

Department of Premier and Cabinet
GPO Box 123
Hobart, TAS 7001

RE: MACQUARIE POINT PLANNING PERMIT BILL 2025

I write to formally object to the proposed legislation (the Macquarie Point Planning Permit Bill 2025) enabling the construction of a new stadium at Macquarie Point in Hobart, Tasmania. While generally supporting appropriate investment in sport and infrastructure, I have serious concerns about this specific proposal — particularly in relation to economic priorities of the State government, environmental and cultural impacts, and, most critically, the extraordinary powers the legislation would confer on the responsible Minister.

Excessive Ministerial Discretion and Precedent for Misuse of Ministerial Power

The proposed legislation grants the Minister broad, discretionary powers that undermine due process, transparency, and democratic oversight. This level of discretion is disproportionate, especially for a development of such scale, cost, and public controversy. It sets a deeply concerning and dangerous precedent for governance in Tasmania and erodes public trust in the decision-making process.

Of particular concern are:

- Exemptions from planning and environmental regulations: The government have ignored their own significant development legislation as part of this process. The proposed legislation enables the Minister to override normal planning schemes and environmental protections for both the stadium and any related infrastructure. It is unclear in the legislation how far this discretion may extend. This removes the usual checks and balances that ensure public and expert input into major developments.
- Power to amend or bypass existing legislation: The Minister appears to have the ability to declare exemptions or modify procedures without parliamentary approval or scrutiny. This is an unacceptable concentration of power in the hands of a single officeholder. The introduction of draft legislation that seeks to bypass Aboriginal legislation in the middle of National Reconciliation Week is also of particularly bad taste and does nothing to support reconciliation in Tasmania.

- No requirement for independent assessment: The legislation permits the Minister to determine approval pathways and conditions without mandatory input from planning bodies, environmental experts, or heritage authorities.
- Limited avenues for appeal or review: The legislation does not provide clear or meaningful mechanisms for the public or affected stakeholders to appeal or challenge the Minister's decisions, even where they may have significant and lasting impacts.

Lack of Transparent Community Consultation

The public consultation process has been rushed, insufficient, and lacking in transparency. The people of Tasmania deserve a genuine opportunity to be heard, not a token process undertaken after key decisions have already been made. Major infrastructure projects of this nature – on a prominent public site with long term implications for Hobart's identity and infrastructure - should be grounded in community engagement and consent and be subject to comprehensive public scrutiny and debate.

Questionable Economic Justification

Independent analyses, including from economists and urban planners, have raised doubts about the cost-benefit rationale for the stadium. The projected benefits, particularly in terms of job creation and tourism, are speculative and potentially overstated, while the costs —currently estimated at around \$1 billion — are fiscally irresponsible, immediate and tangible. These costs are significant and will be borne by taxpayers, including future generations – my children and their children. This is particularly concerning given the state's pressing needs in health, housing, education and essential services.

Impacts on Environment and Culture

Macquarie Point is a sensitive and historically significant site with deep Aboriginal and cultural heritage. The proposed development ignores and sidelines this heritage and destroys the vision for the precinct as a place of reconciliation and community engagement. Moreover, the potential environmental impacts—including on the waterfront and adjacent parklands—have not been adequately addressed and risks causing irreversible damage to a site of historic, cultural, environmental and social importance.

Poor Planning, Urban Integration and Infrastructure Provision

The stadium's location is problematic from a planning perspective and the stadium will not integrate well within Hobart in either form or function. The site is essentially trapped between existing roads which serve as key arterials for the movement of people and traffic which are already over capacity. Issues around traffic congestion, limited public transport access, strains on city services and even the suitability of the precinct to accommodate large-scale events whilst still accommodating usual Hobart life have not been adequately addressed in stadium planning or the proposed legislation. The area is not equipped to manage the logistical demands a stadium of this scale would impose and there is no strategy in place/proposed or funding available to address this.

This legislation represents a dangerous overreach of executive power, bypassing established planning, environmental, and democratic frameworks. It does not represent the will or best interest of the Tasmanian community. I urge decision-makers to reject the proposed legislation and instead engage in a transparent, inclusive process to determine the most appropriate and beneficial use of the Macquarie Point site—one that honours its cultural significance, protects public resources, and reflects genuine community priorities.

If the legislation does proceed despite these concerns, the legislation requires significant amendment to ensure that it is transparent, accountable, and grounded in public interest.

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Yours sincerely,

Trevor Fortune