

Robert G. Richardson,



Att. Mr. Simon Scott

Committee Secretary

Parliamentary Standing Committee
of Public Accounts

Parliament House

Hobart, Tas. 7000

19 February, 2023

re: Inquiry into processes associated with planning for a new
sporting and event stadium in Hobart.

In December, 2022 it was resolved to conduct an inquiry; I (unusually) failed to see this advertised in "The Examiner" newspaper. There appears to have been very little opportunity for the 65% of Tasmanians living outside greater Hobart to comment.

Over the past several months, I have prepared several discussion papers on the issue which have been distributed fairly widely, including at least one of your committee, Dr. Shane Broad, MHA.

The first of those papers, Document 1 outlines the important need for a health facility near to the Royal Hobart Hospital. Increasingly, Government, and other, health services are being concentrated in Hobart. This forces residents living outside Hobart to travel to Hobart for treatment.

There is a strong need for accommodation facilities for those people near the Hobart Hospital.

Macquarie Point offers a unique opportunity; Let's not waste that opportunity.

Document 4 outlines the importance of Macquarie Point in Tasmania's early and ongoing history.

This is where the horrific treatment of Tasmania's aboriginal people began. Reverend Knopwood, the English colony's first van Diemen's land ^{chaplain}, recorded the "invasion" of V.D.L. From this beginning, the dreadful events continued. And it started at Macquarie Point in February, 1804.

The myth of convict criminals was entrenched when English officers landed so-called criminals ashore - at Macquarie Point. The "convicts" were the consequence of the excesses of English nobility; their use of the enclosure acts led to grossly excessive penalties, and even worse punishments, culminating with Port Arthur and Sarah Island.

The English treatment of aboriginal Tasmanians and "convicts" was worst in V.D.L. of all the States - starting at Macquarie Point.

As indicated in document 4, to build a football ground on this site would be tantamount to dancing on our ancestors' graves.

The Macquarie Point ^{site} is a logical place for a memorial park, to include also our military veterans and their families. Perhaps sections could be designed by descendants of our indigenous friends, by descendants of our convict ancestors, and by representatives of returned service men and women.

And some greenery along this section of Hobart's waterfront would be welcome; currently thousands of acres of tar and cement.

Document 4a effectively summarises these issues

There are other issues needing consideration, including:

- (a) The proposed costs have not included removal of Taswater facilities - perfectly functional works proposed to be moved at a cost of about \$250,000,000, 30 years earlier than needed.
- (b) The choice of Hobart; given nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of Tasmanians reside outside Hobart, mostly in the north of the State is highly questionable. A more central site should be considered.

- (c) Reported attendances at sporting events in Hobart are disappointing, to say the least. That is irrefutable history.
- (d) Hobart is not central; it is situated at the extreme south of the State; Launceston is central - being a maximum of 200 km from most Tasmanians. Not so Hobart.
- (e) I have been forwarded "business case" outlines from the Premier's department; they are scant on detail and appear to be questionable on process.
- (f) Recurrent costs are likely to be in the order of \$50 million p.a. that will require about 80,000 members with an annual membership of \$500 to \$600. The likelihood of that is nil.

In summary, wrong facility at wrong site in wrong village.

The MacPoint suggestion seems little more than a Hobart wish-list to be paid for by others

I apologise for the late submission, but I overlooked its advertisement in the Northern press

yours sincerely



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encl. Document 1 : Fairness in Health Facilities

Document 4 : Convict, and other, Tasmanian History

Document 4a : Background History : Macquarie Point.

Tasmania: Fairness in Health: Macquarie Point's Role.Restoring fairness in Delivery of Tasmanian Services.

In recent decades there has been an increasing trend in concentration of health, medical and social services in Hobart.

This appears to have the greatest impact upon the aged, the poor and families of the young.

Increasingly, people living outside Hobart are required to travel to Hobart for services. Often travel is needed for several days, necessitating vehicular travel, accommodation and meals for patients/clients and their families, carers and partners.

Currently there is some Government contribution to costs, but the subsidies fall short. Many of the clients and their families are aged, young or commonly poor.

About 12 years ago I required heart bypass surgery in Hobart. Hospitalisation occurred for about a week at R.H.H. My wife accompanied me for support.

Upon release from Hospital, I was wheelchaired to the door and told to go home - about 250 km to Westbury. I was not ready/prepared. Another week or so in rehabilitation before travel would have been appreciated.

I have spoken to others from remote locations who have expressed similar views.

It is my firm belief that the costs associated with procedures which have been concentrated in Hobart should cost the patient/family the same regardless where they live: almost all those who reside in greater Hobart live within about 10 km of Royal Hobart Hospital. Most can return home relatively easily.

There is an option to cater for those outside Hobart.

The venue is Macquarie Point

Three blocks from Royal Hobart Hospital ; a greenfields site with plenty of room to erect a "Ronald McDonald House" concept building with adequate vehicle parking.

Accommodation for patients and diets and family support should be provided in comfortable premises free of charge for those out of town.

Such a facility would provide a convenient facility based on fairness. If Government authorities wish to concentrate services, then geographical fairness within the state should be fundamental.

What is the demand? That could be quickly calculated.

Inspect patient records for the past several years for patients needing to access specialist services, which are concentrated in Hobart, then look at their residential postcodes. All Tasmanian addresses have 4 figure postcodes :- those starting with 70-- are in Southern Tasmania ; all others are north and north-west

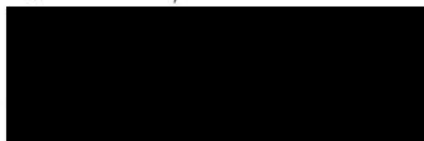
The State Government's option is to duplicate services in other parts of Tasmania!

I seek the support of Tasmania's elected representatives. - at local, state and Federal levels, and community groups.

Thankyou in anticipation

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CONVICT TRUTH-TELLING : A (DRAFT) ESSAY.

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Introduction:

The role of the British wealthy upper class in creating, and then implementing, one of the most brutal systems upon Britain's poor cannot be under-estimated. This group instituted the Enclosures Acts which stripped commoners of their very limited assets including miniscule land holdings and even shelter.

These Acts forced the common people into a fight for survival - leading to a search for sustenance, including theft if needed.

The wealthy landed gentry (men) then established and implemented harsh laws and punishments, including transportation.

Once in Van Diemen's Land, many were subject to unimaginable cruelty and brutality, including at Port Arthur and Sarah Island.

This is my interpretation of Van Diemen's Land convict origins which began in February, 1804 at Hunter Island, Macquarie Point, Hobart

"I was the convict
 sent to hell,
 To make in the desert
 the living hell.

I split the rock;
 I felled the tree -
 The nation was
 because of me."

Dame Mary Gilmore (1918)

Convicts as criminals?

It could be strongly argued that the people, mostly males, shipped from England to van Diemens Land were not criminals, at least with the understanding of 20th century Australian society.

An analysis of the 1804 "convicts" into Hobart Town confirms this impression. These individuals were predominantly lower class people who had been convicted in English courts and then transported, as a penalty, on board H.M.S "Calcutta" firstly to Sorrento, Victoria, and later, in 1804 via "Ocean" to Sullivan's Cove, Hobart Town.

In a London Court just before Christmas, 1800 12 year-old William Jones was sentenced to seven years transportation. He was described in the court records as 3ft. 11 in tall, having a dark complexion and very crooked legs. His crime? Stealing cloth. William spent 2½ years aboard the hulk "Tridentia" before boarding "Calcutta" destined for van Diemens Land.

Nine year-old William Appleton joined him on "Calcutta" for 7 years' transportation. He stole an apron and 7 shillings.

For stealing bacon valued at 1/6 (15 cents) John Davis (14) was also destined to spend 7 years in van Diemens Land.

21 of the 308 "Calcutta" convicts were minors - almost all their 'crimes' were for theft of food and/or clothing, or of items which could be used to trade for food or clothing.

These young children were separated from their parents and extended families and sent thousands of kilometres to an unknown land on the other side of the world. They were destined to live under a harsh and frugal regime, many never to return home.

An analysis of the "Calcutta" convicts¹ shows that 90% of those convicted committed crimes in order to survive - food and clothing were the main targets. This figure is consistent with that cited by Barnard².

Most of the charges laid against those on board "Calcutta" were mainly

petty crimes; very few involved violence, no "large" crimes.

136 of the crimes related to self-preservation - theft of food, clothes or material to make clothes. A further 33 convicts stole small numbers of domestic animals - poultry, sheep, pigs and cattle: for food. Theft of items for survival constituted at least 55% of the "crimes".

Another 20% of crimes involved relatively small amounts of money or goods - which could be exchanged for survival items - especially food and clothing.

Less than 10% of the crimes may have led to confrontation.

Joining these convicts were a bigamist, one who "cohabited" and 8 who were deserters or mutineers from the marines at Gibraltar. 17 others were convicted of unknown felonies or "suspicion of theft".

The Question is why, not what, "convict" crimes.

However, the question is not what these people, including children were said to have done, but why?

For centuries Britain had operated as a segregated society - the rich, landed class who had voting rights (males) and parliamentary access - and the poor, commoners with little access to land and other assets.

The commoners typically served as slaves (also known as serfs, or vassals). Britain was also predominantly an agrarian society where the serfs worked on the estates of the rich. Following long days of work on the estates, they typically returned to their basic abodes in small villages.

Villages were typically surrounded by town commons which could be used by villages to grow food, graze a "house cow", raise animals for food, and so on.

Towards the end of the 1600's, the industrial revolution began /

to develop; machines capable of replacing labour began to appear.

The political system was much different from now; political power was firmly entrenched with the wealthy (male) land-owners. The common-people did not have voting entitlement, let alone ability to sit in parliament.

About the mid-1700's, the wealthy landowners started replacing their labourers with machines. Critically they started to recognise opportunities to "steal" the land to which the commons had access. By passing the Enclosures (or Inclosures) Acts, the wealthy estate owners extended their land titles to encompass the town commons, etc.

The result, Britain's poor lost access to land to produce food. In some cases shelter was denied. Where could they obtain food, and even find shelter? They were forced to steal - for preservation of themselves and their dependants.

THE WEALTHY HAD EFFECTIVELY CREATED AND THEN CRIMINALISED POVERTY.

And who made the laws and created and controlled the judiciary? And the inordinately harsh, unreasonable and brutal penalties? The wealthy class - the landowners / estate owners!

When these "convicts" arrived in van Diemens Land the British administration and officers instituted brutal procedures on at least some of them. Nowhere else in Australia, and perhaps the rest of the world, did the British aristocracy inflict such brutality. The horrors culminating in Port Arthur and Sarah Island were not seen elsewhere in Australia.

The real criminals were the British aristocracy

It was the British aristocracy which effectively stole the British common people's minimal resources, created poverty, criminalised and then entrenched poverty. They instituted a penal system which was

excessive and brutal.

The aristocracy's representatives and Tasmanian indigenous people.

Once these (inherited) wealthy Britons, via their military officials, inflicted their barbarism on their own (lower class) people, they proceeded to inflict their cruelty on lutruwita's indigenous people.

This followed their invasion of van Diemen's Land - commencing at Macquarie Point via Hunter Island. When the passengers from "Ocean" came ashore at Hunter Island, there were indigenous Tasmanians living at Macquarie Point. Extracts from Rev. Robert Knofwood's diary read:-

" Feb 23, 1804 AM: Very fine weather ---. The convicts employed in preparing a wharf at the landing place ---.

Feb. 24, 1804 AM: do wr. Many of files of the natives around ---.

Feb. 26, 1804 AM: At 10 the military paraded; 1/2 past all the convicts, settlers assembled --- " 3.

Clearly the British invaded van Diemen's Land, firstly at Point Macquarie / Hunter Island in February, 1804.

Their treatment of Tasmania's indigenous people was inhumane. British practices are well-documented. Cruelty, included murder. The treatment of indigenous people was worst in Tasmania amongst all Australian states and Territories.

And it started at Macquarie Point.

Memorialisation at Macquarie Point

The excesses of the British (aristocracy) in lutruwita / Tasmania began in 1804 at Macquarie Point.

The need for society to acknowledge the historical excesses

upon indigenous Tasmanians should be a given; Macquarie Point, as the significant first contact point, is the logical memorialisation site.

There needs to be a societal shift in attitudes towards convicts. It is clear that the British aristocracy is responsible for the excessive bastardry of the British poor. Those practices and outcomes are in need of memorialisation - if only to correct common opinions of convicts - as outlaw criminals who had undertaken unthinkable deeds. The excesses of the British aristocracy need to be highlighted.

Macquarie Point is the logical place for memorialisation.

Given the juxtaposition of the Hobart Cenotaph to the Mac. Point site, the area determines the need to develop as a memorial to our forebears - indigenous, convict founders of European settlement, and diggers.

To construct an entertainment venue / football stadium on the site would be tantamount to dancing on the graves of our ancestors.

PS. The whole area should probably be heritage listed

References:

1. Tipping, M : Convicts Unbound : the story of the "Colchester" Convicts and their settlement in Australia ; Penguin , Melbourne , 1988 353 pp.
2. Barnard, S : A-Z of Convicts in Van Diemen's Land ; Text Publishing , Melbourne , 2014 (p.2)
3. Nicholls, M. (ed). : The Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood 1803-1838 : Tas. Historical Research Association, 1977 ; 338 pp. (pp. 44, 45)

Addendum:

For some unknown reason, several notable Tasmanian historians seem to have overlooked the pre-eminent significance of the (British) Enclosures Acts.

These Acts, and the British Class System; are the *raison d'être* for convictism

Macquarie Point is the logical place to record the background to, and the implementation of, arguably the world's most barbaric penal system.

Society must record all of history, including those bits it may not like; This so we don't repeat the past

LEST WE FORGETThe Author

This essay was prepared by Bob Richardson.

He is a direct descendant of (convict) William Richardson who was aboard "Ocean" when it unloaded its passengers at Sullivan's Cove in February, 1804

William was a servant of Rev. Robert Knopwood for many years.

Bob is a keen amateur historian and has been a teacher, association manager and small business owner. He has been extensively involved in community affairs, business, professional and sporting organisations (all in a voluntary capacity) and a local councillor for nearly two decades.

Macquarie Point Site.

Background History - A Personal Comment.

For 40,000 (60,000) years the island of Lutrawita (Tasmania) was the homeland of several indigenous groups. These traditional owners of the land were hunters and gatherers and reports are that they lived a hard but peaceful existence.

Towards the end of February, 1804 all that was about to change. The square-rigger sailing ship "Ocean" arrived with 178 passengers from Britain, via Sorrento, in Victoria. That ship contained mostly men from Britain who had been termed criminals by British land-owner aristocracy (The real criminals were the aristocracy, themselves who, by passing, in Parliament, Enclosures Act(s), stole these "criminals" meagre resources, principally their Town commons.) For centuries they had been slaves, or serfs, to the wealthy aristocrat landowners. By "stealing" their land, these commoners could no longer grow their vegetables nor have their house cow. They were forced to poach and steal. The British aristocracy effectively criminalised poverty.

And the penalties imposed by these wealthy aristocrats were brutal/savage. These commoners were accompanied on "Ocean" by British troops/marines - servants of the British aristocrats.

The 178 personnel, led by Lt. Gov. David Collins and chaplain Rev. Robert Knopwood, disembarked "Ocean" via Hunter Island to establish a settlement at Sullivan's Cove. (Hunter Island was at the south-west corner of the Macquarie Point site.).

From this beginning began the worst of Australia's "Blackdays" and the most barbaric treatment of the so-called "convicts".

These events must not be forgotten - in case people are tempted to repeat such inhumane, barbaric behaviour.

LEST WE FORGET