

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

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Submission from the West End Community Association (WECA)

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

To: State Development and Regional Industries Committee

Lodgment : online and email sdiwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Introduction

The West End Community Association (WECA) is a long-standing voice for residents of the inner-south Brisbane suburbs, with a commitment to inclusive, sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. We represent a diverse community that will be directly impacted by the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The 2032 Olympic Games will envelop the entire peninsula. Our community will live in amongst the construction, event and post-games infrastructure. It is critical to explicitly build our community into the planning process of the Games in a transparent and collaborative way.

WECA strongly opposes the proposed legislative amendments under the *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* and the amendments that relate to *Olympic and Paralympic Games Brisbane Olympic 2032*, which we believe undermine democratic accountability, planning integrity, environmental and cultural protections, and community trust.

Overall Position

WECA supports:

- The inclusion of **Social Impact Assessments (SIAs)** and **Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs)** if they are *co-designed* with affected communities and made *legally enforceable*.
- The integration of **renewable energy** within planning frameworks, provided this is not used as a pretext to bypass community rights or delay necessary environmental protections.

WECA **opposes** any legislative changes that:

- **Erode democratic processes**, especially by excluding local government, judicial review, and community appeal rights.
- **Undermine environmental and cultural safeguards**, particularly for First Nations heritage, ecological conservation, and long-term land use planning.

Major Concerns

1. Erosion of Democratic Protections

- The Bill empowers GIIICA to override 15 foundational planning and environmental laws.
- Clause 66 allows Olympic-related developments to bypass standard legal scrutiny.
- Section 53EG removes judicial review rights, fundamentally disempowering communities.
- These changes represent a dangerous precedent of centralised, top-down decision-making in planning processes.

2. Olympic Venue Governance

- Clause 58 reduces board membership on the Olympic Corporation and allows domination by political and corporate actors.
- Traditional Owners, local governments, environmental experts, and community representatives are excluded.
- The Games Leadership Group is to be appointed solely by the Minister, limiting independence and transparency.
- Cultural heritage protections are diminished and local expertise ignored.

3. Development Risks at Key Sites

- *Barrambin/Victoria Park*: A sacred site for First Nations peoples, at risk of irreversible damage. No guarantees of conservation or cultural legacy. The State Department of Heritage recommended strengthening heritage protections this year. These amendments are contradictory to expert advice.
- *GoPrint Site & Gabba PDA*: Threat of public land privatisation with no binding development scheme. Priority given to commercial developments like Brisbane Live.
- *White-Water Rafting Facility (Redlands)*: Adjacent to critical koala habitat. Fast-tracked approvals bypass environmental scrutiny.
- No legislation mandates post-Games community benefit or land restitution, posing long-term risks of land loss and corporate takeover.

4. Risks to Renewable Energy Development

- New regulatory complexity could deter investment.
- Developers retain appeal rights—communities do not.
- Cultural heritage protections are diluted under the guise of clean energy.
- This may ironically slow emissions reduction efforts through increased legal and social conflict.

5. Threat of Public Land Privatisation

- Market-led proposals are being encouraged without consultation.
 - Sites like the Gabba, GoPrint, RNA Showgrounds, and Victoria Park are at risk of permanent alienation from public ownership.
 - There is no mechanism for public scrutiny or community approval of Olympic land deals.
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Positive Alternatives and Additional Recommendations

WECA supports an Olympic Games that strengthens Brisbane's social and environmental fabric—not weakens it. We recommend the following:

1. **Integration, not devastation**

We endorsed the IOC's shift toward using existing facilities. The current government and this Bill does not reflect this principle.

2. **Legacy Uses**

- The Olympic Village and venues need post-Games operation to meet community recreation and residential needs.
- We support the South Bank Convention Centre being used as Olympic media venue to reduce unnecessary construction.
- The Kurilpa Point site (no longer designated for the Olympic Media Centre) should remain in public hands for public use, incorporating recreation, cultural / community facilities, and social housing to service a growing population .

3. **Conservation**

- Guarantee protection of *all existing open spaces*, especially Victoria Park, from development during and after the Games.

4. **Urban Planning Alignment**

- Olympic projects must be fully integrated into the Brisbane City Plan and State Planning Policy—not override them.

5. **Climate Commitments**

- Expand and protect green space. Minimise new hard-surface developments in line with climate resilience goals.

6. **Genuine Community Participation**

- Establish a *Community Advisory Committee* inclusive of local resident associations like WECA , Save Victoria Park, Rethink the Gabba etc, Sporting Association to provide oversight on Games-related projects and planning.

7. Legislative Revisions

- Remove clauses allowing planning, cultural, and environmental law overrides.
- Restore judicial and community appeal rights.
- Make CBAs enforceable and publicly available.
- Mandate independent cultural heritage assessments for all developments.
- Prohibit the sale or lease of Olympic PDA land without full public consultation.
- Establish a public register of all land transactions associated with the Olympics.
- Release and consult on the full Gabba PDA scheme immediately.

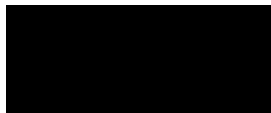
Conclusion

The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games must be an opportunity to enhance, not undermine, Brisbane's communities, culture, and environment. We call on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee to ensure the legislative framework:

- Reinforces democratic governance and planning integrity.
- Centres community voices and Indigenous leadership.
- Preserves public land and ecological systems for future generations.

Brisbane should emerge from the Games with stronger communities, not weaker protections. This Bill, in its current form, is a step in the wrong direction. We urge the Committee to amend it decisively.

Regards,



Seleneah More

President,

West End Community Association

