

Mr John Ramsay
Executive Commissioner
Tasmanian Planning Commission
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Hobart TAS 7001
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07 January 2024

Dear Commissioner,

Re: The Integrated Assessment for the Proposed Stadium at Macquarie Point

We wish to register a definite “no” to the construction of a stadium at Macquarie Point. In our opinion, the whole project is inappropriate, poorly thought through, and does not represent value-for-money for Tasmanians.

We concur with all the points raised in Comment 10, submitted by Our Place.

In addition, we wish to emphasise the following points.

1. In common with many others, we believe that the \$715m allocated (so far) to the stadium and the associated training and administration complex would be far better spent on improving the conditions in which many Tasmanians are presently living. In particular, secure and affordable accommodation is in short supply and health services are notoriously inadequate.

If anything, the construction phase will make matters worse, as construction workers will require accommodation themselves, putting additional pressure on the rental market.

There is little said, altogether, about projected benefits to the community at large for this huge outlay.

2. Aboriginal heritage values have not been taken adequately into account, and it appears that the Aboriginal Community has not been adequately consulted. The project should await completion of the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act (1975) before determining the significance of the indigenous landscape on Macquarie Point. It would be helpful if the Government would stop dragging its feet on this, as Tasmania has been ‘awaiting’ it for a very long time – decades, in fact.

As well, it is dismaying that the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Park is returned to the back burner with hardly a shrug. Reconciliation is important to the community at large, but clearly not of value to political and commercial interests.

3. The built-environment heritage values of Macquarie Point are not respected in the development, either. The stadium construction is not compatible with maintaining the heritage value of the Railway Goods Shed and its longstanding worth to the community. Moving it would destroy a major element of its significance. An important feature of Australian railway history should not be sacrificed to something that has been foisted on Tasmania by an outside organisation with a vested interest in building something new. We already have two stadia that would suffice, certainly while we see what the take-up of seats will be for AFL and other events. But still, the AFL wants a stadium? Fine, put it somewhere else. There are alternative sites. Oh, and why shouldn’t they pay for it, too?
4. The structure is far too large for the location. It looms over Hobart from any direction, an ugly detraction from the visual amenity of our city. We refer the Commission to the informative image submitted with Comment 9. That should damn the project outright, all on its own!

Macquarie Point has the potential to be a highly attractive, mixed activity, community and tourism facility in a scenic location. The proposed monstrosity wastes a golden opportunity.

5. Why is this project assigned the status of State Significance, when it patently isn't? We are distrustful of the covert agreement between the State Government & the AFL. That the Premier is not able to be open about the negotiations and the contract is deeply worrying. What is the Government trying to hide? Tasmanians will be footing the bill, and there is no a priori reason it should not all be transparent and accountable, and seen to be above board. Unless, of course, it isn't.

Relatedly, we believe it is inappropriate for PricewaterhouseCoopers to be involved, given their recent questionable history. Similarly, in evaluating a project that is so sensitive and potentially divisive, other Government contractors should not be engaged by the proponents, as they will have difficulty demonstrating independence and impartiality.

6. Traffic is already an acknowledged problem for Hobart. We do not see how a stadium on Macquarie Point can be serviced by transport, without considerable difficulty and at further great expense to the tax-payer. Traffic gridlock during events is likely to cause problems for local Tasmanians simply going about their business and, imaginably, may lead to local businesses losing custom at such times.
7. Noise and vibration are highly likely to adversely impact local business, during construction and during events subsequently held at the stadium. In particular, we believe that the Federation Concert Hall and TSO are highly likely to be affected. Local residents, too, will suffer.

We regret the timing of the request for comments and the short period made available. However, we hope that our brief comments are helpful, and thank the members of the Commission for their attention.

Yours sincerely



for

Dr Val Ranson PhD

Dr Don Ranson PhD