

**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 (POLA Bill)**

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The State Government is proposing the POLA Bill, to override 15 important Queensland environmental, heritage and planning laws, in order to fast-track Olympic infrastructure including TWO stadiums in Victoria Park / Barrambin:

- (a) the City of Brisbane Act 2010;
- (b) the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995;
- (c) the Economic Development Act 2012;
- (d) the Environmental Offsets Act 2014;
- (e) the Environmental Protection Act 1994;
- (f) the Fisheries Act 1994;
- (g) the Integrated Resort Development Act 1987;
- (h) the Local Government Act 2009;
- (i) the Nature Conservation Act 1992;
- (j) the Planning Act 2016;
- (k) the Queensland Heritage Act 1992;
- (l) the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014;
- (m) the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009;
- (n) the Vegetation Management Act 1999;
- (o) the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008

**1. What the Bill Would Do**

The POLA Bill proposes to list a Stadium in Victoria Park as an 'authority venue' for the 2032 Olympics. The Bill would exempt construction of 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.

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 processes bypass scrutiny and reduce transparency when privatising valuable public assets. This POLA legislation seeks to silence the community and fast-track developments in Queensland, setting a dangerous precedent for how major developments are dealt with in this State. The 15 laws which the POLA Bill seeks to override, exist for a reason. They are there to protect Queensland and Brisbane's unique history, to safeguard irreplaceable parts of our environment and heritage against short-sighted decision-making. To dismantle them, in order to ram through two massive, poorly-conceived stadium developments that will deprive Brisbane of a valuable contiguous greenspace (what's left of it) is an insult to all Queenslanders who value their precious green spaces, laws and democratic process.

I am outraged by this proposal.

## **2. Why Victoria Park Matters to me and my family**

Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city park, recently returned to the people, as it should be. It is not "vacant space" for a land grab by developers and other vested interests. At 64 hectares, it 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.

The construction of these stadiums will hurt a great many people. It will deprive a large inner suburban area and the community at large, including education and health precincts, of a beautiful, peaceful recreational space with wonderful vistas, free from pollution and of great environmental and heritage significance, and replace it with a future of absolute hell - unbearable noise, dust, disruption, unacceptable congestion, traffic jams and ugliness.

This government will go down in history as destroyers, not builders.

## **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. This is why:

**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 such areas. A stadium would significantly reduce this public amenity. There are mature native trees in this park which pre-date European settlement, dating 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 over-development 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. Heritage Listing:** 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.

**At time of writing, nearly 700 people feel strongly enough about the importance of Victoria Park, to have donated \$77,670.** These are the people who felt able to donate money to help fund a legal fight against their own government to try to save a park they value. How many more people do you think there are, who feel the same but are unable to donate to this cause?

#### **4. What I Am Asking the Committee to Do**

Please recommend to Parliament that:

- a. Victoria Park / Barrambin be removed from Schedule 1 (Authority Venues);
- b. The cultural heritage override provisions be withdrawn;
- c. Olympic developments be subject to existing Queensland laws like all other developments; and
- d. The Victoria Park Master Plan be upheld as a reflection of the community's vision for the park.

#### **In Conclusion**

I frankly do not understand why my State Government values Victoria Park so little that it would destroy it utterly to build stadiums when there are other flat industrial wastelands crying out for development such as that on the Brisbane River east of Hamilton, or the RNA Showground arena which is ripe for redevelopment. Mature city parks are a rare gem in this age, and all great cities including other Australian capitals have vast inner city parks (much bigger than Brisbane's) which are an absolute haven and respite.

The current Queensland Government was elected on a promise of "NO NEW STADIUMS". An empty promise as it turns out. This government reminds me of the last LNP Government in Queensland, both of which to my lasting regret, I voted for. Due to this government's broken promise on this issue and its proposed POLA Bill, there will be no third chance. If these stadiums go ahead in Victoria Park/Barrambin, I will never again vote LNP in a Queensland State election.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Tutin