

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

DAILY HANSARD

Thursday 13 November 2025

Preliminary Transcript

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Thursday 13 Nov 2025

The Speaker, **Mrs Petrusma**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Standing Orders 144 and 127

The SPEAKER - As I indicated yesterday, this morning I will make a statement to the House in relation to the practice of Standing Orders 144 and 127. Standing Order 144 applies to offensive or unbecoming words in reference to a member of the House. The practice of the House is that where a member takes personal offence to such words, the Speaker may direct that the member who made the comment is to withdraw the words. What constitutes offensive language needs to take into account both the nature and context of the words spoken.

Criticism or commentary of a member's political or policy positions is not something that is regarded as offending Standing Order 144, as such an approach would mean that a significant number of contributions made by all members in this House would offend this Standing Order. Such comments are instead open to debate, and members have the ability to put alternative views on the record during the debate or through using other forms of the House.

Standing Order 127, on the other hand, enables a member to make a personal explanation, usually when the member has some objection to make or some explanation to give. Such a claim is most often made on the basis that the member has been misrepresented or misquoted. There is, therefore, a difference between offensive language or imputing unbecoming motive that would require a withdrawal under Standing Order 144, and a member claiming that they have been misrepresented or misquoted, which falls within the operation of Standing Order 127. Providing a personal explanation under Standing Order 127 also gives the member the opportunity to rebut the comments made by the other member and to put their position on the record. It does not require that the member who made the comment needs to withdraw it.

During the Leader of the Greens' contribution to the appropriation bill yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that he was personally offended by the following comments made by the Leader of the Greens, Dr Woodruff:

As the Leader of the Opposition has said time and again, since Labor backflipped on its original opposition to a stadium, they will give their unconditional support to the Liberals and they will back it, whatever the cost.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Willie, then said:

I've never said that.

And shortly after:

Point of order, personal offence. I haven't actually said any of those.

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I then provided the opportunity to the Leader of the Opposition to make a personal explanation to address these comments at the end of the conclusion of the item of business. This is because the basis of the honourable Leader of the Opposition's objection to the words was that he had not said any of those comments. He has met the criteria for Standing Order 127 that the honourable Leader of the Opposition had been misrepresented or misquoted, therefore he could provide a personal explanation. As is the practice of the House, I did not enable the personal explanation to be made immediately but gave the Leader of the Opposition the call when the Leader of the Greens had concluded her contribution so as not to interrupt the business before the House.

As the Leader of the Opposition asked for the words to be withdrawn, I subsequently asked the Leader of the Greens to withdraw the comments until such time as I could review the *Hansard*. Having now read the *Hansard*, I wish to clarify for the House that on this occasion, these comments did not need to be withdrawn by Dr Woodruff as they were commentary on the member's political or policy position, rather than something that could be regarded as personally offensive words.

To summarise, enabling the honourable Leader of the Opposition to provide a personal explanation, as was provided yesterday, was appropriate under Standing Order 127, not Standing Order 144, and Dr Woodruff did not need to withdraw her words. This approach in relation to the operation of Standing Order 127 and 144 will continue to be adopted.

QUESTIONS

TT-Line - Insolvency

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

You told this House that the government was informed of the Auditor-General's determination regarding TT-Line on 21 July. Then on 26 July, an increase to TT-Line's borrowing limit was approved after informing the opposition, yet we weren't told about the Auditor-General's findings. Did you cover up the knowledge of how serious TT-Line's financial troubles were to avoid undermining your efforts to do a deal with the Greens and Independents to secure government?

ANSWER

No.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Why wasn't the opposition informed in caretaker of the real situation? What were they covering up?

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The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Emphatically: no. As I understand it, the Auditor-General hadn't reported it to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) at that time. but I might say as well -

A member - It's been reported to ASIC? Interesting.

The SPEAKER - Order. As I outlined to the House yesterday, if there are continual disruptions, I will now have no hesitation to issue warnings, and they can be in quick succession. I am sure nobody wants to be suspended from the House today. I ask that the honourable Premier be heard in silence and that you ask alternative questions or otherwise raise it in other forms of the House.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Further to that, and I'm running out of time, but I'm satisfied with the arrangements when it comes to solvency because the shareholder ministers are satisfied.

Yesterday the shareholder ministers, minister Vincent and Treasurer Abetz, were briefed by TT-Line's independent external advisers and remain comfortable with both the board's opinion of the solvency of the company and the work being undertaken to determine the long-term financial options -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

TT-Line - Borrowings

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.08 a.m.]

I think I just heard the Premier saying that the Auditor-General had reported this matter to ASIC, which we will be following up next week in Estimates.

Premier, you continue to refer to TT-Line's \$400 million of additional borrowings as a temporary extension. The Auditor-General has determined that TT-Line would not be able to meet its longer term debts that fall after August 2026 and it's insolvent. The current ships are worth less than \$100 million each. How will it be temporary unless there's another huge bailout from Tasmanian taxpayers?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and continued, incessant negativity on what is an extraordinarily positive opportunity for Tasmania and Tasmanians. I know the honourable member has to make hay while the sun shines, so to speak, because he knows that in 12 months' time, of course, the brand-new ships will be going up the Mersey River, out into Bass Strait, into Geelong. Along with it will be not only passengers but the wonderful produce that Tasmanians are producing. There will be more capacity for our primary producers and also bringing people here to add value to our \$3.5 billion visitor economy, where the yield per tourist appears to be increasing, or at least that's the advice I had

as Tourism minister, which is fantastic. Record people are coming to Tasmania through airports -

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. The question was how could it be a temporary increase in the loan facility unless there's a massive bailout from Tasmanian taxpayers?

The SPEAKER - I draw the Premier to the question, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is important to note that in July 2025, the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation (TASCORP) approved a temporary increase to the vessel replacement borrowing facility from \$990 million to \$1.4 billion until 31 October 2026, plus the maintenance of the company's \$45 million working capital facility. The then treasurer provided a guarantee to TASCORP that the maximum amount guaranteed by the state for TT-Line is increased to \$1.45 billion.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Cost

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.11 a.m.]

Once upon a time you promised the stadium would cost \$715 million. You stood in this place day after day and insisted the project would be delivered on that budget. You even mocked the Greens for suggesting it would cost a billion dollars. Yet here we are today with the cost for the project already blown out by \$400 million and it's passed that billion-dollar figure. Every time more detail has been added to the stadium design the price tag has gone up. First it went up to \$775 million, then when the project was 50 per cent designed it went up to \$945 million. Now it's 70 per cent designed and the cost is \$1.13 billion. Once upon a time you promised there would be no cost blowouts. Will you repeat that today? Will you promise that \$1.13 billion is the final price, or will you be honest and admit the cost is likely to soar further?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. If I do, you will support it - is that right?

Dr Woodruff - This is about honesty to Tasmanians. We represent Tasmanians and they want the truth.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So do I. I represent opportunity and aspiration. That's why we've driven this project so very, very hard, listening to Tasmanians, travelling around Tasmania and speaking with Tasmanians to ensure they get a greater understanding of what is a significant state investment and federal investment, of course. The opportunity before us, whether it is \$1.13 billion -

Mr Bayley - It is two billion now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's two now?

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The SPEAKER - Order, interjections will cease. The honourable Premier is the only one who has the call.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I might add that when you oppose this, you really have to think long and hard about what you are opposing. You are opposing the establishment of a decades-old dream of the Tasmanian Devils, which is going gangbusters.

Dr Woodruff - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. This is about the cost of the stadium and whether the Premier will be honest and tell them what the figure will finally be.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have updated Tasmanians on the increase in costs. Of course, I can't be beholden to the \$1.13 billion, but, of course, this project will be no doubt scrutinised - it already has been - within an inch of its life and will continue to be, so there is great incentive to bring it within budget. But you will be saying no to \$240 million of federal government funding, \$360 million of AFL investment into Tasmania; \$600 million you will be saying no to on behalf of Tasmanians.

Dare I say that it's not just about you. It's about the young people of Tasmania who deserve a future in this state. People talk about those opposite, and I thank them for the bipartisan support, about young people leaving Tasmania. We want our young people staying in Tasmania and providing them with opportunity, like every other state has. I was speaking to a person in the construction industry the other day who has great insight into where all the construction machinery is heading right now. Unfortunately, it's all going to Queensland. We want that opportunity and those jobs here. That is why we are committed to this project.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier said that he can't be beholden to the \$1.13 billion. Is there an upper limit that his government will pay for this stadium?

The SPEAKER - It is related to the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When you consider the investment that we're making, we need to ensure that we look after every single dollar and that be scrutinised. We also need to make this the best possible opportunity and ensure that this stadia is iconic. To do so we need to have the right investment and of course make it truly Tasmanian stadia infrastructure that we can be very proud of, as other states are.

When it comes to the budget, yes, that will be scrutinised. This is the most scrutinised project in the history of the world.

Dr Woodruff - Is this a blank cheque?

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

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Mr ROCKLIFF - We haven't even turned first sod yet, for heaven's sake. We will make sure that this investment is value for money, but most importantly, an investment that Tasmanians will be extraordinarily proud of, like other stadia infrastructure across the country.

Dr Woodruff - Not 'one red cent more than \$375 million.' Now it's a blank cheque.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier's time has expired. Dr Woodruff, I appreciate that today is going to be a very passionate day. I caution the member to minimise and stop the interjections, because there's an important debate later on today.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - like us all to please welcome year nine students from the Hutchins School. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Economic Modelling

Ms JOHNSTON question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[[10.18 a.m.]

Yesterday you said that you didn't think it was possible to model how much money might flow directly into state coffers from the stadium's economic activity, yet later in question time your advisers found some modelling; something showing that the AFL's payroll in Tasmania would bring in about \$2 million per year in payroll tax. Leaving aside that pitiful contribution to reducing state debt and servicing stadium costs, clearly modelling is possible. Is there more such modelling? If so, will you make it public? If there is no more modelling, will you instruct Treasury to do it and make it public? If not, why not?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, yes, I did compliment the member for Clark yesterday on her acknowledgement that the stadium would ensure that there was greater economic activity than currently exists as a result of the stadium. I thanked her for that acknowledgement. What I indicated was that that would then have a spin-off for state coffers.

I was asked about modelling. No modelling has been done in relation to the AFL contribution. The AFL itself has said that with its operations, given what they know, they will have a payroll of \$44 million. From that, off the top of my head, I thought the payroll tax on that would be about \$2 million. I was corrected, and corrected the record later to say it was in fact \$2.6 million, even a little bit more if that is the payroll of the AFL.

Will I ask Treasury to engage in such modelling? I don't think so, but I can make enquiries as to whether that is a reasonable and possible thing to do, given all the vagaries and a lot of imponderables in relation to how much will actually go into payroll tax or stamp duty. What we do know is that they will be an influx of personnel. Just think about this: here we have the opportunity of a business that will have a payroll of \$44 million that does not exist today, and there are members in this place who want to vote against that opportunity. I, for one, will not

be voting against that opportunity. I'm going to be voting for it because I want aspiration and ambition for our people.

Might I add, it's not only in the area of the craft of AFL. The intellectual nerds, if I can call them that, the computer people - which I have no understanding about - they will be getting jobs. The waiters, the cooks, the chefs, a whole host of people will have job opportunities in this area, which I don't want to seek to deny them. Let's look at the opportunities, let's fulfil the ambitions and this will provide opportunities for a whole host of people, not only in the sporting arena - physiotherapy, medical, accounting, the list goes on. This is a \$44 million payroll that you would seek to deny Tasmanians.

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - A supplementary question, honourable Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms JOHNSTON - This is a very important question that goes to the heart of affordability. The Treasurer has just said in his response that no modelling has been done on the actual amount of money that will go from the economic activity into government coffers to pay not only for the debt-servicing costs, but, as the Treasurer keeps repeating, to pay for health, housing and schools in the future. Treasurer, how can you possibly continue to say that the stadium will pay for health, housing and schools in the future if you don't know and you won't model the actual revenue that will come back into state government coffers?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Treasurer.

Mr ABETZ - There's a pretty basic economic assumption and that is, as the economy grows - and this will be an economic enabler, so we will see the economy growing - you then get more money coming in, from the federal point of view: income tax, company tax, state revenue, stamp duty, payroll tax. It just stands to reason. It is Economics 101, with respect. I don't think any further explanation is required.

If we have a growing economy, we have a growing base from which to get a tax revenue, which will assist in the future funding of matters - health, education, or wherever else that expenditure should be provided, courtesy of the vote of this House.

Salmon Industry - Regulatory Changes

Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.22 a.m.]

Yesterday, we learned that yet another farmed salmon company, Huon, is using the new antibiotic florfenicol in our waterways to treat diseased pens, an indication of what may yet prove to be another summer of mass mortalities. Your own government report reveals so many shortcomings in dealing with the crisis that occurred last summer that coastal communities have every right to be sceptical of reassurances that everything's under control. It's simply not good enough to keep repeating that everything is improving when clearly it is not. Will you tell

this House what changes to regulatory procedures, and what real changes, have been implemented to deal with another summer of antibiotics and mortalities almost upon us?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question and concern on behalf of yourself and your constituents. Can I say that all Tasmanians, irrespective of location or view on the aquaculture industry, do not want a repeat of last summer. That's why the report was done, in terms of the findings and learnings from that. I've spoken a number of times about the continuous improvement needed for the aquaculture industry - increased penalties in a range of areas, increased monitoring in a range of areas as well.

On florfenicol, of course, a very important and effective and safe antibiotic to use: the Director of Public Health has confirmed there is no evidence of harm to human health from consuming traces of florfenicol. It is safe to swim and safe to eat the fish. That needs to be very clear. That's why it's being permitted and regulated by the federal institution, if I can put it that way.

Over the last 11 years, we've seen the industry regulation evolve as the industry has grown. I know it's helpful to characterise foreign companies, but if there wasn't foreign investment in Tasmania, this place would dry up. We need foreign investment. I've lived with foreign investment all my life as a farmer - McCain, Simplot, and all sorts of agricultural companies and suppliers. It's important -

Mr GEORGE - Honourable Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. I asked the Premier quite a clear question. Will he tell the House what changes in regulatory procedures have been implemented to deal with another summer of antibiotics and mass mortalities? We don't need a lecture.

The SPEAKER - That's all you need to do. Point of order, relevance. Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member, but you took licence in your question, I can take licence in my answer - provided the good Speaker allows me to do so.

The SPEAKER - I do remind the Premier of relevance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Measures progressed by NRE (The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania) include: increasing veterinary and bio-security compliance capability with three additional staff, and I believe I've mentioned these before; implementation of the Salmonid Biosecurity Quality Certification Program; planning and implementation for a 2025-26 biosecurity compliance audit programme and a marine aquaculture compliance strategy; increasing multi-regulator land- and water-based compliance assessment activities; the Centre for Aquatic Animal Vaccine Health progressing specific diagnostic tests.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GEORGE - The Premier says that these procedures are being put into place. I'm asking what is being done now? What is in place already to prevent and to deal with another mass-mortality outbreak this summer?

The SPEAKER - That was in the original question, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that additional work which is being progressed by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) includes: the process of varying marine environmental licences to add new conditions around detection, containment and removal of dead fish within a specified timeframe and keeping the records to demonstrate compliance; reviewing reporting templates used by industry including the mortality weight reporting to ensure that all relevant data is provided in a consistent manner by the companies; and liaising with NRE, Tasmanian Biosecurity, Tasmanian Marine Resources and the Department of Health so that regulatory requirements are better aligned to establish data-sharing arrangements.

In addition to the measures detailed in the report, industry has advised the government that it has been proactively implementing measures to reduce the risk of another mortality event. Efforts include advancing selective breeding programs, refining feeding practices and pioneering risk-mitigation technologies, such as the innovative jellyfish bubble curtain system, notably -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Homes Tasmania - Underperformance

Mr O'BYRNE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

One of the core pillars of your budget reform strategy is increasing the productivity of government expenditure. In the last financial year, Homes Tasmania received \$129 million in government funding, which is an increase of \$40 million compared to the previous year. Despite this increase in funding, we've seen very little in the way of increased productivity, which is exemplified by the Huntingfield disgrace and the waitlist for housing, which continues to grow. If you are serious about improving productivity, how can you justify the persistent underperformance of Homes Tasmania?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, which is more correctly, if I might suggest, directed to the Minister for Housing and Planning, who has been at this lectern previously indicating that there is a need for some change to take place, to get things moving, and the honourable minister has done exactly that, as I understand it.

I just drove past the new signs indicating that there were blocks now finally for sale at Huntingfield. Things are happening. If the honourable member wants to get me on board that there needs to be an increase in productivity in every single department, guess what? I'm on board in relation to Homes Tasmania and housing. The minister might give me a nod if I've recalled this correctly, but I think we've allocated \$600 million in this budget to housing. I will

correct that figure if my recollection is incorrect. I didn't get the nod I was hoping for, so I better check that figure.

If there is a request and a desire for increased productivity, then I'm all on board, and we as a government, of course, have the Efficiency and Productivity Unit (EPU) which will we will set to work to go through not only Homes Tasmania but each and every aspect of government endeavours to ensure that the long-suffering taxpayers of Tasmania get the best value for the dollar they provide to government for us to expend on their behalf.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.30 a.m.]

You promised to introduce legislation to establish TasInsure in your first 100 days. Unless you table a bill today, you are going to miss the deadline. TasInsure was your signature election policy. You literally wore it with pride. If you are prepared to break your promise on TasInsure, you're prepared to break your word on everything. Will you be tabling legislation today to establish TasInsure, or will you admit that you misled Tasmanians during the election?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. We are committed to TasInsure. Of course, we are, because as we travel around Tasmania, not only through the election campaign but for the last two years, people have been raising the high cost of insurance premiums, of which, breathtakingly, you're against supporting Tasmanian's -

Members interjecting

Mr Willie - Your policy response to it - it's a serious issue.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members of the opposition, you have asked a question. The Premier still has two minutes and 33 seconds to go. I ask that the honourable Premier is allowed to make his contribution in peace. You could then ask a supplementary or further questions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - airer and cheaper insurance premiums. I don't know why you're against it. I'm sure you travel the state as I do, and all members do. We are looking forward to Tasmania and ensuring Tasmanians have fairer and cheaper insurance. I don't know why those opposite are supporting an industry across Australia that's reaping \$6 billion of profit. I don't know why that is, but as I have my ear to the ground, Tasmanians are being hit hard by ever-increasing insurance premiums.

Members interjecting.

Mr Mitchell - You are all talk.

The SPEAKER - The honourable member for Lyons just made three interjections, basically within three seconds. This is your first warning.

Ms Butler - Which one?

The SPEAKER - Mr Mitchell, I appreciate the both of you together, but you only made one while he made three.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm looking forward to tabling the legislation prior to the end of the year, thank you very much.

We're going to continue consulting with industry, consulting with Tasmanians, listening to Tasmanians, and the whole of government and the whole of community when it comes to providing Tasmanians with cheaper, fairer insurance. This is a problem nationwide which we will address. It was a very important policy at the last election. You had the opportunity to either match it or come up with your own ideas, and you refused to do so.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Cost

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.34 a.m.]

At the 2024 election, you promised Tasmanians you'd cap taxpayer spending on the stadium at \$375 million. You famously said 'not a red cent more' of public money would be spent. However, costs have grown, and private investment has been abandoned. It's obvious this promise has been broken. You've absurdly claimed it hasn't and keep trying to move the goalposts. The last ridiculous pretence was that the extra money being spent on the stadium somehow wasn't taxpayer money; it was borrowings from Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC). However, the budget papers show even that argument is false. On the stadium costs above the \$375 million, it says, 'The remaining costs will be partially funded through equity contributions from the finance general.' That's a big extra chunk of taxpayer money that would be spent on the stadium. Will you finally admit the \$375 million cap is dishonest and designed to deceive?

The SPEAKER - The honourable member's time has expired.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, we always said there'd have to be equity contributions.

To the question from the honourable member, Ms Johnston, to the Treasurer about the growth of the economy. This will attract private investment on Macquarie Point precinct: hotels, visitor economy establishments, all employing many Tasmanians, generating economic activity within the community.

This has been a long journey for a long time. In fact, I have to give credit to the honourable member for Franklin, David O'Byrne, who was the Infrastructure minister, along with the federal minister, Anthony Albanese, in 2012 with that capital injection of some \$50 million to realise a vision for the Macquarie Point precinct. No-one has come up with an alternative -

Mr Bayley - Yes, they have. You had one. You contracted it.

Dr Woodruff - We sure have. So many.

Mr Bayley - You paid out Melbourne developers not to build it. A billion dollars. He is completely misrepresenting reality.

The SPEAKER - Members of the Greens.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Your big greenhouses higher than the stadium?

The SPEAKER - Through the Chair, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There will be investments when it comes to the visitor economy and a whole new industry of young people, particularly. I look at the young people in the gallery today. That's why we're doing this: for the opportunity of our young people and future generations. If you oppose this and this does not go ahead, given the journey we've been through since 2012 and before, I can guarantee you that in 2035, if the stadium is not built, that place will still be an industrial wasteland.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the original question about honesty to Tasmanians about the cost, Premier, give it up. It's in the Budget Papers in black and white. The Macquarie Point Development Corporation has \$490 million on its books. Your general government papers have \$375 million of taxpayers' money. Will you be honest about the fact that both of those sums are sums of money that Tasmanians will pay? Will you tell people the truth that we will be paying through the nose over \$375 million to fund a stadium that we don't need, borrowing to service it for 30 years.

The SPEAKER - Borrowings and everything was at the heart of the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are transparent when it comes to these matters and have always been open when it comes to the investment required. You can point to matters within the Budget Papers in full transparency, but this is an opportunity that -

Mr Bayley - Recommended against.

The SPEAKER - Mr Bayley.

Mr ROCKLIFF - we must fight for and must not lose as a state. If we lose this opportunity, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, with investment from the AFL -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. I'm not asking about the opportunity. I'm asking about the figures and your promise to Tasmanians of \$375 million.

Will you let go of that and be honest about the fact it's going to cost far more than that - at least \$490 million more than that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's \$375 million investment from the Tasmanian government as stated in the Budget Papers.

TasInsure - Election Promise

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.39 a.m.]

The Budget Papers make zero reference to your government insurance business, TasInsure. Your signature election policy was not mentioned once in your Treasurer's 7500-word Budget speech. There is no legislation to establish TasInsure, no business case, no financial modelling or financial advice. The shopfront has disappeared and you've stopped wearing the jacket. Will you finally admit once and for all that TasInsure was nothing more than a cruel election hoax?

ANSWER

Honourable member, I know it's painful, but you could have come up with your own opportunity to address the insurance crisis. When it comes to community groups, when it comes to mums and dads and small businesses in particular, we will deliver TasInsure and consult with the community.

I still have the TasInsure jacket and I look forward to wearing in the not-too-distant future. You have the hat - where did you get that from? If you tell me, I will give you a stubbie holder.

We are committed to it. It's a serious issue so let's work together on it. We're consulting. Come up with your own ideas when it comes to addressing this problem, and be part of the solution.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - If it was his signature policy at the election, why did he make no mention of it in his budget reply or previous speeches? It has disappeared.

The SPEAKER - Premier, that was in the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You say it has disappeared; it hasn't. It's very much part of our agenda, very clearly, and we are very committed to that. I was interested, however, in the Young Labor conference the other day. When they said -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. My question was about TasInsure not being mentioned in the Treasury -

Mr ROCKLIFF - You mentioned the word 'disappear' and I want to say something about that, because in the Young Labor -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Premier, I hope you don't have a prop in your hand there.

Mr Willie - Just running down the clock.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Impact on Cenotaph

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for VETERANS' AFFAIRS, Mr PEARCE

[10.42 a.m.]

RSL Tasmania has long opposed your Mac Point stadium because of the confirmed negative impacts on the values of the Cenotaph. This is Australia's oldest war memorial and a sacred shrine. Last year the RSL said it had been 'disrespected and misled at every turn' by your government about the stadium. Earlier this year, the RSL congress reconfirmed its opposition to the stadium; an overwhelming majority of sub-branches voted to oppose it. Yesterday the new president rearticulated the RSL's opposition in a letter to members of the Legislative Council. He says:

The Cenotaph stands as Tasmania's most sacred place of remembrance. It deserves nothing less than your unwavering protection. No mitigation can offset the harm the proposed stadium would inflict on the Cenotaph. [tbc]

Just days after the sombre ceremony for Remembrance Day, why are you so willing to sacrifice the values of the Cenotaph and continue to disrespect the RSL and its members?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member. I think that is a genuine question that comes from a genuine place, a real place. I certainly appreciate your thoughts and your position on that. I also come from a place that is founded with that respect and that background. Might I say that no place is more significant to me than a cenotaph, particularly that particular cenotaph. Might I also say that I come from a place that, when it comes to remembrance, it's done not just one day a year, but every day. It's done every waking moment. I will take you back to a typical day for a soldier, sailor, or aviator in the military. Their day starts at 0730 hours, where they parade and then do PT. They do physical sport, they play team games. It encourages unity, teamwork, courage, respect. They learn to respect their fellow team members.

That embodiment of sport is integral to all of our defence forces and instils and inculcates in them a sense of teamwork embodied in that sport. My point, why I tell you this, is because that every time we go to recognise a game of sport, we also glance and remember those who have fallen and protected our country. I think that is important. I think that is a different aspect to place onto this. I believe in no way will that diminish the significance of our great war memorials, or in fact the service that beholds our nation.

Beauty Point Tourist Park - Long-Term Residents' Rights

Prof RAZAY question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Mr BARNETT

[10.45 a.m.]

My question relates to the Beauty Point Tourist Park Residents Association and the existing rights of long-term residents. On 17 October 2025, you said in a media release that the government had a clear legislative commitment to ensure that the rights of long-term caravan park residents are protected. Can you please outline what progress has been made by government to protect the existing residential use and long-term rights of residents at the Beauty Point Tourist Park and other Tasmanian caravan parks?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and his special interest in this matter on behalf of his constituents, particularly in that part of the world. I also acknowledge other members of parliament across the Chamber who've been strong advocates for clarity with respect to the rights of long-term residents in caravan parks. I wanted to recognise that upfront.

Certainly, I have heard the concerns of the long-term residents of caravan parks and you've rightly noted that in my capacity as Attorney-General I've intervened in a Supreme Court matter for and on behalf of myself as Attorney-General, but with the ambition to ensure that there is greater clarity - that there is a removal of confusion - with respect to the rights of long-term residents in caravan parks. You've made the point and I take it very seriously. I took it so seriously that, as Attorney-General, I've intervened in that Supreme Court matter which is before us. I won't speak much about that Supreme Court matter. It is on the public record, but I've taken action and I'm delivering on that.

I've also made it clear that the concerns of those rights of long-term residents are not well understood and therefore there is a risk of them being treated unfairly, so I have acted on that. Additionally, I'm getting on with the job on behalf of the government, consistent with the announcements during the election and the good work of the former minister, Felix Ellis, and others with respect to delivering important legislation to provide greater clarity. That legislation will be released in draft for public consultation in December consistent with our election commitment. We will then introduce that legislation in the first part of next year following public feedback and comment.

Of course, it has been delayed because of that commitment earlier in the year from the former minister, because we had an unnecessary election forced on us by the Labor Party and the Greens opposite. That is the reason for the delay, but we've acted on this. It's a very complex matter, as you can understand, and we're getting on with the job. In December I will release

that draft legislation. There will be public comment and feedback. I look forward to that through my department. We will then deliver that legislation in the first part of next year.

TasInsure - Establishment

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.49 a.m.]

The Auditor-General has warned that the Motor Accidents Insurance Board's (MAIB) balance sheet is deteriorating and has weakened over the past five years. In that context, establishing TasInsure as a government-owned business is reckless. Isn't it completely irresponsible to ignore the Auditor-General again and jeopardise the future of a strong, stable public insurer by setting up your dodgy insurance company that has no business case, no modelling, and no Treasury advice behind it?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The MAIB's operating profit in 2024 was \$115.9 million before tax and \$83.4 million after tax, up from \$95.7 million in 2023-24. MAIB also had a net investment gain, as I understand it, of \$177.9 million, representing a net return of some 8.5 per cent.

Don't characterise as the insurance and the idea and TasInsure in that way, because you're dismissing the concerns of Tasmanians who are - well, come up with your alternative -

Mr Willie - That is not true.

Ms Finlay - That is not true. You're preying on the pain points of Tasmanians.

The SPEAKER - Order. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I ask that your interjections cease.

Mr ROCKLIFF - because it's important that if you're in the space of an alternative government - you were in the space a couple of days ago, just waiting and waiting and waiting.

Ms Finlay - We're in the space of honesty.

The SPEAKER - This is the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition's first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have to be proactive. This is a very key policy issue for Tasmanian people in terms of addressing their concerns. Not big business, but mums and dads. Small businesses, community groups, events.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45 relevance. The question was about the Auditor-General's recent report and MAIB's deteriorating balance sheet, and the recklessness of establishing TasInsure in that context. I'd ask if he could address the question.

The SPEAKER - That was the original question, Premier.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have provided information which points to the strength of MAIB and operating profit. I commend MAIB on their due diligence and the very good work that they do in operating their insurance company on behalf of all Tasmanians.

What have we got here? Oh dear - a Labor Party financial document. It does claim that you were going to take a special dividend from MAIB. \$50 million. Actually, no - \$100 million.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable Premier, you're using that as a prop. I will ask that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was referencing it, honourable Speaker.

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. The question was about the Auditor-General's recent report, not about past election commitments.

The SPEAKER - MAIB was mentioned in the original question, but I draw the Premier back to relevance to the question.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - You know the Premier's under pressure when he can't answer the question and he's using distractions. The supplementary is: why would he gamble with MAIB's future with his reckless TasInsure policy?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the member for his supplementary. This is an alternative, when you've got \$100 million of dividends coming out of the MAIB. You speak of disappearing, but this has now disappeared from the website, as I understand, as well. I'm happy to do further research on that.

Ms Finlay - That's right. You know you're in trouble.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are committed to TasInsure and working with Tasmanians to provide the best possible opportunity when it comes to fairer insurance for Tasmanians. That's why the policy resonated and that's why we will deliver.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - I believe we may have a second cohort of year nine students from the Hutchins School, there. They've definitely changed positions, anyways. Welcome to parliament. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Project Financial Management

Ms BURNET question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.54 a.m.]

Your government has completely mismanaged the replacement of the *Spirits* to the point that, as you said today, TT-Line has been referred to ASIC. It's been costly decision after costly decision. Unlike the stadium, the ferries are vital for Tasmanians. The Gruen report on the stadium was clear: the project is already displaying the hallmarks of mismanagement.

Today, this House will be deciding on Tasmania's biggest-ever infrastructure project. Your government has already sent TT-Line to the brink. Now, you look set to bankrupt the state. How can you persuade anyone - particularly your biggest *Spirits* critics, the so-called 'opposition' - that your government could competently manage the Mac Point stadium project?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank honourable member for her question. However, I don't agree with the characterisation contained in the question of taking companies to the brink and the like. I have enormous confidence in the leadership of TT-Line to work through some significant matters. The ships are nearly here. The wharf is well under construction.

As I travelled to Hobart on the weekend, I travelled over the Bridgewater Bridge; an \$800 million project delivered on time and within budget, as I understand it. We can be very proud of that, Dean, can't we?

We can deliver this. You've seen the enormous amount of work when it's come into the stadia infrastructure. It is going to bring enormous opportunity. It is to be built on an industrial wasteland, ripe for opportunity. This is not a pulp mill, that you were debating in about 2007 or 2008 or whenever the time was; this is an opportunity to create and enhance our visitor economy, and to build opportunity for young Tasmanians - I see them in the Gallery today. I don't agree with your characterisation within your question. This project has been scrutinised to the nth degree, and will continue to be scrutinised, which will keep the government, our government, accountable to its delivery.

Ms BURNET - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms BURNET - Premier, you made those points that *Spirits* will be arriving, but they haven't arrived, and it just symbolises all of the stuff-ups along the way with that project which your government has been responsible for. You also talk about the expenses with the stadium, and that is an intergenerational debt. Given your history, your government's history, how on Earth can Tasmania's MPs and MLCs believe you?

The SPEAKER - The member's time has expired. I just want to remind members that you've only got 30 seconds. It's not an opportunity for you to make a statement to the House,

and 30 seconds does go by very fast. I encourage you, as I said a number of times, to use your supplementary to refer back to your original question or to the Premier's answer, but it's not a time to make a statement, so if the Premier has anything further to add to his original comment, because I appreciate the member didn't really get to a question.

TasInsure - Absence from State Budget

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ.

[10.58 a.m.]

Saul Eslake described your government state-owned insurance business as a thought bubble and just about the worst idea to come out of a major political party in Tasmania that he could remember. Your Budget does not include one single reference to TasInsure. We know there's no business case, no Treasury advice or financial modelling for TasInsure, and you did not mention TasInsure once in your 20-minute Budget speech. Treasurer, why did you airbrush your premier signature policy from your budget?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, no matter how the Leader of the Opposition characterises it, at least we do think, so we do have 'thought bubbles', unlike those opposite, who never think about policy. I'm also so terribly, terribly disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition thought my budget speech went for only 20 minutes. I'm told it went for 32 minutes and five seconds, so he missed out on 12 minutes and 5 seconds, and I would encourage him to read -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable Treasurer, I do ask you to stop inciting interjections. Honourable members of the opposition, I ask you to allow the Treasurer to finish, because you still have another question to go and a supplementary question.

Mr ABETZ - I didn't realise the opposition were that sensitive, Speaker, so I will be very careful with my comments.

As the Premier has made very clear, TasInsure is the government's policy; it is being pursued. It is currently with experts who are considering the scope and how we might be able to deliver that for the best value for the Tasmanian people. Once we know that, then we will be including the details of that in the Budget. Until we are informed of that information we can't put figures into the Budget.

What I would say to the honourable gentleman is, yet again - and I just met with a small business owner from the north-west coast yesterday who was complaining that in a period of four years without having had a single insurance claim, his insurance went from \$8000 to \$20,000. There are small businesses genuinely struggling in relation to their insurance premiums - tourism industries, households. That is why the Premier determined on a policy to seek to deal with that issue for and on behalf of the people of Tasmania. Until we land on an exact model and know the full financial details, of course it will not be included in the Budget, but I do compliment the Leader of the Opposition for noting and realising that we on this side

do have thoughts and we do put them forward as genuine policies, unlike the policy-free zone of the opposition.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - The Treasurer in his answer then has just admitted that there are no details, so will he finally admit it was an election hoax and a thought bubble?

Ms Haddad - You were just promising for the election, you've got no intention of delivering.

MR Willie - You said there's no details, that's why it's not in the Budget.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Clark, Ms Haddad, this is your first warning, because you have made a few interjections today. Honourable Treasurer.

Mr ABETZ - The government's position on this is clear and I understand that the Premier will have more to say in relation to this in the next few days, but I thank the opposition for building up the anticipation in relation to this and thank him for the question.

Budget - Letters Postponing of Election Commitments

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.03 a.m.]

It's come to our attention that you wrote letters to community organisations last week explaining that their election commitments could not be accommodated in this year's Budget and would be considered as part of the 2026-27 budget process. Tasmanians working in the salmon and racing industries know that letters from you aren't worth the paper they're written on. How many community organisations did you write to last week about their election commitments and why did some organisations receive letters but not others? Will you table the letters?

Mr Mitchell - Find them on the fiction section of the library.

Mr Rockliff - What was that, Brian?

Mr Mitchell - Do you want me to answer, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - The honourable member for Lyons. He shouldn't be using your first name either.

ANSWER

Anyway, I thank the honourable member for the question. We are committed to our election commitments and those we've written to, community organisations. I believe our Treasurer has explained this in this or other forums and we look forward to delivering on those commitments.

The honourable member has mentioned disappearing, whitewashing and all those types of things. He mentioned the greyhound industry as well. I'm happy to seek some advice.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I remind members that there's a very significant and important debate today. It is my job to maintain order in this House. We will have respectful silence when ministers or the Premier are making contributions. I expect the government to likewise show respect to members of the opposition, the crossbench and the Greens when they make their contributions today too. I ask that the Premier is heard. Members can ask a supplementary question and there are other forms of the House if they dispute the words being said.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I appreciate that and I appreciate the community organisations and the work they do and I spoke at length at that in my contribution on the Budget. I look forward to delivering on those commitments to the hardworking community organisations. The honourable member mentions all this language about disappearing and whitewashing and all those types of things. He mentioned the greyhound racing industry. I was interested in Young Labor's policy on the greyhound racing industry. This is important.

Members interjecting.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Speaker -

The SPEAKER - Order, silence. The honourable member has made a point of order.

Mr WILLIE - Standing Order 45, relevance. The question was about how many community groups he'd written to and whether he'd table the letters.

The SPEAKER - That was in the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is very relevant. I commend Young Labor. I was a Young Liberal at a point in time -

Ms Haddad - They aren't a community organisation.

The SPEAKER - Ms Haddad, this is your second warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and Young Libs didn't always agree with the adults, and I'm sure they still don't, but I was interested in the greyhound policy of Young Labor.

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. Young Labor is not a community organisation getting letters from the Premier. The question was how many organisations did he write to and will he table those letters?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier, relevance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to table the letters and seek some advice, but we passed motions to end public funding for greyhound racing. That's what they believe in. That was at 6.59 p.m., until Mr Winter got hold of them, and at 8.48 p.m., it wasn't, 'We passed motions to end public funding for greyhound racing', it was, 'We passed motions on greyhound racing.' A nice little bit of editing history there from the Young Labor movement. I'm sure Dean was on the phone, who has some history when it comes to editing -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Why did some community groups get letters from the Premier and others did not?

The SPEAKER - That was at the heart of the original question, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to table the letters and seek some advice on the supplementary.

Risk of Algal Bloom in Tasmania

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[11.07 a.m.]

We looked on in horror at the scenes that unfolded in South Australia over summer as they experienced one of the worst algal blooms in our country's history. On Wednesday, a Senate committee looking into the disaster released its report. While there was no silver bullet solution identified, a marine heatwave, high nutrient load in the oceans from finfish farming, climate change and pollution were all identified as contributing factors. What the committee did identify was the lack of research, monitoring or preparedness for this sort of event. They also concluded that by the time the toxic algae was detected, it was too late to do anything about it. All the factors present in South Australia last summer will be here this summer. Algal blooms are almost an annual event now in Tasmania. What research has your government done on algal blooms in our marine environment and what preventative steps has your government taken to reduce the risk of a toxic algal bloom occurring in Tasmania over summer.

ANSWERS

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question and ongoing interest in our oceans. In a recent meeting of the agriculture ministers from around the country, that was certainly front and centre for South Australia and it did impact them significantly. It's been

linked to a number of factors including a sustained marine heatwave combined with significant upwelling of ocean nutrients.

Tasmania has a comprehensive monitoring program in place that goes back 20 years that can detect harmful algal blooms, including those caused by new species. We've also recently convened a series of workshops with the seafood industry focused on, as you rightly point out, harmful algal bloom preparedness. In recognition of the dynamic nature of our marine environment, we also released the Marine Heatwave Response Plan. The plan outlines current and future steps for Tasmanians, not only government but industries and communities, to prepare for and respond to marine heatwave events.

The other thing that the member would obviously be aware of is the effect on the seafood industries. Harmful algal blooms in Tasmania have occurred in the past and are likely to occur in the future, and I think the member knows that. No-one wants to see these events occur, no government, no industry and certainly no community. As we've seen in South Australia, when harmful algal blooms occur they can pose threats to the marine ecosystem and also public health. National guidelines prescribe the thresholds for closing fishing harvesting operations and initiating biotoxin meat testing. In this regard, Tasmania has established a comprehensive biotoxin monitoring program, which monitors the presence of biotoxins associated with such algal blooms. The program has been in place for over 20 years. It has been modified, it has been updated, and it has all the rigour that science can apply, and the results are made available on a weekly basis on the NRE Tasmania website.

There's also, if I have time, reports of the red tide, and I'm sure members are aware of that. What they're talking about there is *Noctiluca*, which is a bloom on the east coast and that is present at the minute. I'm advised that these blooms are of an algal species which appear as a red slick on top of the surface. They're not unusual to occur from time to time along the east and south-east coast of Tasmania. Our scientists are monitoring them. They are not reason for concern, and *Noctiluca* blooms are not harmful to humans.

Supplementary Question

Mr GARLAND - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GARLAND - You've spoken about response. What preventative measures have you taken?

The SPEAKER - That was part of the original question.

Mr PEARCE - I don't understand the question. In terms of preventing the algal bloom from reaching Tasmanian shores? I don't understand what you're saying.

Mr GARLAND - What I'm saying is that we had an algal event in South Australia. We've got all the same conditions here. What preventative measures have you taken, if any, to stop this from happening?

Mr PEARCE - In terms of preventing the tide from bringing the algal bloom to Tasmania, then that is well outside the realms of any human being. What I'm detailing to you

is the preventative measures, the proactive steps that we've taken should such a bloom reach our shores and affect our marine environment. That's what we've put our effort into. Unfortunately when it comes to sea tides and moving algal blooms, I'm sorry, but we can't affect that.

Sewerage Systems - Outdated Systems

Mr Di FALCO question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF.

[11.12 p.m.]

Communities have again raised concerns about outdated water and sewage systems that are struggling to meet population growth. Can you outline how the government will support councils and TasWater to address these long-term infrastructure challenges?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and interest in this matter. There is significant work being done by TasWater, as I understand it. While I don't have direct responsibility with TasWater, enormous investment when it comes to working with councils and addressing some of those needs, particularly when it comes to overflow and the like, which damages the aquaculture industry and oyster industry, as has done in the past.

TasWater's financial 2026-2030 corporate plan in fact outlines some investment of \$2 billion in water and sewage infrastructure over the next five years. Of this spend, \$1.2 billion is to meet compliance requirements relating to drinking water, the environment and dams, and commitments, of course, to government. The years 2027 onwards are subject to the outcomes of the Pricing and Services Plan 5 submission with the Tasmanian Economic Regulator.

Can I also say, for interest, honourable member, that this level of investment is required, and I've spoken about that, to enable TasWater to meet a number of its regulatory obligations and to deliver on customer expectations - which I believe is where the heart of the question is coming from, quite rightly - for reliability with an ageing asset base. The financial projections show gearing will reach some 48.3 per cent in 2029-30, well below TasWater's 55 per cent target.

Approximately 48 per cent of the capital program is driven by compliance, with 27 per cent renewal, 17 per cent growth and 8 per cent improvement, largely in the ICT area. The most recent example that I can speak of is when I was on Flinders Island a few years ago. Honourable member for Bass, Michael Ferguson, was there as well, and Mrs Archer. That's a very good example of TasWater working with the local council, to your question, and not only creating that opportunity for safe water on the island, but also investing for the future, because that investment will, again, enable the tourism and the visitor economy on the island. Also, to have that confidence and security of water supply.

That's a very good example of councils and TasWater working together. There are many other examples around the state. There's also a great deal of need, particularly in those high-pressure areas around the state - namely the East Coast, for example - and other areas where

we need to ensure that good water and sewerage meets visitor expectations and community expectations as well, in terms of safety compliance and the environment.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

ANZAC Day March - Fees

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for VETERANS' AFFAIRS, Mr PEARCE

[11.16 a.m.]

One of my constituents in a local RSL branch is concerned that their ANZAC Day march is under some doubt because of the introduction of expensive new fees for their small branch for police support for a dawn march. Why are small community groups being burdened with red tape and new costs for a cultural event which has strong support for the community and very low risk? So many community groups are burdened in this way, particularly local RSL branches. What can your government do to fix this situation, and will you do it?

Best Practice for Blood Donation LGBTQIA+ Community

Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

My question is from members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Red Cross Lifeblood service has removed the abstinence requirement for blood plasma donations from gay and bisexual men and transgender women, which is a very welcome move. Lifeblood has indicated it will extend this reform to whole blood donations, but no timeframe has been provided for this change. The proposed screening questions for whole blood donations fall short of global best practice, and lack the clarity and consistency seen in the UK, US and Canada. This will potentially discourage eligible donors.

Given the critical need to maximise safe whole-blood donations, has the minister consulted with medical and community stakeholders before endorsing this approach? Will the minister seek a clear timeframe for implementing this reform, and ensure the screening process reflects international best practice to maximise the opportunity for much-needed blood donation?

Florfenicol - Fast-Track Approval

Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

My question is from constituent Cassandra Faux of Geeveston, a small business owner with a Masters in clinical microbiology. She says: I'm deeply concerned by the government's fast-tracked approval to use the antibiotic florfenicol in diseased salmon pens without public consultation, transparent risk-assessment, or environmental accountability. As a small business operator, I ask why the multi-million dollar salmon industry appears to receive shortcuts and exemptions from the level of scrutiny, compliance, and community consultation that is required of small-scale food producers, tourism and hospitality businesses.

Will the Premier explain on what basis approval was granted to use the antibiotic for florfenicol, and how it aligns with Tasmania's stated commitment to science-based regulation, environmental protection, and a clean, sustainable brand reputation built over decades?

UTAS Stadium - Completion Date

Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for SPORT, Mr DUGAN

My question is from Steven of West Launceston. Upgrades work is under way at UTAS Stadium, but he's keen to know how the project is progressing and what the expected completion date is.

Public Transport on the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas

Mr MITCHELL question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

I've been contacted by members of the Nubeena township on the Tasman Peninsula who are deeply concerned about the lack of bus services. The Tasman Peninsula population includes many older people who do not have ready access to private transport and who require regular trips to Hobart for medical appointments. What steps are you taking to improve public transport for people living on the Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas? When can people expect to see an improvement?

Florfenicol Warnings at Beaches - Question out of Order

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

My question is from Drew from Koonya. Australians, and in particular, Tasmanians, have a strong connection culture to the coast. From fishing, swimming and surfing, we rely on the ocean as a place of respite from the troubles of the land. With Tasmanians heading to the coast and their local beach this spring/summer, how can families be expected to know if their local swimming hole is loaded with antibiotics which could potentially cause stinging, irritation of the eyes, affect external cuts or abrasions? Worse, there are serious concerns that this antibiotic

will also have reproductive toxicity and also link to organ damage. Are we expected to change our lifestyle and shift our culture so that multinational corporations can continue to make more profits?

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, on a point of order, if I may, briefly.

The SPEAKER - Mr Garland, you're supposed to be asking a constituent question from constituents in your own electorate. You're asking a question on behalf of somebody in Koonya, which is in the electorate of Lyons because it's down the Tasman Peninsula.

Mr Garland - Right.

The SPEAKER - It is out of order. We will withdraw that question. That will allow somebody else to make a question. Your constituents do have to live in your electorate. You're not a senator.

Primary Produce Safety (Horticulture Produce) Regulations 2025

**Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND WATER,
Mr PEARCE**

I've been contacted by a constituent concerned about claims suggesting that the draft Primary Produce Safety (Horticulture Produce) Regulations 2025 will implement new national health standards which will stop people from selling or sharing fruit and vegetables grown in their own backyards. Can you confirm that these regulations are not intended to apply to backyard growers, hobby gardeners or neighbours who sell or share small amounts of produce directly to locals or from a roadside stalls, that is, people not operating as a business or supplying retailers or wholesalers? And that these small local exchanges within communities will remain unaffected by the proposed changes?

Tannery Road Fuel Stop Site

**Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr VINCENT**

State Growth has developed a traffic management strategy for the proposed Lowes BP fuel stop site on Tannery Road, Longford. I'm advised it is dangerous and not compliant with Australian guidelines. A planning permit should never have been signed off. It is not supported by the community and not conducive to truck drivers having to mitigate sharp turning areas for refuelling. The site location is inappropriate.

Even though the fuel site is privately owned, State Growth are building and paying for an entry/exit point on Tannery Road to accommodate B-double trucks for a private business. It is our understanding that cancelling the fuel stop planning permit could lead to litigation by the developer against State Growth. What is the current status of the fuel stop build? Why should the taxpayer have to foot the estimated \$3 million to \$5 million to pay for yet another infrastructure stuff-up?

Florfenicol Warnings at Beaches

**Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER,
Mr PEARCE**

My question is from my constituent Drew in Koonya.

Members interjecting.

Ms BADGER - Australians, and in particular, Tasmanians, have a strong connection and culture to the coast. From fishing, swimming and surfing, we rely on the ocean as a place of respite from the troubles of the land. With Tasmanians heading to the coast and their local beaches this spring and summer, how can families be expected to know if their local swimming hole is loaded with antibiotics that could potentially cause stinging, irritation of the eyes and affect external cuts or abrasions? Worse, there are serious concerns that this antibiotic also has reproductive toxicity and also link to organ damage. Are we expected to change our lifestyle and shift our culture so that the multinational corporations can make more profits?

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Assent to Bills

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council:

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council has this day agreed without amendment to a bill intituled A Bill for an *Act to Amend the Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021*.

C Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council,
13 November 2025.

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a further message from the Legislative Council:

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council has this day agreed without amendment to a bill intituled A Bill for an Act to Amend the Registration to Work With Vulnerable People Act 2023.

C Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council,
13 November 2025.

SITTING DATES

[11.27 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday 2 December next at 10.00 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[11.27 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

- (1) That upon Notice of Motion No. 29 being debated by the House and the debate having closed but before the Speaker puts the Question to the House, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering the State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025 (Statutory Rules 2025, No. 49) made on 21 October 2025.
- (2) That the Committee consider each clause and schedule in the following manner:-
 - (a) the Chair is to call on each clause or schedule, and ask if any Member has any question thereon;
 - (b) if no questions are asked, or a question or questions having been asked, no further questions are asked, the Chair shall declare that the clause or schedule has been considered, without question being put;
 - (c) the Report of the Committee of the whole House be limited to 'The Committee has considered the State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025 (Statutory Rules 2025, No. 49)'; and
 - (d) for the avoidance of doubt, the Committee of the whole is not empowered to amend any clause or schedule of the Order.
- (3) That upon the Report of the Committee of the whole House being brought up, the Speaker shall immediately put the Question proposed by the Motion.

This motion is fundamentally about scrutiny. It's about giving us, as parliamentarians, the opportunity to do our job properly, to do our job with the time, process and ability to properly interrogate the content of what we are passing so that issues can be explored, answers sought and information put on the public record, on *Hansard*, for all to see for all time.

What we are debating today is the future of the largest infrastructure project this state has seen for a very long time, if ever. It's not only large in bulk and negative impact on our city; it's large in terms of the impact on the budget and the debt burden we would lay at the feet of future generations.

What we are debating today is not just a 50-word motion moved by the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal. What we are debating is the passage of an order, a 157-page approval of the Macquarie Point Stadium and the myriad conditions drafted to oversee its construction and operation. That order deserves scrutiny. Within that order since the detail that would drive this slow-moving train wreck: the delays, the cost blowouts, the ongoing alienation of key stakeholders and the deepening division of the Tasmanian community. As with any piece of legislation, that order deserves a committee process to allow us, as members, the chance to work through it clause by clause and to scrutinise it.

This motion acknowledges that the order cannot be amended. It is within our powers only to approve or reject. While we will reject it, that should not be an excuse to deny us the opportunity to scrutinise because this order is an extraordinary document. It approves the development against all objective independent expert advice, stakeholder and community perspectives and unaffordability at the time of extreme budgetary stress and increasingly harsh austerity. It delivers unprecedented powers to the secretary of State Growth, whoever they should be at the time, to make decisions about the design, implementation and operation of the stadium, decisions that will have a significant impact on others and are not supported by evidence. Why should members of this place be denied the opportunity to work through the order, understand its implications, and establish, on the public record, the government's perspective on how it should be interpreted?

This motion seeks time and space for members of this place to represent the interests of our constituents. If others across the Chamber are willing to abrogate their responsibility to work on behalf of their constituents, so be it, but please don't deny us as you deceive yourselves. Give us the time and space we need to do our job. Give us the equivalent ability, with the exception of amendments, to scrutinise this order as that given to a simple four-page bill. The Electoral Amendment Bill 2025, for example, makes one small change, amending one clause in the relevant act, but it gets a full committee process and undergoes complete scrutiny, as it should. So should this order.

While all too many of you will be willing to get this done and dusted to get out of here ASAP with the least possible time and without saying a word, many of us aren't. Give us the opportunity to do our job and scrutinise this disastrous order so that the acquiescence and complicity of all who pass it is formally on the record. I commend the motion to the House.

[Applause from the Gallery]

[11.32 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal) - Once again, I get applause when I stand for the lectern. It's becoming a bit of a habit -

Mr George - You wish.

Mr ABETZ - but I'm more than willing to accept it, Mr George.

Honourable Speaker, the government opposes the motion. As the Deputy Leader of the Greens indicated, basically no matter what answers are provided, they will be opposing the order, so this is going to be a talkfest, playing ping-pong backwards and forwards, with the recognition, by themselves, that they won't change their mind irrespective of the answers they are provided.

This order is hardly sprung upon us or the community. This proposal has been around now for some considerable period of time. Further, can I say that what the Deputy Leader of the Greens wants to do is a change the traditions, Standing Orders and practices of this place when considering orders of this nature.

In relation to scrutiny of this matter, it's been considered by the Public Accounts Committee in an inquiry that ran for two years. It has been through the POSS process, which included extensive public consultation, stakeholder consultation and public hearings with the submission of over 5000 pages of detailed plans and information all published and publicly available. It's been discussed and debated extensively in parliament, including the tabling of no less than 39 documents, including advice, costings of the business case, schematic design and detailed design stages, numerous motions, questions and Estimates hearings, and now is currently being considered by the parliament as the final stage in the planning assessment process.

The Macquarie Point Development Corporation is led by a very competent CEO in Anne Beach and overseen by a vastly experienced board. The corporation has engaged the services of some of Australia's leading experts in major infrastructure projects to make sure that we get this right; including Ken Kanofski and Peter Gemmell. The corporation has been using and will continue to use Infrastructure Tasmania's project assurance framework, an established project management tool that is used to provide detailed and independent project reviews by a panel of relevant experts at stages throughout design and delivery for large infrastructure projects. It involves independent expert reviews at key stages of a project's life cycle to assess its health, viability and readiness to proceed. Key components include gateway reviews, health checks, deep dives and regular progress reporting.

This is a process that has now been analysed and analysed, and I suspect nearly over-analysed. Members in this place clearly have made up their mind, as admitted by the Deputy Leader of the Greens, irrespective of any question -

Mr Bayley - Doesn't preclude scrutiny.

The SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bayley.

Mr ABETZ - Regardless of any answers provided to the questions that might be asked, they will be opposing it, so we, as a government, oppose this proposal.

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I will just speak briefly to indicate that we won't support the motion. This is different to a regular bill that I understand goes into committee stage, and there is no doubt -

Members interjecting.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

The SPEAKER - Order. I will stop the clock because I appreciate I am using up the member's time. The only one who should be speaking right now is the honourable leader of opposition business. There are still another four opportunities for people at least to make a contribution on this debate. If there's any commentary that needs to be made that can be made by other members, but I ask that the honourable member to be able to use up her four minutes and 20 seconds.

Ms Haddad - The clock didn't stop.

The SPEAKER - The clock was supposed to be stopped. I will give you like an extra 15 seconds.

Ms HADDAD - Honestly, Speaker, I'm used to being shouted down in this place and it doesn't scare me. I'm used to going into Committee on bills. There is no opportunity for the Chamber to amend this. This is not a regular bill of the House. This is an order that we have one choice to make on - support it or don't. There is no doubt that the stadium has been an incredibly divisive issue in our community. It has split workplaces, it has split families, but when we go into Committee on a bill it's because we can amend that bill. This is a different form of the House.

Dr Woodruff - That's absolutely rubbish.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff.

Ms HADDAD - Every member in this place will have the opportunity to provide their contribution on the debate, and every one of us who chooses to speak on the substantive debate will have the opportunity to put those views and make them very clear, as we all have done on this issue, both inside this place and outside over many years now. Extending the debate on this order isn't going to extend scrutiny, it will simply be dragging out a decision that I know is a difficult one -

Dr Woodruff - Unconditional support from Labor.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, this is your first warning.

Ms HADDAD - for the Chamber to make. I know it's one that members of the crossbench have made very clear that they will oppose, but that's not going to change the fact that we don't have the opportunity to amend this motion.

Dr Woodruff - Shame.

Ms HADDAD - It's a yes or no motion and that's not because of anyone's doing in particular, it's because it's an order of the House, not a bill. You can shout me down all you like in this place, but I've made it clear what we will be doing on this motion.

[11.38 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, last night I predicted in this place that we would see the final ninth position of Labor on the stadium and we've had it confirmed from the leader of opposition business here today. Labor's final position on the stadium is yes stadium, unconditional support, no scrutiny, and that is clearly obvious. This is a crying shame,

honourable Speaker. I thank the Deputy Leader of the Greens for bringing forward this very important motion which will provide critical scrutiny to one of the biggest decisions this parliament will be making on behalf of Tasmanians now and into the future.

It is literally our job to scrutinise this government, the decisions of this government, orders, motions and bills put before this House. To suggest, as the honourable Leader of Opposition Business did just then, that the only reason we go into Committees on bills is to amend them is absolute rubbish. We go into Committee all the time to ask questions, to put on the record on behalf of our constituents issues that concern them. *Hansard* matters. When decisions are made later on in courts and other places, people refer back to *Hansard*. They refer to the debate in this place, so it's critically important that we are given the opportunity on this order to go through clause by clause, condition by condition, and ask questions to put on the record the concerns of our community.

The concerns are wide, and they're not just of the communities, they are also the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC), because the TPC found that this project was so bad it couldn't condition it to make it any better. It rejected the conditions from the proponents. They were insufficient to make this project better or feasible or viable. We deserve the opportunity in this place to put the questions on behalf of our constituents and our communities to the government, who wholeheartedly reject it, as does their expert planning panel and the decision that that made. Instead, they've ignored that planning panel and they've brought forward the proponents' conditions.

It would have been lovely, honourable Speaker, to have had this opportunity when it came to the *Spirits* debacle to perhaps have had the scrutiny over the *Spirits* and the purchase of the new boats, of the construction of the berth. Labor would have loved that opportunity, and I am sure without a doubt they would have wanted to scrutinise any decision there. We didn't have that opportunity, and now we see the consequences: cost blowouts of over 400 per cent.

However, we have the opportunity now, before it is too late, to scrutinise this. Yes, whilst we aren't able to amend the order, we can put very clearly on the record the concerns with the conditions. We can ask what contingency plans there might be if conditions aren't met, how they will be funded, what kinds of authorities will be responsible for these particular conditions - basic project-management questions that ought to be on the public record, and the answers ought to be on the public record.

I am absolutely horrified at Labor's position on this. I understand it's awfully uncomfortable for them to have a 'Yes Stadium', unconditional support, no-scrutiny position, that they just want this debate to go away as quickly as possible. Clearly, there are not many of them here in the Chamber today at the moment to debate this, and it's a real shame. I believe, particularly in Clark, that my constituents expect much more from the Labor opposition. They expect them to come here and at least scrutinise it - at least ask the questions, put it on the record.

My constituents know that if this order goes through this parliament, there is no doubt in their minds that there will be some awful 'told you so' moments that will come at the cost of Tasmanians, and particularly vulnerable Tasmanians - those who are sleeping rough, those who are going hungry, without medication and medical assistance, those have been denied community services, children at risk. They're awful 'told you so' moments'.

This parliament ought to be scrutinising this order, and it's an absolute disgrace that Labor are abrogating their responsibilities to stand up this place and scrutinise it.

Members interjecting.

[Applause from the Gallery]

The SPEAKER - Order. For members of the gallery: I appreciate your enthusiasm, but as this motion before the House does deal with a subject matter of great importance to both members of the House and to citizens of the state generally, with the presence today of so many in the House a clear indication of such public interest - we want to welcome you here today, but I do remind you that you are here to observe proceedings and not to participate in them.

Just as I've been warning the members across the party today that interjections are disorderly, very loud and exuberant clapping in the Gallery are classed as interjections or disruptions as well. I do ask that you just applaud a bit quieter and make anything a bit quieter for us. If it does continue too loudly, I will have no alternative other than to suspend the sitting and order the reserve Gallery to be cleared, which I definitely do not want to do because I appreciate you being here. Most of you have probably come a long way, and this is a topic that you feel is very important to you.

[11.43 a.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge the people in the Gallery. I have been asked by the Treasurer not to incite you. Remain enthusiastic, remain engaged, and support the idea that this is a democracy where we can, in this Chamber, examine important issues.

It is a divisive issue, and I'm astonished that the Leader of Opposition Business admits that it's divisive but is not prepared to sit down and examine what is obviously a very major decision - one of the most major decisions economically and culturally and socially that this House is likely to make in a very long time.

I'm astonished that the Treasurer should oppose this motion. At a rough guess, I believe the Treasurer has spent about a third, maybe getting on towards half of his life in one parliament or another, for which I offer my condolences but also my congratulations. It does mean that the Treasurer clearly believes in parliamentary democracy, or why would he waste his life sitting in various different Chambers discussing matters of public importance that impact a state or a nation?

There's no question in this case, as the Treasurer and the Premier have conceded or boasted, this is a program that will last up to 50 years. If it does last those 50 years - which I very much doubt, I suspect this stadium will not even last half that amount of time - but if it does last that amount of time, it's going to cause some major impact on our economy.

Although the government claims that it will miraculously boost our economy, there are plenty of people, including the people in the Gallery up there, who recognise the fact that it's probably going to be a disaster economically, and one from which we cannot return. Therefore this motion advises us that we should have the ability to go through, clause by clause, what is

obviously going to have a major impact on our society, on our economy, on our culture, and on our future.

Therefore, I commend the motion and ask Labor to reconsider its position and vote for the motion.

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, today we will be debating a motion that will be two-and-one-quarter lines long, and 36 words long, for a \$1.13 billion project that's been recommended against proceeding by everyone who has examined it. In the face of all that expert advice, the government think they know better. They think that they can attempt to strong-arm this through the parliament today. This is an insult. I don't think I'm the only one who is outraged and insulted by this. I was not elected to be in here as a planning expert. That is not my area of knowledge and expertise. Yet, today I'm asked to vote on a motion about a project that requires a high degree of planning requirements. It's got planning processes that must be gone through. There are all sorts of details in this project and planned stadium that we are supposed to just wave through with a brief motion today.

What an insult. What an insult to the experts who have done the research and who have assessed the project. What an insult to us, in here, that we are expected to just do the government's bidding and wave something through.

I just want to respond to Labor's comment that we don't go into Committee for anything except amendments. That's already been addressed by Ms Johnston, but there are processes that can be used when debating orders, and that is the idea of a disallowable instrument. We can't amend an order, but it's not as simple as: it must be a 'yes' or it must be a 'no.' There are different parts that can be allowed or disallowed within an order. We deserve the right to take this order into a Committee of the House, examine it in detail, go through it carefully, and decide on each part of that order, whether it should be in there or not. This government want this project approved with light regulation, with a planning order that's light. We should at least be scrutinising the order, closely examining it.

I support this motion and I support as much scrutiny as we can possibly have for this order and for a stadium that is not going to be good for our state.

[11.49 a.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I am very pleased that Mr Bayley has brought this motion for further consideration, because we have an order in front of us, and we don't get too many orders before the House, and certainly not as complex as this.

Probably the last most complex order was the Gunns Pulp Mill-enabling legislation, which was some time ago. There will be members of the House who would have been here for that, but many of us were not. This was a divisive, equally as corrupted process, which enabled Liberal and Labor to be in lockstep, and it overrode the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) at the time.

It was rammed through the Assembly with minimal time for scrutiny, and, sadly, we don't learn from those lessons. It is so important. Our role in this House to scrutinise anything that comes before us. Why is Labor - and the Liberal Party, the government - so averse to scrutiny? That's the question. What has Labor got to be concerned about?

There are, as Mr Bayley rightly said, 157 pages of this order. That's 157 pages of complex planning, essentially a development application. There hasn't been the scrutiny with this because it has come after the TPC process and the integrated assessment report. Who better to scrutinise it than this parliament before it is made an order? At every step, we should be using our capacity to look at things carefully. But that is not what we are seeing. This is an order that doesn't get the scrutiny. Therefore, I urge the opposition and members of the government to consider what we're asking for here. We want scrutiny. This deserves scrutiny. So why on earth would you deny that?

[11.51 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I am shocked and ashamed for Labor on their behalf that they would take this position. Scrutiny was the last fig leaf Labor had left in standing up for Tasmanians and demonstrating that they are capable of acting as the opposition party. They have absolutely derogated their responsibility. This is a minimum standard. It's true we cannot make amendments to the order but we can ask questions. It's almost like Labor would be afraid of the answers the government might give to the questions from the Greens and other people of the crossbench. This order will grant powers to the Treasurer to make all decisions, override any piece of regulation, override a condition, override the panel that would be established. What an inconvenient truth for Labor to be exposed to the reality of the order they are intent on supporting.

This order will utterly transform not just the landscape of the centre of Hobart - not just the beauty of that place, the space that should be an Aboriginal reconciliation park, the space that should be protecting the reverence of the Cenotaph, but it will transform our financial landscape and our capacity to fund essential services for decades to come. The planning commission has said it will be \$50 million a year servicing a debt for three decades. We need to understand how this order will be enacted. We need to have the opportunity to ask questions. It's a minimum requirement for us as legislators. We have so few opportunities to pull apart the 157-page order and the 236 pages of the planning commission's report that recommended against proceeding.

We need to understand what this government will do in the name of the people of Tasmania with more than \$2 billion of our money over the next decade in that most central part of Hobart. I cannot believe the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, has made the case that Labor will throw their hands up and not support this. Shame on Labor.

The SPEAKER (Mrs Petrusma) The question is that the amendment to the first proposed amendment be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 10

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr George
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Prof Razay

NOES 24

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco

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Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff
Mr Garland (Teller)

Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr Mitchell
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Ms Finlay (Teller)

Motion negatived.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[12.01 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent all members from being able to speak to Notice of Motion No. 29 for up to 40 minutes each.

The Liberal and Labor parties have shut down the opportunity now for us to go into Committee and ask questions about the stadium, about the Planning Commission's expert assessment, and about the order that the government has constructed to oversee the conditions that will utterly transform the centre of Hobart and transform the future of Tasmania. We are at a crossroads, and we have a right to have our voices heard. Our voices are the voices of our constituents. This is an opportunity that we need to have to express the passion, the concerns, the questions, the hopes, the sacrifices that Tasmanians will experience in terms of the opportunity cost with services that won't get funded if this stadium goes ahead.

What we have is a Planning Commission's report with an enormous amount of pages - 256 pages - a huge number of issues that they cover, which we want to give justice to. We want to lay out the facts, the work of the Planning Commission, their estimates of the disbenefit of the cost, the impacts in terms of the planning laws, the inconsistency between what's going to be proposed and the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme, the change to the urban form, the impacts on landscape and the visual effects from the stadium, the built form and the dominant presence of the stadium, the impacts on our historic cultural heritage, the Cenotaph, the loss of what should be an Aboriginal truth-telling and reconciliation space, the Regatta grounds and the lower Queens Domain precinct, the Goods Shed, the Royal Engineers

building, the physical effects on the whole of the heritage of that beautiful part of the Constitution Dock and Evans Street. This is the reason that people come to this part of Hobart and Tasmania. People travel here in their droves to see what is so special.

We want to be able to talk about the impacts on our arts, on the TSO, on TMAG - all the issues that have been raised by them. We want to talk about the transport effects, the movements and the traffic, the changes and the impacts that a stadium will have. We want to be able to talk about the things that haven't been included by the government in their estimation, so people understand the lies behind the cost estimations that are being provided by the MPDC.

All of these things have to be teased apart. They're in the Planning Commission's report, and it is our job to lay them out on behalf of our constituents and for the people of Tasmania and for the future. We're being expected, not only in a 20-minute speech, to lay out our objections, our concerns, and our questions about the order itself, but to respond to the Planning Commission's knockdown of this project and the views of the whole of the Tasmanian community.

At least Labor can support this, to give us half a chance of being able to have enough time to do justice to our constituents' concerns. It's not too much to ask, given this is only the biggest infrastructure project that has ever come, as I understand, to the Parliament of Tasmania - the biggest issue that we will ever make a decision about. How could Labor not want that to happen? How could Labor want to shut down the voices of everybody in the Chamber to stand up and make a representation? How many people from Labor will be speaking? I assume everyone will have something to say. Wouldn't they like twice the length of time to say it properly? I would expect that everyone in Labor would be having a big fat say, but we know that that's not nearly enough time. We could be spending hours. We've been modest, and we want to extend the debate for everyone to 40 minutes.

[12.05 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal) - Acting Deputy Speaker, Can I first comment by saying that reflecting on public officers saying that they are putting forward lies is completely unacceptable. Accuse us in this place, the elected officials - elected members, I should say - but the officials that put together documentation should not be so accused.

That said, we know the forms of this House, that you have to move for suspension - sorry, for leave, then for suspension, and then having the formal vote. Could I invite the House not to deal further by way of speeches in relation to seeking leave and suspension, so we can -

Dr Woodruff - This is a procedural motion and we sought advice from the Clerk. This is in order.

Mr ABETZ - It is in order; I'm not saying it is not in order. What I'm seeking is the cooperation of the House so that we can go immediately to the substantive motion rather than going through speaker after speaker after speaker because, with respect, the Leader of the Greens in her -

Dr Woodruff - We're on the motion. This is the motion.

Mr Bayley - It's a procedural motion, so we're on the motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the Leader of Government Business has the mic.

Mr Bayley - You can check with the Clerk if you wish.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Deputy Lader of the Greens, order.

Dr Broad - If we vote for this, we're voting for the motion.

Mr ABETZ - Sorry? What?

Dr Woodruff - This is the motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Member for Braddon. The only person speaking should be the leader of government business.

Mr ABETZ - I wouldn't mind some assistance, if I may, from the floor. I thought the leader had sought leave to introduce her motion.

Dr Woodruff - No, I'm just moving the motion.

Mr ABETZ - Just moving the motion? All right.

Mr Bayley - It's on the notice paper.

Mr ABETZ - Well, in that case, can I continue and indicate my deep regret at the reflection of officials, which was completely unnecessary, unedifying, and brings not only the honourable member into disrepute, but, I would suggest, the whole Chamber. I would invite that to be withdrawn. Accuse us all you like.

In relation to extending time to 40 minutes, isn't it interesting that yesterday we debated a budget over the forward Estimates, dealing with \$40 billion dollars - and it was only introduced on the Thursday previous - so within a week, the Budget debate, everybody was content with 20 minutes. This is a proposal that has been around the track for over two years. Everybody knows exactly what is in it, and it's not only one-week's notice, it's been two-years' notice, but they need double the time. One suspects that they are treating this matter a lot more seriously than the Budget, in fact twice as seriously, because they need twice the time. One suspects that this is because they want to use up time and appeal to a certain element of their constituency and good luck to them.

Dr Woodruff - The majority of Tasmanians.

Mr ABETZ - I would suggest that if 20 minutes was enough for a \$40 billion budget -

Dr Woodruff - We're going into Committee on the Budget.

Mr ABETZ - If 20 minutes was enough for a \$40 billion budget, chances are 20 minutes might be long enough for the stadium, especially when we know that every single member in this place has already stated publicly how they're going to vote. It won't be a secret. Everybody knows. Doubling the time for speeches is not going to change anybody's mind or the result of

the vote. I would have thought, with respect, 20 minutes is sufficient for anybody to make their case for or against or indifferent, albeit we all know that there's nobody of an indifferent mind in this Chamber, and we've already all put our position on the public record. To pursue doubling the time for speaking is, with respect, a waste of this place's time.

[12.10 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I recognise that there are many people observing this debate in this place today and online, or will be following it in the media. The vote that we're dealing with right now is about whether to extend the time for speaking limits. It will no doubt be characterised as shutting down scrutiny, which is not the case.

There were good-faith negotiations at the beginning of this parliament to set new Standing and Sessional Orders, which we supported in good faith, as the Greens and the crossbench did as well. Likewise, earlier this week, a member of the government sought to have the speaking time extended on Adjournment for one particular issue. We also opposed that, as we will do with this motion. The reason for that is it should be enough time.

I heard the Leader of the Greens talk about needing to put on the record people's passions, concerns and hopes. We all do that every time we get up and speak in this place. We put on the record the concerns, the passions and the hopes of our communities. I know that there are strong views on this, and everyone in this place has made those views clear, but if we can't make our points in 20 minutes, I have to ask do you actually have a point that you want to make? Twenty minutes is sufficient for us in every other form of business of this House, apart from ones like this, where I am making my point in less than five minutes.

We opposed the extension of the Adjournment on a particular issue. If we suddenly start changing our sessional and standing orders on particular issues of interest for any grouping or any individual member, then we might as well just throw out having sessional and standing orders in the first place.

I know that my words today will be used to indicate that Labor is shutting down debate. That is not the case. We are voting on this motion consistently with a position we took at the start of this parliament, as a whole parliament - Liberal, Labor, crossbench and Greens - on the standing and sessional orders, and one that we took on the Adjournment this week when a government member sought to have their time on the Adjournment extended for just one issue. We didn't support that, not because we wanted to shut down debate on the very important issue of Remembrance Day, but because we have made that point consistently.

Dr Woodruff - It's because you don't want to be scrutinised on your position.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Ms HADDAD - I believe that if we are to change the rules for one thing, why have rules in the first place at all? We will be opposing this motion, understanding that the negotiations done at the start of this parliament were entered into by everybody in good faith and agreed to by the Greens, the crossbench, and the parties.

[12.13 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I spoke too soon, because we now have a tenth position from Labor. Their position now is, 'yes stadium, unconditional support, no

scrutiny, and for God's sake, get it done as quickly as possible because it's rather embarrassing and awkward for us.'

This particular motion is critical. We are about to make one of the biggest decisions this state could possibly make for now and future generations. The current standing orders only allow for 20 minutes. There are more crossbench members in this parliament than there are opposition members. As an independent, I represent the wonderful people of Clark. In particular, I represent the 9500 people who voted for me, knowing very clearly my 'no stadium' position. To articulate the very long list of issues my constituents have with this stadium within 20 minutes is simply impossible. The TPC took over 12 months to deliberate on this and particularly to highlight and analyse the issues. For me to be able to concisely put that within 20 minutes is impossible.

I appreciate that the Labor Party have 10 members in this place, and therefore they have 10 speaking opportunities at 20 minutes each. I strongly suspect, though, that not all 10 members will want to get up and speak on this particular motion, because it's pretty embarrassing for them, the multiple positions they've had. I am quite frankly sick to death of my constituents coming to me and saying that they've been to see their Labor Clark representatives, to only hear from them saying how terrible the stadium is, how bad it is for our economy, for our budget, for our community, for our city, but they can't do anything about it because it's a done deal. It's only a done deal because the Labor opposition are voting this through with the Liberal government. The Labor-Liberal coalition, yet again. At least they could have a courtesy to get up in this place and for 40 minutes explain to their constituency why they are abandoning them. This is incredibly important.

I take the point the Treasurer made about budget scrutiny. Yes, we only spoke for 20 minutes yesterday on budget replies, but we will have, I believe, about 69.5 hours next week of Estimates scrutiny where we go through the Budget clause by clause to understand the issues within the Budget. Then we come back the following week and have another 20-minute opportunity to respond in Estimates replies, so 40 minutes all up plus scrutiny.

Yes, the Budget is a major decision this parliament will be making, but the decision of the stadium and the progress of this order will have ramifications for generations to come. The least we can do is have the opportunity to fairly put on the agenda, on the table, on *Hansard*, the issues on behalf of our constituency.

I have more than 40 minutes that I could fill up, more than 20 minutes. I suspect Labor don't want to stand here for 40 minutes. They don't have to. They can only speak for five minutes if they wanted to, but they will find it very hard to justify their position for supporting a stadium unconditionally, without scrutiny and very quickly.

Don't deny our constituents, particularly those of the crossbench, the opportunity to have their concerns put forward. This decision matters. Invariably, when things go wrong - and we know, hand on heart, that will go wrong - we need to be able to refer back to these debates where these issues were canvassed, put on the public record and known, so that both Labor and the Liberal Party will be complicit in what will be the destruction of Tasmanians and our life.

[12.17 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, in relation to the debate around the forms of the House and the conduct of debates, I accepted the arguments of the government

and the opposition in the previous matter in relation to respect of process, but in relation to the proposition in this motion that's been put forward, I believe there is an argument to be had to make an exception to extend time. I think it is completely reasonable, given the significance of this debate, the matter of public importance that it is to people in all corners of our state, that members should be given a reasonable amount of time to prosecute their case, either to support the stadium or to oppose the stadium.

We all know when we get up and speak that 20 minutes goes pretty quickly, so whilst 40 minutes is a bit of a stretch of the friendship, I think it's not an unreasonable ask, given that there is no ability to go through clause by clause because of the nature of the question that's before the House. Having a 40-minute contribution as a maximum - you don't have to take it - for those people that seek to defend their position on either side of the debate is not an unreasonable question before the House. I've made it clear to the Leader of the House that we all must reflect that whilst we agreed to the Standing Orders at the beginning of this session, we always are the masters of our own destiny, so to speak, and we do have the capacity on certain matters to change debates.

Whilst this is an important debate, I thought the dying with dignity debate was probably more important in terms of my time here and there was some flexibility in the time for the debate there. I feel that this is not an unreasonable request to extend the time to allow people to have their position clear. We have debated it a lot in MPIs and motions from the Floor, but we are at crunch point. This is the time that this House will debate this matter. I support the motion.

[12.19 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Honourable Speaker, I respect the position put by the member for Franklin, but it's important that we get on with this. This is a debate that's not just about a 40-minute contribution ahead of us. This is a debate that's been going on for two to three years. Our community knows the arguments, they understand what is being put. There's an old quote that brevity is the soul of wit. I think that in this place we need to ensure we are respecting people's time and the time of the House and making sure that we can put those arguments.

As the Leader of the House has said, the budget debate allows 20-minute speeches and that is the most complex legislative task we have. More than \$40 billion across the forward Estimates puts in the shade the \$1.1 billion for the stadium, yet members are able to make arguments right across the spectrum of work that our parliament does, from health, housing, education, community safety, a whole gamut of different areas, and they're able to put them in 20 minutes. We need to see this for what it is. The Greens are trying to filibuster this debate because they don't support the stadium.

Dr Woodruff - You're only going to have a couple of members.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ELLIS - We understand that you don't support the stadium, but we will be able to understand that after a 20-minute speech. We certainly will be able to understand it after a 40-minute speech. I'm not sure that there will be much additional in those in the back end of that 20-minute contribution from those members, if it does happen, that will shed any more light on the complex task that we have ahead of us.

We have all had years to think about this. We have had significant documentation that has been prepared by experts and by people who understand this process. We will be looking forward to bringing this debate to a head because that's ultimately what our job is. We need to persuade, of course, but we need to make a decision, and we cannot forget just how key it is that we do make a decision on this.

Every day that we delay means more cost for the stadium. We want to ensure that we are delivering this project and the attempts to filibuster this debate is simply about trying to put it out into next year. We need to get on with this project. We need to get on with this project and deliver it for the Tasmanian people.

It's not shutting down debate; it's just not extending the time. There will be time for debate. There will be the allocated time for debate. This will be an extraordinarily robust debate. I have absolutely no doubt about that. But it can be achieved within each speaker doing a 20-minute speech. I mean that's 700 minutes worth of speaking. Well, 680 excluding yourself, honourable speaker.

I think we can get across the facts of the matter in that time. To try and extend it out to beyond 1,000 minutes of talking in this place I don't think necessarily serves the purpose to which the Greens say they are attempting which is a robust discussion. I think it serves the purpose of what you really mean, which is that you're seeking a filibuster to delay this process, to delay the most important thing that we do here.

Debate is important, but the most important thing that we do in this place is decide, and that's what we're seeking to do. We're seeking to get to a point where we make a decision. We also have to be honest with ourselves, that the people who are seeking to move this extension of time have already decided.

You're not seeking to debate it here; you have already decided your mind is made-up. Your mind has been made-up for years. We accept that. We have a difference of view and opinion, but the attempt to extend time beyond what is reasonable is simply about making sure that you can delay an important project that is important for the future of our state.

There are also other opportunities for the parliament to scrutinise. You will be able to ask questions during the Budget Estimates that are coming up next week. Hours of scrutiny, we're expecting from you; dozens and dozens of questions, and that's fine, that's your right.

But parliament's time is valuable. The standing orders are there in place for a reason. The Project of State Significance exists in its form as it does without committee so that a decision can get made on some of the most important projects for our state. Whether for or against, decisions need to get made and, of course, government business enterprise scrutiny as well. We'd expect plenty more questions, too.

We want to make sure that we're getting on with this debate, that we're delivering it, that we are deciding today rather than filibustering today in the guise of debate. This is an important decision for us. Let's get on with it.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - What a curious time when we have to come up here and help explain to the Treasurer how the Budget Estimates process actually works. We had 20 minutes initially on the interim draft budget before us. Then we do go into Estimates, and you will have plenty of questions on the entire contents of that budget, which has an awful lot in it, including cuts to other services, as well as the stadium, and that is the point that Tasmanians are trying to make. That is what should be on the record, that we have to try and get on the record.

Twenty minutes is what we agreed to in the standing orders, regularly. That's what we'd come up here and speak to on a normal bill. What happens, for everybody in the public gallery and watching online, is that then we have a vote, and its normally convention that we vote yes, that then we go into committee. What is happening here with the orders is the opposite. It's back-to-front in terms of how it's been put because of the abnormal process.

We don't have the opportunity to go into committee. We have lost that opportunity for scrutiny. Therefore, here, what we can do is have the additional time for what is an enormous project for Tasmania we're asking for 40 minutes per member if they choose to take it, to put the record of their constituents and Tasmanians on the record, for a project whose implications are going to be for generations to come. It's 40 minutes. Why wouldn't you vote for it? Award the Tasmanian people here today, and coming forward, that level of respect.

This is a huge order with so much in it. How are we supposed to put everything adequately on the record? Not just how Tasmanians personally feel concerned; questions that they might have that they're no longer going to get answered directly in the relevant debate, because we are not going to committee. But everything, from the Aboriginal heritage concerns, concerns of the heritage of the entire precinct that the stadium is going to impinge upon, the concerns of the RSL. What about the questions of all the Tasmanians who are concerned about the health system, education and housing?

I don't think any of us spent the last two elections forgoing almost every conversation that we had, having the stadium brought up in it. That is the level of concern and confusion of Tasmanians from both sides. It doesn't matter which way you were going to vote on this; it is important to the state for generations to come, and you owe it to everybody who voted for you and put you in this place, to put their concerns on the record, to justify how you are going to vote for it.

That's the point of debate in the parliament and in the Westminster system. To say, 'We know how you're going to vote, so we don't need to extend speaking time' is to say, 'Let's just turn up for an hour each day and vote through every piece of legislation, we don't need to worry about it because we know what your policies are, and therefore, how you're probably going to vote on it.' No, that's not how democracy works.

The Premier came in this morning, and he was exaggerating when he said that this is the 'most scrutinised project in the world.' Why, then, is he diminishing the scrutiny opportunities that we actually have on this order, bearing in mind that there have been previous reports that have had to be scrutinised? There's been the Gruen report, we've had Saul Eslake's report, now we have the TPC report. We owe it to Tasmanians to actually dissect all of that. We have a government that's just completely dismissed the recommendations from those reports, including the recommendation not to bring on this order. You should get up here for 40 minutes and justify to Tasmanians why you're dismissing the recommendations of your own process.

Bad governments thrive in the absence of good opposition. What we have seen for too long in this place is a tiny crossbench that have held accountable the Liberal government for 11 years. Now we are bigger, and we are the true opposition. That is evident today, because we are upholding not only the rights of Tasmanians and the views of Tasmanians on this stadium, but basic levels of democracy so that we can actually have a proper debate for the time that is solicited for it.

It is 40 minutes. Bearing in mind, Mr Winter, you've got two positions to get up here, so maybe you'd like 20 minutes each; 20 minutes for when you actually supported the stadium, and then another 20 minutes for now that you oppose it.

This is an intergenerational asset for Tasmania, or it's going to be an intergenerational debt. It's going to be a huge burden. Whichever side you're on, get up and justify it. Do the Tasmanian people here today, and into the future, justice.

The SPEAKER - I remind members that during the debate this afternoon I will expect respect for members; so, for example, it would be: 'the honourable member for Franklin, Mr Winter.' I will be pulling people up on that this afternoon because I do want to have a respectful debate.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I'm finding this debate unedifying. We're talking about 20 minutes each, here, and we're not talking about a compulsion for every member to use it. We utterly don't expect every Liberal member to get up and say anything, let alone 20 minutes worth of content or 40 minutes worth of content. This is not something you have to do. You can opt out of this as you will. You are opting out of your responsibilities as it is. If you don't want to take the full 40 minutes, then that is your prerogative, but don't deny us as the crossbench the opportunity to represent our constituents and make sure that all of their views are on the record.

This is not your average motion. This is not just a three- or four-line motion that we get to run through here, and we can amend and we can talk about. This is a complicated order - a piece of legislation, effectively, that details the basis upon which this mega project would proceed. And it would proceed against the expert advice, against the advice of the very people this government and this parliament stood up to assess this development. That panel is utterly unequivocal in their view. They haven't said, 'You shouldn't build it, but if you did, you should do it this way'. They haven't said, 'Oh, maybe you can do it, but do it with different colours or a different kind of roof'. They have basically said, in no uncertain terms, that this project should not be built. That is the process we in here stood up.

The Leader of the House is clutching at straws to talk about the budget process and talk about our 20-minute contribution. We have Estimates, we have Estimates reply. We are going to scrutinise the Budget to the nth degree and we will take every single minute of our opportunity. What we are wanting here is another 20 minutes to go through the details of this proposition, this order, and the motion.

Mr Ellis, this is not a filibuster. This process is a limited 35-minute debate. We're going to get to this today. Whether we debate for 20 minutes or 40 minutes, we have agreed with the Leader of the House that we will sit as long as it takes tonight to deal with this order. You, with the complicity of the Labor Party will have the passage of your order today.

What you are denying us, as the crossbench, is the opportunity to do justice to our constituents, the people that have voted to put us in these chairs, and actually have the conversation about this project because it is a massive project.

I mean, compare the pair: compare the Tasmanian Planning Commission's report, a year's worth of work, millions of dollars, five expert members in law, planning, administration and in Treasury writing a very succinct, well-written and clear recommendation that this project should not be built because of its impacts on the city, its impacts on the economy and a range of other fatal flaws, including the opposition of key stakeholders - key stakeholders that would normally be held sacrosanct.

Compare the pair: this is the government's response. It's a flimsy PR document full of nothing more than platitudes and quotes from either vested interests or punters on the street. It's embarrassing that this is the level of information that legislative councillors who haven't made-up their mind are being asked to decide upon: an expert independent panel that took years to complete and this PR pamphlet.

As members of this place, we need to properly represent the views of our community, to have the time in this place to put on the record the concerns expressed by the planning commission, to pick through this document and make sure the issues are well understood, and also pull apart the flimsy arguments of the government. This is nothing more than a PR document that is trying to take advantage of the fact that the Labor Party has already rolled over and acquiesced, and abrogated its responsibility to hold this government to account.

This is not the end of the world. We are talking about 20 minutes to give a handful of us additional time. You don't have to take it. We don't expect you to take it. But don't deny us the opportunity. You just shut down the opportunity to go through a detailed process to look at the order, to ask questions about the order. That's a vote that's behind us. But now we have the opportunity to coming up to debate the order. An additional 20 minutes over and above the existing 20 to make it 40 minutes is not an unreasonable ask given the gravity of this decision.

Time expired.

[12.34 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. There is nothing more crucial than getting the information out to the community. This stadium project, I cannot recall a time when it has divided so many people in this state. They deserve the respect afforded to them by us recording and putting out everything we can and giving them all that information. One thing I do not like is being rushed and having to forgo and not get -

Time expired.

The SPEAKER - The question is

The SPEAKER (Ms Petrusma)- The question is that the motion be agreed to.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

The House divided -

AYES - 10

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr George
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Prof Razay
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff
Mr Garland (Teller)

NOES -24

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr Mitchell
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Ms Finlay (Teller)

Motion negatived.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Housing Shortage and Homelessness

[12.39 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: housing shortage and homelessness.

My MPI today is on housing shortages and homelessness. Imagine sleeping in a tent on the banks of the Tamar River on a winter night. The temperature has plunged into the minuses and all you have is a sleeping bag to keep you warm. Now imagine that in that tent with you are your children. Hard to imagine. Shockingly, this is the reality for some families.

If you talk about people experiencing homelessness, you realise that each one has a sad and tragic story about young and old, men and women. Some have been in domestic violence situations or have mental health problems and some have been evicted because they can no

longer afford to pay high rent. They live in old, poorly-constructed tents, and have been exposed to a harsh winter that's wet, windy and cold. Some nights, it gets so cold that they cannot sleep. They stay awake at night and go to sleep during the day. They often eat tinned food because they do not have fridges to keep their food fresh. 'I suffer from asthma and I had to be admitted to hospital because of pneumonia.' 'I suffer from mental health issues and I struggle to find a doctor and get medication.' These are some of the stories I've heard in the past.

Housing is one of the biggest issues Tasmania is facing. The median price of houses sold in Tasmania was \$330,000 in 2016, with the income required to pay mortgages at 23.2 per cent. House prices rose dramatically to a median of \$623,000 in 2022, with the proportion of income required to pay mortgages at 42.5 per cent. Moreover, the latest Cotality report shows that rent in Launceston and the north-east have increased by 32 per cent. This means an average renter is now paying \$122 more every week than they were five years ago.

Unfortunately, housing affordability will continue to deteriorate, with massive shortages of social and affordable houses forcing many Tasmanian out of the housing market. This will further exacerbate the rise of people experiencing homelessness.

Recent Anglicare reports showed a 34 per cent increase in Tasmanians seeking support through the housing support service Housing Connect Front Door. Shockingly, it revealed a 88 per cent increase in the number of Tasmanians sleeping rough and a 54 per cent increase in people living in inadequate conditions, without running water, or bathrooms or kitchens. Moreover, there are currently 5300 people on the waiting list for social and affordable housing, and the number could soar to 14,000 by 2032 without intervention.

Behind these statistics are mums and dads, sons and daughters, grandmothers and grandfathers, who are caught up in the worsening cost of living, forcing them into cars, caravans, tents, friends' spare rooms, shelters, and streets.

Homes Tasmania has pledged to deliver 10,000 new social homes by 2032. Recent Salvation Army reports suggest that 1300 people are experiencing homelessness in Tasmania. Moreover, according to the 2021 census, 537 caravans were occupied and additional structures like cabins or houseboats. There were 227 families living in caravans and cabins - 28 single parents and 52 couples with family and children.

For some, caravan parks may be their only option for affordable and stable housing for pensioners whose homes are converted caravans in a tourist park where they have lived for years, but at the end, many residents have been living under the threat of eviction for well over a year. Recently, the Supreme Court ruled that the eviction notice of one of the residents in the car park was invalid with no effect. It's encouraging that our government is taking a concerted interests in the issue and emphasising the need for the swift introduction of fair, balanced and workable legal protections for permanent caravan park residents, because they deserve the same rights as other tenants. As a government, we must take action to prioritise affordable housing and ensure protection. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home. We must do better.

[12.45 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, I want to acknowledge Prof Razay's contribution and thank him for bringing this matter of public importance to the House, acknowledging that he was due to speak on my matter of public importance last week on this

very matter as well but missed the jump and wasn't able to speak, so I'm glad he is able to bring this on and talk about this important matter.

As I said last week, housing is a fundamental human right of all our community to be able to be provided with a roof over their head, a home. It is a fundamental foundation stone of people's lives. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy of need, housing is crucial. Without a safe, warm home to live in, all of the decisions we make in day-to-day life are put under enormous pressure. How can we expect Tasmanians to fulfil their full potential when we're not able to provide them with affordable housing or a home in times of crisis and in times of need?

There is a reason state governments and states in our federation have the responsibility of housing, because we've seen the impact it has on our community, the deprivation of the Depression time, when people were thrown out of homes were not given that that provision. The social and economic dislocation that created was profound and echoed through generations. We can only imagine for those 5300 applicants on the waiting list the kinds of decisions they're having to make on a daily basis, decisions that we would fear we would have to make once in our own lifetime. We need to walk in the shoes of those people.

In 2018 after the election, the then Premier three premiers ago, Will Hodgman, called it a crisis. He called together a crisis summit and yet here we are and the situation is worse. The actions of government are not enough and it is having a profound impact on our community. I know other members would like to speak so I won't take up my full time.

I acknowledge Prof Razay in his short time in this place, his passion for preventative health and his understanding of the fundamental need for people to be provided with houses, and I support the matter of public importance.

[12.47 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Business, Industry and Resources) - Deputy Speaker, I rise today to make a contribution on behalf of the government, particularly the Minister for Housing and Planning but also the Minister for Consumer Affairs, noting Prof Razay's special interest in the rights of caravan park residents. I commend you, Prof Razay, for your interest and work on this matter. I know that as a as a doctor you see many of the health effects that come from the difficult challenges people face when they have unstable housing. I also acknowledge the member for Franklin, who raised this as an MPI last week as well. I think this is an area we can all agree on is vitally important and a key area for government investment and further government action.

As government we recognise that housing affordability and availability is causing an increase in the number of people on the Housing Register. To help address this, the recent interim Budget contains \$545 million of taxpayer money over the forward Estimates to ensure that Tasmanians who need it most have somewhere to call home. Using borrowings and Homes Tasmania's existing funding, we're investing about \$230 million this year alone to build new social and affordable rental housing, My Home investments, and an extra 200 modular homes and land subdivision works. This investment is key to delivering our goal of 10,000 social and affordable homes by 2032.

In addition to the provision of social and affordable housing, considerable investment is made in crisis support services. The government invests over \$50 million annually into specialist homelessness services, crisis and transitional accommodation, 20 shelters and three

safe spaces statewide to provide immediate support and relief. We're very grateful to all who provide those services, and there are some incredible examples of homelessness support services in Tasmania, including here in Hobart with Bethlehem House. Run by the St Vincent de Paul Society, Bethlehem House is Tasmania's largest provider of crisis and transitional accommodation for men experiencing homelessness. I want to thank all members in this Chamber who have advocated on behalf of them.

Bethlehem House operates a 24-hour staff facility in central Hobart offering self-contained rooms, meals, laundry, fitness and workshop facilities and dog kennels, so residents don't have to separate from their pets. The facility supports residents through tailored case management, financial planning, legal and housing referrals, social reintegration and employability programs aimed at stabilising lives and helping people transition into independent housing. Services such as these provide not just emergency shelter, but also holistic wraparound services to address the complex issues behind homelessness, including mental health, income support and social connection. The interim Budget provided \$2.82 million to this service, ensuring that their case management services can continue over the next four years.

Up north, we have the Indigo Lodge in Prospect, which is a supported accommodation facility managed by Anglicare catering to adults with low independent living skills. Up to 30 people can be accommodated there. The Budget has provided \$467,000 to enable the temporary relocation of residents while essential repair works and upgrades are undertaken.

A further \$2.4 million is going towards the women's shelter, Amelie House, on the side of the original Bethlehem House. This shelter assists women over the age of 55 who need support in transitioning back to independent living. The Budget also provides \$674,000 for five new units at the amazing Hobart Women's Shelter. This provides operational funding, ensuring that the shelter can deliver safe emergency accommodation for women and children experiencing hardship, including those escaping family violence.

Our Youth2Independence program is an extraordinary program that has rolled out across the state, and we were very pleased to finalise the work at the Burnie facility.

In terms of caravan parks, I can assure the member we have heard the concerns of long-term residents of caravan parks. The rights of those residents is a critically important issue for our government and many Tasmanians. We have made clear legislative commitments to ensure the rights of caravan park residents are protected. Last month the Attorney-General intervened in the Supreme Court appeal by the Beauty Point Tourist Park. That is some of the action that has been taken and we want to get on with the job of delivering the legislation. The bill will be introduced within the first 200 days of this government, in line with our election commitment.

[12.52 p.m.]

Ms BROWN (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge Prof Razay in bringing this matter of public importance. It is important. You are quite right in saying that it is one of the most important matters we have in Tasmania right now. The long-term impacts of homelessness we are seeing for Tasmanians include severe mental health issues, severe decline in physical health, children no longer having access to school and the barriers created for parents and other people seeking long-term employment.

We have seen it become even worse over the last 11 years, and that's because addressing homelessness is not a priority for this government. If it was, they would be stepping in and doing more. They have had 11 years to step in and fix it, which they have not done. We see over 5300 primary applicants on the housing waitlist. That's not the total number of people. That's only primary applicants. Many more people are included in one application. It's grandparents, parents and children. That is all wrapped up in a single application, so over 5300 applications is a staggering amount. This is a crisis, and those on that side should be making this a priority.

We see from the Anglicare report that 34 per cent more people than last year have been seeking more housing support and an increase of 88 per cent of those sleeping rough. That's people sleeping in tents, or on someone's couch or in a caravan. We have also seen a 54 per cent increase of people living in substandard dwellings.

When I stand up on this issue, I will always bring my constituents along with me. This is one single constituent. This is hours of advocacy. This is home visits. This is looking at their house and the standard of what they are expected to live in, with holes in their walls that have been done by maintenance, with birds living in their roofs, with garbage bags of nests being pulled away. This is the standard of housing people are expected to live in by this government. The fact that they are not standing up and saying "This is not appropriate" is telling.

I will always stand up for my constituency right across Tasmania when it comes to housing because they deserve more. We have seen what housing can do for people when they go from being homeless or living in a dwelling that is not appropriate to living in a safe, secure home. We have seen lives transform. We've seen children re-engage in school and be happy at school and really want to be there. We see the educational outcomes from that. We see parents and other people re-engage in employment, build confidence and contribute to society in a positive way. That's what people want to do. They want to be able to do these things, but this is such a severe barrier that they are unable to.

We on this side will keep demanding change and action in this space, and we will keep advocating for all of Tasmania.

Time expired.

[12.57 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I thank Prof Razay for bringing forward this matter of public importance. It is, indeed, a very important matter. As has been said, housing is a fundamental human right and it's our responsibility as a state to provide that right to our people. It's not only a responsibility because it is a right, it's not only something we need to deliver because that is the expectation. It's actually an investment in the future. We know that people who have safe, secure, adequate housing are more productive. They're more productive in the workplace and in the school environment. Children go to school, they study better, they are more settled.

We know that safe secure housing is also a critically important preventative health measure. Professor Razay touched on some of the health-related issues in terms of the housing crisis driving insecurity, health issues, mental health issues and other wellbeing issues. Not only is providing adequate housing a responsibility of us as a parliament and for the government, but it is an investment in the future.

For too long now we've seen the government consistently fail to deliver enough to meet these expectations. There are noble aspirations when it comes to building 10,000 new public and affordable homes by 2032, but we consistently fail to deliver against that. Instead of acknowledging that failure and addressing it by investing more in housing, the government over the last years has resorted to fudging the figures, making sure that crisis accommodation, for example, and vacant land are included as part of the reported data in relation to the target of 10,000 new and affordable homes.

A new and affordable home is not crisis accommodation or vacant land. This is something that Homes Tasmania and the government seriously need to address. There are 5336 applicants on the waiting list. More than that number are actually waiting on a house, waiting -

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Housing Shortage and Homelessness

Continued from above.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, before the lunch break I was talking about the housing waitlist of 5336 people and those people waiting 100-plus weeks. We have a situation with Homes Tasmania where it is racking up debt now to build houses and not build enough of them, where previously we would build them from within government itself.

Of course, the housing crisis is not just about public housing; it is about managing the private rental market as well, because when people can't afford to be in the private rental market, that pushes them towards public and social housing or, indeed, into homelessness. That's why we need to see rental affordability measures and measures to deal with rent stress, action on rent control, ending no-cause evictions and minimum standards so that houses that people live in actually meet their needs.

Short-stay accommodation needs to be reined in. We need to deal with short-stay and the loss of whole homes from the private housing market. The 5 per cent levy that was promised two elections ago from government has now been kicked down the road until next year. That's going to cost the Budget \$22 million. An election commitment that could have delivered \$44 million over two years is now going to only deliver \$22 million and that's being put into stamp duty relief.

On this day I would be negligent not to talk about housing in the context of the debate about the stadium and the investment, because at \$375 million in government investment and \$490 million in Macquarie Point borrowings, we are going to be servicing debt to the tune of \$50 million or more every single year. We're not going to be paying that out of a surplus because there is no surplus in the foreseeable future. The surplus that the Treasurer identified last Thursday is an absolute mirage. This \$50 million to service the Macquarie Point stadium debt is something that we're going to have to borrow to service, so we're getting out the credit card to pay the interest bill on this stadium. It's utterly untenable.

The previous master plan for this site identified significant volumes of housing, 15,000 square metres of housing on the Macquarie Point site. In the current proposal there is absolutely zip. We are short-changing our people in regard to housing when it comes to the Macquarie Point stadium because it will cost us dearly.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - I would like us to all to recognise the attendees from the Reconciliation Tasmania Youth Speak Out program who are in the Gallery with us today.

Members - Hear, hear.

[2.33 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I can see there's a lot of appetite for jumping, so I will try to contain my remarks within the time. I was pleased during this lunch break to join with the Premier and the honourable Leader of the Opposition at the launch of the ABC Giving Tree appeal. It was a beautiful ceremony with stories told live on-air, without identifying information, about some of the hardships experienced by families in my community of Bass and around Tasmania who are reaching out for help because they need help. I want to take this opportunity briefly to acknowledge that the government has provided an amount of funds towards the appeal. I know that all of us are encouraged to make a personal donation and I certainly shall be.

It's a reminder for me as an MP of the disparity, for far too many families, not just in our state but around the country, where their income is not able to meet the cost-of-living increases they face. One of the ways that manifests is through housing, whether it's rents that are not affordable, or some pressure on housing that they've been asked to move out of or forced to move out of. This is happening right around the country. The reason it's a particular challenge in our beautiful state is that all of the same factors are occurring around the rest of the country, but we've also seen an extraordinary level of population growth and we particularly saw that in the census following the COVID pandemic. We saw tens of thousands of people moving to Tasmania. I can't blame them, but that population growth blew out of the water our population targets for that period and certainly exceeded expectations.

I have to challenge a number of speakers on the other side of the aisle who have said that the government is doing nothing. That is patently an unhelpful comment to be making. It's not true. You may wish to say that you would do more if you were in power but that's a different argument. I'm for doing more. This government is committed to doing more. With different ministers, premiers and portfolio holders, sometimes at the behest of the community, wonderful organisations like Shelter Tasmania have lobbied for and provided ideas for solutions.

I believe I can speak with one voice with many other members of the Chamber that there isn't a single solution because homelessness is a spectrum of need. There are different people on that spectrum between secure, reliable, affordable housing and those who are absolutely destitute and without anywhere to stay, even tonight. We're all experiencing in our communities the increase in demand; we're seeing it in the increasing number of people registering as eligible for social housing and joining the Housing Register that's run by Homes Tasmania. It's an important acknowledgement that I want to make. These different stressors that I've referred to are impacting on the Housing Register.

I'm pleased to be part of a government that has such a bold agenda to deliver so many thousands of additional dwellings and places, not just social homes but also affordable housing. There is also the importance of short-term accommodation options, which need to be ideally designed to deliver care tonight, a place safe place tonight and for the short term, while skilled and funded practitioners are able to support that person into something much more secure.

As a former housing minister myself, I know how challenging it can be to meet all of the needs that are out there, but it's a shared challenge. It's not a government challenge, it's a social challenge for all of us as participants of this House to show a commitment to addressing. I want to give a compliment. When I was minister for Housing, some of the most impressive, committed, hardworking and dedicated public servants I ever worked with were in fact Peter White, Jessemy Stone and Richard Gilmore. I want to give them a shout-out because when people criticise the housing entities far too often, I feel those highly skilled, dedicated professionals feel unappreciated. I wanted to make that my final call this afternoon.

[2.38 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I commend the member for Bass, Prof Razay, for bringing on this really important issue. It is one that this parliament speaks about a lot and for good reason. Housing and homelessness is a fundamental human right. It's a fundamental, social and moral responsibility of government to provide government and social housing to those people most in need.

I add to the member for Bass, Mr Ferguson's, comments about Peter White, Jessemy Stone and Richard Gilmore. They're all extremely skilled and capable public servants who I'm proud to have worked with back when I worked in that department up until 2018 when I ran for parliament. They work incredibly hard, as do the people across the social housing sector, who are supporting so many people who are in desperate need, as we've heard, with more than 5300 people now sitting on the housing wait list. That list is growing year on year on year. It's growing because need is growing, but it is also growing because government has deprioritised housing as a policy area for 11 years of government. I can say that with some certainty because I saw it happen.

Mr Ferguson's not wrong; they're not doing nothing. They didn't come into government and rub their hands and say, 'Let's just forget about housing', but they certainly didn't make it a top-order issue. The result of that is what we're paying for now. It's what people in Tasmania who are struggling with housing and homelessness are paying for now. That's the result of 11 years of inaction.

In the last four years of Labor administration there more than 2000 social and government homes were built. We've seen that number diminish and diminish each year. True, they can point to some construction, some starts, but it's not enough to keep up with the demand. What's the result of that? We see more and more people in need, more and more people sleeping rough, sleeping in cars, couch surfing with their friends and family if they have that opportunity. It didn't used to be like that. Shelters didn't used to be full with a bottleneck, where there's no ability to move out of the homelessness shelter and into transitional accommodation, and then into something permanent - either social or government housing or private rental. All these sectors are now bottlenecked because of a lack of action from the government and from market failure as well.

I agree with the member for Clark who talked about the importance of private affordable rentals as well. When people can't afford private rents, yes, that might put pressure on the social and government housing waitlist. But there are many people who aren't eligible for social and public housing yet still can't afford private rents because they are astronomically high.

At the last two elections, the Labor Party took policies to address these things to the election. We took a policy to regulate short-stay accommodation across the state because we don't have statewide regulation of short-stay. The government continues to tell local councils that they can do what they want for their municipalities. They can't. That's been tested by the City of Hobart. They are locked in to the state planning scheme. The other policy we took forward was a policy for build to rent, incentivising development of affordable rental accommodation that would have stayed in the rental market at affordable rates for 30 years. Those were policies I was proud to stand behind. They were ultimately rejected by the Tasmanian people, but also by the crossbench and the Greens when they were making negotiations around forming government this time around.

Public and social housing is a social and moral responsibility of government. It is also something that is in the Labor Party's DNA to stand up and fight for. When you see a federal government with a prime minister who grew up in social housing and a former housing minister in Julie Collins who grew up in social housing, you see the national conversation change, you see housing start to be a central policy area of government. You can talk about the details. There's been changes to the Housing Australia Future Fund and the other legislation that's gone through the federal parliament to make improvements. Ultimately, that's possible because those policies are there in the first place, because we have a federal Labor government that is focused on housing and increasing supply across all sectors to finally address this terrible problem we have of growing homelessness.

Let's not forget the many people working in the homelessness support sector. Housing is a lot about a lot more than bricks and mortar, important as that is. It's also about providing the homelessness support services, the social support services and the allied health and other support-adjacent services that people need in order to be able to live a dignified life. The first step of that is a safe, warm, secure roof over your head.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

SITTING TIMES

[2.43 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, pursuant to Sessional Order 18A, I move -

That for this day's sitting, the House shall not stand adjourned at 6.00 p.m.
and that the House continue to sit past 6.00 p.m.

I understand that with the collaboration and cooperation of the colleagues around the Chamber, that will be carried. I thank them for that.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I will speak to that briefly. Obviously, this is an important debate. We recognise that we need to get through this debate and we are happy to make sure we do so today. Sitting late is the option to guarantee that. That was always the option. Hence the disappointment that the House didn't afford members additional time to speak because this was always on the cards. Nonetheless, we look forward to this debate. We're happy to get it done and dusted, and wish everyone the best with it.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

**State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025
(Statutory Rules 2025, No. 49)**

[2.44 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House approves, in accordance with section 26(9) of the State Policies and Projects Act 1993, the State Policies and Projects (Macquarie Point Precinct) Order 2025 (Statutory Rules 2025, No. 49) made on 21 October 2025.

Today this House has a choice: express its confidence in Tasmania and her people, express confidence in our future - our future economically, our future culturally and our future sporting. The proposal before us today is one inviting us to be bold, ambitious and forward-looking. It is a challenge to us as a state whether we can turn an ugly eyesore wasteland into an iconic, uniquely Tasmanian gateway to our capital city; whether we can be part of the stadium economy; whether we want to host the larger world conferences; whether we want cultural events, bands and concerts playing here; whether we want our very own Tassie Devils teams, something we have sought after for so long. I'm excited for our young people, be they fit and sporty, intellectually into computers, practical and hands-on. These are the types of jobs and opportunities which beckon, and so many more in the fields of medicine, physiotherapy, financial management and administration.

From just the AFL team alone, we can expect a new payroll of \$44 million per annum, with most of the money flowing in from external sources. And that is just the AFL component. On top of that, we will have catering, waiters, cooks, chefs and producers all viewing new horizons.

Will we sit here today and deny this future to our young people, to our state and to our economy? I, for one, won't be. The stadium will be an economic enabler. A new hotel and other private investments will surely flow. It will signal to the investment community that Tasmania is open for business.

Allow me to turn to some of the issues that have been raised. This area has been an industrial wasteland for a considerable time. Proposals for a car park, proposals for the Greens' Eden Project, proposal for a hospital and all sorts of other plans and proposals have been put forward, none of which have gathered momentum like this particular plan has.

Mr Bayley - You paid out a Melbourne developer not to build one.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable deputy leader of the Greens will be able to make his contribution today. I ask all members not to interject because it is a time-limit debate for members to speak on. I ask that members are heard in respectful silence. Please keep notes and you can make your own contribution later.

Mr ABETZ - And it is World Kindness Day.

The multipurpose stadium is a do-able, constructive proposal, one that has gained real momentum. It is the only realistic proposal on the table.

Let's turn to the issue of cost. In the absence of not having a vision for this wasteland, considerable sums will need to be spent in any event, and that's the counterfactual. Whatever is done at that site, apart from nothing, will cost money no matter what. If you want to convert it into a car park or an Eden Project or a hospital, or whatever else, it will cost taxpayers' money in any event. So, the only issue which should be entertaining our mind is, what might the cost differential be and the benefits that would flow from that investment? Whatever is proposed won't be cost-free. It will cost money that won't be able to be spent elsewhere. The multipurpose stadium will be aesthetically pleasing to behold and an economic enabler. The costs have been detailed.

The costs of not proceeding are also well known but not as well understood. Doors will slam closed in the face of our aspirational young Tasmanians. Doors will be slammed closed to piggyback investments, and confidence will be shattered. Our self-esteem as a state will be trashed and the message will be: 'Don't try and do business in Tasmania', and that message will ring loud and clear in every potential entrepreneurial investor's ear.

The false assertion is made that we in Tasmania will be paying fully for the stadium. Let's be clear: for the development of the precinct, which is premised on the stadium, federal Labor will make a contribution of \$240 million. The AFL will make a \$15 million capital contribution, but also a \$345 million extra; in other words, \$360 million altogether towards AFL in Tasmania, supporting and helping grassroots AFL around Tasmania, from Smithton to Swansea to Strahan to Southport. That money would be foregone - \$600 million worth. Our investment in the stadium, according to some, could be foregone, to pay, for example, for public service wage increases, or health, or education or roads. Can I remind honourable members that you will only be able to spend that money once? The glaring obvious is that once it is spent on salaries or on health, it will be baked in forever, whereas the stadium is a one-off.

Will there be borrowings? Of course there will be, and some are trying to allocate the total contribution as being fully borrowed. They ask, 'How are you going to pay that back?' Do people ask that about the investments and the borrowings made for building the Legana School, the Brighton School, or the Bridgewater Bridge? Surprisingly, that demand is never made, but it is being made in relation to the stadium. One can use the accounting technique of saying the whole lot will be borrowed, but the reality is, in relation to this budget and the forward Estimates, that we spend roughly, on the operating balance - about \$10 billion - we have other capital investments, but in general terms that which is in the Budget - unfortunately, regrettably, which we will be dealing with - about 20 per cent is borrowed.

To put the whole cost of the stadium in as borrowings, and therefore interest, is to do a disservice to the fact that it is 20 per cent of the cost that will be overall borrowed. Our equity injection and borrowing will be 80:20, like every other part of our budget and forward Estimates.

Let me turn to the issue of the size and the visuals of the stadium. It is often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and that one can argue one way or the other about that. I have used the example of the Eiffel Tower. The academic and cultural elite of Paris in 1880 condemned the prospect of the Eiffel Tower as it would be a monstrosity. The same arguments were made for the Sydney Opera House. Then people living behind were wanting compensation because it would undoubtedly decrease their property values. What occurred? Within a year of it being built, real estate agents were advertising houses there as being with a full view of the Sydney Opera House. It became a selling point.

Here in Tasmania, people might recall the Symphony Orchestra building, which was unfortunately referred to as a 'water tank.' Now people accept it as being part and parcel of the architectural vista of our city. The casino down the road was described as a 'thermos flask', yet when you go on a Pennicott Tour, they point this out as an architectural highlight of the landscape. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I won't seek to detain us any longer, other than to say that it's quite clear that fashions and tastes in this regard have changed on a whole host of buildings and it is exceptionally subjective.

On the practical side, all sorts of arguments were initially raised be it transport, or 'It couldn't fit into the space'. Might I remind everybody that our stadium will be fitting into a space twice the size of the MCG. We were told that transport, the space, emergency services, et cetera - one thing that the POSS process has told us is that all these things are in fact doable; they are capable of being achieved. Therefore all those naysayers have now had to rest that argument. Indeed, in relation to transport, part of the design is now to have a bus mall.

Another argument is that we have two stadia already in Tasmania that are fit for purpose. I say to honourable members, with respect, when the state government, the AFL, our own Tasmanian AFL task force of 2019, and so the list goes on, says that we cannot retrofit either Bellerive or York Park or - let me do them justice - Ninja Stadium and UTAS Stadium: they simply cannot be retro fitted. Does York Park have a great playing surface? Of course it does. Some argue it's the best in the country. That's great, but that does not mean that the facilities in the stadium per se are sufficient to be able to maintain a proper AFL team both on and off the field. They need the facilities.

We then have the 'Yes team, No stadium' argument. I think a lot of people sort of realise that if you want a team, you might actually need a stadium. Given the gross ignorance with which that slogan was born, it then became apparent they had to change their slogan from 'No stadium' to 'No new stadium'. But it is very clear that the only way our team is going to be effective is if we have a new stadium. I also ask the question: If you retrofit one of these other stadiums, how much public money would that have cost? I suggest a lot more. Also, if they are supportive of the team but not a stadium, would they be willing to devote public money to support the team? Of course, there is silence on that. We are willing to back in our team. What we have in relation to that campaign is silence.

Then we have the issue of inflated costs. We've had this time and time again. We are told, for example, that the northern access road will cost a substantial amount of money. It will;

there's no doubt about that. But the northern access road, which the stadium will be able to leverage off, was part and parcel of the Hobart City Deal signed in 2019. So a new slogan can be 'No stadium, No team, but a northern access road'. It will happen anyway irrespective of the vote in relation to the stadium. To include the cost of the northern access road as some extra cost for the stadium is disingenuous, if not mischievous.

In relation to the criticism about the view from the Cenotaph, all I would encourage every single person to do is read from *Hansard* the fantastic, sensitive and eloquent answer from our very own former veteran, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Gavin Pearce, in his answer to the Deputy Leader of the Greens during Question Time today, nobody could have put the case better, more superbly and, I think, put that matter absolutely to rest.

There have also been comparisons with the TT-Line and sure, that's a fair cop, but if you fall over, does that mean you never get up again? We have recognised the mistake of the TT-Line situation, and we have a new board, new governance, new CEO, new governance arrangements that have passed through this House, because if you were to adopt the policy or the position that because there was one mistake over here, you should never again embark upon another project, none of us would get on in life.

We learn from our errors and mistakes and we have in relation to the TT-Line. What is more, the individuals who have brought the TT-Line project back into a proper position, namely the Ken Kanofskis and Peter Gemmells of this world, are now part and parcel of the oversight committee of the stadium, so we can have confidence. Similarly, when I was speaking to the Leader of the Greens' motion, I indicated all the oversight, gateways, health checks, et cetera, that would be undertaken in relation to the multipurpose stadium project, something which unfortunately was not undertaken with the TT-Line.

If we're into cheap shots, I can refer to one for the benefit of the Greens. There used to be a Greens leader who said, 'We don't want hydro power, let's have a coal-fired power station in the Fingal Valley'. I think he regrets that and I dare say he may have learned from that mistake. If the Greens can learn from their mistakes, please provide us with the opportunity of saying that the TT-Line, difficult as it has been, has now being resolved, and that of itself should not be a reason that we don't go ahead with other very important infrastructure projects that we can and do do well, like the Bridgewater Bridge.

I turn to the fact that this is a divisive issue. You know what? It only becomes really divisive if we are not civil in our debate. It is when we start name-calling and, if I might say, refer to it as the 'vanity project of the Premier' and try to personalise it. I encourage everybody in this debate to recognise that there are good Tasmanians on both sides of the debate and we shouldn't denigrate individually those on opposing sides.

We were told that we should be following the POSS process. I remind the Greens that this was foisted upon the government and the Greens actually objected to the process. It was then adopted as the only pathway forward for the government because of two defectors from the Liberal team at the time and the only pathway forward was to refer it to the POSS process and that is what we did. We didn't want it to go there but that is what occurred.

In relation to the POSS process, a lot of expert evidence was given to that process and people say listen to the experts, et cetera. I know that there have been numerous court cases from time to time where a gentleman was found guilty, on appeal found guilty, and then a High

Court acquitted him seven nil on the basis of a complete error running through the whole case, so men and women of good faith, people who are required to sit in judgment on matters, can make decisions, and it is right and proper - especially in a democracy - to respectfully disagree.

The good thing about the POSS process was, given all the overwhelming evidence, they had to accept that it was doable, it was constructible, the transport issues were resolvable and the safety issues were resolvable. All the objective issues were well and truly addressed. It was the subjective issues such as what it looks like, its height, et cetera, and I will just remind the Greens again that when it comes to height and respect for the Cenotaph, the Eden project that was being championed at the time would have been higher.

Mr Bayley - You demean yourself, minister. You keep embarrassing yourself.

Mr ABETZ - What I also find very disturbing - and I note the interjection from the deputy leader of the Greens - is that when the Australian War Memorial was graffitied in Canberra a Greens Senator refused to condemn it and said, 'That was an expression of free speech.' The Tasmanian Greens did not condemn that commentary, so I unfortunately find their concern for the Cenotaph here somewhat out of step with their concern for the War Memorial in Canberra. I trust that this -

Dr Woodruff - You try saying that to Christine Milne and see what you get back.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ABETZ - differentiation has nothing to do with political opportunism. This is a project about which I am absolutely excited.

Mr Bayley - That is below you, minister, we turn up every time.

Dr Woodruff - That is absolutely disgraceful.

The SPEAKER - Order. Sorry to interrupt, honourable Treasurer. Dr Woodruff and Mr Bayley, today, of all days, I ask for respectful silence. You all can make a contribution to this, so I suggest you take notes and feel free to make your comments then. The honourable minister only has seven and a half minutes left. I ask that he be heard in silence, please.

Mr ABETZ - Speaker, that interjection came from somebody who earlier in this place referred to officials lying, people who can't come in here to defend themselves. If you want a definition of disgraceful, using coward's castle to defame people is the lowest of the low. I invite the Greens to tell us what the difference is, or do they agree that graffiti-ing the Australian War Memorial is in fact just an expression of free speech, or do they agree it should be condemned? I hope they will do the latter.

This is an exciting project. I am very exercised and energised by it. I think this will be transformative for our state in so many ways. It will be transformative for the landscape; the cityscape of our city; it will be so helpful for the stadium economy, the economy generally, the piggybacking of other investments, for our sportsmen and women with the Tasmania Devils; for the cultural events and the concert events. This is an exciting project worthy of support.

I remind people that when there was a vote just recently, all of us, in fact, indicated which way we stood in relation to the stadium, and 25 out of the 35 of us in this place were elected on a policy of supporting the stadium. I and the government intend to do exactly that. Having said that, I want to compliment and thank the Labor Party for supporting the stadium, something that will be transformational, and people will hopefully be able to look back at this and say, 'Tasmania and the Tasmanian parliament was at its best when something like this was able to be achieved on a bipartisan basis.'

[3.10 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak for the Labor Party on this important matter. I will begin by acknowledging that we have been on a long, challenging and unnecessarily divisive journey to get to this point today, where this House is being asked to approve the development of the Macquarie Point Stadium. It should not have been this way and it did not need to be this way. I've spoken in this place many times that I believe the Government's handling this process has been abysmal. I understand why so many in the community are sceptical about the project and angry about the process. We share your concerns about the process. But we also see the extraordinary opportunity that this project presents, a chance to progress a once-in-a-generation project, opening new opportunities across so many sectors in our state.

We understand this project is critical in securing the AFL and AFLW licence our state has dreamt about and fought for for decades. We will not lose sight of what this project means for Tasmania, thousands of exciting new jobs in construction, the sports industry, and events management; confidence of our tourism and hospitality industries to invest, and the realisation of a dream for so many Tasmanians, for so long, to see us take our rightful place in the AFL.

When it comes to Tasmania's struggle to secure a place at the highest levels of the AFL, the Labor Party has a legacy to be proud of. It was a Labor Party government under Jim Bacon, who in 2000 first brought regular AFL games to Launceston, initially with Hawthorn and then for a few years with my much loved but underperforming Saints. The partnership with the Hawks was expanded under future Labor governments, which saw Tasmania features so prominently through that golden era of the Hawks success.

AFL at York Park has been one of the great success stories of modern Tasmania. It has given so many Tasmanians the opportunity to see their AFL heroes live. It has stimulated investment in the tourism and hospitality industries across northern Tasmania. The games have filled flights, hotel rooms, restaurants, wineries and pubs throughout the winter months, and, importantly, they've created and supported jobs. It has put Tasmania centre stage for some of the truly great AFL moments.

Who will ever forget 'sirengate'? That was the game that I was at. Or Buddy's thirteen-goal haul, or those big finals we hosted in COVID. Again, I was at the Sydney and GWS game with my family. You saw Launceston come alive. It was very obvious back then because of the COVID lockdowns and people's reluctance. But the city was alive for those finals. The attendance was capped at 10,000. It is the Labor government that brought the Kangaroos to Hobart.

But the Hawks and the Kangaroos have never been, and they've never tried to be, a true alternative to having a team of our own in the AFL. This is why a Labor government initiated

the first serious discussions with the AFL two decades ago about what it would take to secure a licence.

It was Paula Wreidt, then that work continued under Michelle O'Byrne, who commissioned the first comprehensive business case by GAMBA on Tasmania's capacity to support an AFL team.

When it comes to the AFL dream, Labor has always led from the front. We've always understood this is bigger than politics. This is why we provided bipartisan support to the Hodgman government when it established the Brett Godfrey Task Force. It was a process even the Greens supported back then. The Godfrey Task Force made clear, in its 2019 report, that for a Tasmanian AFL licence to be successful, a significant investment was necessary in upgraded venues in both Hobart and Launceston. That is the report Tasmania submitted as part of our pitch to the AFL. Labor accepts it is the basis for the provisional licence we now have secured, because it convinced the AFL that Tasmania was a viable option.

But Labor also understands why so many Tasmanians are angry by the process that has led to us being here today. We share their anger. I struggle to imagine how this government could have managed this process any worse if they were really serious about wanting to take the Tasmanian community along with them on the journey. From the aborted major projects process to the POSS process, to the wheeling and dealing with their own members and the crossbench to keep their government afloat, the government's handling of this project has been appalling from day one, led by a premier who signed an agreement without taking it to Cabinet and then declared 'not one red cent more' than \$375 million would be spent on the project, which turned out to be was just another mistruth to get him through another election.

This is a government that has overseen the worst infrastructure stuff-up in Tasmania's history: the ferry fiasco. We're still only finding out about that one.

We, on this side of the House, do not trust this government when it comes to delivering major projects for this state. But that shouldn't mean Tasmania stops building them or misses out on opportunities because our current state government has a chequered history. We continue to be the voice in this parliament that strongly prosecutes the government's mishandling of the *Spirits* replacement, and it is this approach we will take to holding this Liberal government, which is now propped up by the Greens, to account, for its delivery of the stadium project.

Already, Labor has successfully moved to have the project fully scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee. The PAC has been given specific terms of reference to hold the government accountable for the delivery of Macquarie Stadium project, including:

1. The adherence of the Tasmanian Government, Macquarie Point Development Corporation and other entities to all announce delivery schedules and budgets relating to the Macquarie Point Stadium project, should the project be approved by parliament;
2. Options to minimise delays and reduce additional expenses for taxpayers;
3. The appropriateness of the project oversight and governance arrangements, and any other incidental matters thereto.

Because of the actions Labor has taken, the guardrails will be in place to keep the government on track and on budget with the delivery of this stadium project from day one. Labor continues to urge the government to engage the private sector in the project. We've seen the private sector partner with governments on other stadium projects across the country. Just today I see the New South Wales Labor government is opening opportunities for the private sector to leverage stadium infrastructure across that state, with the goal to generate new housing and commercial investment. We expect the Tasmanian government to continue to fully test the private sector's capacity to be part of the stadium project, including with the business events and hospitality infrastructure, for example.

The private sector can play an important role in reducing the cost and risk to the Tasmanian taxpayer while bringing their expertise and networks to help maximise the outcomes of the project. Who we do trust on this project are the industries and stakeholders whose opportunities will be defined by the stadium proceeding. The building industry needs this project to underpin the valuable commercial construction sector. The Master Builders Association of Tasmania has said,

The stadium provides a clear, stable pipeline of work for the commercial construction sector. The industry remains heavily reliant on large government-led projects. A major project like the stadium, with a defined construction schedule, will provide vital continuity, allowing businesses to better plan resourcing, workforce development and investment in upskilling.'

The stadium is expected to generate 600 jobs in the construction industry across a range of trades. The NBA estimate that up to one in five of these jobs will be apprentices; Tasmanian young people getting their start in the building industry, delivering a project they can take pride in for the rest of their lives.

Labor is a strong supporter of the tourism and business events industries who are looking forward to the stadium as the next great demand-driver to Tasmania, akin to MONA and Cradle Mountain, while opening the state to lucrative new markets in events and conferences. One in seven Tasmanians are employed in our visitor economy. We are the most tourism-dependent economy in the country and we cannot take this industry for granted.

The stadium has already become symbolic of the state's aspirations as a visitor and events destination. Airlines, investors and event organisers are looking to the stadium development as Tasmania's opportunity to take another great leap forward as a year-round visitor destination. As the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania CEO, Amy Hill, said: 'The importance of this investment cannot be underestimated as a confidence signal to those assessing whether to continue and build on their support and investment in Tasmania.'

We know the stadium is the catalyst to realise the AFL dream, but it also opens up exciting opportunities in other sports. It is highly likely there will be more international and BBL cricket played at the stadium than there will be AFL.

It is essential any concerns about the shadowing from the roof are resolved to Cricket Australia's satisfaction, and I understand trials of the roof technology are being planned soon. I note the comments of Cricket Tasmania's CEO, Dominic Baker, who said:

Not only is the stadium essential for the footy club, but I believe it's essential for cricket as well. We think we can triple our membership. We think we can bring 20,000 people a game into the stadium.'

I'm sure most members now will have met Grant O'Brien, Brendon Gale and Kath McCann from the Tasmania Devils - Kath's in the Chamber with us today. Our Labor team has spent some time with them learning more about the work their team are already doing in the community, and the considerable work they still have ahead of them in fielding an AFL and AFLW side in 2028. This is a real football club that they are now leading, with a strong identity, over 200,000 paid-up members, nearly 50 employees, players recruited for a VFL team, and they've now started pre-season training for next year's season. Tasmanians are returning home to work and play for the club, making massive life decisions because they want to be part of something historic and special.

There is a stark choice before us: risk all of that, crush the hopes and aspirations of so many people, and create enormous uncertainty for some of our largest industries - or, we move forward and we make this stadium as successful as it can possibly be.

I want to respond to those who have questioned the cost of the stadium. I understand why so many Tasmanians look at the cost of the stadium in the prism of services in decline, public servants under more pressure than ever, and budget debt that is spiralling under this government. Labor has done more than anyone in this place to raise critical issues with the Budget under this Liberal-Greens government. However, the truth is: cancelling the one-off capital stadium funding will not fix the Budget, and you don't borrow for operational expenses like health or education in a sustainable way.

The \$609 million allocated to the Macquarie Point Development Corporation in this Budget represents just 12 per cent of the state's total infrastructure pipeline over the next four years. We need to invest in infrastructure. It's a core role of government that supports economic activity. This state government's challenge has been its failure to get its infrastructure spending under control and its inability to deliver major projects on time and on budget. This is why Labor has established the guardrails of PAC to keep the government accountable on its management and expenditure of this project. It is disingenuous and wrong to say that cancelling the stadium will resolve the Budget challenges Tasmania faces.

I want to call out those who continue to propagate the argument that we can still have a team without a stadium. These people are not listening, or choosing not to listen. The AFL has been consistent in its position that the conditions of the licence are non-negotiable. Those MPs who flew over to Melbourne earlier this month have now heard it directly from the AFL. If you don't believe the AFL, then listen to Brendon Gale, the CEO of the Tasmania Football Club, who has consistently stated that the stark commercial reality for the club is, as it was said in the original Godfrey report:

With 12,000 seats, Bellerive is simply too small, and it lacks the modern corporate facilities to secure the club's long-term success.

Bellerive is a beautiful place to watch cricket, and has served southern Tasmania well, but it's a suburban cricket ground with very limited capacity for any further expansion, has constrained transport links, and any further investment into the facility would be short-sighted.

Let's not pretend for one minute the AFL and the other 18 clubs would not walk away from Tasmania if we don't deliver on the conditions of the licence, including the stadium. Brendon Gale said this very clearly, and I told the House this last week. The AFL commission does not act alone. It has its own constituency; it has its own politics. It has 18 clubs. Those 18 clubs will act in their own interest. If the AFL Commission goes to the 18 clubs and says, 'Tasmania has not been able to fulfil its part of the deal,' those 18 clubs will say: 'Those draft picks we've given up for this year, can we have those back? Because we could really do with those', and the AFL Commission will say: 'Yes, of course you can have those back'. 'That \$360 million that we're giving the Tasmania Devils over the next 10 years, can we have that back too? Because we could really do with that for our club', and AFL Commission will say: 'Yes, of course you can'.

People think that the politics of this is the AFL can't do that, can't withdraw. I will tell you, the politics on the mainland is, people are looking at Tasmania thinking 'What on earth is going on down there? Do you want an AFL team? Do you want a successful AFL team, or do you not?' They will withdraw from Tasmania and I have no doubt there will be other regions popping up around Australia saying, 'We will build a stadium, give us the next licence'. I know the Northern Territory is already there. I know Western Australia is looking at a third team. They will move on and they will forget about Tasmania.

We need modern facilities. This was laid out in the Task Force Report and anyone who is still doubtful of this, please read that 2019 Task Force Report, it lays it out. We need modern facilities to attract and retain players. They looked at Launceston as a base and they decided that AFL players would not be attracted to play and be in Launceston with all of the professional support staff that are required for an AFL team. They decided, in that report, the report that convinced the AFL that we were a viable option, that the team had to be based in the south.

If you accept that premise, Ninja Stadium is not going to fulfil the team's needs, so we need a new venue. You could upgrade Blundstone Arena - Ninja Stadium now - from 12,000 seats to 23,000 seats, but you're probably going to spend as much as you would on a new stadium. It's in a residential area; you will never activate it in the way that you could and you will never get the transport links right. We need a stadium that will attract and retain AFL players in the south, and the professional support staff that are required to support an AFL team - an elite team - two teams with the AFLW.

Some people have compared our situation to the Gold Coast and the GWS and said, 'Well, they didn't have to do it'. Well, guess what, over the 10 year period they did do it. They built metric on stadium, they upgraded stadiums in New South Wales. They did it because to have a successful AFL team you need modern facilities, because you're competing with all the other teams that have modern facilities. They did do it.

I'm sure that Tasmanians, if we're going to do this, want the Tasmanian Devils to be successful. We don't want a team that's going to be flogged every week, with its hand out for more money because it's struggling to survive. Tasmanians are proud people. If we're going to have an AFL team, let's give it every chance to be successful and let's be proud and win premierships and to do that we need to have modern facilities.

People who are still sceptical of this, whether we like it or not, the state government has made commitments on all of our behalf. It has signed an agreement. I guarantee there are people

on the mainland, on boards and overseas, who are looking at Tasmania right now. If we have a state government that defaults on an arrangement like this, which is so high profile, it will shatter confidence. What business and investor confidence needs is predictability and certainty. When a state government commits to something, it delivers it. That's what creates confidence in the economy, and I think the cost of not proceeding will be far more detrimental than proceeding.

The last point I will make on this is that we're not starting from zero here. I've seen a lot of comparisons that we're going to add a billion dollars or \$2 billion if you listen to the Greens hyperbole, to state debt. There's already money allocated, a significant amount of money allocated and accounted for. We're not starting from zero. The club's not starting from zero. We're going to build a squad, we're going to have a coach, the excitement's going to build around this. I will say to the Greens and the crossbench and members in the other place, if you vote against this and you do everything you can to stop it, how are you going to engage with the Tasmania Football Club? I hope that people will understand at some point that this is a huge thing for the state. I would welcome the crossbench and the Greens at some point in the future saying, 'We might have got it wrong and I will buy you a beer at one of the games.'

Mr O'Byrne - Not all the crossbench.

Mr WILLIE - Not all the crossbench, sorry. I know the honourable member for Franklin, David O'Byrne, has been a supporter for quite some time. I'm sorry about that oversight.

I think that's where we will end up with the Tasmanian population. There will be excitement that builds around the team, people will want it to be successful, will want to win premierships. I believe that when that happens in 2028, when we see the team run out on the field, people will say, 'Let's get on with this, let's get the stadium done,' and 'We're actually enjoying the stadium'. I believe people will think, 'What was all that fuss about that we went through?'. That's what has happened in every other part of Australia where they've done this. Smaller places like Townsville and Geelong, bigger places like Adelaide and Perth: that has been the experience. I'm confident that's going to happen around the Devils.

I say to those who maintain that we can simply renegotiate the deal with the AFL: you're ignoring the facts and you're putting up so much risk.

The government has handled this project poorly from day one. This is why Labor will continue to place guardrails around the government's delivery of the project. We will use all the powers available to us as an opposition in this parliament to hold the government to account for the delivery of this vital infrastructure. We will scrutinise every decision made and every dollar invested. We will ask questions and demand answers. We will call out delays and cost blowouts, and hold those responsible to account.

But we will not stop the project and crush the hopes and aspirations of so many Tasmanians. We will not be responsible for stopping the AFL and AFLW dream. We will not be dishonest with Tasmanians and say that there is a pathway to an AFL and AFLW teams without a stadium. We will not deliver a mortal blow to Tasmania's reputation as a place for an investment. When the history books are written, let the record show Labor stood on the side of the Tasmanian boys and girls who dream today to one day wear the map and represent their home in our national game. And that we stood on the side of those Tasmanians who, for decades, have fought long for our team so that we can participate in the highest level of our

national game. Let the record show Labor stood on the side of jobs, as we always have, backing infrastructure investment that will create jobs and opportunities in our construction industry, tourism and hospitality sectors, and sports and events industries. Let the record show that when it mattered, Labor looked to the future and we supported the passage of this order.

[3.33 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to put on the record today the fact that for decades the Greens have been part of a tri-partisan united front with the Liberals and Labor to support Tasmania's bid for a team of our own. Our history as football fanatics and devotees stands for itself. This island literally kicks above every other state in Australia.

The Greens made it crystal clear in the earliest conversations about a licence with the Liberal and Labor parties that our support for the licence would be contingent. It would not extend to building a new stadium infrastructure for the AFL in Tasmania. We already have more than earned the right to join the national league without billion dollar strings being attached. The Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, looked Cassy O'Connor in the eye and reassured her that our participation in the state's bid was not contingent on a stadium. We now know that he was not being truthful. It was the start of the Premier's long, sad descent into deception with Tasmanians about the costs and the deals that have been struck for this stadium.

The AFL has always said, as we found out later, that it was a prerequisite from day one. Today we will be voting on this stadium order that would never have come about if then-premier Peter Gutwein hadn't blinked and caved into Gil McLachlan's demand to the smallest and poorest state in the country to hand over the sweetest spot in central Hobart to the AFL for their pleasure as a shiny money-making vanity project, with a retractable roof for novelty to boot.

The news went down like a stink bomb in the community and opposition immediately commenced, which continues to this day. The people watching in this Chamber are a tiny fragment. I know there are many more listening online. Our internationally award-winning author Richard Flanagan, along with Roland Browne and other doughty citizens, started a group in early 2023 called My Place. They released an alternative vision, activating the proposed stadium site, which the Liberals for a decade had failed to achieve or refused to do.

We could have had an internationally significant urban renewal project there already, including 1000 houses providing homes for 2000-3000 people, a nationally significant indigenous truth and reconciliation park, a new State Library, a tidal swimming pool, a light rail transit hub and so much more. The Greens support the \$240 million in federal funding but it should be used as intended: not for a stadium but on housing as part of the alternative vision that's been proposed.

When the Premier derides, as he did again this morning, that beautiful place at Macquarie Point, or what could be a beautiful place, as an industrial wasteland, he is denying his failure and that of the last 10 years of Liberal governments to do something. What he should have done is got out of the way of the community and let the community lead for a project that should be a palawa-led, community-led, supercharged social investment space. That is what we still can have on this beautiful place in central Hobart. The Greens will continue to fight for that to happen. There is a viable alternative to a stadium at Macquarie Point and it has a social licence. Building a third stadium clearly does not have that.

Three-and-a-half years later and the debate rages on. Poll after poll have confirmed that the stadium is massively on the nose among Tasmanians, especially among northerners. In February, two-thirds of people who live in the north and north west were registered as opposing the stadium in a significant poll. They were evenly divided in the south but, overall, against a stadium. Another poll in June found around 70 per cent of all Tasmanians oppose it.

The My Place group has been growing exponentially over the years. It's a tireless team of committed Tasmanians who continue to devote themselves, on their own time, to challenging the combined Liberal and AFL juggernauts that seek to destroy the values that so many Tasmanians hold dear. These people promote, as do the Greens, a genuine Aboriginal-led truth and reconciliation space. They want to protect the unique Hobart heritage and arts precinct that is a source of tourist delight. They flock to see something which nowhere else in Australia has. They want to protect the Cenotaph's visual sightlines and positioning in the landscape. It deserves the dignity of holding space for remembering and commemorating returned soldiers, a place forever to pay our respects to people who gave their lives in our service. These would all disappear or be irrevocably damaged if the stadium were to be built. \

I thank from the bottom of my heart, on behalf of the Greens, everyone in the My Place group, and all the other Tasmanians who have respectfully, intelligently and doggedly worked for years to help Tasmanians wade through the spin and deception of the Liberals, engaged with the government's perverted planning processes, made representations and submissions to the planning commission and who stayed the distance because of their love for this place and their outrage at the injustice of it being taken away on the whim of the AFL bullies. It is people like you all that bind and enrich the fabric of Tasmania's community, coming from a place of love and fairness, not self-interest, you epitomise the best of us.

By contrast, Premier Rockliff has covered himself and his party with shame for his behaviour over the stadium. He's broken promises and has been repeatedly dishonest with Tasmanians about the true cost of the stadium. It's grown from an estimated \$715 million to \$1.13 billion and rising. The Premier said the state would not be on the hook for one red cent more than \$375 million and he said much more than that. He's repeated himself on multiple occasions and what we know from his comments is that we can't take anything the Premier says on the stadium to be the truth because he's said it's a good investment, it will be funded by the private sector, we will be investing \$375 million and the rest will be coming from private resources. He also said in September that he's happy to be held account when the time comes. Well, the time, Premier, is today. You have to listen to the truth and we are reflecting back to you the dishonesty you have been peddling for the last two years with Tasmanians and it is a shame and a stain on your leadership of this state.

He has done some worthy things, but the way he has presented the case for the stadium and the spin shows that he doesn't actually have the conviction to believe it, because if he did he'd be utterly honest with Tasmanians about what it's going to cost, and the costs have grown and the government has clearly abandoned the hope of private investment, so despite the stadium price tag already having skyrocketed to by an extra \$400 million, the Premier continues to try and downplay the risk of cost overruns. He finally admitted in Question Time this morning that while \$1.13 billion is the current estimate, he knows the cost of the project will increase further.

Most Tasmanians already know the stadium costs will keep blowing out and I want to refer to the interim Budget Papers that show the government is splitting the cost between \$375 million that will be paid in this budget in the general government account and \$490.7 million that will be taken as borrowings from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation within that state authority. It's very clear that these costs will be borne by the state of Tasmania and we will be bearing the costs for paying down that debt for decades to come.

The Premier has dodged the planning schemes, contracted independent experts such as Nicholas Gruen to review the stadium and Saul Eslake to review the state's finances and when both gentlemen found a dire economic outlook for Tasmania and exposed the stadium's true costs, the government tried to hide the evidence to dismiss it and, worse, he has attacked and vilified the very people he employed to do the work. Attacking truth-tellers is form for this premier and this government. They don't like the truth. Nicholas Gruen said the project was 'already displaying the hallmarks of mismanagement' then.

The Premier established the Project of State Significant process and the independent Planning Commission panel and then he's rubbished the scope of their work, even though the government's own Solicitor-General has thoroughly vindicated the panel's decision to include the northern access road and and car park and other areas within the scope of what should be assessed for the stadium.

The Premier's proponent, the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, has withheld information from the panel in an effort to a stymie their assessment work. The draft panel's assessment report certainly looked damning for the prospects of the stadium's future and at that point the Premier tried to smash up his own planning process and drafted special stadium-enabling legislation in an effort to ram it through parliament before the commission's findings could be published.

The record stands that the Planning Commission was given an unexpected reprieve by the state election, and here we are today. Full credit to the Planning Commission, which stood firm on their legislature requirements and continued to work and provide us with a final draft assessment.

Their recommendation was, not surprisingly, withering. They recommended that the stadium should not proceed; it is a financial sinkhole that will diminish the economic welfare of Tasmanians as a whole. Far from being an architectural triumph, it is overbearing, unexceptional, too big for the site, and overall, negative for Tasmanians. The stadium has irrevocable and unacceptable adverse impacts on Hobart's spatial and landscape character, its urban form, and our historic cultural heritage.

They found that the stadium will cost every Tasmanian who's not on Commonwealth welfare benefits \$5900. By comparison, they said that Sydney's Allianz Stadium cost \$273 for every New South Wales household. If we take this order on and pass this stadium, we would need to raise taxes of \$50 million a year for the next 30 years, the Planning Commission says, or we would need to cut public services by the same amount to balance the books.

At 54 metres high, the stadium is not for sharing with anyone or anything. It would obliterate Constitution Dock and make a mockery of the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme that has lovingly safeguarded the heritage of this tourist drawcard area. The Planning Commission

found the form and scale of the stadium are a repudiation of the scheme's longstanding principles and strategies.

The Planning Commission says it will extensively and irreparably damage the historic cultural heritage of Hunter Street, the Engineers Building and, most particularly, the Cenotaph. They said it would be a dominating backdrop to the buildings and the Cenotaph and would dwarf them, diminishing their spatial and visual importance.

I want to make mention, as I know the member for Clark, Mr Bayley, will do shortly as well, to the letter that was sent by the president of RSL Tasmania, Mike Gallagher, to all Legislative Councillors. He says:

The commission's report finds the proposed development would cause significant and irreversible harm to the heritage values, setting and commemorative function of the Cenotaph. The Cenotaph's visual prominence, contemplative atmosphere and national symbolism would be permanently diminished.

He also says:

No mitigation, the Planning Commission confirms, can offset the harm the proposed stadium would inflict on the Cenotaph. Once its setting and reverence are lost, they cannot be restored.

Those of us who stood there on Tuesday morning on Remembrance Day to pay our respects and remember the sacrifice of our servicemen and servicewomen who died for us could not avoid feeling the significance of standing in that place and thinking of today. I spoke to many people about what it would be like if the stadium were to be built that would be utterly dominating that landscape. It would be a shame.

The Planning Commission says the stadium would also drown the splendour and the beauty of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's concerts at their purpose-built Federation Concert Hall, right next to where the stadium would be.

I want to address the comments they made about Aboriginal heritage. The Macquarie Point area has a special significance for Tasmanian Aboriginal people. On the edge of Timtumili Mananya and under the gaze of great Kunanyi, it has been a traditional gathering place for eating and ceremony for countless generations before colonisation. The Macquarie Point Development Corporation has proposed to recognise the character of the landscape and Aboriginal cultural values, proposing an Aboriginal culturally informed zone, but the commission has found in their report that consultation with the Aboriginal community was wholly insufficient. Professor Gregory Lehman gave a submission to the commission and he said

The Macquarie Point Development Corporation has sought to generate a range of superficial outcomes to create an appearance of Aboriginal participation in the stadium project through a rushed process with little transparency. A statement of Country, a Palawa artwork and ad hoc input into the design framework of the stadium by a single individual stand in stark contrast to the accumulated engagement undertaken over seven years prior to

the decision to allow a stadium to be built on the precinct. Instead, these gestures amount to what I would characterise as a typical example of what is commonly called black cladding. Aboriginal engagement and consultation has been inadequate and of poor quality. The AFL stadium at Macquarie Point offers minimal scope for reconciliation and healing, or for the celebration of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural resilience and vitality in the face of genocidal colonial violence.

Nala Mansell, also from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Council, made a submission. She said:

The Government is proposing to build a billion-dollar stadium, a project that will not just dominate the nipaluna skyline but further erase the opportunity for Aboriginal land justice in the heart of the city. Macquarie Point is not a blank canvas as it's been described. It's a part of a living Aboriginal cultural landscape that holds generations of stories, history and trauma. It's one of the few remaining spaces in this capital city where a real act of restitution could take place. We have been excluded from every formal decision-making process related to this stadium.

Shame. It is a shame. The government's own business case shows a negative return on the investment. It is a loss-making venture, only 45 cents in every dollar that we would invest in it. Despite what they say, it's not pro-business and development, it's actually a loss-making commitment of public funds, just when we're staring down the barrel of the worst debt burden ever in Tasmania's history as a state courtesy of the Liberals budget mismanagement.

I thank the Treasury officials and the opportunity that a surprise snap election gave us to hear the unvarnished naked truth from Treasury officials in caretaker mode. Their Pre-Election Financial Outlook report - if anyone watching hasn't looked at it - is well worth reading. I suggest Labor read it as well. Because if you do, you will understand that what they say is we cannot afford the time to wantonly take on more debt. It should only be critical infrastructure. They were very serious about the risk to Tasmania, the potential for serious downgrade of our credit rating. That has also been forewarned by the planning commission. Should this stadium go ahead, our credit rating would go down, in all likelihood, and that would mean we'd be paying more interest on the interest that we're paying on our debt at the moment and any further interest that we wanted to take out through TASCORP would be at a higher interest rate, also more money that wouldn't be going into public sector jobs, community sector services. The infrastructure displacement for the project is real. Every subsidised stadium dollar is a dollar that's not available for home construction. Not having housing for more than 5000 desperate waiting-list applicants directly holds back people's ability to contribute fully in society. It holds back the educational outcomes for children. The opportunity cost for the interest on the debt for decades to come is enormous. It will come, as the Treasurer has said, with deeper cuts to essential programs in next year's budget.

If this blighted project were to proceed, it would drain business and other revenue from across each of our electorates. Members should think about that deeply. It will not increase opportunities within electorates. Victoria has realised that, rather than throw good money after bad, it could not afford the Commonwealth Games. That decision taken was recently vindicated by a Victorian parliamentary inquiry decision this April, which found that the decision taken to withdraw from that project, even though it came with significant costs at the time, was correct and the reasons they gave are almost identical to the ones being raised here about the

proposed stadium. It is not too late to back out. It is much better in our state's interests if we do so.

The Greens oppose the vast cost it would take to build the stadium, whatever the figure will finally be. The design is not completed and no contract's been locked in, so any home-builder would know from bidder experience that the price could easily go up by 50 per cent or more. There would be a fierce battle to attract a competent large infrastructure firm to do the work, given the flight to the north from companies wanting to cash in on the Brisbane Commonwealth Games dollars. Given what's known, the stadium would at minimum add an extra \$2 million in debt to the state's books. The Planning Commission calculates our state coffers will be depleted by \$50 million a year, for the next 30 years.

I will talk about Labor's role in this, or more precisely, the failure of Labor to have a position in this. That is, the position that an opposition should take. The comments that Labor have made over the last six months about their concern about the levels of debt and their blistering evisceration of the Premier and his ministers, about their epic failure to deliver the *Spirits* on time, and the gross mismanagement and costs that have resulted from the Liberals failure to do that, do signal that Labor does appear to care about the impacts of large infrastructure costs. Disasters.

The Liberals, we know, have shown that they're not capable of building a ferry terminal for the *Spirits* in Devonport without the budget blowing out by more than five times, from \$90 million to \$493 million and counting, or to do it without timeframes blowing out by years. Why would Labor think that the Liberals can keep financial control of the stadium project? What gives you confidence that this would happen, and where have your questions been about this? Where have the questions been for weeks and weeks about these issues? Why haven't you asked them? Why haven't you asked about -

Mr Willie - You can check *Hansard* from the other week, get your facts right.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Dr WOODRUFF - the loss for decades and decades to come of services to the community about the cuts to the budget that will come? This is a massive failure for Labor as an opposition. Where are the questions about the broken promises and the choices that the Premier has made all down the line about fast-tracking government's processes, about attacking independent experts because of their valid comments and concerns? Where have they been? You have been absent.

The worst thing that has happened is to pretend to Tasmanians that you're actually going to scrutinise this project. I will go back to the comments that the now honourable opposition leader, Mr Willie, made in the press conference in April this year, about the stadium. He was asked by David Killick from the *Mercury*. David Killick said:

Is there no limit to your support to the stadium? If it costs \$2 billion or \$3 billion or \$4 billion? Is there nothing that can go wrong with this project that would cause you to oppose it?

The honourable Mr Willie said:

We'll support the stadium through the parliament.

Mr Willie - It doesn't mean it's a blank cheque.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Dr WOODRUFF - In the same interview David Killick from the *Mercury* also asked:

So, the stadium is more important than good governance, it's more important than not running up a massive debt, it's more important than the environmental restrictions, than the traffic problems. There's nothing that can happen with this project that can go wrong that will cause you to waiver in your support of it?

The honourable Mr Willie said:

We need to see him come to parliament and explain how he's going to deliver on his promises for Tasmanians and how he's going to address some of the concerns of the Planning Commission. But we will support the stadium through the parliament.

Why is it, Mr Willie and Labor, why did you vote against giving us time to go into Committee so we could ask the questions and get answers for Tasmanians.

Mr Willie - You support projects and policies, it doesn't mean you're signing over a blank cheque, does it?

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is welcome to make a contribution on Adjournment tonight.

Mr Willie - I'm being incited, Speaker. She's asking me questions.

Dr WOODRUFF - Why did you vote against us having sufficient time limits to 40 minutes so that we -

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, through the Chair, please.

Dr WOODRUFF - could ask the questions that Tasmanians want answers to? Is every single member of Labor going to be asking questions of the government today, as Mr Willie promised people before an election earlier this year? We will see. You can be courageous with your vote, Labor. Other members can be courageous with their vote. It is time to vote with your conscience.

We all represent Tasmanians who are struggling. There are 81,000 Tasmanians who are hungry and cannot get a meal every day. This stadium will not feed them. That is the bottom line. This stadium will take \$50 million and more out of the budget for every year for decades to come. That is not feeding hungry Tasmanians, it's not building them a home and it's not helping the healthcare situation.

To those people who are concerned about the Tassie team, I suggest you look to the mass enthusiasm to join the Tasmania Devils when the membership opened last year. We've got a quarter of a million members. At least 110,000 of us are residents of Tasmania, about one in five; and that speaks volumes to the enthusiasm and passion that's backing the team. We're not going to go back into the bottle, stadium or not, regardless of the AFL's demands.

Mr Willie - How did your delegation go?

The SPEAKER - Order.

Dr WOODRUFF - We're entering the VFL next year, and the women's team will start in 2027, and the Greens and every other Devils member will back those teams and continue to fight, as we have for decades to come for our right to have them.

In the words of economist Nicholas Gruen, Tasmania is a proud state that for too long has given far more to the AFL team than it received. Our state deserves an AFL team and must have it at the right cost, but not at any cost. This vote is a reckoning for the Premier and all Tasmanians. Thanks to the Liberals' hand at the wheel for over a decade, we're now living far beyond our means and stealing from our children and our grandchildren. We're paying interest on the interest to service our debt and to turn that ship around into calmer waters, Treasury's advice and basic commonsense tells us we can't add yet more billions of dollars of debt.

It's a serious moment for us all, for the future of our much-beloved Hobart waterfront with its heritage and arts precinct, the sacred Cenotaph site, and the alternative vision of a truly iconic Macquarie Point park that would be lost forever if the stadium was built. It's especially serious for the future of young Tasmanians who need extra government resources to flow into better schooling, public transport and home construction.

As the Treasurer says, this is about choices. For all these reasons, and to honour the commitments that the Greens have made to Tasmanians for three-and-a-half years and countless conversations ever since, the Greens will not be supporting this order to build a Macquarie Point stadium.

[4.03 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, this is one of the most consequential votes this parliament has taken in my time in this place. The significance of this vote in relation to the impact it will have in our community will echo far beyond the counting of the votes of this House. I make this statement as I consider the economic and social impact an approval of the stadium will bring, but also the profound loss a vote in the negative will cause to our economy, to our brand and to future generations.

We do not have the luxury of deferral or speculating on what may have been a better process or a better time; we have the circumstances we have and the responsibility to make a decision in the best interests of all Tasmanians. Many decision-making moments we as parliamentarians find ourselves in are imperfect, they are complex, and they need to be seen not only in a specific set of circumstances we find our state in, but also how it will be viewed and understood in years to come.

This proposal has caused intense public debate, in part because that is the Tasmanian way. Be it parochialism or the reality of change itself, Tasmanians are passionate about this place and are easily motivated to have their voice heard, but the controversy is also in part due to the government's handling of the proposal. From the day the former premier Peter Gutwein dropped the idea like a dead cat on the table in the State of the State address in 2022, to the division inside the Liberal Party that caused two members to defect to the crossbench, triggering an early election., to the Labor Party seeking to play opportunistic politics and oppose the stadium, to the confusion around funding, scope, ownership and ongoing management. The government, despite their steadfast support for the project, have fumbled the primary responsibility of those seeking change, that is to engage, to understand, to explain and, importantly, to convince.

Regardless of the critique of the government, I have said from day one that good governments must do more than one thing. They need to deliver essential services of health, education, housing, public transport and also take advantage of economic enabling opportunities that create jobs, build economic prosperity and inspire our current and future generations. These decisions are not binary.

Yes, for those that have pointed it out, this was prior to my being appointed to the volunteer role with the Southern Football League. I'm just one of thousands of people each Saturday who love their community sporting clubs. It's a privilege to be able to volunteer with them. I know people have said this is a conflict in my role and understand why they would say it, but it does give me a unique insight into communities, families and individuals about how they're coping with their day-to-day struggles and their needs. We don't always talk sport and in my view it makes me a more informed local member of parliament. For the record, I'm a volunteer and a patron for a range of volunteer-based community groups. It's interesting that when I talk on their behalf I don't seem to be accused of having a conflict of interest.

I have a long history with the Mac Point site. I was the state minister that negotiated with the then federal minister and now PM, Anthony Albanese, to secure the original \$50 million to prepare the site for development. It was a polluted transport hub on reclaimed land with an ageing and soon to be redundant sewerage works in the middle of a working port. At the time there were many suggestions as to its future use. Even a stadium was proposed. For the record, back then I thought a stadium was a silly idea, because not only did we not have a team to underpin its activity, but in my discussions with the then AFL administration, they had made it very clear to me that despite our efforts Tasmania would never get a team in the AFL.

There were other suggestions, such as an Antarctic gateway, services hub, convention centre, arts and creative industries hub and other science and research institutions. All of these ideas had one thing in common. They would all require over a billion dollars of government money, local, state and federal, to be delivered. Regardless of which path is taken, that money will be needed, and in part that is why the site has sat idle for so long.

Several plans came and went, then the site was earmarked for a mixed-use development that, Aboriginal interpretation side aside, quite honestly could have been anywhere in the world - a soulless collection of buildings inside a working port, isolated from the CBD and devoid of any imagination, an exercise in mediocrity.

So what has brought us to this point, Deputy Speaker? The trigger for the stadium proposal has undoubtedly been the granting of a licence for a Tasmanian club in the AFL,

something that has been campaigned for by so many for generations. A foundation football state would finally be taking its rightful place in the national game in the national league. No longer would Tasmanians have to leave the state, turning their back on their families and their communities.

But AFL is more than just a game. It's a massive multibillion dollar industry that has changed rapidly over the last 20 years, no longer being played in suburban grounds and populated by semi-professionals on the weekend. The football industry at the elite level demands so much more and those who pay their money to watch also demand quality facilities and top-level entertainment environments.

What did that mean for Tasmania? It meant that to get a team we needed to build a rigorous business case that would not only set the club up for success, but importantly, one that would convince the AFL clubs and commission that we would not be a drain on the resources of the league and would add something to the massive economic pie it generates. We have deserved a team for a generation, but the business case was required for it to be delivered and deliver it did. Without the business case, including the proposal for a stadium, we would not have even been invited to the table.

But a stadium built for a limited number of AFL games per year alone does not stack up, so building on the models created in other capital cities, the concept of a multi-use facility was developed, a facility to host conferences, events and concerts, to create activity nearly every day of the year that would attract business to Tasmania that could underpin not only the club, but also create significant economic activity, enough activity to create jobs, sustain careers, and give thousands of Tasmanians across the country in the world a reason to come home and thousands of Tasmanians a reason to stay.

The concept of enabling infrastructure is not new. The most recent example of this is the Adelaide Oval, an economic hub that has transformed that city and that state's economy. The economies of stadiums have changed rapidly over the last few years. Streaming services, which deny many artists revenue for when their music is played, means they now need to derive their income from touring and the sales of merchandise. Put simply, they need more places to play.

The roof has been a major point of argument and, I must admit, it did take me some time to come to terms with this aspect of the proposal. The reality is, whilst Hobart is the second driest capital in the country, we have the most rain days and, for me, the major issue that we have is, not the rain, but the more devastating winds we endure. For this facility to work, we need to manage the perceived and real risk factors. We need to know we can book artists and hold events that are not ruined, nor the experience diminished, by weather events.

Whilst we may get misty eyed about the Queenstown gravel oval, and some of us are emotionally tired to Victoria Park in Melbourne, the home of my beloved Magpies, the world of elite sport has left this rustic, romantic notion far behind. A stadium is not just about a revenue model for the club, it is also about how we attract and retain the best players and staff in the game. The arms race in terms of facilities in the AFL is well and truly on and those that don't deliver on this lose.

Let's deal with some of the arguments about why we should not approve the multi-purpose stadium and, in doing so, I acknowledge that the timing is difficult in budgetary terms, the location is not without its challenges, and the nature of the build throws up a range of

logistic and practical challenges. The misconceptions that we can renegotiate with the AFL- well we've been negotiating for 30 years. We've been knocked back time and time again. We were knocked back in the past largely because we could not present a compelling business case.

'It's in the wrong place.' For the multipurpose stadium to be successful, it must be within flat walking distance of the CBD, with hotels, restaurants and other key pieces of infrastructure.

'It's too small for the stadium, Macquarie Point.' Once the stadium is built, there will be around 59,000 square metres left for development. This is around the size of two Federation Squares or all of Salamanca, including PW1.

'The state can't afford it.' There is no denying the state's debt is significant, but there is a massive difference between borrowing to fund the one-off cost of productive infrastructure versus borrowing to fund ongoing services, the latter being Tasmania's biggest challenge.

'We should get the private investors to pay for it.' Private investment was explored at length, but after examining the economics of stadiums around the country, it was determined that, for Tasmania to gain maximum financial benefit, the state needed to own the facility outright and therefore reap all the profits.

'It will only be used a couple of times a year.' Business Events Tasmania estimates the venue will enable Tasmania to bid for an additional 110 business events, creating \$332 million in economic opportunity each year.

'We've already got stadiums.' York Park is having hundreds of millions of dollars spent on it in upgrades, but Launceston sadly cannot be the home of the club. Bellerive is a landlocked, suburban ground that has served us well, but the time for these scale events has passed.

When we're looking at one side of the ledger, we need to look at the other, and what is the cost of the lost opportunity? We will lose the AFL club, a club we've wanted and deserved for 30 years. Three-hundred-and-sixty million investment in Tasmania is a contribution from the AFL to grassroots football across Tasmania, thousands of direct and indirect jobs, the 1,500-seat convention centre and economic transformation that will come with it. The \$240 million of federal funding from Macquarie Point will be put at risk as it relates directly to the stadium proposal being the linchpin for the grant, and the PM made that clear in his announcement on this.

What about the Tasmanian Academy of Leadership and Sport? Those young trainees, 50 young Tasmanians that are now, solely due to the existence of the Devil's Football Club and the AFL decision to grant us a licence, undergoing a training program that will set up their careers for the future. This opportunity could not have happened without the decision to build a stadium.

I've read all the reports and all of the major pieces of work for and against the Macquarie Point Stadium. Many of them justify their positions for and against on a few narrow points. Using a narrow BCR to kill this project ignores the fact that the BCR should always be used in context of the other factors at play, and that they are an economist's best attempt to quantify a project that, at times, is really hard to quantify.

Tasmania's most famous economist, L.F. Giblin, along with Keynes, pioneered work on the multiplier effect. This is the core of the argument. This project will fundamentally alter the pattern and quantum of consumption. It will shift investment behaviour and will in part underpin rather than detract from future fiscal policy. When I grew up in Launceston, it was pretty common for many of my friends and schoolmates to talk about leaving Tassie - for work, for life, for adventure. Whilst I encourage more Tasmanians to travel and spend time off our island if they can, I'd like to be able to be part of a political class that gave young Tasmanians more options to stay or to return. I left to live on the mainland, but I came home. I came home because I love this place.

I recall a recent conversation I had with a mate of mine who I went to university with in Adelaide, when he finally came down to Tassie to visit. He said, 'Dave, I never knew why you came back here. You'd escaped the island. That was until I came here and I saw the place, and I could see the love of it in your eyes.' It reminded me of the comment made by one of the state's finest premiers, Jim Bacon. Jim referred to Tasmanians and Tasmania when he said:

We are paupers in paradise - a beautiful place but an economic backwater, a place destined to have more people leave than arrive.

I'm also reminded by the work of the late Jonathan West, an academic and economist, in his 2013 piece for the *Griffith Review*. His article referred to the narrowly-based nature of the Tasmanian economy and how it consigned future generations of Tasmanians to repeat our poor health and education outcomes:

The underlying problem is simple but intractable. Tasmania has developed a way of life, a mode of doing things, a demographic, a culture and associated economy that reproduces underachievement generation after generation. Ultimately, Tasmania doesn't change, because its people don't really want to. They don't need to change, because their way of life is mainly financed by the mainland. Only a minority of Tasmanian households derive their income from participation in the private sector.

West goes on to identify that a third of the population derive their sole or primary income source from a Commonwealth public payment. Another 30 to 35 per cent of the people derive their employment or main source of income from local, state or federal government. On top of this, it is estimated that up to 10 per cent of work for a private corporation whose sole client is government.

He states further:

The implication of these stats is that only a small minority of the Tasmanian population has a direct personal stake in economic development. When a particular economic development is proposed and would necessitate some inconvenience or clash with values, which they ultimately do, few Tasmanians have an immediate stake in making a compromise. Little is lost personally by opposing the development or delaying its introduction.

If government attempts to expedite the proposal, a large number of Tasmanians will oppose such action as improper. Instances of inconvenience

mentioned by opponents of particular projects include: more trucks on the road, more difficulty finding parking, lights.

He goes on actually to describe the reasons why people oppose this stadium.

All are real concerns, but only a population whose income is independent of the performance of its private business will come to privilege such concerns, no matter how minor, above the need to earn a living.

The point that West is making is that unless we diversify our economy and build a bigger private sector, the seemingly intractable social problems we are told the government needs to privatise will never be solved.

There's a radical conservatism at play in Tasmania, borne from privilege and middle-class indifference for the lives of others. Those who are most vigorous in their opposition to this proposal are blind to their indifference and to the hopes and dreams of others. This wilful ignorance consumes them. At its heart, it's selfishness. Where they prosecute their brand of radical conservatism, they are cruel and offensive in their discourse. In my view, they're bullies - bullies of the worst kind. There are a few relatively well-off, high-profile Tasmanians who wring their hands and drape themselves in faux compassion for the less fortunate, and use all of the state's ills as justification for their anti position.

I've spent the bulk of my working life and time working in and with some of the most disadvantaged communities in this state, and therefore, the country. I know them, I respect them, and they've elected me to be their voice in this place. I have not seen any one of the leaders of the anti-stadium brigade spend one day, one hour, one minute in these communities working with me.

If these bullies have their way, we will still have a terrible budget. Our health, education, public transport, housing systems will still be under enormous pressure - but we will have no Tassie Devils, no uplift in the economy, and Macquarie Point will still be a car park.

It took a working-class kid from Cleveland, Ohio who knew something about disadvantage and a working-class chip on their shoulder to inspire us. He coined the phrase 'defend the island' and told people not to punch down on us. Kid Scott Roth, who so quickly after spending time here, recognised in us something within him. Our whole life, people have been telling us we aren't good enough and that we should accept second-best. He challenged that, and led the Jackies to successful season after successful season, harnessing the passion, the grit, the grind, the working-class attitude personified by hard work and pride.

We all walked taller when we won the NBL championship in that season - and that's tough for me - and the surge of confidence in our state followed. It's hard to quantify BCR on that. Imagine what a Tassie Devils club, run by proud Tasmanians Brendon Gale, Kath McCann and Grant O'Brien, leading a team of skilled Tasmanians, many of whom have come home specifically for this opportunity, could do for this island. The inspiration, the hope, the confidence. Who are we to betray them by failing to grasp this moment?

The thousands of young Tasmanian girls and boys have already got their hearts set on playing for the state, defending the island, being the best they can be and setting an example

for other young Tasmanians to have ambition, to have drive. How many times have we said, 'you can't be what you can't see'?

This vote is not an endorsement of the government, it's not a blank cheque for them, it's not a free pass for all and sundry. It's simply a statement of confidence in the future. It's a reward for the work thousands of Tasmanians have been putting in for years to build something greater than the sum of the parts. It's a vote to give Tasmanians permission to stand up, to be proud and to head into the future with confidence.

A vote against this project on the basis of the government's poor record does not change that record. It simply compounds the series of poor decisions by parliamentary leaders in both Houses and consigns Tasmania to being the basket case many people think we are. Tragically, it would also rob generations of Tasmanians of a future they dream of and are desperate for. A vote against this bill makes you as bad as those you oppose.

Let's not make the perfect the enemy of the good. In football terminology, let's not be that full forward that refuses to take a mark if the ball is not lace out. Let's all be on the right side of the history. I commend the order to the House.

[4.22 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to what I consider to be a once-in-a-century opportunity for Tasmania. We've been playing AFL, or Aussie rules football, for a long time, and Tasmanians have wanted our own team in the VFL-AFL for most of that period. After years of both formal and informal lobbying, now is the time because now we can have a team in the national competition. We deserve a team in the national competition. They're called the Devils and they already have 215,000 paid members, 110,000 of those Tasmanian-based. And that's before a sod has even been turned on the proposed Macquarie Point Stadium.

That's why I rise today, to make a case to build it, to get it done. Not for those of this place today, not for the anti-everything brigade, but for the young people who will grow old with this stadium as a central and normal part of life in Tasmania. The stadium is a project for the future. It will encourage young Tasmanians into grassroots sports with the hope of one day playing, for example, AFL footy for the Devils, proudly representing their state, Tassie, every time they run onto the footy field.

The AFL knows this. That's why they're injecting \$360 million into Tasmanian football - grassroots footy, where our future stars of the game will come from. It makes me so proud already, when I'm working around my electorate of Bass, attending footy games every weekend. The hype is incredible. Devils mania is here and we're still three years out from them taking the field. Coming originally from South Australia, which is a fanatical state when it comes to football, I haven't experienced it ever before.

My question is, are we really going to vote down this stadium, looking that gift horse in the mouth? The AFL has made it very clear: no stadium, no team. The delegates that went over last week, or the week before, to meet with them to put their case for no stadium were told it again: no stadium, no team. That is it. No ifs, buts or maybes.

Some say it's just for the elites. That's nonsense. With the Devils' AFL and AFLW teams, they're going to be inspiring our young boys and girls playing the greatest game in the world

to one day pull on a Devils jumper, and that makes me incredibly excited for the future. But what is the cost of keeping our kids engaged and kids in sport? Mental health comes to mind for me. The Mac Point stadium and project is a game changer in every sense of the word. We are at that point in time where Tasmania can stay where it is or be visionary, look to the future, look for generations to come. That's what we need to do, not just look now. We need to look for generations to come, for our kids, their kids and their kids, and so on.

I'm talking about sport and the Devils. I commend Grant O'Brien and Kath McCann, who's here, and I welcome her, and the board for the amazing work they have done already in establishing our Devils Football Club. They have worked tirelessly. They know it's a huge job ahead. I commend Grant as well for the vision of making it his number one priority to secure the best CEO we could. And we did: he got him, Brendon Gale. He is the best of the best, and we have him back here in Tasmania with our Devils. I commend Kath and Grant for securing Brendon because there is no better man or person for the job, in my opinion.

I'm not just talking Devils because it is a multipurpose stadium, but staying on the sport side of things, at the moment there is no chance of the Matildas, the Socceroos, the Wallabies or other national teams coming down here to play the great games they do. With this stadium, that changes. We are on the world stage. Imagine the Wallabies playing here, the Socceroos and the Matildas inspiring our youngsters to want to take up their sports. That cannot be dismissed, the value of having them playing here on our doorstep, instead of families having to save up and go across to watch them play interstate all the time.

Obviously, stadiums come at a cost. That's inevitable. It's called an investment. The stadium is not like health spending. This is an investment that produces economic activity for the people and for Tasmania. There's been a lot of figures that have been thrown around the Chamber but I'd like to add another one. Coordinator-General John Perry has done numbers: for every dollar spent on the stadium, there will be an economic return to the state of \$4.95. Essentially, that's a five-to-one return on investment.

If the stadium's not passed, in my view we will become an international laughing stock. No one is going to want to invest here, and who would blame them? It's too hard.

Last weekend, I went with my wife to Victoria to see a rock band, one of the greatest, in my opinion. It was at Marvel Stadium and it was bucketing with rain all day. They closed the roof. A sell-out crowd of 50,000 people were there to watch Metallica pump out 'Enter Sandman', which I love. It had a roof and it was closed for our comfort. We need to remember that this stadium is going to be used all year round, and not just for sport. It's going to be used for concerts. Our comfort is guaranteed.

When I was in Victoria, walking round for three days, shopping and things like that, meals, obviously; drinks, I had a good look around restaurants, bars, clubs, shops packed; money going berserk into the Victorian economy. I reckon I bumped into just probably half of the Tasmanian population while I was over there. They were obviously metal heads as well.

The point is, all that money, thousands and thousands of dollars, millions, is getting pumped into the Victorian economy. I was walking around the entire time, thinking: why can't we have that here? Why can't people be pumping money into our economy? I can't figure that out. We can, when we have this stadium. We will have acts; we'll have big acts. They will be coming, they will be playing sell-out shows, but money won't be pumped into interstate

economies; it will be pumped into ours. Of course, with the roof, there's no risk of rains or high winds, and everybody wins.

Then we talk about the conference centre; a 1500-seat conference centre which a lot of people seem to forget about. That's again worth millions of dollars to our economy. It again puts us on a level that we've never been on before. This stadium gives us that opportunity. It opens the door globally. Another thing I'd like to raise with the Devils, too - and a lot of you might know my background is athlete and sports marketing - the price of our team, the Devils, wearing Tasmania all over the country when they're playing AFL footy, and the AFLW competition as well; that is worth millions in advertising that we don't have to pay for. They are showcasing our great state, in my opinion, the best state, everywhere they go.

The AFL is big business. It's massive business; it makes squillions. Our time is now, and we deserve our cut. Our contribution to our great game of AFL football clubs and teams over the years, you could go on for days. We deserve it; our time is now. We have fought so hard for this. We cannot let this opportunity slide.

Supporters for the stadium, Tasmania's business and employer community, from the Civil Contractors Federation to the Tourism Industry Council, Hospitality Tasmania, Business Events Tasmania and the Small Business Council, all voice their strong support for the stadium. How is thousands of jobs - in the construction phase alone - a bad thing? Don't we want more people employed here, working here, injecting money into our economy?

I know I certainly do. To give you an idea of how big AFL football is, the latest data from Roy Morgan shows that over 9.1 million Australians aged 14 and over watched AFL matches last season. Television viewership for the AFL last year was up by 341,000 people, or 3.9 per cent over the year before, with increases in both men and women's viewers.

If the Devils could make a grand final - and we need them to give the best opportunity to do just that by having the best facilities - 7.5 million people would tune in to watch.

Then there's overseas AFL markets where our great game is shown in the USA, Asia, Africa, New Zealand, UK and Ireland, even Latin America. What is the value of that? It's worth millions. I question whether those who in the No camp have even considered the obvious benefit to Tasmania for decades to come of tourism. Thousands of people are going to be coming for sporting events, for our concerts, for our conferences with this stadium.

I'd like to wrap up. I mean, I could talk all day about it, but I'm very passionate. I'm very passionate. Our future generations of kids need this. Tasmania needs this. This is a line in the sand moment and we have a choice. As I said before, we need to have vision, guts and determination to build infrastructure that is going to benefit Tasmania for decades to come. I know us. The government are determined to do that, to give our kids, our future generations, pathways to get into sports, to see the best concerts going around, the best acts, attend conferences. This is a game-changer and to me it's a no-brainer. The decision to build the stadium has been framed around can we afford it? In my opinion, a better question is how can we afford not to?

[4.37 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, it is fitting, perhaps not iconic so much as much as poetic, that we debate this stadium motion in the same week members

deliver their Budget replies, because both go to the heart of the same question. That question that the honourable member who's resumed his seat said: can we afford it?

Even if we all agreed it was a good design on the right site and something Tasmania truly needed, we still have to ask ourselves whether we can afford it. That is the nub of the question before us. To be honest, it's the question that resonates most for Tasmanians that I talk to. They all understand the pressures on household budgets right now, and so many, how you pay for what you need first, then if there's anything left over, that's when you go to your nice-to-have want list.

But many Tasmanians I speak to can't even afford their basic needs. They say that the Tasmanian government's budget is in the same position, too. We can't even afford our basic needs. When you're putting the groceries on the credit card, as the honourable member for Murchison said earlier this week, you shouldn't be buying a boat. I will come back to that question of affordability a bit later on in my contribution, but first I want to deal with process, because how we got here says a lot about the state of this government and governance in Tasmania. This stadium proposal has been marked by bad process from the very beginning.

The Premier signed a billion-dollar contract with the AFL without Cabinet approval or even Treasury advice. A staggering breach of process for a project of this scale. I bet the AFL could not believe their sheer luck. Every single demand they made was agreed to and we even threw in the equivalent of an extra set of steak knives; the roof. It was the sweetest of deals for them. Easy money. The Premier, blinded by his desire to be the one to secure a team, threw out proper due diligence, proper planning and budgeting processes, even forgot to consult with his own colleagues. If the Premier had even taken a moment to pause and think before picking up his pen, he might have had time to make some enquiries about what this project would actually mean for Tasmania.

It abandons the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme, the very framework designed to protect Hobart's historic heart. The Sullivans Cove precinct is not just a parcel of land, it's a jewel in the crown of our heritage. The government vowed to properly consult key stakeholders, Tasmania's Aboriginal community, the RSL, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the broader Hobart community. There's a very long list of people who've been ignored. It was so on the nose to some members of his own party that they left and joined the crossbench, plunging his government into crisis. In an attempt to try to claw back some semblance of proper process, the stating was referred to the Tasmanian Planning Commission. Naively, perhaps, the Premier believed the TPC would just rubber stamp his project. Then, after a very early, snap election to appease three new crossbench members, the Premier smugly agreed to an independent review of Macquarie Point Stadium. Smug, I say, that was until it came back that it was a bad deal and did not stack up.

What would a responsible premier do in that scenario? Withdraw the project? Go back to the AFL and say it doesn't stack up? Can we renegotiate the deal? Not this Premier. Instead, he embarks on what was then, and sadly is no longer, an unprecedented attack on the author, Dr Nicholas Gruen. He tried to shoot the messenger but Tasmanians were not fooled. Then, when the Tasmania Planning Commission delivered a considered, evidence-based interim report, highlighting the serious flaws in this project, the government didn't just ignore it, it attacked the credibility of the TPC panel itself.

This is a worrying habit of this government; commissioning reports, then discarding them or undermining them when the findings are inconvenient truths. Do not even get me started, Honourable Deputy, on the farce that was the special enabling legislation. Time doesn't permit me to go into that one.

In its final report, the TPC made it clear the project is on the wrong site, with serious planning challenges and should not go ahead, and I want to read directly into *Hansard* the conclusion of the TPC. It says:

The fundamental problem is the size, location and geographical features of the site in its highly-valued context, do not support the disproportionately large, monolithic building proposed. It is a building which is incongruent with the valued characteristics of its spatial context, completely at odds with the long-established planning principles guiding and informing development, and with the land and urban fabric surrounding the site and the heritage raised associated with nearby places.

Proceeding with the project will give rise to irrevocable and unacceptable adverse impacts on Hobart's spatial and landscape character, urban form and historic cultural heritage. In addition, the project represents a significant net cost and will diminish the economic welfare of Tasmanians as a whole, and it offers almost no scope for the site to become a vibrant, active place that is attractive to visit outside a major event mode. In very simple terms, the stadium is too big for the site and the benefits it will bring are significantly outweighed by the disbenefits it creates.

They could not have been clearer. That is an emphatic rejection of this proposal. Yet the government barrels on, determined to push through regardless of the evidence. Now, time doesn't permit me to go through all the particular concerns the TPC raised because there are many, many in them and I strongly recommend that members of the public and this place and members of the other place familiarise themselves with the excellent evidence-based report from the TPC. It is really important.

Then we have so-called opposition. In his budget reply speech, the Labor leader, Josh Willie, did not even mention the stadium once. In fact, it did not even get a mention once in any of the other Labor budget reply speeches. There was much concern expressed about the public sector cuts, the underfunding of the community sector, the size of the unsustainable debt and the lack of a pathway to a sustainable position, but not one mention of the stadium, which worsens every one of those issues.

Labor has had more positions on the stadium than the Kama Sutra. It is worth articulating again, for the record, their various torch positions on this. I know I did it yesterday and this morning, but I am doing it again here because it needs to be understood and it needs to be clear. First, there was a very clear 'no stadium position,' then there was a 'yes stadium, but only if it cost \$375 million and not a red cent more,' then it became the 'yes stadium, even if it costs more than \$375 million, but it has to stack up' and just before the election, it changed again to 'yes stadium regardless of the issues, but we will scrutinise it.' Fifth, during the election, it became a whisper; 'yes stadium, but we don't want to talk about it or mention it in any election material.' Then, after the election it was widely rumoured that they saw the error of their ways and were contemplating a 'yes stadium but only if the TPC says it's okay' position. Yesterday,

it appeared to be the 'yes stadium, and we never said it was unconditional support' position. For a brief moment this morning, it was position number eight: 'yes stadium, and now we admit it's unconditional support, but we'll scrutinise it.' Following the opposition's pathetic refusal to vote for scrutiny of conditions this morning, we arrive at position number nine: 'yes stadium, unconditional support, no scrutiny.' Then, following Labor's refusal to extend time for debate this morning, we get to the final and tenth position: 'yes stadium, unconditional support, no scrutiny - and now let's get this over and done with as quickly as possible; we're a bit embarrassed.'

Although, I should add, there is a possible eleventh position - that of the Tasmanian Young Labor. On the weekend, they passed a resolution at their state conference calling for Labor to consider better alternatives to the Macquarie Point Stadium to ensure a new stadium can be built to deliver the team. Interestingly, Tasmanian Young Labor were able to find a line in the sand, a condition where they said support for the stadium would be too much. They said at their conference that a stadium costing \$1.8 billion during a budget crisis is too much to spend. It seems to me that Young Labor are far more in touch with the community than the Parliamentary Labor Party. Maybe it's time to move on over and let the young ones - who, let's face it, are going to be paying for this bill and this folly for years to come - take over.

Nor did Labor use it in their election material, certainly not in my electorate of Clark. They know it's on the nose with their own voters, but they couldn't bring themselves to show leadership - not for the sake of the electoral fortunes and not for the sake of the state.

I spoke to one constituent who hosted a Josh Willie poster because he was told that Labor opposed the stadium. He was horrified to learn that this was not the case and felt deeply betrayed. Day after day, fed up Labor voters tell me the party has lost their confidence, and that they won't be voting for it again. Indeed, I quote this issue as one of the main reasons why I doubled my vote at the most recent election. Thank you very much for the job security, but I'd rather you do the right thing. I am sick to death of hearing from constituents who met with their Labor representatives and pleaded with them to say no to the stadium only to have those same representatives tell them that there is nothing Labor can do. That is an outright lie and its fake concern. Labor have it within their power to stop this foolishness now, today. Instead, they are drunk on the vibe of a team and blind to the pain that it will cause and all the evidence before them.

Many of my constituents have thanked me for my strong and clear stand - a stand based not on popularity, ideology, false promises or wishful thinking, but on evidence. There is so much evidence. The views of the community I was elected to represent and the interests of future generations. To those constituents, I say I hear you and I will not let you down. This is my job. I will continue to put the interests of Tasmanians ahead of corporate interests and bullies, and to advocate for the services and programs our communities desperately need: more social and affordable housing, accessible and affordable healthcare, reliable public transport, properly resourced schools, family supports that strengthen households, a youth justice system that's trauma-informed and evidence-based, protection of the natural environment that sustains us, housing. I want a Tasmania where people have the security, dignity and opportunity to thrive, not one where billions are tied up in a vanity project serving private interests.

From the start of this parliament, I've been clear about how I will make decisions: not through party orders or ideology, but through a simple framework that puts fairness, responsibility and the future first. When I assess a proposal, I ask:

- Is it based on evidence?
- Have the people affected been consulted?
- What is the impact on vulnerable Tasmanians?
- Does it tackle climate change or protect the environment?
- And does it respect the needs of future generations?

On every one of those tests, this project fails. Is it evidence-based? It is not. The government and the opposition are working off a vibe. Yet, those who oppose the stadium have a plethora of evidence - thousands upon thousands of pages - to say that this is a bad deal. Have the people affected been consulted? No, they certainly haven't. It's been a deal done in secret. What is the impact on vulnerable Tasmanians? We can already look at the impact of the budget cuts on vulnerable Tasmanians. Does it tackle climate change and protect the environment? No, it just destroys a beautiful precinct. Does it respect the needs of future generations? It certainly doesn't. It burdens them with debt. This government is prioritising corporate interests - the AFL and private businesses, including gambling interests, over ordinary Tasmanians.

That brings me back to the question of affordability. We heard the Treasurer deliver his budget speech last week and we read the budget papers. The response from economists and experts was damning. Saul Eslake and the honourable member for Murchison, Ruth Forrest, have both pointed out that the surplus the Treasurer promised will not materialise. Once you include the debt of the wider public sector, Tasmania's debt is far higher than claimed. And hidden within the forward Estimates are cuts to the community and public sectors that will cripple essential services - services relied upon by thousands of Tasmanians.

Adding the cost of the stadium, the vast majority of which will be paid for through yet more borrowings, makes absolutely no economic sense. And that's if the stadium runs on time and on budget which, given the recent history of Tasmanian infrastructure projects, is yet more wishful thinking. To name just a handful: the Australian Antarctic Division wharf upgrade, cost increases of 42 per cent, and not yet finished; expansion of the Southern Outlet, cost overruns of 104 per cent, not yet started; Cradle Mountain Cableway, 217 per cent over projections; and the *Spirit* berths at Devonport, 447 per cent over initial cost and still not complete. The cost of the common ticketing system has gone from \$7 million seven years ago to \$65 million now. That's an 829 per cent increase, surely some kind of special record. The average of these cost overruns is 125.7 per cent. At that rate, the \$1.13 billion stadium starts to look more like a \$2.55 billion stadium.

Yet, we are expected to believe that the stadium is some kind of unicorn project, that unlike all of these other projects managed by this government, this is the project - the one with incredible risks, plagued by problems and complexities, an expensive project - this is the one that they can deliver on budget and on time. If you believe that, you probably also believe in the fairies at the bottom of the garden. The AFL themselves are concerned about the government's reputation when it comes to major project delivery. They know this is a real risk.

Contrary to the government's claims, the stadium won't help repair our finances. It further weakens the state's foundations. This week in the parliament, I gave the Treasurer multiple

opportunities to back up his claim that economic activity generated by the stadium will help fund government services to Tasmanians. It should concern everyone that the Treasurer said he was 'not willing to speculate' and had to be dragged to concede that he will make inquiries into whether such modelling can be done. The secretary of Treasury has said, and the Treasurer knows this, that:

There's a poor connection between economic activity and revenue to the government.

That is, increased economic activity from the stadium will not help the government pay off debt, let alone help it to fund services. Instead, increased economic activity will largely benefit private businesses and corporate interests, including the cashed-up AFL and parasitic gambling companies.

Meanwhile, people are being told to tighten their belts, with government cuts to public sector jobs and wages, already depleted community service organisations asked to propose how they can wind back their services, waitlists for health, mental health, housing, educational supports, the list goes on. Together, this Budget and the stadium plan paint a very bleak picture, one where public services are stripped back to pay for corporate deals and where Tasmanians are left to fend for themselves.

There are strong passions on all sides of this debate. Many supporters of the stadium genuinely believe it will be good for Tasmania. I respect that view, but I do not share it. For me, the overwhelming emotion I feel isn't anger or frustration; it's deep sadness. I love this state. I was born here, raised here and I never wanted to live anywhere else. I see Tasmania's potential every day in my home of Glenorchy, in small towns and suburbs across the state; and people who are resourceful, generous and resilient in the face of hardship. But they can't do it alone. They need a government that acts as a safety net, that steps up when people fall, that invests in the services that give communities strength. Government is supposed to provide leadership, vision, smarts and heart, yet this government has shown none of those things. It has prioritised the interests of the powerful over the needs of the people.

What saddens me most is that I don't want to tell people in my community that their government and the opposition have given up on them. That is not the Tasmania I know, and it's not the Tasmania our people deserve.

The result of this vote might already be written because of this government's betrayal of trust and Labor's lack of courage. But it is by no means a done deal in the other place. I know several members of the Legislative Council share the deep concerns expressed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, by economists and by communities across this state. I wish them strength and wisdom as they consider their most weighty decision.

To Tasmanians listening today, you have every right to feel angry and disappointed. You also have every reason to keep faith, because this fight is about more than a stadium; it's about the kind of Tasmania we want to build. I believe in a Tasmania that invests in people, protects its environment and plans wisely for generations to come. That's the Tasmania I love and that's the Tasmania I will keep fighting for.

[4.56 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I begin by acknowledging the constituents of my electorate, Franklin, for whom I speak and who supported me in my election campaign when I made it clear that I would oppose the Macquarie Point stadium. I thank them, many of them who turned up today. I made my position clear last week in private members' time, so I shall be brief.

On Tuesday, the Premier and other parliamentarians attended one of the nation's most solemn annual ceremonies, marking the end of the First World War, at 11.00 a.m. on the 11th of the 11th. The Cenotaph is a solemn place of contemplation which brings the community together and reminds us never to forget. Unfortunately, the Treasurer was at another ceremony but those who gathered at Australia's oldest Cenotaph would have seen the view down Storm Bay that Tasmanians have marvelled at since the Cenotaph was built 100 years ago; a view that looks down the navigation channel that ships sailed as they carried our young people towards the war to end all wars. Yesterday may well be one of the last times that view will remain unobstructed by the folly that is the Rockliff roofed stadium looming over a site that so many have revered for a century and more. This is an atrocity that I and many of my constituents will never forgive. It is an outrage to the veterans, the RSL, and all those who revere our servicemen and women, who will never forgive either, notwithstanding the honourable Primary Industries minister's contribution to this debate.

Will the state's Aboriginal people ever forgive the lost opportunity of creating their own place, building something that reflects their culture and history, instead of a hulking stadium?

No one believes that this is a construction that will enhance the skyline of Hobart, a city that still retains historically significant buildings and spaces, particularly around Macquarie Point and the nearby environments. It is at the heart of the response of so many people in my communities in the south east of the state that it is in the wrong place. It is, to borrow a religious term, a desecration of an iconic part of our city.

We all know that the process that has led us to this point has been deeply flawed. Reports by the most reputable Tasmanian Planning Commission, insights from specialists, economists - all this advice has fallen on cloth ears.

For months, MPs, community leaders, not-for-profit organisations and the broader population have been begging the Premier to change his mind, to find another way, to have a Plan B, because perhaps the alternative could have been better. But stubbornness and ego have gotten in the way of innovative thinking. There is nothing innovative about this stadium. What we have been robbed of in this debate is the possibility of the other. Just look around us at what has been built, developed and grown in social, ethical and environmentally responsible ways. Tasmania has a history of innovative ideas: MONA, Spring Bay Mill, Incat, festivals like The Unconformity in Queenstown, the Overland and other tracks that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors. So many innovative projects, attractions and experiences that bring visitors, adventurers, and people who just enjoy life to Tasmania.

The space that is now deemed for destruction on Macquarie Point could have been and still could be a place of innovation and excellence. It could be something extraordinary. This place could have been and can still be, if common sense prevails, an innovative, multifaceted shared space for Tasmanian businesses, accommodation, affordable housing, Aboriginal and cultural facilities, and opportunities for more connection between people. There is the

Commonwealth contribution of \$240 million for Mac Point to start off a genuinely transformative project. Money which the Treasurer ignores, will still be there, with or without a stadium.

Let's turn the debate around and ask ourselves, What are we going to lose by doing this? What else is possible? We have a state of good ideas and people full of good ideas, and the stadium is not top of the list. The Treasurer and the Premier have lost focus on what is really important for Tasmanians. You have lost focus of your core job: education, health and above all homes for all. In other words, the wellbeing of Tasmanians.

When I was growing up in the 50s and 60's, the state and federal governments prioritised housing for all. You have lost sight, Treasurer, of this fundamental human right, distracted by the dream of a team and a stadium. Your expressed intention to build the stadium or leave Macquarie Point as an industrial wasteland is an outrage. It is an outrage. It's either a damned lie, or it's a heartless and frankly incredibly stupid threat to the people of Tasmania.

I am probably flogging a dead horse to people with cloth ears, and I accept that. But instead of building a monstrosity of a stadium, we could be developing innovative spaces and building entire communities that bring people together, offer a range of housing options, and celebrate our culture. The Premier and the Treasurer claim that they lead a consultative government; put it to the test. It's never too late, although this government wants us to believe it is. We long ago should have worked together to seriously consider proposals for how to accommodate, house, and design spaces for everyone in our community, starting with the very wasteland that we know of as Macquarie Point.

The challenge is for the government to recognise, even at this moment in time, that Tasmanians do not want a stadium. They do not want our energies, our resources and our budgets to be squandered on the stadium. The Premier and the Treasurer used scare tactics to convince Tasmanians that if this doesn't happen then nothing will. Let's be clear. The nonsense that a contract can never be changed, that the Devils can only exist with the death-cap mushroom of a stadium. That is just fear mongering and it's threats and it's rhetoric. The Treasurer and the Premier know it, The backbenchers know it. Labor knows it. So does the AFL. So do the Devils. Leaders change their minds when it is needed and when it's of benefit. Even the contentious Marinus deal was renegotiated when in 2023 a new deal was reached for cost-sharing between the federal, Tasmanian and Victorian governments.

It happens. It happens in daily life, it happens in small businesses, it happens in major international projects, in local, state and federal government decisions. It wouldn't be the first time that a government has changed its mind for a good reason and for the benefit of the state and its people. Victoria made a tough decision not to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games up against condemnation, criticism and reputational loss, the Premier stuck to his resolution to put the people of Victoria first. He knew the infrastructure required to host the Commonwealth Games was not worth bankrupting his state. He knew that hosting the games was too much for the budget to bear. The final parliamentary report into Victoria's withdrawal from hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games found the government's multi-city proposal was overly ambitious, lacked proper planning and consultation, and should have been cancelled sooner. That is something that could easily be said for this stadium and this government. We don't want to be in this position, so the Premier should grasp the nettle and face reality and so should the Treasurer. Now is not the time for a stadium, Mac Point is not the place for a stadium.

Labor, too, should be listening to reason. In this case, listening to the reason of Young Labor. Young Labor's Facebook page reported passing a motion to the future of the stadium and here's the rub. Those sensible young people, all of them dedicated Labor supporters, agreed that Labor should reconsider its support for the government and for the stadium. Young Labor, honourable Leader of the Labor Party, is your future. They are your future. Young Labor is the generation that will carry the burden of your mistake in supporting the government. Young Labor will inherit the debt and the electoral opprobrium of the decision your caucus made. It's almost too late to change direction, but there's still time. As the Turkish proverb says: No matter how far you go down the road, if it is the wrong road, turn around.

While I admire the Treasurer's lofty rhetoric and his well-known loyalty to the Premier, I am sure that, for all his bloviating about the miraculous benefits of the stadium, he knows what a terrible idea it is. He is far too smart to think that this is a good decision, and while I admire much of his parliamentary abilities, I do not admire his decision to stick with loyalty rather than common sense. Even a most cursory look at the internet reveals the billions that are squandered around the world in hyped up stadium projects that have cost their owners, their cities, and their governments many tears and great losses.

There is no serious business case, none at all, upon which you are building the expectations of rivers of gold. My advice to the Premier, my advice to the Treasurer- not that I think that they will listen- echoes Cicero - so if it's unparliamentary, you can blame Cicero: Any man can make mistakes, but only an idiot persists with his error.

[5.08 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, for the avoidance of doubt, I will be supporting the motion and backing in our minister, of course, and our long-stated position when it comes to this opportunity which Tasmania cannot afford to lose. I will come to those points in just a moment, but this is such an opportunity for this state and couched within the AFL and the Devils team and the dreams that many young Tasmanians, who are now more senior citizens in our community have had for decades. It is up to all of us to think about their dreams and the aspirations of the young people right now.

The young people right now who want opportunity; to live, to work in this state and to raise a family in this state and to invest in Tasmania, not look for opportunities elsewhere as they see them in other states of Australia. So we can provide good, well-paid and ongoing jobs during and after this debate of the stadia infrastructure and all the opportunities that it will bring.

The AFL and the AFL agreement - much has been mentioned when it comes to that. There has been criticism of the deal that we signed. Was it the most perfect deal of the century? Some would say 'yes', others would say 'no', but we've signed it and it got us an agreement to get our own Tasmania Devils team which we've been fighting for decades. As Mr O'Byrne said, we had our foot in the door and the AFL kept shutting the door on Tasmania. 'No, no, no'. Well, when we signed the agreement, they said, 'Yes, now you can have a team'.

It is fantastic, as has been stated before by Mr Fairs, that we could not have asked for better leadership of our Tasmania Devils than Grant O'Brien, Kath McCann and Brendon Gale, and all those who work alongside them - people who have come from interstate and brought their families to Tasmania, people who are Tasmanian who have gone to other states in search

of opportunity and setting up their families there. Now, there's that breath of life back into their passions. They're now examples of young people bringing their families to live and work in Tasmania, and ensure that they can then follow their dreams - not to be an AFL player or an AFLW player, but to work within the AFL and the Devils' fraternity, and the many jobs already created by that opportunity. This has been a long-held dream of many Tasmanians, and why if it's woe betide to destroy those dreams when they're right there.

I believe the reason why there's opposition in this Chamber and others around is good old-fashioned politics. When there's something right there that other states have benefitted from - and I go around other states, and it's been mentioned by Mr O'Byrne - the Adelaide Oval, Optus Oval, Townsville, Allianz Stadium, Marvel Stadium - all those opportunities, and all those oppositions at the particular time. I've seen a documentary on AFL and the Adelaide Oval and the enormous opposition there. Some people say to me, 'I think Adelaide was worse.' Really? Was it? Because this has been quite some journey for many of us within this Chamber - those for, against, have had different positions, and whatever the case may be.

This is not necessarily ideal. The POSS process, the first process, was the major projects legislation. The angst about the stadium infrastructure at the time led us to the POSS process - the Project of State Significance - which led us to the enabling legislation, which has gotten us to this point in terms of the order of the day. What I'm saying is that I've been answering questions in this place pretty much from day one of my premiership about the stadium infrastructure. I was answering questions on the floating stadium. The first iteration to the Macquarie Point precinct stadium, as well. I was happy to do so, because, we, as a government need to be accountable to the commitments we've made, the AFL agreements, but it's gotten us this far.

The reason why it's gotten us this far is because when everyone keeps slamming the door shut, like the AFL did for decades, you have to breathe a bit of life and a bit of hope into the project. Those of us who have spoken passionately about this for many years now, and decades before, need to have that door remain open for the opportunity for our young people.

The most scrutinised project in the world, I said today. I probably took a bit of social licence, but I cannot imagine a more scrutinised project, even in Tasmania. I mentioned the pulp mill. Now that was very heavily scrutinised, but you had your reasons - feedstock, environment, water outflows, all those sorts of things. This is a building on industrial wasteland and an opportunity very close to the CBD of Hobart. Like other stadium infrastructure across the state, the country, Adelaide Oval, the opposition to it was enormous and passionate. There are not too many people - in fact, I can't find a single person when I go to Adelaide who say we shouldn't have invested in that stadium infrastructure.

I went to Melbourne a couple of weeks ago. I happened to go to an Oasis concert. I couldn't help but come back on the plane and see all that Oasis merch on the plane coming back to Tasmania where it should be happening here and attract those types of events in Tasmania. People talk about AFL, of course, but it's so much more than that. You go to the Aussie Open or the footy in Melbourne; people go to those events and they walk into town. They walk past venues, visit accommodation venues, hospitality venues and all the infrastructure associated with those opportunities of those events.

This will be even greater, less than 10 minutes to Salamanca, less than 10 minutes' walk to the CBD of Hobart. Investment in hotels, the visitor economy, bars, pubs, clubs, restaurants

as a result of movement of people. That's the opportunity that we want for Tasmania and Tasmanians right here. However, this has had the scrutiny like I've never seen before: multi parliamentary and public processes, Public Accounts Committee, detailed assessments by independent bodies, and exhaustive consultation led by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation. Thank you, Anne Beach, you have been outstanding.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have been absolutely and utterly outstanding. I commend my Department of Premier and Cabinet and State Growth and all other associated work throughout as well. Thousands of Tasmanians have had their say through submissions, surveys, meetings, shaping the design and the vision for the precinct. Through all the discussions that I've had with a number of people, and increasingly so, there's an energy being created, particularly because of the leadership of the Devils. It was a hard sell, I have to say. I haven't been the best frontman in the band when it comes to selling this particular project. But I will tell you what, the Tasmania Devils have and Rum'un has. I was there with Rum'un today and the young kids. They were going up to Rum'un, excited about Rum'un and know exactly who Rum'un is incidentally, which was also fantastic.

It's a difficult sell for what is always unpopular projects. Stadium infrastructure are always unpopular projects across the nation. But the Tasmania Devils have sold the aspiration, the vision, the energy and the hope. They've had representatives, former AFL and AFLW players and existing players, who have travelled this state to the gravel oval, to the north-west coast, to the east coast, to southern Tasmania, the Huon Valley, and all over. Just slowly, but surely and passionately, and in such a committed way providing a better understanding of the community of the aspiration. When I have young fathers stopping me in the street with their two sons - the example I've probably given before - wanting to say hello and ask me questions about the stadium and the Tasmania Devils. That's what it's all about, the ingrained stuff. The unfortunate reason why David O'Byrne supports Collingwood maybe. I support the mighty Blues, but now of course the Devils, Kath. That's what it's all about, that inherent passion that will be instilled in every young and older Tasmanian for generations to come. This is what we stand to lose.

I said before, we cannot let parochialism and politics get in the way of opportunity in this state. You have to grasp the nettle and make decisions and make calls. You can get the very best of advice around you. However, you have to have the right judgment as well and see the vision. I appreciate the advice from the TPC and the work they've done. I've said that previously. What they did say was that the commission found that transport, access, safety and noise can be successfully managed. That's what they said. These were the issues that were all raised in the community as well. Over 5000 pages of specialist reports were tendered to the Tasmanian Planning Commission through the Project of State Significance process. Approximately 30 expert stakeholders appeared in public hearings, many presenting in support of the project.

The proposed Macquarie Point Multi-Purpose Stadium has been the most scrutinised project in Tasmania's history. Dare I say it, from this day forth, it will continue to be the most scrutinised project in Tasmania's history. Should this order be passed through both Houses of parliament, and commencement on construction, I know that those opposite and others in the community will be scrutinising every single bit of that project to fruition. Like all projects,

I don't doubt that there will be hurdles along the way. None of them will be insurmountable. There will always be challenges, but solutions are always found to challenges.

I will come to the line-in-the-sand moment that Mr Fairs and others have spoken of. It really is. People are aghast at some of the discussion that's been had, when it comes to the opposition of this particular project. Aghast because we are a state that's fought for so long for our own team, and it's there, seemingly it would appear we say, 'Oh, thanks, but we can't quite do it'. This is the type of language that appals me.

First, parochialism absolutely appals me - and I'm a north-west coaster saying that. It always has, because I've seen so many projects and so many opportunities gone to the dustbin because people were worried about 'Oh gee, this part of Tasmania is getting something, therefore Tasmania can't have it'. Many Tasmanians are sick of it.

Tasmanians want people with the drive and the ambition to see the tough stuff through, and we're at this point right now. People will be aghast if we say no to what we've fought for for decades, and the excitement of the young kids, and their dreams and aspirations. They will be aghast at the fact that we've said no to the AFL for \$360 million. I mean, seriously? \$360 million bucks, we will say 'No thanks, AFL. No thanks, you can go to Darwin in the Northern Territory'. I will tell you what, I know what Lia will be doing if this stadium falls over; she will be bang on to the AFL, bang on to the federal government telling Albo, send your \$240 million-plus up this way, send some dough, please, AFL. We will have your stadium and we will have your opportunity. How embarrassing will that be for Tasmania?

Mr Abetz - Humiliating.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Humiliating, as has been correctly said behind me. Of course, the \$240 million of federal investment into this particular project, so \$600 million of opportunity, just in, effectively, grants coming to Tasmania, let alone all the other economic opportunities that will come our way. No to the high-performance centre? I mean, seriously. People talk about sporting facilities and not just investing in elite sport, and I agree with them. We need to have greater grassroots investment in sport across this state, in every corner of the state, because our young kids deserve that irrespective of the code of sport that they play.

What a great problem it has been when members of the community sidle up to us and give us a good old kick up the backside about not enough basketball courts. Great problem to have, isn't it? Because we made the strategic investment, along with the NBL, to create the JackJumpers. Not much fuss around that particular investment. It might have been COVID, I don't know what it was, but there wasn't a lot of fuss to that particular investment, but it was needed to get that across the line, and haven't they done such a fantastic job?

What a great ambassador for Tasmania is Scott Roth and all associated with the JackJumpers: Christine, Steve Old, and that whole board have created something truly special where there is, embarrassingly, probably at least a couple of thousand waiting lists to get in and see the Jackies play the game. As I head up the road, getting my quarter pounder after the - don't tell Larry Kessleman- getting my quarter pounder up the road at Bridgewater, who do I see there at Maccas? North-west coasters after the game, have come down all those hours to go and see that opportunity of that particular elite sport, but it has created momentum and excitement and aspiration.

Kids are excited about it. They love the Jackies. This is what we want, also, for our own AFL, AFLW Devils and it will happen. Tasmanians in their own colours, but Tasmanians, of course, singing our own song and that has been a long time coming.

This project, despite the Armageddon - I mean, I cannot believe some of the language I am hearing. I could understand it about the pulp mill. I could understand and get it because you could visualise it. You could visualise the waste and you could visualise the pollution and you could visualise the feedstock and all those sorts of things, but seriously, the language around Armageddon, the language around the fact that we are going to provide an opportunity for Tasmanians and economic hope for Tasmania.

We navigated our way through the Budget, all those arguments have been had, those challenges will still be there, stadium or no stadium. It happens to be the fact that, since 2014, our government has invested \$7 billion in infrastructure and continues to make Tasmania strong, healthy, safe, and, today, once again, the lowest unemployment in the nation and we want to continue that momentum. But don't shut the door on that momentum and send a signal to the rest of Australia and the rest of the world that we can't do it here or that we can't have this here.

This is the trouble with some of the language that I'm hearing from those opposite. Because the leaders of your community, when people want you to stand up - you're all intelligent people, I say that in all honesty. You're all intelligent people. You know you're playing politics with this. When it came to the Tasmania Devils, all three parties were on board but the stadium was a tough sell and I know it. But when it was a bit tough -

Dr Woodruff - Why didn't you tell us? Wasn't it a part of the deal?

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr Woodruff - You were dishonest.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But when you get up and say Tasmania can't have this like every other state can, it gets into Tasmania's psych that we're not good enough somehow. We're a small state, we can't afford this, we can't do this, we can't have the opportunity that other states have. Well, I say 'rubbish'. We can have everything that other states have and more.

Dr Woodruff - What about the homes? There are no homes for 5500 people.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because we have the natural environment, we have innovative people, we have passionate Tasmanians, grassroots Tasmanians who have created so many opportunities out of hard work and endurance. The net zero debate, for example, is not a debate we're having in Tasmania because of the hard work and endurance of our forebearers who set this state up for hundreds of years through hydro for industrialisation.

Dr Woodruff - Because of our forests.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. This is an important debate. I do not want to have to give you more warnings and ask you to leave the Chamber.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are lot of reasons why we can be very proud of the state. All states and territories have their challenges. I can talk to every premier across the country, and he will talk to me about waiting lists. She will talk to me about housing, whatever the case may be. We all have those challenges. We will unite on those challenges for another time with the federal government. I can guarantee you that. But other states have not said 'no' to these opportunities. Other states have fought the good fight and the argument with passion.

We need to not lose sight of this opportunity that we have in Tasmania. I could go through the hospitality investments. I could go through the conventions that we're missing out on now. We're missing out on thousands of people every single week when it comes to the hospitality economy. You know what? Cricket. We will make a name for ourselves when it comes to the game of cricket, because the fastest growing sport in the world is cricket. There are lot of eyes across the globe on a roof stadium and the ability to play cricket in a roofed stadium.

I'm not sure what the match was the other day but it was cancelled elsewhere in another state. It rained. No good. Everyone went home. The opportunity we saw just the other day was fantastic. But if it rained, she's all over red rover. Everyone has gone home. For the roof, they keep playing. That's the opportunity where Tasmania can be an important part of the global conversation of how we sustain the fastest growing sport in the world, that being cricket, if my information serves me correctly.

It has been some journey. I thank all those that have worked very hard. I've mentioned Macquarie Point Development Corporation. I've mentioned people across the parliament. I've mentioned the Tasmanian Devils. I do want to mention the Yes AFL Team, Yes Stadium people and the team. When it looked as though it was just too tough to sell - and I see Mark in the Chamber - they stepped up, because they could see the grassroots opportunity.

No doubt there would be many members of the Yes AFL Team, Yes Stadium team who want aspiration for their young people, particularly in communities of disadvantage. In communities of disadvantage, I want to ensure and see the opportunity in a young person's eyes - that glimmer of hope and that glimmer of aspiration - because the team that they love is accessible just down the road or further afield, for the rest of the state. At least, have that glimmer in their eye, that hope, that aspiration, that there's a future for them. It's not elite sport, they're not one of the eighteen out in the park, they're part of the training and the management, which has also been highlighted today, which is fantastic for Tasmanians.

There's a lot of emotion in this. We have lot of facts on the table and lot of information, and we can work our way through that. I respect everyone's opinions. I disagree with those who oppose it. I often think about some of these debates, and I have made decisions when it comes to certain matters that I've debated and voted for or against in my 23 years of parliament. There have been occasions when I've thought, 'I voted that way, but gee, I don't feel good about it.' I can name a couple of those debates - more in the social areas.

I want to make sure that this order goes through not only in this House but upstairs. We can draw that line in the sand and create a new destiny for Tasmania and Tasmanians. To those who might be thinking against voting for this opportunity, there might be that fleeting moment of exhilaration when you've won the politics of the day, but I actually guarantee the next day,

you will wake up with a sinking feeling that you've broken thousands of Tasmanians' hearts. I want everyone to think about that.

[5.38 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise in frustration and some despair on behalf of the constituents I represent to speak to this motion and proudly oppose the order of a stadium at Macquarie Point. Anyone would think from that performance from the Premier that bluff and bravado is going to build the houses that Tasmanians need, end the waiting list for healthcare, employ the child protection workers, because belief alone is not going to deliver those things for people.

The panel recommends that the project should not proceed - 'This project should have died there.' They are the words of the Tasmanian Planning Commission's expert assessment panel, stood up by this parliament on the passage of an order introduced by that very Premier. Five experts across architecture, law, treasury, planning and administration, a year of assessment, millions of dollars, two community consultations, assessment guidelines, public hearings, a draft assessment report, and a final assessment report - and an utterly unequivocal, unconditional rejection of the Mac Point stadium, and a crystal-clear recommendation: the stadium should not proceed; it should not be built.

This is despite the immense resources the government has thrown into the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to deliver this project and the focus - the overwhelming focus and refocus - of the public service into delivering this project. It should not pass this House. That is the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Really, this order should never have even been presented to this House, but such is the obsession and the acquiescence of the Premier and his government, no amount of expert advice, community opposition or fiscal madness has dissuaded the belief that it must be built because the AFL says so. Such is the complicity of the Labor Party, the abrogation of responsibility and absolute vacation of the job of opposition, that this order will pass this House.

The Premier's bad decision is backed in. AFL gets a pyrrhic victory, the city is compromised and the Tasmanian budget, condemned to billions in debt and intergenerational inequity on an immense scale. For what? A third stadium. A third AFL stadium. A \$5.4 million to 5.9 million better bottom line for the Tasmanian Devils Football Club, and a 'build it and they will come' economic belief that is rejected by every expert the government has commissioned and the evidence they have based their advice on. But a pyrrhic victory this would be, for the Premier, for Labor, for the Devils and for the AFL, should it be built.

What was once seen as a critical piece of enabling infrastructure to facilitate the Devils' success has, over the two-and-a-half years since that dud licence agreement was done, turned into a solid net negative. Be it the community opposition, be it the expert planning recommendation, the budget crisis, the impact on our city, the shafted stakeholders or the toxic constrained site that would lead to delays and cost blowouts that will make the TT-Line fiasco seem like a minor innocuous misstep.

This stadium now represents an albatross around the neck of the Devils, and a stain on the approach of the AFL, a significant risk to its reputation, brand, and credibility as the steward of the national competition of our national game. This is corporate overreach writ large.

It was good to force the opportunity to present this perspective to the AFL last month. It took two letters, multiple follow up emails and the threat that we were turning up anyway; it was welcome to have the opportunity to join a delegation to AFL House and meet with the CEO to present this case, to present your case, to present the community's case. Tasmania has two AFL-grade stadiums where games have long been played. Tasmania has earned the right to a team. There is no national competition without Tasmania.

The stadium is no longer a net positive. It has morphed by mismanagement, cost, blowout and deaf ears into a corrosive, negative influence on the support for the teams. Of course we do support the teams. We Greens were signatories to the tripartite agreement in support of a Tasmanian team back when the Premier looked then-leader, Cassy O'Connor, in the eyes and assured her that the team was not conditional on a stadium. It's the same commitment the Premier made to the public.

To this day, there's an August 2022 AAP story on the AFL's website, detailing the deceit in both the headline and the lead:

Premier confirms new stadium won't be part of Tassie's AFL bid. Tasmania confirms their formal proposal for the league's 19th licence won't include a new stadium ahead of a vote this month.'

But of course, with the passage of time, a few short months later a stadium is central to the deal for a Tassie licence and history has shown that it was a negotiation point and a demand of the AFL since day one. Flawed from the start, the stadium was born from deceit and a dud licence deal that had no reference to Treasury, no reference to Cabinet and certainly no reference to the community. It had no social licence and nothing that has happened in the sorry three-year saga since has done anything to engender confidence or made progress in earning much-needed support. Quite the opposite.

Important stakeholders have been dismissed and disregarded. Under what other scenario is a stakeholder like the RSL, representing returned veterans and their families, so casually and consistently ignored. Since the start, the RSL has been a loud and proud defender of the values of the Cenotaph, the country's oldest state war memorial, prominently located as a sombre reminder of the sacrifice of so many and long-protected by planning provisions so its sight lines and reverential ambience is maintained.

'Disrespected at every turn,' wrote RSL CEO, John Hardy, to the Premier mid last year, describing the platitudes the RSL received from the government and the Macquarie Point Development Corporation as the height of the stadium steadily grew and the sacred sight lines down the Derwent and across Sullivans Cove were designed away behind a roof mandated by a multi-billion corporation. Site selection and design has been 'carefully selected so that the sight lines run on each side of the structure rather than through the middle of the stadium,' said the MPDC CEO. 'The Macquarie Point Stadium site will never impact the views from the Cenotaph to the setting or rising sun, views up and down the Derwent, or across to the eastern shore.'

This was demonstrably not true then, and definitely not true now, as confirmed by the planning commission in its expert assessment. It wrote:[tbc]

The built form of the stadium will have a significant detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the Cenotaph and the way it is understood and experienced. The height, form, bulk and proximity of the stadium building will cause it to be highly intrusive and physically dominating against the Cenotaph monument and surrounding landscape, and will diminish the prominence and primacy of the monument. The location of the Cenotaph was specifically chosen for its conspicuous position. The impacts on the views will negatively affect the cultural significance of the place, as well as the status of the monument.

I could go on - as has the RSL's campaign to protect their sacred place, confirmed again this year in its annual congress. An overwhelming majority of RSL sub-branches opposed the stadium and are looking to us elected representatives to stop it. More accurately, given the complicity of Labor, they're looking to the independents in the Legislative Council to stand up for proper process and good decision making, and accept the planning commission's recommendation that the stadium not be approved.

Just yesterday Legislative Councillors received correspondence from new RSL State President, Mike Gallagher[OK], with a view unchanged since day one:

The evidence is clear, the Cenotaph's visual prominence, contemplative atmosphere and national symbolism would be permanently diminished. RSL Tasmania urges you to exercise your independence in full, to consider not only the present debate but the legacy your decision will leave for future generations. The cenotaph stands as Tasmania's most sacred place of remembrance. It deserves nothing less than your unwavering protection.

I remind members that protection has been enshrined in planning rules for decades. The statutory planning scheme, developed over years with consideration and consultation, has long imposed height limits on the Macquarie Point site explicitly to protect the heritage, character and important values of Sullivans Cove and the Cenotaph. This is a key reason we held concerns about the Project of State Significance process. As acknowledged by the panel in its report, the POSS turns off all existing planning rules, and essentially gives complete discretion to the panel to recommend a course of action irrespective.

Even with this freedom, and with the political pressure sitting behind this project, such are the impacts of the stadium, it has received resounding refusal and a clear recommendation that it should not be built by the experts we, in this Chamber, engaged. No-one should believe the government's desperate argument that this is an industrial wasteland that will remain so should this project not proceed. Macquarie Point is one of the country's premier brownfield sites and this stadium proposal is the true Tasmanian tragedy. Of all our many land-use conflicts, and the Premier has spoken of some, over the decades: dams, development, logging, cable cars, fish farms, canal developments and the pulp mill. No-one disagrees that this site should be developed. It's a huge opportunity for something special, but the stadium is not it.

Previously agreed with the development master plan for genuine multi-purpose renewal, product of years of torturous consultation and release to much fanfare and celebration of economic and employment stimulus. A true mix of residential, commercial, science and open space, centred on a groundbreaking truth and reconciliation park, the previous master plan was so complete that the government began contracting out elements for construction. Opportunity

lost, where previously we had the Palawa and their stories central to the site, a first for a capital city and a big opportunity to tell our truth in a genuine and meaningful way, we now have a second-rate concourse built for mass ingress and egress and cynically titled the Aboriginal Culturally Informed Zone. It's not even funded as part of this build.

Where once the government offered prominence, it now tenders platitudes described by Palawa Professor Greg Lehman as gestures that he would 'characterise as a typical example of what is commonly called black cladding'. Shame. That is a shame. That is an appalling accusation to be subject to. By turning celebration to condemnation is not only the backward step taken in the rush to ditch the agreed master plan for a third AFL stadium. In fact, we, the taxpayer, paid a Melbourne property developer \$1.6 million not to proceed with the housing development this government had contracted them to deliver. How is that? The Treasurer still claims that without the stadium, the site will stay vacant land. That is simply not the case. I read from the planning commission's report:[tbc]

It is noted that the precinct plan has not been subject to any statutory process by which it could be included in the planning scheme. If the project does not proceed, the existing reset site development plan will remain in place and provide for a much higher level of development and activation.

That's what the planning commission says. Years of planning and agreed vision and millions of dollars were thrown out simply to start again with the stadium ordered by the AFL, on that site, of this size, with a roof - a requirement no other team had to meet to join the competition. It's a lose-lose for the city and for the state.

We lose genuine urban renewal. Such is the size of the stadium and unsuitability of the site that the planning commission finds genuine activation of the site outside of event days will be impossible to achieve:

The panel considers that the project will not support or promote integrated urban renewal of the Mac Point site ... The project faces inwards on the site, in isolation from the wider city, and it does not readily enable permanent activation of spaces or meaningful connections with the surrounding areas and waterfront.

Compare the numbers: look at the sheer floor area of the various development categories under the previous versus the stadium development master plans. Data doesn't lie:

- Education and research: 50,000 square metres previously; 7000 square metres now.
- Commercial, retail and hotel: 60,000 square metres previously; 10,000 square metres now.
- Residential: 15,000 square metres previously, nothing now on the actual Mac Point site.
- In total, 125,000 square metres of usable floor space previously; 17,000 now under a stadium scenario.

The reality is that, outside of event days, what is being approved today is a dead zone, a monolith that will sever connections between the city and the Domain, obscure the Cenotaph, and dominate the cityscape for decades to come. Housing is but an afterthought, an add-on as a condition of federal funding and identified for waterfront land, not part of the site, remote from services and now proposed in a spot to be severed from the city by a monumental white elephant.

This brings me to the budget. Since this project was first proposed, we have seen four budget blowouts, and no-one really expects it to stop there: \$715 million, \$775 million. \$945 million. Then, on the day the planning commission released its report, thanks to the generosity of the Premier, along with a superficial rejection of its findings, he announced another cost blowout to \$1.13 billion. That's not even including enabling infrastructure or the future cost blowouts, which will come.

Macquarie Point is a constrained, reclaimed and contaminated site that was largely rehabilitated to accommodate the previous development master plan. Inherent in these characteristics is risk: risk of delay, which equals risk of cost escalation. Treasury has advised that the risks are real. In the Pre-Election Financial Outlook, Treasury staff, unfettered from the oversight and spin of the Treasurer, warned of cost uncertainty, saying:

The actual cost of construction of the stadium will not be known until the project is put to tender. A range of issues could further impact on the cost of the stadium, including a tight construction market, the bespoke nature of the roof design, the cost of related projects to support the stadium.

There's also the fact that the stadium proposal is still only 70 per cent designed. The planning commission put the cost of the stadium, in terms of accumulated debt over the next decade, at \$1.8 billion, and that is at the previous cost estimate of \$945 million. I note Mr Willie's contribution in relation to debt, which was seemingly ignorant of the evidence presented by the planning commission that this project would add almost \$2 billion of debt to our books, at a time when Labor rails against debt.

Just a week after the Budget was delivered and ahead of an even worse one in May, this kind of expenditure is simply untenable. Tasmania will have to borrow just to service the debt racked up to build this stadium. The state will borrow \$375 million for capital investment and pay tens of millions each year simply to service that borrowing. Despite promising to provide it to the crossbench panel, an exact figure has not been delivered. Despite their 'not one red cent more' commitment, the promise of a public-private partnership and the state of the Budget, we will borrow hundreds of millions of dollars more to throw at the project. There will be \$490.7 million borrowed by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, costing the taxpayer over \$30 million every single year across the forward years to service the mountainous debt. More, assuming borrowings will blow out as construction costs climb. That's tens of millions of dollars each year that need to be borrowed simply to service debt we rack up to construct this catastrophe. With no credible plan to pay off the debt, it will dog us for the life of the project.

All this at a time of austerity, as the Treasurer sends letters to community service organisations asking them to volunteer cuts while a Trump-style efficiency unit is stood up to find cuts in the public service, when teachers are refused a pay rise and the housing waitlist grows longer. We will borrow to pay for the borrowings to build a third AFL stadium.

Tasmania has some of the worst health outcomes, lowest literacy rates and most chronic housing crisis of any state in the country. Child safety is underfunded and community gardens are closing. In the face of this, with the Treasurer on a savings bee, the stadium would condemn generations of Tasmanians with the annual burden of borrowing tens of millions more each year just to pay for it.

We know that this year's Budget is just the start. This year's Budget and the Treasurer's approach foreshadow even harsher measures in the years to come, as borrowings really kick in and the interest payments escalate. With rising debt and no ability to pay it, the credit rating agencies are watching closely and seem poised to downgrade us for good. Last year, both S&P and Moody's placed Tasmania on a negative watch, down from 'stable', pending budget outcomes and debt declarations. If we are downgraded, the cost of capital goes up and this whole shocking show becomes more expensive again.

No-one should believe the government's promise of new stadium-led nirvana. No-one has advised them it will be so; not Nicholas Gruen, not the Tasmanian Planning Commission and not its own Treasury. This government makes a virtue out of ignoring expert advice and makes explicit policy choices that will make things worse. This stadium will make things worse. It will deepen the budget crisis, destroy important values and compromise the city. It has divided our community and it will cost us dearly. It has already cost us dearly.

The evidence is clear. As elected representatives, it's incumbent upon us to consider the facts, weigh up their credibility and make decisions based on data, on expert advice and on evidence, not on emotion and bravado. The experts have spoken. Let us compare the pair: the planning commission report versus a flimsy PR pamphlet written by the government to justify their position, prosecuting the same arguments that were heard by the planning commission, the same ones that were heard by the community; the same ones the planning commission rejected in its recommendation that the project should not proceed. If I were an MLC sitting on the fence seeking answers, I'd be offended. Back this report over this pamphlet. It's a complete joke.

I acknowledge the community we represent and will continue to fight this stadium.

Time expired.

[5.59 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I come before the parliament today not just as an Independent member for Bass but as a proud Tasmanian and someone who has dedicated a good part of my life to medicine, especially dementia care. My primary role as a physician has always been to prioritise patient care. Patient care requires good planning and a team approach, where many professionals bring their specialist skills and experience to the table. Medical professionals collaborate and problem-solve to ensure that every treatment plan promotes a patient's wellbeing.

Of course, with every proposed treatment plan, there are risks and benefits. As a physician, I must discuss any potential risk, as well as benefits of the proposed treatment plan with the patient. The goal for professionals is to always work toward finding a pathway that maximises positive patient outcomes and reduces any foreseeable risks. Patients trust their

doctor to help them to achieve long-term benefits and ultimately good health in the same way that Tasmanians trust this government to help them achieve long-term stability and prosperity.

Tasmania's economy is currently like a sick patient in urgent need of economic repair and a sensible economic health plan for the future. The state is bleeding financially, but instead of the government seeking to stem the bleeding, it wants to invest in one of the largest-scale infrastructure projects in Tasmanian history, which might further add to ballooning Tasmanian debt.

A cardiologist does not advise a heart disease patient to go out and run a marathon while the patient is unwell. Such action would likely risk further damage and possibly worsen the patient's health. A good doctor would recommend safer treatment options that first restore the patient to good health, through lifestyle changes like good diet and regular exercise. It might well be that the patient who follows sound medical advice will one day be well enough to run a marathon, but the patient must restore their health first before attempting to tackle a large ambitious goal like running a marathon.

Likewise, our government must first repair our state's financial position before proceeding with a project of this magnitude. The government should be exercising caution and restraint in relation to spending so it can restore budget surplus. Instead, the government is letting emotion and hype around the prospect of having a Tasmanian AFL team drive spending at a time when we cannot afford to go into further debt.

We do not need an expensive new stadium to have our new Tasmanian AFL team. If we look at the history of some new AFL teams that have been granted licences in the recent past, this is the first time that the AFL has demanded a new stadium be built with an additional roof as a condition for granting a licence for a new team. In fact, the AFL has never in history demanded that a new stadium be built as a condition for any team licence other than in Tasmania.

The Gold Coast, for example, with a population of half-a-million, established the Gold Coast Suns football club, was granted a licence by the AFL, and commenced playing in the AFL in 2011 without the need to build a new stadium. At that time, a new stadium with a cost of \$172 million was being considered as an option, but the AFL eventually brokered a deal with the Gold Coast City Council and the Queensland government to redevelop the old Carrara Stadium instead, at the cost of \$144 million, which increased their stadium capacity to 25,000. There was also no roof requirement.

Unfortunately, the AFL has presented a new roofed stadium as a non-negotiable condition for the Tasmanian AFL team, which will contribute to the high and escalating costs. This is completely unfair and unreasonable compared with their treatment of other states, as no stadium other than the Marvel Stadium in Melbourne has a retractable roof. AFL is a winter sport and most AFL games are played in unroofed stadia, including the AFL final. Football stadia in Europe and the USA are also mostly uncovered, and their winter weather is much wetter and colder than Tasmania.

Likewise, in 2008, the AFL delayed on multiple occasions its decision regarding the establishment of the Greater Western Sydney Giants football club due to the global financial crisis. In 2010, the AFL Commission announced that Greater Western Sydney was granted a licence to become the 18th team and would enter the competition in 2012. The announcement

was made after formal signing of an agreement with the New South Wales government and the Royal Agricultural Society for a \$60 million redevelopment of the Sydney showground to become the home for Greater Western Sydney. The AFL did not demand a new stadium as a condition for Greater Western Sydney being granted a licence for a new team, but instead focused on something much more important as a condition for granting a licence - community connection to football.

The AFL CEO at that time, Andrew Demetriou, identified that the Greater Western Sydney was a priority for expansion for the team, not unlike the current priority for expansion for a Tasmanian team, and said that of greatest importance was building support and connecting football with the community. Mr Demetriou stressed that having a new team was about community and their love of football, not a stadium. Greater Western Sydney subsequently entered the league in 2012 without the need to construct a new stadium and, instead, redeveloped the older stadium just like Gold Coast did.

In comparison to Greater Western Sydney, Tasmania has a relatively smaller population. Having said that, Tasmanians, particularly in northern Tasmania, have always been proud supporters of AFL. Tasmania has long-standing community connection to football since its inception. The UTAS and Bellerive stadia currently have a capacity of approximately 17,000. However, UTAS Stadium in the north has averaged much better attendance compared with Bellerive Stadium in the south - with an average attendance of 14,500 in Launceston compared with an average attendance of 9400 in Hobart.

Tasmania deserves its own AFL team, but a new team should not come with a large debt attached, which will be an unfair financial burden that all Tasmania will carry in the future.

There are viable alternatives to the Macquarie Point Stadium. If a redeveloped stadium were enough for Gold Coast and Great Western Sydney for the AFL to grant their new team licences, their redeveloping UTAS and Bellerive stadia should also be enough for AFL to grant us a new team licence in the future. The north UTAS Stadium has been very successful in bringing \$20 million to \$30 million a year to the northern Tasmanian economy. The north cannot afford to lose this essential ongoing revenue. There is a real danger that if a new stadium is built in the south, not only are there no assurances that the south will have good attendance once the stadium is built, but that more and better games will be promoted in the south to make the project investment viable, which will starve the north of important AFL games.

The government must ensure that the north and the south have equal opportunities to host AFL games, even if the new stadium goes ahead. Tasmania has already earned the right to have a Tasmanian team, stadium or no stadium, it deserves one now. Although there are some other states that have needed to build the football community to earn the right to have their own team, Tasmania has done all the hard work already to earn that right. The AFL should now be saying 'Well done, good and faithful Tasmania, here is your team'.

Honourable Speaker, the government, therefore, requires to minimise any foreseeable economic risk before AFL demands. Tasmania needs a long-term fiscal policy that will benefit the health of our economy and all Tasmania. Both Labor and Liberal have boasted today that the construction of a new stadium will secure Tasmania's long-held dreams, aspirations and its long-term prosperity. Dreams and aspirations are important, but when the dreams and aspirations lead to unsustainable financial debt, those dreams might turn quickly into

nightmares. This is not a time to throw caution to the wind and say, 'I am here for a good time, not a long time.' The government must secure the financial wellbeing of all Tasmanians and act according to Tasmania's collective needs into the future so that Tasmanian long-term prosperity is secure.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission panel delivered a comprehensive integrated assessment of the Macquarie Point Stadium project and made an unequivocal recommendation that the project should not proceed at this time. The report emphasised that if the project proceeds now, it will not provide long-term economic and social benefit, and it will have lasting adverse impacts on Tasmania's economy and Hobart's landscape and historic cultural heritage.

Now is not the right time to proceed with this project of significance. During my last state election, I campaigned against the stadium because I believe that our state desperately needs investment in health, education, housing, rather than a costly stadium.

The recent interim Budget confirmed that the impact of external shocks, including the COVID pandemic, combined with rising service delivery costs, particularly delivery of health services and a tight labour market, have placed sustained pressure on our budget. The Tasmanian economy is in need of urgent repair to stop further economic bleed, not further spending that will open existing economic wounds.

I regularly hear from Tasmanians and Tasmanian businesses who share an increasing sense of urgency around addressing the significant and rapidly intensifying budget problem and the need for budget repair.

Yesterday in my Budget reply, I expressed my concern about the current budget deficit of \$5 billion this is projected to more than double by 2029. The rate of debt is unsustainable and we need to move to a fiscal balance surplus in order to reduce debt. We need to be more fiscally conservative in the short term, and that involves reducing our debt by reducing excessive spending, especially infrastructure, including the Macquarie Point Stadium.

According to the integrated assessment report, it also equated that the cost to the Tasmanian household will be around \$4,100. If you take it over the 30-year economic life of the project, that will lead to about \$50 million a year of real costs which will need to be recovered from Tasmanian households and businesses, if the stadium is to be funded through a tax increase. In addition, the panel stated that these expenditures, if taxes were not raised, construction costs to the state will need to be totally funded by the ongoing financial subsidy.

As many Tasmanians are already suffering significant financial stress due to rising living costs, they should not be forced into further financial stress through increased taxes or impacted financially by the state entering further unsustainable debt.

One of the arguments given about the new stadium was that Launceston was not suitable for an AFL team. This was based on advice provided to the taskforce by the AFL Players Association - that Hobart would be the likely team base. Former Collingwood president Eddie McGuire said in 2023:[tbc]

I don't think there are any kids at the moment lying awake hoping that they are going to play in Tasmania on a refurbished oval in Launceston.

Mr McGuire obviously wasn't aware of the Hawthorn club's longstanding relationship with Launceston, or it's great success playing at the UTAS Stadium. Keep in mind, UTAS Stadium is also undergoing a \$130 million upgrade that will increase its total capacity to 17,500. The Hawthorn Hawks football club has pledged that it is committed to playing games at UTAS Stadium in Launceston beyond 2028. I believe that a commitment of at least four games a year being played at UTAS Stadium must be signed, sealed and delivered by the government and the AFL to ensure northern Tasmania continues to get its slice of the AFL pie from 2028. That's how we can say to our parochialism: 'Leave it behind us.'

Since 2001, the Hawks have won 61 out of 82 games at UTAS stadium. That is a 75 per cent win rate, making it the most successful record of any club at any venue in the history of the AFL. The northern footy-loving public and the large Hawthorn supporter base in Tasmania wants the team to continue its success at UTAS Stadium and to also reap the economic benefits that flow to northern Tasmania from the game played there.

Like the former AFL CEO, Andrew Demetriou, who expressed the importance of community connection with AFL, I believe that a Tasmanian AFL club should not be about the venue. It's about connecting with the community, uniting rather than dividing Tasmanians, and inspiring people to be part of its extraordinary journey.

[6.17 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Lyons - Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the State Policy and Projects Macquarie Point Precinct Order 2025, and to put on record my strong support for the Macquarie Point Precinct project, including the multi-purpose stadium.

As Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, this project, this development, this debate, is about far more than just realising the dreams of many young Tasmanian girls and boys to one day play footy for the Tassie Devils in the national competition. This long-term urban-renewal project will deliver benefits across generations by increasing confidence in our wonderful state; by encouraging young people and families, giving them confidence to stay here in Tasmania, while also enhancing the state's appeal to other young families considering coming to Tasmania.

It will create so many new jobs, and sustain so many other jobs during construction and afterwards, across a wide range of sectors. It has received such strong support across the community, from organisations like Master Builders Tasmania, the Civil Constructions Federation of Tasmania, and Hobart International Airport. So many tradies and contractors are fearful about what will happen to jobs, families and the workforce in the sector should this not proceed.

As my colleague, the minister and Treasurer said earlier, doors will slam shut in the faces of aspirational young Tasmanians. Nathan, an earth-moving contractor working on projects in my electorate, simply said: 'It just has to go ahead. Build it now'.

As Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, I am most interested and inspired by the massive confidence and opportunity to boost - that is what generates for our visitor economy. This project has received significant support from the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania and Hospitality Tasmania, the peak bodies for our visitor economy. I thank them for

their support and strong, unwavering advocacy for this project. As Industry Council CEO Amy Hills[OK] has described it:

This precinct should be viewed through the lens as a major visitor demand generator. That benefits the entire state, just like Cradle Mountain or MONA.

This is about new businesses, new investments, new confidence for Tasmanian families, new jobs and so much more opportunity, especially in the events business sector. The stadium will showcase Tasmania as a leading destination for conferences, concerts and world-class entertainment.

Data from Business Events Tasmania also helps demonstrate how the stadium benefits will reach beyond the Greater Hobart area. I thank Marnie Craig [OK] for her strong advocacy for this project. Business Events Tasmania notes that 20 per cent of people attending Hobart conferences extend their time in Tasmania by visiting regional areas.

Despite significant growth in the Tasmanian business events sector over the years, the opportunity to maximise growth is limited by Hobart's current 1100-delegate conferencing capacity. The limitations are choking off huge opportunities for growth in this sector. We could harness that right now if we had the Macquarie Point stadium.

The flow-on economic impacts on bringing more business event travellers to the state must not be underestimated. Conference delegates are the highest yielding visitors in our visitor economy, spending around three times more than leisure tourists. We know that they extend their stays on an average to 4.7 nights. They frequently travel for conferences that are held in the shoulder and winter seasons, providing a much-needed boost for our tourism and hospitality sectors in the traditionally quieter months. Most importantly, they generate return business opportunities. Conference delegates help lift awareness of Tasmania's brand as a destination of choice, with 89 per cent of delegates saying they intend to return to Tasmania on a holiday within three years. We have this data, which also notes that those who do return for leisure are likely to be accompanied by their family or loved ones.

Across the summer, visitors are drawn in by our world-class events like the Taste of Summer, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and the Wooden Boat Festival. These events provide significant benefits for the surrounding local hospitality, tour operators and our accommodation providers. Why should that only be in the summer period? As Tourism Industry Council Tasmania CEO Amy Hills described it in May this year:

This impact is something that Hobart could achieve every time a major sporting or cultural event is held at the Macquarie Point Stadium. Between these major events, the Macquarie Point precinct can be an activated space for Tasmanians and visitors alike, hosting business and conferencing events and activities, spaces for local gatherings and becoming a destination and demand driver in its own right.[OK]

Just imagine the innovative products and experiences that will be generated by having Macquarie Point stadium nearby - a renowned destination and a demand driver in its own right, a desirable place where people want to go and a place that people want to be part of.

Our Prime Minister, the honourable Anthony Albanese, agrees. The Prime Minister has compared the Macquarie Point precinct to the Docklands in Melbourne and Barangaroo in Sydney. The Prime Minister is one of the project's biggest supporters. In April last year, *The Age* newspaper quoted the Prime Minister on the Macquarie Point precinct as saying it would be 'a revitalisation project that will transform this city'. This city, our capital city of Hobart. There's no question in my mind that this urban renewal development will revitalise and transform our capital city for the better, much better. The Prime Minister said:

This sets up Macquarie Point as the future jewel in the crown for Hobart, a place where people can live, work and come together.

The Macquarie Point precinct and the multi-purpose stadium will increase Tasmania's brand value nationally and globally. It will provide many new opportunities to showcase our innovation, culture and unique identity. It will bring new visitors and provide long-lasting growth to our tourism and hospitality businesses, generating new conventions and business events and harnessing so much latent growth and opportunity, generating work and jobs for Tasmanian families, and stimulating new business opportunities for our wonderful Tasmanian operators. It will drive new investment and deliver flow-on benefits across the Tasmanian community, including, most importantly, in our regional areas.

I've lived in Tasmania all my life. I was born here. I'm raising my family here. I've run my businesses here. I've seen how much we have grown as a state in the last 15 years. Our tourism industry is globally recognised. We have iconic tourism experiences that are the envy of the world. But we can't also be uncomfortably comfortable with complacency. How embarrassing would it be if we don't grasp this opportunity that we have in front of us right now? This opportunity is not going to come back again. It's time for our capital city to go to the next level, to fulfil its potential, deliver on its incredible vision and take an inspired and courageous step into the future.

This is the future that I want to be part of, and I want my family to be part of this future, a future where the Macquarie Point precinct and its stadium are known across Australia and the world as the place to be, a place we can be very proud of and a destination, a demand driver in its own right, driving visitors, activation and new business opportunities for our state, a desirable place that becomes known as somewhere people want to go and people want to be part of. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make right now, a decision for the future, for those who come after us. That's why I support it. I strongly believe in its intergenerational value. I commend it to the parliament for your support as well.

[6.29 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak to the motion brought by the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal. I wish the minister really was a minister for Macquarie Point urban renewal, rather than the minister for plonking a giant, ugly, obscenely expensive, divisive and unnecessary stadium in a completely inappropriate location that will destroy the aesthetic of Hobart and plunge the state into debt we may never pay off. Let's not pretend a stadium at Macquarie Point offers any kind of urban renewal or any kind of urban renewal or any kind of appealing, inclusive renewal in anyway. It does not. Real urban renewal at Macquarie Point would create a beautiful, inviting, appealing, restored and restorative public space that is open to all Tasmanians to visit and appreciate at any time.

We've seen some excellent proposals for the Macquarie Point site, proposals that honour Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage, provide housing and create community space for all. Instead of the urban renewal we could have had, we are presented with a stadium that will be a drag on the state. This stadium is clear evidence of the collective foolishness of those who are in complete denial of the facts.

I have 20 minutes to speak here, and even if I filled that whole time with the abundance of evidence of the folly of this stadium, the government and Labor would bat it away. Even if the Greens had managed to extend speaking times to 40 minutes and I filled all of that with the cold hard truths of the cost, the inappropriateness, the absolute wrongness of the stadium, the suspension of rational thought displayed in this chamber means it would make no difference. The idea of this stadium has become like a brain-eating virus that has infected the minds of normally sensible people. Those people would usually look at the facts, and recognise the stadium does not fit into the space at Macquarie Point; it does not fit into the natural landscape of the area; it does not fit into the heritage or cultural values of the wharf and nearby buildings; it does not fit onto reclaimed land that is laced with toxins we cannot risk disturbing. It does not fit with the wants of the majority of Tasmanians; and it certainly does not fit into our budget.

This stadium just does not fit, and because of all of that, the government has decided it does not fit into existing planning legislation or processes either. It has simply subverted that legislation by removing the stadium from all the usual planning processes, that provide checks and balances, regulations and reassurances.

In a giant display of overreach, the government has overridden, accepted and legislated planning processes and opted instead for an order that is light on detail, light on regulation and light on qualified, meaningful oversight; apart from the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal, who isn't actually engaging in urban renewal, and is one person who likely has no experience or expertise in project management, let alone the management of the biggest, most expensive project this state has ever seen. It's ludicrous. Absolutely ludicrous that we are here debating a tiny 36 or so-word motion to approve a 157-page order, for the biggest project this state has likely seen, with the capacity to change our state, and not for the better.

As I said this morning, for the last two days, all of us in this Chamber have debated the Budget. Every single one of us has noted the state's finances that are in a dire situation. It's indisputable that our Budget is in a mess. Tasmania is in significant debt and the debt is projected to grow and grow. Yet, here we are. With the government expecting us all to sign off on this tiny little motion, to approve an inadequate order that will plunge Tasmania into even greater debt.

The latest figures on the stadium suggest it will cost \$1.13 billion and counting. We all know that cost is only going to keep going up. We've watched it go up year by year already. Tasmania will be borrowing bucket loads of money and the interest on those borrowings will add even more to our debt, \$2 billion more over the next decade and counting.

Meanwhile, the Premier this morning confirmed he is willing to commit our state to whatever cost the stadium might reach. 'I cannot be beholden to the \$1.13 billion', he said. It is beyond belief that the Premier and Treasurer would willingly choose to do this when we are already in such a perilous financial situation - that the Liberal government, the supposed sensible financial managers of the state, would tie us to a project that will financially destroy

us. Also, Labor, which has sat in here and decried the mismanagement of the Liberal government ad nauseam, is just going to wave this motion through as well.

What's wrong with you all? Why are you condemning Tasmania to financial ruin? Why have you suspended all rational thought? Why do you refuse to recognise the very real and serious implications this has for our state?

We know some of the reasons why. They're flimsy reasons; clutching at straws. For example, because we won't get an AFL team without a stadium. We've heard that one multiple times today. You don't think a contract has ever been renegotiated before? Of course it has. Contracts are renegotiated all the time. The AFL is refusing to renegotiate because they're bullies who want everything their own way so they can continue to make huge profits with little risk to themselves. They are holding Tasmania to ransom. It's time we toughened up and stood up for ourselves, so we get what we need in this state.

Here's another flimsy reason for the stadium that doesn't stand up: we have to have a new stadium for our team because what we have just now isn't good enough. Wrong. We have two stadiums already. I'm biased coming from the north of the state, but one of those stadiums, York Park, already provides a beautiful home for the AFL in Tasmania. York Park has been the home of football in Tasmania for over 100 years. The north has hosted and nurtured footy in Tassie for even longer.

Quite apart from my home-ground bias, York Park is widely recognised as one of the best playing surfaces in the country. I was in the security queue at Sydney Airport earlier this year and the Greater Western Sydney team were on the same flight down to Launceston. There was quite a bit of chatter in the line and I overheard someone telling their companion about York Park's beautiful playing surface. It's well-known. We have a great field and a great stadium in Tasmania already, and it's only going to get better with the \$130 million redevelopment that is happening right now. There's also Bellerive Oval down in Hobart. There are quite enough stadiums in the state for AFL already. It's pretty wild that we're gonna hock ourselves to the eyeballs for a new stadium when we already have two.

The next weak argument for a stadium: The stadium will stimulate the economy, the infrastructure will make the state boom. No. The TPC integrated assessment report was pretty clear that the stadium is going to cost the state, and not just the costs I've outlined already, such as ballooning debt we may never repay, and interest repayments we will need to borrow to cover. According to the TPC, there will only be a 45 cent return on every dollar of investment in the stadium. We will be losing over half of what we spend. We will literally be throwing away more than 50 cents with every dollar we put into the stadium.

I recently heard of research conducted in Victoria into Neighbourhood Houses. For every dollar spent in a Neighbourhood House, you want to know what the community benefit is for that? It is \$18.00 for every dollar spent. That's incredible. Why are we accepting a project that will return less than \$0.50 for every dollar we put into it; less than half of what we're investing in it? Actually, let me rephrase that, because it's hardly an investment when we will be losing money. It's not a good investment, that's for sure. Why are we accepting a project that will return less than half the benefit of what we throw into it?

What about the other things that we could be spending money on in this state? Something I hear repeated over and over is that health investment is a bottomless pit; that when we invest

in health, we're throwing money down the drain. Wrong. Absolutely, 100 per cent wrong. Investing in health has very real benefits, both for individual people who need care, but also for the economy. Investing in healthcare increases economic output. It is not an economic sink to put money into health. It is an economic stimulus. Properly funding health is a true investment that does and will benefit the state. Conversely, building the stadium is going to result in a loss of healthcare services.

The government likes to suggest no money will be taken from health to pay for the stadium, but their claim doesn't add up, because when we're stuck making those millions of dollars in interest payments from our operational budget, we will have less to spend on health. There will be longer waiting lists, deteriorating health and wellbeing, chronic pain and debilitation, and people potentially dying due to lack of services. People will be less able to participate in work, less able to volunteer, less able to enjoy life, and that will all cost the state. Productivity will drop, costs to individuals and the community, and ultimately the economy, will all grow. Let's add the resulting loss of health to the list of ways Tasmanians will be paying for the stadium.

The government can claim this stadium is going to stimulate the economy and lead to a blossoming of the state, but the evidence for that simply does not stack up. The TPC made it clear in their assessment: there will be substantial net social cost to the Tasmanian community. The costs of this project will outweigh the benefits. That's because the economic and social benefits of the stadium are small compared to the public costs. The financial costs of this project will outweigh the benefits. The social costs of this project will outweigh the benefits. The stadium is a net negative for our state. I quote from the Tasmanian Planning Commission's recommendation report:

The project represents a significant net cost and will diminish the economic welfare of Tasmanians as a whole, and it offers almost no scope for the site to become a vibrant, active place that is attractive to visit outside of major event mode. In very simple terms: the stadium is too big for the site, and the benefits it will bring are significantly outweighed by the disbenefits it creates.

That's a pretty damning statement by the TPC: 'The benefits the stadium brings are significantly outweighed by the disbenefits it creates.'

Ultimately, there are plenty of other things we could be putting our precious state resources into for far greater benefit, including other infrastructure that we need - particularly given this government's proclivity for building infrastructure and referring to the economic stimulus it brings. Any infrastructure build will stimulate the economy. There's a whole lot of health infrastructure listed for construction in the state, but so much of it has been pushed out until years and years down the track. Instead of a stadium infrastructure that will drag our economy and the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians down, we could bring forward infrastructure spending in health, stimulate the economy through building, and end up with facilities that will benefit all Tasmanians.

Here's another thing stadium supporters like to say: 'We need the stadium to give our youth a future.' Wrong. I will quote from a speech I gave yesterday in this place:

We've all heard it in this place, how fond the government and particularly the Premier are of telling us the stadium will sure up the future of Tasmanian

children, as if a monolithic concrete stadium will somehow magically transform the lives of children in our state and make everything better for them. It's a longbow for sure, particularly when the stadium is going to force Tasmania into intergenerational debt that today's children will be paying for for pretty much their whole lives. It's ridiculous to suggest a stadium will make everything better for our children. I love Rum'un, but hugging a cute mascot of a team we all love will be cold comfort for Tasmanian children in the long run.

As I've stated above, the stadium is going to plunge us into debt. Interest payments on that debt will mean less money for things Tasmanians need - less money for things Tasmanian children need, like education, support for their families, food, and housing. The Treasurer, who doubles as the Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal, has signalled loud and clear that he will be cutting jobs and cutting services across the state.

This is yet another cost of the stadium - the cutting of services Tasmanians need and deserve - and children will most definitely be impacted. While a few children might end up one day making it onto the Tassie Devils team, many more children won't even get a look in. The services they need will be underfunded and they will be missing out at a greater disadvantage. This is all part of the cost Tasmanians will pay.

'But Tasmanians want a stadium at Macquarie Point,' I hear the supporters say. Well, this one's easy to repudiate. In all my years of campaigning, and now being an elected member of parliament, I can count on half a hand the number of conversations I've had with people who support the stadium. Doorknocking, street chats, market stalls, phoning, attending events - overwhelmingly, what I have heard from Tasmanians is that they unequivocally do not want this stadium. I stood outside Harvest Market in Launceston every Saturday of this year's election campaign, and person after person approached me to tell me they did not want the stadium. Lifetime Liberal voters in their 80s said they were voting Greens because we were the only party who did not support the stadium.

Labor members said they were voting Greens: because of the Labor Party's position on the stadium they could not vote Labor. Young and old people from all walks of life, right across the political spectrum said the same thing, 'no stadium'. The Greens vote grew in Bass. That's because people know a dud project when they see one and they know what Tasmania does and doesn't need. It doesn't need this stadium. I've spoken already today of my outrage at being expected by this government to sign off on their defective stadium plan, or half plan as it actually is right now. I'm outraged by the disrespect the government has for all of us in our roles here as MPs, reducing us to simplistic box ticking for a project that requires detailed analysis, as they force their stadium into a debate in a forum that is not at all designed for this kind of decision making. Demanding we fulfil a role we're not trained and not equipped to do, to sign off on likely the biggest, most expensive project the state has seen.

The truth is, this project is so terrible that without the government desperately and inappropriately squashing the debate into a tiny motion, it would not be given approval. Every single report that is examined, every single aspect of this stadium has reached the same conclusion. The stadium should not proceed. So, in the end, even without having planning expertise or knowledge of how to manage a major project, I can see the inappropriateness and unsuitability of the stadium for both site and the state. The evidence is clear. Macquarie Point multipurpose stadium is a terrible idea and should not proceed.

For that reason, I will be voting against this motion today. I cannot support a project that is going to put our state into debt, that will be terrible for health, housing, children and education, a project that will drain the state in every way and a project that the majority of Tasmanians don't want. I would call on all members in this place and the other place to note the facts and make a decision based on them. The facts say this stadium won't work for Tasmania. It's not what we need. We need to vote against this motion and order and choose another way.

[6.47 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to make a contribution in support of this motion as a member of the Rockliff Liberal government and as a proud representative of the electorate of Braddon. In the lead up to the last election, as with many others here, I knocked on many hundreds of doors in my electorate. You know you're getting into your door knocking when you start to see patterns emerging in what people tell you and what you hear. The stadium did come up in the majority of conversations that I had at people's doors, not all, but easily more than half. It was a winter election in more ways than one. It was rainy most days so people left their wet boots and shoes outside the door all lined up.

Here's where the pattern emerged. At homes where these lineups included children's footwear, gumboots, Crocs, sport shoes, more Crocs, football boots, alongside the adult versions, when people came to the door at those houses and the topic of the stadium came up, more often than not they expressed their support for it. They wanted it to happen. Not all of them, but enough that I got pretty good at predicting what I would hear when I knocked on those doors. Younger people and families with children in their household on the whole saw the stadium, the AFL team, the other sport and entertainment it can support, the economic activity it represents and the message it sends about Tasmania as a positive thing, as opportunity for us now, as well as the next generations and the future residents and visitors to our state. Opportunities for the owners of the small wet boots and shoes and Crocs lined up outside their doors.

The doors with work boots by the door and hi-vis jackets hanging up were similar. Again, not all of them raised the issue with me as their most important issue and not all of those that did were in support, but enough for there to be a clear trend in my one-man survey of Braddon. Older residents were different again. Again, not everyone of them raised the stadium. Some were football fanatics and were supportive of any effort to secure our state's AFL team. Some told me they were unlikely to travel to the stadium themselves but it wasn't for them; they wanted it for the young people who would share its benefits throughout their lives. Other people wanted a stadium and a team, but thought it should be located more centrally in the state so it was easier for more Tasmanians to access and enjoy. Others still had serious concerns about the costs and the opportunity costs of a major investment of this kind, particularly at a time when the state's finances are under pressure.

I've had hundreds of conversations with people in these last two categories, in particular, with my constituents in my electorate of Braddon, some of the Tasmanians who live furthest away from Macquarie Point itself. The conversations went something like this: 'Why can't it be somewhere more central?' Well, that may be ideal, but it's not just about having a suitable ground to play football on that all Tasmanians can get to and be home in time for dinner. It needs to be attractive to the players, trainers, officials, sponsors, media teams and others who will need to travel to or move here with their families to make the team and the AFL product

work. It needs to be a destination that's worth coming to for the supporters and the audiences that come to or tune into the games. It has to compare favourably, it has to be competitive with other places that people already travel to for football, concerts and other events and entertainment, including Tasmanians who travel interstate regularly to see a game or a show and make a weekend of it, spending their Tasmanian dollars in somebody else's city.

Just quietly, this is particularly true for my fellow north-west coasters, large numbers of whom travel to Melbourne for games or shows several times a year and never come to Hobart. I'm sorry, Hobart, but that's the way it is.

Delivering a destination like this is a big challenge for our small state compared to the bigger mainland cities with bigger population catchments on their doorsteps. It needs to be special to succeed. A good playing surface with ample parking somewhere central in regional Tasmania won't do that. An innovative all-weather multipurpose venue on the waterfront, under the mountain, walking distance from hotels and restaurants, ferries, the Salamanca Market and so much else would be unique and worth coming to, and look fantastic on television, where it can be a powerful advertisement for Tasmania. That's why.

'Couldn't the money be better used for other things that we need?' Usually, this question referred to the other things we need being things like healthcare and education. The money referred to in this question is generally the state's money that would otherwise be invested in the stadium. The answer to these questions is: yes, we could use that state money to pay for health care and education instead, but it would only last for a few months in one year. That's all. Those things would continue to cost the state just as much, or more, next year and every year forever. We would miss out on \$600 million in Commonwealth and AFL spending in Tasmania if the stadium and the team don't proceed, and this money is not ours to use for other things.

The stadium investment itself will represent a huge injection into our economy. The workforce and the local suppliers involved in its construction; the new jobs associated with the operation of the stadium and the team; the new private investment that will respond to the increased demand for accommodation and hospitality, and other services generated by thousands and thousands of people visiting our state and our capital throughout the year; millions of dollars spent in Tasmanian businesses; hundreds of Tasmanians with new jobs in Tasmania; and millions in revenue to the Tasmanian government which can be used for health care and education every year, not just once.

I won't say that these conversations resulted in everyone of my wavering constituents who had previously opposed the stadium changing their position, and I didn't push them to declare their personal view. That's not my job. A lot of them said I'd given them a lot more to think about, and why hadn't we told them all this before? Nearly everyone of them thanked me for taking the time to answer their questions and paint a bigger picture for them beyond just football, Tasmanians who go to the football and the one-off costs to the state of building a stadium.

I didn't tell them that they were wrong but I answered their questions about why I support the stadium. I did that for two main reasons. One, because I'm their representative and I'm accountable to them for my views. And two, because they are my constituents and I owe it to them to share the information and the insights that I have as their member of parliament, the bigger picture I see, so that they can form their own views. I've continued to have these

conversations and I will continue to do so because that's part of my job, because the public, parliamentary and online debate can become dumbed down and shouty, and people can be swayed by emotional campaigns and simplistic arguments.

We can wheel out any number of experts with opinions to prove or disprove one point or another, as if there's some sort of absolute truth out there to be found, some law of physics or some oracle who can decide for us if this is definitely the right or wrong thing to do. But there isn't. We are elected members, the government. We are a parliament. It is our choice to do this and we cannot outsource it. It will be our decisions and our continuing efforts that make it work and achieve its full potential to uplift our state the way Wrest Point and MONA did in their time, the way that *Spirits I* and *II* did and the way *Spirits IV* and *V* will, with the added benefit of delivering our own AFL team and statewide pride.

I see that vision. I have worked hard to understand for myself its component parts, its risks and the work needed to make it succeed, and I believe we can make it work. I believe it's worth it and I can account for my beliefs.

I support and commend the motion to the House and to Tasmania.

[6.58 p.m.]

Mr Di FALCO (Lyons) - Deputy Speaker, this debate is not about whether Tasmanians love their football or that this state deserves a team. Of course, we do. Tasmania entering the AFL should be one of the greatest moments in our state's history. However, it has become a divisive issue that people are reluctant to discuss with their friends and family.

First, I want to deal in numbers, not in nostalgia. The proposed stadium project is now estimated to cost over \$1 billion in combined public and private funding. This is through the state's direct commitment through borrowings, grants and associated infrastructure with an additional \$240 million from the Commonwealth. These figures are not fixed. Every major project of this scale in Australia in the past decade has exceeded initial estimates by 20 per cent to 40 per cent. If we apply that historical average, the real cost would be closer to \$1.5 billion-plus by completion. That is not theoretical. That is a figure that represents debt. That is not theoretical. That is a figure that represents debt service obligations for 20 years. To commit to a project of this magnitude when essential services are struggling to meet existing demand, demands a level of confidence in the future revenue that this government simply has not demonstrated.

I am not advocating for this money to be spent on services such as education, health, et cetera, because building infrastructure is essential for the future of this state. We must grow the revenue in this state so we can fund our essential services. I have sat in numerous Treasury briefings and attempted to understand the forecasting and pie charts. What I could understand is that we need to make the pie bigger.

There is also the question of timing. We are entering a period of economic uncertainty. Construction costs have risen by nearly 30 per cent since 2021, labour shortages persist, contractors are already stretched across multiple major projects, including housing, hospitals and renewable infrastructure. This means that any additional project of this scale risks either diverting skilled labour from essential works or inflating prices even further. If the government insists on pushing ahead, it must be prepared to admit that other projects will be delayed or scaled back.

This is not a question of opposing development. It is a question of sequencing and priority. I have no doubt that those involved in this project are well-intentioned, but the governance model is still vague. The handling of the POSS process was comical and the government's response looked rushed and dismissive. We are being asked to approve expenditure on the promise of future benefits without a clear, accountable mechanism to measure them.

A responsible government, before proceeding, would present the House with an independent review of financial risk, contingency planning and operational sustainability, not slogans, not concept art - hard numbers, measurable outcomes. Tasmania's small population base limits the local multiplier effect. Unlike larger states, we do not have millions of residents attending multiple major events each month. The stadium will rely on out-of-state visitation and national events scheduling to generate returns. This is an uncertain foundation on which to build a billion-dollar public investment. Critically, the projected stadium operating model assumes ongoing government support in the form of maintenance, event subsidies and promotional funding. In other words, the initial cost is not the final cost. It is not unpatriotic to ask whether this is unsustainable; it is responsible. The government has not done their job in bringing the public along on this journey to fully educate them on the need for a new stadium.

There is another truth that we must hold alongside all those concerns. Tasmania has waited decades for recognition on the national sporting stage. For too long, our state has produced extraordinary athletes, filled stadiums elsewhere, and yet been treated as a spectator in our own story. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party strongly advocates for children to be active outside, preferably fishing and camping with your friends and family, but if you want to kick a football and go around, go for it.

There comes a time when numbers alone cannot define ambition. For all the financial risk, this project represents something rare, an opportunity for Tasmania to be part of a national league, to project confidence, to invest in itself as a place that matters on the map.

It is not just about football. It is about identity, pride and the message that we send to our children, that Tasmania can stand on its own two feet. Our young people are leaving our state in droves for education and lifestyle reasons. We must attract working professionals and families to return to our state and send a message interstate that Tasmania is viable for all generations. A stadium is more than a structure; it is a signal. When visitors fly into Hobart or Launceston, what they see and experience shapes their perception of this island. When our young people dream of sporting careers, they should be able to imagine themselves playing for their home state on home soil.

We can and should demand accountability for costs, but we must not confuse accountability for paralysis. Too often in this state, our default answer to change is no, and we need to be dragged kicking and screaming before saying yes. Then, when it's a success, we wonder why we never did this before. The correct posture for this parliament is not blinded enthusiasm or blanket rejection. It is cautious courage to proceed with all the safeguards, to invest but with our eyes open, to ensure that the stadium does not become a financial monument, but a functioning, living part of our community fabric.

If we are to build this, we must insist that Tasmanian companies and workers benefit first. We must require that access is affordable, that community sport is integrated, and that the

venue serves not only elite events, but grassroots participation. The government must enshrine transparency over every dollar spent. Regular public reporting, independent auditing, and genuine community consultation must be non-negotiable.

I've been forthright today about the cost; it is immense. The risks are real and the governance has been flawed. When we step back, we must also ask, what kind of state do we want to be? Do we choose to stand back until conditions are perfect? Or, do we take a carefully calculated step into a larger story for Tasmania? This is not a blank cheque; it is a leap with conditions. We proceed not because the numbers are perfect, but because the opportunity is rare. We do so knowing the cost but also knowing the cost of inaction. The loss of our team, the loss of belief of a moment that may not return.

Prior to the election, I took a position of voting no against the stadium, based on my own views and understanding at the time. I am not too proud to admit that I didn't understand the issue fully. Since being elected, I've spent a lot of time in the community. I've listened to the people of Lyons. I've met both sides of the debate. I've had strong discussions even within my own party. I've received hundreds of emails, and even been stopped in my local supermarket to listen to the community when I just wanted to buy some milk and go home. I will listen to the hospitality events and tourism community that are overwhelmingly supportive of this. I will listen to Brendon Gale and the Devils who outlined how crucial this stadium is to the team. I will listen to the local sporting communities who have seen drastic increases in participation since the team's announcement.

As most would know, I'm not an Aussie Rules follower. I would much prefer to be out in the bush. I've never supported a team in the past. However, I am proud to say that I'm now a Devils fan. I will not stand here and say I am for the team but against the stadium because we know they are one and the same. I owe the people of Tasmania the respect that they deserve to take this vote very seriously.

I understand my decision today will upset some people, and I may lose their support, but that is something that has weighed on my mind these last few months. Being in this place is about making hard decisions on behalf of the Tasmanian people. Some people may say I backflipped. If you're not allowed to change your position after critically weighing up options, then I'm not sure what the purpose of being here is.

I have heard a lot over the last few months from people in this Chamber that we must be willing to compromise and work collaboratively. I am yet to see much compromise, so I will not cheer recklessly, nor will I stand in the way. I will look forward, determined that if this parliament builds something of this scale, it does so with both caution and conviction.

As I cast my vote, I do so weighing up concerns and doubts about the stadium and the economic risks involved, but also for the past generations who have worked decades for this. I will be voting yes for the future generations of Tasmanians who deserve an AFL team.

[7.11 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to make a short contribution. I could speak for the full 20 minutes, but the night is getting long and a lot has been said. I congratulate all those people and acknowledge the issues that they've raised, both for and against - but particularly for - the stadium. The insight that the member for Franklin,

Mr O'Byrne put together was wonderful, along with the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier, the Treasurer, and all the spokespeople who have come here.

The Macquarie Point stadium is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and it will set Tasmania up for the future. It will grow our state and drive our economy. It will create local jobs, enliven our city, and deliver an AFL team our state so rightly deserves, and it is time for us to get on with building it. We cannot afford any further delays. This project is for the tourism industry, it's for our local businesses, it's for hospitality. It will improve our economy, Tasmanian jobs will be created, and so much more. This is our time and we need to grasp it. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Our plan is to deliver a world-class arts, entertainment and sports precinct at Macquarie Point with a multipurpose stadium at its core. Before I go on, I do need to declare that I am the patron of the Oatlands District Football Association (ODFA), and I have been down this path before and made several contributions. It's not as if we haven't commented about the stadium in this Chamber in the past. As a country footballer in the past - as my grandson would say, 'What was it like in the olden days, Pop?' Anyway, that's a fair while ago, but the reality is that I and my generation have been speaking about this for 50 years. It's been a long time coming, and as the Premier said, it is fantastic to get to this point today. It is to create that aspiration in the young people and to have them dream of playing AFL, but from a regional perspective and as the patron of the ODFA, it will not only do that, but it will also maintain the sustainability or improve the sustainability of regional football.

The number of participants that are coming out of this, that are going through the underages at the moment because of the AFL team will create, again, in a few years time, the ones that make the AFL team fantastic. Everybody knows that that's only one or two per cent of the people that play football. The rest filter out into the countryside and allow those country teams to be sustainable. It's right across the football arena; it's not 'just' an AFL stadium and an AFL team. It will, of course, improve regional football.

We all know in country communities what the footy team does in that region. I've seen over my lifetime a number of communities that have lost their heart and soul when they lost their local footy club because they couldn't sustain it with not enough players, and I don't want to see that happen to any more regional communities or regional towns.

I do need to add a few things - what's been covered, I will not go back over them - but just a few additional points. We have, of course, as we've been talking about most of this week and last week, the *Spirits* have an extra 40 per cent capacity. The advertising that will come from an AFL team playing on Thursday night, sometimes on Channel 7 broadcast on Friday night, on Saturday, and even if it is not on the broadcast, it is going nationwide and in front of millions of people, there will still be thousands at the games having a look and saying, 'Well, the next time my team plays down in Tassie, I am going to jump on the *Spirit* because there's capacity available. I am going to go down to Tassie and I'm going to have a look at this new stadium that's always been talked about and then I'm going to spend a week touring around regional Tasmania to have a look at it because I haven't been there yet'. That activity alone - you just can't buy that advertising or the promotion and all the economic benefits that will come from it.

It has been stated that - and blaming the government for not being able to build things. The reality is, when we talk about TT-Line, the TT-Line new Chair has taken responsibility for

it even though, under the Westminster system, my good friend and treasurer at the time and minister for Infrastructure had to fall on his sword. That's what happens in this, where it was actually a GBE issue. What we have now if you take that aside and what this government has constructed over the last 10 years, just look at - when we talked about the Bridgewater Bridge, \$786 million development, almost three quarters of where we need to be. The Royal Hobart Hospital, \$689 million, all the schools, Legana School, all those built, the enabling infrastructure built under the guidance of this government have been fantastic for the state and driving our economy. So we can build things, we will build things, it will come online and I will be very happy the day that I can go down and have a look at a team in the new stadium.

Just a couple of other points we can build on. Rum'un has been mentioned and, of course, the Devils. We had a discussion about that Devils' logo and Walt Disney's Tasmanian Devil - it's known worldwide and here we have our team named - or the devil is named after our team. We have that promotional ability, nationally and internationally, when it comes round to the Macquarie Point Stadium and its convention centre, to come down to where the Devils play.

It's a fantastic opportunity. I cannot wait to see, as I did with the Bridgewater Bridge, when you are driving down to Hobart all the time, to witness the stage by stage development of it and the new building down at Macquarie Point, we will be able to watch that over the weeks, months and, hopefully not too long after that, years, but we will see it develop and we will be proud of what we have been able to achieve. It will be fantastic for the state. I have a heap more notes here, but I don't believe I need to say anymore. It will be a wonderful development. We will look back on this in years to come and wonder why we went through all this hoo-ha over a building that will be a landmark in our city.

[7.19 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I begin broadly by acknowledging those who have respectfully engaged in this debate. The closer that we have come to this order, the crueller and more personal the attacks have become, online and in person. As in any debate, we come to the table representing different perspectives, different understandings, unique life experiences and challenges and we can present those without degradation of one another and certainly without threats.

Tasmanians in my electorate of Lyons, who are not having their basic needs currently met, feel overlooked and hurt by this proposal. The Premier said in his budget reply that no Tasmanian would be left behind, but they are being left behind without a clear path to catch up.

The capital expenditure in the Mac Point Stadium cannot and should not be compared to the capital expenditure on schools. A good education in a safe modern facility is the right of every Tasmanian child. Tasmania, which still has the lowest rates of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy of any state in the country and where there are no ambitious plans being put to Tasmanians for vast educational improvements, a functional, accessible health system and safe homes, so a stadium is understandably the least tangible project for many Tasmanians to relate to, especially one that's been proposed despite expert advice saying it shouldn't proceed, with a cost of over \$1.13 billion, and with just 70 per cent design work complete.

It is embarrassing, to be honest, as is the fact pointed out by the Tasmanian Planning Commission that the stadium is too big for the site that it is being proposed on. Finding impacts

on the surrounding heritage buildings and that the disbenefits of the project outweighed by the benefits, the TPC rightfully and unequivocally recommended the government do not proceed.

The *Spirits* debacle, as has been said today, is a textbook example of poor fiscal and project management. The stadium, which is yet to even get through the parliamentary approval, is already showing all the signs of even worse project management. The honourable Treasurer spoke today about the need for forgiveness and understanding for MPs when they have more knowledge available on various projects, when more science comes to light, that they can admit fault and go on and make better decisions and that we should forgive them for that and understand. He is absolutely right; we should have a political space where, if fault is admitted because of unknown circumstances and a new path put forward is found, we should acknowledge the incidents and move on.

Here we have a TPC report, the Gruen report, Saul Eslake's assessment and others which have all explicitly laid bare the issues of building a stadium at Macquarie Point, yet you are forging on with it. You are pushing this through in full knowledge of the costs, the strife and the challenges that will inevitably come. Choosing to proceed with that knowledge in advance as a deliberate action is not going to be forgivable. The TPC clearly stated that the stadium, including its roof, through its size, scale and form will be dominant within the landscape, diminish the prominence and significance of the neighbouring domain headland as a frame of Sullivans Cove. It said it will irrevocably change for the worse, in the opinion of the panel, the way in which the landscape and urban pattern is appreciated and understood. The project will not be a fair development. It will extensively and irreplaceably damage the historical cultural heritage of the heritage-listed buildings in Hunter St and the Engineers buildings and most particularly the Cenotaph.

The Premier's flippant comment that this is the most scrutinised project in the world is almost as absurd as his statements on the costs for the stadium. Remember when the Greens and some Independents were laughed at for projecting that the stadium would increase to over \$1 billion? Well, here we are. The Planning Commission explicitly states that the government's stadium cost estimates are 'optimistic and there is a significant risk the true cost will be much higher than the estimates.'

There's the cost of the storm water treatment and planning still to come, which even the proponent identified as requiring high capital expenditure. Investment needs to be made to ensure pedestrian safety, including widening footpaths. An additional onsite remediation also needs to occur to ensure Tasmanians aren't exposed to any contaminants remaining in the soil. The additional costing that we do know of and we do have an actual dollar amount for, is to address the noise issue for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, which is to the tune of \$4.5 million. But whether this will actually be enough to address the entire noise issue remains unknown.

The TPC report's future budget blowout statement comes after four other increases. Tasmanians to come will cop the consequences of this decision if it goes ahead, which is why the lack of scrutiny, particularly today, is so disappointing. I'd remind members of the 1968 debate which was on the *Wrest Point Casino Development Act 1968*, where there was a forthcoming referendum. Labor figured that they had the numbers early and brought the bill on for debate prior to the referendum. Debate for that raged on for 30 hours straight and we couldn't even award members 40 minutes for their speech. Labor is happy to talk about the *Spirits* and the concept that is TasInsure. Yet even with all the damning reports on the stadium

here before us, we're debating on this on behalf of all Tasmanians. Where have you been? How many of you have read the TPC report? Or are you staying silent because consciously you don't actually agree with voting for this? Tasmania deserves its own AFL and AFLW teams, but Tasmania does not deserve the financial burden of borrowing money to service stadium debt for the next 30-plus years. Deals can be renegotiated, and deals poorly negotiated should be amended. Look at Marinus, and as has already been mentioned today, the Victorian government decided it was ultimately better to withdraw from its 2026 Commonwealth Games pitch, so it can be done.

The YouGov poll from earlier this year showed that 69 per cent of Tasmanians surveyed agreed with the statement that 'the AFL is treating Tasmania unfairly in its requirements for granting Tasmania a licence to join the national competition.' ERMS polling from February this year showed that people in my electorate were mostly against the proposal; 63 per cent were opposed. This polling is reflective of the conversations happening in my electorate, certainly profound in the election. Conversations were laced with the dire need for basic services and the confusion of why the government would prioritise a stadium over meeting the basic needs of Tasmanians. Even today, no amount of creative accounting spin can buy a social licence for this stadium with the people in rural areas who cannot access vital healthcare, who can't call 000 in an emergency, and who have infrequent if any, public transport.

On the 23 May this year, the Tasmanian Doctors for the Environment released a public statement. It said:

A group of doctors sit together after a meeting in Hobart, talking about living and working in Tasmania; what we need, what we want and what we don't want, what our patients need and want. No one set a stadium or even an AFL team. What was agreed is that we all hear is that there is no money.

We are doctors; we like working with the facts. We rely on research that has been reviewed by experts in their field to make the best decision that we can. We know a lot about wishful thinking and denial and human behaviour. We know about choices and consequences.

For Tasmanians, things are really tough, are already tough. In this state, we are older, sicker, more spread-out than other states, and half of us can barely read. Fewer of us have jobs, we work fewer hours, and for each hour we work we produce less.

We don't have deep pockets. We get less back from our minerals and there are other options for increasing finances that we don't use. Climate change will bring more fires, storms, floods, droughts, sea-level rise and storm surges and all their associated costs. Then there is ecological collapse, pollution, plastic and waste.

Talking of which, exactly where is the massive tonnage of contaminated soil and water from Mac Point going to go, and how safe is it now? Our government should be putting money aside for all of these predictable demands now, not emptying the budget for a passion project held in blind faith and without limits, and subject to an unreasonable stadium demand. The cupboard is bare, so what do we want - toys or food? [TBC]

On water and pollution, Dr Graeme Wells made a statement on 25 January this year. He said:

It's a hallmark of poor public policy to claim, as Rockliff did in the face of a series of expert analysis, that we know the stadium stacks up. As the saying goes, when you're stuck in a hole, stop digging. Perhaps it's time to put the spade away and take Dr Gruen's recommendations seriously. [TBC]

Speaking of digging holes, the physical construction hurdles of building a structure of this scale at Macquarie Point are yet to be fully understood. Mac Point was once a gas works and heavy industrial site. It has had significant soil and water contamination. It contained toxic coal tar, heavy metals, asbestos and other industrial chemicals. This toxicity poses a risk to public and environmental health, and particularly the flow-on effect for the River Derwent. Although some remediation has already occurred at this site, the TPC report stated:

No new substantive information on the current site contamination characteristics was provided at their hearing.

The EPA identifies that there is uncertainty about the plans for the development, including how it will interact with groundwater, and there are concerns over the stormwater management.

At this stage, it appears that the project won't comply with the Water Quality Policy, a policy that states authorities must require that storm water controls are specifically addressed at the design phase of proposals for new developments, and ensure that best practice environmental management is implemented. The TPC says on all of these issues, the sustainability of the site for the proposed stadium will not be known until after the site suitability assessments for the stadium are complete.

Development of the stadium, Aboriginal Culturally Informed Zone, and storm-water arrangements before that point will not be consistent with the site contaminated NPM.

If you can visualise the pulp mill toxins, you are selectively blind if you are not seeing those at Mac Point.

I don't know how many members in this Chamber were still up late last night after we finished, but there was an aurora. It was fantastic. What's even better is that we live in a capital city where we can see dark skies, one of the only few left on the planet where we have that privilege. The lighting study for the 70 per cent of the designed stadium did not evaluate the facade lighting, signage, concert lighting or the translucent roof's glow. The transparency and materials of the roof remain undecided, so the level of external light emissions cannot be accurately predicted. Indeed, in the latest designs, plans include elements not covered in the original lighting model. The Hobart City Council has argued that the lighting assessment underestimated the amount of illumination escaping the roof. The Federal Group, which operates nearby accommodation, warned that light spill could affect guest accommodation and sleep.

The proponents sought permission to operate lights beyond the standard curfew of 11.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m., but do not specify limits or provide supporting analysis. If the government's estimate of over 300 events each year rings true, how many of those would be

running beyond the standard curfew? The true extent of light spill is unknown. Hobart is one of the final cities on the planet that you can look out the window and see the stars or the southern lights, so we must see far better planning.

To take a serious step back, at a very high level, and this is not exclusive to Mac Point or the Tasmanian AFL discussion, but it is a discussion we have to have. The TPC has investigated social benefits, but what it hasn't fully investigated is the increased impacts of gambling, alcohol consumption and domestic violence. I am raising this in a general context because statistically, during and after big sporting events anywhere, not just in Tasmania or Australia, but around the world, there is a notable spike in domestic violence incidents. This is Australia's and indeed the world's unspoken crisis and it's time that we started talking about it so that we can overcome it. Tasmania already has the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the country, with low prevention investment per capita. So, when we're planning for big events, we should also ask if we have the support systems and resources in place to not only deal with this increase in incidents, but to mitigate it all the time.

On emergency services, further to keeping Tasmanians safe it is still unclear how the large number of people will move beyond the stadium to an emergency gathering point if needed. The TPC noted:

Achieving the regulatory requirements for emergency evacuation may require design changes.

Mr Bayley already spoke about the impacts to the RSL, but I will read into *Hansard* a letter sent earlier this week from Major Ted Leeson, who is a constituent of mine at Eaglehawk Neck. He writes:

Please note, I am very opposed to the present proposal for the stadium at Macquarie Point. I firmly believe that the proposed structure will negatively impact the present views and the very significant sightlines which are inseparable to the sensitivity of the memorial to our fallen war dead. As a decorated war veteran and someone that earlier in my military career stood as a member of the honour of the guard at the Cenotaph, and as a Tasmanian of over 70 years, I want to be heard and for my opinion to mean something to you.

The present proposal is a sacrilege and a desecration to the state's most important war memorial. It is very apparent to me that had this been a site sacred to our First Nations people, that you, as a member of parliament, a representative of the people's state, would not dare disrespect and desecrate this site.

I note that this is also a sacred site and that's not properly been considered:

You have a number of reports before you. Very few support this proposal. I ask you to search your hearts, acknowledge the freedoms we enjoy because of those who have served in defence of this great country, to uphold the sanctuary of this sacred site and vote against the present proposal to build a stadium at Macquarie Point.

An everyday Tasmanian trying to build a garden shed or to pop up a small home in their backyard to help alleviate the housing crisis would not be allowed to present a 70 per cent finished design to a local council. They wouldn't be allowed to proceed with plans that didn't fit their site or that didn't fit the planning scheme. Why in this place should we accept the government pushing through this order at this time, this order that is only 70 per cent complete, a design that, even when incomplete, is expected to cost over a billion dollars. We know it will cost more. The cost has increased on more than four occasions and that's before, as the Premier stated this morning, a sod has even been turned. This is poor planning, it is poor process, terrible fiscal management and it's socially reckless.

On behalf of the majority of people in Lyons and, indeed, Tasmania who do not want this stadium, I cannot vote for this order. That was my pledge to them at the past election, which was on the basis of this budget and partially on this stadium. I am proud to have upheld the values that I was voted into this place for.

The divide between those with and without in Tasmania is widening and this proposal will increase that divide. There may be a waitlist for the thousands of people wanting to go to JackJumper games, but there are also waitlists for medical appointments and housing. This is not the time for a new stadium and certainly not one at Mac Point. Mac Point does have great potential for an appropriate development at that site: housing, a cultural centre, a social hub.

We all want to give Tasmanian children inspiration and aspiration, so how about ensuring they are on a path to a future that is anxiety-free, one where they know they are going to have essential services when they need them? That they will have a safe home, leading education and training opportunities as well as well-paid employment here in Tasmania. They deserve all of that, in addition to an AFL and AFLW team, without the intergenerational debt repayments.

[7.36 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, the whole premise for the Macquarie Point stadium sits upon feet of clay: that to get an AFL team we must have a new roofed stadium in Hobart because that is what the AFL taskforce recommended in 2019. This is the justification the government and Labor are using. It is not the AFL that have insisted we must build a multi-billion-dollar roofed stadium before we get our team; it was our very own AFL taskforce back in 2019 and so, we must follow through with this. I will start my contribution by highlighting how threadbare that argument is.

I will start by referring to recommendation 5 of the taskforce: that Launceston would host the Devils' blockbuster matches at an enhanced UTAS stadium and Blundstone would host the games likely to draw the smaller crowds. To quote:

Upon proof of concept, a longer-term aspiration should be a roofed stadium for Hobart.

The taskforce suggested that, for the first five to seven years, the team could be based at UTAS Stadium while a proof of concept was developed. A new roofed stadium in Hobart before the Devils run out on the field was not a recommendation of this taskforce. A new stadium in Hobart was always meant to be a longer term aspiration.

I now remind people of the Legislative Council's final report on AFL in Tasmania, published in 2020, and specifically an observation of former long-serving and respected AFL

CEO, Andrew Demetriou. In response to the question of whether a Tasmanian AFL team could succeed if it operated in our existing stadiums. Mr Demetriou said:

Yes, of course it can. What you really want as part of the journey, and making sure you are successful, is having those stadiums sold out. A good result would be six games at Launceston getting 21,000, with people not being able to get in, and Blundstone for five games, having 19,000 sell out and not being able to get in, and then membership packages sold at capacity. The club would do very well out of that: the signage, the corporate boxes, dining. It would do well.

That might be the catalyst, and the demand then compels you to go to a much greater capacity. The next stage is like Geelong. It could go to 25,000. And there might be a second stage and go to 30,000. You don't have to do it at the beginning. It would be terrible to have a 22,500-seat, \$500 million investment and be getting 13,000 people in.

The committee made the following findings:

Finding 8: it is not necessary to develop a new large-capacity state at Macquarie Point.

Finding 9: Upgrading UTAS and Blundstone stadiums and establishing a new club will be more valuable investments in the future of Tasmanian football than developing a new venue.

Finding 11: Games should be shared equally between northern and southern Tasmania.

But then the Liberals' Hobart-based property developer mates and the business lobby got to work behind the scenes. In a time of economic prosperity, backroom meetings were had, and suddenly a new roof stadium in Hobart became a prerequisite before the Devils could play their first game.

When the Premier signed us up to this agreement requiring us to build a stadium at Macquarie Point in order to have our team, he did so largely in secret, without Treasury approving the final agreement, without Cabinet even seeing the final agreement, let alone the rest of Tasmania. That did not go down well. It was never going to go down well - particularly in northern Tasmania, where York Park has long been known as the home of football in Tasmania.

Labor has long supported York Park as the home of AFL in Tasmania, from the late Jim Bacon through to former Labor Premier Paul Lennon. Even the Independent member for Franklin Mr O'Byrne said in 2010:

From the perspective of the Tasmanian Government, the home of AFL football, supported by the Tasmanian Government, is York Park.

Northern Tasmanians rightly feel duded by the deal the Premier signed with the AFL to build the stadium in Hobart and giving Hobart the lion's share of the games the Devils will play

in Tasmania. Polling earlier this year by EMRS clearly shows this: in the north and north-west, opposition to the stadium is between 60 and 70 per cent. Since the agreement was signed by the Premier, the stadium has forced us to two early elections and has become the most divisive issue I can remember.

In landing this deal without consulting the Tasmanian people or the Tasmanian Parliament, the Premier has sadly sown the seeds for the team's own destruction. That's not just my thinking; go back to the AFL Taskforce Report from 2019, which quotes the then AFL CEO who raised serious questions about the team's ability to succeed without a united Tasmania behind it.

This has been a complete and absolute failure. They've divided the state at a time when everybody should be behind this side. We've got two-thirds of the state against it. It's terrible.'

When the AFL Taskforce Report recommended that we should aspire to build a new roofed stadium in Hobart to house the AFL team, it had not done any serious costing of building that stadium, it had not done any credible economical modelling, and it had not done any cost-benefit analysis.

In 2019, when the Taskforce report was handed down, it was a very different time to the one we find ourselves in now. It was long before we understood, in the words of the independent expert panel, there would be a 'significant net social cost to be borne by the Tasmanian community from the development of a roofed stadium at Macquarie Point.' In 2019, there was no net debt. As we draw to a close on 2025, we are approaching a net debt of \$10 billion. In 2019, a new stadium was estimated to cost \$300 million. Six years later, the TPC are estimating a cost of \$1.8 billion. Our debt is costing us about \$0.25 billion a year just to pay the interest. By the time the stadium is built, the debt will be approaching \$20 billion with an annual interest bill of \$0.5 billion. The interest bill for this stadium alone will cost us \$50 million per year.

In 2025, the Treasurer is looking to make large cuts into our precious public services to pay for this gigantic folly. In the Taskforce 2019 report, the financial risk for the government was identified in having a team without a new stadium. In November 2025, the clear financial risk to the government is from going ahead with this project and plunging us even further into debt. In 2025, the government has been clearly advised against going ahead with this project by the expert independent panel. Even Treasury are telling them this is no time to be building a stadium.

The business case for this stadium is wishful in the extreme. It failed to persuade the independent panel assessing the project, and it has failed to convince any private investors to co-invest.

Apparently, we can expect the Macquarie Point Stadium to host over 40 big events each year, that it will somehow draw three international standard concerts per year with 30,000 people in attendance. I want to remind people of the evidence that Charles Toubert gave to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in November 2023 - a man who has been the backbone of live music events in Tasmania for almost three decades. He told the committee that in his view, there is not the money nor the population to sustain a stadium at Macquarie Point. He gave the example of the AC/DC concert, which was the biggest concert in Tasmania's history: 16,000

people attended and it didn't even sell out. Yet Mac Point is expecting to host at least six of these concerts a year.

The idea that the stadium would host 44 big events a year overlooks the ironclad rule of public events. The more you saturate the market, the smaller the attendance becomes. He completely debunked the idea you will be getting big international in demand acts playing in Hobart. He talked about the complicating barrier of getting equipment onto the island. The fact that these top-level acts only play five to six concerts in Australia, is simply not financial for them to come here. He gave the example of the stadium in Townsville, which has a similar population size to Hobart and a similar stadium size. That stadium opened in 2020 with very high expectations, but they've had the grand total of one big concert in four years.

Mr Touber quoted the Townsville mayor, who said the lack of shows has been a source of bitter disappointment. You can't build stadiums and only have sporting events. He said having read the government's business case, 'I don't think there has been any analysis to determine demand or any proper statistical work done to establish that they are going to get anything like the estimated annual attendances.' He called it a work of fiction of truly Olympic proportions. He said that even if there was a spare sporting feature like an international rugby game, the bidding from other centres which would be geographically and strategically better placed than Hobart would be considerable. He said attracting big events, sporting or concerts, is:

... not viable unless we inflate our population by two million people. It's a supply and demand curve. We just haven't got enough supply of people to go to the shows.

He then went on to say:

This project is kind of like a pack of cards. It rests on the foundations of its estimated demand or estimated attendances to generate the income that is needed. You take away the pillars or take away a card and it falls. The foundations are rotten to the core and it completely falls apart. As a business case, it's a basket case. I think the whole project has been reverse engineered from a concept to making a rationale for it. Everyone seems to be arguing on this on the basis of emotion and I can understand why there is emotion involved. But it really should be about what makes sense for this state financially, about the financial legacy. [TBC]

The Mac Point stadium is a terrible business idea. Nearly all the experts are agreed. Even Liberal stalwart, the Oracle of Delphi himself, Brad Stansfield, calls this project an absolute stinker and has been imploring his party to drop it. I've just sat through a few days of painful budget reply speeches where government members talked about how well they are managing the budget, where the Labor Party talked about how badly the government is managing the budget. Both ignored the white elephant in the room, the stadium. Neither of the major parties have any economic credibility in the eyes of the public because they are both effectively saying yes to a stadium at any cost. We know the cost of this project will soar and once the ship has set sail, we will be forced to go down with it.

The government is bringing on this debate now before we know with any degree of certainty the likely cost of the stadium, before we know if this first of its kind roof can be built,

before we even know if cricket, which is a key part of this business model, can be played there. It is extremely reckless. Have we not learned anything from the *Spirit* embarrassment? While I understand diehard footy fans saying yes to a football team at any cost, thankfully they aren't the ones in government. They don't have a responsibility to the people of Tasmania, present and future. They don't have to balance the competing needs of the health, educating systems groaning under the strain of doing more with less, of community safety, of housing and homelessness, with an ever shrinking budget. That's our job. So, anyone who says yes to a stadium at any cost is ignoring the concept of responsible government, which is what we are elected to provide. While I respect Mr O'Byrne and Mr Fair's impassioned pleas, this vote is not about emotion and wishful thinking. This is about economics and planning and the stadium fails miserably on both fronts. You just ask the experts.

How will we pay for this billion dollar stadium? We're broke. We're on the verge of needing a federal bailout. This is a question you would expect the Labor opposition to ask, but of course they haven't. To ask it would highlight the hypocrisy of their position. The Treasurer likes to tell us that the stadium is only 10 per cent, 20 per cent of annual revenue. The expenditure on the stadium won't make a big difference to the budget in the grand scheme of things. Well, tell that to the domestic violence victims who can't flee their relationships because there are not enough safe houses for them to go to. Tell that to the 5,300 families on the housing waiting list. Tell that to the Neighbourhood Houses in crisis, in need of a few million dollars to keep the current level of services. Tell that to the people sitting in emergency waiting for 90 hours for a psychiatric bed. Tell that to those suffering persistent pain in the northwest who have to drive to Hobart to access treatment. Tell that to the teachers who are resigning in droves because of the strain they are under in our under-resourced public schools.

There is a moral and logical inconsistency to the Labor-Liberal position on this which is readily apparent to the voters of Tasmania. The people of Tasmania can see through the hollow weasel words of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition; the tortured logic, the spin, the BS. The people of Tasmania recognise that if we can't afford to properly fund basic services, we can't fund a multi-billion dollar stadium, and that's why this project has encountered so much opposition from the public.

Premier, every time a cut is made to human services in the coming budgets - and we know the cuts are coming - the people directly impacted by those cuts will look at this edifice of excess and those that voted for it with anger and resentment.

The site of this proposed white elephant is deeply significant to Tasmanian Aboriginals, but yet again this government has excluded Aboriginal people from this process and is ignoring their concerns in favour of corporate interest, just as they have done throughout the colonial history of this island. I won't repeat the words spoken by the Greens on this issue; I will instead lend my support to them.

York Park is the home of football in Tasmania. The good news is there is a contingency plan. If this order does not pass the parliament, there are alternative options. The dream is not dead like the government wants you to believe. The government has been telling anyone and everyone that York Park, now known as UTAS stadium, is not up to the job of being the home of the Devils. It cannot be retro-fitted to meet the needs of an elite football club. That claim isn't just misleading; it's demonstrably false.

The fact is that AFL stadium upgrades are the rule across Australia, not the exception, and that York Park facilities are fit for purpose and can be retro-fitted for the Tasmania Devils AFL team. They are not second-class by any means. It is one of the best playing surfaces in the country. Of all the 17 stadiums currently used for AFL season games, only three have been new AFL stadium builds, contrasted with all other stadiums being gradually upgraded.

Perth's Optus Stadium and Melbourne's Docklands Marvel Stadium were to serve established AFL teams in densely populated cities. Only Carrara Stadium on the Gold Coast could be argued as a new stadium on an existing oval, which was for the Brisbane Bears; a team that originally merged from the Fitzroy Lions Club, and moved to the Gabba five years after Carrara Stadium was built. UTAS Stadium is already an AFL-compliant venue and will remain so with ongoing upgrades. For over 20 years it has hosted AFL Premiership matches, drawing crowds of over 15,000 and putting on nationally broadcast games without issue, with the highest attendance at more than 20,000 in the mid-2000s. With stage 2 of a \$130-million redevelopment approved by the Launceston City Council in April 2025, after just having recent upgrades completed, the stadium is preparing to become even more capable, with more than 3,000 additional seats, modernised match-day facilities and upgraded infrastructure. Geelong's Kardinia Park is proof that regional stadiums can grow into elite venues through staged investment. That's exactly the model York Park is following.

York Park is twice the size of the proposed Macquarie Point site. There is space for multi-storey car parks, training facilities, and everything needed for spectators, officials and successful Tasmanian AFL and AFLW teams. If this isn't enough, there are at least three other sites within two kilometres of York Park that could be redeveloped to meet training and high-performance centre needs, much closer than Kingston is to Macquarie Point.

The truth is simple. Retro-fitting York Park and the surrounding areas is not only possible, it's already under way, and it's smarter, more inclusive and more economically responsible than spending billions of dollars of taxpayers' money on a new stadium at Macquarie Point in Hobart. The Tasmania Devils AFL team is a Tasmanian team and should reflect equal access to the entire community and share the economic benefits across Tasmania, not just to the capital.

Upgrades and investment to York Park will stimulate the northern economy. It will shift the concentration of economic activity from the south and disperse it to the north, which is consistent with Tourism Tasmania's goals. I believe Tasmania can unite behind this team if it is based at York Park.

Finally, I want to call out the rhetoric fashioned by the Premier that if you oppose the stadium, you are killing the dream. This inflammatory, misleading rhetoric has served to deepen division over the project. It has been used like a dog whistle for the pro-stadium supporters and led to appalling online trolling and abuse of those advocating against the stadium. Clearly, it was rhetoric designed to pressure the brave Independents in the Upper House and the not-so-brave members of the Labor Party to conform, to get on board with team Tasmania, or be forever held responsible for killing the dream.

We know this disgraceful rhetoric worked on Labor. We heard it in the hollow words of the Leader of the Opposition as he waved the white flag today. Not only is this rhetoric undermining our social cohesion -

Mr Willie - It's okay to have a difference of opinion.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable member for Braddon has the call.

Mr GARLAND - If those brave Independents in the upper House take the advice of the experts of the TPC panel and decline to approve this great white elephant, what is the Premier going to do the next day? Will he front the media and say the team is dead? If he does it, it will be the Premier killing the dream, not this parliament. He is the signatory to this agreement, not this parliament. If this motion doesn't pass the Upper House, the Premier must go back to the AFL and seek to renegotiate a deal in the best interests of Tasmanians and keep the dream alive.

If the AFL and its 18 clubs refuse to renegotiate, it will be the AFL killing the dream, not the brave Independent MPs in the Upper House. I go back to the AFL task force report from 2019 to see what's at stake for the AFL. Two decades ago, Tasmania enjoyed the highest per capita rate of participation in Australian rules across the country.

Time expired.

[7.57 p.m.]

Mr VERMEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise here to support the stadium. I am not going to talk long because a lot has been said, a lot has been covered and it is what I see from my side of where I have been before. I came here as a butcher, as a businessman, supporting business, supporting clubs, supporting opportunity. The stadium will bring so much more than what we cannot even foresee now.

The stadium will bring confidence to the community; it will bring confidence that people from outside Tasmania can invest in Tasmania. No stadium, no confidence. We need this. I stand here as an elected member of Clark, an elected member of the Liberal Party, a member of our Liberal government that is here to promote investment, promote jobs, promote community, to enable opportunity. This is what our stadium, our entertainment precinct, will deliver.

We have been to Melbourne and we have been to Sydney, we have been to Adelaide, all around Australia and you see that throng of people enjoying an event, moving through the town, not staying in one area, circulating, getting out and about, being part of what's happening around, putting money back into businesses, to clubs, to bars, to shops. They will spend that dollar on a top or a footy or something to do with a club, that's money being spent back into the community.

We have wanted a team for many years and we've fought hard for that opportunity. Put before us is a licence that we can now have our own team. We have young men and women who want to be part of that team and not all will make it, we know that, but it is giving that chance, that aspiration, and there's people behind those people supporting them, wanting them to go on and through the eyes of young people, they are getting fitness. It is encouraging others to get out and about. You have got to look after yourself as well; you cannot just rely on medical help to support.

If you are out and about and running around, that will get your body fit, healthy and it is looking after yourself indirectly without even thinking about it. This is an opportunity we can't

say no to. We can't miss this opportunity. The money will not come to us again. If we say no to the team by not having a stadium, the AFL won't say 'We will wait until the next time.' They will move, they will dash the dreams of everybody.

They know we're at this point and it's a great point to be at. Kath and everyone has worked so hard to keep that driving going, with all the negative thoughts and words that are going out there, still pushing forward. They're driving that dream. But that doesn't matter. AFL is a business and they will go to Queensland, they will go to Darwin or they might look at another team in Western Australia. We have to have that stadium to be part of that. I was messaging a very senior person with a club that I love, Collingwood, and he was telling me that straight out today as well. I have some good connections there, and it was straight from the horse's mouth. That's where they're looking, that's what we miss out on.

I was in Melbourne and went to a Carlton v Collingwood. I got Collingwood in twice and David O'Byrne is here to back me. I had my Tassie top over my Collingwood top - that's three times - and Carlton people were coming up to me and saying, 'When is this going to happen? What are you doing? Are you getting on with this? You will make this happen?' I said, 'I hope we do. There's some who just can't see where we should be going and that dream, that economic boost that will be there.' They want to see it.

People come to Tasmania; they come down for conferences. I have a good mate who runs a very big conference design business and they have conferences in Melbourne, Sydney and New Zealand because they can't fit them here. They will bring them here, and when they come here, they come to Tasmania for the conference, they're here for a couple of days and they see what's happening, and they go 'Gee, this is a good place. Might jump on one of those yellow boats and I might go down to Bruny Island, and I might see some orcas in the water and say wow, what a great place, what a beautiful place.' Then they will go back and tell friends and they will come back again, they will stay for another week in a couple of years' time. They will go to some beautiful bushland stuff up on the west coast, all looked after and preserved, and they will engage with that green side of things, that green economy.

They're coming because they've been here. They've come to the stadium, they've come to the entertainment precinct, they've been here for a conference, they're seeing how great this place is and they will tell others. They will come back, they will move around. That's the dollar that rolls around, that supports education, supports our roads, our schools and our hospitals by people investing and growing businesses, putting on apprentices, taking a chance by opening a restaurant, doing something else that they can see, with this amount of people, that we might have a crack at doing bus tours or another boat ride, or something that we haven't thought of. That's what it brings. It brings that opportunity.

The cricket: having that where you can lock in a date and know that it's not going to be wet. Isn't it great to have that roof? If we didn't have that roof, we'd have some pretty big towers which would be extremely high so it's a great compromise to have a roof, to have that lighting shining down, not shining up, still having a dark sky. That's good. We don't want a stadium with massive lights all up over the top. We've got a nice roof with lights directed down, working well, closed in, so we can guarantee that when people book, they know that test match, that football game, that rugby or whatever is going to be there, is going to be happening. That's what we want, that confidence.

Employment: we have waiting, cleaners, chefs, catering, maintenance, physios, doctors, bar staff, hotels, you name it. How many people? Our employment here is around 4 per cent, low. That's great. We can enable and keep more people here, offering more jobs.

With the stadium we get the training centre at Kingston. That's around another \$120 million. That's people buying houses, people investing and staying, going to schools -

Mr Abetz - Paying stamp duty.

Mr VERMEY - Absolutely. That's what we have. We have \$360 million going around to junior development around the state, at grassroots, increasing young people's participation, increasing that opportunity to have that dream to go on, play sport, be active, be healthy, being part of a team, learning how to work with people, just being communicative. That's why we need this stadium. We have to back our team, back our state, the enabler, supporting jobs and supporting our team. I will go for Tassie. I might put that black-and-white top in the second drawer -

Mr Willie - Put it in the bottom drawer, or the bin.

Mr VERMEY - But I will be backing Tassie, and I will be backing Rum'un, and I will be there on game day. Let's get this job done for Tassie. That's all I have to say.

[8.06 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, this morning I woke to a storm. It was very atmospheric and it really made me think about what we might be considering today. We've come to a point where we've had a lot of discussion about the Macquarie Point stadium, the whys and wherefores, the pros and cons of it. I'd like to acknowledge everybody who's been on this journey, whether they have been for the stadium, whether they've changed their mind along the way, or whether they have been opposed to the stadium. We've heard from members of the crossbench. Every member of the Greens has spoken. It was important that we put our concerns and the concerns of our electorate, our constituents, on the record and I'm proud to be able to do that tonight.

Here we have this order presented by the Treasurer and Minister for the Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Project. These are two important portfolios, the yin and yang of this debate, if you will. We've been discussing a number of matters around the Budget. I believe everybody in this House did a reply speech in relation to the Budget. We cannot separate the Macquarie Point stadium and all that it represents, and all those threats to good economic management without thinking about the Budget.

I will start by addressing some of Mr Abetz's comments when he moved the motion in relation to this order. The minister talked about borrowings for infrastructure projects and suggested that there was never any question raised by the House about borrowings for schools and bridges, and those other necessary infrastructure projects; so, why then would we question borrowings for the Macquarie Point stadium? As I argued this morning, there are infrastructure projects and then there are other infrastructure projects.

If we look at the TT-Line's debt crisis and poor project management, the ferries need replacing and money needs to be spent. That the project hasn't been managed all that well I will get to in a moment. If we look at Tasmania's ageing school buildings, some of those aren't fit

for purpose. They shouldn't have young Tasmanians in them. They need replacement or they need serious repair. Those are important projects for our state. They're a 'must have', not a 'maybe we could have' which the stadium is. Then if we compare this to the TT-Line debacle, the multi-million dollar borrowings and poor project outcomes, these issues as yet have not been resolved. We hear today from the Premier, that TT-Line has been referred to ASIC. These issues have not yet been resolved and they are still to play out.

The minister suggested that the government has learned from the mistakes of the ferries failures. Have they learned better fiscal management? Have they learned better infrastructure management? I think these issues have yet to be determined and I think the jury is absolutely out on the matter. Before we jump into another significantly large, if not the biggest infrastructure project, we have to consider the risks. The Tasmanian Planning Commission, in their interim assessment, pored over those risks. They looked at it from every angle. They received multiple reports on transport risks, on financial risks. That was a considered proposal. Then, when we had the response from the government, it was pretty much less considered. Now, we have an order to consider and the order is a bit of a pulling together of all these different components.

Many of us in this Chamber have been members of planning authorities before and many of us do come from a local government background. And I have to say, and I think Ms Rosol said it well, that there are concerns about considering an order of this magnitude, if you like. There are 157 pages of considerable detail and we don't even get to discuss it, which is a travesty, in my opinion. This is something that should have been teased over. We should have really gone line by line to get an understanding and to do it justice and do the justice of those people who have been involved, the public servants who've been involved, the members of the TPC. They could be proven wrong. But their considered recommendation, I think really should stand the test of time. There was so much consideration poured into that and unfortunately the government has dismissed many of those findings.

I'd like to remind the House on the return to local economies as a result of major sports facility developments. There's an American think tank, Brookings, who in an article stated a new sports facility has an extremely small, perhaps even negative, effect on overall economic activity and employment. No recent facility has been self-financing in terms of its impacts on net tax revenues. Regardless of whether the unit of analysis is a local neighbourhood, a city, or an entire metropolitan area, the benefits of sports facilities are diminished. I think the point is, and it's been made again clearly by the work borrowed from the report done by KPMG, which the members of the Planning Commission panel used as their modelling, the cost benefit analysis should be much higher than that was identified, which is 45 cents to every dollar spent.

Again, Ms Rosol, to borrow her example, that community gardens, neighbourhood houses, are given much greater return to their economy. When we invest in projects, no matter what the Treasurer might say when we invest a lot of money and all the borrowings that we have to make and the interest that we have to pay, it comes at a cost to other worthy projects for our communities in all our electorates across Tasmania - in health, in community services, in education, in housing. We all suffer, and we are all diminished as a result.

The minister referred to the divisiveness of this issue, and Mr Garland really drew our attention to this as well. This has been a very divisive issue for Tasmania and divisiveness is something which should be, at all costs, avoided where possible. Tasmanians are divided by this issue. This has been an abject failure in taking the community with you. In part, this is

because of the significant physical impacts on the city, as the stadium will loom large over heritage features of the city. It is a massive financial burden which is being covered over the time and it is those environmental aspects, which I will get to in a moment.

The project just doesn't stack up on so many counts. At every turn, there's a 'you're with us or against us' on this stadium and there's little rational debate, I am afraid. The division and its impacts have not been handled well and I believe that this responsibility lies squarely at the feet of the government, particularly with little regard for compromise. The costs to the north-west footy fans to go to games in Hobart has been brought up by the member for Braddon, Mr Garland. That's why York Park is the pick for many as the home of football in this state, central to everyone and, therefore, it is an equitable outcome.

One other thing that impacts every Tasmanian is this massive debt that the TPC has calculated and this debt is for every household: \$4100. The government would accumulate \$1 billion in debt in construction costs, which rise to \$1.8 billion over 10 years. So, the construction cost equates to an excruciating \$5900 per Tasmanian household not reliant on Commonwealth support and, as I have said before, this is the biggest burden that any population that has a stadium thrust upon them has to pay.

Why is it that the poorest population in Australia has to pay the most to have this stadium delivered? What of external revenue streams? Have we heard that there will be no gambling-related advertising associated with the Macquarie Point stadium? There is significant harm from online gambling, and it would be an absolute travesty, but the AFL will need to get their pound of flesh, and I will assume that it would be they who would reap the benefits of gambling revenue or perhaps the state has some gambling revenue taxes in mind.

Division, as I was saying before, is a favoured political currency. Who benefits? Not Tasmanians, but those in power when you get division. The minister, Mr Abetz, used the analogy of the culturally elite of Paris and Sydney with the building of the Eiffel Tower and the Sydney Opera House, and how the culturally elite didn't want to see it but then it was of benefit to them in the long run. However, what I see this translate to is referring to the good burghurs of Glebe and across this state who are concerned about the visual and cultural impact this will have on the human scale city that is Hobart, which has significant heritage values, which with the building of this stadium, are completely disregarded.

I want to talk about a couple of things featured in the order and, again, the massive amount of spending or the lack of costing as part of the overall project.

The Greens have raised many times the issue of the northern access road. It's being funded as part of the Urban Congestion Fund, a road that effectively leads to the port, and of course the event plaza, which is costed at \$75.9 million, but it's not even a through road, so it's interesting that this should come out of the Urban Congestion Fund.

Mr Abetz - It was the Hobart City Deal.

Ms BURNET - There were other projects earmarked for these funds that would benefit other road users, which were part of the city deal, actually, minister Abetz, but this is really enabling the stadium build.

The Tasman Bridge upgrades, for starters, would be a winner and benefit for many more southern Tasmanians often stuck in congestion. If we look at the construction issues which have not been addressed on this order, there is a stark admission in the EPA's submission, and that is the environmental issues with the fill, which Ms Badger touched upon.

In their submission, they say there isn't enough room in southern Tasmanian landfills to accept all the contaminated soil that will have to be excavated. The management plan doesn't even include the mass that would need to be moved for the car park. I could talk about the car park, but that's a very expensive car park to build in the brownfield site.

Third, I wanted to raise the issue of transport, any transport issues for the stadium. There are so many unknowns and assumptions in this modal shift, which is expected, it is cringe-worthy. For example, the rapid bus transit, which, uncoded, would move supposedly 3 per cent to 6 per cent of game-day patrons. We await the business case for this. There's \$49 million allocated for event buses, which minister Abetz said was actually to make school buses DDA compliant. Getting that modal shift is a big ask for Tasmanians who do not catch public transport; they steer well away from it, which is unfortunate, but it's going to be very difficult to get that modal shift.

I remind the House that Metro, a key sponsor of the JackJumpers, couldn't even run their shuttle buses up the Brooker on game day. We need to see a lot more detail before anyone can take seriously the proposed modal shift that would be required to get 23,000 people to events without causing complete chaos, read that as congestion, across Greater Hobart.

We have a responsibility to make choices on how dollars are spent for this state. We have given budget reply speeches, and we will have 70.5 hours of Estimates committee work to scrutinise the government's budget, and no extra time to scrutinise this order.

This has not really been aired as a gendered issue, but I might make the point. We've heard about family violence; it's been raised by a number of speakers. Footy is predominantly a male game. It's been championed by two male premiers. We've heard one member, one female member of the government, and really, I think there's concern, and I would like to imagine what this House might have done if we'd had a different interpretation or a different approach to this if it wasn't football.

We know that people are passionate about football in Tasmania, however during this debate, there has been little said about grassroots teams and facilities. In many other sports, such as soccer, rugby, basketball, hockey, netball, played by many Tasmanians every week, they get crumbs comparatively. Aussie rules is receiving the lion's share of sports funding when you take into account the Macquarie Point stadium. I have to wonder that if there were requests for funding for a national netball team, would we be having this debate?

In closing, this has been a significant issue felt acutely across this island. The Greens have represented concerns of many thousands of Tasmanians. We have listened to those concerns. We have also shared the desire of so many Tasmanians to have an AFL team. However, we vowed not to do this at any cost. We do not want to see generations of Tasmanians paying for this football stadium folly. We also hope that those in the other place can consider the best interests of all Tasmanians and generations to come, and not throw caution to an ill wind.

[8.26 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Arts and Heritage) - Honourable Speaker, I will make a few reflections. It is fair to say that the comments we've heard from around the Chamber have been very interesting and helpful. I will make a contribution that focuses on women and the arts. It's an area in which we haven't really yet articulated all the benefits that we might see.

Those in the Chamber who have been around for a while, like I have, are aware that for many years I was involved with the Southern Football League, first as vice president and then as the league's first woman president. When you become the first woman president of one of Tasmania's oldest football leagues, you have to choose what you're going to do with that, and you have to think, 'How can I best make a contribution that's going to benefit the state plus also the kids who want to play sport, and make sure that you leave the league in better condition than when you found it?'

I think it's fair to say when I and Kyron Johnson took on the leadership of the Southern Football League, it did need a bit of love and a bit of help. What we had found is that over time, clubs found it much harder to run their teams and run their clubs because the money just wasn't there to be able to do that. What I decided to do, for better or worse - and it wasn't easy - was to start the women's competition. We inaugurated the SFLW women's competition, which was needed because the children and the STJFL, in particular, had started to play.

As a state netballer myself, with my girlfriends, we look back and think, 'Well, if football had been around, would we have played that?' We probably would have. We probably would have played netball and football. As it was, we went to lots of the football parties, which were really good fun. I will just put that on the record. I see the humour is not lost on the Treasurer.

The rise of women in footy happened across that period, both with the SSFL, the NTFA, and the NFLW. We organised that. We brought the AFL back to the table, and we organised as a state. We got each of those leagues and therefore each of the clubs to affiliate with the AFL, and from that, we set up football hubs in each of the regions. Those hubs then were able to put more support into the leagues and into the clubs. So, good on them. Then, participation went up. They got in back into the schools, the kids were playing more, and guess what? The women's competition now with the SFL is larger than the men's competition. It's a different game, but they play it beautifully.

I say that by way of reflecting on what I believe one of the other members for Clark said about where are the women in this conversation. I don't think that's right. We're in the centre of this conversation, and a lot of people have done this work. I also congratulate Mr O'Byrne, who has come back into the room, for his continued carriage, particularly of the SFLW, which I thank you for your service.

More importantly, I want to talk about the arts, and I want to talk about performance. Football is a sort of performance, isn't it? It's a show that we go and see and we love. I'm a Swans supporter. As much as I like football, I love the arts, I love music and I love concerts. I was just reading the review on AC/DC's performance last night at the MCG. It's been called 'A thrilling show, your eardrums will never be the same'. Well, I hope they will be the same. There was something like - Melbourne just adopted this and absorbed this, something like 392 bagpipers came out -

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Loved the bagpipes.

Ms OGILVIE - So do I. I'm Scottish. Came out to welcome AC/DC back to their heartland. They went there because they had a place to play. My first concert I went to as - I think I was under age, oh my goodness, I don't know if I can confess that. I think it was all right to go still, 17 at KGV Oval to see Dire Straits.

A member - There were over 20,000 there.

Ms OGILVIE - I was there. Biggest and best band in the world. What a time. That was at a football ground, but I wasn't there for the football.

A member - *Brothers in Arms*.

Ms OGILVIE - *Brothers in Arms*, Dire Straits, great. We love the music. Music needs that lifeline. We want kids to be studying music. We know there's a challenge with that in the state. We need those participation pathways, as they are now for football, but we need that for music. I've been doing a lot of work with that. We need kids to see what they could do and what they could be.

I started thinking about some of the other things I would like to see once we get this through. I would like to see the incredible artefacts and treasures of the British Museum come to our state. We bring that kind of exhibition here, people will come from all over Australia and all over the planet. I would love to see the Seattle Symphony Orchestra again. I went to see it in Seattle. It was incredible, it was huge. Let's get our orchestras together. How about we bring some of the treasures and the paintings of the Met from New York here? How about some fashion exhibitions? The Dior exhibition from Victoria could come here and would be beautiful. I'd like to create opportunities for the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to take some of the amazing stuff we have in storage and bring it out into this building and show it off more. Some pure Tasmanian love right there.

The cultural precinct is already there. We have the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the Theatre Royal, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Salamanca Arts Centre and we have all of that wonderful activity around that area. It can be enlivened even more. I've been in conversation with those groups as well.

There are training and learning opportunities. With a building of this nature, the need for digital technology so that you can perform, transmit, record and do all the broadcasting you need to do. The need for that is very high. That would be a remarkable thing to have in our state. The IT students at UTAS are going to love playing with this equipment. Our sound engineers are going to enjoy learning on the latest stuff. There is something for everybody in this, and the arts in particular.

Performance: what about the opera? We can't have the big shows. We can't have the Australian and Victorian Ballets in their full format here because they don't fit on our stage. Our beautiful Theatre Royal, which is old and colonial, is quite small. Imagine having that come to town.

The opportunity for data and digital, for performance and recording, and for selling and licensing our shows and intellectual property (IP) out there. Our film sector is already magnificent. We can do more with that because we have those skills on the island. With that

IP licensing, we're already working with Hollywood, as I mentioned, Seattle, the west coast, our games sector is doing incredible things. The royalties come back into Tasmania because this is good mind work. This is from creativity that we're going to make more for our state.

The economic development opportunity, particularly in that tech sector, is the number one opportunity for our state. Get the footballers in, get some funding in, get this going, but I see a much bigger picture.

I'm really optimistic about all of that. I love the thought that a band like AC/DC might go and play in Melbourne and then rock on down here. I don't play -

A member - They did.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, they did. My aunt went to that show. She went on tour with them. I don't play bagpipes -

A member - I do.

Ms OGILVIE - but we have a bagpiper in the house. Fantastic. You can come in my band? I will play the oboe - bagpipes, it's going to be a terrible band, but we will give it our best shot.

You can already see that people feel good when you talk about music because music brings people together. To have music in a venue where our local kids can get there and they don't have to buy a ticket to Melbourne, and they don't have to get mum to send someone with them to Melbourne and pay for the flights, the hotels, the tickets, which are not inexpensive, and it connects us at that global layer of stadium economy.

For those people like me who really love their reels, which I do, I love watching how American college football combines music, dance, performance and sport. The cheerleaders, the dance stuff. But the music? How about that running-out music? When these big colleges play the music and the crowd goes wild, you don't know if you're at a music concert or a sports event. It's a performance, and we love that because we're humans and we like to get together. In this world of digital technology and social media, where we are all quite separated and we get in that bell jar because we are fed through the algorithm and we just hear what we think we're already looking at, or things we already think we agree with.

I will give Mr Willie a little credit because I think you said something important: it's okay to disagree. We don't all have to agree on all elements. However, I think the one thing we do agree on -

Mr Willie - I think that's the first compliment you've ever given me.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't think you've ever given me one so I'm one up. I will wait for yours. You let me know when you're ready.

The one thing we can do is put Tasmania first. Here's our opportunity. I've been around a long time, fifth generation Clark person. That's been a big pile of broken concrete over there for a long time. We had a lot of ideas. We haven't landed any of them. Maybe we should grab this one and move with it quickly.

I want to see people getting together, having more fun, I want to see the music, I want to see the exhibitions. Just imagine what we could do if we really grasped the opportunity.

Most of all, I would like to see the Tasmanian women's football team run out first on the national stage, which they will do. Some of those players came up through our Southern Football League (SFL) program and through our women's competition. I feel proud of that. I will stop there and just say, Go, women.

[8.38 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak briefly on this vitally important subject. I know that time doesn't permit absolutely everybody to speak, but I want to put a few things on the record in support of this motion for the order that's been brought before the House.

I will reflect that, coming from the north of the state and representing the best part of the state, this has not been an easy issue for many of my constituents. I'm sure any member for Bass in this Chamber would agree, even if they're not prepared to say so on the public record. At various times I've had some big questions.

My colleagues in my party would know that every time and any time in my time in government that there's been a discussion around a significant financial outlay. I've always needed a lot of convincing. I've always needed to be persuaded. I like to be convinced and see the merits of the arguments. At various times I believe there have been some proper questions to be answered. Maybe some of those unanswered questions are the reason the Labor Party opposed the stadium from the outset and mocked it, and they called it a floating stadium to try to make it -

Mr Willie - The Premier called it a floating stadium before.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, we're nearly there.

Mr FERGUSON - The opportunism of that politics did not serve us well in getting answers to the questions and to see a strong project management model being put around this project. It's been a real journey. I have also had questions of process, the financials, community support, the way that the AFL has treated our state, for a long time, not just in recent years and, of course, the manner with which the Australian Government has treated us in being a financial partner with our state in this project, but you are not much of a partner if you give us a \$240 million grant but you don't give us the GST exemption, which means that we're potentially at risk of losing a significant fraction of the funds later on. I will come to that later.

We have worked through these difficult issues. The Premier has continued to advance and champion this project. Ministers have supported the Premier and the team and there have been plenty, thousands, tens of thousands, dare I say, hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians who have also cheered it on, but it hasn't been unanimous and speaking again from the north, it has been a challenge to work through.

One of the leading influences in my thinking has been my father, my pastor and one of the leading businessmen in the north, Errol Stewart. When I listened to them speaking to me from their very different perspective, I was so comforted, if you like, and pleased with the

business and the social and the sense of obligation to the economy that those three leading figures in my life brought to me.

We mustn't lose sight of the fact, and it has been mentioned, if at all, far too infrequently through this debate in the lead up to it, that the first major upgrade goes to York Park. Some call it UTAS Stadium, I don't. It's York Park always for me. We, in the north, are the biggest and earliest beneficiary for this overall project. Our team will be running onto York Park and it will be a phenomenal facility. It will be completely transformed with \$130 million of investment and all the jobs that go with that. I want to reflect as well that when the opportunity to join the Tasmanian Football Club emerged, of course I joined, I was always going to and I think in the order of the memberships I came in at around about 30,000. That was about 8 p.m. - could be wrong about that - but every member of my family joined the Tasmanian Football Club at the same time, people in my family who have the least bit of interest in football. I just want to think about that for a moment.

People who have little interest in Australian Rules joining the Tasmanian Football Club says a lot more about our state than only a fixation on organised team sport because this project actually does represent more than achieving the dream of an AFL team, which I vigorously support. It's broader than that. It's about what kind of state we believe we are and can be in the future.

I grew up at a time where we lost major projects. The Wesley Vale pulp mill, major dam infrastructure which divided the state, but the big thinking, the big projects, which evaded our community, and even if you think that's wonderful, that we did not get those developments, the economic loss and the loss of optimism for the future is something I grew up with in this state. I remember it very well and I have sensed a different outlook in this, and people have been so excited. I want to speak up for that.

Of course, 30,000, get in line. It got up to well over 250 financial members. I want to give a great shout-out to the incredible leadership of that club. We have been very blessed with the men and women who are serving in board positions and the executive of our club, the Devils. So, thank you to Grant O'Brien and Kath McCann, who have been leading lights from the board and, of course, Brendon Gale, who is somebody we really look to with such admiration.

Now, we need development and the unanswered question from those who continue to oppose this project is well, then what else because we do need major development. We always need to have a major project on the books, in the next slot. We need that. The state needs to be able to say yes, to have a culture of permission, that 'yes, we can be ambitious', 'yes, we are able to aspire' and yes, we can have some of the wonderful public infrastructure that other states just take for granted.

This stadium is for all ages. The project, the team and the benefits that go with it are for the spectrum of our community. I personally believe that the biggest beneficiaries are our young people. I believe that our generation - that is people 40 and over - in many ways we've lost sight of our obligation to younger generations. This is for them. Especially when you look at the juniors who are interested in sport, not just but including Aussie Rules are this, we must have them firmly in our minds. I realise today was a school day, a college day, possibly an exam day, but how many young people have we seen cheering from the gallery every time somebody gave a riveting speech against the stadium? They weren't here. We can't lose sight

of that because they're our charges, our obligation, and we owe to them the future that they deserve. We owe it to them. For an asset - it's not just an expenditure, it's an asset that will be with us for decades, call it 40 to 50 years, that's their future. It's certainly part of their future.

The construction sector is looking for the next big project, but it's not their first. This government has delivered the Royal - the much talked about but never got around to Royal; the Bridgewater Bridge that's been promised since the since the 1990s, we've delivered it, and we've done so in partnership with the construction sector. It's been very successful. Port developments, rail developments, airport developments, road developments, major road developments that are saving lives right now. We have as a state had the wherewithal and the capability to get it done, and we can do this as well. Somebody mentioned risks. Yes, every project has risks and they need to be managed and competent people can do that.

A brief word on the politics. I believe it's been one of the great exhibitions of disappointing human nature, the politics that's been played around these projects. In particular, I single out the Labor Party on this. They looked for every opportunity to score a political point. We've seen the lot. We've had MPIs, we've had motions passed demanding confidential documents that ministers couldn't provide, we've had the ridiculing of the Premier and other ministers, the use of the word 'floating stadium', we've had the arguments about the Cenotaph - I think best I've ever heard responded to by our minister this morning - we've had the inquiries, we've had the websites, we've had the social media videos, the reels, we've had the stickers, and, of course, we've had the petition that was never tabled in this House. I don't know how many people signed it, but it was advertised. And, of course, the election pledges which hurt us in the Liberal Party in 2024. It did, but you have to stand for something.

I thank those who fought for a good financial outcome and a proper one in regard to our GST. We vowed that we would get it and we did. I particularly thank those Liberal Senators who fought for it and single out Senator Tammy Tyrrell, Independent Senator for this state. I think it's probably one of the greatest things that she's done in that role and she's represented this state and got a great result by arguing for it and not going quiet on it.

A brief word on budget. Yes, it's an investment in an asset that will be with us for decades to come, but when I've heard members arguing against the stadium on the basis of financial outlay, they seem to be pigeonholing and setting aside what the Treasurer said in his budget speech just days ago: this budget has an extra \$900 million for health. We are able to invest in our infrastructure and our essential services at the same time.

What if we did vote this down? Or what if the other place voted it down? Has anybody considered those costs? For a start, we will lose our quarter of a billion, \$240 million - Canberra will be raking it back, no doubt. I wouldn't put it past them. The AFL would withdraw their \$360 million. There's still the financial cost of developing Macquarie Point.

What about the non financial costs? What about those? What about the loss of economic activity? What about the jobs and apprenticeships and training positions in the construction sector around the build program? What about the lost events? What about the lost conferences? What about the plans that businesses will now set aside? Because obviously, we can't get things done in this state, and we're back to that sort of 'no can do' attitude that has that has troubled this state for far too long with a belief in saying no.

What about the loss in the physical activity and benefits of exercise that all ages would otherwise enjoy? What about the social strength and conditioning that we might lose if young people have lost those opportunities to really engage in a reinvigorated sport? There's nothing like team sport to build a sense of a whole person - a person who's cared for, watched out for, got the mentoring of the coach, the volunteers, the chaplain, the younger ones who are admiring them and 'I want to be like that guy one day, I want to be like that woman one day.' The loss of the opportunities that come with a reinvigorated sporting code. In this period of our society, we need to see more people not just playing physical sport for the physical health benefits, but equally for the mental health and socialisation benefits that will come from it.

I've lost a few voters over this issue, but I want to say to any of those people who have believed in me, believed in our Liberal Party in the past, and have been unsure, I say to them: I've considered this very carefully. I believe everybody here has, as well, but I'm speaking for myself. I have formed the very strong view that the total benefits to our state, including to my families in Bass - the total benefits are greater than the total costs. On the other side, if we were to abandon this permit, the total costs will be much greater than the benefits of not having to pay our share toward the project.

That's my position. It is of course consistent with my party's position, but that's my articulation of it. I want to say to anybody listening in the Chamber or out of it: I do believe that we can make a go of this for Tasmania. I believe it can be a success, and for many of us, it will be around longer than we will even be alive to enjoy. I commend the motion to the House and thank the minister for bringing it through today.

[8.53 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal) - Deputy Speaker, thank you to all those who have made a contribution to this debate. I think the prize for the most extravagant hyperbole goes to Ms Rosol for the 'brain-eating virus' that seems to have afflicted 26 members of this place who are wanting to vote in favour. I listen to a lot of hyperbole and extravagant phrases, but I have to say that one took my fancy and I thought it was quite funny.

Moving to those who have contributed, I thank Mr Willie and the opposition for their support. There was the obligatory backhander on the way through, the smack around the chops, and we accept that, that's the role of opposition and good luck to you. The important thing is that the opposition is providing bipartisan support for this proposal.

Dr Woodruff - Their one speaker. They're really behind that support.

Mr ABETZ - Moving to the Leader of the Greens, who is already interjecting, can I say to her that you cannot say out of one side of your mouth that this is excessive expenditure and should not be undertaken, and then say out of the other side of your mouth that we should be spending this money on a new library, on a new pool, on a new rail line, and all sorts of other things. If we cannot afford to spend the money, why on your projects but not on this project?

You need to have a consistency and integrity of argument, which is lacking. Indeed, she then sought to promote the My Place group and their proposals - a \$300-million investment, according to them, for 1000 homes at \$300,000 per house. I'm not sure that's very well-costed, but I'll just park that. One hundred million dollars for a Truth and Reconciliation park, a new state library, the light rail transit hub, and so the list goes on. She then went on to assert her

concern that people were going hungry and not being fed. I could understand that argument if you weren't going to spend it on all these other things. You can't spend the money twice. You cannot spend - and she laughs. You know, this affected laughter, which shows -

Dr Woodruff - You spent this whole time trying to tell us that the operational budget is not being affected. That's what the \$240 million from the federal government can go towards. That's already slated for housing.

Mr ABETZ - That she does not understand the porosity of her argument. Can I also turn to her assertion that the MPDC withheld information from the TPC.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, they did.

Mr ABETZ - Once again, a campaign of denigration against officials who do their very best -

Dr Woodruff - It's just what the planning commission told us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, it's not time for debate, please.

Mr ABETZ - in the service of the people of Tasmania. Have a whack at us, by all means, we stand for public office, give us a whack, but not the officials. Especially not when you are in cowards castle taking those cheap shots knowing that people cannot defend themselves. Can I say -

Dr Woodruff - I don't resolve from reading from the planning commission's report.

Mr ABETZ - Can I say that the Macquarie Point Development Corporation submitted nearly 4000 pages of plans and reports and during the process, the TPC requested additional information and all of those requests were responded to and are published on the commission's website. That is the fact. So why, in a desperate attempt to denigrate the stadium, do you try to denigrate the officials that are doing such a very good job for us?

We were told that this proposal is not pro-business by the Greens. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry have got it wrong. The Master Builders Association have got it wrong. The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania has got it wrong. The National Electrical Contractors Association have got it wrong. The Housing Industry Association have got it wrong. I think one can make the argument and assert that this is, in fact, going to be pro-business.

Can I also say that this investment will be genuinely intergenerational. I believe the member for Bass, Mr Ferguson, absolutely nailed it. When we look at debt, as I have said in this place on a number of occasions, if you incur a debt and expect the next generation to help pay it off, they should be getting some of the benefit of that - and they will, because this stadium, like the Bridgewater Bridge, will last for decades and they will be the beneficiaries of it, unlike when you borrow for recurrent expenditure.

Can I then also go to the precinct plan and that was subject to a lot of public consultation. Over 16 weeks of public consultation in two rounds, with nearly two-and-a-half thousand written submissions, and more than a hundred meetings with local organisations, businesses

and individuals and so, the list goes on. I thank Mr O'Byrne for his wonderful contribution from a wealth of experience. The only problem with his contribution was that he supports Collingwood. I look forward to the day, along with Mr Vermey, when they can get rid of those disgusting black and white jerseys and don the Tasmanian jersey.

I refer to the roof, which has been referred to by a number of people. With a roof, any cricket that is played there will then be guaranteed the game. It cannot be washed out. Do you know what that does for television rights? To be able to sell a game knowing that it will not be washed out - that will provide real dollars. Do we need a roof for the AFL? I suspect not, but do we need it for all the other purposes that the stadium is going to be put to? Absolutely, and that is why when - I forget who it was - I think it was Mr Garland, was referring to the AFL taskforce and all its considerations. Yes, I get what they said, but they only looked at it from an AFL point of view.

This is a multipurpose stadium in which we will not only be playing football. I must say I have been astounded how often I have received the email saying 'How do you justify a stadium of this cost for only seven games of football, and that translates into whatever cost?' completely and utterly ignoring this is a multipurpose stadium in which football will be played or Australian rules, Cricket, concerts, conventions and so the list goes on. Mr Garland told us that supposedly the biggest concert was, I think, 13,000 - the Dire Straits one -

Ms Ogilvie - Dire Straights was amazing.

Mr ABETZ - Yes, at Glenorchy, 20,000. I think it was the Triple J One Night Stand concert on the east coast, 20,000 people. With respect, the information that the honourable member had in that regard, was somewhat dated.

People have referred to the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme. That was a scheme that was developed some 35 years ago. Somewhat outdated, outmoded and this is now a new vision for this area.

We were also told that the roof on the stadium is somehow a sweetener to placate the AFL. The roof was in fact suggested by Tasmanians, for Tasmanians, and they suggested it in Tasmania. Why? Patron comfort. The stadium will have the protection from the wind and rain, as well as an internal temperature of plus or minus 5°Celsius from the outside. There will be the certainty for events - look, coming to Tasmania is a risk for a band or a concert, whatever, especially if it gets rained out. With a roof, that risk is gone, it is diminished. Not only diminished, it is gone. As a result, they can book with confidence. Whereas in the past, when they have made the consideration of coming to Tasmania, there has been the problem or the risk that they've had to factor in. This now minimises or gets rid of that risk.

Then, we have the alleged concern of light spillage from the stadium. Well, without a roof and if it were lower without the roof, we would need huge light towers. Then those who promote My Place, a few people that we know that live in the Glebe, I am sure would be a lot more affected with light towers. So many notes here.

Then, we're told that the stadium is too big for the site. As I said in the introductory speech, the site is twice the size of the MCG. The stadium is going to take 45 per cent of the Macquarie Point site. The other 55 per cent somehow is still all squeezed in and people won't be able to move, everybody will be shoulder to shoulder. It's simply not the case.

The suggestion was that a lot of expert advice was ignored. Well, the TPC in fact listened to a lot of expert advice. Its report shows that a stadium can work on the site, that traffic can be managed and pedestrian access -

Dr Woodruff - It recommends not to build it.

The SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ABETZ - Someone in their contribution told us, I think it was the former deputy Lord Mayor of Hobart, Ms Burnet, if I recall correctly, that somehow footpaths have to be widened. No, they don't. That is not needed. It is not necessary, but it is part in parcel of the desire to throw on every possible cost to make it look as though it's going to be a lot more costly.

Dr Woodruff - You have spent thousands of our resources trying to reduce the scope.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff.

Mr ABETZ - In relation to the Northern Access Road, the former deputy Lord Mayor of Hobart should have known that the Northern Access Road was part of the Hobart City Deal.

Dr Woodruff - Wrong. The planning commission says -

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, this is your second warning. We are nearly at the end of this debate. I'm sure you would prefer to be in here for the vote. I ask that interjections cease. If you have further comments to make, you are welcome to make a contribution on the adjournment. Thank you.

Mr ABETZ - The Hobart City Deal required the northern access road to be built. It is already in the budget, fully funded. Can I say, as I said in my introductory comments, no stadium; no team, but yes, northern access road. So, even without the stadium, the northern access road will be built. It is going to happen, funded separately under another deal. That said, of course the stadium will be able to leverage off the northern access road and it will be beneficial. I was also surprised by that contribution, which sort of confused me that a Green would say that using more buses and public transport would somehow lead to more congestion. I would have thought you'd be celebrating the fact that more people might be using buses.

I ask, rhetorically, just imagine if the TPC would have said yes. Would the Greens say: 'Fair enough, we now support the stadium?' They had opposed the stadium from day one. They objected to this matter going before the TPC and the POSS process. They actually voted against it. Now they're championing it, which tells me that irrespective of the TPC's decision, they would have been opposing this project and would have found some sort of reason to go against it.

Somebody alerted me to the fact, another fun fact, that the Hobart Cenotaph, which was unveiled by Tasmanian Governor Sir James O'Grady on 13 December 1925, in front of the Premier, the Mayor of Hobart, representatives of municipalities, and 9000 citizens, was, in fact, Hobart's fifth war memorial, not it's first.

In relation to several members saying what the reasons for the order were, and in relation to the strategic case, and that nobody had ever looked at other possible stadia, can I indicate that the report found that the new stadium needs to have a roof to be able to host events year-round without worrying about the weather? The government strategic business case released in February 2020 for the stadium project noted that Tasmania needs a contemporary stadium, so this need for a roof was fully acknowledged and accepted well beforehand.

Then there's the suggestion that here's nothing innovative about the stadium; but it'll be made of Tasmanian timber with steel. This will set a new standard for stadia and is a first for a fixed fully roofed stadium over a natural turf oval field. You won't be seeing light towers. We have already had expressions of interest internationally as to having a look as to how this is going to be built. This will be a world first, so it wasn't excessive hyperbole when, in my initial speech introducing this, I said the eyes of the world would in fact be upon us.

Given the time, allow me to quickly move onto some other responses. I indicate to the member for Clark, Mr Bayley, that he said that residential development does not feature. It does, as part of the Macquarie Point Precinct Plan, which was approved in September 2024, which clearly sets out the residential development.

Mr Bayley - It's a tack-on piece of land outside the site.

Mr ABETZ - No, it was not an afterthought. Residential development is an important part of the urban renewal of Macquarie Point, and it encourages inner-city living. Encouraging inner-city living is included as a requirement in the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act 2012*. These things were thought of - part and parcel of the whole deal.

Mr Bayley - You took a bit of NRE land and added it to Mac Point. He's misrepresenting the situation. Completely misrepresenting reality.

Mr ABETZ - When you are deliberately not willing to inform yourself of all the facts, you will make those comments.

The SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bayley. Again, you can make further comments on Adjournment. I ask that the interjections cease.

Mr ABETZ - I have made some observations about language in relation to this debate. One member said they would 'never forgive' in relation to this matter if it got voted up. Can I say that that is the sort of language of ugly division in our community? It is ugly language. If this proposal gets voted down, will I be upset? Yes, but you move on with life. You don't harbour that and say, 'We'll never forgive.' It's that sort of ugly language which does not assist us at all.

Prof Razay made some interesting contributions. It's about 12 per cent of infrastructure at the moment. It was suggested that the roof was a demand from the AFL. I think I've covered off on that, that it wasn't. AFL is a winter sport, and therefore it's not needed - a comment that Prof Razay made. As I tried to say before, this is a multipurpose stadium not only for football.

He then gave us a medical analogy. Can I try, without being in any way qualified - and I accept on dangerous ground, but - if you've got a sick patient, every now and then an injection of vitamins or whatever boosts the beast. I would like to think that what we're doing with this

is giving an injection to the patient to boost the beast, boost the economy, and get this person running again. I hope my analogy is not too far-fetched. I liked Prof Razay's analogy, but I thought I'd try to respond.

I also indicate that the AFL and AFLW will play in the UTAS or York Park Stadium routinely every season. While the final numbers haven't been fully determined up until 2027, I believe it is - or 2028 - there will be four games each year. Be assured that Bass will not miss out. As the member for Bass, Mr Ferguson, indicated, the upgrade of York Park - I didn't hear Prof Razay say that that was 'bad' money spent, because it was in Bass; if it's in Hobart, it is. I understand parochial politics, but I thought I would point that out to the honourable gentleman.

I also respond to the comment that was made that this is 'only' - in inverted commas - a 70 per cent-designed stadium? This is part and parcel of the way these projects are developed. To say that this is - I believe the term used was 'embarrassing' - indicates, embarrassingly, that the person who made the comment doesn't understand how these projects are, in fact, developed; that they are designed to a certain stage and then you go to the design and construct phase.

We were also told that there were terrible toxins in the ground. Yes, there are, but wait a minute, we can have housing on top of those terrible toxins where people live, but we can't have people playing football on the ground there. I think I'd rather play football rather than permanently live on such a site. It doesn't become more toxic just because it's going to be an AFL ground.

In relation to Mr Garland, can I indicate to him, that in his electorate of Braddon, the great champion of the stadium received a monster vote like nobody else on the stadium, and six out of the seven members elected from Braddon support the stadium?

That concludes my commentary in relation to the contributions that were made. I simply sum up by saying this is a transformative project. It's an exciting project. It's a project that has all the hallmarks of being a well-rounded proposition for our state. Aesthetically pleasing, an iconic gateway to the city, a multipurpose stadium, which allows, yes, for sport, but not only for sport, for cultural events, for concerts, we can now attract international conferences here with 1500 people and the benefits of that were well-outlined by the Minister for Tourism, Msr Howlett.

The uptake in Auskick amongst our young people, be it in Ulverstone or at Kingston or at Lauderdale, has been huge. Why? Exactly the same as with the JackJumpers and basketball: you give them the hope they aspire, they have ambition and it gets them off their screens and onto basketball courts or footy fields. With some of the youth crime that we have, I've been advised - and I've mentioned this a number of times - that law-enforcement people tell you very clearly, show me your suburb where there is a high rate of youth involvement in sport and I will show you a suburb with a low youth involvement in crime.

It really is helpful for the development of our next generation and I think the member for Bass, Mr Ferguson, put it exceptionally well as to those of us who are over 40 - and I think I just fit into the category, Mr Ferguson - can I say that we should be thinking about the next generation, the future. That is why I am so confident that this is the right project covering

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a multiplicity of things from architecture to an iconic gateway to all the events it will be able to host.

Honourable Speaker, I fully commend the order to the House and make the observation in concluding that not a single question was raised about a specific element of the order requesting the minister to respond to it in the conclusion of the debate, so there's no need for me to do it. However, it is indicative of the fact that we all spend our time on the umbrella issues and not the specifics of the order.

The SPEAKER (Mrs Petrusma) - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES - 25

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Mitchell
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Mr Jaensch (Teller)

NOES - 9

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Ms Johnston
Prof Razay
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff
Mr George (Teller)

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[9.25 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Tabling of Letters - Budget Funding Commitments

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, I refer to the Leader of the Opposition's request in question time this morning seeking the Premier to table letters from the Premier to community organisations regarding budget funding commitments. On behalf of the Premier, I am now tabling letters that were sent to a range of stakeholders. It should be noted that only some stakeholders received letters regarding funding, while others may have had direct contact with their portfolio minister, the minister's office or the relevant department.

We are working through the varying complexities of each of our commitments, but as the Premier outlined to the House this morning, we are committed to delivering our election obligations and are willing to engage and work with each of our stakeholders on how we will meet our commitments.

Unanswered Questions on Notice - TT-Line Solvency Issues

[9.26 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I will try to do this while the Premier is still in the Chamber. Yesterday, he took on notice two questions on TT-Line matters. He did not update the House yesterday and he has not updated the House today. The two matters were providing TT-Line's advice regarding their solvency. He endeavoured to take that on notice. I point out that there's been two sitting days now.

He also took on notice that he would go and check whether he could table the Treasury advice provided to the Treasurer's office. He did not do that either. Tasmania is now struggling to trust this Premier's word and these sorts of matters don't help his cause.

I did give him the benefit of the doubt today. I thought he would come in on the Adjournment, or the Leader of the House would do it, but it hasn't happened.

I point that out because I will be holding the Premier to account. I don't think it's good enough when he takes matters on notice and refuses to provide this House with the information requested. It goes to show that this government lacks transparency, particularly on this issue where they've sought to cover up at every twist and turn.

We had a slip-up from the Premier today - I don't know whether it was deliberate or not - that TT-Line has been referred by the Auditor-General to ASIC. We know that there is more to this story and this government is not being honest again. We will get to the bottom of it.

The House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.