

Tasmanian government to introduce 'enabling legislation' to pave way for Macquarie Point Stadium

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The Macquarie Point stadium is expected to be ready for the 2029 AFL season, as is a requirement for a Tasmanian team. *(Supplied: Macquarie Point Development Corporation)*

In short:

The Tasmanian government will introduce "enabling legislation" to progress the Macquarie Point stadium in Hobart, bypassing the Project of State Significance process currently underway.

The stadium is a requirement for Tasmania to get its own AFL team.

What's next?

Public consultation on the new legislation will open in May, with premier Jeremy Rockliff optimistic construction could begin by Christmas.

The Tasmanian Government has confirmed it will introduce legislation to push the Macquarie Point AFL stadium forwards, bypassing the planning process already underway.

The roofed stadium is a requirement for Tasmania to be granted its own AFL team but the project has faced considerable backlash, [with a draft report handed down by the Tasmanian Planning Commission in March](#) describing it as "overbearing" and arguing it risks Tasmania's credit rating.



A render of the proposed Macquarie Point stadium in Hobart released by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to the Tasmanian Planning Commission, which was published by the TPC in February 2025. *(Supplied: Macquarie Point Development Corporation)*

Premier Jeremy Rockliff this week indicated the government had concerns with the current planning process, and was canvassing other options for its assessment.

Today, he confirmed the government would be introducing "enabling legislation" to progress the stadium, rather than continuing with the Project of State Significance (POSS) process.

"We cannot afford not to deliver this project. And we cannot afford delays," Mr Rockliff said.

He said in the last week it had "become clear" that the current process "is undermining certainty and confidence in the future of the precinct and the Tasmania Devils AFL club".

Business minister Eric Abetz said the government held concerns about the Tasmanian Planning Commission's draft Integrated Assessment Report's scope, and [reliance of an assessment prepared by economist Nicholas Gruen](#).

Last week the ABC reported that Dr Gruen had met with anti-stadium campaigners at the encouragement of a senior Jacqui Lambie Network staffer prior to his formal appointment to conduct the economic review.

That these meetings were not initially disclosed in the final report, Dr Gruen said, was an administrative oversight.

"It is the government's view that Dr Gruen's report has been tainted by an apprehension of bias, undermining the government's confidence in the Integrated Assessment Report," Mr Abetz said.

After Mr Abetz made similar remarks in Tasmania's parliament last week, a statement from Dr Gruen was read into Hansard defending the independence of his report.

In that statement, Dr Gruen suggested the government was sidelining inconvenient truths.

"In my case, it's suggested that my consultations with those opposed to the stadium somehow compromise my independence," he said through Independent MP Kristie Johnston.

"It is not only unremarkable for reviewers to consult with stakeholders with strong and diverse views — it is expected.

"It is also normal for this to occur before specific terms of reference have been announced."

Tasmanians put in 'impossible position'

In a statement to the ABC on Sunday, Dr Gruen said Tasmanians had been put in an "impossible position" by "powerful people".

"...The frame against which all reporting takes place is whether you're for or against the stadium. Those who've performed their public role in helping to flesh out the costs and benefits have been instantly caricatured as pro or anti," he said.

Dr Gruen said he had never been for or against the stadium.

"I want Tasmania to decide how to handle this shocking situation in such a way that, when the decision is made, all

Tasmanians feel heard, and that, even if they disagree, they feel the decision was made in good faith," he said.

"We are about as far as it's possible to get from that situation right now."

Timelines set for next stage



Premier Jeremy Rockliff says the Macquarie Point stadium is one of the "most scrutinised projects in the state's history". (ABC News: Ebony ten Broeke)

Mr Rockliff said public representations on the draft report would "continue as planned" until May 8.

He said the new legislation would be released for public consultation in May, and that he hoped to have it pass the lower house in late June and the upper house in early July.

"Every member of parliament will have their say on this project — just as they would have through POSS."

Mr Rockliff said he was optimistic construction would start before Christmas this year.

Plan slammed as a 'new low'



Independent Member for Nelson Meg Webb MLC recently moved a motion to urge the government to renegotiate the terms of the deal with the AFL. (ABC News: Luke Bowden)

Independent MLC Meg Webb, who last week moved an unsuccessful motion [calling on the government to renegotiate the deal with the AFL](#), denounced the government's plans as "a new low".

Ms Webb said the government was "behaving with utter disregard for good governance and accountable decision-making".

"This is a clear admission from the Premier that the Macquarie Point stadium – as demanded by the AFL and signed up to by him behind closed doors with no oversight or consultation – is so manifestly flawed it could not hope to pass the rules and standards of our regular planning system," Ms Webb said.

Labor MP Luke Edmunds said the party would support the stadium through the parliament, but that it was disappointing to not receive a briefing on this decision.

"When you want to work with two houses of parliament, across multiple members around the state, I think getting on the front foot and offering to brief those people would be a good start," Mr Edmunds said.

"...This is not a regular occurrence in Tasmanian parliament to do this, especially around something so big. So there are going to be a lot of questions, and it's really up to the premier to explain to people how he intends to work through it."

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