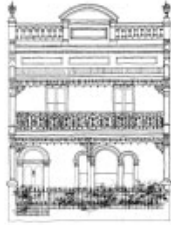


**Submission
No 226**

INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

Organisation: The Paddington Society

Date Received: 25 May 2018



THE PADDINGTON SOCIETY Inc.
For Community and Heritage
Est 1964

24th May 2018

The Premier
The Honourable Ms Gladys Berijiklian

Dear Premier,

We are writing to express our total opposition to the proposed demolition and rebuild of the Sydney Football Stadium.

The demolition of the existing stadium is an outrageous and unnecessary act which brings your government into disrepute. We have attended information sessions which purport the cost to refurbish the existing stadium to be \$714million as against a new build costing \$729 million. We do not believe these figures and request the basis for these to be made available for public scrutiny.

We recognize, with disappointment, that the SFS has been neglected and not well maintained during its 30 year lifespan. However, looking after the building has been the responsibility of the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust. This same organization has acted responsibly in terms of upgrade and maintenance of the Sydney Cricket Ground, with buildings over 150 years of age. If the SCG Trust has failed in its duty to maintain the SFS then it is their responsibility to meet the costs of upgrading the SFS, not the general public. Unfortunately we suspect the SCG Trust has the government's ear on this issue.

It is suggested that the stadium needs to be brought up to 'international standards'. Our members are regular patrons of the SFS and do not perceive there to be a problem with the existing standards. Any serious approach to maintaining the existing stadium could easily provide more disabled seats and public amenities, modern food and beverage offerings, and even more weather cover, as is purported the newbuild proposal will provide.

Please show us evidence of a serious approach to refurbishing the existing stadium. We suggest that architects be appointed to prepare a detailed plan and strategy for refurbishment which can be accurately costed. We would suggest this would result in a more modest expenditure and the works could be staged over a number of

years, making annual expenditure more palatable. Let's face it, even a new stadium will require annual expenditure on maintenance or the same predicament will exist once again.

It is beyond our comprehension that an existing stadium which holds 42,000 seats, but seldom draws a crowd of that size, sometimes less than 10,000, can seriously be proposed to be removed and replaced with a stadium of much the same capacity. This does not compute.

We are amazed that we can be told openly that the proposed new stadium will provide 'an enhanced game day experience' with 'all seats protected from the elements, closer to the action'. It is difficult to see how people can be seated closer to the action when seating is already provided as close to the sidelines as is possible. And to protect people from the elements is only possible if the stadium were to be fully roofed. Sun, wind and rain angles will always ensure patrons are affected by the elements with a roof height governed by sight lines. We suggest the promotional material provided at the briefing session is deliberately misleading.

In closing, given that the government is only now embarking on the preparation of a Reference Design which will set the building envelope, it is clear that not enough is known at this stage about the proposal, nor its impacts. It is therefore, in our view premature to be embarking on this project, to request community feedback and to put dates on demolition and approvals, when the outcome is unknown.

Premier, we ask you not to treat your electorate as fools and reconsider the impact this proposal will have on your political future.

Yours sincerely,

Will Mrongovius
President,
The Paddington Society
Per Robyn Attuell