

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

**Submission No:** 141  
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### Submitter Comments:

Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Why Victoria Park / Barrambin Matters Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city green space, encompassing over 64 hectares of land that serves as a vital refuge for community wellbeing, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. It is a site of profound significance to the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, containing documented bora grounds, pullen-pullen sites, and traditional pathways. It is also the site of York's Hollow, a long-standing First Nations camp and cultural gathering place that predates the establishment of Brisbane itself. The park is not only an ecological asset—it is a living cultural archive. Every contour of the land carries the imprint of thousands of years of Indigenous history, later layered with colonial, wartime, and community narratives. It is where families gather, children learn to ride bikes, hospital workers take respite, and elders share stories. The Victoria Park Master Plan was developed over four years of extensive community consultation. The surprise proposal to impose two Olympic stadiums on this park—against the Plan and public trust—is not only undemocratic but a fundamental betrayal of Brisbane's people. Personally, I walk Victoria Park weekly, and the idea that this rare urban green space—already surrounded by hospitals, universities, and dense suburbs—could be bulldozed for Olympic spectacle is heartbreaking. If we lose Victoria Park in its present form, we lose a living connection to both our past and our best future. There are so few places one can go that doesn't require you to spend money. Converting Victoria Park into a place of stadiums will make it another place I can't go without paying for the privilege. And the whole park will be impacted even though the people in power are trying to downplay how comprehensively the park will be altered.

### 2. Why a Stadium in Victoria Park Doesn't Make Sense

Constructing stadiums in Victoria Park is illogical, environmentally irresponsible, and socially harmful. Key concerns include:

- **Incompatible Terrain:** The hilly topography and hard Brisbane Tuff rock will require costly excavation, risking vibration damage to the adjacent Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.
- **Olympic Host Violation:** The Olympic Host Contract prohibits permanent venues in protected natural areas. Victoria Park clearly violates this principle.
- **Traffic Gridlock:** Already congested due to nearby hospitals and schools, adding stadium events would paralyse local roads and delay ambulances.
- **Insufficient Public Transport:** The nearest rail station is too distant for large crowds. Additional infrastructure would destroy more parkland.
- **Loss of Critical Green Space:** This is Brisbane's largest central park. Trees in the park have been dated to pre-1750, and the site plays a crucial role in reducing the city's heat island effect.
- **Hospital Adjacency:** The stadium would risk hospital operations and the wellbeing of patients, doctors, and emergency staff.
- **Lack of Amenities:** The park is not surrounded by the entertainment precincts needed to support regular stadium events, risking further overdevelopment.
- **Ecological Harm:** As one of the few cooling green zones in the city, its loss will worsen air quality and urban temperatures.
- **First Nations Cultural Significance:** Barrambin is not just symbolic—it contains sacred sites and is directly tied to historical figures like Daki Yakka, whose legacy is embedded in the land.
- **Heritage Value:** Every part of the park is heritage listed locally or at the state level. The park also contains elements from the WWII and Depression eras, and its use by displaced persons adds additional layers of significance.
- **Strong Public Opposition:** Across Brisbane, there is widespread and growing resistance to sacrificing Barrambin for short-term events. The loss would be irreversible.

### 3. What the Bill Would Do

This Bill would:

- **Designate Victoria Park as an 'authority venue'** and permit the construction of Olympic infrastructure within it;
- **Exempt Olympic venues and villages from 15 Queensland laws**, including the Planning Act, Environmental Protection Act, and Queensland

Heritage Act; • Remove public access to judicial review for affected developments; • Introduce a new 'fast-track' cultural heritage process that sidelines Traditional Owners by imposing default plans if timelines are not met. These powers are sweeping and unprecedented, and remove vital democratic and legal protections from Queenslanders.

#### 4. Why This Should Concern Queenslanders

This Bill undermines public oversight and permanently alters Queensland's legal landscape to benefit Olympic developers. Key concerns include:

- **Loss of Legal Protections:** The exemption of developments from key environmental, planning, and heritage laws weakens protections that apply to all other developments in Queensland.
- **Erosion of Legal Rights:** Removing access to the courts sets a dangerous precedent that strips Queenslanders of due process.
- **Cultural Disrespect:** The cultural heritage override disrespects Traditional Owners, replacing meaningful consent with imposed timelines and bureaucratic power.
- **Risk of Corruption:** By exempting Olympic villages from scrutiny, the Bill invites questionable deals and commercial misuse of public land.
- **Privatisation of Public Space:** There is a real danger that this Bill will enable the quiet conversion of public parkland into private, profitable ventures under the Olympic banner.

#### 5. What I Am Asking the Committee to Do

I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend:

1. That Victoria Park / Barrambin be removed from Schedule 1 (Authority Venues);
2. That the cultural heritage override provisions be withdrawn, and full Traditional Owner consultation and consent be required;
3. That Olympic developments remain subject to existing Queensland laws, including planning, environmental, and heritage protections;
4. That the Victoria Park Master Plan—developed through years of public consultation—be respected and upheld as the legitimate vision for the site's future.

Queensland's laws are not obstacles—they are safeguards. Please ensure they remain in place, for the good of our communities, our cultural integrity, and our environment.