

# ‘Leeway’ over key stadium timeline

## David Killick

Missing two key deadlines for the construction of the Macquarie Point stadium did not mean the state’s deal with the AFL was off, Premier Jeremy Rockliff said.

Under the contract signed with the AFL, the Tasmanian government was to have secured “all relevant planning and environmental approvals for the Stadium Construction Activities in accordance with the relevant laws” by June 30.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission is still considering the development under the Projects of State Significance process.

The government was also required to have the project approved by the Public Works Committee.

The July 19 state election means that even if the approvals are obtained, it will not be for several months at the earliest.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff said the AFL was giving the state some leeway, but the delay was the opposition’s fault.

“When Dean Winter blew up the parliament and forced an election, he put in jeopardy Tasmanian young people’s dreams to be playing for their own AFL and AFLW team,” he said.

“The AFL accept the fact that we are having an election because Dean Winter forced us to, and have allowed and will

allow that flexibility for a new returned Tasmanian government to continue on working through those arrangements.”

Independent Member for Nelson Meg Webb questioned whether there was room for flexibility in the deal, which the government has repeatedly insisted was non-negotiable.

“Do the two missed deadlines mean the state is in breach of the deal, and if so does that make the agreement null and void, or will those provisions now be up for renegotiation?” she said.

“If these missed deadlines are to be renegotiated, there are serious questions surrounding when such renegotiations can occur, and by whom.

“Further, if parts of the deal to do with obtaining environmental and planning approvals, and the sign-off by the Parliamentary Public Works Committee can be renegotiated, why not other elements of the deal?”

Ms Webb said any renegotiations should not occur during the current caretaker period of government, but must now wait until the new parliament is convened.

“I am calling on the Premier to clarify the status of the AFL agreement in light of the two 30th June deadlines, and to undertake that no renegotiations will occur during the caretaker period until a new parliament is sworn in,” Ms Webb said.

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