



ROYAL HOBART REGATTA ASSOCIATION

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SUBMISSION FROM THE ROYAL HOBART REGATTA ASSOCIATION

Submission from the Royal Hobart Regatta Association (*the Association*) to the Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's process into the proposed *Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct in Hobart*.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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:

1. *matters related to the Club Funding and Development Agreement (the Agreement) signed between the Crown in the Right of Tasmania and Australian Football League (the AFL);*
2. *the suitability of Macquarie Point as the site for a proposed the Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct;*
3. *the financial risks associated with the Agreement;*
4. *matters related to the financing and delivery of the entire proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct;*
5. *the future of Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium; and*
6. *any other matter incidental thereto.*

BACKGROUND

The Royal Hobart Regatta (the 'Regatta' here after) is one of the first Regattas, if not the first to be held in Australia. From humble beginnings in 1838 the Regatta has cemented itself into the psyche of Hobartians whilst growing into an unrivalled stalwart on the social and aquatic calendars for both Tasmanians as well as interstate visitors and competitors. It is an event steeped in tradition that, to this day, resonates history having forged memories over two centuries whilst weaving itself into very social fabric of Southern Tasmania.

In 2023 the Regatta commemorated its 185th anniversary and throughout its history has welcomed hundreds of thousands of competitors and spectators alike. Competitors make the Regatta come to life every year, be they those learning a sport, future potential Olympians and / or those wanting to have a go young or old.

The Regatta's significance to the Australian Government is easily demonstrated by the support provided from all branches of the Australian Defence Force in harmony with the event consistently attracting a significant level of interest from the public; thereby reinforcing its value as an economic generator residing comfortably with other public events including the Wood Boat Festival. Of note the 2023 Regatta Long Weekend attracted nineteen (19) other events.

Patronage of the association is afforded by Her Excellency, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania alongside the Lord Mayor of Hobart, Councillor Anna Reynolds who serves as Vice Patron.

Since 1921 the association has occupied the John Colvin Memorial Grandstand (the Grandstand), as a tenant of the Hobart City Council. This tenancy provides, inter alia, access to the Regatta Grounds during the period that the Regatta is conducted each year, and at other times as required.

The Grandstand provides the Association with its administrative and operational headquarters and, is co-located on the site of the Regatta making it perfectly positioned to deliver this event whilst providing ample parking for patrons in close proximity to the Hobart City centre.

In addition to the Association the Grandstand houses a further tenant in the 'Music Theatre Crew' which caters for approximately 200 children.

The Association owns and operates the electrical reticulation on the Regatta Grounds utilised for the presentation of other public events including, yet not limited to:

- The Royal Hobart Show;
- Various travelling Circuses;
- Dark Mofo; and
- Various concerts and other entertainment.

This service is further rented to commercial operators, with power supplied to smaller events and not for profit organisations on a donation basis.

This infrastructure, originally donated by the Royal Hobart Regatta Association, is now aging and requires upgrading to allow the safe and uninterrupted supply of electricity. Despite numerous

requests to state and local government and grant applications, the Association has been unable to secure this funding. Limited income is derived from the hire of this infrastructure.

SUBMISSIONS

This submission is made in accordance with the *Terms of Reference* and in particular, but not limited to, paragraphs:

2. the suitability of Macquarie Point as the site for a proposed the Arts, and

6. any other matter incidental thereto.

The Association is an interested organisation. Should the proposed development be realised, the conduct of the Regatta will be directly and permanently affected by the establishment of the *Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct*.

Those impacts include the use of the foreshore area for a housing project which will permanently deny the Association of space, amenity and access to undertake the annual Regatta, and in particular but not limited to:

- views to the waterfront area and the water will be limited;
- the grandstand will become a redundant historical artifact;
- the construction of social housing in this area will reduce the amenity of the area by restricting its historical and continued use;
- the foreshore boat ramp is used by vessel owners across the greater Hobart area as well as commercial operators, including Pennicott Wilderness Adventures and Emergency Services. It currently provides parking space for city workers and is the only public boat ramp in the City of Hobart municipality. The noise levels from vessels using this facility would diminish the amenity of any accommodation being built;
- the foreshore area at the Regatta grounds is the only undeveloped accessible foreshore area in the City of Hobart. The Association thereby suggests that developing this into residential accommodation is inconsistent with the intent of the area and the projected use outlined in the Hobart City Council *Domain Masterplan*. Such development would significantly limit its availability, amenity, and accessibility to the people of Hobart and greater Tasmania;
- the value of the land, amenity and access to the public is contra-indicated for its use as social housing. The future return on investment, both in terms of rental income, and appreciation would be lacking;
- any housing in this area, would be isolated, leading to a reduction in amenity, use, safety, and accessibility to the intended residents. This isolation would be further compounded by the construction of a roadway to service the Port of Hobart, breaking the link between the Regatta Grounds and City of Hobart with the proposed residential development;
- the construction of a roadway between housing development and the City of Hobart would subject the occupants to high levels of heavy vehicle traffic at all times of the day and night;

- the construction of a roadway for the use of heavy vehicles accessing the Port of Hobart is likely to have a detrimental effect on the buildings in the immediate area of the roadway, including the memorial Grandstand.

The Association has concerns and is seeking advice as to:

- a) How does the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct ensure the current, continued and unimpeded access to the foreshore so that the Regatta can safely and effectively continue to operate?
- b) If access to the foreshore is adversely affected and / or can't be guaranteed, how does the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct make provision for an alternative site, accommodation and infrastructure to ensure that the Regatta can safely and effectively continue to operate?
- c) The Association has three other infrastructure assets located in the area colloquially known as the 'Cattle Jetty' with direct and unimpeded access to the foreshore and which house all of the equipment used to conduct and support water borne activities that allow the Regatta to be conducted.

In a similar, if not identical, manner to the Grandstand the aforementioned concerns arise as to the Association's foreshore assets and the continued access and amenity which will, on the public information currently available, be permanently and adversely affected by the proposed Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct.

To crystallise these concerns the Association seeks advice as to how the proponent will make provision for alternative foreshore sites, for storage, accommodation, and infrastructure to ensure that the Regatta continues to safely operate with its current amenity and deliver public expectations associated with the Regatta.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

The proposal submitted by Stadia Precinct Consortia on November 3rd, 2023, was seemingly rejected by Premier Rockliff on behalf of the Tasmanian Government. On November 4th, 2023 the Minister for Stadia, Nic Street, modified that position indicating the State Government would consider the proposal, however, the State Government has an agreement in place with the AFL for a Stadium at Macquarie Point.

Then finally, on November 5th, 2023 the State Government publicly announced that the alternative proposal had been invited to make further representations prior to February 5th, 2024.

The alternative proposal provides upgraded facilities for use by the Association including office, meeting and storage spaces and a relocated public boat ramp. The inclusion of these facilities in the alternative proposal was a function of the genuine and professional consultation that occurred between the proponent of the alternative proposal as opposed to the lack of any consultation or consideration undertaken by the State Government.

The alternative proposal also provides an income stream, derived from the on-site parking fees charged during the Regatta; the proponent having offered that income to the Association as a not-for-profit fully staffed by volunteers.

OTHER MATTERS

The Association was not consulted prior to the announcement by the Tasmanian Government of the proposed AFL (Macquarie Point) Stadium. This was unfortunate and regrettable. It is not easily understood how that lack of consultation could have been overlooked given the location in which the Regatta has been conducted for 185 years, the site name presently being 'Hobart Regatta Grounds' and the obvious impacts thereafter.

The Association has a *partnership* with the Returned Service League and the Hobart City Council but has been unable to secure a joint meeting with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) to discuss these and other concerns.

Due to the failure to secure a joint meeting with the MPDC the Association suspects that the MPDC has no capacity to address any concerns as to accommodation, access to foreshore and guarantees associated with the continuation of the Regatta or how the proposed *Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct* will affect the future of the Royal Hobart Regatta and Regatta Association.

The Association submits that the MPDC are unable to address these concerns because there exists no detailed planning and that there has been any effort or consideration given to the effect on the proposed *Arts, Entertainment and Sports Precinct* in Hobart on community versus corporate stakeholders.



Ross Doddridge OAM

President

Royal Hobart Regatta Association

