

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

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Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

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

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1. Why Victoria Park Matters

Victoria Park is a community space held in trust for the public. Respectfully, it should not be sacrificed and repurposed for short term or private or commercial infrastructure such as stadium development.

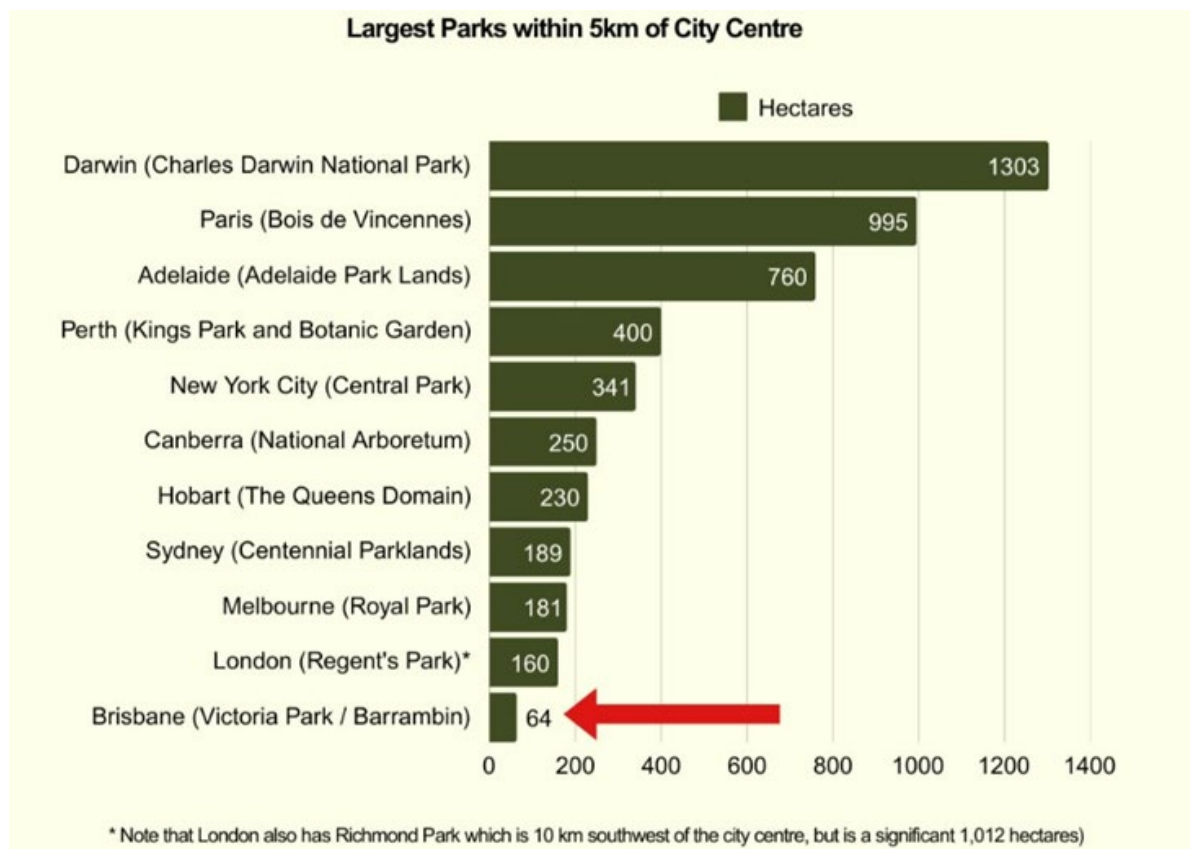
Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city park, spanning over 64 hectares. It is a rare and vital green space that supports recreation, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. The site holds deep significance for First Nations peoples and is cherished by the broader Brisbane community.

The park is important for many reasons - one of which is its impact on human health and wellbeing. A substantial body of research shows that urban greenspaces are essential for healthy communities. They help reduce loneliness - which affects one in four Australians - by restoring our sense of belonging, deepening our connection with nature, and strengthening our capacity to connect with others.

Peer-reviewed research from the University of New South Wales ([Astell-Burt et al., 2022](#)) is one example that reinforces these findings, highlighting how urban greenspaces play a critical role in fostering social connection and psychological resilience.

Brisbane already ranks as the Australian capital city with the least inner-city green space per capita - lower than Darwin, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra, Hobart, Sydney, and Melbourne (see graph below, sourced from [SaveVictoriaPark.com](#)).

Within 5km of Brisbane's CBD, no other park matches the scale or ecological value of Barrambin/Victoria Park. If we build over it, the loss will be irreversible - affecting not just people and communities, but also local wildlife and the climate resilience of our city.



**Figure drawn from SaveVictoriaPark.com*

Following nearly four years of extensive community consultation, the Victoria Park Master Plan was created to reflect the shared vision and aspirations of the community. I participated and spent time and energy, with enthusiasm - as did others I know.

The sudden announcement of Olympic venues within the park disregards this process and constitutes a serious breach of public trust, undermining the collaborative efforts that shaped the park's future.

On a personal level, this decision has deeply shaken my trust in this government's commitment to civic values and the rights of its community.

2. What Victoria Park Means to us personally (our family and community):

My family and I love Victoria Park and visit at least once a week to walk, relax, and enjoy the natural surroundings – alone or with friends. It has become a meaningful part of our lives: my daughter has celebrated her last two birthdays there with family and friends. It is a unique and irreplaceable part of our weekly health and wellbeing activities, and our lives.

If Victoria Park is lost in its present form, we will lose not just a beautiful green space that supports our physical and mental well being and connection, but a place filled with memories, connection, and a sense of belonging to our community.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Caitlin Curtis