

**RESPONSE TO PETITION
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MEMBER FOR HOBART – CASSY O'CONNOR**



TITLE OF PETITION: The proposed Macquarie Point stadium

The petition of the undersigned Citizens of Tasmania draw to the attention of the House:

An E-Petition from 5096 citizens and residents of Tasmania who Draw to the attention of the House:

The improper attempt by Government to bypass the independent planning process and have Parliament pass enabling legislation to approve the proposed Macquarie Point Stadium.

Independent expert assessments by respected economist Dr Nicholas Gruen, and the Tasmanian Planning Commission highlight significant risks associated with the stadium including:

- *Major cost blowouts, substantially increased state debt, and potential credit downgrade*
- *Inadequate space for the stadium*
- *Safety risks to pedestrians*
- *Unsafe emergency evacuations*
- *Harmful contamination risks from site excavations*
- *Threats to heritage, including the Cenotaph.*

The Premier had no mandate to agree to unacceptable terms dictated by the Australian Football League (AFL) CEO to build a stadium Tasmanians cannot afford on a site that is unsuitable.

The original Macquarie Point development plan was widely consulted, had public support and included genuine urban renewal, including medium density housing, transport connections, public space, and protection and promotion of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage.

Any project of the stadium's scale, complexity, and cost to the State of Tasmania must be properly and independently assessed.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Legislative Council to:

- a) *Support completion of the Project of State Significance (POSS) process, to allow MLCs to assess conclusions drawn by eminent appointed experts after they examine all evidence presented.*
- b) *Reject the improper attempt to discredit independent evidence and bypass due process through special enabling legislation.*

- c) *Call on the Rockliff Government to renegotiate the terms with the AFL to ensure Tasmania and the 200,000 plus signed-up Devils' members retain the AFL/W teams we have earned.*

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

The Government is committed to transforming what has been an industrial wasteland for over a decade into an iconic gateway to our capital city, with a multipurpose stadium capable of hosting AFL and international cricket, as well as major concerts and events, at its core.

This project has the potential to be completely transformative – not only for the broader Macquarie Point Precinct, but for Tasmania – encouraging more opportunities across the capital city including for our tourism and hospitality sector.

- a) *Before the 2025 election the Government introduced the Macquarie Point Planning Permit Bill to expedite the development approval process for the Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium.*

With the delays associated with the State election, there was no longer any merit in enabling legislation in terms of timeframes for the delivery of the stadium.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission released their final integrated assessment report on 17 September 2024.

- b) *Although the original request is not applicable in the context of the original petition, some comments on expert advice are provided herewith:*

While the Tasmanian Planning Commission did not recommend proceeding, the report confirms the stadium can be built and that objective concerns around constructability and operational considerations can be resolved through permit conditions.

Over 5,000 pages of specialist reports were tendered to the Tasmanian Planning Commission through the Project of State Significance process and approximately 30 expert stakeholders appeared in public hearings, many presenting in support of the project.

On 8 October 2025, the Government released its response to the Tasmanian Planning Commission's assessment. This includes responses to the Commission's subjective concerns about economic and social effects; urban form, activation and public realm; and historical cultural and heritage and community value.

In relation to economic impacts, while the Government acknowledges the Commission's economic modelling, a cost benefit ratio of less than one does not mean that a project has more costs than benefits. It simply means the project's quantifiable benefits are less than its quantifiable costs in the minds of the assessors.

It is also noted that each assessment provided a different figure, confirming this is not an exact process.

The stadium will create jobs, stimulate investment and supercharge our sports, tourism and hospitality sectors. It will also deliver a range of long-lasting intergenerational benefits that cannot be easily quantified, such as community pride

and belonging. This has been demonstrably shown overseas and in Australia from the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House, Federation Square, Adelaide Oval and Optus Oval in Perth to name a few examples.

In relation to the Commission's subjective findings around urban form and visual and heritage impacts, the Government recognises that the Stadium will have a strong positive visual presence but believes that this is an opportunity to establish an iconic addition to Hobart's landscape, representing a beacon of cultural activity for the city and Tasmania.

- c) *The Tasmanian Government signed a Club Funding and Development Agreement with the Australian Football League for the establishment of a Tasmanian-based AFL and AFWL club in May 2023.*

The agreement specifies there will be a 23,000 seat multipurpose fixed translucent roofed stadium at Macquarie Point.

Tasmania's entry into the national competition depends on meeting the same high-performance and commercial standards as every other club. That means elite facilities for players, staff, fans, media and all other associated users.

It is not a matter of negotiation, it is the foundation of the AFL licence. The construction of a new, roofed stadium in a central capital city location was a core recommendation of Tasmania's very own AFL Taskforce in 2019 — and it remains the foundation of our licence today.

The Devils can't exist without the stadium. That's the reality of modern AFL. Modern stadiums are the backbone of club revenue and competitiveness. There is a strong correlation between a Club's financial sustainability and its on-field success. We want our Tasmania Devils team to be a competitive club, not just one that makes up the numbers.

I trust that the information provided addresses your concerns on these matters.



Hon Eric Abetz MP

MINISTER FOR MACQUARIE POINT URBAN RENEWAL

Date: 24/10/25