

## 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

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### 1. Why Victoria Park Matters

Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city park, spanning over 64 hectares. It is a rare green space for recreation, ecology, and cultural heritage, holding immense value for the broader community and deep significance for Aboriginal peoples.

The Victoria Park Master Plan was developed after nearly four years of extensive community consultation. The sudden announcement of Olympic venues within Victoria Park disregards this process and betrays the community's trust.

Personally, I have strong ties to Victoria Park. Growing up in the area, I spent countless hours enjoying its open spaces. I recently and regularly used its paths regularly for commuting and cycling to work in the Valley and for enjoyment. The approved Master Plan promised a vibrant "People's Park," with retail opportunities, footpaths, cycling networks, and beautifully designed parks and lakes. To see this vision cast aside is deeply concerning. The park's proximity to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital also makes it a vital space of respite for visiting families and friends.

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the proposal to convert an amazing green **heritage listed** space like Victoria Park into yet another stadium. As a passionate advocate for environmental preservation and sustainable development, I believe that green heritage sites play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Green heritage spaces are not just patches of land; they are living reminders of our cultural and natural heritage. They provide essential ecosystem services, such as improving air quality, reducing urban heat island effects, and promoting biodiversity. These spaces also contribute to the mental and physical well-being of communities by offering recreational opportunities, promoting relaxation, and fostering a sense of connection to nature. I often walk around Victoria Park and have picnics with family and friends. Concreting over this amazing area is just heartbreaking.

The proposal to replace this valuable green space with another stadium not only disregards its historical and ecological significance but also neglects the long-term benefits it provides to the community. While sports stadiums can be important for entertainment and recreation, they should not come at the expense of sacrificing irreplaceable green heritage areas. We already have two in very close proximity, Suncorp stadium being **only 2km** from this proposed area. And third, it is an unnecessary, costly, irrelevant waste of tax payer money.

Building a stadium in smaller council areas such as Logan, Caboolture, or Ipswich can bring several benefits to these lower socio-economic communities such as stimulating a much-needed economic boost and creating job opportunities in the locations that desperately need it. Inner city Brisbane does not need this. A dense urban centre needs green spaces.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and explore alternative solutions that preserve and

enhance our green heritage spaces. By investing in sustainable development practices and valuing our natural and cultural heritage, we can create a more resilient and vibrant urban environment for generations to come.

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

Building a stadium in Victoria Park is impractical, environmentally damaging, and contrary to community interests. Key concerns include:

- **Challenging Topography:** The park's hilly terrain and Brisbane Tuff rock would require excessive excavation and blasting, disrupting nearby hospitals.
- **Violation of Olympic Host Requirements:** The Olympic Host Contract prioritizes previously developed sites and mandates that permanent structures should not be built in protected areas.
- **Traffic Congestion:** The area is already strained by traffic from nearby hospitals, schools, and universities. Stadium construction would exacerbate congestion, impacting emergency services.
- **Inadequate Public Transport:** Unlike other stadium sites, Victoria Park lacks sufficient transport links, making access difficult, particularly for those with mobility impairments.
- **Loss of Green Space:** Brisbane already lacks green space, and Victoria Park's vast natural area provides essential environmental and recreational benefits.
- **Environmental Impact:** The park regulates urban temperature and air quality. Removing green space increases heat retention, worsening the city's environmental conditions.
- **Cultural Significance:** The site has irreplaceable Indigenous cultural value and risks being permanently damaged by development.
- **Heritage Protection:** Every part of Victoria Park has local or state heritage listing, encompassing WWII and depression-era history.
- **Community Opposition:** The public has expressed overwhelming resistance to the proposal, citing environmental, cultural, and accessibility concerns.

## 3. What the Bill Would Do

The Bill seeks to classify Victoria Park as an "authority venue" for the 2032 Olympics, effectively exempting its development from 15 key Queensland planning, environmental, and heritage laws. Alarmingly, it would also:

- Remove public access to the Courts for appeals related to Olympic venue construction.
- Override First Nations cultural heritage protections by implementing a fast-tracked consultation process.
- Enable unchecked privatisation of public parkland, opening avenues for corruption.

## 4. Why This Should Concern Queenslanders

This Bill strips away critical legal safeguards that protect all Queenslanders. It places Olympic developments beyond accountability, sidestepping planning regulations, environmental protections, and heritage laws. The removal of court access is unprecedented, silencing community concerns. Additionally, the proposed cultural heritage process undermines Indigenous rights by imposing default plans without Traditional Owners' full agreement.

Using public land for commercial Olympic villages, without scrutiny or planning oversight, is deeply problematic. Exempting these developments from legal review severely limits transparency and opens the door for unjust privatization.

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

I respectfully request that the Committee recommend:

1. Removing Victoria Park / Barrambin from Schedule 1 (Authority Venues);
2. Withdrawing the cultural heritage override provisions;
3. Ensuring Olympic developments comply with existing Queensland laws;
4. Upholding the Victoria Park Master Plan, honouring the community's vision for the park.

Victoria Park is more than just land—it is an integral part of Brisbane's identity and a treasured space for generations. Its loss under rushed, opaque processes would be a devastating blow to our city and community. I urge the Committee to reject this harmful proposal and preserve this vital green space for the future.