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**PENDING APPROVAL**

# MAC POINT WON

STADIUM

GATE 1

Flinders stadium opponent Greens MLC Casey O'Connor (below left), Independent Bic Thomas who was the first member to back the Macquarie Point project in the Upper House during the sittings, and Premier Jeremy Rockliff.

## Second marathon sitting ahead of stadium green light

The order allowing the construction of the proposed Macquarie Point stadium continued its slow progress towards inevitable approval late into Thursday night. The Legislative Council continued its consideration of the governor's 157-page order to build the stadium well into the evening after a marathon Wednesday sitting that ended at 2.45am. A handful of independents and Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor continued a rearguard action scrutinising the clauses of the order one at a time in a chamber largely deserted by government and Labor MLCs. But it was clear from earlier debate the order would pass by nine votes to five. **DAVID KILLICK REPORTS, PAGES 4-5**

Late sitting as plan clears final hurdle

# NIGHT PUSH FOR A FIELD OF DREAMS

David Killick and Bridget Clark

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But it was clear from earlier debate that the order would pass by a margin expected to be nine votes to five.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff was upbeat about developments on Thursday morning.

"What we're doing is letting the Legislative Council have their say," he said.

"There was a long debate yesterday in the early hours of the morning and can I commend all that spoke on that legislation... those that spoke for and those that spoke against.

"I didn't agree with everything that was said, but that's democracy.

"I'm still a little nervous. I was nervous the other day. I am still feeling that way and I'll



Macquarie Point stadium concept design. Picture: MPDC



Independent MLC Meg Webb

be immensely relieved should the order pass, but I'll wait for that particular time."

Labor leader Josh Willie, whose party is backing the government on the stadium, said the debate had been long, but the state deserved a team.

"I think it's been handled poorly by the Premier, and that's why you have legislative councillors trying to put conditions on the government and make the project better," he said. "I think what you found through this debate, whether it's in the lower house or in the upper house, members are doing what they can to hold this government accountable.

"We referred the project to the Public Accounts Committee. Just because we've got a

government that has a poor track record in delivering major projects, doesn't mean that Tasmania should stop building major projects and not realise opportunities.

"With this project comes the AFL teams that Tasmania has fought for for generations, and it's going to be a great day when they run out on the field."

The Legislative Council occupied itself with reviewing the detail of the order on Thursday.

After independent Dean Harris concluded his contribution by comparing the Tas-

mania Devils to the moonwalk, Labor's Luke Edmunds added his support.

"I'm here today and I'm lining up with progress and with those who support jobs and the

economy," he said. "I'm lining up with our young people and I'm lining up with the Devils."

Minister for Infrastructure Kerry Vincent stuck to the government script.

"This project will transform an industrial wasteland into an

entertainment precinct for the benefit of all Tasmanians to enjoy sport, entertainment, cultural events and conferences," he said.

"Importantly, this project delivers what generations of Tasmanians, current and past, have dreamed of - the Tasma-



Premier Jeremy Rockliff, with acting director, communications, media and public relations Sarah Aquilina, is all smiles about the progression of the Macquarie Point stadium. Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones

nian AFL team, the Tasmania Devils."

Liberals Jo Palmer and Nick Duigan and Labor's Sarah Lovell also spoke in favour of the stadium.

In her marathon three-and-a-half hour address, independent MLC for Nelson Meg Webb spoke at length about the government's "unacceptable" rejection of the Tasmanian Planning Commission report on the Macquarie Point Stadium - even likening Premier Jeremy Rockliff to US President Donald Trump.

"The project has been cat-

egorically shown to be detrimental to our state's finances.

"If we damage our already dire state finances further, we damage our ability to provide basic services to the Tasmanian community, and we are hurting Tasmanian young people. We're picking winners here, and the winner is AFL football, but everyone else is going to suffer as a result."

My Place spokesman Roland Browne condemned the deals the government had done to get the stadium across the line. "These deals are laughable. They rely on this

government honouring its word, a most unlikely outcome," he said.

"Most importantly, there's no accountability and no consequence if the government falls short on the commitments it has actually offered.

"Premier Rockliff's Christmas present to Tasmania are AFL/AFLW teams at a cost of around \$2.5bn, and the dec-

retation of the Hobart Gensaph and destruction of the heritage of Sullivan's Cove. It is a recipe for ongoing division." david.killick@news.com.au