

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

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Submitted by: Karen Sullivan
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From: [Karen Sullivan](#)
To: [State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee](#)
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Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

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

Submitters details

Name: Karen Sullivan

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Thank you for allowing and acting on submissions regarding the Bill. As a Queensland resident, I strongly object to the proposed Bill for the following reasons.

1. Victoria Park should be retained in full as park lands

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 so the surprise announcement of Olympic venues in Victoria Park is a shocking betrayal of community trust.

A pre-election promise NOT to establish new Olympic venues was made by the current premier. It is an egregious and improper act to revert that decision. It is a serious betrayal of our democracy. I frankly can't believe that our Premier is proceeding in this fashion, and it is a blight on the entire parliament if this is allowed to occur.

I implore you to look to Tasmania and see the issues they are facing with their stadium development, including independent reviews of their plans, which have already revealed that initial plans were under costed, and benefits overstated. There is significant community opposition to that stadium just as there is to this one.

I also draw your attention to the IOC's own statement about stadiums. They do not support their construction as it is wasteful and unnecessary and communities lose more than they gain from such constructions

I quote: "Since the International Olympic Committee (IOC) adopted Olympic Agenda 2020 and the New Norm, no infrastructure is required to be built to host the Olympic Games. Hosts are encouraged as far as possible to use existing and temporary venues, which can be spread over several cities, regions or countries."

2. Stadiums in Victoria Park Doesn't Make Sense

Building a brand new stadium from scratch in Victoria Park / Barrambin is costly, impractical, environmentally and socially damaging, and contrary to community interests. Furthermore, it is unnecessary and anti-democratic.

Key reasons include:

1. **Challenging Topography:** The park's hilly terrain and hard Brisbane Tuff rock would require extensive excavation and blasting. This will be costly, difficult, and time consuming. It will significantly and unnecessarily disrupt residents and major services including nearby hospitals, transit routes, schools, and universities.
2. **Violation of Olympic Host Requirements:** Constructing a stadium here would breach the Olympic Host Contract, which mandates avoiding permanent structures in protected areas and prioritizing previously developed sites. As per the quote above, there is absolutely no requirement to waste tax payers money at the expense of a valuable community asset.
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. There are no good transport solutions, partly because of the topography. This will make it an unappealing and inaccessible venue.
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 is a galling situation given that our stadiums are already very well served by public transport, and the Gabba will soon have cross river rail.
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 space. There are mature native trees in this park which pre-date European settlement and date to pre-1750. There are numerous studies that show the major benefits of parklands like this in urban areas, and the major costs when they are devalued and destroyed.
6. **Proximity to Major Hospital and university and one of Brisbane's largest schools.** The park is adjacent to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Stadium events could disrupt hospital operations, affecting patient care and staff. It shares a border with one of Brisbane's largest universities, and is close to a very large P-12 school attended by thousands of students each day. The disruption from construction, including noise and pollution, isn't justified and could be harmful.
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.
9. **Psychological impact:**

The park serves as a retreat for people, whereas the destruction of natural

features, including trees, increases anxiety. Younger generations will feel this particularly acutely.

19. Cultural Significance: Victoria Park holds deep cultural importance for First Nations communities. Development risks disturbing sacred sites and erasing historical significance.

11. 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.

12.. Community Opposition: There is strong public resistance to the stadium proposal, with concerns about environmental degradation, cultural disrespect, and loss of public space.

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.

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. 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.

I thank you for your time.

Kind regards

Karen Sullivan