




Speech By
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BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.38 pm): South Brisbane will be the epicentre for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It will be a massive opportunity for infrastructure, for beautiful, accessible venues, for jobs and for publicly owned clean energy, but so far the government's track record on bringing the community along with it has been very poor. There has been zero community consultation, and this bill continues down that path—fostering corruption, denying public access to information, making massive cost blow-outs likely and stacking decision-making bodies against community interests. I will be moving amendments to fix all of these things, and my amendments have been circulated already.

My amendments strike out the ridiculous exemption of federal MPs from Queensland's anti-corruption laws. The government's amendments pay lip-service to the Crime and Corruption Commission's concerns and give federal government MPs a get-out-of-jail-free card.

Secondly, my amendments will ensure the Right to Information Act 2009 covers all documents between the corporation, the AOC and the IOC, with the usual exemptions in the framework to apply. The blanket exemption in the bill is unjustified, as set out in the Queensland Information Commissioner's submission to the inquiry on this bill. Submissions from Friends of Raymond Park and individuals in the community illustrate the community's keen interest in maintaining its right to know what is going on. The clause raises serious questions regarding the expected conduct of the corporation and the power ceded to the IOC and AOC.

Thirdly, my amendments will cap spending on the games at \$5.5 billion, being the current budget plus a 10 per cent buffer. Budget blowouts seem to be a feature of every contemporary Olympic Games, and if we want to avoid this we need to make plans to do so now.

The government's estimated economic impacts have fluctuated wildly. We have been told we can expect \$3.5 billion in very ambiguous social benefits like health, prestige and civic pride. Evidence from the 2000 Sydney games found that, rather than producing an economic benefit, Australian household consumption was reduced by \$2.1 billion. There was no evidence that the Sydney games left a tourism legacy and, instead of boosting employment, the games displaced employment in other activities and sectors. The Sydney games also cost twice as much as its original budget. If we are letting the federal government, the IOC and the AOC treat Queensland like a doormat already, imagine what will happen down the track with billions of dollars on the table.

Fourthly, I will be moving for the government to include a community representative on the corporation. For the 'new norm' to be a reality, we need to place people and those communities most affected at the centre of decision-making. Without genuine community consultation, of which there has been zero to date, we risk losing green space, amenity for local residents and housing security. Beyond this bill, I will keep working to ensure we deliver a games that truly benefit all Queenslanders.

There has not been any community consultation for the games, as I have mentioned. Neither the Labor state government nor the LNP Brisbane City Council have provided transparency about Brisbane's Olympic bid or the planning that has ensued. The council held a closed-door meeting to vote

in favour of hosting the Olympics, locking the public out to keep the details of the bid private. The lack of consultation is in stark contrast to cities like Munich and Hamburg, where residents were given the opportunity to vote in a public plebiscite—and they voted no.

In this absence, I initiated community consultation processes myself—I have done more consultation than the whole government has done—holding in-person meetings and an online survey and meeting with community groups like the East Brisbane State School and the Friends of Raymond Park. To date, nearly 500 people have responded to the survey. These are some of the results: 46 per cent of respondents indicated feeling very negative about the Olympics; 10 per cent felt somewhat negative; 16 per cent felt somewhat positive; and 28 per cent were very positive. Most felt very poorly.

Of those who felt negatively about the Olympics, the key concerns included the excessive use of public money that could be better spent elsewhere, concerns that the government should instead focus on the housing crisis and concerns that the games will drive up the cost of housing and force people out of the neighbourhood. Of those who felt positively, they saw the Olympics as an opportunity to invest in a backlog of much needed local infrastructure, an opportunity to showcase Brisbane to the world and an opportunity to invest in public and active transport that is severely lacking.

Overall, consultation showed a feeling of apprehension, the need for vital investment in the neighbourhood and concerns that benefits may not meet costs. The voice of the community that has been most affected needs to be included in decision-making to ensure local residents are able to realise the full benefits of the games. For example, again off the back of no consultation, the government has identified Raymond Park in Kangaroo Point as a warm-up track. This means that locals will lose access to a well-used park and, despite assurances, residents remain extremely anxious about the potential of losing their homes. East Brisbane and Kangaroo Point locals launched a petition to save Raymond Park, with over 1,600 signatures. For many locals, Raymond Park is effectively their backyard and vital for their mental health and wellbeing. The government needs to be clear about its intent, particularly for those residents who back onto the park.

The government should also investigate alternative sites that could address the issues around the distance between the warm-up track and the stadium for the benefit of Paralympians that ensures no loss of green space and adhere to the election commitment of at least 50 per cent parkland, not open space, at the Cross River Rail site.

Again, with no consultation East Brisbane State School is facing a complete rebuilding of the Gabba stadium right next door. So much for the new norm. East Brisbane State School sits in the shade of the eastern grandstand, and the Gabba has been clawing playgrounds, sports fields and classrooms off the school for decades. In a rapidly growing neighbourhood like East Brisbane, the threat to the school is unacceptable.

From a survey the school conducted in May, the P&C found that 96 per cent of the wider community agreed that the area needs and deserves a local primary school, and 71 per cent of the school community think the school should stay in its current location. Indeed, this catchment deserves an excellent primary school that kids can access on foot or by bike, and the school community deserves certainty about the future of a school that has been educating Queensland kids for nearly 125 years. Education planning driven by a flash-in-the-pan event in a decade's time is an appalling approach to education and a disservice to Queensland kids.

In their submission the P&C asked that the Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games be required to have regard to the needs and best interests of the communities where the games will be held. We are yet to see that commitment, and the set-up for the corporation, shrouded in secrecy, suggests that the government is more interested in putting the financial interests of the IOC ahead of the interests of everyday Queenslanders.

There is also a housing crisis in Queensland. In October the ABC reported that the median house price in Brisbane will tip \$1 million well before 2032. This is similar to what we saw with Expo 88. In the lead-up to the Sydney games, house prices in the Olympic corridor rose by 23 per cent above inflation and rents increased by between 15 per cent and 40 per cent, disproportionately impacting low-income communities. What are we doing to ensure this does not happen in Brisbane? Some Sydney local governments reported a tripling of homelessness and boarding homes being converted into more profitable lodgings for tourists.

There is a long history of 'city cleansing' and displacement of residents in the lead-up to international events. Summer Olympics related developments have displaced more than two million people since the eighties. The Atlanta games saw 9,000 people who were homeless arrested and 30,000 people displaced by gentrification. We observed a similar moving-on of people sleeping rough in Brisbane during the G20 meeting and on the Gold Coast during the Commonwealth Games.

The Olympics is an opportunity for Queensland to deal with the housing crisis and commit to zero homelessness by 2032. Rent caps, rate caps and inclusionary zoning would ensure that every new development includes public housing. Ensuring that 100 per cent of media and athletes' accommodation is turned into public housing after the games, retaining all new infrastructure in public hands, and ensuring that all venues are excellently accessible for everyone would be a real legacy for Queenslanders.

Lasting legacies are not a given, particularly not when decision-making is shrouded in secrecy. Globally, the legacy of the Olympic Games is decaying facilities, abandoned pools, displaced communities and overdevelopment. Any lasting legacies have been fought for. After Expo 88 it was intended for South Bank to become a luxury hotel, world trade centre, retail section and residential area.

Ms Richards interjected.

Dr MacMAHON: I will take that interjection because obviously none of you have done your homework. It was only after a significant community fight that residents secured half of the South Bank site as publicly accessible space. The South Brisbane community and all Queenslanders deserve for the government to be up-front about their plans so that we have an Olympics for everyone, not just those with a financial stake in it.

I am looking forward to these international connections and celebrations. I looking forward to taking my mother to an excellently accessible venue to watch the tennis. This can only be realised with a commitment to consultation and accountability and not corporate profit at the core.

(Time expired)