



Amy MacMahon MP
Member for South Brisbane



27 July 2022

Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
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Hon Anika Wells
Minister for Sport
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Hon Jason Clare
Minister for Education
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2032 Olympics Infrastructure in Brisbane

Dear Minister King, Minister Wells and Minister Clare,

We write to you with regards to planning the delivery of infrastructure in Brisbane for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As elected representatives from council, state and federal governments, we represent the areas where many of the major 2032 Olympics venues have been proposed. Rather than an opportunity for excitement and hope, the complete lack of information from the state government, and the absence of any community consultation, has caused anxiety, anger and frustration in the community.

Olympic Games put upward pressure on house prices and rent, people are displaced from their communities, and there is limited evidence on the tourism or economic benefits. On average, the Olympic Games run over budget by 172%. The feedback that we have received from our constituents is that public funds, and the attention of governments at all levels, would be better focused on housing, healthcare, education and clean energy.



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The Gabba Redevelopment

The Queensland government is proposing to demolish and rebuild the Gabba Stadium (the Gabba), to be the location for the main athletics stadium and the opening and closing ceremonies. We understand that this is projected to cost \$1 billion, with contributions from both the state and federal governments. The Gabba will be increased to 50,000 seats (from 42,000), and increased in size to accommodate an athletics track. It is currently a cricket ground, and will return to being a cricket ground after the Games. Using the Gabba Stadium as the main Olympic stadium is unworkable for a number of reasons.

The Gabba is co-located with a state primary school, East Brisbane State School. The school has shared a block with the Gabba for 123 years. Parts of the school are state heritage listed. The school is actively growing, and in a fast growing neighborhood. Gabba expansions over the years have steadily encroached on the school, and the school has lost buildings and playground area. The Gabba redevelopment may now completely wipe out the school. There has been no consultation.

The East Brisbane community is growing quickly, and prior to the announcement of the Gabba as the main stadium, the school was set to get an additional building, to cater for a growing school population. The school had also been advocating for an expansion of the campus to include a block across the road, as has recently happened at West End State School.

The school community has been left entirely in the dark about the future of the school. There has been no formal consultation or information. Parents, children and teachers are anxious about what this means for their future.

From what I understand, the government is considering a number of options, none of which have been formally brought to the school community. One option includes acquiring land in the catchment for a new school campus. Another option is to amalgamate the school with another school outside of the catchment. This second option is unacceptable - this is a densely populated, fast growing area that needs a local primary school. It is unacceptable that the Olympics would



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dictate education infrastructure planning. A community petition¹, set up by a school parent, already has 1861 signatures.

In addition to concerns about the school, Olympics athletics stadiums need to have a warm-up track within close proximity to the main stadium. Olympics requirements dictate that this be a full-sized track, with a number of associated buildings and facilities. At this stage, the government has identified a nearby park to accommodate the warm-up track. Raymond Park is one of the few substantial parks in the Kangaroo Point/Woolloongabba community. It currently houses a soccer club, dog park, playground, a community garden, cricket pitches, a basketball court and an exercise area. The park is over 100 years old, and is home to 100-year-old trees. A standard sized warm-up track will not fit in Raymond Park without removing trees, park facilities and surrounding homes. While the Brisbane City Council have stated that the track would be temporary, and will return to parkland after the Games, homes and established trees cannot be replaced once removed. A community petition² set up by the Friends of Raymond Park group, already has 2838 signatures.

The new norm³

The Brisbane 2032 Games are meant to be functioning under the 'new norm'. The new norm is designed to save costs and unnecessary infrastructure by maximizing use of existing infrastructure, temporary demountable venues as venues outside the host country. The goal is to improve sustainability.

Within formal documents, the Gabba Stadium is being considered an existing venue. But this is false. In demolishing and rebuilding the stadium, this is a new venue. At this stage, this new venue is being pushed at the expense of the local state school, and a local park. There has been no community consultation.

In addition, the state government has committed to making the 2032 Games 'carbon positive', by being carbon neutral and "set in motion actions and lasting behaviour change to achieve:

¹ <https://www.change.org/p/save-east-brisbane-state-school>

² <https://www.change.org/p/qld-state-government-kangaroo-point-green-space-save-raymond-park>

³ <https://olympics.com/ioc/faq/roles-and-responsibilities-of-the-ioc-and-its-partners/what-is-the-new-norm>



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greenhouse gas reductions greater than the Games residual emissions; additional climate benefits for host communities". A rebuild of the Gabba will be environmentally destructive and wasteful. The destruction of trees, homes and parkland at Raymond Park will be environmentally destructive. Relocating East Brisbane State School outside of the school catchment will force more families to drive, eliminating other potential carbon savings for years to come. A temporary warm-up track is also environmentally destructive, and a waste of money, when a permanent location could be used.

Alternative Locations

If the 2032 Olympics are to go ahead, there are a number of alternative locations for the main stadium, that would be more cost effective, and without the impact on the local community:

- **Mettricon Stadium at the Gold Coast:** This is a full-sized stadium, and has an adjacent warm-up track. It was used for the Commonwealth Games in 2018. Being relatively new, it would require minimal work to function as the 2032 main stadium. It is close to an existing train station.
- **Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre:** QSAC is in Mt Gravatt, 15 minutes south of Woolloongabba. It seats 48,500 people, only a few short of the planned capacity for the Gabba Stadium. It already has a warm-up track, and could be upgraded with minimal impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.
- **Eagle Farm Racecourse:** The Eagle Farm Racecourse could accommodate an athletics stadium, and the adjacent Doomben Racecourse could accommodate a warm-up track. This location is close to a train station. It is also close to the planned athletes village.

Lack of consultation

To date, there has been no consultation with affected communities. While other cities around the world have engaged cities via plebiscites to decide to bid for the Olympic Games, the Queensland Government have done no consultation whatsoever. In 2021, when I asked what consultation had been done, the Premier told me that there had been a lot of media coverage about Brisbane's Olympics bid. The communities surrounding the Gabba, East Brisbane State School and Raymond Park have never been consulted. This is a very poor reflection of what regard the government gives to the needs, ambitions and futures of everyday people.



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From recent media reports⁴, I note that the federal government has yet to reach a firm agreement with the Queensland government regarding funding for the rebuild of the Gabba Stadium. I urge you to ensure that any agreement is predicated on:

- The protection of East Brisbane State School
- The full protection of Raymond Park with an alternative location for the warm-up track
- A guarantee that measures will be put in place to ensure housing affordability including: rent caps, regulating short-term accommodation, inclusionary zoning around Olympics venues, building tens of thousands of public homes, and guaranteeing that Olympics Village and other accommodation be transferred to public housing after the Games.

We understand that the East Brisbane State School P&C have also recently written to you, requesting a review of the business case for the redevelopment of the Gabba, concern around the lack of consultation, questions around the allocation of public funds, and the need to consider the school in the rebuilding of the Gabba. We understand that the P&C is requesting that as a condition of any Federal funding, that the school remains, or newly established within the existing catchment.

We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Amy MacMahon
State Member for South
Brisbane

Max Chandler-Mather
Federal Member for Griffith

Jonathan Sri
Councillor for the Gabba Ward

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<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/federal/gabba-olympic-funding-up-in-air-despite-purported-pact-with-former-pm-20220721-p5b3f0.html>



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Media Coverage and Background

- [Solutions to save East Brisbane State School have been put forward by the community](#), June 2022, The Courier Mail
- [123-year-old East Brisbane State School locked in 'David v Goliath' battle to survive, June 2022](#), The Courier Mail
- [As Brisbane looks ahead to the Olympics, the survival of a heritage-listed school hangs in the balance](#), March 2022, The Guardian
- [Parents concerned as Gabba revamp threatens school](#), April 2021, Brisbane Times
- [Residents ask the Premier "Save Raymond Park"](#), Nov 2021, ABC News
- [Temporary warm up track may pave over century-old Qld park](#), February 2022, Nine News