

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

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**Submitted by:** Lindsay Fell  
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## **Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee**

**cc** Hon Steven Minnikin, Member for Chatsworth, Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business

**cc** Cr Ryan Murphy, Councillor for Chandler Ward in Brisbane City Council

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

**Name:** Lindsay Scott Fell

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

## **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. After all the public input that was involved, it is ridiculous to simply jettison all the input and hard work that has gone into this redevelopment.

It has been transformed from a Golf Course into a public park much more widely available to the general public. We have enjoyed walking around this park and enjoying its quiet ambiance, even though it is close to the city.

As an Old Boy of Brisbane Grammar School, I also have significant memories of school cross-countries in this area.

**However, what really upsets me the most is that this decision was taken without any consultation with the local Indigenous leaders. This is a significant indigenous cultural heritage site, and once again this government has ridden rough shod over the wishes and sensibilities of the Indigenous community. This would not happen to other significant ethnic groups in Qld.**

## **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 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. 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.

**This is a retrograde step taking us back to the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It is corrupt!**

**This money would be far better spent improving public hospitals and construction of much-needed social housing. The role of government is to protect and look after the vulnerable in our society, and this government is failing to do so. Everyone to whom I speak about this issue expresses the desire that they are sorry that Brisbane is hosting these Olympic games.**

**It is a shame that we have to wait another 3 years until the next election. I am quite sure that this decision would not have been taken in an election year,**

## **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.

As always I will pray for wisdom for the Government to make wise, just, sensible and compassionate decisions.

Yours faithfully

Lindsay Fell

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