

Premier makes last-ditch bid to win over the undecideds



Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff pictured at the Yes AFL Team Yes Stadium rally at Parliament Lawns in Hobart. Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones



Casey Hiscutt



Bec Thomas



Dean Harriss

Govt targets key MPs to save \$1.1bn stadium

David Killick

The minority Liberal government is using the countdown to the Legislative Council vote on the proposed Macquarie Point stadium to lobby undecided independent members in the hope of getting the project over the line.

With debate on an order to build the stadium expected to begin in the upper house on Wednesday, the fate of the stadium rests in the hands of two or three undeclared MPs.

With the bulk of the chamber having declared with intentions, the fate of the \$1.13bn project rests in the hands of member for Elwick Bec Thomas, member for Huon Dean Harriss and member for Mont-

gomery Casey Hiscutt.

Debate is expected to continue well into Thursday night before the final result is clear.

Buoyed by a bumper turnout at Sunday's pro-stadium rally, Premier Jeremy Rockliff told ABC radio he was doing everything he could to persuade MLCs.

"I'm meeting with Ruth [Forrest] today. I've met with both Bec and Dean a number of times over the course of the last few weeks," he said.

"And they are doing a great job, they are scrutinising this project to the nth degree, they are asking a lot of questions, they want assurances around oversight and those matters, and they're doing their job, and I commend them for it."

Mr Hiscutt, who was elected to the Legislative Council six months ago, said the stadium decision would be one of the biggest in a generation.

"My stance was that I was pro-team, and therefore I thought the stadium needed to proceed for that team. Nothing has particularly changed that," he said.

"But I also did preface that by saying that I would only make that decision if I thought it was in the best interest of Tasmania."

"I've gone through all of the briefings and evidence that we've received, and I've failed to see anything that has shown me that there's a life for the team if the stadium doesn't get through."

Independent member for Nelson Meg Webb urged her colleagues to vote the stadium down.

"It doesn't really matter what the spin is, what the boosters say, what comes, what it comes down to is facts, expert advice and opinion."

"What we've seen here is really clear expert recommendation on this project that it shouldn't go ahead, and I'm hoping that the upper house heeds that advice."

Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor agreed.

"I don't know how my colleagues will vote this week, but I'm very hopeful that, having read the evidence, listened to the experts, the stakeholders

who come before us, independent members of the Legislative Council will vote down this order and save Tasmania from the disaster that would be this stadium. I am urging my colleagues to pay attention to the evidence, because it is really clear, and if you heed the evidence, you cannot support this stadium."

She said there was no doubt the anti-stadium rally was smaller than the pro-stadium rally, but questioned Tasmania Police's estimates of 1500 people at the former and 15,000 at the latter. "There are questions to be answered here about why Tasmania Police so under-sold the anti-stadium rally, and in my view, pumped up the pro-stadium rally."