

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

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Dear Committee

The legacy of the Brisbane 2032 Olympics should not be the destruction of essential green space, valuable inner city biodiversity and cultural heritage at Victoria Park. That's what the Crisafulli Government will do if it ignores and overrides planning constraints that are designed to ensure proper planning that respects the local environment, heritage and community needs and expectations as well as the democratic, properly made decisions and statutory provisions of Brisbane City Council.

Bypassing statutory safeguards puts the community at risk and opens State Government to allegations of favouritism and corruption.

I urge the Committee to withdraw the Bill.

1. 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.

Overriding Brisbane City Council's adopted master plan undermines protection of this critical valuable inner city parkland which is being rejuvenated and revegetated as a central city park. The States bully tactics ignore the democratic will of the citizens of Brisbane and their elected Council for expediency purposes only

2. 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 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. The lack of easy connections to the

new proposed Olympic Village also does not make sense as the areas are disconnected by major road, public transport and community infrastructure.

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.

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. Road closure for the Olympics around the Stadium are unacceptable but common in other Olympic this will put lives at risk if access to medical services by ambulance is disrupted

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.

8. Environmental Impact: The park serves as a natural cooling area, mitigating urban heat. Development would increase heat retention and reduce air quality. Replacing trees and green space with concrete does not reflect the Olympics sustainability mission for host countries

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. The Olympics should be supported by the community in which it is held. It is a poor reflection upon the State Government that they are seeking to bulldoze local communities through poor legislative changes that dismantle essential governance and statutory provisions designed to protect communities and ensure fair and transparent decision making.

3. Why This Should Concern Queenslanders

The 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, City of Brisbane 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. It may not actually be enforceable as removing the inherent jurisdiction of the Queensland Supreme Court is not possible. Privatisation clauses are also controversial and contestable because they are an attempt by parliament and the executive government to stifle powers bestowed upon the Court to examine administrative decision making.

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.

5. What I Am Asking the Committee to Do

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.

I urge the Committee to re-examine the original location at Albion designated in Brisbane's Olympic bid. Jamming a huge concrete stadium and ancillary structures like warming up tracks, support buildings, parking and more into a valuable and iconic City park should not be the legacy of the Brisbane Olympics presented to the world.

Regards

Nicole Johnston
Councillor for Tennyson Ward



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