

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

**Submission No:** 645  
**Submitted by:** Nicki Cassimatis  
**Publication:**  
**Attachments:**  
**Submitter Comments:**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Submission regarding Victoria Park  
**Date:** Monday, 19 May 2025 9:47:44 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

## Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

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

**Name:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

I wish to make a number of points in relation to the proposal to veto 15 Queensland laws and I seek your understanding and forgiveness for any typos or mistakes that appear as a result of attempting this task at the end of a long work day, knowing that the deadline to submit is looming.

I am vehemently opposed to the vetoing of state laws for the purposes of allowing a stadium and related facilities to be built on Victoria Park, without due process, proper community consultation with adequate time for public debate, and with the intention to remove the capacity for judicial challenges, in circumstances where individuals or the community deem the planning, procurement and construction processes unfolding to be detrimental to the city of Brisbane, to the indigenous members of our community whose cultural heritage will be decimated, and to future generations of children yet to be born, who will have had no input into the shaping of their city in such an environmentally and culturally and historically potentially devastating way.

Victoria Park is an inner city public space that is worthy of protection, not only for the current generation -for people of all ages - but for the generations yet to be born.

All our laws serve one fundamental function and that is to ensure that we live in a well-functioning society where citizens' rights are respected and where the rule of law is meant to apply equally to all.

It is crystal clear to anyone with a clear political moral compass, that this step sets an extremely dangerous political precedent, as it puts almost absolute power in the hands of a group of people (who are not public servants) and who potentially stand to gain financially, professionally and personally from involvement in a process that has no checks and balances and is beyond community and judicial oversight. It also creates in my view, a difficult relationship between government and a body that is supposedly independent and yet cannot be held accountable in terms of relationships and influence from members of Parliament and other parties.

We have seen the way that commercial-in-confidence clauses remove transparency from public processes. We hear of freedom of information processes intentionally impeded to

avoid accountability or to buy time for the obstructing party. These are the ways that processes can fall prey to corruption. Without community and judicial oversight, we become impoverished; at the behest of anyone who has power at the time. We see this being played out in the international political arena at this very time and it is unpleasant and extremely disconcerting, even dangerous, to witness, even from afar.

I would specifically like to draw attention to the professional make-up of the review committee appointed by the government for the Victoria Park proposal and would like to see this objectively reflected upon, to determine whether in fact this committee represented (and therefore for present purposes, represents) the broader interests of our community as a whole, and not just the business and sporting community. It was not a secret that sporting bodies had two hour face-to-face meetings with the review committee, the contents of which meeting were, by contrast, secret.

Is it not public money that is going to be expended for the Olympics? Why is it that this level of access to provide a submission is not afforded to an ordinary member of the public but rather that our submissions are to all intents and purposes, faceless, if not anonymous; that we are unable to build a direct connection with the people who are putting forward a proposal that will permanently change the face of Victoria Park (yet again). Those submissions were behind closed doors and the public will be none the wiser about what was said, who would benefit, for how much, for how long and every other question that flows from this one fact...?

That the goal for the government should be that 15 laws of the state of Queensland need to be bypassed to ensure timely (execution and non-interruption of building works) should be reprehensible to any law abiding citizen regardless of how much they love their sport.

When one considers that as ordinary citizens we will be made subject to every law of the land in every aspect of our lives...

For example, planning laws when it comes to constructing our homes, what we can and can't build, where fence lines are allowed to be drawn, and our responsibilities towards our neighbours; laws that govern the running of our businesses; laws that govern how, when, where and how fast we drive on the roads and where we can park; laws that govern our access to Social Security services and schools and hospitals; and the list goes on and on...

But these laws exist for a reason. And they have come at a cost: significant Parliamentary time and money for them to be brought into effect...for the greater good!

Any proposal by an individual or group that sees itself so "above the law" as to brazenly rewrite them to suit their own agenda is not a good faith player; and is gravely eroding trust (whosoever interests they purport to be serving).

The stadium location stands to create a lot of wealth for people who own businesses or properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed stadium. This is where the danger lies and this is why the review committee and their interests and any conflicts of interest need to be closely examined before any legislation is attempted to be changed.

The Queensland community remembers the time of Joh-Bjelke Peterson and his government, and the corruption of his government, along with the ensuing psychological and heritage damage that our city suffered. We do not need to be looking down the barrel of another Fitzgerald inquiry because of our carelessness in this grave matter of changing our laws to suit one event.

We need our politicians to be above that behaviour and to hold themselves to account and not need to be held to account by the people, But if they won't do that, or are resistant to accountability and scrutiny and transparency, then it is absolutely vital that judicial processes are available to provide needed protection. It is vital that the community continues to have recourse to the courts, if it genuinely believes that serious harm or detriment is being inflicted by decision makers and decision-making bodies.

The games has a century long legacy of bringing the world together, of forging connections and promoting harmony. Knowing that there was strong justifiable opposition to such a proposal, it's announcement came as a backhander in the face of all who love nature, all who love green spaces, and all who need to see these spaces preserved and enjoyed for the sake of our collective physical and mental health and well-being, now and into the future.

***A stadium, a new stadium, can be built in any place. But parkland, public parkland, once disappeared, cannot be retrieved.*** And once in private hands, it is no longer a public good, freely available for all to use.

**Victoria Park doesn't matter only to local residents.** It matters to people from all suburbs of Brisbane. It matters to people across Australia and it will matter to those people across the world who were led to believe (falsely it seems) that from now on the Olympics had to be sustainable; so that they can be sustainable.

It appears That Brisbane has lost its soul in the desire to look good to the world. But what looks good to the world is not what this proposal does.

The world will laugh at us because we are desecrating green spaces not preserving them in a time of climate crisis and challenges.

The world will laugh at us because we are doing away with laws that have been designed for decades to protect the very things we are now destroying by this proposal.

The world will laugh at us because we don't care about the future generations of children; or the fauna and flora that is unique to this land, that lives in the park.

But for those of us who care, who though we are tired will stay up lodging a submission because we know it will be a missed opportunity to be heard if we don't...for us, Victoria Park and everything it has to give, and everything we stand to lose... matters!

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, offered in the hope that there are good people who want to do the right thing and want processes to stay fair for everyone as they serve our city and state within public life.

Kind regards

Nicki Cassimatis

## **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.

Indeed, we are also talking tens of millions of dollars that have effectively been wasted of public funds for an exercise that was able to be negated, it seems, with the stroke of a pen.

## **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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### **3. What the Bill Would Do**

The 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.

### **4. 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, 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.

### **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.

Sent from my iPhone