

To Simon Scott, Committee Secretary, Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts.

Introduction

I write to object to the development of a stadium at Mac Point to satisfy the demands of the AFL.

In short, I live on Mount Nelson but I expect to be adversely affected if this stadium goes ahead as, in my opinion, the proposed stadium is ugly, out of scale and out of place, the construction cost is bound to be under-estimated and whatever the final figure, it will be an on-going drag on the state budget for both the capital cost and the annual operating losses. It is bound to be under-utilised and attendance estimates over-estimated. Traffic disruption and parking have not been adequately considered. And why are we in such an adverse contract with multi-million dollar AFL?

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 has been a sell-out of Tasmanian interests, including giving away access to public land. The Tasmanian Government hasn't just helped out with the establishment of a Tasmanian AFL club, it has entered into a highly risky business venture with the AFL, where the AFL bears no risk and where the anticipated costs of this project will escalate rapidly.

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.

The scale of the proposed stadium impinges on the Royal Engineers building, on the Cenotaph and on the heritage listed Regatta Pavilion. It towers over the heritage buildings of Hunter Street and Sullivans Cove. It robs Tasmanians of all opportunities provided by a prime waterfront site in their capital city.

The prevailing planning scheme specifically precludes development that overwhelms the historic spaces and buildings. By the government's own assessment, it is over 40 metres high. Digitally-rendered images already published by Our Place reveal a build that fully overwhelms this historic site in our capital city. This project clearly fails to comply with the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme. It breaches many of the principles of the scheme, designed to protect the cultural heritage of Hobart's waterfront precinct.

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.

For the claimed \$715 million stadium, 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 \$60 million Training and Administration Facility which we will also pay for on top of the \$715 million, and which we are told is to be constructed close to the Hobart CBD. And we are also told that the facility is to have an oval the same size as the MCG. Moreover, the new Tasmanian club, effectively run by the AFL, will rent the Training and Administration Facility for \$1.00.

In its funding commitments, the Tasmanian Government has signed away any entitlement for sponsorship or commercial rights or any interests in the club, yet the Government pays the establishment funding and, if needed, additional establishment funding and additional operational funding. All up, the Tasmanian taxpayer is on the hook for \$144 million over 12 years, which when added to the \$60 million high performance centre makes \$204 million just for the team on top of the \$715 million for the stadium. That's \$915 million, before we get to the blowouts.

We still have no idea of the actual spend, because the Government has, incredibly, avoided costing the entire development with major roadworks off Hobart's busiest arterial road, major public transport infrastructure, redevelopment of Macquarie Wharf, removal of the sewerage works, and mass parking facilities.

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.

The likely \$1.5 billion for the stadium (plus transport infrastructure costs) would best be directed to more pressing needs. That is, housing, funding for our education and health systems.

The Government's own Reports 'base case' assumes that, without a Stadium precinct, nothing will be built on the Macquarie Point site. But the ultimate reason the project is so destructive of social and economic value is that a sportsground better sited elsewhere, and inappropriate for this unique harbourside site adjacent to Hobart's iconic waterfront and the inner city, would prevent this area from being transformed into a visionary and iconic place for Hobart, and for Tasmania – a place that potentially provides for housing, focuses on reconciliation, and celebrates the site's attributes with its proximity to the river, its mountain views and Aboriginal history. This is the alternative option that a properly conducted cost benefit analysis ought to consider.

What are the public infrastructure costs for Hobart City Council to integrate the site in the city?

We need to consider the disruption to traffic on the Tasman highway, Tasmania's busiest arterial road, as this construction proceeds over several years. Traffic in Hobart is already bad enough.

The systems of the city are not prepared for the infrastructural scale of the stadium. Transport systems, and city-services circulation will need massive reconfiguration to facilitate the servicing for a stadium of that size.

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.

Tasmania doesn't need a costly 3rd stadium.

When Anthony Albanese, then Minister for Infrastructure, and Tony Harrison from Cricket Tasmania, announced in 2013 they wanted to increase the Blundstone arena's capacity to 20,000 they said public money was justified because "the strong support of the North Melbourne AFL football matches at Blundstone Arena suggests the extra capacity is required to meet public demand". In 2016 a record crowd of 17,844 watched North Melbourne defeat Richmond 124 - 54. A record which has never been broken.

Yours faithfully

James Anderson

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of James Anderson.

22 November 2023