

## Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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## **Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee**

Re: Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation

Amendment Bill 2025

Don Brown



7 May 2025

### **Introduction**

I welcome the opportunity to provide this submission to the Committee on the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I write in strong opposition to provisions of the Bill that override existing heritage protections, particularly those concerning Willard Farm and the World War II Radio Receiving Station located within the Birkdale Community Precinct.

These are not just local landmarks; they are irreplaceable parts of Queensland's cultural and wartime history. Their protection should be strengthened and not cast aside in the name of Olympic timelines.

### **Key Concerns**

#### **1. Heritage Protections Are Being Overridden Without Justification**

The Bill enables Olympic-related infrastructure to bypass standard heritage and planning laws. This may result in:

- The disruption or destruction of the World War II Radio Receiving Station, a rare surviving remnant of Australia's wartime communications network. Built in the early 1940s, the station was a top-secret facility vital to the Allied war effort in the Pacific. It played a critical role in intercepting and relaying radio transmissions between Australia, the United States, and the Pacific theatre. Most notably, it is believed to be the station that received General Douglas MacArthur's historic message announcing the surrender of Japanese forces

— the moment the war officially ended. This site is not only nationally significant; it is globally symbolic of peace and the conclusion of the deadliest conflict in human history.

- Encroachment onto Willard Farm, a designated state heritage place and one of the oldest intact examples of early agricultural settlement in the Redlands. Established in the 1860s, the farm and its original homestead provide a rare window into Queensland's pastoral and pioneering heritage, with links to several generations of early settlers and farming families.

These works would ordinarily require detailed heritage assessment and public accountability under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. The Bill circumvents those protections.

## 2. Redland City Council Already Forced to Dismantle One Tower — But with Oversight

To enable Olympic-related road construction, Redland City Council has already had to dismantle one of the WWII towers in conjunction with the Queensland Heritage Council. While far from ideal, at least that process involved oversight, a formal heritage impact assessment, and acknowledgment of heritage responsibilities.

Under this Bill, there is no requirement for oversight, no formal review process, and no requirement for either Council or the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority (GIICA) to reconstruct or reinstate the tower post-construction. This is a permanent heritage loss with no path to recovery.

## 3. Willard Farm Under Direct Threat from transport infrastructure

I am deeply concerned by the proposed intersection upgrade and Olympic venue entry at Old Cleveland Road East and Buckingham Street, which lies less than 40 metres from the boundary of Willard Farm. This proximity places the heritage site at direct risk from traffic realignments, excavation, and construction impacts.

Worse still, the Bill removes any requirement for community consultation or opportunity for legal objection. Transport needs could now legally override the state

heritage value of Willard Farm without the public ever being notified or consulted. This is entirely unacceptable and a clear departure from responsible planning.

#### 4. Lack of Community Consultation and Transparency

If this Bill is passed in its current form, the community has received no formal opportunity to respond to the heritage and environmental implications. Existing protections were achieved through years of community advocacy and consultation. This legislation strips that away and replaces it with unchecked executive discretion.

On a personal note, the last koala I saw in the wild was at this site, during a tour provided by Redland City Council. That moment was a powerful reminder of the ecological and environmental value this precinct holds for our community. The destruction of habitat in the area — combined with the removal of public input — makes it clear that environmental and heritage values are being treated as disposable.

#### **Recommendation**

I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend that the Bill should be amended to remove the provisions of the Bill that override heritage laws for Olympic venues and infrastructure.

#### **Summary**

Queensland should not have to choose between Olympic development and historical preservation. A truly visionary Games plan would embrace both. We do not build a better future by demolishing the past.

I urge the Committee to reconsider this Bill's impact on heritage and community voice and to amend it accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Don Brown