

**Submission
No 233**

INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

Name: Ms Julie Osborne

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Dear Minister

I believe the rebuild of Allianz Stadium is a flawed Government policy and should be aborted. Funds are better spent on dealing with our inadequate hospital, school and Family and Community Services Department. Irrespective of the current spend in this regard, it is under funded.

It is completely irresponsible to proceed on this project without the release of a proper business case - given that the manner of documenting major infrastructure transactions in this State is historically very poor (eg Light Rail Project, Westconnex etc) I would consider public scrutiny an essential element to benchmark the Government's honesty in relation to the cost/benefit analysis required for such a large spend. If the rumoured benefit-cost ratio is less than one – meaning the project will cost far more than it benefits - the justification for this project is significantly flawed.

If a world class stadium is required, I consider that the Government has selected an inappropriate location being Allianz Stadium to develop as the premier sporting facility in the State. Why is Government policy focused on creating major sports and entertainment facilities on the edge of a congested city and eastern suburbs with inadequate public transport, when the larger population and demand for such facilities is in Western Sydney?

I consider a better use of funds would be to upgrade local sporting facilities to allow greater community use including school children, community sporting groups and the like. This would indeed be preferable rather than catering to the needs of elite sportsman who represent a small number of the population. Additionally spectators continue to stay away from sporting events preferring to watch events from either local fields or on their television. This has led to the Trustees of Allianz Stadium trying to dupe fans by having the seats painted in the Stadium to simulate spectators!

If the proposition is that the rebuild is not just about sports – it's about creating a multi-complex entertainment precinct then why is this not located in the centre of population in Western Sydney, where there is a much greater demand and significantly fewer facilities?

Infrastructure NSW has given a timeframe of 6 months to assess the project. This is an unusually fast determination for a project of this size and complexity. The Government appears to be fast tracking an approval so demolition of the current stadium can occur before the next election. This is highly inappropriate and will result in me voting against the Government. I am not alone in my opposition - having attended the drop-in sessions there were many voicing their opposition so Gladys be prepared for opposition!!

Other issues of major concern with this project include:

1. Disruption to the surrounding residential (conservation) areas and parklands from demolition, construction and operations, which will not only include sporting events but large music concerts.
2. Ongoing loss of trees to facilitate an expanded footprint of the new stadium.
3. Increased traffic congestion – the combination of the sporting stadia and the widened road to accommodate the Alexandria to Moore Park Connector from St Peters Interchange to Anzac Parade is a recipe for further gridlock coupled with the ridiculous experimental proposal of the continuous turning lane into Dacey Avenue which is will amount to a stoppage closer to the City on Anzac Parade.
4. The failure of the Sydney Cricket & Sports Ground Trust to maintain the stadium which has led to the current safety and security problems. The entire Trust should be removed by the Government as they have fundamentally failed in their duty - curiously the only Trustees removed were those objecting to the re-build!!

5. Ongoing use of the Moore Parklands for spectator parking – all parking should be taken off the grass and be restricted to the new facility, under built-on areas. It is pertinent to note that parking has not been included in the new Stadium proposal - yet again are we to see an attempted conversion of Parkland to built car parks - thus making use of the Tibby Cotter Bridge which of course was always a part of the plan - we need to look no further than Gladys' mentor Barry O'Farrell (amazingly and of course boldly a Trustee!!) for explanation.

6. Need to preserve the former Sydney Showground (Entertainment Quarter), which is now under threat of commercialisation and appropriation for professional sport, for much-needed community/amateur sports use (both indoor and outdoor).

In summation I am completely against such a wasteful use of taxpayer funds without considering the voice of the people who have repeatedly spoken against this project.

Yours faithfully
Julie Osborne