

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

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Submitted by:	Koala Action Inc. (KAI)
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TO: QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
RE: The Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of members of Koala Action Inc. (KAI) and provide Koala Action Inc.'s views on the above Planning Amendment Bill 2025.

For your information Koala Action Inc. (KAI) is a volunteer not for profit incorporated association designated as a charity dedicated to protecting and conserving Queensland's koala population, as well as retaining, conserving, replanting and rehabilitating koala habitat. Volunteers undertake a variety of tasks including raising orphaned koala joeys from their homes; rescuing and/or caring for sick, injured adult and orphaned koalas; providing free koala education and awareness presentations; creating koala food tree plantations; replanting koala food trees and other natives in parks, reserves and open spaces as well as rehabilitating secondary habitat to increase its' carrying capacity for koalas and other native wildlife.

In summary, KAI believes this Bill:

- Exempts Olympic developments from 15 planning and environment laws; and
- Requires large scale wind and solar projects to have signed a Community Benefit agreement with the local council before submitting their development application.

Members are deeply concerned that the *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit)* Bill sets a dangerous precedent by allowing Olympic developments to override environment and planning law.

When the world turns its attention to Queensland for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic games, KAI wants this grand state to be celebrated for its natural environment, the diverse flora and fauna as well as the rich cultural heritage. To ensure international visitors can appreciate our precious natural wonders, like the Great Barrier Reef and iconic local koala populations, Queensland needs to take strong climate action while ensuring that all development is properly assessed and well-sited.

Members are particularly concerned about the implications of this Bill on the Aboriginal cultural heritage at Barrambin (Victoria Park) and the potential environmental impacts at Redlands

Whitewater Centre. These sensitive sites must be assessed thoroughly, not exempt from planning and environment laws.

KAI supports making sure that renewable energy developers fully articulate the impacts of projects and that benefits flow to the local community. However, members remain concerned that these rules may not deliver these benefits and could instead be used to delay or reject renewable projects.

KAI urges the State Government to accelerate the Renewable Energy Zone framework to guide local development, provide further support through Local Energy Hubs so that communities can negotiate effectively with developers, and fund local councils to develop, with communities, investment priorities for community benefit funds.

KAI also believes the Government must apply the same requirements on community benefit agreements to resource projects, and maintain community objection rights for resource projects. It is KAI's belief that there is a loophole allowing a coal mine that extracts less than 2 million tonnes per annum to avoid full environmental impact assessment, whereas a 2 hectares solar farm would be impact assessable and have to deliver a community benefit agreement and social impact assessment report.

All developments should be rigorously assessed for the environmental and community impact – Olympic venues and the resources sector should not get a free pass.

Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me via return email.

With thanks Vanda (aka Wanda) Grabowski, President/Secretary, Koala Action Inc.