

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

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Submission Regarding the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 To the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendments within the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, specifically those relating to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021 and their potential impact on the heritage-listed, culturally significant greenspace known as Victoria Park.

Background: The Significance of Victoria Park Victoria Park holds immense value for the Brisbane community. It is the largest provider of green space in our city and is heritage-listed, recognizing its historical and environmental importance. The area is also culturally significant, serving as a gathering site to traditional owners. Furthermore, it is home to mature trees, some believed to be over 700 years old, and supports a diverse range of wildlife. This vital green space was promised to the people of Brisbane as a permanent area for recreation and respite from urban life, a promise that is now under threat.

Concerns Regarding Amendments to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021 The proposed amendments introduce an "expedited pathway" for the delivery of Games venues and villages by removing the requirement for compliance with "relevant Acts relating to development and use (other than building work and cultural heritage)" and limiting review rights. I am deeply concerned about the implications of these changes for Victoria Park for the following reasons:

Erosion of Environmental and Heritage Protections: Removing the need to comply with relevant development and use acts undermines the existing legal protections afforded to this heritage-listed site and its significant environmental values. While cultural heritage is mentioned as an exception, the Bill lacks clarity on how the ecological and landscape heritage of this vital greenspace will be adequately safeguarded. The potential destruction of ancient trees within Victoria Park and disruption of its wildlife habitats for Olympic infrastructure is unacceptable.

Lack of Transparency and Accountability: Limiting review rights removes crucial checks and balances in the planning process. This expedited pathway prioritizes speed over thorough assessment and community input, raising serious concerns about transparency and accountability in the decision-making process regarding the future of Victoria Park.

Prioritizing Short-Term Gains Over Long-Term Loss: The potential construction of Olympic stadiums and villages on Victoria Park represents an irreversible loss of a vital community asset. The short-term benefits of hosting the Olympics should not come at the expense of Brisbane's long-term environmental health, heritage, and the well-being of its citizens who cherish Victoria Park.

Broken Promise to the Community: The development of Victoria Park for Olympic infrastructure directly contradicts the promise that this land would remain a green space for the people of Brisbane. This breach of trust will have lasting negative consequences for community relations and future planning processes concerning public lands like Victoria Park.

Impact on Community Well-being: Victoria Park provides a crucial sanctuary for Brisbane residents, offering a place for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature. The loss of this space will negatively impact the health and well-being of countless individuals who rely on Victoria Park as a reprieve from city life.

Recommendations I urge the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee to:

- Reject the amendments to the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021 that would facilitate development on Victoria Park by overriding existing planning, environmental, and heritage protections.
- Ensure that any development related to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games fully complies with all existing Queensland planning, environmental protection, and cultural heritage laws and regulations.

There should be no exemptions that could compromise the integrity of heritage-listed sites and significant green spaces like Victoria Park. Prioritize the preservation and enhancement of Brisbane's existing green spaces, including Victoria Park, as a crucial and lasting legacy of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Ensure genuine and meaningful community consultation in all planning decisions related to the Games, particularly those impacting significant public spaces like Victoria Park. Explore alternative locations for Olympic venues and villages that would not necessitate the destruction of irreplaceable heritage-listed greenspace like Victoria Park. The proposed amendments pose a significant threat to Victoria Park, a vital piece of Brisbane's heritage, environment, and community fabric. I implore the Committee to recognize the immense long-term value of this greenspace and to reject any measures that would lead to its irreversible loss. Preserving Victoria Park is essential for the well-being of our community and for ensuring a sustainable and meaningful legacy for Brisbane.