

17 November 2025

**Ms Meg Webb MLC**

Committee Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Parliament House

HOBART TAS 7000

By email:

Dear Ms Webb,

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters – Inquiry into conduct of the 2025 State election**

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2025 inviting me to make a representation in relation to the Committee's Inquiry.

I acknowledge your note that the Inquiry into the 2024 election has been recommenced and that you have asked me to limit any submission I make to new material directly related to the 2025 elections.

My submission relates to the House of Assembly election held on 19 July 2025.

By way of context, the then Liberal government in mid-2023 lost its parliamentary majority following a major public rally outside the Parliament in May 2023 opposing the proposed Mac Point stadium, which in turn followed the announcement of the signing of the Team Agreement between the Premier and the AFL earlier that month. Public disquiet did not relate to the team. It related to the condition in the agreement that Tasmania had to construct, operate and subsidise a stadium at Macquarie Point.

We then had the election in March 2024. The State Government did not gain a majority in the Parliament. Consequently, the political instability generated by the proposed stadium continued. I have already addressed that in my submission to the Committee inquiring into the 2024 State election.

On 5 June 2025, a motion of no confidence was moved in the Parliament by the then leader of the Opposition. Whilst that motion related to the State Budget, one of the defining features in that Budget was the cost imposed on the State by the proposal to build a stadium at Macquarie Point. This is not speculation. At the time of the motion of no confidence, the Tasmanian Planning Commission had released its Draft Integrated Assessment Report advising that it appeared to the Commission that the stadium would lead to very significant state debt, very significant ongoing interest payments and a likely impact on the State's credit

rating. In fact, the Planning Commission had much to say about the significant costs and very modest benefits that the stadium would yield.

We then had an election campaign over the next 4 weeks. In that campaign, both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party went out of their way to avoid mention of the stadium. Despite all of the rhetoric of the preceding approximately 2 years, there was no talk by the Premier of the stadium being a centrepiece of any policy. Rather, it appeared to be an embarrassment because it was effectively a millstone around the State in terms of the Budget consequences. The Labor Party also did much to avoid engaging in debate about the stadium. The issue was increasingly divisive and contentious.

I am not saying the stadium was never mentioned. But it was not part of any major economic policy. For example, the Liberal Party on 11 July 2025 announced its “Strong Economic Plan for the State”, described as an “economic statement”. A copy of that statement is **attached** to the email carrying this letter. In this 31-page document that deals with the Liberal vision for the State and fiscal strategies and management, there is no mention of the stadium at all. Not one mention.

There was a reference in a Liberal policy announcement that appears to have been made on 18 July 2025, about the stadium. But that is a re-statement of a spending limit on the stadium from the 2024 election.

On 8 October 2025, the Government through Minister Abetz, released its response to the Planning Commission’s 17 September 2025 Final Integrated Assessment Report. The summary of that response is **attached** to the email carrying this letter. It provides a stark contrast to what was put up by the Liberal Party in the course of the election campaign. It talks glowingly about the economic benefits of the stadium. Importantly, none of the information in the summary document is new. It was all available and provided to the Tasmanian Planning Commission in the course of the hearings in June/July 2025.

The conclusion is inescapable that the Government chose not to raise the topic of the proposed stadium through the election.

The Government chose not to address the stadium as, clearly, it was not a popular issue, especially in the north of the State. That state of affairs is confirmed by various independent members being elected around the State with significant levels of support, who ran on no stadium platforms. I have in mind Craig Garland MHA, Peter George MHA, Kristie Johnson MHA.

The Labor Party also failed to run an election campaign on the stadium. Again, it was an unpopular issue for the Labor Party as well.

Electoral integrity requires parties to argue for their policies in the course of an election. Not run dead on them and claim later they have a mandate.

Elections are the opportunity for the ventilation of ideas and the discussion of ideas with the objective that the best ideas are put into effect by the government of the day.

In this way, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party are not able to claim any mandate for support for the stadium given their unwillingness to readily take it to the electorate in the course of the July 2025 election campaign.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Roland Browne.

Roland Browne  
Spokesperson