

Attention: Simon Scott, Committee Secretary, Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts

I am a proudly sixth-generation Tasmanian and Hobartian who wants to let you know why I strongly oppose building a stadium at Mac Point to satisfy the demands of the Australian Football League (AFL) and a minority of privileged citizens who appear bereft of conscience and economic-literacy.

Terms of Reference

ToR 1

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on matters related to the *Club Funding and Development Agreement (Agreement)* signed between the Crown in the Right of Tasmania and Australian Football League.

The Agreement "negotiated" by the Tasmanian Government does not reflect any of the values held dear by Tasmanians and is not in the public interest. In fact the Agreement is completely one-sided, with all the risks the responsibility of the Tasmanian Government (representing the Tasmanian people!). There is relatively little cost, and absolutely no risk, to the AFL. Is it even legal for a democratic government to sign such a one-sided agreement in this way? It certainly isn't ethical.

If another stadium is so urgently required in Hobart, and I do refute that claim, then there are other feasible locations that would consolidate existing sporting infrastructure. Yet the agreement seems to put Tasmania's financial future at risk with a highly speculative venture. For example, the government will likely seek to pass contract delay penalties directly onto the procurement contract. Applied as liquidated damages and in the exponential order of millions, these penalties applied on the Tasmanian community purse by the AFL are exorbitant, particularly in the current construction market, and the risk of delay is high. The example of this can be drawn toward Victoria's current infrastructure delay costs. It is a major cost risk to pass onto the public purse in Tasmania – that is to pass onto the taxpayers of Tasmania.

By any standard, the agreement negotiated by the Tasmanian Government has been a sell-out of Tasmanian interests, including giving away access to public land (Macquarie Point). This is not about the establishment of a Tasmanian AFL club – a subject which should be an entirely separate conversation. It is about a government entering a highly risky business venture with the AFL, where the AFL bears no risk and where the anticipated costs of this project will rapidly escalate and ultimately be borne by the regular hard-working people, whether through taxes and/or dramatically increased building costs.

ToR 2

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on the suitability of Macquarie Point as the site for a proposed the Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct.

Mac Point is the people's land – the Traditional Country of Aboriginal Tasmanians, and a space for all Tasmanians regardless of wealth or power. This prime waterfront location, on our beloved River Derwent, behoves development that can be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone – not an elite few. Any development needs to be in keeping with the surrounding area and in communion with the unique lifestyle and culture that makes Tasmania and Hobart unique. It needs to reflect the budget of a hard-working and modest people, and involve costs that can be easily met and not place an undue burden on the community and future generations. We do not need to be a "little Melbourne" or a "little Sydney", and we certainly don't need a stadium that doesn't even fit into the footprint available to it!

The scale of the proposed stadium impinges on the Royal Engineers building, the Cenotaph and the heritage listed Regatta Pavilion. It would tower over the heritage buildings of Hunter Street and Sullivans Cove, and obliterate views to and from the Cenotaph and the historic waterfront. The proposed stadium would adversely impact the heritage significance of the Hobart Cenotaph and Sullivans Cove. It is even possible that the stadium would not meet the requirements statement in the current Hobart Planning Scheme, set up to protect the unique values of the Sullivans Cove area.

The precinct is suitable for a range of uses, but scale must be realistic, with all consequences considered and addressed professionally. In addition, concentrating activity in such a confined area, on a headland, creates massive transport and communication infrastructure problems, isolated as it is from the CBD by the existing convoluted road network at that point in the city's traffic grid.

Mac Point is beautiful, majestic and relatively un-spoilt. It typifies Hobart – a capital city where you can be in bushland or on the water in minutes. A city that's different to mainstream high-rises, traffic-jams and pollution, and that shares and celebrates this difference with millions of tourists every year.

ToR 3

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on the financial risks associated with the Agreement.

In short, Tasmania cannot afford this deal. Of the stated \$715 million building costs, the AFL's exposure is no more than \$15 million. Clauses in the *Club Funding and Development Agreement* specify that all risk falls to Tasmania for the costs of development and construction, including cost overruns, and the same applies for the additional \$60 million Training and Administration Facility, which we are told is to be constructed close to the Hobart CBD. I understand the new Tasmanian club, effectively run by the AFL, will rent the Training and Administration Facility for \$1.00 – what a terrible deal for Tasmanians, and what a dreadful message to send to our local community (and the world!) – you can't rent or buy a home and fundamental shelter here, but elite training facilities cost less than a chocolate bar! Outrageous!!

There is peer-reviewed objective evidence showing that a stadium is not a good economic deal for communities, and to say otherwise is deceitful and misleading. The financial and economic lies need to stop!

ToR 4

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on matters related to the financing and delivery of the entire proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct.

There is no spare, magic bucket of cash for the Tasmanian Government to finance this project – it s a proposed financial burden for the community. In addition, there is no evidence that there is either capacity or competency to deliver an ambitious project of this nature.

The budgets provided are not commensurate with international and national stadiums that have been completed to the standard we would expect for our city, in such a prime location. It is not a good financial deal.

ToR 5

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on the future of Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium.

This highlights the incredibly poor planning of the Tasmanian Government and they should be held to account for this. What a great question – what is to become of the expensively maintained Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadiums – both venues delivering a high standard of sporting opportunities for Tasmanians interested in AFL and Cricket. Unfortunately, there is no comparable rectangular stadium for other, more popularly played, sports.

ToR 6

To inquire into and report upon the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart with a particular emphasis on any other matter incidental thereto.

There is a story that this proposed stadium will increase the pathways into elite levels of AFL for grassroots participants. In fact, it will actually draw athletes who are enjoying other sports into the AFL (which one presumes is the aim of the AFL in this Agreement), thus reducing participation in other much more poorly funded sports. This is sounding like another great deal for the AFL but not for everyday Tasmanians – the majority of whom prefer to play sports other than AFL!!