

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

Submission No: 667
Submitted by: Ray Kerkhove
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to State Development
Date: Tuesday, 20 May 2025 8:20:25 AM

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: Associate Professor Ray Kerkhove (USQ)

Address: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

1. Why Victoria Park Matters

Having researched broadly on SE Qld Indigenous sites, I can state categorically that Victoria Park is one of the two MOST SIGNIFICANT sites of Inner Brisbane for Indigenous cultural heritage, because:

- a. It was a major inter-tribal meeting and corroboree area associated with important ceremonies and tournaments in the vicinity.
- b. It was one of the largest and most-used camping areas of the Brisbane region.
- c. It has well-documented continuous Indigenous occupation from pre-settlement times until the 1950s.
- d. It played a central role in key historical events of early Queensland.
- e. It was the one-time home of several important Indigenous leaders including the Duke of York and the recently deceased Uncle Des Sandy.
- f. It contains remnants of a waterhole probably used for rain-making and associated with Bunyip stories and other Dreaming lore.
- g. It is the ONLY Indigenous site in Inner Brisbane that retains some of the original form, original features and original vegetation. In fact, the shape of Victoria Park mirrors the former extent of the ridge-top camps.
- h. It was the site of Frontier conflict, including at least two skirmishes resulting in deaths of First Nations people.

The Victoria Park Master Plan was developed after almost four years of community consultation – ESPECIALLY WITH INDIGENOUS ELDERS so the surprise announcement of Olympic venues in Victoria Park is a shocking betrayal of community trust.

Loss of this SACRED Indigenous heritage would be a STAIN on Brisbane's record.

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.

Ray Kerkhove, PhD

Associate Professor (Adjunct)

University of Southern Queensland (Education)