

David Wanless

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Simon Scott
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Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts
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Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's process into the feasibility planning for a new sporting and event stadium in Hobart

Dear Hon Ruth Forrest MLC and other review panel members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important matter for Hobart and Tasmania more broadly.

I have lived in Hobart for many years and regularly travel past Macquarie Point by car or, on my daily commute, by bicycle. I have attended quite a few events in Macquarie Point - Dark MOFO, cultural and musical events at the Red Shed/Hobart Brewing Company, and events organised by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in the shed they were using on the site.

I was very pleased when MONA proposed a truth and reconciliation park on the site and the Hobart council approved it.

I was very disturbed when the years of planning for the site were apparently discarded and the football stadium was announced. This would be a tragic waste of a prime development site close to the centre of Hobart, and a shameful waste of public money when there are so many more important things which the money could be spent upon.

My concerns are as follows:

1. The stadium would prevent any meaningful implementation of the truth and reconciliation park, which would have provided valuable public open space and an opportunity for Tasmania and Australia to begin to reflect on and come to terms with our history. It's possible that a small park might be able to co-exist with a massive stadium, but that would relegate the truth and reconciliation park to be a minor sideshow.
2. The stadium would be far too big to be useful for most other events and so would sit idle most of the time.
3. We already have a large stadium on the eastern shore, which could be upgraded for a fraction of the cost and without alienating Macquarie Point. It should be easier to upgrade public transport to that stadium than to squeeze more into Macquarie Point. There is already massive congestion on the roads leading into central Hobart, and upgrading public transport to Hobart should be a big part of the solution, but to build a stadium which would necessarily bring very large numbers of people into one place where the congestion is already intense, is highly likely to make the situation worse. The diagram I've seen of the likely size of the stadium would make it hard to fit upgraded public

transport corridors like light rail or trackless trams into that area, and that area would be most sensible for them, to link up to the existing rail corridor.

4. An upgraded Antarctic precinct for part of Macquarie Point would be more meaningful than a sports stadium, and help shore up an important industry for Hobart, that of Antarctic science, which provides a great deal of important employment, motivation and prestige for STEM students and STEM and other workers in Hobart and around Tasmania.
5. Given Hobart's housing crisis, using some of the land for social and affordable housing should be considered.
6. A large stadium at Macquarie Point would overshadow and block views from surrounding paths, streets, buildings and probably the Cenotaph lawns. It would most likely be a dead zone as far as passing residents and tourists were concerned, most of the time, and would certainly detract from the experience of the many people who use the Intercity Cycleway every day. Imagine, instead, a public space, with gardens, low rise buildings (a few stories high), and the truth and reconciliation park. That would be a nice thing to walk or cycle through or past, and potentially a great place for events. It would increase rather than decrease our health and wellbeing, through being open, accessible and, if done well, nice to look at and be in, rather than a massive inward-looking building alienating the area from the public.
7. My friends and I run lots of community arts events and would be interested in exploring the new spaces if they were accessible for community groups.
8. Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on a sports stadium, Tasmania would be much better off spending it on any or all of the following:
 - a. The truth and reconciliation park.
 - b. A new wharf and precinct for Antarctic ships such as the RSV Nuyina, which apparently is at risk of having to be berthed in a different city unless a new wharf is built. It would be a massive loss to Hobart and Tasmania if the Antarctic science community moved elsewhere. It's an important part of our identity and history, as well as our economy.
 - c. Social and affordable housing and the housing crisis.
 - d. A major upgrade of public and active transport for Hobart, and other measures to reduce congestion in Hobart, as well as increase health and wellbeing through active transport.
 - e. Improving our struggling health system.
 - f. Measures to protect our natural environment and people, in the face of the rising impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.
 - g. Arts and cultural facilities usable by community groups and art groups which don't have the wherewithall to hire a massive stadium.
9. I am also concerned about the process which was used to make this decision. There was no meaningful public consultation about the decision that I was aware of, and it seemed to blindside even those who'd been involved in the planning which had gone on concerning the future of Macquarie Point. From my understanding, most Tasmanians don't want to see this stadium built at Macquarie Point and think there are much better things which could and should be done with large amounts of public money. Certainly everyone I know seems to be opposed to it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission and for your time in considering it. I would be happy to expand on it or clarify any points.

Yours sincerely,

David Wanless.