

23 September 2026

Submission on the Victoria Park Precinct Draft Legacy Plan

Parks & Leisure Australia (PLA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Victoria Park Precinct Draft Legacy Plan.

Parks & Leisure Australia (PLA) is the peak national body representing professionals working across Australia's parks, leisure, sport, recreation and related sectors. Established in 1926, PLA has been supporting the industry for 100 years and brings together more than 3,000 members across five regions nationally.

PLA's vision is for Australia to be the most liveable country in the world, supported by high-quality parks, sport and recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy, connected and resilient communities.

PLA represents a diverse and multidisciplinary sector, including community and urban planning, parks and open space management, environment and conservation, sport and physical activity, tourism and the arts. Through collaboration with government, industry, research and the private sector, PLA promotes evidence-based policy and practice to strengthen the role of parks, leisure and recreation in creating liveable communities and improving outcomes for all Australians.

PLA supports the ambition for Victoria Park to become a place that works for Brisbane every day, as well as for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Draft Plan's proposed combination of parklands, wetlands, recreation, major venues, public spaces and improved connections provides an important foundation for that legacy. Around two-thirds of the precinct is proposed to remain green and public space.

Our central recommendation is that the green and public-space legacy should be treated as essential infrastructure: planned, funded, connected and managed for the long term, rather than as landscape surrounding the major infrastructure.

PLA recommends four priorities:

1. Set a measurable legacy for parks and green infrastructure

The final Legacy Plan should establish a clear baseline and measurable targets for the quantity, quality and function of Victoria Park's green infrastructure and public open space.

This should include trees and canopy, biodiversity, habitat, soils, water management, shade and cooling, recreation, accessibility and connectivity.

PLA supports a no-net-loss-of-green-infrastructure function principle through construction and redevelopment, with improvement wherever practicable.

The measure should be functional, not simply spatial. The replacement of an area of landscape does not necessarily replace the value of a mature tree, established habitat, functioning wetland, shaded recreation space or other public-space asset.

Targets should be publicly reported and aligned with existing Brisbane City Council objectives for Victoria Park/Barrambin and relevant Queensland planning frameworks.

This approach reflects PLA's longstanding advocacy for green and active infrastructure to be planned, funded and delivered as essential infrastructure supporting healthy and liveable communities.

2. Connect Victoria Park to the city around it

Victoria Park should be planned as part of a wider network of parks, public spaces, recreation opportunities and everyday destinations.

The Draft Plan already identifies better connections to the city, Kelvin Grove and Fortitude Valley.

PLA recommends strengthening this ambition through connected green health and green knowledge corridors, including:

- a green health connection between Victoria Park, Herston, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the wider health precinct;
- a green knowledge connection to QUT Kelvin Grove and the surrounding education and research precinct;
- stronger connections through the Brisbane Showgrounds and its future residential legacy;
- safe, shaded and accessible walking and cycling connections to surrounding communities and public transport.

The proposed pedestrian connections across major transport barriers should also be considered as part of this network. In particular, crossings of the Inner-City Bypass and rail infrastructure should be assessed for the potential to incorporate green-bridge approaches where technically and operationally feasible.

These connections should provide more than movement. They can support recreation, everyday physical activity, shade, cooling, biodiversity, water management, social connection and access to nature.

This is consistent with PLA's longstanding position that connected green and active infrastructure is fundamental to healthy, liveable communities.

3. Make long-term responsibility and stewardship explicit

Victoria Park will involve multiple projects, agencies, owners, operators and asset managers. The stadium and other major venues are likely to have different ownership and operational arrangements from the surrounding parklands and public domain. Responsibilities will also change between construction, Games operations and the post-Games period.

The boundary between assets must not become the boundary between responsibilities. The final Plan should establish a clear cross-agency framework for the planning, funding, delivery, ownership, maintenance and monitoring of the green and public-space network.

This is particularly important from a local-government perspective. Councils are often the long-term custodians of public open space, but sustainable stewardship requires that whole-of-life costs, maintenance obligations and asset standards are understood and funded from the outset.

The framework should also embed First Nations knowledge, connection to Country and participation in decision-making, including in the design, management and stewardship of public landscapes.

A publicly accessible reporting mechanism should show who is responsible for what, what has been delivered, and whether agreed legacy targets are being maintained. This would support the integrated and accountable planning objectives of Queensland's Planning Act 2016 while strengthening the practical legacy arrangements for the precinct.

4. Use Brisbane 2032 to establish a new standard for public open space

The Commonwealth–Queensland funding agreement provides an important opportunity. The Commonwealth's capped \$3.435 billion contribution forms part of the \$7.1 billion Games Venue Infrastructure Program, and the agreement specifically requires a Victoria Park Precinct Plan with a focus on improving access to green space. Government has also been clear that the venues are intended to provide benefits well beyond the Games and that Victoria Park is being planned for everyday community use as well as major events.

PLA recommends that Victoria Park become a Brisbane 2032 exemplar for parks, recreation and green infrastructure, with relevant lessons applied proportionately across other Games venues and precincts.

This could build on existing planning and investment mechanisms rather than create another layer of regulation. It should establish practical expectations for: public access; open-space quality; trees and canopy; recreation; connectivity; climate resilience; biodiversity; water-sensitive design; First Nations values; construction impacts; asset ownership; maintenance; funding; and long-term monitoring.

The objective should be simple: public investment in major infrastructure should leave Queensland with better public places, not simply larger venues. **A legacy that lasts beyond the Games.**

The measure of Victoria Park's success will not be confined to 2032. It will be whether the precinct remains a place where people can walk, ride, play, exercise, meet, relax and connect with nature; whether it provides shade and cooling as Brisbane grows; whether its landscapes and waterways continue to function; whether it connects surrounding communities with major health, education and recreation destinations; and whether the public domain is properly funded and cared for over time.

That is the role of parks.

PLA's position is that parks, recreation and green infrastructure are essential community infrastructure. They contribute to health and wellbeing, participation, environmental resilience, social connection, place identity and economic vitality. PLA's stated purpose includes advocating for first-class planning, design and management of public spaces and recognising the economic benefits of tourism, sport and recreation.

Victoria Park provides an opportunity to put those principles into practice on an unprecedented scale. The Games will provide the catalyst. The parks and public spaces will provide the legacy.

PLA Queensland encourages the Queensland Government to strengthen the final Legacy Plan so that Victoria Park becomes a benchmark for how Queensland plans, invests in and stewards public open space for generations.

PLA Queensland welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the next stages of planning and delivery for Victoria Park and looks forward to working with the Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council and other partners to help realise its long-term potential. As a leading voice for parks, recreation and public open space, PLA is keen to share its expertise and support the development of a legacy that places people, nature and community at its centre. We look forward to being actively involved in helping shape a greener, healthier and more liveable Queensland, with Victoria Park providing an enduring example of how investment in parks and green infrastructure can deliver benefits for generations to come.

Any questions can be directed to our PLA QLD executive officer, Ursula Gleeson on plaql@parksleisure.com.au or 0417 020 126

Kind regards



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