

**Bill:**

The choice of Macquarie Point as the site for the proposed multipurpose stadium is deeply flawed, and this consultation document fails to justify or critically assess the location's appropriateness. The legislation appears to bulldoze over genuine concerns, both logistical and environmental, in an effort to rush development approval under a shroud of legislative convenience.

**1. Poor Suitability of Macquarie Point as a Stadium Site**

The site is highly constrained by existing infrastructure, traffic bottlenecks, and limited public access. The Bill disregards these limitations and instead attempts to override existing planning instruments to force-fit a development of disproportionate scale into a space that is inherently unfit for it.

**2. Inadequate Transport and Access Infrastructure**

There is no substantive evidence that the access network proposed in the Bill—through compulsory land acquisitions and reclassification of roads—will be sufficient to handle stadium traffic without severely disrupting Hobart's already limited traffic routes. The location, hemmed in by water and existing development, makes future expansion or modification difficult and expensive.

**3. Destruction of Cultural and Environmental Value**

Macquarie Point holds cultural and historical significance, particularly for the Aboriginal community. The draft bill effectively circumvents normal heritage protections by 'deeming' permits issued, instead of earning approvals through transparent, independent assessment processes. This undermines the role of the Aboriginal Heritage Council and others.

**4. Disregard for Local Planning and Public Input**

The legislation overrides the Hobart City Council and disempowers local planning schemes. The site's selection and fast-tracked approval process marginalize community voices and reduce public consultation to a formality, especially considering the lack of meaningful mechanisms for community objection or appeal.

**5. Land Use Concerns and Environmental Risks**

The site's former industrial use raises serious questions about contamination and remediation, which are barely acknowledged in the bill. Developing a stadium on reclaimed or previously contaminated land without transparent environmental review is reckless.

**6. Legislative Overreach and Suppression of Opposition**

The Act extinguishes most avenues for appeal and judicial review, even where land acquisition or heritage issues are concerned. This legal insulation is especially alarming given the high-impact nature of the project and the unsuitability of the chosen site.

**7. Absence of Justification for Site Selection**

The bill provides no comparative analysis with alternative locations. It reads as though Macquarie Point was a foregone conclusion, not a rigorously assessed option. This calls into question the objectivity and legitimacy of the planning process.

In short, this bill reads like a legislative instrument designed to mask poor planning decisions under the guise of state significance. The location choice of Macquarie Point is neither justified nor acceptable. It disregards the long-term interests of Hobart's residents and urban integrity.

### **Permit and conditions:**

The Draft Project Permit for the Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium reveals a concerning disregard for public interest, urban planning integrity, and long-term city function. The most pressing issue lies in the deeply flawed choice of location, which is unsuitable for a high-capacity stadium and inadequately supported by infrastructure.

#### **1. Poor Site Selection – Inherently Inappropriate Location**

Macquarie Point is geographically constrained, hemmed in by waterfront, existing port infrastructure, and limited transport corridors. The Draft fails to explain why such a tightly confined site was selected for a 31,500–40,000 patron stadium. No serious comparative location analysis is presented, and this omission undermines the legitimacy of the project. The site's industrial past and contaminated land history should raise red flags for health and safety, yet this is only weakly addressed through generic environmental compliance language.

#### **2. Overriding Local Planning Instruments and Democratic Process**

The legislation grants sweeping powers to override existing planning schemes, local council input, and appeal rights. This is unacceptable in a democratic society and amounts to an erosion of transparent governance. The community's ability to influence decisions is essentially nullified under this permit structure, with all critical oversight concentrated in ministerial or state-level control.

#### **3. Inadequate Transport and Access Planning**

The area suffers from poor public transport integration, narrow road access, and limited capacity to handle large crowd movements. The plans lean heavily on theoretical Operational Transport Management Plans and Event Bus Plazas—yet offer no solid commitments on how these will function in practice. Port operations and cruise ship scheduling will almost certainly clash with stadium events, and the mitigation strategies provided are vague and unconvincing.

#### **4. Cultural and Heritage Concerns Marginalized**

The project acknowledges Aboriginal and historic heritage but treats them as compliance hurdles rather than cultural responsibilities. The relocation of the Goods Shed and handling of Aboriginal artefacts is delegated to generic "management plans," with no evidence of genuine engagement with community custodians. This represents a tokenistic approach that fails to respect Tasmania's historical and cultural integrity.

#### **5. Environmental and Urban Impacts Underplayed**

The site's past as a contaminated industrial zone is brushed aside with vague mentions of remediation and site suitability statements. The risk of flood, stormwater overflow, and erosion during construction is high in this coastal location, but plans are deferred to post-approval stages, weakening accountability.

#### **6. Staged Approval Without Full Disclosure**

The Draft allows for “preparatory works” and staging without full plan finalization. This opens the door to irreversible site changes before public scrutiny or independent review can occur. Once construction starts, opposition becomes symbolic rather than effective.

In summary, the Draft Project Permit serves as a vehicle to force through an unpopular, ill-considered development. Macquarie Point is the wrong location—functionally, environmentally, and culturally. The rushed legislative pathway and lack of rigorous justification damage public trust and set a dangerous precedent for planning in Tasmania.

## **Report:**

The Enabling Legislation Draft Report for the Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium reflects a fundamentally flawed approach to planning, governance, and public interest. The location—Macquarie Point—is demonstrably unsuitable for such a large-scale stadium development, and the report fails to justify the choice with sufficient transparency or rigor.

### **1. Inappropriate Site Selection**

Macquarie Point is a heavily constrained site with poor access, sensitive heritage values, and a long industrial history. The report attempts to position it as “development-ready,” but downplays serious issues including environmental remediation, traffic congestion, and the site’s proximity to heritage landmarks like the Cenotaph and Federation Concert Hall. This location was not chosen through an independent, publicly accountable comparative analysis, and the alternatives were dismissed with limited justification.

### **2. Undemocratic Legislative Process**

The enabling legislation seeks to bypass standard planning and heritage protections by extinguishing all rights of appeal and removing oversight from the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The proposal to issue permits directly through ministerial discretion undermines democratic processes, weakens institutional checks and balances, and risks setting a dangerous precedent for future developments.

### **3. Community and Cultural Opposition Ignored**

The report acknowledges widespread community opposition—including from Hobart City Council, cultural institutions, and veterans’ groups—but fails to address their concerns meaningfully. The proposed stadium would overshadow important commemorative spaces and disrupt long-standing plans for a Truth and Reconciliation Art Park. This top-down approach dismisses years of collaborative visioning for the site in favor of politically driven imperatives.

### **4. Flawed Economic Justification**

The KPMG cost-benefit analysis finds the project has a negative net economic benefit (BCR 0.69), with the Planning Commission’s panel estimating it could be as low as 0.53. Despite this, the report seeks to normalize failure by referencing similarly underperforming stadium projects elsewhere. Public funds are being committed to a project that even proponents admit will not provide measurable economic return. The rationale that “stadiums never break even” is insufficient to justify the scale of investment involved.

### **5. Infrastructure and Transport Deficiencies**

The report fails to present a credible, detailed plan for managing traffic, public transport, and pedestrian flows to and from the site. Critical infrastructure—such as the Northern Access

Road and event-day transport network—is still in conceptual stages. The absence of a Collins Street pedestrian bridge and unclear staging of construction signal that planning is incomplete and speculative.

## 6. Poor Consultation and Fast-Tracking

Public input appears to have been processed using AI summarization tools rather than thorough community engagement. The shift from the PoSS process to enabling legislation reflects a desire to accelerate approvals rather than resolve substantive concerns.

In summary, this report reflects a rushed, top-down approach to a deeply controversial project. The location is not fit for purpose, the public interest is not being served, and the legislation circumvents proper planning and environmental protections.

### **Other comments:**

The Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium Enabling Legislation Draft Report reveals a concerning imbalance of power in the relationship between the AFL and the Tasmanian Government. The insistence on building a stadium at Macquarie Point—despite strong evidence against the site’s suitability—suggests Tasmania is being held to ransom to secure its long-overdue AFL licence.

The notion that the AFL’s presence in the state is conditional on an expensive, problematic stadium at a deeply contested site is unacceptable. The AFL should not have the authority to dictate planning outcomes or override public interest. Tasmania’s long-standing contribution to Australian football should not be leveraged against it to force through a stadium in a location with clear logistical, environmental, and cultural problems.

Macquarie Point is not fit for purpose. The site’s constrained layout, heritage sensitivities, and transport limitations are well documented. The government’s own commissioned analysis shows the project has a negative benefit-cost ratio, with estimates as low as 0.53. Despite this, the project is being rushed through via bespoke legislation that removes community appeal rights, overrides planning safeguards, and bypasses the proper independent assessment process.

Critically, the enabling legislation reinforces the false binary that Tasmania must accept the current site—or lose the AFL team. This is a manufactured ultimatum. It is neither fiscally responsible nor democratically justifiable to proceed under these conditions. A more appropriate path forward is to renegotiate the AFL licence terms, with the goal of identifying an alternative location that is better suited, more cost-effective, and more publicly acceptable.

Renegotiation is not only possible—it is essential. The current approach ignores community voices, risks irreversible damage to public trust in government, and compromises the long-term urban and cultural fabric of Hobart. Tasmania must stand firm and insist that the AFL engage in good faith, recognizing that a permanent team in the state should not be contingent on a single, flawed stadium location.

Other cities have successfully hosted AFL teams in redeveloped or alternative venues, and there are viable options in Hobart and Launceston that warrant renewed consideration. A stadium built with proper planning, community input, and financial oversight will serve the state far better than one imposed by external conditions.

In summary, the AFL must not be allowed to dictate terms that compromise Tasmania's planning integrity and fiscal responsibility. The government must explore renegotiation, assert its planning sovereignty, and ensure the stadium—if built—aligns with public interest, not just league demands. Tasmania deserves an AFL team without sacrificing its principles or its city's future.