



ARNIE'S FOURTH CROWN

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FIRST BITE OF TASSIE

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SALUTE TO OUR GREATEST

When he first burst onto the scene his name was hard to pronounce, but 18 years and five Olympic Games later, Tasmanian hockey sensation Eddie Ockenden leaves the game a household name.

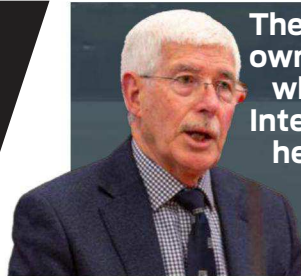
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Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones

TT chair says company to blame for port failure

FERRY



The interim chair of TT-Line says the government-owned company made a series of mistakes which contributed to the ferry fiasco. Interim chair Damian Bugg KC has told a hearing that TT-Line should have let TasPorts complete the port side infrastructure in Devonport.

DAVID KILICK REPORTS, PAGE 5



Acting chairperson of TT-Line Damian Bugg and the Spirit of Tasmania IV arrives in Scotland.

EMBARRASSING

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Elliot battle heads to court

Genevieve Holding

The Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has ordered that a discrimination complaint against City of Hobart councillor Louise Elliot move to the Magistrates Court, after queries over the jurisdiction of Anti-Discrimination Act complaints.

On February 19 this year, Esmeralda Rosalia Isabelle Miller and Lucy Richmond filed a complaint with Equal Opportunity Tasmania alleging that



Louise Elliot

Ms Elliot had breached the Anti-Discrimination Act through posts to her X account (formerly Twitter) between July 29, 2023, and

February 19, 2024, and conduct at an outside event on February 19.

The office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner referred this complaint to TASCAT on August 13, as it was unable to settle the matter.

Within the initial submissions to the commissioner, Ms Elliot contended that section 19 of the Anti-Discrimination Act should be read down in settling the matter.

Section 19 states that a person must not incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person on the grounds of various factors, including gender identity.

Ms Elliot states the inclusion of Miller and Richmond's complaint against section 19 conflicts with her "implied freedom of political communication" and should be read down and sent to the Magistrates Court.

Neither Miller nor Richmond objected to the matter being sent to the Magistrates Court.

Ms Elliot said she and her legal team were prepared to "take this as high as required" and stated she hadn't done anything wrong.

"The complaints are a complete waste of taxpayer money and of precious court time," she said. "I was threatened by the person, yet I'm the one that's investigated."

The Mercury contacted Lucy Richmond but did not receive a response.



TT-Line interim chair Damian Bugg at Thursday's hearing. Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones

“It’s an embarrassment to us and it’s upsetting for me because the people of Tasmania expect better from their appointed representatives”

Damian Bugg KC
Interim TT-Line chair

TT-Line takes blame for role in ferry fiasco

David Killick

The interim chair of TT-Line says the government-owned company made a series of mistakes which contributed to the ferry fiasco.

Interim chair Damian Bugg KC has told government business enterprise committee hearings in Hobart that TT-Line should have let TasPorts complete the port side infrastructure in Devonport.

Hold-ups to the infrastructure have delayed two new ferries coming into service on the Bass Strait run for up to two years.

"With the benefit of hindsight – and I suspect careful consideration at the time – the first mistake that we made was to be involved in this project in the first place.

"That is an infrastructure build when we are and were a ferry company that is structured and staffed to run efficiently and leanly as a ferry



The Spirit of Tasmania IV ferry arrives at Leith in Scotland. Picture: Iain Masterton/Alamy Live News

company," he said. "And here we were embarking on a fairly complicated infrastructure task. Mistake number one.

"Should we have taken it on? No. Should TasPorts have said 'get out of the way, we'll do it'? Yes, they are the port infrastructure entity. Now, is that a mistake? I think it is. So mistake number two."

Mr Bugg said the third mistake was being overconfident after the success of the move of the northern terminus from Station Pier in Melbourne to Geelong.

"The fourth mistake: we

should have elevated the situation to a cabinet level when it became apparent that we were falling behind schedule but we had overconfidence, I think, within our ranks," he said.

"Should I accept responsibility for it? I do, on behalf of the company.

"It's an embarrassment to us and it's upsetting for me because the people of Tasmania expect better from their appointed representatives and I'm one of them."

Mr Bugg said he didn't want to get into a further debate over who was right and wrong.

TasPorts on Tuesday washed its hands of any responsibility for failing to have berthing facilities ready in time for the new TT-Line ferries at Devonport. They are not expected to be in operation for two more years.

The company's interim chair Amara Doyle told a House of Assembly committee hearing the government-owned port operator had done nothing wrong.

Mr Bugg said he was more focused on solving the problem than a public debate over who was responsible.

Independent MP David O'Byrne described Mr Bugg's analysis as "a blunt assessment of the bleeding obvious".

The hearing was told the ferries would be out of warranty after 12 months and there was "not a strong likelihood" they would be leased.

Mr Bugg said it was expected six crew members would stay on the vessel for the time

it is in "warm lay-up" up and the auxiliary engines will be kept running to keep systems operational.

Labor leader Dean Winter said: "I actually got a lot of information out of today's hearing, and I really appreciated TT-Line owning up to their mistakes, but it really points us back to TasPorts.

"You've got TasPorts that refuses to take accountability or responsibility – and you've got TT-Line that's now owning up to its mistakes."

Transport Minister Eric Abetz said there were no major revelations from Thursday's hearing.

"The GBE hearings into the TT-Line today were about as anticlimactic as you can get," he said. "There was no new information, no new evidence, and all that Mr Winter did was go on with his relentless negativity without providing a single solution."

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