

April 2023

Dear Madam/Sir

This letter has been written on behalf of Friends of Raymond Park. It expresses the communities concerns about the Gabba development and the impact it will have on Brisbane and the community.

Re: concerns around the proposed Olympic Athletics Warm up Facility at Raymond Park

Raymond Park has been earmarked for the future athletics warmup track and field facility for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This proposal is incongruous with the International Olympics Agenda 2020, the New Norm initiatives and the 2020+5 policies.

Friends of Raymond Park are concerned that the proposal to develop Raymond Park will have serious long-term consequences for the area and the community.

Raymond Park

Raymond Park is an established green open inner city public park that currently services the surrounding communities within Kangaroo Point, East Brisbane and Wooloongabba, It is an important public space in terms of servicing the Desired Standards of Service provisions in such a high-density neighbourhood (highest in Queensland).

Raymond park is highly utilised, servicing a range of formal and informal recreational activities, for a large and diverse residential population. It is a well-loved park and highly valued by the (large surrounding) community and visitors.

The green open space that the park provides important shade and cooling for the many visitors that frequent the park. Furthermore the green space and large trees help reduce the heat island effect in a dense urban environment.

The fig trees within the Park are over 50 years old and some of the palm trees are over 100 years old.

Facilities within Raymond Park include playground, dog offleash, outdoor exercise gym, skate bowl, basketball court, picnic and barbeque facilities, soccer/hockey field and cricket pitches. The park also forms important pedestrian thoroughfare and connection routes between Sinclair Street, Wellington Road and Baines Street. Maintaining this shady pedestrian through route is important for the greater community who utilise these routes for both exercise and commuting. Other than the formal parkland embellishments the park is also used for picnics, parties, kickabout and a number of other informal activities. The park is highly used and valued by the local communities within East Brisbane, Wooloongabba and Kangaroo Point South. It provides an important green space for socialising, gathering, meeting and respite. Many community members have got to know eachother through regular use of the facilities within the park. Raymond Park also provides important habitat for a number of bird species including a resident curlew family.

The parkland sits within a leafy Character Residential neighbourhood, which is surrounded by high density residential. Many of the houses within the Character Residential Zone live adjacent to Raymond Park with a number of residential houses that share their boundary fences up against the parkland. A number of community members, including those from the surrounding high-density residential developments use and rely on Raymond Park for green open space. Some of the new developments showcase Raymond Park as one of the selling features for unit sales.

2032 South East Queensland Olympics Agenda

The agenda for the 2032 Olympics is to be one that is sustainable with facilities that provide an ongoing legacy. *"Our focus has never been on a few weeks of competition. It must be on decades' worth of investment that will set up Queensland for the next 20 years"* Annastacia Palaszczuk, Courier Mail , 23/02/2022.

Below is supporting evidence of the 2032 Olympic games legacy objectives:

- Olympic Agenda 2020- the "[New norm](#)"- invites opportunities to reduce venue sizes, rethink transport options, **optimize existing infrastructure** and reuse the field of play for various sports
- International [Olympic Committee Charter \(2020\)](#):
 - **2-14** to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly;
 - **2-15** to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities, regions and countries;
 - **34** location, sites and venues of the Olympic Games, **priority must be given to the use of existing or temporary venues and infrastructures**. The construction of new permanent venues or infrastructure for the purposes of the organisation of the Olympic Games shall only be considered on the basis of sustainable legacy plans.
- IOC Feasibility Assessment 2021- Recommendation from IOC to consider reusing existing Carrara Stadium in Gold Coast for Athletics and the Gabba for ceremonies (used at the 2018 Commonwealth Games). Please note the current Premiers incorrect statement that the bid included the Gabba for athletics on ABC news 17 February 2023- Albion was proposed in the initial bid. See incorrect statement :
<https://www.facebook.com/melissa.occhipinti.58/videos/895669045085755?idorvanity=4320746281307337>

Proposed Warm up Athletic Track Proposal

Track and Field Facilities Manual 2019 - Construction requirement for a warm-up facility:

- The Olympic Games requires a "Category 1 construction for competition facilities", ranging from tracks to spectator stands. Refer Appendix 1.
- Physical location of warm up track- Preferably, within the same sports complex, adjacent to the competition facility, however, there is no maximum limit in distance set. If a facility is being considered for a major international event, the location and standard of the warm-up facilities will be assessed by the relevant governing body.

An athletics warm up facility will see the hard surfacing of a green open space, with embellishments including sealed track and field facilities, spectator grandstands, changerooms, flood lighting, parking, bus turnaround and circulation pathways. The facility will be fenced off to the public.

The construction of both the Gabba and Raymond Park will likely bring the whole of the eastern suburbs to a standstill, where many people rely on the local network to commute to the city and access the highway. Traffic is already congested within this locality.

Impacts of Proposed Warm up Athletic Facility

If constructed at Raymond Park, the proposed athletics track will result in:

- The loss of a number of highly utilized facilities such as the dog offleash, playground, kickabout, picnic facilities, basketball court and outdoor gym
- People will lose their homes forever for a temporary event. Please note that Minister Miles was incorrect- residents have not been consulted.
<https://www.facebook.com/954044698655850/videos/768010604750752?idorvanity=4320746281307337>
- Mature trees and canopy removed for a temporary event
- Loss of an important walking and cycling commuter pathway network and connector
- Loss of community meeting space and wellbeing

Furthermore there will be a number of significant negative impacts to the community and surrounding area including:

- Net loss of green open space and parkland, resulting in a deficit of parkland within a dense residential area
- Lighting impact as a result of required flood lighting in close proximity to surrounding residences
- Traffic impacts during a minimum 12 month construction phase and during game period (noting the local area is already congested and Baines, Sinclair and Rosina Street are relatively small residential streets)
- Noise and dust impacts to residential neighbourhood during construction and game period
- Increase of heat island effect to neighbourhood due to significant hardscaping extents and buildings and removal of trees and green open space

Large scale sporting facilities are usually located in larger open spaces where there is little impact to communities or at least a buffer can be provided. The proposal is incongruous with the surrounding residential fabric and the space required will not provide any buffering to residential homes.

Furthermore restricting access to the local residents during games within a high density residential area is impractical and not feasible.

Due diligence

Given the information provided above regarding the high value that the Raymond Park has within the wider community, and the significant impacts that loss of this green space will have as a result of the proposed warm up athletics facility, the question is asked as to whether due diligence has been undertaken by the government, including:

- The mix of Character residential, surrounded by high density residential is not an appropriate location for a world class sporting facility. Has due diligence been undertaken as to the precedence and appropriateness of such a proposed facility in this location?
- The deficit of green open space, with no proposal to acquire/ offset green open space in the nearby vicinity to replace the loss of open space is inconsistent with the desired standards of service of green open space as stipulated in the planning scheme. Has consideration been given to acquiring new open space that can equally accommodate the loss of green public space as a result of the proposed warm up facility?

- The new facility will raise the ambient temperature of the surrounding area, as well as creating an uncomfortable space where people will be too exposed to walk around the increased heat of the exposed concrete facility. Currently people walk and cycle through the park and it is a comfortable place, should the vegetation and shade be removed this will stop people from utilizing this space for walking or cycling to access public transport, shops etc, thereby increasing traffic on road, and making this currently valued public space redundant for this purpose. Many older people use this park and sit on the benches under the trees. Has the temperature impact been measured impact of ambient temperature changes to the local area with the removal of permeable green space?
- The extensive construction time will have traffic and noise impacts- has this impact been studied, including the feasibility of trucks and construction vehicles being able to access the park given the constraints of the surrounding narrow streets, that are already constrained and heavily impacted on by local traffic in the area?
- Has a social impact been undertaken as to the community health and wellbeing as a result of loss of important green open space and the highly utilised park facilities?
- Have other alternative athletic facility locations been explored that provide more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable solutions that the loss of parkland at Raymond park? Please refer to alternative locations.
- Have the relevant spatial buffers (noise, light, safety, amenity, existing views over park) been considered between the proposed warm up facility and the existing adjacent homes that will not be resumed (noting the close proximity of many character houses and Raymond Park)
- Has the local walking and cycle commuter and access routes been assessed to understand how people currently access public transport, shops and other local nodes through Raymond Park, and the impact that fencing the route off to the public (particularly between Sinclair Street and Wellington Road, will have on the local access network?
- Has the impact of loss of homes through resumption been considered, including market value to those houses that back onto Raymond Park?
- Has the logistics and impact of locking down one of the highest density residential areas (as well as highly inner- city trafficked road network grids and highway access points) in Brisbane during games for moving athletes between warm up and main facilities actually been considered?
- Has the long term economic burden on the tax payer been considered, particularly during these economic times where government should be lean?
- Have sustainable and carbon neutral targets and repurposing been considered?

Temporary or Permanent Athletics Warm up Facility at Raymond Park

There are two scenarios which can be posed with this proposed Athletics warm up development:

A: It is a permanent facility

This would result in a permanent loss of public green open space within a high-density residential area. There would be permanent negative impacts as stipulated above and would therefore be an unsustainable solution and poor legacy outcome for Brisbane.

B: It is a temporary facility

(refer [channel 9 excerpt](#) "Its expected impacts will be temporary and the park will return after the games")

The costs required to construct a “temporary” world class facility, with all its required embellishments for an event that runs for a few weeks is highly incongruous with the sustainable and positive legacy messaging from the IOC and government. Furthermore the loss of mature trees and resumption of character residential houses and displacement of families is a permanent loss and cannot be reinstated. The extensive construction period, followed by the games period, followed by the decommissioning and removal of the facility and substructures (for example drainage, sewerage and water underground infrastructure etc.) would mean that there would be multiple years whereby this location would not be publicly accessible, and the construction, noise, dust and lighting would likely be almost consistent during the period before and after the park is returned back to the public (which it is believed is unlikely given the costs attached to undertaking such a development for such a short event.)

It is understood that along with this option the proposal for the Gabba is to demolish the existing stadium, rebuild it to include Athletics and then decommission the athletics facility post games and return the Gabba back to cricket and AFL, where it serves in its current capacity. This also seems highly incongruous with the sustainable and positive legacy messaging from the IOC and government.

Recommendation

Friends of Raymond Park recommend that the 2032 Ceremony be held at the Gabba, where minor upgrades can be maintained and that the Cross River Rail Site become a park and forecourt supporting the Ceremony. This upgrade will assist with future cricket and AFL games. We recommend that the Athletics be relocated to:

- Carrara as recommended by the IOC in the 2021 Olympic Bid,
- at Queensland Sport and Athletic Centre (QSAC) which is 10kms from the city; or
- at Albion as originally proposed in the Olympic Bid

These options provide more positive legacy outcomes for SEQ/Brisbane and would be more inline with the messaging of the IOC and government in providing a sustainable 2032 Olympic Games”

The proposal to locate the Olympics Athletics Warm up track at Raymond Park has no benefit to the community, to Brisbane, to tourism, to the economy or to the environment. It will become a white elephant in a place is currently highly used and valued by the community. It is not in keeping with the objectives of the IOC and government in terms of creating positive legacy outcomes.

Friends of Raymond Park have over 750 members who are strongly opposed to this development. To date the Save Raymond Park petition has almost 3000 signatures opposed to the construction of such a development on green public open space.

Friends of Raymond Park urge all those who have a part to play in selecting a venue for the Athletics warm up facility to undertake further due diligence and to select a venue that is fit for purpose, that has sustainable and positive legacy outcomes, that does not take away valuable green open space or homes.

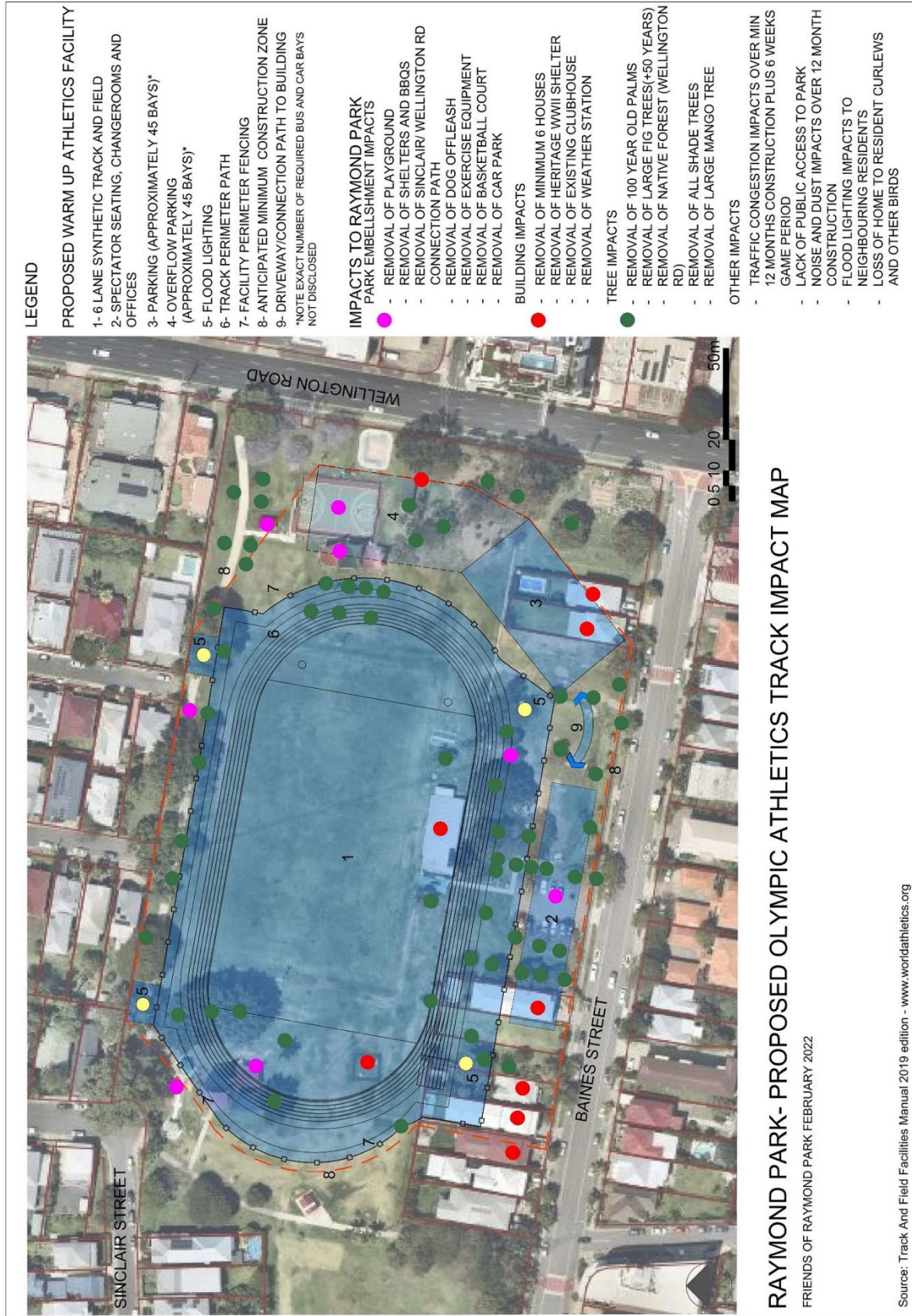
Thanks

Kind Regards

Cass Gaisford

(on behalf of Friends of Raymond Park)

Appendix 1- Raymond Park Proposed Facility Impact Map



Appendix 2- Village News article March 2022

V | news

Locals fighting plan to bulldoze park for Olympics

By Rob Mellett

The proposal to flatten one of Brisbane's oldest parks for an Olympics track has provoked anger and disbelief in a close-knit Kangaroo Point community.

The State Government has earmarked Raymond Park for a 400m outdoor athletics track for the 2032 Olympic Games.

Friends of Raymond Park (FORP) campaigners said the race is now on to save the 109-year-old park, on Wellington Rd and Baines streets, from devastation.

They said century-old fig trees will be axed, houses will be resumed and a dog park, soccer pitch, playground and community garden will be destroyed to accommodate the track.

"There is absolutely no way the facility can be built without resumption of homes," FORP co-founder Melissa Occhipinti said.

"Locals have not been consulted about this project. We have asked the State Government to see plans showing how the track will fit in the park and at what cost, but we have been ignored.



FORP campaigners Melissa Occhipinti, Cass Gaisford and dog Milan.

"Our questions have fallen on deaf ears."

Athletics regulations mandate track measurements should be a minimum 167m long x 85m wide and have no fewer than six lanes. It would feature facilities for a



Campaign group graphic showing how the track would look in the park. Source: Track And Field Facilities Manual 2019 edition - www.worldathletics.org.

high jump, plus a throwing field for hammer, discus, javelin and at least two shot-put spaces.

An additional 250sq m would be needed for toilets, change-rooms, lighting, parking, a public address system and a grandstand for spectators.

"Raymond Park accounts for half of the available green space at Kangaroo Point; how long are we expected to lose it for?" Ms Occhipinti said.

A spokesperson for Steven Miles, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, said the park was considered the "ideal location for the track, based on its scale and proximity to the Gabba".

"The proposed, temporary warmup facilities at Raymond Park would be removed immediately following the Games and the park will be restored back to the community," the spokesperson said.

He said residents would be kept informed and "any short-term impacts minimised".

The State Government said it is still too early to say what impacts the park would suffer, but Ms Occhipinti said campaigners

were informed by letter late last year that Olympics architectural firm Populous had already carried out studies of the effects of the Olympic Games track upon the site.

FORP co-founder Cass Gaisford said residents remain sceptical about the park's return to green space.

"We are being told this is 'temporary' but, really, how do you build a temporary Olympic-grade track involving all that cost and time for it all to be pulled down again?" Ms Gaisford said.

"What will be destroyed cannot be returned, things like the character-listed homes and the century-old trees."

FORP campaigners believe a better option for the warmup track would be to build it at Coorparoo Secondary College.

To make your views known, you can email MP Terri Butler at terri.butler.MP@aph.gov.au, MP Stirling Hinchliffe at tourism@ministerial.qld.gov.au, or MP Steven Miles at deputy.premier@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Go to facebook.com/groups/4320746281307337/ or you can sign the Friends of Raymond Park petition at chng.it/4jpfYh2zv9



M JAN MANTON GALLERY

Medicine Clay
Simone Arnol & Bernard Singleton

Artist: Simone Arnol, Bern Singleton
Photograph: on cotton rag, 48 x 35, 2019, Edition of 6.

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Please keep letters to 150 words or less. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Supply your name and suburb.