

OUR PLACE - HOBART

MEDIA STATEMENT – 2 August 2023

Roland Browne, spokesperson for the Our Place group, has called on Premier Jeremy Rockcliff to heed ex-Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett's opinion published today in the Herald-Sun that there needs to be a "Plan B" for a Tasmanian football team that doesn't involve building a new stadium in Hobart.

In the article Mr Kennett said he "would hate the AFL to be imposing such conditions on Tasmanians to have their own AFL team, that their state debt becomes a stone around the necks of Tasmanians for decades."

Mr Kennett, an ex-Hawthorn president, says "I have no doubt when the decision was made by the AFL Commission and the presidents, everyone was thinking of Tasmania's contribution to the code over many decades and the desirability of a Tasmanian team, but not the financial cost we were imposing on the Tasmanian public with a roofed stadium that will hold only 23,000 patrons."

Mr Kennett pointed out that "interest on the monies borrowed, losses on the stadium each and every year, will be costs borne by the Tasmanian public for years, not the government, as the government has no money of its own. It is all public money. And that is before the Tasmanian government funds the new Tasmanian team."

Mr Browne said Mr Kennett's comments go to the heart of the outrage so many Tasmanians feel about the proposed stadium.

Mr Kennett went on to say, "The AFL and the presidents have a responsibility to grow the game, but that should not be at the cost of a ridiculous financial burden to the people of Tasmania."

Mr Browne said what was needed now was leadership by our government to ensure there would be a Tasmanian team by working for a compromise as advocated by Mr Kennett.

"The alternative is no stadium and no team. That may suit Mr Rockcliffe as he prepares to lose the next election and retire to his farm, claiming he did everything he could to get a Tassie team. But the truth is he hasn't. The stadium is just a kamikaze stunt by a flailing premier. It sounds strong, but it's weak, and so too is the Premier Rockliff, if he fails to work for an outcome that involves compromise. That compromise would be real leadership."

"Mr Browne called on The Mercury to publish Mr Kennett's article in full, in the interests of a balanced debate."

Roland Browne 