

Brendan Gale told this Commission on Friday 27 June that sport would bring people together.

In the TFC submission (representation #312), he said:

“The Mac Point Stadium would unite our communities.”

In fact, the evidence is to the contrary. The Federal Hotels representation makes clear the level of division about the decision to build a stadium, the location of the stadium, and the state funding that might be directed to the project is pervasive.

Evidence of the level of division is provided by the failure in consultation with the community. The Glebe Residents Association have not been consulted with.

Federal Hotels were not consulted with prior to the decision being made.

Professor Lehman documented the failure to consult with the Aboriginal Community since the AFL became engaged. Nala Mansell made the same assertions about a failure to consult.

Mr Wadsley recorded the lack of consultation with the FOSW.

None of this has been disputed by MPDC.

I remind the Commission of the critical role of consultation in planning processes, mandated by the RMPS objectives, Schedule 1, clause 1(c):

(c) to encourage public involvement in resource management and planning

This is not just directed to the hearing stage – but in the planning stages.

Mr Gale’s position seems to be that if the stadium is constructed, many of the problems facing Tasmania will be solved.

In his opening, Mr. Townshend KC conveyed a similar sentiment. He said the proposed stadium would be given a nickname. That it would be endeared to Tasmanians. I can tell him that the proposal already has a number of nicknames, but they are all pejorative.

Mr. Townshend also talked of “community need”. What need?

There was no “need”, or desire, intention etc or even hope for a stadium at Mac Point prior to 2022. In fact, the site was slated for housing and other community activities, for which there was a demonstrated community need.

Then, in May 2023, the MP stadium was imposed on Hobart and Tasmania with no credible planning process. It was a political decision, and the community has been playing catch-up ever since.

Far from solving all of the state's problems, constructing this stadium at this location will, in fact, be the beginning of many problems that the state will have to solve.

It is at this point, that the planning issues with which this Commission has to grapple, loom large.

Those planning issues were detailed in the Commission's draft IA report. They include transport to and from the venue, access in and egress from the venue, especially egress. And considerable heritage impacts.

The draft IAR confirmed the State is attempting to fit an oval peg into a round hole.

And when an attempt is made to drive an oval peg into a round hole, damage is caused.

And many of those problems are not solvable, despite the confident assertions of the proponent.

So much is being reorganised and recalibrated to make this project fit into this utterly inappropriate location.

One piece of evidence cannot pass without comment. It relates to the AFL-mandated roof.

The Stadiums Tasmania representative described how the roof "de-risks the impost of weather on cricket".

Really? Anyone who watches or listens to cricket knows commentators spend much of their time discussing the weather and its role in the twists and turns of the game.

Test cricket is governed by humidity, wind, dew, and rain interrupting play. Is the AFL reconfiguring the game of test cricket?

Most significantly, the overall visual impact, especially from the Cenotaph and from Sullivans Cove and surrounding areas will damage those heritage values and will undoubtedly impact on Hobart's tourism. There are "infinite views" according to Mr Gard'ner. Hobart will lose its "picture postcard" image of Hunter Street.

The proposed stadium will impact the setting of the Cenotaph and betray the community decision to site it at a location with commanding views all around it. The Cenotaph was located to enable it to be seen from many places in Hobart. This proposed stadium will impact – and significantly impact - many of those views (to and from).

As Mr Gard'ner accepted, the overall magnitude of the effect of the Project on the identified values of the Cove in its broader sense (including Regatta Grounds) - identified using the matrix at Table 3 [58] informed by both the scale of the impact and the level of significance or heritage threshold - met the criteria as a "Major Effect" even with remediation steps he proposes be taken. **Major effect**. There is no higher criteria on that scale.

The effect of the opening by the State is to say that this assessment process is free from any planning constraints and is not to be limited by questions of economics.

That approach is undoubtedly flawed, but even if it is accepted, the Commission's assessment will still depend upon the Commission making its own judgements about impact on heritage of Sullivans Cove, impact on the Cenotaph, and visual impact generally - and those judgements are very significantly based upon visual impact assessment evidence.

In making those judgments, this Commission is entitled to expect the proponent of this ~\$1 billion project to provide it with accurate information.

More specifically, it behoves the proponent to provide accurate and objective visual impact evidence to this Commission. In its first round of material, provided by SLR, it failed to do so.

The proponent has now engaged another visual impact person who has produced a report that appears to supplant the SLR report filed in September 2024.

However, the Goss report is still flawed and does not provide the Commission with a satisfactory basis to make the necessary judgements.

In particular, many of the photographs are taken with a 20 mm lens which has the effect of minimising the height and bulk of the proposed stadium and maximising the bulk of surrounding buildings. It is not a useful portrayal of impact. 50mm focal length is the prevailing standard.

And Mr Goss has chosen to rely on a series of photographs taken in November 2024 when there was a massive cruise ship at Macquarie wharf.

I will acknowledge now that photographs that include a cruise ship are not inappropriate. There are about 80 cruise ship visits to Hobart each cruising season. But what the proponent should have done if its work was to be creditable - was to include visualisations without the bulk of a cruise ship in the image.

And then there are some significant questions about the locations from where these visualisations were taken.

The commission is entitled to expect much better from the proponent.

The Commission's task is not one to be envied: the change wrought by this proposal will alter the Cenotaph, Sullivans Cove and Hobart's landscape for all time.

Once altered by this project, the damage will be irreversible.

We will call 3 people to speak to the Commission: Tim Biles, Barry Murphy and Hamish Saul.