




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

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MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.12 pm): I rise to speak on the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill. This bill significantly expands the powers of Stadiums Queensland. Under these changes, Stadiums Queensland will not just be managing facilities; it will be managing land as well. Stadiums Queensland currently manages recreational facilities. Under these changes, it will be developing and supporting the use of land declared under the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Act 2001 and facilities associated with major sports facilities for commercial outcomes and where compatible social or community benefit can be demonstrated. These can be used by Queensland Stadiums or leaseholders.

The explanatory notes for this bill are unbelievably dry and they mention the 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games just once, extremely obliquely. The introductory speech is much more candid. This bill is preparation for the 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games. In introducing this bill, the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement stated that this bill will provide Stadiums Queensland the increased ability to operate an effective contemporary, commercially agile and responsible manner to achieve government objectives, all of which has even more prominence as we prepare for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

These Olympics are the government's white elephant. Sometimes listening to the extremely bland, unambiguous bills coming through this parliament, it is hard to imagine what kind of legacy this government actually wants to leave. Is it a legacy of housing? Is it a legacy of health? It does not seem so, and it does not seem to be making life better for everyday Queenslanders either. By joining the dots, this government does want to leave a legacy of a flashy, two-week event in 2032. It wants to be on the red carpet at the opening ceremony. It wants to throw the absolute maximum amount of money at the Olympic Games.

I really enjoyed the contribution yesterday from the member for Greenslopes. To be fair, the 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games are a matter of public interest, certainly in my electorate of South Brisbane. He noted—

Sadly, not everybody is on board with the Olympics and the Paralympics. There are people out there who want to run this wonderful event down. Just in this House alone we have heard the Katters and the Greens running this event down. I hear people in the community parroting things that the Katters and the Greens have said such as why are we spending \$2 billion for a two-week event?

People in the community actually think this. People in Greenslopes think this. People right across Queensland are concerned about billions of dollars going towards the Olympics when people are crying out for investment in housing, in health care, in underfunded state schools and public transport.

Rather than listening to Queenslanders, to say Queenslanders are just parroting opinions is incredibly patronising. There has been lots of activity preparing for the Olympics on the government's part but there has been zero community consultation about the games and their impacts, and is it any wonder given these opinions that people expressing opinions about the Olympics are just parroting

Greens' lines. This lack of consultation contrasts sharply with cities like Munich or Hamburg where residents have the opportunity to vote in a public plebiscite. They said no in both cases. Brisbane City Council even closed its doors for the vote in favour of hosting the Olympics. Zero transparency.

As a local member of parliament, I have worked closely with the local community to represent them on these issues. I have hosted community meetings and an online survey. I have worked with East Brisbane State School P&C and the Friends of Raymond Park and other groups, and it is actually really sad that members representing neighbouring electorates, and members of this government, cannot tell when their own communities are also concerned about these games. People are not just parroting things they hear in Queensland parliament; it is just that people put more weight on what happens in here than what happens in the community. People are worried about the games. They are worried about what bulldozing the Gabba and rebuilding it will take, and they know the government has no interest in hearing their concerns or taking them seriously.

What we do not know about this bill is what land is captured in the remit of stadiums. Will infrastructure have to follow neighbourhood plans or engage properly with community consultation, or will planning for new infrastructure on stadium lands be dealt with like it is for priority development areas or ministerial infrastructure designations that are gaping planning loopholes, tailored to allow private developers to sidestep local planning rules and genuine engagement? What constitutes social benefit? This bill does not outline what criteria is regarded as social benefit, only that it will be determined in the future.

Here is a list of things that this government thinks are in the government's interest: handing over 10 per cent of the Brisbane CBD to a mega casino which has since been deemed unfit to hold a casino licence; handing over \$40 million to a greyhound racing track that will require the clearing of koala habitat to be built, likely killing greyhounds and koalas; threatening a state school and a major park to demolish and rebuild the Gabba stadium at a potential cost of over \$2 billion—

Mr McCALLUM: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member, I was listening. I was about to ask you to explain the relevance of this particular as it relates to this bill.

Dr MacMAHON: The relevance is what constitutes community interest which is what this bill is meant to engage with. These are things that are considered to be in the community interest—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I take a differing view on that. I will ask you to come back to the substance of the bill.

Dr MacMAHON: To be clear, this government pursues things that are in commercial interest which are not in community interest. The explanatory notes and the committee report plainly entertain commercialising public space and facilities. This bill could facilitate things like turning the green space in front of the Gabba into a McDonald's, turning the public land around the Gabba into shop frontage, or contracting fast food joints to run the hot food inside the stadium. To be clear, this is not a bill about sports, this is not a bill about encouraging more people to engage in sports or to get kids into sports; it is about the commercialisation of public land and public facilities.

In this debate today we have heard a lot of individual MPs talking about their experiences at stadiums. Let me tell you a bit about my community's experience with the Gabba stadium. East Brisbane State School has shared a block with the Gabba for over 120 years. The Gabba has steadily encroached on school grounds. The school lost a classroom, playground and, ironically, cricket nets to the Gabba expansion 20 years ago. Despite promises to be able to regularly use the Gabba grounds—it makes a lot of sense that kids can use the beautiful green space right next door—the school struggles to get access to the grounds, and now the proposed Gabba expansion threatens to wipe the school off the map.

The concern from the community is not just parroting Greens policy. This community has been mobilising. They have run a petition. They have been asking for meetings. They have been writing letters. They have been talking to their neighbours. Raymond Park, a 100-year-old park just down the road, is earmarked for a warm-up track. It seems the government planner has said, 'Golly, gee, we need a warm-up track next to this athletics track. There's a bit of green space,' without checking if a warm-up track will fit, without any conversation with community and with no concern for the fact it will wipe out homes, a community garden, a soccer club, a dog park and a playground. This community have also been mobilising, launching a petition, running events and saying to the government, 'Hands off our park.'

I truly wish that this community could feel excited about the Olympic Games. The kids at East Brisbane State School should feel excited about going to the opening ceremony in 10 years time. Gabba residents should feel confident that they will not be priced out of the neighbourhood and they will be

around to enjoy the games, to volunteer and to soak up the atmosphere. How can we feel excited when on the chopping block is a state school, a major park and housing affordability? How can we feel excited when there has been no consultation and there is the threat of losing a school, driving up house prices in a neighbourhood that already has rising levels of rental stress and mortgage stress? Is it any wonder that this community and neighbouring communities are angry? They are questioning the multibillion dollar price tag. This event is budgeted at \$5 billion, but history tells us this will balloon way beyond that. Olympics run over budget on an average of 170 per cent, and it will be everyday Queenslanders footing the bill.

Last week over 200 parents, students and community members rallied outside East Brisbane State School. I want to table some of the photos from this rally.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs depicting rally for East Brisbane State School and Raymond Park, Wellington Road on 20 October 2022 [1754](#).

They show the faces of the kids who do not know where they are going to be going to school in a few years time. They do not know where they will be playing with their friends in a few year times. They do not know where their siblings will be going to school. I wanted to share some of the placards that East Brisbane State School kids painted for the rally. These are the voices of Queensland youth. They include, 'I love my school.' 'Hands off my school.' 'Protect our heritage', 'Education first', 'Where are we going to go?', 'We need schools, no Olympics', 'Choose schools', 'Don't eat our park', 'Little people count too', 'Spend \$2 billion on the books we need', 'Hands off East Brisbane State School', 'Don't demolish our community', 'Don't demolish our education', 'Don't let the Olympics opening ceremony be our closing ceremony'. These are the voices of Queensland youth who are concerned that a two-week event is going to wipe out their school.

Honourable members should not be naive. This is not 10 years away. The plans to demolish the school at the Gabba are earmarked to happen after the 2025 Ashes. A school takes about two years to build. If we are going to build a new school, where is the land? Where is the investment? Where is the education minister? The Greens will be opposing this bill because this is a pathway for the commercialisation of public land.