

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

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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 The cultural heritage override provisions be withdrawn;**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.**

Below are the reasons 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.

I personally love Victoria Park because it saved my sanity and my health when we lived in Kelvin Grove, in a tiny apartment, while my daughter was at school. We loved living there, in the vibrant community. I walked through the park daily and have loved discovering the nature and the history of the park. It was VISIONARY of the council and the government to create this dedicated parkland for the people. I still visit the park regularly - it is a special, peaceful, beautiful place and I have been so heartened to see the thoughtful Council developments that are happening. And then suddenly, a decision to destroy it? 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 and potentially disrupting nearby hospitals due to vibrations.

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 prioritising previously developed sites**. The so called 'Green Games' - were a big part of the pitch, and now we are going back on that. Build something great on rehabilitated land, revive a precinct and future generations will thank us because the Olympic Games come at great cost to a city and its people. No one has made a profit from the Games since Sydney in 2000 - and their venue was purpose built.

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 schools in the area - Kelvin Grove State College alone has 3000 students, and the hospital is so big it's got its own postcode.

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. I would not underestimate this as a priority. Disorganised, inadequate public transport will be a blight on the Games and will turn off events organisers.

5. Loss of Essential Green Space:

Victoria Park is beautiful and should be cherished. As Brisbane's largest inner-city park, Victoria Park provides vital green space in a city already lacking in such areas. The city is growing, and 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.

6. Proximity to Major Hospital:

The park is adjacent to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Stadium events could disrupt hospital operations, affecting patient care and staff. This is a major concern. Heaven forbid that someone dies because they get caught in Game Day traffic, or during construction. If that were something the stadium builders were aware of, and went ahead with anyway, it would be a significant lack of duty of care.

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. This is not the nature of the surrounding area. Kelvin Grove is beautiful, its character and history is iconically Brisbane/Queensland - full of Queenslander houses and lovely streets and a great community. It is not in need of rejuvenation and the money could be better spent building something better, elsewhere.

8. Environmental Impact:

The park serves as a natural cooling area, mitigating urban heat. Development would increase heat retention and reduce air quality. Brisbane is getting hotter and is already full of concrete. The massive amount of money, time and effort it will take to destroy Victoria Park would be better spent rehabilitating industrial land, such as out near North Shore. It beggars belief that in a growing city like Brisbane the government is considering creating more congestion and housing.

9. Cultural Significance:

Victoria Park holds deep cultural importance for First Nations communities. Development risks disturbing sacred sites and erasing history that should be celebrated, and highlighted, particularly for international visitors.

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. These should be embraced as part of Brisbane's story, not eradicated.

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. The Big Picture issue: Degrading the rights of Queenslanders.

This is a big picture issue of tremendous concern.

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 and 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.

This 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. There are already major issues with corruption on government construction sites, as we saw in the news last year.