

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-12-04/tas-parliament-vote-approves-afl-stadium-for-tasmania/106103886>

## Hobart stadium at Macquarie Point gets final approval in parliament's upper house

By Adam Holmes

Thursday 4 December 2025



Politicians and supporters celebrate together outside Legislative Council chambers. (ABC News: Mack Heard)

### In short:

After years of debate and division, the \$1.13 billion Hobart stadium has passed both houses of the Tasmanian parliament.

It follows two days of long and at times tense debate in the state's upper house, which went until 2:47am the first night and then 11pm on the second.

### What's next?

The decision means Tasmania has stuck to the conditions outlined in a deal between the state government and the AFL for the state to enter the competition, but physical construction works are unlikely to start for at least 12 months.

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A roofed stadium on the edge of the Hobart CBD has been approved by Tasmania's upper house after debate went well into the night.

The final tally was nine to five, in favour of the stadium.



**Members of the Legislative Council divide to vote on the stadium (Yes side on the left of the image). (ABC News: Mack Heard)**

"Mac Point has just passed the Tasmanian parliament. Our democracy has spoken. Let's unite and move forward together," Premier Jeremy Rockliff posted to Facebook shortly after the vote.

It was the final vote the state government needed to approve the 23,000-seat, \$1.13 billion arena, which was required as part of a signed agreement between the Tasmanian government and the AFL for the state to enter the competition.



**Devils supporter Tiana Brown celebrates outside the chamber after the vote. (ABC News: Mack Heard)**

The outcome was assured on Wednesday, ahead of the vote, when four independents expressed their support for the stadium during the debate, bringing the 'yes' supporters to nine, and the 'no' votes to five.

Fourteen upper house MLCs spoke in the first round of the debate on Wednesday, with independent Meg Webb starting her speech against the project at 11pm and finishing at 2:37am on Thursday.



**A render of the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point, which is set to be built by 2029. (Supplied: MPDC)**

Members returned at 11am on Thursday to go through the stadium order, clause by clause. It finished with a vote 12 hours later at 11pm.

Here's how the votes went:

YES	NO
Bec Thomas, independent	Meg Webb, independent
Dean Harriss, independent	Ruth Forrest, independent
Casey Hiscutt, independent	Mike Gaffney, independent
Tania Rattray, independent	Rosemary Armitage, independent
Nick Duigan, Liberals	Cassy O'Connor, Greens
Jo Palmer, Liberals	
Kerry Vincent, Liberals	
Luke Edmunds, Labor	

YES	NO
Sarah Lovell, Labor	

The majority of the second day was dominated by Ms Webb and Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor.



**Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor asked most of the questions during Thursday's scrutiny of the stadium order. (ABC News: Mackenzie Heard)**

They questioned a lack of confirmed detail on how events would be managed, how pedestrian infrastructure would be implemented, how the bus network would be developed and how Aboriginal heritage would be protected.

There were also questions on the level of power provided to the secretary of the Department of State Growth, who has the final sign off for changes to the conditions for the stadium.

Independent Tania Rattray is the government leader in the Legislative Council, and had the task of providing the government's responses, which resulted in a number of tense exchanges.



**Independents Bec Thomas and Casey Hiscutt both supported the stadium. (ABC News: Mackenzie Heard)**

Independent Bec Thomas — whose support was critical for the government getting the numbers — took exception to Ms O'Connor's comments about her absence from the chamber for a period of time.

After several particularly challenging moments, independent Mike Gaffney urged that they break for dinner at 6.45pm.

### Stadium and a team for Tasmania



**Police estimated about 15,000 people at the Yes stadium rally on Hobart's parliament lawns last Sunday. (ABC News: Jessica Moran)**

The final vote comes after three divisive years in Tasmania.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff moved the location of the proposed stadium from nearby Regatta Point to Macquarie Point, and it was then written into the agreement with the AFL.

It was declared a Project of State Significance, and laws were changed to ensure parliament had the final vote after two Liberal backbenchers quit the party to become independents.



**The stadium will have a roof to make it into an all-weather arena. (Supplied: MPDC)**

This meant a Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) panel had the task of assessing the stadium, and its draft report was scathing.

Mr Rockliff then questioned the findings, and chose to instead bypass the process by using specific stadium legislation.

A snap state election was called over state budget concerns, meaning the legislation did not have time to pass, and the TPC process continued.

The final report recommended against the stadium on a range of grounds — including its impact on the Tasmanian economy and poor city planning outcomes — but the government chose to continue.



**The stadium is forecast to cost \$1.13 billion. (Supplied: MPDC)**

Labor had switched its position from opposing the stadium to supporting it after the 2024 election, so the government only needed three upper house independents for it to be approved.

Now that it has been approved by the upper house, the proponent — state-owned Macquarie Point Development Corporation — will seek a head construction contractor by the end of 2026.

The stadium is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2029 men's AFL season, while the Tasmania Devils will enter the AFL in 2028 and play at least its first season at Bellerive Oval and York Park.