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22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023

# Economic Benefits to Tasmania from the introduction of a **Tasmanian AFL Team and a New Stadium** in Hobart at Macquarie Point.

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# 1. Letter of Endorsement – Saul Eslake Economist

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24<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Mr Russell Hanson

[REDACTED]  
Lindisfarne, Tas. 7015.

Dear Russell

Thank you for the opportunity to read and comment on your report, *Economic Benefits from the Introduction of a Tasmanian AFL Team and a New Stadium at Macquarie Point* dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023.

It is noted that the Club Funding and Development Agreement between the Government and the AFL has attracted a degree of criticism in some quarters.

It is therefore understandable and desirable that the costs and benefits of the agreement between the Tasmanian Government and the AFL are subjected to close and careful scrutiny.

In my opinion your Report makes an important contribution to that scrutiny.

You make the important point that the analysis of the benefits to Tasmania should be based on the cost to Tasmania, that is, excluding the (welcome and vital) \$240 million to be contributed by the Federal Government. You have, in my opinion, used appropriately conservative assumptions to assess the impact of shortfalls in revenues from events at the proposed stadium, and of an over-run in construction costs. And you have properly considered the possibility that the \$240 million grant from the Federal Government could adversely affect Tasmania's share of GST revenues.

You conclude that, even in the event of these presumed 'worse case' outcomes, the 'deal' with the AFL produces net economic benefits for Tasmania.

In summary, I think you have constructed a powerful case, and I hope that other readers to whom it may be directed, who have had understandable concerns about the 'business case', find it similarly persuasive.

Sincerely



(Saul Eslake)

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## 2. Executive Summary

This report will demonstrate that the economic benefits that will flow from our team and the New Stadium are substantial and will be for decades to come.

After examining the MI Global report, it is apparent that it is structured in a way to meet specific and consistent requirements, in particular when Federal Government Funding Applications are involved. Their presentation meets that consistency. An example of that being that the MI Global report on the new stadium uses the full construction cost in order to ascertain for the Federal Government the full cost of the project.

However, there are areas identified in this report where certain economic benefits to Tasmania need to be included which will make it quite clear that the New Stadium is no “dud deal” as has been claimed.

It is not a 20-year loss of \$306.2 million as has been claimed; it will generate additional visitation spend across the whole State in excess of \$2 billion over the 20 years.

This huge economic benefit is further demonstrated on examination of the PwC analysis of the Hawthorn games in Launceston and applying the same methodology to the New Stadium, the economic returns are substantially positive, ongoing and an opportunity this State can't afford to lose.

**Even when a worst-case scenario is looked at; with direct benefits substantially discounted, the New Stadium is no “dud”.**

It is quite clear the economic benefits to this State are every bit as compelling as the vitally important and unquestioned social, health and well-being benefits.

## 3. MI Global report analysed.

There have been a number of reports completed in relation to the business case for the stadium precinct:

- MI Global November 2022.
- PwC August 2022, and a
- Further PwC report with relevance to the analysis. (PwC 2017 report on Hawthorn games at York Park).

The most conservative of those reports was the MI Global document which has led to commentary to describe the New Stadium as a “dud deal” but it is far from the reality of what the real benefits to Tasmania are. It forecast:

- A Nominal positive outcome of \$25.8 million over 20 years, in real terms, and
- A Net Present Value (NPV) negative outcome of \$306.2 million over 20 years.

See following table:

Table 1.

MI Global Summary over 20 years Using full cost of New Stadium	\$ millions 20 Year Totals	(NPV) Present Day values using 7% discount rate
Total costs	1,003.7	618.1
Total benefits	1,029.5	311.9
Net benefits	25.8	-306.2
Benefit: Cost Ratio (BCR)		0.50

In relation to the MI Global report, it is important to note that:

- This report used the estimated full cost of the stadium construction, not the cost to the state of Tasmania; \$375 million.
- But Tasmania receives and is fully entitled to 100% of the benefits.

If the cost to the State is used rather than full stadium precinct cost the outcomes are:

- A Nominal positive outcome of \$363.2 million over 20 years, in real terms.
- A NPV negative outcome of \$61.8 million over 20 years reduced from negative \$306.2 million.

Table 2

\$ million	Base Case adjusted for \$375m cost	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	363.20	337.40
Net Benefits NPV 20 years		(306.20)	(61.80)	244.40
Benefit Cost Ratio BCR		0.50	0.84	

**The MI Global report, in keeping with specific and consistent requirements as previously explained, does not take into account other real benefits that will result from the stadium precinct - it does not include:**

1. The jobs and activity generated by the construction of the stadium precinct and the economic benefit of the permanent ongoing jobs. This represents \$14.5 million per annum in real terms before NPV discounting. The economic activity during construction and the jobs generated during construction and ongoing are detailed in the PwC August 2022 report; together with the 116 direct jobs generated ongoing as identified in the AFL Taskforce report December 2019.
2. The activity generated by the establishment and operation of the new Tasmania Football Club. This represents \$10.62 million per annum in real terms before NPV discounting. The economic activity directly related to the team as identified in the AFL Taskforce report December 2019 and the incremental AFL funding as confirmed directly with the AFL General Manager Tasmanian Expansion in July 2022, make up the total of \$10.62 million.
3. Intrastate incremental expenditure that would occur from Tasmanians utilising hospitality, tourism, goods and services associated with their attendance and use of the stadium precinct with a wide range of new events that previously required travel to the mainland to achieve their objectives. This represents \$4.76 million per annum in real terms before NPV discounting. The PwC report identified the total Tasmanian

spend in their August 2022 report. MI Global did identify in their November 2022 report the number of Tasmanian visitations but did not quantify the spend. The \$4.76 million per annum is based on 50% of the total spend quantified by PwC.

4. The "Flow-on" spend which MI Global agrees will happen but does not include. This represents \$29.8 million per annum in real terms before NPV discounting. See notes 2 and 3 below.

1 to 4 above represents a total of \$59.68 million per annum of other real benefits.

Note 1. The MI Global report discounts all beneficial tourism spend by 83.75%. For consistency the numbers used in this analysis of the report do likewise including the identified real benefits detailed above.

Note 2. *MI Global states: "The additional expenditure will induce further benefits through flow on supply chain effects however the cost-benefit analysis only considers the direct impacts".*

Note 3. The flow-on effect is described by Tourism Research Australia for 2021-22: "for every dollar spent in the tourism industry, an additional 86 cents of additional expenditure was generated and spent elsewhere in the economy".

Note 4. I have assessed that with the quantification of the ongoing jobs this could well be argued that they are flow-on impacts; so, I have not used a flow-on calculation for that segment.

The 4 items above are significant and realistic and together with the adjustment using the Tasmanian construction cost of \$375 million are used in the adjusted base case and are quantified in Appendix A page 11.

The following table shows the result of analysing those impacts on Tasmania.

Table 3

\$ million	Base Case	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	2214.40	2188.60
Net Benefits NPV 20 years		(306.20)	527.90	834.10

Conclusion: If you accept the MI Global methodology – but insert the actual Tasmanian stadium contribution (\$375 million) and include the 4 real economic benefits listed above the effect is dramatic. Total, Net Present Value of the stadium/team goes from negative **(306.20)** to positive 527.90.

#### 4. Will the stadium create a debt level problem in the future?

There has been a question raised as to how the State would manage the increased debt associated with the \$375 million contribution to the stadium as compared to spending the \$375 million on health. The stadium would be generating economic activity from day 1 opening the door to principal repayment and interest over a 20-year period versus spending the \$375 million on health with no economic return and hence compounding interest over 20 years.

- Principal repayment and interest. Over 20 years the total repayments with interest at 5% would be \$594 million and the stadium is owned with no further associated debt.
- If the \$375 million was spent on health with compounding interest the total debt would be \$644.2 million plus the \$375 million still owing. A one-off spend of \$375 million on health over and above a current health spend running at one third of the total state budget would trigger a further \$375 million in year 2 and so on or reductions would be required to go back to previous levels.

The 2023-24 Budget for Tasmania shows the estimated health spend over 4 years will be \$12.1 billion or \$8.3 million each and every day. The New Stadium cost to Tasmania represents just 45 days of health spend over the same period.

Full details of what the actual health spend is, are available in Appendix B page 13.

**It is ironic that there is criticism of the health spend and claims that a New Stadium is the wrong priority, yet there are no issues with the \$130 million currently being spent on York Park for which there has been no rigorous examination at all, as compared to what is happening with the New Stadium; also, this expenditure is based on getting a Tasmania team which is currently under threat by opponents of the New Stadium.**

## **5. What happens if you apply the accepted PwC modelling to the New Stadium?**

As further evidence of the purpose of the MI Global report versus the accepted manner in which the State has measured benefits of sporting and other events historically is to use the 2017 PwC Economic Contribution report for the Hawthorn AFL matches in Launceston, that both sides of politics accept as a reliable reflection of the benefits for the State.

This is a significant report in the context of the examination of the New Stadium.

Significant in that:

- Both political parties support the findings of the 2017 report.
- Both political parties, over the course of 22 years, have renewed the Hawthorn contracts.
- The last renewal, before the 2017 PwC report, was in 2015 by the Liberal Party and both parties were in agreement as to the 5-year renewal and as to the benefits of the games since 2001.
- The economic returns claimed by both parties was confirmed by PwC in the 2017 report.
- It was Labor who first brought Hawthorn to Tasmania in 2001 and

- The Leader of the Opposition referred to the Hawthorn arrangement on Tas Mornings Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 as **“It is all part of the Labor Northern Economic Development Strategy”**.

The PwC report showed a benefit to the State economy of \$29.62 million per annum in real terms.

**Using the exact PwC methodology which both parties accept for York Park and applying it to the New Stadium would show \$226.61 million per annum or worst case \$169.96 million in real terms.**

By contrast, if the MI Global method was used for Launceston it would show a Net Benefit loss before NPV discounting over 20 years of **-\$239.3 million**. This includes picking up the current stadium returns and expenses but also including the current event acquisition costs and the \$130 million upgrade. This directly compares to the New Stadium which shows a MI Global positive Net Benefit of \$25.8 million over the same period in real terms.

This comparison is shown in the following Table 4.

Table 4

	Annual \$ million		
	Total Tourism spend	Flow-on spend	Total spend
<b>Using PwC methodology</b>			
York Park PwC updated to 2022	21.2	8.42	29.62
New Stadium same methodology PwC York Park	162.19	64.42	226.61
New Stadium but worst case (see Note 1.)	121.64	48.31	169.96
<b>Using MI Global methodology</b>			
York Park Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years			(239.30)
New Stadium Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years			25.8

**Note 1. The events revenue for the New Stadium has been criticised by some as being overstated. A precautionary 25% reduction is shown in this table, but the reality is there are many events not included. Refer to Appendix C page 14.**

**However, even with a 25% reduction included in the table above as a worst-case scenario the result still remains significantly higher than the York Park accepted returns.**

The Hawthorn arrangement is justified by all parties based on the quantified economic returns using the PwC methodology.

It is clearly demonstrated that the results using this same methodology show the New Stadium produces a significant Economic Positive Impact and to be consistent both parties should use that same methodology on the New Stadium.

It is important to note that the report prepared by PwC outlined the Economic Impacts of the New Stadium in terms of total direct spending; the same methodology as it provided in 2017 for the Economic Contribution of the Hawthorn games in Launceston which also included flow-on benefits on top of the direct spend. The same flow-on benefit ratio has been used for the New Stadium.

Whenever governments look at funding proposals for the likes of Supercars or the Gather Round of AFL games in Adelaide, they make their judgements in terms of what is the direct spend that will occur as the result of the event; not a discounted spend of 83.75%.

For both parties to argue in support of the PwC methodology for Launceston but then one switch to cherry pick a negative NPV methodology used by MI Global for Hobart seems to be inconsistent.

## 6. But as a precaution a conservative approach has also been taken and a worst-case scenario used.

It is prudent to undertake sensitivity analysis on both the MI Global and PWC methodologies when applied to the New Stadium precinct.

- Current assumption is that there would be 44 events of which 28 would be new events.
- Current assumption is that the stadium is to cost \$715 million of which Tasmania is responsible for \$375 million.
- **I have undertaken an analysis:**
  - To show the impact of a 25% reduction in interstate/overseas event spend.
  - To show the impact of a build cost of \$1 billion.
  - To show Tasmanian spend reduced by 80% representing the incremental spend only.
  - To show the impact of the \$240 million Federal Grant not being exempt from future GST distributions; noting that an application has been made to the Federal Government to have this exempt, and the decision is pending. (See fuller discussion on this matter in Section 7.)

**The NPV result being a profit of \$54.30 million over 20 years not a loss of \$306.2 million. (See Table 4)**

Table 5

\$ million	Worst Case	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	1,270.10	1244.30
Net Benefits NPV 20 years Worst Case		(306.20)	54.30	360.50
Benefit Cost Ratio BCR		0.50	1.07	

Table 6

\$ million	Base Case	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	2214.40	2188.60
Net Benefits NPV 20 years		(306.20)	527.90	834.10

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What is clearly demonstrated (Table 6) is that when all the benefits are included and the actual Tasmanian cost of the stadium used, the results *before discounting* to NPV are, over 20 years, \$2.214 billion base case and \$1.27 billion worst case (in real terms).

The much incorrectly used “the stadium is a dud” with a NPV loss over 20 years of \$306.2 million is in fact a profit of \$527.9 million base case and \$54.30 million worst case; far from a dud, in fact an economic opportunity for future decades.

## **7. The team home base and the necessity for a New Stadium.**

The taskforce recommended Hobart as the team base; the independent report commissioned by the AFL concurred and the AFL Players Association made it clear that the team must be set up for success. The Players Association would not accept any other location as all of the 18 clubs concurred with when voting for our team.

The AFL has mandated that the team base is Hobart and a New Stadium at Macquarie Point, and a High-Performance Centre are absolute conditions of the 19th licence.

The AFL identified 11 areas that needed to be addressed before any recommendation would be made for a 19th licence with financial sustainability and early success of the club being its aim.

But the two issues of the utmost importance were player retention and the lack of a suitable stadium in the team’s home base, Hobart.

It became crystal clear that a New Stadium was a requirement and without it there would be no licence and without it, player retention would be a disaster and hence sustainability and team success would not be achieved. In other words, the team would fail.

Player retention has been a huge problem for the Gold Coast Suns and Greater Western Sydney and the AFL did not want to replicate those issues with a Tasmanian team. We should cast our minds back to the Brisbane Bears playing out of the Gold Coast and their early failures before common sense had them playing in the capital, Brisbane, at the Gabba.

As for the Bellerive stadium as the home for the team it became quickly apparent that the team needed not just state of the art training facilities but also a home ground of a comparative standard enjoyed by all other teams, albeit on a smaller scale.

Bellerive has 12,237 seats when 23,000 are required; it simply can’t be achieved.

The total current capacity for Bellerive (seated and standing) is 17,809 yet the average attendance forecast by the AFL Taskforce is 18,400 seated indicating peak crowds up to 23,000.

The AFL has been crystal clear with the conditions for an AFL team licence to Tasmania. The two vital components being:

1. A new Hobart stadium at Macquarie Point; roofed and with 23,000 seated capacity and a state-of-the-art High-Performance Centre.
2. The team will be based in Hobart not just because it is the capital; but it is by far the largest concentration of people in one area. This is a key to success; it is recommended by the AFL, the AFL Players Association, the 18 clubs and the AFL Commission.

Both conditions are the driving force to ensure that what we set up for the club must be what is best for the team, the players, the support staff and partners. It is about the ability to gain employment and a lifestyle not too far off what all those associated with other AFL clubs are accustomed to.

## 8. The Federal Government \$240 million grant and GST.

Currently there is some debate about the \$240 million Federal grant and whether it will be deducted from GST payments the State would receive in the future. Again, noting that an application has been made to the Federal Government to have this exempt, decision pending.

If there is no exemption, then the \$240 million Federal Government grant would be reduced from future GST calculations over a 3-year period. That effectively means it is just a loan.

While it is not entirely clear how that would occur, it appears that the \$240 million is then allocated back to the States on a percentage of population basis meaning Tasmania would get back approximately \$5 million.

The key point is even if the \$240 million was set off against future GST payments, the worst-case scenario shows in the following tables. Table 7 shows outcome with \$240 million Federal contribution with NO GST Exemption and is compared in Table 8 to the revised Base Case from Section 5 above.

Table 7

\$ million	Base Case Lost GST	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	1999.80	1974.00
Net Benefits NPV 20 years		(306.20)	336.90	643.10

Table 8

\$ million	Base Case	MI Global	Adjusted	Improvement
Net Benefits before NPV discounting 20 years		25.80	2214.40	2188.60
Net Benefits NPV 20 years		(306.20)	527.90	834.10

This is about an AFL team in Tasmania; finally making the AFL a truly national competition and to achieve that we must have first class facilities to match the other 18 clubs. Without it the team would be "primed to fail".

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The Federal Government has recognised that the stadium is part of an urban redevelopment of Macquarie Point and has granted the funds and did so in person with the Prime Minister and then the Deputy Prime Minister (then Acting Prime Minister) was a part of the licence announcement on 3 May 2023.

## 9. Conclusion.

After examining the MI Global report, it is apparent that it is structured in a way to meet specific and consistent requirements, in particular when Federal Government Funding Applications are involved. Their presentation meets that consistency. An example of that being that the MI Global report on the new stadium uses the full construction cost in order to ascertain for the Federal Government the full cost of the project.

However, there are areas identified in this report where certain economic benefits to Tasmania need to be included which will make it quite clear that the New Stadium is no “dud”.

It is not a 20-year loss of \$306.2 million as has been claimed; it will generate additional visitation spend across the whole State in excess of \$2 billion over the 20 years.

This huge economic benefit is further demonstrated on examination of the PwC analysis of the Hawthorn games in Launceston and applying the same methodology to the New Stadium, the economic returns are substantially positive, ongoing and an opportunity this State can't afford to lose.

**Even when a worst-case scenario is looked at; with direct benefits substantially discounted, the New Stadium is no “dud”.**

It is quite clear the economic benefits to this State are every bit as compelling as the vitally important and unquestioned social, health and well-being benefits.

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## Appendix A

### **There are benefits to the Tasmanian Economy that have not been assessed in the Cost Benefit Analysis.**

The cost benefit analysis by MI Global has used the total value of the stadium presumably to see the overall picture for the stadium but the cost to Tasmania is what we should be considering in assessing the overall benefits to our State.

On that basis we have used our cost of \$375 million.

The other 4 areas are:

1. The intrastate incremental spend which has been left out by MI Global. The theory being that Tasmanian's are already spending that money and are simply re allocating that spend. This is over simplistic. There are many Tasmanians, like me and my family, that regularly travel interstate for AFL games, for concerts, for conferences that would have been held in Tasmania if a suitable venue was available.

It's not just what they spend on the event but the airfares; transport, accommodation, food, beverages, an extended stay to visit wineries and other attractions.

When we have the covered stadium and the dream team and events that we could never hold before that money goes into our economy; not the mainland and it will create internal tourism and help to get our people from all the state to travel internally in Tasmania. The flow on will be enormous. PwC includes 100% of this spend and in the base case I have proposed to use 50% and in the worst case I have only used 20%.

The total Tasmanian spend is in the order of \$58 million as assessed by PwC and can be calculated using MI Global Tasmanian attendee numbers, so the two consultants are broadly consistent in their projections.

I will also point out that because of the multitude of potential events people will do what they haven't done before and spend additional funds; it could be from savings; less into super; larger super withdrawal and other sources. It has to be included.

2. The team and the stadium go hand in glove. We know without the stadium there is no team and equally without the team there is no stadium. The contribution the team makes is a part of the justification for the stadium, but only the direct team contribution. The taskforce identified \$110 million per annum and 360 jobs created but I have only used the direct team impact of \$40 million and 116 jobs. Additionally, it is also about the incremental money coming into Tasmania so the incremental amount the AFL provides is also included.

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3. MI Global has not used the significant Economic Activity generated during the stadium construction as identified by PwC nor the value of the jobs created during construction and ongoing. They are absolutely relevant and have value and is not double counting as both PwC and MI Global refer to visitation spend only. I have used a conservative wage figure after income tax times the number of forecast jobs.
  
  4. Flow-on spend is recognised by both PwC and MI Global but it is not included. Using the Federal Government Tourism Research assessment for Tasmania it identifies for every direct dollar spent and additional 86 cents is spent throughout the Tasmanian economy.  
This has been used but I have assessed that the quantification of the ongoing jobs could well be argued that they are flow-on impacts, so I have not used a flow-on calculation for that segment.

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## Appendix B

### Tasmanian Historical Health Spend.

Analysis prepared March 2023 prior to latest state budget 2023-24.

Health is the biggest expense for the Tasmanian government and probably all states in Australia and has been for decades.

The real test with health expenditure is what is the ratio of health expenditure expressed as a percentage of total spend.

Tasmania has increased its health spend considerably over the years from around 27.5% of the total budget to now one third of the total budget (2022-23).

South Australia for the same budget period will have an average ratio of 31.6%. Queensland 31.4%. Tasmania is 33.6%.

The 2023-24 Budget for Tasmania shows the estimated health spend over 4 years will be \$12.1 billion or \$8.3 million each and every day. The New Stadium cost to Tasmania represents just 45 days of health spend over the same period.

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## Appendix C

### Stadium Events not assessed.

Another aspect that creates confusion is the claim that the events won't happen but if one takes a closer look, they are probably understated.

By way of example:

1. We brought the Military Tattoo to Hobart; do it again.
2. The AFL say there is every chance the Gather Round can come to Tasmania; that's 9 events in 4 days
3. Our JackJumpers sell out every game with a capacity just under 5,000; just imagine when we are playing finals and the games were transferred to the new roofed stadium with 20,000 fanatical fans.
4. We could host 1 of the best of 3 Rugby League State of Origin games.
  - Melbourne have hosted 9 games.
  - Perth once and
  - Adelaide twice.
  - Capacity may hinder, but creative thinking could be a planned third game for the New Stadium if it was a dead rubber. We should note that the Adelaide game in 2020 the attendance was 25,218 but they had a second game granted in 2023.
5. Unique car rallies; imagine the cars arriving on the Spirit at Devonport and touring the state ending up at the new stadium for a spectacular protected display.
6. We can look at the Invictus games and a potential sharing with Victoria.
7. Motocross.
8. The Brisbane Olympics are in 2032; there will be many countries with a potential to set up a base before the actual games and prepare in a roofed stadium
9. When one examines the cricket test match that is being criticised as test matches can't be played under a roof; firstly, the analysis by MI Global uses approximately 7% of the total events and it is more than likely that Tasmania will be the trial state to pioneer these matches under a roof. By the time the stadium is active.
10. Expos and trade shows.
11. Weddings.
12. Dinners.
13. Cocktail parties.
14. Networking breakfasts.
15. Markets.
16. International wine show.
17. An Anzac Day AFL game, twilight, or night, as an annual tradition against Geelong in conjunction with the TT Line running a direct cruise from Geelong to the stadium doorstep and returning with a full array of non-football people wanting to cruise to Geelong.
18. A unique dinner on the football field.
19. Watch world events on the big screens after a gourmet catering experience.
20. Create a Federation Square experience for big national or international events on the Regatta lawns as well as inside the stadium.
21. Christmas on the field parties and dinner.
22. Possible Men's World Cup 2034; a roofed stadium could attract early rounds to Hobart.

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That is 22 events on top of the 28 or 79% more and they are just my thoughts. The imagination and positive thinking of others would no doubt unearth many more events.

**We should also remember that in the worst-case scenario I have reduced event income by 25%; when the above demonstrates the possibilities. Not all may be achieved but many would and I'm sure there are more.**

## **Acknowledgments.**

In compiling this report, I wish to acknowledge the editorial and technical support I received from:

Roger Curtis, Barrister and Solicitor, former Commissioner Tasmanian Football League and former President Clarence Football Club.

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