

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

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Submitted by: David Pyle
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Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee regarding the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (the Bill) Name: Dr David Pyle Address: [REDACTED] Email:

[REDACTED] Phone [REDACTED] I am deeply concerned that the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) Bill sets a dangerous precedent by allowing Olympic developments to override numerous environment and planning laws. When the world turns its attention to Queensland for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic games, I want our great state to be celebrated for our natural environment and rich cultural heritage. To ensure international visitors can appreciate our precious natural wonders, like the Great Barrier Reef and iconic local koala populations, we need to take strong climate action while ensuring that all development is properly assessed and well-sited.

I am particularly concerned about the implications of this Bill on the Aboriginal cultural heritage at Barrambin (Victoria Park). This sensitive site must be assessed thoroughly, not exempt from planning and environment laws. 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 contrary to the expressed views of the (now) Queensland Premier prior to his election is a shocking betrayal of community trust. It will be condemned globally in the short-term and historically in perpetuity. If Victoria Park is lost in its present form, the people of Brisbane and electors of Queensland will be the losers. 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 principles, which mandates avoiding permanent structures in protected areas and prioritizing previously developed sites. 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. 4. Inadequate Public Transport: Unlike other stadiums, Victoria Park lacks sufficient public transport access. The nearest station is a considerable, uphill walk away, posing challenges for attendees, especially those with mobility issues. 5. 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. 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. 7. Lack of Surrounding Amenities: The area lacks the bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues that typically support stadium events, leading to potential over-development within the park itself. 8. Environmental Impact: The park serves as a natural cooling area, mitigating urban heat. Development would increase heat retention and reduce air quality. 9. Cultural Significance: Victoria Park holds deep cultural importance for First Nations communities. Development risks disturbing sacred sites and erasing historical significance. 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. 11. Community Opposition: There is strong public resistance to the stadium proposal, with concerns about environmental degradation, cultural disrespect, and loss of public space.

WHAT THE BILL WOULD DOThe 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.

WHY THIS SHOULD CONCERN ALL QUEENSLANDERSThe 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.

WHAT I AM ASKING THE COMMITTEE TO DOI 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.

All developments should be rigorously assessed for environmental and community impact – Olympic venues should not get a free pass. This suite of legislative tools is needed more than ever and should not be cast aside in a cynical response to pressure from vested interests. Many thanks. Dr David Pyle.