to my interest and my involvement and outline some of my concerns. I am compelled to make this representation to the Committee in order to ensure there is a clear understanding of the recent history of engagement between the Tasmanian Government and Tasmanian Aboriginal people in relation to the redevelopment of the Macquarie Point precinct, or Mac Point.

This is of particular importance because of four key matters. The first is that the establishment of the new Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017-23 was predicated on engaging Tasmanian Aboriginal people in creating a nationally significant memorial to frontier

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wars in the colony of Van Diemen's Land and a celebration of the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples' survival, resilience and unique creative culture. Known as the MONA Vision, the idea of having a truth and reconciliation art park as the central feature of Mac Point was an inspiring outcome of the Tasmanian Government's contract with the Museum of Old and New Art to offer fresh ideas for the precinct following the poor public reception of the first master plan. This idea was developed as a result of creative collaboration between a number of people including Leigh Carmichael and myself. Consultation with Aboriginal people on the concept included elders such as Aunty Patsy Cameron and Uncle Rodney Dillon, as well as national leaders such as the previous social justice commissioner and co-chair of Reconciliation Australia, Michael Dodson.

Extensive Aboriginal community consultation was not attempted prior to the launch, in order to preserve the intended impact of the vision. Instead, it was emphasised that the vision was intended to establish a disruptive idea and create a set of opportunities that the Aboriginal community and the broader Tasmanian community could then take advantage of through co-design of content and implementation. This idea was simple. Instead of a monument, Mac Point would be home to a public space or park that could be activated by diverse cultural events to acknowledge the severe impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike and to celebrate resilience and survival. Activation would be achieved by the creation of a Tasmanian Aboriginal Cultural Centre, potentially incorporating cultural retail, exhibition, learning and tourism.

The launch of the vision in December 2016 attracted strong and positive media coverage. The proposal was presented to the premier and members of Cabinet and received with excitement and enthusiasm. The then-premier Will Hodgman, then-minister Groom, MONA owner, David Walsh, and the CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, Mary Massina, publicly endorsed the proposal as a nationally-significant way forward for Tasmania's most important urban renewal project.

The second point: dedicated Tasmanian Aboriginal people have worked in good faith with the Tasmanian Government since the conception of the MONA Vision to build Aboriginal community understanding, support and participation in the future of Macquarie Point as a place of cultural sharing, reconciliation and healing. Since the launch, a series of public forums and workshops have been held to gather ideas to engage the public in the project. An Aboriginal working group formed, comprising myself, Teresa Sainty, Zoe Rimmer and Allan Mansell and, up until the stadium announcement, was involved in an active process of statewide Aboriginal consultation and codesign of the Truth and Reconciliation Park concept. The Aboriginal community response to that date was strongly supportive. At the same time, an Aboriginal community-based enterprise was commenced by Nayri Niara, headed by Ruth Langford in the Longhouse. This included highly-successful cultural exhibitions, training programs and effectively modelled many of the aspirations of the vision an activation centre or cultural centre.

My third point: a broad range of Tasmanian people, organisations and businesses accepted the public endorsement of the MONA Vision by the Tasmanian Government, leading to the uncontroversial passage of the current master plan through the Tasmanian parliament in the knowledge that the development would proceed according to accepted standards of design, planning and approval.

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The Macquarie Point Master Plan 2017-23 details 65 major stakeholder bodies and 14 Aboriginal organisations and bodies that were consulted in its development.

While the development of Mac Point attracted increasing public criticism for the rate of progress, the Mac Point Development Corporation was successful in translating the adventurous MONA Vision into a new and deliverable master plan that was compliant with a full range of site planning and statutory requirements. At the same time, the master plan preserved the vision for a major open space or park comprising approximately 20 per cent of the precinct's area. The Tasmanian Government in turn provided an allocation of around \$17 million dedicated to funding the park's development.

My fourth and final point: since the announcement by the Tasmanian Government in 2022 of its intention to accept demands by the AFL for a stadium to be located at Macquarie Point, the successful consultation, codesign and working relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal people has effectively ceased, casting into serious question the integrity and commitment of the Tasmanian Government to everything that the MONA Vision and the new master plan entails.

For Aboriginal people involved in the development and implementation of the vision for Mac Point, the announcement that the Government had decided to accept the AFL's preference for locating a stadium at Mac Point rather than at Regatta Point was a massive blow. In the leadup to this announcement, there was no consultation or advice from the Government other than a courtesy phone call to members of the working group by the CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation on the day of the announcement.

I was invited by the Premier's office to attend a stadium working group inaugural meeting on 4 November 2022. On attending, I found that there was no consideration in the agenda for the truth and reconciliation art park or any other commitments made to Aboriginal people regarding the precinct's development. I have not been invited to any subsequent meetings of this nature and am unaware whether that working group has continued to exist.

To date, neither the AFL nor the relevant ministers or Premier have sought to engage the Aboriginal community or the Aboriginal working group in discussions about the existing commitment to the vision for a truth and reconciliation art park and cultural centre. The CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, to her credit, has sought meetings with individual members of the Aboriginal working group -

CHAIR - The current CEO, you mean, or the former -

Prof LEHMAN - The acting CEO, Anne Beach, and is planning a meeting in August [2023] with the working group to canvass its views on the future of the vision. It is understood by the CEO that the agreement to meet should not be seen as the working group agreeing to a redesign of the park to fit in with the stadium; rather it is an opportunity to take the first steps in reassessing the consequences of the Government's decision to abandon the existing master plan and the co-design work we have done to date in favour of the AFL's demand for a stadium. I am aware of the requirements of federal government funding for the Tasmanian Government to:

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Work with First Nations Groups, Hobart City Council and RSL Tasmania to ensure all existing and proposed uses respect the history of the site and region.

In my view, our August [2023] meeting is a preliminary meeting to discuss the co-design work we have done to date, assess whether the new stadium proposal provides the opportunity to honour the commitments that have been made to the Aboriginal community to date and to remind Government that the vision for a truth and reconciliation art park and an Aboriginal cultural centre is reliant on these being significant, properly resourced and respectful features of the Macquarie Point precinct.

In summary, despite the Premier's assurance that the Government remains committed to a park, it remains unclear how this can be realised given the large scale of the proposed stadium on a limited precinct. It is also of great concern that despite the AFL's very public commitment to working with indigenous people, there has been no attempt to reach out to us during the current public relations campaign or to acknowledge the legitimate expectations and interests of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the precinct's future.

CHAIR - Thanks, Greg. You've probably answered a lot of questions about consultation. When this announcement about the stadium at Macquarie Point was first made and questions were raised about what does that mean for the truth and reconciliation art park and other things that were planned for the site, the Government continually reassured us in the parliament and in the media that that was still going to happen. As you've said, while it's a large site, it's not necessarily an oval shape to start with that you can easily put an oval in the middle of, or a facility like that. In your view, is there any way to know, without understanding the full dimensions and location of the stadium if built there, what that would look like?

Prof LEHMAN - I was reassured to some degree that the Premier, on the occasion of the public announcement of the Government's decision to locate the stadium at Macquarie Point, assured that the Government remained committed to establishing a truth and reconciliation art park. At worst, that assurance is disingenuous. At best, it's naive. To date, despite all of the inquiries and conversations that I've been able to have with those individuals who are closest to the planning and design process, I have not been able to obtain any assurance that the precinct will be able to accommodate the sort of scale of public space that is inherently part of the truth and reconciliation art park vision. Therefore, in my view, a meaningful acknowledgement of the Government's commitment.

I have somewhat sarcastically said publicly in the past that at the moment it looks like the only outcome for a truth and reconciliation art park would be akin to a front lawn for the stadium. That will in no way meet the public expectations and the Aboriginal community expectations that were established when this precinct was dedicated to being a major national urban redevelopment that paid respect to frontier war and the continuation of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture.

CHAIR - In terms of why Macquarie Point is so important, the Government could say we'll do your truth and reconciliation art park at Regatta Point or somewhere else. Can you explain to the Committee what the significance and importance of the Macquarie Point site is and why that proposal was put forward?

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Prof LEHMAN - What made the original MONA Vision so exciting and so inspiring for the Tasmanian public was that it was an almost preposterous idea that a major urban redevelopment project adjacent to the CBD, of considerable commercial value, could be dedicated to something that was aimed at healing Tasmania's relationship with its colonial past.

Anyone who knows me, anyone who's read the work of Henry Reynolds or heard from generations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people will understand that our view is that that dysfunctional relationship with our past is one of the major things holding back this State and by extension, the whole of Australia in maturing as a nation. While we have to hide from our past, we will remain constrained.

I've often said that in many ways you could argue that Germany is the cultural, social and economic powerhouse of Europe. Can anyone imagine Germany being in that place if it had turned its back and tried to deny the horrors of its past in relation to the Holocaust as Australia has up until very recent times sought to do?

The MONA Vision coincided with an increasing conversation in Australia about truth-telling and reconciliation. Leigh and I, when we decided to go for this rather preposterous idea, were proven right because it landed with a huge amount of enthusiasm and really positive reception from the public, not only in Tasmania but the response nationally was really positive. Tasmania was, for that period of time, on the verge of taking national leadership in this space.

Why does it have to be at Macquarie Point and not at Regatta Point or somewhere on the Domain? It's about the proximity to the CBD. It's about a precinct like this being part of the civic life of Hobart as the capital city. Not being a token presence somewhere off to the side, that may or may not ever be visited by anyone.

It's more like Barangaroo or Brisbane's Southbank. It was an opportunity for this to be able to be part of the everyday life of Tasmanian families and also by virtue of the creation of public space, a place of enjoyment and cultural engagement and renewal and healing through the various cultural activities that were envisaged.

This would be much more difficult to do if the park was somewhere else. It would require a particular and dedicated planned trip by members of the public or visitors to Hobart, whereas right there at Macquarie Point, it's in the heart of the cultural precinct and the tourist precinct.

Symbolically, that speaks very profoundly to the commitment of Tasmania and Hobart as the capital city and the seat of government to that business of acknowledgement and healing.

Ms WEBB - It is interesting to hear you talk there about why somewhere else might not be suitable because it is similar to arguments that the stadium proponents make about why it has to be right on the doorstep of the CBD. It is an interesting proposition that these are two quite different visions of how that area might be used and enjoyed by the community similarly making claims to that space.

I am interested to talk, though, and get your response, because beyond the initial disruptive idea put forward by MONA then the planning that went on after that, we had the *Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty* report come out from Professors Warner and McCormack. That had, of course, recommendation 20, which is the establishment of a

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Tasmanian Aboriginal art and culture centre at Macquarie Point. That report came out, I think, in November 2021. Did that reinvigorate engagement around the idea? I am wondering about how engagement from the Government tracked across that time since 2016-17 in terms of progressing more actively toward that. Did the McCormack-Warner report assist to progress?

Prof LEHMAN - I would have liked to have thought at the time that it did. Although one would have to question just how effective that energising, reminding and refreshing of commitment was in the end. I think the conversation about the truth and reconciliation art park and the cultural centre to activate came up in the truth-telling consultations because, like the broader Tasmanian public, there was concern amongst Aboriginal people that the time was passing. The glacial progress, I think, was a common term being used in the development of Macquarie Point, might compromise the future of that vision, or put it at risk. There is only so long that a great idea can stay fresh sitting on the shelf waiting to be put into action. I think ultimately that is why we had the problem that we have now.

It's not useful for me to make any comment about whether the time that was being taken at Macquarie Point was reasonable or not. It is what it is. But I do think it contributed to the vision becoming more vulnerable.

You are absolutely acute in your observation that the precinct offers some of the same attractions to the AFL as it did to MONA and Aboriginal people, and, I would argue, the general public, who were swept up in the enthusiasm for the truth and reconciliation art park because of its proximity.

Ms WEBB - It is a very unique location. It speaks to its value, doesn't it, in terms of a location and the importance of the decision about what is sited there.

Prof LEHMAN - That question about the value of the site or what the site represents in terms of the values of Tasmanians is really the key point at issue here. Whether or not our values are focused on a really rare, the first time in two centuries, opportunity to come to terms with our past and address truth-telling in a meaningful, inclusive and reconciling way. Whether that represents our core values, or whether we want to simply make the site available to a commercial enterprise which happens to involve sport.

Ms WEBB - In terms of the *Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty* report and that recommendation 20, could you reflect on whether it was the understanding of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that the Government had committed to that recommendation from the report?

Prof LEHMAN - I can't speak on behalf of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. My understanding of the Government's response to that report was that it was a positive one. My understanding is that the Government saw that the recommendations in relation to Macquarie Point were consistent with its public commitment. So, for me, the reference to Macquarie Point in those recommendations was a further confirmation, consolidation and reassurance that the vision was going to be realised because it had now been translated from the MONA vision for Macquarie Point into being part of the Government's very public commitment to a pathway to truth-telling and treaty. And that made perfect sense.

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Mr WILLIE - We don't know yet whether there's going to be 20 per cent of the site available along with the stadium for a truth and reconciliation park. But let's say there is, hypothetically, can it co-exist with a stadium adjacent to it or would that impact the park?

Prof LEHMAN - There could be a thing called a truth and reconciliation art park. There could even be an Aboriginal culture and heritage activation centre incorporated into the built structure of the stadium. You can build convention facilities into these things, so you could build an Aboriginal heritage centre into it. The really profound difference between the MONA Vision, where a truth and reconciliation art park constituted not just the backbone of the site but the heart of it, and a precinct dominated by the immense bulk of a 30 000-seat stadium, it's self-evident that the precinct becomes the place of an AFL stadium, rather than the place of a truth and reconciliation art park. Trying to fit the park into a limited precinct footprint with the stadium inevitably means that it plays very much second fiddle to the stadium. It is no longer the defining feature, quality or value of the precinct. That, to me, is a major cost.

Mr WILLIE - And that will set back the reconciliation element of the project?

Prof LEHMAN - I speak personally here. The thing that sets back the reconciliation element of the precinct is the preparedness for the Government and the AFL - as I've said, the AFL has a very public national commitment to indigenous people. Their willingness to not recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people as a partner in the precinct - and what I mean by that is there was simply no conversation, let alone negotiation or consultation. It's hard for me not to describe this as the park being bulldozed out of the way in order to make room for a stadium. There are some gestures from the Government that they remain committed but I'm not sure what we'll end up with. A small lawned area with a sign that says 'Truth and Reconciliation Art Park'? That's absolutely not what the MONA Vision was talking about and it's not what inspired the public.

Mr WILLIE - You also talked about \$17 million being set aside for the park in your introductory statement. Do you know what the status of that funding is? Is that part of the funding that's been added up and contributed to the stadium costs?

Prof LEHMAN - That figure is an approximate figure, from memory. I recall that as advice from the then CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, Mary Massina. She was reassuring me that the development, the corporation and the Government were taking their commitment to the park seriously in that there was a notionally allocated amount of money that was intended to ensure that the park infrastructure and landscape design could proceed.

Mr WILLIE - Okay, so the status is unknown.

Prof LEHMAN - Some of that money would have already been spent. As I mentioned before, the process of Aboriginal community consultation that was undertaken by the MPDC in partnership with the Aboriginal Working Group involved contracting Cumulus Studio and Stuart Huys and Rocky Sainty to undertake statewide Aboriginal community consultation. They travelled up as far as Smithton to talk with Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and right down to the south, so that was a really genuine exercise in statewide consultation.

CHAIR - When was that?

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Prof LEHMAN - That was undertaken in 2021 and the early part of 2022 and we had generated a first draft of an urban design for the park. We'd identified some key cultural themes which focused on cultural marine resources such as maireener shell necklaces, focussed on the original shoreline, focussed on some archaeological work that had identified through the discovery of an Aboriginal stone tool that was made from European glass, in association with the foundation of a very early hut, that effectively identified one of the earliest known contact sites of relationship between Tasmanian Aboriginal people and British colonists, which as you can imagine, for a place dedicated to reconciliation was hugely significant.

These were the things that were feeding into the draft concept design. The next stage of Aboriginal community consultation was then to take some renders, some images, out to people to give people something tangible to respond to and then we would have moved into the next stage of co-design, which was to come up with some more fully worked renders that could then go out to the public and be presented to Government. We were getting quite close.

Mr WILLIE - If the Government proceeds with the stadium proposal, is there any way that they can make things right or is it now fundamentally flawed?

Prof LEHMAN - I think that depends who you ask. Probably one of my flaws is that I'm far too tolerant and pragmatic. I've committed to the acting CEO of Macquarie Point to continuing to sit down and talk about this. I think the vision was so important and so inspiring and obviously, I've got such a strong interest in not seeing this as a lost opportunity, that I will stay as part of the conversation for as long as I can but I know that there are other Aboriginal people who see this as yet another betrayal. When Government gets what is seen as a better offer and you'll have other people talking to you about whether or not it really is a better offer, a lot of people feel very betrayed by what's happened.

CHAIR - The reason I asked you about when that consultation occurred - you said it was at the end of 2021 into 2022 - is that Mr Andrew Dillon, the incoming CEO of AFL, appeared before the Committee just recently. He said that there were workstreams identified that included the stadium as needed to secure the deal for the AFL team and that decision was made in December 2021. So even though from the AFL's point of view at least, this was going on in the background, the stadium was clearly on the table as one of their workstreams, and the Aboriginal people were being consulted around the State as to how they saw the progression of the truth and reconciliation art park as per the master plan. Is that correct? It seems that there's two things going on here, completely isolated from each other.

Prof LEHMAN - I was aware that there was an aspiration for a stadium. I was aware there were a range of sites under consideration and I have since seen the report on those various site options. I only saw that quite recently. I then became aware along with the public through public media that the Government had identified Regatta Point as its preferred option. Right throughout that whole process we continued to confidently work with Macquarie Point Development Corporation on the basis that the park would be at Macquarie Point. It was only in, was it November 2022, when the Premier made his announcement, that we became aware that the stadium would displace the current master plan and all of our development co-design for the park.

CHAIR - You also talked about the AFL's relationship with and commitment to Aboriginal people, around the country, not just here. You probably cannot answer this, but I am interested in whether you have heard through your connections, whether the AFL had any

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discussion with particularly the AFL players who originate in Tasmania, and there is good number of them who play at AFL level now. Was there any conversation at least with those? There are Tasmanians playing for the AFL who are Aboriginal. Did you get any feedback that there was conversation with them about this?

Prof LEHMAN - No, I am afraid I can't offer you any -

CHAIR - It didn't come back to you that there was?

Prof LEHMAN - I haven't heard of any, no. Even if there had been, talking to players is not really the way that you would expect an organisation like that to be doing business and to be acknowledging and respectfully engaging with Aboriginal people, particularly when it would have been very easy for them to know that there was a working group in place and there were people who had been involved in the current master planning process from the very beginning.

Ms WEBB - Following on from one of Josh's questions, I am interested to know what your thoughts would be in terms of what would be needed now. You have described a really thoughtful and comprehensive consultation and co-design process that has already been occurring. Is it back to square one? If there is a proposal to include a park as part of a new precinct, are we literally back to square with that consultation and co-design process? That's one thing I am interested to hear your thoughts on and I guess ultimately, similarly to the question that the member for Elwick asked, can you imagine a scenario where the Tasmanian Aboriginal community can accept a much-reduced potential expression of that idea of the truth and reconciliation park, or whether it would be highly unlikely that would be acceptable, and therefore perhaps have to be discarded because of a lack of wanting to be involved in that at all further?

Prof LEHMAN - Big questions.

Ms WEBB - Yes. I guess I am asking them because the Government might well think, 'Well, we can just rejig the idea and pop it in around the edges'. But of course, if the Aboriginal community would have no appetite for that or sense that it was an okay way forward, then it is clearly not an okay way forward.

Prof LEHMAN - I think the Government's thinking very much is, 'Let us look for a way that we can fit a park in', in order to be able to give evidence of the reality of that continuing commitment. That will necessarily mean that the space available for a park will be significantly reduced. I have already made some comments about what owns that precinct.

Going back to your questions, the idea of a truth and reconciliation park is not just something that Aboriginal people can demand. For it to be real reconciliation, it has to have buy-in from all of the participants in that complex, challenging conversation about what reconciliation is.

Now, in my mind, that means that what happens in the name of reconciliation in that precinct has to have social licence. It has to be something that the general public consider to be in the public good. Otherwise, reconciliation does not work if it is happening within a framework that the majority of Tasmanians are going to shake their head about, and say 'this is

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appalling' for other reasons, that will effectively undermine the desired reconciliation outcomes.

With that in mind, it is really a democratic question. It's in the hands of the Tasmanian public about whether people collectively believe that a stadium on that site is in the net public good. If that is a predominant view, then I think that would make it easier for Aboriginal people in Tasmania to be able to reconceive what might be involved in establishing some sort of public facility and whether that be a park or an activation centre.

CHAIR - But don't we need to ask the Aboriginal people first about what has happened to date?

Prof LEHMAN - As I keep saying, that's been one of the most challenging things that has been missing in the whole public discussion so far.

Ms WEBB - On that, it connects in to the next question I had, which was, clearly the previous planning processes had been under way. You were primarily interacting with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to progress those. Now, even in this sort of reset situation where we now have a different proposal, you are continuing to interact and converse with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation as they look at a new precinct plan. Where has the Government been in any of this in terms of connection to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on this issue or leadership or public commentary or reaching out to make a connection? Where has the minister for Aboriginal Affairs been, for example, across this time?

Prof LEHMAN - I have had a couple of informal conversations with minister Jaensch, who has reassured me that the Government is serious in its commitment to the park, but at the same time was unable to provide any detail of what that might look like or how that might be achieved. I think it is fair to say that there is an in-principle commitment there, which I suspect it is probably genuine, if not naively genuine.

As a result of the fact that there has not been consultation or serious conversations with Aboriginal people, I think the Government is in a situation where it might believe that what it thinks is deliverable is viable. I believe if it sat down and talked with Aboriginal people, it might have to reconsider that, because there is such a huge difference between what was proposed before.

Everyone is looking for opportunities to force-fit everything around the stadium. The stadium is a given and then everything else has to fit in with that. Well, normally urban design processes and social initiatives like this do things the other way around.

CHAIR - Just on that, in some information that was provided yesterday to the parliament, it is clear that the site selection went through Cabinet. Would you expect the minister for Aboriginal Affairs at that point to say, 'Well, have we talked to the Aboriginal community about this, because this is going to significantly disrupt the plans on that site'?

Prof LEHMAN - I would like to think that the minister would be representing the interests of Aboriginal people around the cabinet table. But I -

CHAIR - Did he reach out and seek any advice at that time?

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Prof LEHMAN - No. As I said before, nobody from Government, apart from Anne Beach, the Acting CEO, has reached out. Her contact was really a matter of courtesy to let us know, immediately before a public announcement was made -

CHAIR - There wasn't anyone from the Government that got in touch. It was Macquarie Point?

Prof LEHMAN - No ministers of Government reached out. I had two meetings with Kim Evans, the departmental secretary of State Growth at the time, over the course of the last two years about the truth and reconciliation art park advocating and ensuring that it was still on the radar, it was still understood and that the same reassurances came back from -

Ms WEBB - Can you tell us when those meetings were? Are you able to provide us -

Prof LEHMAN - I can get back to you with that.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. It would be good to have the dates of those two meetings with Kim Evans, where you received those reassurances.

Prof LEHMAN - I think it's fair to say that the Government has been quite consistent in expressing that it maintains its commitment. What we are waiting for is to see what physical scope that commitment entails, in terms of the site. We are yet to see any clear site plan which would give us an idea of the square meterage that might be available, where it would be. There's been some general suggestions at one stage that the park could be between the stadium and the escarpment. Then, as it becomes clear, the stadium will probably have to butt up against if not eat into the current escarpment. The ideas, I think, have shifted to the park perhaps running alongside of the highway.

Going back to your question earlier on, is there any way that a meaningful park and cultural centre could be part of the precinct with the stadium? I think it's just really difficult for any Aboriginal people involved or Aboriginal community more generally to have a view about that while there's no clarity around the design of the stadium or the precinct. The AFL's got a lot of money. If they stepped in and offered millions of dollars to build Australia's most incredible indigenous cultural centre and put lots of money - they've certainly got the ability to do that - that would probably begin a fresh conversation, which might involve some new design ideas and expectations. That certainly hasn't happened and there's been no suggestion from the AFL that they're interested in talking to us.

It's interesting that the AFL, in all its public commentary and announcements throughout this last several months, haven't actually even referred to Aboriginal interests in the park at all. I've been struck by the complete absence of any reference and it makes me wonder whether it's part of their public relations strategy to try to starve that issue of oxygen.

CHAIR - On the process, I don't know how much you understand about the Project of State Significance, and it's obviously got a process to go through parliament. Again, if you don't know enough about the process you may not be able to comment. But do you believe the matters that are of deep concern to Aboriginal people, particularly on the back of the previous agreement, can be adequately aired through that process?

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Prof LEHMAN - My limited understanding of the process is that it will require proposals to go before parliament twice, both Houses of parliament. That's reassuring -

CHAIR - That requires an amendment to do that but the Premier did table something to that effect. I'm interested in not so much the process through parliament, although you can certainly engage with that, but the process if, say it's approved to go through that process, the Tas Planning Commission is undertaking their work -

Ms WEBB - The Integrated Assessment -

CHAIR - Yes, the Integrated Assessment. Yes, sorry. It's a whole range of areas. Do you see there's a role there for the Aboriginal community to really raise their concerns there? It may be something that you need to look at more.

Prof LEHMAN - I don't know the detail and the scope of the process but I would hope that if it's an adequate public engagement and consultative process it would provide that opportunity for Aboriginal people to have a voice.

Mr WILLIE - One of the binding parts of the agreement, and we heard from Andrew Dillon last week, was 'it's Macquarie Point or it's nothing'. Was that a mistake for the Tasmanian Government to sign up to that condition?

Prof LEHMAN - That would be a political judgment on my part to respond to that. To speak personally - and I don't want to be suggesting I'm representing an Aboriginal viewpoint here, just a citizen of Tasmania - I agree with the sentiment that is being commonly expressed across letters to the editor and various other public commentary that this is tantamount to blackmail and bullying. Having seen aspects of the agreement that's been signed, I'm flabbergasted that the Tasmanian Government has signed up to subsidising the proceeds of events if they don't meet the income expectations that I'm not sure who would be involved in setting. I just don't see that the negotiation relationship that has emerged is one that should normally occur if normal public processes of design and planning and consultation were undertaken.

Mr WILLIE - This nature of 'it's either that or nothing' doesn't leave a lot of flexibility to work through issues such as the concerns of the Aboriginal community, veterans or anything else that may emerge through the planning process with the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

Prof LEHMAN - No, it's exactly not intended to. It's intended to drive a short-circuited process directly to an outcome that the AFL has determined is in their interests and arguably the interests of the game.

Ms WEBB - I can't help but reflect that this is a year that we're at a national level contemplating a referendum about a voice to parliament and we've got a Premier and a minister who are quite vocal in their support of that effort at a national level and what you've described to us today is a Government that has not reached out to effectively communicate and seek engagement with the community on this very significant issue that was at the heart of our ongoing efforts towards truth-telling, treaty and reconciliation. Is that something that you think is an especially difficult prospect to swallow, in terms of moving on from this and finding a way through that's going to be productive and constructive?

PUBLIC

Prof LEHMAN - There's a great deal of contradiction there between the stated commitment to truth-telling and partnership and working with Aboriginal people, particularly towards something like a treaty. I cannot imagine a treaty emerging from the sort of relationship that is being modelled at the moment because Aboriginal people would be having to guess at every moment what was around the corner that hadn't been -

Ms WEBB - What might trump us.

Prof LEHMAN - hadn't been discussed. At the same time, I try not to be cynical but I have to say that for many Aboriginal people, to be misled or disappointed or deceived by government is part of the unfortunate history of Aboriginal and colonial relations stretching back to the earliest days of Van Diemen's Land. This is something that we were hoping that the pathway to truth-telling and treaty would actually move us on from, that sort of relationship between Aboriginal people and government. It's possible. I mean, we saw land rights achieved in Tasmania in 1995 in a State where most people in Australia assumed that it would never happen. Not only that, but it was delivered by a conservative Liberal government, mainly due to the work of premier Ray Groom, and leader of the government in the Upper house, Tony Fletcher. It passed through parliament with unanimous support and without amendment. When things like that occur, that is what helps me to remain foolishly optimistic, I feel sometimes.

Ms WEBB - If as, work was to progress on the site, material was discovered there with Aboriginal heritage implications, under our current arrangements what is the status then of that site and what has to be considered, then, going forward?

CHAIR - In terms of development on it?

Ms WEBB - Yes. In terms of progressing a development.

Prof LEHMAN - The Aboriginal Heritage Act protects Aboriginal heritage sites and objects and material. We already know there are Aboriginal living places evidenced by what are commonly referred to as middens all along the coastline stretching right around to Cornelian Bay from Regatta Point. As I mentioned before, we know that there is an incredibly rare and significant very early contact evidence of Aboriginal and colonial contact site there within the precinct.

CHAIR - In Macquarie Point.

Prof LEHMAN - In the Macquarie Point precinct.

Ms WEBB - If material was discovered that could not then remain in situ because of the development that was going to occur, would that be returned to the Aboriginal community in some sense, or relocated?

Prof LEHMAN - There would be a requirement under the act for a request for a permit to conceal or destroy that Aboriginal heritage. That would go to the Aboriginal Heritage Council, who may or may not agree to the issuing of that permit, and even if the Aboriginal Heritage Council refused to support the issuing of a permit to destroy that site, the minister could still sign off on a development that would destroy that site.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - The interesting thing too is the Project of State Significance (PoSS) process actually suspends every other piece of legislation, planning scheme, strategy or any of those things. It suspends those and all those matters become dealt with in the integrated assessment phase for which the TPC¹ makes guidelines and consults on guidelines, but literally every other piece of legislation that relates into the normal planning processes is off the table during a PoSS process. That is an interesting thing to consider for the Aboriginal community, because as the guidelines for that PoSS process were developed by the TPC and consultation was done on those guidelines, it would be an incredible opportunity to engage so that matters currently dealt with under other legislation could be dealt within the integrated assessment process.

It is no small thing to suspend every other act and process we have in place that has carefully been legislated to do particular protections and have particular arrangements in place, and then put it all into one bucket. Granted, the TPC will no doubt take that very seriously and do a very comprehensive job, but it is a moment in time where all bets are off for a moment until the new guidelines are created.

CHAIR - I'll take that as a statement.

Ms WEBB - Sorry, that was a statement. I feel like anytime we can educate the public and stakeholders about the PoSS process it is probably worthwhile right now, given that we are barrelling towards one and we are going there at a great pace.

CHAIR - It is also really important that the Aboriginal community feels able to engage in that process, in the development of the guidelines and the process more generally.

We are out of time, Greg. Is there anything you really wish you had said and you haven't, before we close off?

Prof LEHMAN - No, I don't think so.

CHAIR - We will write to you around those meeting dates. If there is any further information you want to provide to the Committee, you can write, and we can consider that as part of our correspondence.

Prof LEHMAN - Okay. Thank you to the Committee for providing the opportunity to have some input into this process.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

The Committee suspended from 3:00 pm to 3:04 pm.

¹ Tasmanian Planning Commission

PUBLIC

Honourable JEREMY ROCKLIFF, MP, PREMIER, WAS CALLED.

CHAIR - Thank you, Premier, for appearing before the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into the AFL stadium and team arrangements. I think you understand the process but I will invite other members of your team to take the statutory declaration, then I'll invite you to introduce the team as you wish and make an opening statement and if there are others who need to come to the table, I'll just get you to introduce them as they come.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure. I have Kim Evans, the Secretary of State Growth. To my right is Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary, Transport and Infrastructure. To my left is Brett Stewart.

Mr KIM EVANS, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, **Mr BRETT STEWART**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH AND **Mr GARY SWAIN**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you. Over to you, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair, and thanks very much for inviting me here today to talk about what I believe is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Tasmania, in terms of an urban renewal project and indeed, being able to secure our own AFL and AFLW team.

Of course, I acknowledge the differing views in the community. I respect those differing views and passion on both sides, but it is my view that as a Government we are elected to govern, to make decisions, to get on with the job, and to progress important projects such as this. I have said many times that a strong economy fuelled by transformational infrastructure projects enables us to invest in those essential services such as health, education, public safety and housing. It means jobs, it means a prosperous future for our State, and it is also about aspiration and enabling opportunity.

The Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Project, which has a multipurpose stadium at its core, finally takes forward our plan to transform Tasmania's most significant waterfront and urban development opportunity. Of course, we have partnered with the Australian Labor Government, the Tasmanian Liberal Government, to unlock the potential of the precinct. In consultation with key stakeholders and the community, we are now creating a refreshed precinct plan which will include a focus on transport connections, port upgrades and housing for our essential health workers. What has been largely lost in the current debate is that the Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Project will be a destination to attract visitors to our State and it will be a venue to host events that ordinarily bypass us. It will create opportunity for investors and a pipeline of work that will see new skills developed here in Tasmania, ensuring that young people can stay here, to work here and to raise a family here.

Of course, the multipurpose stadium is also vital to Tasmania having its own AFL and AFLW team, which have long been fought for, for many decades. Finally, we have seen that come to fruition. Without the stadium - as was made clear last week by Mr Andrew Dillon - there would be no Tasmanian team and that fact could not be any clearer. This decades-long fight is not something that I am willing to give up on. I recognise, again, and I say there are different views in the community but I believe in this project and I believe in the opportunity that this project will create.

PUBLIC

You will be well aware of a business case that was presented last year and what I want for the community is that this stadium would be a truly iconic, uniquely Tasmanian, boutique and absolutely world-class. It will be Tasmanian in every single sense of the word. It will be an opportunity to feature Tasmanian materials and our renewable credentials to create something truly special that all Tasmanians can be proud of.

In relation to the funding, the Tasmanian Government's contribution is \$375 million. To help provide some context, we are investing some \$12 billion over four years. I will be investing that \$375 million once and if you compare that to our health expenditure, as an example, that investment - the \$375 million - we spend on average in health every 45 days.

Chair, I come from the north-west but I am passionate about it because I genuinely know, hand on heart, that this will be a project that is good for not just southern Tasmania but for all of Tasmania. I mention the north-west coast because, Chair, you would also recognise, not too far away from your electorate is the City of Devonport, where considerable effort and investment, both local government, Federal Government and State Government, went into a significant urban renewal project - the Devonport Living City. It was controversial at the time, people fought against it, but no-one can deny that the Devonport city has been transformed as a result of the courage of many and those in the community who worked together to create an urban renewal at Devonport.

The Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct is not a standalone investment. We expect it to form part of a broader precinct plan that includes mixed used development such as hotels, bars and cafes along the housing, commercial and public open space. Bringing together those small, medium and larger businesses, there is opportunity to invest as a result of the flow-on effects of significant investment such as the Macquarie precinct.

Macquarie Point Development Corporation will be developing and refreshing a master plan for the site over the coming months. This includes consultation on the development of a draft precinct plan, which is open until Sunday, 13 August this year. I am advised that since 3 June, over 700 submissions have already been received. Feedback from precinct plan consultations will also inform the design brief to help to the design phase of the process and we will look forward to providing updates to the community as this takes place. This integrated precinct at the nexus of Hobart's three transit corridors and close to the Hobart CBD will support broader urban renewal activities across greater Hobart with a flow-on effect across the city and State, bringing jobs, bringing investment, bringing investor confidence and attracting events, business and tourism.

With its proximity to the wharf and the Nuyina berthing facilities at Macquarie Point, it will cement Hobart's role as the gateway to the Antarctic, to be recognised across the world as a leading scientific hub for Antarctica. All the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's work to date has helped make the site ready for development. The corporation continues to have a key role in remediating the site and preparing it for development.

I wish to finish up by reiterating, Chair, that we aspire for the Mac Point precinct to be a place where Tasmanians can come together, to gather, to celebrate and also to reflect. I am incredibly excited about what the project can offer our State and that excitement extends well and truly beyond the AFL and AFLW team. Thank you.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - We haven't heard from you before in this Committee inquiry and we have revised our terms of reference since we started. You are aware of that change so some of these questions may relate partly to the previous terms of reference only because we haven't reported on all of those yet. I want to start off, and I will go to other members too. What date did Cabinet first consider the AFL agreement and the licence, and what date did Cabinet make a decision on the AFL agreement and the licence?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There were various decision points because, as we have demonstrated through being transparent, a number of decisions have been made, a number of Cabinet-in-confidence documents were presented for discussion, as has been demonstrated -

CHAIR - The documents, or a list of them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well the list of documents that we have released yesterday in the interests of transparency, and we have been making the decision around this for some time as information comes to light, as we are able to secure investment from the Federal Government for example. Indeed, the Budget process was the key decision point when it comes to progressing the AFL licence and the investment as well.

CHAIR - I asked for what was the date that the AFL agreement, and that includes the AFL licence, when was that first considered by Cabinet? What date?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well we have been considering and having verbal discussions supported by Cabinet-in-confidence documents that has enabled us to make the decisions around the investment of the stadium and indeed the team itself as they are very clearly in the Budget papers. We secured and finalised the Budget in around mid-April where it was very clear that we worked through this very methodically. Cabinet was kept informed at every stage on both the stadium and AFL negotiations. The acting secretary's letter says that matters are regularly discussed during Cabinet that don't form an official record and therefore weren't on yesterday's list and, of course, Cabinet met the day before the AFL announcement which was a couple of days after the Prime Minister's visit, when we secured the funding arrangement.

CHAIR - I again ask: what date was this first considered by Cabinet?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well I've just explained that, Chair. It's no single date. It's a process which we work through methodically.

CHAIR - The first discussion around the agreement for the AFL licence - what date was that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, a lot of discussions go into discussions around the agreement, keeping Cabinet informed around the investment that we're making every year, like the \$12 million times 12 years. The investment in the high performance centre, all part of the agreement.

CHAIR - Premier, can I just take you back to the document you tabled yesterday with a number of documents and other information provided that just outlined some of the Cabinet material. Can you point me to this table as to which meeting was the first meeting of Cabinet that the Cabinet actually considered the AFL licence and agreement that was eventually signed by you in May [2023]?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got it listed all here, Chair, right back to 28 January where Cabinet considered the AFL licence - 2020, yes - AFL licence task force report prepared for -

CHAIR - No, that's the AFL licence task force report, not the actual agreement and licence -

Mr ROCKLIFF - the State Government. AFL licence task force report. I'm not going to get into any Cabinet deliberations but this was a process that we worked through methodically as a Cabinet, where people were kept informed -

CHAIR - I'm not asking for deliberations. I'm asking for the date on which Cabinet first considered the agreement that you ended up signing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well I was able to verbally brief Cabinet on May -

CHAIR - That was after.

Mr ROCKLIFF - May the second. May the second, there was a Cabinet meeting and in anticipation of the deal being signed the next day, and to inform Cabinet on the status.

CHAIR - Just on that, Premier, if I might. The last square on this table relates to a presentation to Cabinet, 'Macquarie Point precinct and AFL licence by the Department of State Growth, 8 May, verbal update'. We know that the agreement was signed before that and you've just referred to another verbal update that is not in this list.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And as the Acting Secretary said in his letter, there are some verbal discussions that take place. The State Growth team -

CHAIR - You've already outlined one here. I'm just saying -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The State Growth team came in and discussed -

CHAIR - On the third?

Mr ROCKLIFF - On 8 May -

CHAIR - You said - what happened on the third then? You referred to a verbal -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Second, I said.

CHAIR - Sorry, the second. Sorry. What happened at that meeting, in terms of -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to talk about Cabinet-in-confidence matters and the deliberations, except to say the next day -

CHAIR - It's not referred to here.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because as explained by the Acting Secretary, it was a verbal update provided by me to Cabinet as to the status of the deal. Mr Evans?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Right.

Ms WEBB - So some verbal things are reported on in that list and others aren't.

CHAIR - Yes, that's correct. It does.

Ms WEBB - Essentially and a pivotal one, the Premier briefing Cabinet on the actual thing we're about to sign, that didn't warrant being listed clearly by the look of it, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it was a verbal update provided by myself as often happens. We discuss matters in Cabinet and the next week there was an update on the agreement and the Macquarie Point precinct by State Growth.

Ms WEBB - Was that the first time it was considered?

CHAIR - The question about the first meeting seems to be very nebulous. I'll move to the second question. On what date did Cabinet approve or make a decision in terms of a decision - in the document we've got minutes, we've got decisions, we've got briefs. At what point and what date did Cabinet make a decision about the AFL licence agreement, because the first time it was really talked about in terms of this agreement for the licence is after the signing, whether it was a verbal update from the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we made the key decisions at the Budget process because the Budget was essentially written and decided upon in around mid-April [2023]. That's when we made the key decisions about the investment we are going to make into Macquarie Point Stadium and indeed the AFL. Clearly that is -

CHAIR - Can you point me to which Budget subCommittee of Cabinet - Department of State Growth, or the Budget Committee subCommittee of Cabinet 2023-24 Budget Agency forward Estimates allocations, from Department of Treasury and Finance - which one or which ones were the ones at which the agreement and the funding that is contained within that agreement was approved and confirmed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well Cabinet agreed every dollar before the signing, and as I say, in mid-April we made the final considerations -

CHAIR - So we're saying the meeting on 13 April [2023], by the Budget Committee. Is that where it occurred?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ah, well I'm not going to get into any deliberations, but the agency forward Estimates allocations on 18 April would have been those decisions where we signed-off on the dollars for the Budget, and indeed the stadium and the AFL licence.

CHAIR - Was the agreement available for the Committee or Cabinet? If you go to the Budget subCommittee meetings, the last one that is listed there is on 13 April, the Department of Treasury and Finance. Then there's Cabinet consideration on 18 April. There's a minute. There's two minutes and then there is a decision. Was the agreement that you signed part of the information that was provided to Cabinet to help them decide on the allocation as approved in the Budget?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - The allocation of the funds for the stadium project and the AFL team and the high-performance centre was made at the final meeting that we had our Budget deliberations - which forms part of the agreement, the agreement that was officially signed on 3 May [2023] and we had many discussions leading up to that point.

Mr EVANS - Premier, can I add one little bit of context? You are reading from a list in relation to -

CHAIR - That is all we have at this stage.

Mr EVANS - motion 125. Motion 125 in terms of advice refers to advice in relation to the stadium, not to the AFL licence. You are seeing -

CHAIR - Then we need to have the same information provided that relates to the agreement.

Mr EVANS - That is a different question.

CHAIR - I do not operate in the Lower house. Lower house members can speak -

Ms WEBB - That is the question we are putting to you now, I think.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We make these decisions over a period of time. When information becomes available, we secured our Budget allocation based where the agreement was at that particular time in terms of what we had secured, a yearly contribution, the high-performance centre, investment in the stadium. I provided a verbal update to Cabinet myself the day before the actual signing, and you know -

CHAIR - Excuse me Premier, the Secretary just said that this information that was released or tabled downstairs late last evening related to the site, not the agreement. Have I misunderstood the Secretary?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The stadium.

Mr EVANS - What I said is Motion 125, in terms of advice, it's advice relating to the stadium. That's the advice that we provided to the Premier and to the Acting Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet to develop the list that you're reading from. Had we been asked a different question then, Premier, we could provide that information.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We could.

CHAIR - Okay. Then it goes on that last point, then points to the Macquarie Point precinct and AFL licence. You have included one aspect -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because it included the Macquarie Point precinct but I'm happy to provide further information, Chair.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - The key question was, you've made it very clear that Cabinet had a role in approving spending that was going to be in the Budget that relates to the licence deal and the stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct.

Ms WEBB - The question is, did Cabinet have a role in approving the full detail of the AFL licence agreement deal, or did they just get told about it once a decision had been made already and was about to be signed by you, in the verbal briefing the day before you signed it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Cabinet were briefed along the way, of course, particularly at the time we made the Budget allocations around the stadium, the high-performance centre, the yearly investment and other matters contained within the Budget.

Ms WEBB - Quite clearly, I'm asking you, did Cabinet see the deal and have an opportunity to sign off on it before you signed it or did they just hear about it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got the authority -

Ms WEBB - Okay. I'm going to take that to say 'no'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got the authority to sign the deal and Cabinet were fully aware of aspects of the deal, of course, particularly the investment because it was part of the Budget decision.

Ms WEBB - But not the full deal, by the sound of things.

CHAIR - Josh?

Mr SWAIN - Premier, could I -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Gary.

Mr SWAIN - I was just going to say during that time there were multiple processes running in parallel over months. There was the Budget process, there were conversations with the Australian Government and there were some negotiations with the AFL. It wouldn't be unusual for negotiations to go right down to the wire and the way we would normally handle that in briefing ministers or the Premier is to make sure that we've got an understood framework to negotiate within and that if we vary or propose to vary from that, we'll come back and update.

That's really what was going on here. If I draw the analogy say to the Bridgewater bridge, which I've done a few times because it's the biggest project and most comparable project we've got, Minister Ferguson was the responsible minister, he would have been all over the detail of that deal. His Cabinet colleagues would not have been at the same level of detail as he was.

CHAIR - The question is about what information did the members of Cabinet have to make their decision?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, a lot of information because you've seen a number of the documents as alluded to.

CHAIR - Did they have the agreement before they made their decision and the details within the agreement, like the penalty clauses, all the other bits in the agreement? The meeting the match day revenues if they shortfall the cost of the team, all those things. The team, probably yes, because that was in the Budget papers, the cost of the team itself, but things like the penalty clauses aren't, for the obvious reason. Some of the other costs that might be incurred further out weren't there because the Forward Estimates are the Forward Estimates.

That's the question: did Cabinet, when making decisions, either around the Budget allocation or any other decision point in Cabinet, did they have access to and did they vote on the agreement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a lot of discussions around the Cabinet table. We receive advice from various areas of departments and we signed the final deal on 3 May. Cabinet were made aware of the circumstances of the deal through the various negotiations.

CHAIR - Did they have a copy of the agreement, that's the question?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'm not going to go into any Cabinet deliberation.

CHAIR - I'm not asking you to. I'm asking you, did they have access to a document that's now mostly been made public -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I made very clear to Cabinet, aspects of the deal. Kim.

Mr EVANS - Premier, it might be helpful for us to talk a little bit about the negotiation process, which we did last time we were here. These matters require detailed negotiation over hundreds of hours around a number of elements in the agreement itself. As I say, it took place over hundreds of hours over a number of months. When officers within my agency, supported by the Crown Solicitor and appropriate legal and technical experts were undertaking those negotiations. They did so within a framework which had been approved by the Premier. That framework has been made public. The basic funding commitments that we have made, et cetera, as we have progressed through the negotiations, and at every point I was kept briefed and the Premier's office was kept briefed, and I cannot speak for what goes on in Cabinet, but I am assuming that the Premier kept his colleagues briefed.

If we diverted from the agreed position with the Government in the negotiations, we had a conversation, and got authority to do so.

CHAIR - I will come to you, Josh. Just while we are on this point, I asked a question without notice in our House a few weeks ago and got an answer around this process, around who was the chief negotiator, and was told it took hundreds of hours and the like.

Can you, Premier, provide the names and positions of the senior officers referred to in that answer, who were involved in this negotiation? Also, maybe not right now, I am happy to provide on this notice, but can you provide the diary dates and notes of appointments and all meetings in all forms for those senior officers related to the AFL agreement, the stadium, any

PUBLIC

of the 11 work streams that the AFL identified, and the AFL taskforce and the Tasmanian Arts Entertainment and Sports Facility, since 1 July 2021?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I can - you know - best endeavours, but, Kim?

Mr EVANS - So, Premier, it would be quite an extensive exercise, and we would need to take this on notice -

CHAIR - Yes, I am saying I am happy to provide that on notice.

Mr EVANS - We could provide you with a list of all the key meetings that we had.

CHAIR - I am just asking for the dates. I'm not asking for -

Mr EVANS - You need to appreciate that some of these are not meetings. Some of these are short conversations that we had at various levels within both negotiating teams to clarify points. That happens on an ongoing and dynamic basis. We can provide you with a list of all of the key meetings, but there are probably hundreds of conversations that take place outside of that on, as I say, a very dynamic basis.

CHAIR - I am interested in the meetings that were scheduled, that would be in people's diaries. And you said there were two teams.

Mr EVANS - The AFL team and the Government team.

CHAIR - Okay. Are you able to provide the names and positions of the senior officers referred to in that answer to me a few weeks ago that were part of the negotiation team?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure why you would need names. I mean it sounds like a -

CHAIR - Well, positions then. So we can identify who they are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you said names, you know.

CHAIR - The senior officers - what is their position title?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Best endeavours. Put it on notice, and we will see what we can do.

Mr EVANS - It will take us a while.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will take some time.

CHAIR - Not their positions, surely?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Diary aspects.

Mr EVANS - To do an exhaustive search of all diary records on all of the conversations we can recall, understanding that there will be hundreds of others -

CHAIR - No, I am asking for the meetings between the two negotiating teams.

PUBLIC

Mr STEWART - If I can just add some clarity around the time frame for that would be useful, because some of these negotiations pre-dated the direct involvement of State Growth, for example. It goes back to the taskforce.

CHAIR - I am saying from 1 July 2021.

Mr STEWART - Okay.

Mr EVANS - From 1 July 2021 -

CHAIR - 2021. If there was none in that period, then start when there were.

Mr WILLIE - Just to follow on from your questions, good governance matters, Premier. I am interested in why you thought it was not necessary to present the agreement to Cabinet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you know, I'm interested in why you think it is necessary to block progress in this State. If I look at this Committee, everyone has put their position on the table - 90 per cent of this Committee is against the stadium. Frankly, to call it a kangaroo court is an insult to kangaroos.

Ms WEBB - Chair, I would like to object to that.

CHAIR - Yes. Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is just typical politics.

CHAIR - Premier, 90 per cent includes everyone except your own member on this Committee in that, and I think that is being very disingenuous. In fact, you are probably counting half of him. I urge you to avoid such statements.

Ms WEBB - I object to being verbally by the Premier on this and on what my position is. I'm quite clear in the public statements I put out about this. At no stage have I -

CHAIR - Let's move on from the politics and answer the questions. Did you want to rephrase your question?

Ms WEBB - That's an outright lie.

Mr WILLIE - I didn't think it was political.

CHAIR - Ask it again then if you think and I'll make a judgment on that.

Mr WILLIE - Why did you think it was not necessary to present the agreement to your Cabinet colleagues?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to get into the details of Cabinet deliberations, except to say my Cabinet colleagues were informed along the way, including the expenditure in the Budget, Mr Willie, which has just gone through the Lower House of Parliament and will be debated in the Legislative Council next week.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - Premier, you have signed an agreement that signs Tasmania up to significant liabilities, cost blowouts, financial penalties for not meeting timelines -

Mr ROCKLIFF - There you go again: negative.

Mr WILLIE - I'm interested in good governance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So am I. I'm also interested in the fact that we've secured \$360 million from the AFL. I'm also interested in we've secured \$305 million from the Federal Government for stadia infrastructure in both the north and southern Tasmania.

CHAIR - We'll come to that later, but let's -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm interested in the fact that for decades, everyone's tried to secure a deal for their own footy team here in Tasmania. No-one's achieved that. We have and I'm proud of that fact. It seems to me that a lot of people, including yourself, Mr Willie, and your party, seem to be intent on denigrating that, getting bogged down in process and politics as a smokescreen to not support the stadium.

CHAIR - Let's not use politics as a process not to answer questions.

Mr WILLIE - I'm asking process questions here, Chair. This appears to be an extraordinary failure of responsible government that your Cabinet colleagues did not sight this agreement prior to you signing it.

CHAIR - Is that the case?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's your opinion. I would absolutely reject that opinion. My Cabinet colleagues were consulted along the way. Part of the decision-making process signed off on the Budget and supportive of the deal.

Mr WILLIE - Was Treasury advice provided to Cabinet to make a decision on their funding agreement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You've seen the Treasury communication.

Mr WILLIE - We've just heard that's about the stadium and Budget. I'm interested in whether Treasury advice was provided to Cabinet regarding the agreement you signed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to get into Cabinet deliberations. You've seen the -

Mr WILLIE - I'm not asking for deliberations, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to get into those Cabinet deliberations. You can get a range of advice from across agencies. We had a Budget process. Of course, Treasury provide a point of view. State Growth provide a point of view. We make key decisions in Cabinet all the time across a range of portfolio areas, including investments. We receive advice from departments and make decisions based on a range of information.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - I'm going to rephrase a question of yours. Did you receive advice from Treasury - I'm not asking to see the advice. I'm not asking for any Cabinet deliberations. Did you receive advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance about the agreement you were signing that is clearly not outlined in this list of documents?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to get into the details of matters in Cabinet deliberations.

CHAIR - I'm not asking the details.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Treasury were part of the Budget process -

CHAIR - I'm not asking about the Budget.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's a key part of it because we have an annual investment of \$12 million for the team and investments leading up to the team's commencement, including the stadia infrastructure capital investment. Of course, Treasury officials were involved.

CHAIR - If I can stop you there, Premier. There's clauses in the agreement that don't go to the current Budget that have a financial implication should certain circumstances occur. Did Treasury provide advice to you or to Cabinet about the agreement that is unrelated to the \$12 million over the period for the team and the allocation for the stadium?

Mr SWAIN - There are major projects and developments all over Government happening all the time.

CHAIR - I understand that. I am asking did you receive advice from Treasury around the detail within the agreement you signed on 3 May?

Mr EVANS - The agreement is largely a legal agreement, so we got extensive legal advice from the Crown Solicitor -

CHAIR - I am not asking about the legal aspect. I am asking about the financial implications.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The legal aspect is important.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr EVANS - The financial aspects were understood by Treasury, because they were part of the deliberations - advising Government on the deliberations through the budget process.

CHAIR - But the Budget does not include all the financial implications. Let me ask you: did you get legal advice on all those aspects?

Mr SWAIN - I was Acting Secretary at that time and part of the advice we gave the Premier was we got the independent legal adviser to give us its view on the legal risks around the deal, which should be standard practice. In then advising the Premier, we said we have taken appropriate legal advice on the risks of this deal.

CHAIR - On every aspect of the deal you took legal advice on that?

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Mr SWAIN - That adviser was involved all the way through, they had full knowledge.

CHAIR - You had legal advice on every aspect that was included in that agreement?

Mr SWAIN - Yes.

CHAIR - Yes. Okay. Did you get Treasury advice on every aspect of that agreement?

Mr EVANS - We would have other major projects all over Government where that does not happen.

CHAIR - No, I am not asking about that.

Mr EVANS - That is not the standard process.

CHAIR - I know it may not be, but I am asking a simple question: did you get Treasury advice around every aspect of this agreement as you got legal advice on every aspect of the agreement?

Mr EVANS - We would not ordinarily get - as the Deputy Secretary was going to say, we are involved in lots of transactions, hundreds that are small, some large. We do not consult and involve Treasury on every single part of every negotiation just because it might have a financial impact.

CHAIR - Let us be more specific then: did you get advice from Treasury on the penalty clauses?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Treasury were a part of the process, of course, because they are intimately involved in the budget, because they are Treasury.

CHAIR - The penalty clauses are not in the budget. We do not seem to be able to get an answer to that.

Mr EVANS - I wanted to correct something if I could. You characterised them as penalty clauses. They actually make good clauses. They are clauses that would give rise to funding in certain events to make good the costs of the team.

Mr WILLIE - Compensation.

Mr EVANS - No, it is not compensation, because the counterfactual is that in making good the team, it enables it to remain viable, but it avoids the payment of the initial \$12 million as an example.

CHAIR - What about the penalty, I would call it, for not having the stadium built in time?

Mr EVANS - Again, this goes to the fundamental viability of the team. The team has a detailed business case and financial model that underpins its viability. Those models rely on certain revenues. The simple point is if you have first grade infrastructure that would come

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with a stadium, it will have a different revenue impact or benefit for the team than if it is playing in other stadia. What we have agreed is that should we not -

CHAIR - Based on crowd numbers?

Mr SWAIN - It is based on a whole range of factors, including advertising, capacity, crowd numbers, hospitality, all of those things.

Mr EVANS - My simple point is it would be the AFL and the 18 clubs' interest is to make sure the team is successful and viable. Our interest is the same.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will have a mutual interest. No party wanted to sign a deal -

CHAIR - We will move on. Shane's got a question. We have gone off the track of that question.

Ms WEBB - The question still stands and has not been answered.

CHAIR - Yes, the question still stands. Yes.

Dr BROAD - Mr Evans gave evidence the stages of the negotiation he sought approval from the Premier, and we have just heard Mr Swain say legal advice was provided to the Premier. When we look through the document we see there is no legal advice provided to Cabinet, and there is very little advice to Cabinet about the various stages apart from verbal briefings. Is it fair to say that you, Premier, were leading the negotiation and Cabinet was not provided with the legal documents or information about the steps as they progressed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I might throw to Mr Swain on that one. But in the minutes signed on 3 May, it references Attachment F, which has been reviewed by the Crown Solicitor.

Mr SWAIN - I was referring to the process for giving the Premier assurance and advice as to whether to sign that deal. In that minute we pointed to an attachment. That attachment articulated [inaudible] who had been involved all the way through the process's view in relation to business. What I was really trying to say -

Dr BROAD - That legal advice was not provided to Cabinet. Indeed, 3 May is the day after the signing of the agreement.

Mr SWAIN - Every contract we would ever enter into will have an allocation of risk and every contract will have arrangements where one party or the other has to -

Dr BROAD - This is not relevant to the question I am asking. I am asking about that advice being provided to Cabinet, not whether it was due, or whether it was robust or anything. I am just pointing out that advice was not presented to Cabinet. That is what I am pointing out. Would you disagree with that? Where was the legal advice presented to Cabinet?

Mr SWAIN - I am not trying to frustrate this by not answering the question. I was just trying to get to that we would have projects all the time where that is not the case. We would do 20 to 25 major projects a year. Every one of them has four roads. We would have a contract with an external party. There will be risk allocation if certain events happen. The contractor

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might have to pay if other events happen. The principle being the Government might have to pay. If it is a principle-based delay, we might have to pay. That level of detail does not typically go to Cabinet. There will be a responsible minister and that minister will exercise their authority.

Ms WEBB - It is hardly a typical project. The answer is no, and that is the reason why the answer is no. That is fine. The Committee can hear that answer. It is just that if the question is put and the answer is no, how about you say no?

Dr BROAD - That is right.

Mr YOUNG - Going back to the viability of the team, Premier, can you tell me how long the viability of the team been linked to a purpose-built stadium?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course, it has been very clear, and what I was saying before, Mr Young, on the AFL and the State Government, I wanted to make it sure the viability of this team was such and that is when the clauses come in in terms of investing in the team if the stadium is not built in the required time frame. What was made very clear by Mr Dillon last week was the importance of new stadia infrastructure to the success of the team.

This is nothing new. I can go back to a Senate inquiry in 2009, in actual fact, relating to the establishment of an AFL team for Tasmania. This is, you might recall, when the Gold Coast and GWS were introduced ahead of us. To quote from the AFL's own website from the day they fronted the inquiry:

AFL Chief Operating Officer, Gillon McLachlan has told the Senate inquiry there are no plans to include a Tasmanian team in the competition.

This emphasises just how far we've come to getting our own team. First, this isn't something the AFL wanted to do, in terms of giving us our team. We've had to fight for our own team but interestingly in one of the Committee's five concluding comments the following statement was made, and that is:

A facilities upgrade at York Park would be needed but a well-supported Tasmanian club playing in a purpose-built stadium would represent a viable option for a new AFL team.

And so the need for a new stadium was acknowledged some 14 years ago but, of course, then we've got the AFL task force report, we've got the Carter report as well, which made it clear around the importance of stadia infrastructure to support the viability of the team. This is nothing new when it comes to what is a fantastic opportunity for Tasmania, its economy, its people, the visitors who come here and indeed being able to secure our own AFL and AFLW licence. Thank you for the question.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I'm just going to take you back a little bit into the history. On 1 March 2022, the then premier, Mr Gutwein, in his State of the State Address, said:

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The Government has recently undertaken preliminary feasibility work to understand what opportunities there are to develop a major entertainment sporting and event stadium.

And then further he says:

Today, I'm pleased to announce that subject to stakeholder consultation and planning approval and achieving an AFL licence, we plan to develop this new stadium at Regatta Point.

This announcement was made on 1 March 2022 but looking at the list that you have provided yesterday, it appears that nothing went through Cabinet in terms of advice. I couldn't see anything. There is one entry on 4 February 2020 which is titled, 'Cabinet decision AFL task force public report,' et cetera prepared by Department of Premier and Cabinet, which is one page, and then nothing after that on the list until 22 August 2022.

Why is there no report or advice regarding this particular preliminary feasibility work that Premier Gutwein was referring to, which was early in 2022, so one would assume that this feasibility work would have started in 2021? Why was something like that not listed in the Cabinet documents? Surely, such a significant piece of work would have come as advice to Cabinet in order to say that Regatta Point was the place for the stadium.

CHAIR - Your question is: on what date was Regatta Point determined to be the site. Is that your question?

Mrs ALEXANDER - Yes, that's right, and the feasibility study -

CHAIR - Yes, what date is the first question?

Mr EVANS - I think Mrs Alexander's question relates to why wasn't that information provided on the list released by the Premier yesterday -

CHAIR - So if we could have the date first and then the answer as to why it's not in the list.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The list, I think, Chair, is a list provided around Macquarie Point.

Mr EVANS - Through the Acting Secretary of DPAC, the list of material that we have provided through to Cabinet. We had -

CHAIR - In relation to?

Mr EVANS - In relation to Motion 125 which asked for advice in regard to the Macquarie Point stadium. The report that Mrs Alexander's referring to predated that and was specifically about the matters around the selection of Regatta Point. We saw that as out of scope.

CHAIR - Okay. We'll ask you now - if I might, Lara - we want the date and a similar table with regard to the decisions around Regatta Point and the stadium there. Is that right?

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Mrs ALEXANDER - Yes, I'm trying to understand if that discussion around Regatta Point started as far back as 2021 since the former Premier refers to a preliminary work which has been commissioned.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kim?

Mr EVANS - Yes, the actual options analysis commenced in the preceding December, 2021. We provided that report to the former Premier. If the question is whether we could provide similar information that the Premier provided yesterday with regard to that report -

CHAIR - To Regatta Point decision-making, and the agreement which we have already asked. The licence agreement.

Mr EVANS - Yes, I think we could do that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can seek that information for you, Chair, albeit Regatta Point is no longer an option.

CHAIR - No, but it is part of this whole process.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A very small part.

Mr WILLIE - Well, it is where the Government first announced that they were committed to it.

Mrs ALEXANDER - It would be good to understand when was the Department of State Growth asked by the previous Premier to undertake that visibility work in 2021? A request should have come through in order for the Department to have the work ready by December 2021.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kim.

Mr EVANS - I can't give you an exact date, but I can recall the request from the former Premier. The former Premier, off the back of the work done by the taskforce and the taskforce report and then the subsequent thinking around how to progress our case for a licence, decided that he wanted to examine options for a greenfield stadium in and around Hobart. He asked us to commission some work which commenced in December 2021, I am fairly certain, but I could get you a date, by engaging MCM - Philp Lighton - yes. They did that work over the ensuing couple of months, and we presented that to the former premier, which ultimately led to him announcing in the State of the State Address that Regatta Point was the preferred location.

I should add that the recommendation of the consultants was Regatta Point, although Macquarie Point did score more highly than Regatta Point at the time, but for one reason or another, they recommended Regatta Point, and the former premier supported that.

CHAIR - If we get a table, we will get all those decisions points.

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Ms WEBB - That is really interesting that you mentioned that Philp Lighton report from February 2022, because in fact as you say, although Mac Point scored higher, they recommend Regatta Point, and the quote from that report says, because Macquarie Point:

... has been touted for other uses, and throughout our project, we have gained an understanding that the chances of using this site are more or less non-existent.

Philp Lighton, doing that feasibility study, clearly were given the impression, very distinctly, that it would be very unlikely Macquarie Point would be available. Then they fed that into their recommendation.

When was there a change in view from the Government, then, that Macquarie Point was no longer 'touted for other uses', as is the phrase used there?

Mr EVANS - I can walk you through that broad approach.

Ms WEBB - No, just a quick date. We do not really need a vast description. It is just that clearly in February 2022 when that report came out, the authors of the report were under the impression that Mac Point was not up for grabs.

Mr EVANS - There were two options, and former Premier chose the Regatta Point site. It was later in the year when we started to engage in detail with the AFL about the prospect of the 19th licence that we set up the working group. The working group comprised officers from my agency, the AFL taskforce, and the AFL, to progress through the 11 workstreams, one of which was on infrastructure. The work done on the infrastructure was to examine the detailed pre-feasibility that needed to happen and the feasibility of Regatta Point.

Through discussion we introduced Macquarie Point into that broader examination. That happened because there were some concerns Regatta Point would be too expensive and too difficult. It made sense to bring Macquarie Point into that thinking. It was at that point through the AFL we engaged Aurecon and other consultants to do the detailed site optimisation work on how big the stadium should be, as well as the detailed examination of the engineering issues and detailed costings.

Ms WEBB - What I want to know is that at a certain point, Macquarie Point went from being an off-limits consideration to being preferred and in the mix. Where did that decision sit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can speak about that.

Ms WEBB - I do not need a detailed explanation of why it became the preferred site, but just where the decision sat and when it happened.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wanted to have another look at Macquarie Point to see if it was possible to put stadia infrastructure at Macquarie Point. The reasons for that were that the closer you have the stadia infrastructure to the CBD and other retail hospitality events -

Ms WEBB - We do not need to get into this.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - such as Salamanca, for example, the likely more successful it is at attracting people and indeed adding to that economic activity. In and around mid-June, it would have been, we had a discussion with the CEO of AFL to see what might be possible, whether or not Macquarie Point is a better place. I was also conscious of the costs of Regatta Point. Some land reclamation was required and other matters. I was wanting to see if, given I thought the costs would be significant, was Macquarie Point a better and more viable option, not only for its proximity, but also for the amount of investment required.

Ms WEBB - So it was your decision, Premier, in June 2022 that the previous plans would be discarded and replaced by a new plan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not discard, but just explore.

Ms WEBB - Well, previous plans were in place. If you were going to contemplate a new whole precinct plan, including a stadium, which you opened the door for with this decision in June [2022], that is your decision that would obviously immediately discard all previous plans that had been there for that place.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wanted to explore the opportunities of Macquarie Point. There was no discarding until we made the decision on Macquarie Point as the preferred site. I announced that on 18 September.

Ms WEBB - I accept you had lots of reasons to consider Macquarie Point a favourable site for the plans for the AFL. What assessment did you make of the impact and the cost of discarding the previous plans for the site? How was that undertaken in a careful, analytical way?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the investment we had made on choosing Regatta Point?

Ms WEBB - No. The previous plans for Macquarie Point. I am speaking of the fact that we had a masterplan in place. We had very inspiring plans for a significant Aboriginal truth and reconciliation park.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which we will include and be part of that. I am very committed to the reconciliation park. Absolutely committed.

Ms WEBB - I am sure we will talk a bit more about that in a moment.

Dr BROAD - There was also the escarpment and the sewerage works that were just happening.

Ms WEBB - Yes, and there have been talks about Antarctic provisions and things like that. I want to understand what assessment was made. Was there a formal assessment made of the impact and the consequences of discarding the previous master plan that was in place and in fact legislated, I think?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wanted to explore that opportunity of Macquarie Point and see if -

Ms WEBB - That's fine, Premier. If you can't describe to me what analysis you did of the discarding of the previous plan, that is not a problem, we can move on.

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CHAIR - If I might follow up on that one, Premier, you said you made that decision on 18 September -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I announced the decision that day.

CHAIR - Is that then related to the Cabinet decision of 5 September [2022]? Because, obviously, that seems to be where that decision was made. That went to Cabinet, the decision to site the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point, that was on 5 September?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct, to the best of my knowledge, yes. Correct.

CHAIR - According to this list of documents. Meg?

Ms WEBB - I'm interested to move on to a different matter.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's one matter that Mr Evans wants to raise -

CHAIR - Before we go on I have one more on that line.

Mr EVANS - Chair, I was trying to remember when that MCM work commenced on site options for a stadium. I think I said my recollection was December, it was actually late October that it started.

CHAIR - October 2021?

Mr EVANS - The engagement of MCS to do the site options for a stadium, it was late October 2021 rather than -

CHAIR - Just on the assessment of the site, Mr Dillon stated that he had identified the stadium as one of the work streams. This started in December 2021, that was in his evidence whenever he's appeared before us. This flows into the comments you are making here.

When did the negotiations related to the AFL work streams commence in relation to the stadium then? When did it become one of the work streams? Obviously, there must have been negotiations prior to that, otherwise the AFL wouldn't have said 'this is now a work stream'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have spoken about that in terms of when we announced the decision around Macquarie Point precinct to be the site for the stadium, and there was a rolling process of negotiations through those work streams. What date are you after, Ruth?

CHAIR - I'm just asking when the work stream regarding the stadium started? We are talking about the AFL work streams here. When did they start negotiating with you to include the stadium?

Mr EVANS - From my recollection, Premier, that was in sort of mid-2022. So, late July 2022 we finalised a grant deed with the AFL to undertake a feasibility study for the development of a stadium, which looked in deeper detail about Regatta Point but also included some work on Macquarie Point. Because of the concerns we had around the costs and the technical and engineering practicality of building a stadium at Macquarie Point, we broadened

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that to look at two sites. We originally thought about three but narrowed it to two. That was the work that was done.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It included detailed engineering, stadium demand optimisation costs and time analysis -

Mr EVANS - That was the Aurecon, MI Associates and WT Partnership work. That started in, as I say, late July.

CHAIR - So it was the Department of State Growth, Premier, who basically agreed with that as the work stream and commenced the work on that, or was that you as Premier? Who made that decision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well the study was managed by a working group of AFL and State Growth officials with expert input from -

Mr EVANS - Some of the work streams, Premier, through you, the AFL taskforce were involved. On some of them it was AFL and the Department.

CHAIR - I'm interested in the stadium stream.

Mr EVANS - This was a working group of the AFL meeting regularly with relevant officers from my department.

CHAIR - When did that start then, the negotiations on that stream between the AFL and the officers in your department?

Mr EVANS - As I said, late July 2022, we entered into the funding deed with the AFL to undertake that feasibility study, because it involved a contract with those consultants that I just spoke of, Aurecon, MI Associates and WT Partnership.

Dr BROAD - It was clear at that point then that 'no stadium, no deal'.

Mr EVANS - No.

CHAIR - That's what Mr Dillon said. He said that once the stadium workstream had been agreed, that was the deal.

Mr WILLIE - He said December 2021, too.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That was the AFL position. It was not our position. We wanted to explore opportunities. I came to the conclusion that the stadium infrastructure is important not just for AFL, which is the catalyst, but more broadly. But, at that point in time we were focusing on the bid, around the annual investment, but also the high-performance centre as well, which was part of the original bid.

Ms WEBB - I'm going to move onto another area. Premier, I note that in your opening address here today, you twice made mention of acknowledging and respecting differing views in the community. I think that's an important statement to have made. Although you may arc up across the table here and characterise things as political, we know out there in the

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community, people have views and it's not necessarily political. There's got to be community discussion on this.

I'm interested, in that context, when a group of citizens have, for example, engaged in this community conversation and put forward a plan - I'm speaking of the Our Place people - and just this week, released an image from an architect representative of the scale of the stadium from a particular viewpoint. That's released by a group of citizens, not by a political party or one of us here in parliament. It's released with a statement of methodology and explanation from the respected architect who did it. Then, your social media platforms, and your Government's media release, describe this as 'grubby', 'dodgy' and a 'scare tactic'.

I'm wondering how that aligns with acknowledging and having respect for differing views for a start, and whether perhaps, the tone that's taken in your social media actually drives a disrespectful tone?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, have you seen the tone from the 'no' group towards me?

Ms WEBB - Let me put this to you, you're the Premier, you actually have to have your big boy pants on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, and I have, clearly.

Ms WEBB - When I speak to my kids and they say 'he's hitting me' or 'she's hitting me', somebody's got to stop. You're Premier, so, don't you think that it's your responsibility to set the tone, primarily? I'm saying that because -

CHAIR - Can you come to the question?

Ms WEBB - Yes. For a start, I'm inviting you to commit to assisting with a tone that be robust discussion, but respectful discussion. Will you make that commitment from here on, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I've seen stuff about 'Rockliff's wart' and all sorts of stuff going on -

Ms WEBB - Yes, Premier, that's right, you're the decision maker.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, and clearly, and proud to be. Make a decision. Isn't that great? Governments are elected to make decisions in the best interests of their community and I've made the decision in the best interests of Tasmania. Some may well disagree, but I have made the call and that's what I believe people expect of leaders in the community, to make decisions, yes, we need to bring our community along with us. I accept that. I accept we have work to do in that area. I have always engaged in respectful discussion around this matter.

Ms WEBB - Premier, 'grubby', 'dodgy'. You called respected architects in your Government's media release just this week 'grubby'. Is that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Did you see the image?

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Ms WEBB - Yes. I would like to speak about that, actually. You released an image, too. What I would like to know is two things. On the one hand, I would like to understand -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look at that.

Ms WEBB - Yes. They have put out an explanation and a methodology. I would like from you and your Government a breakdown of what you believe is incorrect about that methodology and that image. Rather than just disparage and throw names in social media, how about you actually provide facts? Will you provide facts, Premier? I would like to see a factual response from you about that image and the methodology used to produce it.

A second question. You put out a counter-image. I would like to see from you your methodology from a respected architect to presumably produce that image. I would particularly like to see you present an image from the same location as the one that was put out. Will you provide an image from your representations from the very same location with a methodology so we can see two comparable things side by side?

CHAIR - That is the question. Will you provide that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right.

CHAIR - Will you provide that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I make a comment out of respect?

CHAIR - No, answer the question then I invite -

Mr ROCKLIFF - This looks like Marvel Stadium.

Ms WEBB - I have already asked you. The first question I asked was please provide to the Committee -

CHAIR - Let us deal with one question at a time.

Ms WEBB - a factual critique of that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In my answer, can I also say this looks like Marvel Stadium being plonked there, with a Marvel Stadium-type roof. Also, incidentally, my understanding is the AFL-owned Marvel Stadium has just received north of \$200 million from the Victorian State government -

Ms WEBB - Premier, we are not speaking about that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - to invest in the AFL stadium.

CHAIR - It is not making any money. Let us move on.

Ms WEBB - Premier, I am happy for you. Have you actually read the methodology behind the image?

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CHAIR - Have you read the methodology?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I point you too -

Mr SWAIN - It doesn't cover the methodology if I could -

Ms WEBB - There you go. The questions have been put.

CHAIR - Let him answer the question, please.

Mr SWAIN - We have asked for a representation from the most similar view we had. It is quite starkly different, that one.

Ms WEBB - That is from someone swimming in the water, quite a way back. I have asked -

Mr SWAIN - It is actually from the dock on the Hunter Street side of Mures. This image appears to be from perhaps a little bit on the side -

Ms WEBB - I am sorry, you are pointing to an image that was not the one the Premier shared this week on social media. That is a different image.

CHAIR - Let us just get the methodology on the one we have here.

Mr SWAIN - That does appear to be for a stadium that has a retractable roof, which is why it has infrastructure above the roofline which is not comparable -

Ms WEBB - Again, it is detailed in the methodology. Three questions.

Mr SWAIN - But you cannot just plonk -

Ms WEBB - Three questions. Have you read the methodology, so you know whether it is just plonked?

CHAIR - Have you read the methodology?

Ms WEBB - Have you read it, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not need to read it. To look at that is -

Ms WEBB - The answer is no. Next question is: I would like you to provide us with, and it is probably one to take on notice, a detailed critique of that image and the methodology provided.

CHAIR - Of his image?

Ms WEBB - Yes. The one that was put out by the citizen group. The third thing is: I would like you to provide us with an image that is comparable to that with the methodology alongside it from the architects who produced it.

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CHAIR - You have the image there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Mr Evans, can you please.

Mr EVANS - The image we got for the Government in the last two days was by the same consultants, Liminal Studios, who did the work for us so we could get an understanding of the shape of the stadium with respect to key view lines for the RSL. It was for that specific purpose.

We can use the same consultants using exactly the same assumptions that are in their published report to get view lines from other points. If the question is whether we can get an equivalent image from the same point the other architects, developers -

Ms WEBB - And detail of the methodology.

Mr EVANS - The methodology is already being described in the report but we can repeat that.

Mr. SWAIN - We should not lose the sight of, in the Liminal work that came out, it was very clear that was not informed by design and those visuals will change as the design process continues, because we are not through the design process at the front end of the project.

Ms WEBB - I think the same corollary was put out in relation to the image put out by citizens this week too. That they were not attempting to present a design. They were attempting to present representation of what it could look like and the explanations are there.

Those are the three questions. I would also like to ask the Premier to make that commitment about tone on social media when engaging with citizens. Part of the reason I am asking is people are starting to get personal about this and connections -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Really?

Ms WEBB - We are all elected representatives who need to be used to that and be able to cope with it. Well, there you go Premier -

Mr ROCKLIFF - What about the *Motion for Respect* report? We should be respecting each other.

Ms WEBB - Now we have people making connections between the architects behind the citizens image and their partners and the workplaces they work in. Comment is being made on that on social media and pursued in unpleasant ways. That is fed -

CHAIR - Can we just have a question? You have a lot of other questions?

Ms WEBB - I am inviting you: will you make a commitment to be mindful of a respectful tone in social media? Be factual, be strong on making your case, but be respectful. Will you commit to it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I always have a very considered tone in my social media.

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Ms WEBB - I am talking about your team's social media you are responsible for, Rockliff media team and other ones you are responsible for.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do you read it?

Ms WEBB - Yes. I have just used some words from it. I have used some words from it, Premier, and they are the words driving this tone.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course, we will engage in respectful behaviour.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, last week we heard the incoming CEO, Mr Dillion, say he could not recall the Tasmanian Government asking for more than \$15 million towards the stadium. Why did you not ask for more funding given the AFL is a beneficiary?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have secured \$10 million for the high performance centre from the AFL capital and \$15 million for the stadium. The other matter we need to be mindful of Mr Willie, is we need to have ownership and control of the stadium. The more the AFL invests, then presumably the more they would want a clip of the ticket, if I can say that, and have control over the stadium. This is the Tasmanian's stadium, not the AFL's. We appreciate the \$15 million of investment but in my mind and others might want to comment further, that higher the investment of the AFL the less control Tasmania would have over their own stadium.

Mr WILLIE - It sounds like you did not even ask the question.

CHAIR - The question was, did you ask for more than \$15 million from the AFL for the stadium?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was lots of room for negotiation of capital investment and indeed, investment, including the \$360 million of investment the AFL is putting in, which people are against the deal or the stadium seem to forget.

Mr. EVANS - The \$358 million investment from the AFL, whilst we did not exactly negotiate around how that would be divvied up, it is fair to say the contribution to the new club to ensure it is viable of \$210 million and then additional funding in to grassroots football is arguably, more important than a small contribution to the stadium. As the Premier has indicated, the larger the contribution by the AFL, the more that they would want a say in terms of the use of that particular stadium when we see this very much as a Tasmanian project, broader than the AFL -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Outside of the AFL.

Mr WILLIE - You've made that statement about the AFL wanting more control. Is that what they told you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's just -

Mr EVANS - Hypothetical.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

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Mr WILLIE - So, they haven't made that statement to you? You're just making assumptions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well the AFL -

CHAIR - You've got to be nice now, Premier.

Mr STEWART - I think it's reasonable to assume that if someone's going to invest equity in something, they'll want a return on that equity. That's in any investment. It's a principle of any commercial deal.

CHAIR - Including the people of Tasmania.

Mr STEWART - Correct.

Mr WILLIE - So, you're confirming you didn't ask for more than \$15 million because you were concerned they would want greater say over the stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well it stands to reason. The greater investment they would have, the more clip of the ticket that they would expect, and we wanted this to be Tasmanians' stadium. What we've done is secure \$358 million from the AFL into Tasmania and \$305 million from the federal government into Tasmania. Now, I could have thrown my hands up in the air and said 'No, it's all too hard', but we would be more than half a billion dollars worse off at that point with no AFL team and no Macquarie Point precinct plan and development opportunity.

CHAIR - We did have a Macquarie Point precinct plan. You have to accept that we did have one. The one that had been approved and was in progress to the point that Macquarie Point told us at a previous hearing that they had to redirect the contractors they had on site to stop what they were doing and do some plans to relocate the main sewerage line differently.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I accept what you're saying.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, in your opening statement, you said that the stadium stimulus, effectively, will help to invest in essence services. Some 67 per cent of State Budget comes through the Federal Government through grants and GST payments. The State generates about 20 per cent in taxation revenue. I think your own cost benefit analysis, the unredacted one, says that the State will have a return of \$300,000 in payroll tax each year. What modeling are you basing that statement on?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we can all pack up the show and weave baskets if you like, Josh. I mean, that's basically what we -

Mr WILLIE - You're making a statement. I'm only asking what's behind it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I am making a statement, very clearly, I'm making a statement. Why do you think we invest in key infrastructure across the State? It's enabling infrastructure, that allows us to grow our economy. I would consider the stadia infrastructure to be enabling infrastructure that attracts private investment to the precinct, based on economic activity generated from the stadia infrastructure. People pay wages, they pay rates, taxes, land tax and all those matters associated with a growing economy.

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I find your question a little bizarre because you're essentially saying we shouldn't make an effort to grow our economy and create jobs. That's not what I'm about and not what this Government is about. We're about looking at enabling infrastructure to ensure, for example, our road infrastructure, the Bridgewater bridge - there's a contractor not far from me, where I live at Sassafras, who has a multimillion-dollar contract on the Bridgewater bridge.

Mr WILLIE - And they have better business cases in terms of multipliers and economic stimulus, all of the projects you're talking about.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry?

Mr WILLIE - They have better business cases and multipliers.

CHAIR - They have detailed business cases. This was not a detailed business case.

Ms WEBB - There's always a choice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. There's always choice and we're choosing to invest in stadia infrastructure and the broader Macquarie Point precinct. The point is that the AFL stadia, and more broadly, is the catalyst for so much more. I've mentioned the private investment coming online. Hospitality venues. Imagine Dark Mofo with the stadia infrastructure there in place right now. That's why Leigh Carmichael of course has made the comments that he has about the stadium.

Mr WILLIE - My question was about State taxation revenue. You are making the claims that you are going to be awash with more State taxation revenue to invest in schools and hospitals and I am understanding what -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have never said the word 'awash', Josh. Ever.

Mr WILLIE - Well, \$300,000 is what your cost-benefit analysis says.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I never said 'awash' with that. You have got to be mindful of your little extension of language there. I have always said that a growing economy supports the support of essential services. It so happens that you mentioned parts of the Budget and the like. We now have 34 per cent of our State Budget is into health, for example. When we came to Government, it was around 28 per cent. We need to keep -

CHAIR - Around that time, Premier, too, there was commentary that if it had gone over 30 per cent, it would be a big problem. So here we are.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, we have had people sitting at this table, saying that the links are tenuous. Yet you are still parroting this line that you are going to have all this revenue to invest in schools and hospitals. You have no modelling to prove it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What is the solution, Josh? Do nothing?

Mr WILLIE - No.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sit on our hands and hope for the best?

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Mr WILLIE - As other members of this Committee are saying, there is always a choice in what you invest in in terms of infrastructure. There is always a choice.

Ms WEBB - In a *Utopia* episode the stadium is number 14 on the list. I wonder where it sits on the list of value for us here?

CHAIR - Let's get away from *Utopia*, it's too hard to watch.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes and I have watched it many times Meg, the *Utopia* clip, and it is.

Mr YOUNG - I'm probably going back a couple questions here. The AFL is often being painted as the big bad bully in this whole situation. But to me, the things that they have asked for, they have asked for in the knowledge of running a competition to make a team sustainable - our Tassie team sustainable - into the future. In your dealings with the AFL, Premier, do you think they really want an AFL team in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is a good question. Yes, I do.

CHAIR - They have changed their mind since the Senate inquiry, then?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was a particular statement by the former CEO of AFL that made some sort of unsavoury comment around whether or not we will ever get an AFL team in Tasmania. I believe the AFL are absolutely committed to this. I believe the AFL truly understands that without an AFL and an AFLW team, and we must remember the AFLW team, that the footy code in terms of AFL is at risk in Tasmania. We have seen the growth of basketball for example as a result of our JackJumpers investment. The stadia investment in MyState Arena. The enthusiasm that has generated through many of our young people. Mr Young, you are part of a Government that now has a challenge: there are not basketball courts in Tasmania to facilitate the increase of grassroots participation.

Mr WILLIE - It is because your basketball court in the northern suburbs is delayed by years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And so that is a great thing, having kids putting down their iPhones and picking up a basketball and bouncing along the court. That is fantastic. That is what we want for AFL and AFLW code as well.

I can point to many areas around the benefits for an AFL and AFLW team, that grassroots footy participation, local clubs that actually do a great service to the community. Having kids and young people on the field three or four days a week including training, the wrap-around support that AFL clubs give to young people sometimes doing it tough. The Committee gets involved. The volunteers. The community. There is a huge social aspect of an AFL team in your local town.

I remember this is as a president of Latrobe Football Club between 2006-09, and see the value. I know the AFL sees the value in that as well. Plus the fact more broadly we are talking about AFL and the games per year and the like. Where is a comparison here? We have got Dunedin will be a good example: 120,000 people right and they have a stadium infrastructure, roofed stadium. A number of sporting events, of course rugby because it is a Kiwi national

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sport of course. The Bledisloe Cup: All Blacks versus Australia 2023. But the concerts: Elton John, 2011; Macklemore, 2013; Paul Simon, 2013; Aerosmith, 2013; Empire of the Sun, Rod Stewart, Luke Diamond, Fleetwood Mac, Black Sabbath, Stevie Nicks, Roger Waters, Robbie Williams and Ed Sheeran - he had four concerts – 100,000 attendees. I am talking about Dunedin of course, Southern New Zealand, 120,000 people. Pink, Shania Twain, The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac again, Queen and Adam Lambert, Rod Stewart again, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Post Malone. My daughter went to Post Malone in Adelaide. Could not go to Post Malone in Tasmania, but maybe with the stadium infrastructure, she might be able to. These are the things we are missing out on.

What I have said many times before, the stadia infrastructure across the country is some \$8 billion. Why should we not have a share of the pie and also contribute to growing the pie?

CHAIR - Let us go back to Dean's question. I think your question was does the AFL really want the team?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, they do.

CHAIR - I want to follow up on that. I am not sure if you looked at the situation of Greater Western Sydney and the Gold Coast. Twelve years-plus after their entry in to the AFL, when you look at their financial situation, the Giants particularly, Greater Western Sydney, would notionally have ceased trading but for the guarantees and assurances from the AFL. It would appear as if the AFL has ensured that will not occur again by requiring the Tasmanian Government to act as guarantor, effectively, for the Tasmanian team. How do you see that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not see that at all. How do you see that?

CHAIR - Having keep topping up and if we do not - we get to the end of the 12-year period and, as Mr Dillon was saying in his appearance recently - because he was pressed on this - does that mean you can just pick up and take the team elsewhere or cancel the licence and perhaps look at Northern Territory, far North Queensland or wherever?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We risk that because the Northern Territory and Northern Queensland of course -

CHAIR - That was the context in which I was putting the question and you challenged the question. Is the financial sustainability of Greater Western Sydney particularly, and to a lesser degree Gold Coast Suns, supported and underwritten by the AFL? Now, we are being required to potentially - according to Mr Dillon - put in more money if the determination is made about what is a successful team after 12 years. You might want to address your mind to what that looks like from your perspective but Mr Dillon was pretty clear that it will be renegotiated at that point. And that would mean -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Probably prior to that. We are probably putting in an order of \$8 million a year for our existing arrangements.

CHAIR - I understand that.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - The differential for another \$4 million a year for all the economic benefits that the AFL team will bring, which is a \$120 million a year, outside of the stadium infrastructure, I think it is a pretty good investment.

CHAIR - These teams are being underwritten, effectively, by somebody. Those two are being underwritten and guaranteed by the AFL. The AFL could cut them loose too if they wanted to, notionally.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do not want our Tassie team to be another Gold Coast or GWS. We want it to be sustainable into the future.

CHAIR - The State is willing to underwrite that and be the guarantor?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the State is putting in \$12 million per year plus the investment in the infrastructure. After 12 years I would imagine - and we have 92,000 believers in Tasmania and no doubt elsewhere -

CHAIR - Not all those believers can afford to pay a membership.

Mr WILLIE - A lot of them signed up before the stadium became the condition. I am one of those 92,000.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Excellent. Well done. You should continue with all that, but I'm sure you're still a believer.

Mr WILLIE - I believe in the Tasmanian team, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And we've made it very clear, Mr Dillon last week, that no stadium, no team.

CHAIR - On the back of that, Tasmania's being required to foot the bill, and if we want to keep the team after 12 years, or you know, let's say after 11, the State's likely to have to stump up more if there's any question about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a hypothetical, Ms Forrest, as you would well know. I would anticipate that when the team is successful, there may well be a lesser government contribution at the time, but that's to be determined.

CHAIR - That's pie in the sky too. Dean, did you finish your question? Sorry, I did jump in.

Mr YOUNG - I guess the other side to that is that everything that the AFL has done is to make the team sustainable. After 12 years, they wear the operational costs as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's been a clear agreement and we are joined at the hip with the AFL in that this team must succeed. I do not want a team with such a significant investment we're putting in, and I acknowledge that, albeit a differential of \$4 million or \$5 million to what we're investing in now into Hawthorn and North Melbourne, is we'll gain greater economic benefit, in my view, in our investment of \$12 million. But we're both committed to the success of the team. That's why we're willing to work together to invest.

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CHAIR - Since you were always told that the North Melbourne deal was commercially sensitive.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Premier, you mentioned that the decision to move from Regatta Point to Macquarie Point, which obviously the location of Macquarie Point has caused a fair bit of stress and anxiety with a number of people. You said that - (cuts out)

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, Lara, I can't hear you

Mrs ALEXANDER - You know, that decision kind of like, came from you, is that correct?

Sorry, the decision to move from Regatta Point to Macquarie Point, I think you indicated earlier on that that decision came from you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wanted to explore Macquarie Point as an option.

Mrs ALEXANDER - I was just looking a document that was released under RTI written by Secretary Mr Evans in August [2022]. It was addressed to you and it says 'referring to your meeting with the AFL on the 9th July, where it was actually the AFL that proposed that it would like to undertake further analysis of the Macquarie Point site as a potential site for Tasmania -

Mr ROCKLIFF - And other sites, and others as well.

Mrs ALEXANDER - It further says that 'the sites considered were the Government's current preferred site at Regatta Point, at Macquarie Point and the Lower Domain. These sites were the top 3 ranked in a report completed in February 2022. The Lower Domain was effectively excluded from further consideration'.

Then underneath it continues by saying, 'The AFL's motive in proposing that this work be undertaken was to enable to have a stronger case to put the club presidents around Tasmania's new arts, entertainment, sports precinct.

It also continues by saying 'AFL had some concerns that the Government's preferred site, Regatta Point, may be too costly.

It appears that the AFL actually had quite a weight, quite an important place or role to play in the Government changing from Regatta Point to Macquarie Point. Is that correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wanted to explore the opportunity of Macquarie Point because of the proximity to the CBD and other hospitality venues. In discussions with the AFL, they wanted to explore other options as well, including Macquarie Point. I guess we shared the concerns around the potential costs of Regatta Point.

Kim, would you like to say something to that?

Mr EVANS - Thank you, Premier. That advice to the Premier came through the working group that we have talked about that was set up in late July or in July 2022 between the

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department and the AFL. In those discussions they expressed concerns around the practicality, the technical feasibility and, in particular, costs of Regatta Point. I think it is fair to say that we shared those concerns. We agreed after discussion with and advice to the Premier to broaden the examination of that work to include the Macquarie Point site as well as the Regatta Point site and hence the engagement of the consultants I have talked about, Aureicon and MI Associates and WT Partnerships.

There was another site that was potentially looked at very briefly, but it was just too difficult and was quickly discounted.

CHAIR - Which one was that?

Mr EVANS - Lower Domain, from memory, near the Soldiers Walk. It had too many problems, including engineering and geotech problems, and obviously, its proximity compared to Regatta Point and Macquarie Point to the CBD. We agreed to concentrate our efforts on those two sites.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Thank you. Premier, based on the Philip Lyton previous report, the Macquarie Point site was not really considered because it was already earmarked for something else, it appears to me that the discussion was driven by the fact that they had completely excluded the earlier consideration of why Macquarie Point was not really a preferred site. Was it ever discussed that the Philip Lyton report and other reports identified that Macquarie Point was actually proposed to be used for something else?

CHAIR - Is that a question.?

Mrs ALEXANDER - Yes.

Mr SWAIN - My understanding is that through that working group process it was well understood that Macquarie Point had existing proposals around it. I think there is an element here that relates back to the earlier question. Those working groups recognised that the AFL had skin in the game. One of the things I was not aware of coming into to all these processes, a lot of codes through participation, clip the ticket on all the people playing and they fund the peak bodies further up. The AFL model is different to that. They have a major TV deal which they are allocating across clubs. They are flowing funds down. They have a significant interest in the success of the team. It's not like in this instance - one party had one interest and another had another. Both the Government and the AFL wanted the best possible site to make the club as successful as it could be.

Mr WILLIE - We're probably going to finish the hearing where we started, and that's the agreement going to Cabinet. Premier, I have the Cabinet Handbook here and under 3.1 Matters that come before Cabinet, amongst the dot point are:

new policy proposals and significant or sensitive variations to existing policies, significant intergovernmental agreements, actions, plans and matters likely to significantly affect intergovernmental relations, significant portfolio announcements and matters that might be strategic or contentious in nature.

Have you ignored the Cabinet Handbook?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - Come on, Josh, really.

Mr WILLIE - It's very clear here. The agreement would meet a number of those criteria.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm very satisfied and comfortable with the way that we've arrived at the decision. This is an opportunity for you, Josh, and your party to draw a line in the sand. We are clearly builders and the Labor Party are blockers. We're not interested in -

Mr WILLIE - You are blank cheque writers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What about the AFL cheque to Tasmania for \$360 million, Josh? It's a significant investment. I know you must know that. The cheque from the PM for \$305 million to Tasmania. These are extraordinary opportunities -

Mr WILLIE - Not GST-exempt. Future Tasmanians will be paying that back, thanks to you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - so I want you to get off the blocking path and get on the building path. We can work this together. You can actually have your true believer or your believers -

Mr WILLIE - In terms of my question, Premier, because you are not going anywhere near it, did you look at the Cabinet Handbook and see whether the agreement would be appropriate for the Cabinet to consider?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am very satisfied with the way that our Government has arrived at the decision, including the investment that we all signed-off on in the Budget.

Mr WILLIE - Are your colleagues happy with the arrangement? I mean collective decision making is an important part of the Westminster system. It seems like you bound them through collective decision-making kind of agreement that they didn't see?

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are very satisfied with the decision because they can appreciate the vision and the opportunity and what this will bring for our young people, Mr Willie. The aspiration and pathway to an elite sport. Our young kids having that dream of playing for their own State in an elite national competition. Don't underestimate what that aspiration can do for our young kids of any circumstance or any background around Tasmania. Everyone loves their footy, particularly, of course, our young kids. Don't, please, lose this opportunity for the sake of politics, it is -

CHAIR - Let's just come back to -

Mr WILLIE - I am trying to stick to questions, Chair, and this is about good governance, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am very satisfied with the governance.

CHAIR - Premier, you talked about the federal funding. The AFL believes, and Mr Dillon made this very clear, that the whole \$240 million for the Hobart-based investment is for the stadium. Is that your understanding?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - To build the stadium?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not only build the stadium but also to enliven the Macquarie Point precinct. Again, the enabling infrastructure -

CHAIR - Mr Albanese's comments were pretty clear around this. He wants some public housing or social housing. He wants urban renewal -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, and we've spoken about that as well.

CHAIR - But Mr Dillon made it pretty clear - his view was that \$240 million was to spend on building the stadium. Is that how you see it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Albanese actually said pretty much what I have been saying around stadia infrastructure, if my memory serves me correctly, around the economic opportunity that it can bring. The bigger vision here, Chair, I'm sure you do appreciate, that with enabling infrastructure such as this, it then supports the extension of the Derwent Ferry network, the transit northern corridor -

Mr WILLIE - No funding for that.

CHAIR - Can I take you back to my question? Mr Dillon said that he expected the \$240 million that is in the Federal Budget papers that are being committed to the place-based investment, that is how it was referred to in the Federal Budget papers, that will be spent on building the stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's our understanding this well. But can I say that the PM said that one of the things a sporting precinct does is that it brings economic activity which generates revenue and generates taxpayer dollars which can be put into other services.

CHAIR - No, that is not the question here. That is not the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To Mr Willie's question a little while ago. So the Labor PM agrees with the Liberal Premier around what this sporting precinct and stadia activity can generate in terms of taxpayer dollars that can go back into other services.

CHAIR - Mr Dillon is saying that the \$240 million will be spent on building the stadium, acknowledging that will have other flow-on effects down the path. But Mr Albanese's comments related to housing - he has spoken publicly about that. Regardless of whether it is spent on the stadium or on housing or some other development, it is likely because it is notionally a State-based responsibility - the GST, the Commonwealth Grants Commission GST guidelines around this say that we will pay that back, that will not be quarantined. So the AFL is including the \$250 million that we will pay back as stadium funding. Do you agree with Mr Dillon's position on that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well the Federal Government has other expectations as well, around the housing matters. Our expectation is that the \$240 million will contribute to the stadium.

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Ms WEBB - We are very short on time. The \$240 million isn't exempt from GST. That's the working assumption we have at the moment. Can you confirm that? So we will be paying it back?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a certain methodology and it is not dollar-for-dollar -

Ms WEBB - Yes, but in future years our GST will be reduced because we are accepting this \$240 million from the Federal Government now?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not guaranteed to happen at this point in time -

CHAIR - That's what the guidelines would suggest, though.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Webb, that's not guaranteed.

Ms WEBB - So noting that our future GST -

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are asking a hypothetical question.

Ms WEBB - Noting that our future GST receipts pay for our schools, our hospitals, our housing, those things will be reduced in years to come because of the \$240 million we are receiving? So essentially we are paying for it -

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, no, come on. We are still in discussions around the GST. There's a complex methodology around calculating the GST, so we won't get into any hypotheticals, but we are still in discussions with the GST.

Ms WEBB - It's not exempt, though, at the moment. Can I also clarify because Catherine King, the Federal minister, was quite clear on radio here locally about it. The \$240 million is for the State Government to decide how to spend and therefore it can all be spent on the stadium. However, the State Government in order to get it, has to present a precinct plan that includes -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Fantastic, isn't it?

Ms WEBB - social and affordable housing development, transport corridor, upgrade of Mac 4-6, recognition of the importance of the First Nations people, et cetera.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Brilliant!

Ms WEBB - Who is funding all those bits? Can you present us with the breakdown of how those things are going to be funded?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can't wait.

Ms WEBB - Excellent, so where are - even the ballpark figures? We started the conversation about stadiums with ballpark figures. Let us start the conversation on these.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are going to be so excited when we present that broader -

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Ms WEBB - When is that then? Let's just hear about it.

Mr WILLIE - It's on 1 October [2023].

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is October.

Ms WEBB - Is that when it is going to be presented to the Federal Government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kim, please.

Mr EVANS - A couple of things are happening in parallel. Obviously, around the funding we have already started to engage with the federal department at very senior levels. The Deputy Secretary and I have had the initial discussions at the Deputy Secretary level. We have had officers down talking through what the funding agreement will look like. The deputy secretary responsible is coming down in early July [2023], so we hope to work through the funding agreement and the terms and conditions around that pretty quickly. But our expectation is that those funds are available for us to spend in the precinct and predominantly on the stadium.

Ms WEBB - Can I just go to my quick question? It is a clear one. I don't really need the information around it. The Federal Government requires a precinct plan to be presented that covers the elements that they have laid out. When will that be presented to them?

Mr EVANS - The Minister for State Development has asked the Macquarie Point Development Corporation - and I should declare that I am a director of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation - to lead that work. That work has commenced and we are to provide the precinct plan by 1 October [2023].

Ms WEBB - Thank you. The PoSS process, the Project of State Significance process, kicks off earlier than that, from what I gather from the detail provided in Estimates. Premier, can I ask you about the timeline for that? When do you expect to have the recommendation go to the Governor to make the order that would then come to Parliament? When will the order be made and when will it come to the Parliament for the first vote?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can probably inform you, to the best of my knowledge, we tabled the legislation last night, you would be aware. That's -

Ms WEBB - We do not need to go through the detail of that. We know it is tabled.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good, okay. That has to go through Parliament. We then expect to make the declaration of the stadium as a Project of State Significance -

Ms WEBB - The Minister will recommend to the Governor to make an order and that order will be tabled in the Parliament. When do you expect that to happen?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The direction to the Tasmanian Planning Commission is potentially late August to late September [2023]. Assessment guidelines by December 2023, subject to the Commission's work.

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Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, that can't happen until it's gone through Parliament. When do you expect to -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The declaration of the order, August?

Ms WEBB - Your expectation is, we deal with the amendment to the process and then we straightway deal with the Governor's order after we've done the amendment.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has to go through the Parliament first, and then -

Ms WEBB - Sorry, just stay at that part, because that's the part I'm interested to know in terms of timing. You're expecting that to happen late August, early September?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm informed now to expect a declaration of stadium as a Project of State Significance in October this year, which may well have put out those time frames that I've said around the State planning commission before.

CHAIR - Can you provide a new timeline?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I can. I can provide a new timeline, and so it's all very clear. How's that?

Ms WEBB - What I'm getting to with these questions, I'm interested, particularly to know what information will be available to parliamentarians at the time of the first vote. Because the timelines you provided about that possibly being in late August, early September is obviously before the precinct plan is completed by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation which is due on 1 October.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The declaration of a stadium as a Project of State Significance is likely in October this year.

CHAIR - So that might be after the precinct plan?

Ms WEBB - So that's now the timeline of October, in which case the precinct plan will be public?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It may well be. The precinct plan? I'll give you my expectation?

Mr EVANS - Our requirement is to present it to the minister by 1 October, then it's a matter for the Minister as to -

CHAIR - Take it as a given that we'll want to see it.

Ms WEBB - Can you commit that we'll see the precinct plan prior to the vote?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. What else do you want? Do you want other information?

Ms WEBB - Even more than 24 hours prior would be good thing to have a commitment about, how about that?

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Mr ROCKLIFF - We'll see what we can do.

CHAIR - If you could update the timeline for dealing with the legislation, the order, including the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got an updated timeline, declaration October 2023; direction to the TPC October/November; guidelines, January/February next year; and, yes.

Ms WEBB - Can I just clarify, if that's the case, were you expecting the guidelines to be completed January/February next year? Or consulted on January/February? If it's completed January/February, you're going to be doing public consultation on those very, very important guidelines across Christmas, or the TPC will be.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I committed to the Chair to get a detailed timeline for you and the Committee and I'll do that.

Ms WEBB - I encourage you to make sure it's not across Christmas, because, every other bit of legislation is scrapped under this process, so no other protections through planning schemes or, for example, Aboriginal heritage laws or any of those sorts of things apply. So, we're looking for a commitment that it won't be consulted on across Christmas time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, fair enough.

CHAIR - We'll know that because we'll get the timeline and then we'll be debating the motion.

Ms WEBB - I feel like, Chair, given the hearing we just had previously, we need to at least have a question that relates to the subject matter there. Have we got time or not?

CHAIR - What subject matter are you talking about?

Ms WEBB - The hearing we just had prior to this one in relation to the reconciliation park.

CHAIR - Can you take one more question?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I can. Of course I can.

Ms WEBB - Premier, what we heard so far in our hearings is that there hasn't been regarded as effective communication and consultation in place leading into this process prior to decisions being made. There was a significant consultation process under way by a working group with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, consultation and co-design for the previous plan for the centrepiece Aboriginal truth and reconciliation art park on that site. We've heard that so far nobody from your Government, including the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has been interacting with that community around this. You've said your intention is that there will still be some form of park.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is not my intention. There will be.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - But surely, that's also a decision that has to be arrived at with the Aboriginal community, so what have you done as Premier to ensure that while you're making those assertions in public, the Aboriginal community regard that as an appropriate way forward given the new circumstances with the stadium? What have you done to ensure that that's appropriate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have committed to all stakeholders, more broadly, that of course we'll consult with the impacts on the RSL, our Tasmanian Aboriginal community, around the precinct, and very pleased to do so, and each at the table -

CHAIR - We do not actually need to hear from Macquarie Point Development. We know they have been consulting. I think the questions to you, Premier, are about -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I commit to consulting, Ms Webb.

CHAIR - I know.

Ms WEBB - Premier, how could the Aboriginal community have confidence in that given that you failed to do that to date on this, in any way that is meaningful or effective? What can you say to the Aboriginal community in this State to give them confidence that they can believe you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That I will consult with them. That is my word.

Ms WEBB - Why did you not do it leading into this decision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is already some consultation under way.

Ms WEBB - No, leading into the decision. Why was it not done?

CHAIR - When the decision was made to put it on Macquarie Point when there was already a proposal that had been accepted and was being progressed that included a significant truth and reconciliation art park that recognises and engages deeply with the Aboriginal people prior to that agreement, why has there been no consultation from you, according to the witness we had earlier, since the decision to -

Ms WEBB - Prior to that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can only provide my commitment to provide the consultation on the reconciliation park. My understanding is that that is still the wishes of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Ms WEBB - How have you arrived at that understanding, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that is my understanding.

Ms WEBB - How have you arrived at that understanding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because that is my understanding.

Ms WEBB - How have you arrived at that understanding, Premier?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do not believe anyone has told me that it was the opposite.

Ms WEBB - Why would you assume if you have not been provided with information? Have you been provided with information about the wishes of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am more than willing to engage with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on this matter.

Ms WEBB - Do you accept that you have not done that to date in an effective way?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If people feel that I could be more consultative, I accept that, and I am more than willing to engage in thorough consultation on what is a very sensitive matter.

Ms WEBB - Will you commit to your Government doing that, as well as the Macquarie Development Corporation, which is undertaking a process that we understand and sounds appropriate at that level, how will you Government ensure that that happens? From the Government, so that the Aboriginal community can have confidence in your Government's actions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, by our actions. I say again, Ms Webb, I give my commitment that we will be consultative in conjunction with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

CHAIR - Is it a fact then that there has been no direct consultation with the Aboriginal community leading into that decision in September 2022 to relocate the stadium and precinct at Macquarie Point, and now, when we are hearing that there has not been? Has there been any direct communication from your or the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that you are aware of, and we can always ask him, about the decision to move from Regatta Point to Macquarie Point in September 2022? Around that time, before it, immediately afterwards, or since, has there been any direct communication with the Aboriginal community?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take that on notice in terms of what communication there may have been, whether it is the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, whether it is minister Jaensch -

CHAIR - We are not talking about Macquarie Point Development Corporation - we know what they are doing. We have heard about that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am more than happy to engage. I accept the fact that -

Mr EVANS - Premier, I did have a meeting immediately after the announcement was -

Ms WEBB - Yes, immediately after the announcement.

CHAIR - Yes, that was the only communication. Just telling them what decision had been made.

Mr EVANS - There have been a number of follow-up conversations.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Yes, Macquarie Point have. We are talking about the Minister and the Premier.

Ms WEBB - And it was after the decision.

CHAIR - We will ask for any details of any communication that you have had, you personally, and the Minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I mean, the Macquarie Point Development Corporation was asked, of course, to consult with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on behalf of the Government.

Ms WEBB - After the decision was made.

CHAIR - Okay. We have kept you a little longer than scheduled. We appreciate you turning up. Thank you. We will follow up with some questions on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have to turn up, don't I? You are the all-powerful Committee of the world.

CHAIR - It is always better if you do. I will say, Premier, there was a former government before you that refused to turn up to Committees such as this, the ministers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Really?

CHAIR - Yes, they did. I was a member of that Committee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Labor-Greens government? Surely not.

CHAIR - No, a Labor government all up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Oh, right.

CHAIR - Anyway. It is much better that the ministers do appear, and the Premier, because it is such an important part of the work of the parliament and of the Committee. Thank you, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the Committee. I thank the members for their interest in this matter, and the questions and scrutiny today.

The Committee adjourned at 5:10 pm.