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10 February 2023

Mr Simon Scott
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts
Parliament House HOBART TAS 7000
By email: pac@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Scott,

RE: Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's process into the feasibility planning for a new sporting and event stadium in Hobart

The [Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania](#) (PMAT) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the *Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's process into the feasibility planning for a new sporting and event stadium in Hobart* which closes on the 10 February 2023.

Our submission includes four sections, which are outlined below: 1) What is PMAT; 2) Inquiry Background; 3) PMAT's Position; and 4) Key 12 questions regarding planning and the stadium that we would like answered during the inquiry.

Our key concerns relate to:

1. The construction of a stadium on Macquarie Point is currently prohibited under local planning rules;
2. The Government decision to propose an AFL stadium on the site is entirely unsupported by public consultation and or strategic planning. In the ten years since the Macquarie Point Corporation has been in existence never has an AFL Stadium been considered as appropriate for the site during any strategic consultation planning;
3. If an AFL licence is granted conditionally on having a new stadium then it will be impossible for a new stadium, with its major planning implications, to be independently and objectively assessed; and
4. The State Government abandoned the strategic planning process it established to create the final Mac Point Master Plan – i.e. the [Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030, which was finalised in 2019](#). This Plan has been uploaded onto PMAT's website, as it appears that it is no longer available elsewhere online. It is assumed that this is the final document.

Please contact us if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Sophie



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Sophie Underwood

State Coordinator - PMAT

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WHAT IS PMAT

The [Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania](#) (PMAT) is a growing network of [almost 70 community groups](#) from across *lutruwita* /Tasmania which is committed to a vision for Tasmania to be a global leader in planning excellence. Our Alliance is united in common concern over the new Tasmanian state planning laws and what they mean for Tasmania's future. The level of collaboration and solidarity emerging within the advocacy campaign of PMAT, as well as the number of groups involved is unprecedented in Tasmania and crosses community group genres: recreation, environment, urban/local community associations, European built heritage, ratepayers and 'Friends of ' groups.

Land use planning impacts every inch of Tasmania. We hold that good planning is fundamental to our way of life and democracy. PMAT works to raise community awareness about planning and encourages community engagement in the planning process.

PMAT is an independent, apolitical, not-for-profit [incorporated association](#), governed by a [skills-based Board](#). PMAT is funded entirely [by donations](#).

In 2020 PMAT was named Australia's Planning Champion, a prestigious honour awarded by the Planning Institute of Australia that recognises non-planners for their advocacy and for making a significant contribution and lasting presence to the urban and regional environment. PMAT was awarded the Tasmanian Planning Champion title in 2019.

PMAT's purpose is to achieve a values-based, fair and equitable planning scheme implemented across Tasmania, informed by [PMAT's Platform Principles](#) and delivering the objectives of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*.

As outlined in [PMAT's Strategic Plan 2021–2023](#), 'PMAT's vision is for Tasmania to be a global leader in planning excellence. We believe best practice planning must embrace and respect all Tasmanians, enhance community well-being, health and prosperity, nourish and care for Tasmania's outstanding natural values, recognise and enrich our cultural heritage and, through democratic and transparent processes, deliver sustainable, integrated development in harmony with the surrounding environment.'

Planning schemes must offer a balance between development, individual rights and community amenity, and not just make it easier for development and growth at the cost of community well-being and natural and cultural values. PMAT aims to ensure that Tasmanians have a say in a planning system that prioritises the health and well-being of the whole community, the liveability of our cities, towns and rural areas, and the protection of the natural environment and cultural heritage. PMAT considers that the incoming Tasmanian Planning Scheme will weaken the protections for places where we live and places we love around Tasmania.



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INQUIRY BACKGROUND

As per the Parliament of Tasmania website, on 6 December 2022, in accordance with section 6(2)(a) of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts (Committee) resolved to inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the feasibility planning for a new sporting and event stadium in Hobart with a particular emphasis on:

1. the process used to select Macquarie Point as the site for a proposed new stadium;
2. how a new roofed stadium became a condition of a Tasmanian licence to enter the Australian Football League (AFL);
3. the figures and assumptions contained within any State Government commissioned reports and economic impact assessments of the proposed Macquarie Point stadium, including any subsidies required and assessments of ongoing operating costs;
4. the Tasmanian Government's expectation regarding financial contributions from the Australian Government, AFL and third parties;
5. the level of borrowing and costs on the assumed \$375 million Tasmanian Government contribution to the construction of the proposed new stadium;
6. the future of Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium, including State Government ownership and future capital and operational expenditure;
7. the role of the Major Stadiums business unit within State Growth and the newly established statutory authority Stadiums Tasmania in relation to the proposed new stadium; and
8. any other incidental matter incidental thereto.



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PMAT'S POSITION

Macquarie Point covers 9.3 hectares on Hobart's historic foreshore and presents a once in a generation development opportunity for Hobart and Tasmania.

The PMAT does not take positions of support or opposition on specific developments including the proposed AFL stadium. PMAT's purpose is to advocate and support its member organisations to improve the planning system.

The PMAT got involved with the AFL stadium issue when it became clear the State Government was potentially seeking to overturn the [Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030](#) and planning scheme provisions for the location.

We hosted a [public meeting on the 16 November 2022](#), which was attended by over 300 community members at the Hobart Town Hall, to generate community discussion about how best to revitalise Mac Point. We wanted to highlight the planning process to date and to discuss how best to maximise the enormous economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits that could bring new vibrancy to the city of Hobart and Tasmania. You can hear the proceedings of our meeting [here](#), which includes a presentation from an expert planner, E3 Planning, who was the third speaker.

The State Government has abandoned the strategic planning process it established to create the final Mac Point Master Plan – i.e. the [Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030](#). This also included public consultation and engagement with over 250 key stakeholders and Tasmanian Government agencies.

The agreed Plan is made up of seven precincts (Figure 1) which were designed to underpin the planning scheme framework and include a range of mixed use, arts and institutional developments (Figure 2).



Figure 1 – Macquarie Point Master Plan.



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Figure 2 – Macquarie Point, showing the planning zones as per the final Master Plan – Arts and Institution Arena, Mixed Use Area and Open Space Area.

The final Master Plan was developed with key stakeholders. As outlined in the Master Plan, *‘since January 2017, the Corporation has been pro-actively engaged with over 250 key stakeholders to provide opportunities for input the reset vision and enhance community ownership and commitment to the reset’*. See the extensive list of Government agencies and stakeholders on page 10 of the Master Plan. The finalisation of the Master Plan also included public consultation.

The *Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme 1997* was amended, via a Tasmanian Planning Commission statutory process, which included public comment, to reflect the [Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030](#). This took effect on 30 October 2019.

The amendments followed consultation that took place in 2019 and provided for the planning arrangements at the Macquarie Point site to be updated to enable the Macquarie Point Development Corporation’s [Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030](#) to be implemented and to provide for the redevelopment of the Macquarie Point site. This Plan has been uploaded onto PMAT’s website, as it appears that it is no longer available elsewhere online. It is assumed that this is the final document.

The Government decision to propose an AFL stadium on the site is entirely unsupported by public consultation and or strategic planning. In the ten years since the Macquarie Point Corporation has been in existence never has an AFL Stadium been considered as appropriate for the site during any strategic consultation planning.

Instead, when a private business says it wants the site, all previous strategic planning and consultation on the future use and development of the site has been abandoned. The AFL will



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provide no meaningful financial contribution, yet it has been given almost exclusive rights to not only Tasmania's but one of Australia's premier public land development sites.

Mac Point has gone from an essentially privately funded urban renewal project to a tax payer funded proposition. This raises many questions.



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KEY QUESTIONS REGARDING PLANNING AND THE STADIUM

Question 1 – *Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*

Why is the [*Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*](#) and all the strategic planning, stakeholder engagement and public consultation which informed it being discarded?

A key concern to PMAT is that the Tasmanian Government abandoned the strategic planning process it established to create the final Mac Point Master Plan – i.e. the [*Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*](#).

The *Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme 1997* was amended (e.g. PSA-19-2 Amendments insert a new Macquarie Point Site Development Plan within Part F – Key Sites and amend 26.3 Objectives for Traffic, Access and Parking in Activity Areas), via a Tasmanian Planning Commission statutory process which included public comment, to reflect the [*Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*](#). This took effect on 30 October 2019. The amendments followed public consultation that took place in 2019, and provided for the planning arrangements at the Macquarie Point site to be updated to enable the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's [*Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*](#) to be implemented and to provide for the redevelopment of the Macquarie Point site. **This Master Plan has been uploaded onto PMAT's website, as it appears that it is no longer available elsewhere online. It is assumed that this uploaded document is the final document.**

The final Master Plan was also developed with key stakeholders. As outlined in the Master Plan, *'since January 2017, the Corporation has been pro-actively engaged with over 250 key stakeholders to provide opportunities for input the reset vision and enhance community ownership and commitment to the reset'*. **See the extensive list of Government agencies and stakeholders on page 10 of the Master Plan.**

Question 2 - Independence of the Planning Assessment Process

If an AFL licence is granted conditionally on having a new stadium then how can a new stadium, with its major planning implications, be independently and objectively assessed?

There will be significant potential for conflict of interest where the State Government is a strong advocate for the stadium and has significant authority in the planning processes that may be applied.

The State Government has been a very strong advocate of an AFL license and the stadium. If a AFL licence was granted conditional on a stadium being built the State Government may intervene and declare the stadium a major project, which is a process which the state planning minister has



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significant authority in, including initiating the declaration of a major project. The minister cannot be expected to ignore the potential loss of the licence in making decisions about the stadium planning process.

If it was to be dealt with through the normal planning scheme process (not a major project), then a scheme amendment would be required, which could be initiated by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation recommending it to the Planning Minister. The Planning Minister would have a conflict of interest in responding to this recommendation because they are a member of the government that supports the stadium and license. If the scheme amendment is initiated then the Tasmanian Planning Commission would make the ultimate decision to approve or not approve it and be placed under substantial pressure by in effect deciding the fate of the AFL licence as well as the stadium. It would be expected that the stadium proponent (probably also the State Government) would participate in the Tasmanian Planning Commission process and the potential political pressure would be impossible to ignore.

Question 3 – Which Planning Assessment Process

What planning assessment process will be used to assess the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point?

This question is especially important given that the construction of a stadium on Macquarie Point is prohibited under local planning rules.

For example will the stadium be assessed under the:

- Project of State Significance (POSS) assessment process under the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*;
- Major Projects assessment process under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*;
- Planning Scheme amendment process under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*;
- Hobart's Draft Local Provisions Schedule process under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*.

Question 4 – Major Projects and local planning rules

If the stadium is assessed under the new contentious Major Projects process, what will this mean for local planning rules?

The Major Projects process would take planning decisions out of the hands of Hobart City Council and its ratepayers, and where the stadium does not need to be compliant with local planning rules.



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This is in contrast to the *Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*, which is consistent with and furthers all relevant planning legislation and policy, including the:

- *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*;
- *Applicable State Policies within the State Policies and Projects Act 1993*;
- Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy; and
- Sullivans Cove Strategic Framework under the Planning Scheme.

Question 5 – interrelationship between legislative processes

What is the interrelationship between the following legislative processes and Acts: Major Projects process, the *Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme 1997* and the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act 2012*? Will the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act 2012* need to be amended to facilitate the construction of the stadium?

Question 6 – Impacts on Built Heritage

How will the construction of a stadium at Macquarie Point impact heritage buildings like the iconic 1914 Goods Shed and the Cenotaph?

Question 7 – Planning Issues – access and noise

What will the stadium mean for traffic/access, parking and noise? E.g. how will spectators access the site?

There are planning issues beyond the development site - in particular impact on traffic and transport. The major projects process is potentially not a good way to address these broader planning issues.

Question 8 – impact on existing tenants and local businesses

What impact will the stadium have on the 18 Mac Point small business tenants who have invested in the site based on the existing planning process?

What does it mean for city businesses, which would benefit from the uplift of a year round vibrant Mac Point?

Question 9 – Truth and Reconciliation Art Park

What will the construction of the stadium mean for the future of the proposed ‘centrepiece’ Truth and Reconciliation Art Park?



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The [*Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*](#) states that 'it is important the Aboriginal community leads the development of the Truth and Reconciliation Art Park, the Centre for Living Culture and the Aboriginal Heritage Centre. The Corporation had started to consult with the community' including 13 Aboriginal community, groups, individuals and Elders around the state.

Question 10 – Antarctic and Science Precinct

What will the construction of a stadium on Macquarie Point mean for the future of the global gateway Antarctic and Science Precinct?

Question 11 – Finances and remediation

How much money has been spent on Macquarie Point to date? How much money has been spent on remediation? Would the same level of remediation been required for a stadium as compared to that required to implement the *Macquarie Point Reset Master Plan 2017 – 2030*?

Question 12-Bellerive Oval

What would become of the Bellerive Oval?