

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

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Submitter Comments:

1. Why Victoria Park Matters Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city park. It spans over 64 hectares and is a rare green space for recreation, ecology, and cultural heritage. The site is deeply significant to Aboriginal peoples, and it also holds immense value for Brisbane's broader community. The Victoria Park Master Plan was developed after almost four years of community consultation. The surprise announcement of Olympic venues in Victoria Park is a shocking betrayal of community trust.

2. Why a Stadium in Victoria Park Doesn't Make Sense Building a stadium in Victoria Park / Barrambin is impractical, environmentally damaging, and contrary to community interests. Key reasons include:

1. Challenging Topography: The park's hilly terrain and hard Brisbane Tuff rock would require extensive excavation and blasting, increasing costs, whilst also disrupting nearby hospitals, businesses and residences due to noise and vibrations.
2. Violation of Olympic Host Requirements: Constructing a stadium here (as also the proposed Redlands white water venue site which lies in protected core koala habitat) would breach the Olympic Host Contract, which mandates avoiding permanent structures in protected areas and prioritising previously developed sites.
3. Existing Traffic Congestion: The area already experiences significant traffic from nearby hospitals, schools, and universities. A stadium would exacerbate congestion, affecting emergency services and daily commutes.
4. Inadequate Public Transport: Unlike other stadiums, Victoria Park lacks sufficient public transport access. The nearest station is a considerable walk away, posing challenges for attendees, especially those with mobility issues. This reduces accessibility and necessitates an increase in park destruction to create parking and other associated accessibility infrastructure onsite.
5. Loss of Essential Green Space: As Brisbane's largest inner-city park, Victoria Park provides vital green space in a city already lacking in such areas. A stadium would significantly reduce this public amenity. There are mature native trees in this park which pre-date European settlement and date to pre-1750. Victoria Park is home to approximately 100 different species of native flora and fauna.
6. Proximity to Major Hospital: The park is adjacent to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Stadium construction and events would disrupt hospital operations, affecting patient care and staff - placing lives at risk for an extended period of time.
7. Lack of Surrounding Amenities: The area lacks the bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues that typically support stadium events, leading to potential overdevelopment within the park itself.
8. Environmental Impact: The park serves as a natural cooling area, mitigating urban heat. Development would increase heat retention and reduce air quality therefore quality of life for Brisbane residents and visitors.
9. Cultural Significance: Victoria Park holds deep cultural importance for First Nations communities. Development risks disturbing sacred sites and erasing historical significance.
10. Every inch of Victoria Park is heritage listed at the local or state level. This land is part of the story of Brisbane and has a rich WWII and depression era history.
11. Community Opposition: There is strong public resistance to the stadium proposal, with concerns about environmental degradation, cultural disrespect, and loss of public space.
12. Wildlife Impact: The park is currently vital habitat for a large variety of protected native species. Encountering deceased and diseased wildlife - the inevitable result of habitat loss as well as the noise and light pollution generated by stadium activity - would be an extremely common sight for visitors to an Olympic stadium at Victoria Park. On top of decimating core koala habitat in Redlands to build a white water stadium, remodelling Victoria Park into a stadium would shape these Olympics to be the killer of literally tens of thousands of protected native animals (animals who cannot be relocated as research very clearly proves that too is a death sentence for them in the overwhelming majority of cases).

3. What the Bill Would Do The Bill proposes to list a Stadium in Victoria Park as an 'authority venue' for the 2032 Olympics. The Bill

would exempt construction of such Olympics venues and villages from 15 Queensland planning, environmental and heritage laws. The Bill would also remove any access to the Courts in relation to the construction of Olympics venues or villages. It would also override First Nations cultural heritage protections using a new process which railroads First Nations into a default plan if they don't agree in the timeline specified by the Bill.

4. Why This Should Concern Queenslanders

The Bill removes public safeguards by effectively exempting Olympic venues and villages from laws that apply to ordinary Queenslanders. This includes the Planning Act, Heritage Act, and Environmental Protection Act. Access to the Courts is a basic right of all Queenslanders. The Bill proposes to remove this right with sweeping provisions in relation to Olympics venues and villages. The Bill introduces a fast-tracked cultural heritage scheme that limits consultation and allows default plans without the agreement of Traditional Owners. The potential use of public parkland for commercial Olympic 'villages' risks corruption. These exemptions from planning laws and court review bypass scrutiny and reduce transparency when privatising very valuable public assets. Permitting these exemptions from law sets a dangerous precedent for future developments and commercial investments.

5. What I Am Asking the Committee to Do

I respectfully ask that your report to Parliament recommend that:

1. Victoria Park / Barrambin be removed from Schedule 1 (Authority Venues);
2. The cultural heritage override provisions be withdrawn;
3. All Olympic developments be subject to existing Queensland laws like all other developments;
4. The Victoria Park Master Plan be upheld as a reflection of the community's vision for the park.