

Submission by Josephine Clayton

I am making this submission as a Tasmanian resident, voter and ratepayer.

I am extremely disappointed that the plans for the domed stadium and Macquarie Point redevelopment have progressed so far, and so quickly, and urgently request that the timeline set by the AFL be revised, and all other options for accommodating the Tasmania Devils, including Mac 2.0 be reconsidered.

AFL Team in Tasmania

Apart from Victoria, all the other states had a population of over 1 million in their capital cities when they got their first AFL team. Hobart has less than ¼ of that. I wish the proponents of the Tasmanian Devils well, but can the teams be adequately supported? How many people who say they support the Devils would actually go to a game?

Design

The domed roof, covering the entire stadium is a demand by the AFL, and a very expensive component. There is no other stadium in Australia with a fixed roof covering the entire stadium. There are stadia with roofing over some of the spectator areas and stadia with retractable roofs over the playing area, but this would be the only one with a complete roof. Some of the best designed stadia in Australia do not have a roof over the playing area Cricket Australia and Cricket Tasmania have said that the roof design is problematic, so not all sporting codes are happy about it. As far as AFL and NRL are concerned, wet weather is sometimes part of the game.

Cost

At over \$1billion, the total cost will be borne mostly by the state government (about ¾), but also by the Federal government (about ¼) and the AFL - less than 2%, yet the AFL are making all the demands! The state government will have to borrow and pay the interest on a loan plus ongoing maintenance costs of the stadium. The state government has far more urgent and important budgetary demands, such as improved health care.

Parking and Traffic

The draft documents suggest that Hobart has sufficient car parking spaces to meet most of the demand. The main car parks are very busy during business/shopping hours but to deduce that they empty out sufficiently for weekend/evening matches or functions is optimistic. Tasmanians travelling from outside inner Hobart need to park their cars - that would be most of the spectators.

To suggest that a fleet of buses would adequately meet the needs is fanciful. Major work would need to be done to change the present, woefully inadequate, bus service into one capable of meeting these demands. This section of the Enabling Legislation Report is all gloss and little substance.

Safety

Management of safety issues would be a nightmare. Imagine a serious traffic crash in the vicinity of Macquarie Point at the same time as thousands of fans are trying to cross the roads to access the car parks! Or trying to get out of the car parks into worse traffic conditions! (These concerns apply equally to Mac 2.0.) What provision is made for emergencies?

Summary

Can Tasmania support an AFL team?

The timeline of the proposed development is far too rushed.

A stadium with a roof covering the entire building is unnecessary.

The cost of the proposal is entirely unjustifiable, given the present state of Tasmania's budget, **most particularly** on the state of Tasmania's hospitals and health services but also the huge waste by the government on works associated with the new Spirit ferries (brought on by mistakes of the present government).

It would impose huge burdens on the parking and bus infrastructure that have not been adequately addressed. Safety concerns do not seem to have been adequately addressed.

The following is a direct quote from an opinion piece by Greg Barns,, which references the work of Dr Nicholas Gruen:

The state we are in can be described thus: we have a government that appears completely captured by one of the most arrogant professional sporting bodies in Australia. The consequence of this is a complete lack of transparency about the real cost of Mac 1, via a refusal to apply the principle of value for money on the part of the Tasmanian government. Meanwhile, Mac 2 is shunned despite its clear superiority as a design and financial proposition for the people of this state.

I have also sourced an article by Dr Nicholas Gruen in *The Mercury*, which advocates **taking the time to do it right**.