

## 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**

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

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

If this development goes ahead, we will irrecoverably lose a beautiful and precious green space which has given thousands of families pleasure and enjoyment. Even people who do not visit Victoria Park benefit from the ecological advantages of this green space.

### **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, not to mention a complete deception of the public by the government. Key reasons include:

1. **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. Brisbane cannot afford to lose this peaceful patch of nature.

2. **Environmental Impact:** The park serves as a natural cooling area, mitigating urban heat and protecting against flooding. Development would increase heat retention and reduce air quality. With less green space than any other Australian city, we need to keep what little we have.

3. Throwing away our Heritage: Every inch of Victoria Park is heritage listed at the local or state level. This land was gifted to the people of Brisbane and is part of our city's story.
4. 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.
5. The Premier's assertion that there are no other alternatives for an Olympic Stadium is just plain wrong (as well as a backflip on an election promise). There are many alternatives that do not result in the environmental devastation that would occur at Victoria Park. Replacing the unsightly Bowen Hills rail yards or upgrading Boondall Entertainment precinct are both viable options that are consistent with the Olympic Host Requirement to prioritise previously developed sites.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Challenging Topography: The park's hilly terrain and hard Brisbane Tuff rock would require extensive excavation and blasting, increasing costs and potentially disrupting nearby hospitals due to vibrations.
9. The proposed stadium of 60,000 seats is not providing the 100,000 seat facility that Brisbane is seeking. It is not much bigger than Lang Park/Suncorp Stadium which is seen as too small to attract major international artists.
10. 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.
11. Cultural Significance: Victoria Park holds deep cultural importance for First Nations communities. Development risks disturbing sacred sites and erasing historical significance.
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.
5. Assessment of alternative stadium sites be re-started with the Host Requirements in mind - avoid protected areas and prioritise previously developed sites. Take the politics out of this divisive decision.

Regards,  
Jacqui Rowland