

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

**Submission No:** 689  
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## 1. Why Victoria Park Matters

Victoria Park / Barrambin is Brisbane's largest inner-city park. This iconic parkland spans over 64 hectares and is a rare green space in the heart of the inner city, 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.

'When the town of Brisbane was first surveyed in 1844, the site of the present Park and surrounding lands were designated as a reserve.' ( Local Heritage Places- Brisbane City Council)

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 Brisbane City Council '...collaborated with Traditional Custodians, residents, businesses, and community groups to create the Master Plan. More than 80000 people engaged with the project, from the initial ideas phase through to the release of the Draft Master Plan. The Master Plan identifies the priorities community members told us were important to them. There was significant support to restore the park's natural landscape; increase tree canopy cover; revitalise the park's wetlands and waterholes; create unique space, including a treehouse and a nature water play gully.'( Brisbane City Council website The people of Brisbane and Queensland contributed to the MasterPlan process saying what they wanted, On a personal level, Victoria Park holds a significance for me for a few reasons: I was born in RBH and my mother used to walk in the park prior to and after her pregnancy; my father's golf club was Victoria Park. He returned from WWII greatly affected by his war experiences and Victoria Park was an important 'therapy' for

him; when I was a child admitted to RBH for a period, walks in the Park with my parents were a welcomed relief.

## 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. This is a significant issue as such potential violation will result in any development being halted.
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. Ambulances to and from the hospital will have great difficulties navigating such congestion and this delay will put lives at risk.
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. One can imagine ambulances trying to enter and leave the hospital during event days

where traffic and pedestrian congestion will be at its peak. This will be a nightmare and put lives at risk.

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. Another concrete hard surface monolith in once was a beautiful Park. This will be( if it occurs) another disgraceful legacy reflective of the worst of the Bjelke-Petersen era.

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. 'Victoria Park is also known as Barrambin ( the windy place) in the traditional language of the Turrbal peoples. The area 'Walan' was traditionally a meeting and gathering place for indigenous peoples travelling through the area, as well as a cultural site for corroboree, dance, hunting, and fishing. At the time of British settlement, the number of Aboriginal Australians living at Barrambin was significantly more than the number of settlers. Sharing of resources between the the York's Hollow settlement and Aboriginal tribes occurred on this site. There were also several killings of Aboriginal elders and leaders by colonial police and the British Army on this site. However some settlers allowed Aboriginal people to stay on the land despite the colonial government not designating any land in the Brisbane region for use by Aboriginal tribes. Aboriginal people's were inhabiting Barrambin up to around 1910. The proposed destruction of such a significant Aboriginal site in Brisbane would be both an embarrassment Australians and a disgrace by the LNP.

10. Victoria Park is heritage listed- it was added to the Queensland Heritage Register in 2007. This land is part of the story of Brisbane and has a rich WWII and depression era history. It has significant Aboriginal history. Heritage laws must be followed otherwise what is the point of such laws when they can be overridden? Heritage laws are designed to provide for the conservation of Queensland's cultural heritage for the benefit of the community and future generations. Victoria Park is

proposed to be covered by such laws. Qld's own environment department has recommended heritage listing Victoria Park, as the QLD government prepares to ride rough shod over more than a dozen protections if they stop the development of Olympic venues.

11. Community Opposition: There is strong public resistance to the stadium proposal, with concerns about environmental degradation, cultural disrespect, and loss of public space.

12. Victoria Park/Barrambin is home to over 200 species of plants and animals: The Park is an important haven for bird life with 60 bird species identified. Barrambin is an important habitat for both resident and migratory birds. The Park also is a home to mammals, reptiles and amphibians and insects and pollinators including micro bats ( the Eastern Bentwing Bats) which play an essential role in controlling insect populations; tree frogs, the Eastern Water Dragon and skinks; native bees butterflies and beetles. Migratory birds use this Park as a respite We don't know what we have. Imagine the thousands of overseas visitors who could visit this natural open space with its abundance of wildlife and marvel at it. There are Bottlebrush Trees, Native grasses, Fig Trees, and Eucalyptus Trees and many other significant trees. Some of these trees were specifically planted for important occasions eg. honouring returned service people, or as a celebration by local schools- many of these trees are nearly 100 or over 100 years old.

13. Continual Historical Significance: The Park was the site of conflict between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the colonial period; the site of camps for displaced people, including Chinese and Scottish immigrants (1840s), itinerant camps during The Great Depression (1929-1932), war brides (1945-7), and families awaiting housing commission accommodation(1947-1960). As CampVictoria Park, the park hosted Australian and US soldiers/operations during the Second World War, as well as temporary accommodation for returned servicemen and their families after the war. Victoria Park still holds significance with local aboriginal tribes of the Brisbane area. In 2009 BCC and Turrbal traditional owners agreed to add the traditional name of Barrambin as a dual name for Victoria Park, and in 2020, the Council announced plans to build an indigenous cultural learning centre on the land.



The Sports Field (1925;relaid 1935 and including 'Play The Game' Wall (c.1936) and Dressing Sheds and Kiosk (1959-60) are associated with the development of sports organisations, particularly as the first headquarters of the Brisbane and Hockey Association.

14. Correspondence following EPetition to Parliament Stating the QLD Givt has no powers over Victoria Park! - the Minister (as per correspondence below) states that ' It would not be appropriate for legislation to limit the Council's powers in relation to the park, or to constrain the purposes to which the Council's powers can be exercised.' This is quite an incredible statement given the QLD Government is proposing to do just this- 'limit the Council's powers' with regards to Victoria Park. The Minister even acknowledged in her letter of December 2024 that attempting to do this 'would not be appropriate.'



Hon Ann Leahy MP  
Minister for Local Government and Water and  
Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers

Source No.

13 DEC 2024

Mr Neil Laurie  
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter regarding petition 4081-24 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2024 about Victoria Park in Brisbane.

Under the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, the Brisbane City Council (the Council) is responsible for the good rule and local government of Brisbane. This responsibility includes managing Brisbane's parkland and other green spaces and planning how to best use those areas for the benefit of residents.

Because of its responsibility for the Brisbane local government area, the Council is best placed to determine how Victoria Park is to be used for the public benefit. It would not be appropriate for legislation to limit the Council's powers in relation to the park, or to constrain the purposes for which the Council's powers can be exercised.

If they have not already done so, petitioners are encouraged to forward their concerns to <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/contact> regarding the use of Victoria Park for Council's consideration.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr Angus McCaffrey, A/Chief of Staff on 0424 683 186 or [Angus.McCaffrey@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:Angus.McCaffrey@ministerial.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Leahy".

ANN LEAHY MP  
Minister for Local Government and Water  
Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers

### 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. This is sounding like the dark days of Bjelke Peterson- running over existing planning rules for self interest, destroying the environment and making it up as you go.

### 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 long term vision for Victoria Park.

I request that you please consider my submission and reject Victoria Park as a site for the Olympic Stadium and all other infrastructure related to the Olympics.

regards

Bronwyn Morris

Help us grow the moveme