



## **EAST BRISBANE STATE SCHOOL P&C**

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### **Submission to Senate Inquiry into Australia's preparedness to host Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games**

#### **East Brisbane State School Parent and Citizens (P&C) Association Olympic Impact Group**

**22 April 2023**

#### **Who we are**

East Brisbane State School is the only public primary school for East Brisbane, Kangaroo Point and Woolloongabba, and is located adjacent to the Gabba stadium.

East Brisbane State School (EBSS) is a vibrant school community for over 300 primary-aged students and their families. EBSS has had a growing population in recent years, in line with the growth in school-aged children in the local area<sup>1</sup>. It is a multiculturally diverse school, including hosting an English program for newly arrived migrant and refugee children.

East Brisbane State School has a proud tradition, with its current site having been used as a primary school since 1899. The site is on the Queensland Heritage Register.

East Brisbane State School is well-supported by parents and the local community, including an active Parents and Citizens (P&C) Association. In order to respond to the growing parent and community concerns regarding the Gabba stadium, the EBSS P&C has formed a subcommittee, the Olympic Impact Group. This submission is made on behalf of the P&C Olympic Impact Group.

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<sup>1</sup> Growth in student population data is taken from the Education Queensland website. East Brisbane State School | Department of Education ([eq.edu.au](http://eq.edu.au))

## Response to Terms of Reference

### a) The adequacy of existing infrastructure to host games events.

The Queensland Government has continually presented the idea of a rebuilt Gabba stadium as the main athletics stadium for the Olympic and Paralympic games, however have not adequately explained to Queenslanders why the Gabba rebuild has been favoured over other available options.

In the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Feasibility Assessment – Olympic Games Brisbane<sup>2</sup> published February 2021, the IOC comments on the Olympic Stadium project were:

*“Consider using Carrara Stadium (40,000) in Gold Coast for Athletics. Consider using The Gabba (40,000) for Ceremonies”<sup>3</sup>*

Carrara Stadium (known commercially as Heritage Bank Stadium) served as the athletics stadium for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, so has proven capability to host major athletics events. A temporary grandstand was added to increase the capacity of the stadium to 40,000 seats for the Commonwealth Games, and the IOC will support the use of temporary facilities where new, permanent venues are not supported by viable business plans<sup>4</sup>.

Carrara Stadium also has existing public transport links (including proximity to the main train line), an adjacent oval that could potentially be used for warm-up facilities, and a significant public plaza area.

### b) Investments into the provision of new or upgraded sporting infrastructure to host games events, which will have legacy applications for elite and community sports.

The Gabba rebuild project requires using a local park, Raymond Park, as a temporary warm-up track for the Olympic athletes. If we consider the legacy that Olympic/Paralympic infrastructure will have on community sports, we can see that the proposed use of Raymond Park is flawed.

Raymond Park already serves as a community sports facility, hosting a soccer club, basketball court, skate ramp, outdoor gym, cricket pitches and a playground. These facilities will need to be removed for the temporary warm-up track. This clearly prioritises elite sporting facilities over community sports facilities. If the Olympic stadium was placed elsewhere in Queensland, there would be opportunity to create the warm-up track as a

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<sup>2</sup> From the IOC website [Future Host Commission for the Games of the Olympiad \(olympics.com\)](https://olympics.com/future-host-commission-for-the-games-of-the-olympiad)

<sup>3</sup> This comment refers to the Gabba stadium at its current size, not the slightly larger, rebuilt Gabba proposed by the Queensland Government.

<sup>4</sup> Olympic Host Contract – Principles. Section 15.3. [Host-City-Contract-2032-Principles.pdf \(olympics.com\)](https://olympics.com/host-city-contract-2032-principles)

permanent facility that could be an asset for continued community use without removing other community sporting facilities.

**h) the costs and benefits to the Australian community of investments in infrastructure to support the Games, including any impacts on local government, communities and business in host locations.**

East Brisbane State School (EBSS) is currently directly adjacent to the Gabba stadium. As a part of the Queensland government's decision to rebuild the Gabba for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Queensland government has also decided to remove EBSS from its current site. The cost of Olympic Games infrastructure to our community could be the loss of a much-needed primary school in our community.

In February 2023, Education Queensland undertook a tokenistic consultation process regarding options for EBSS. Three options were presented:

1. Relocate East Brisbane State School to the Coorparoo Secondary College site as a primary school
2. Redevelop Coorparoo Secondary College as a P-12 school.
3. Close East Brisbane State School.

**Options 1 & 2: Relocate to/Merge with Coorparoo Secondary College**

If Education Queensland's proposal to move East Brisbane State School to Coorparoo Secondary College were to go ahead:

- The school will no longer be walking distance for many children who currently walk to school. There are also concerns about the safety of the available footpaths.
- The school will be moved in an easterly direction, away from rapidly growing populations of school aged children to the north and west of the current site<sup>5</sup>.
- There will be three schools, Coorparoo Secondary College, Brisbane School of Distance Education and East Brisbane State School on the same campus, having a detrimental effect on traffic volume and flow in that area.
- East Brisbane State School will be in an area of higher flood risk than its existing campus, with no flood mitigation plan having been made available for the site<sup>6</sup>.
- Nearly all of the vacant land at Coorparoo Secondary College is reclaimed rubbish dump. This raises serious concerns about whether Education Queensland intends to place children's play areas over the top of a reclaimed dump site<sup>7</sup>.
- The heritage of East Brisbane State School's current campus will be lost.

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<sup>5</sup> Data about the growth and projected growth in school-aged children is extracted from the Queensland Government's projected school-aged persons map [Interactive schools infrastructure demand map, 2018 edition](#) ([qgso.qld.gov.au](http://qgso.qld.gov.au))

<sup>6</sup> Data about flood risk is drawn from the Brisbane City Council Flood Awareness Maps [Map - Standard | Flood Awareness Online](#) ([brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://brisbane.qld.gov.au))

<sup>7</sup> Rubbish dump map accessed from Brisbane City Council Archives. Photograph available on request.

### Option 3: School closure

Kangaroo Point and Woolloongabba are experiencing rapid growth in the number of school aged children and projections indicate this growth will continue into the foreseeable future, so there is no logical reason that the state government would consider closing the local primary school. If the construction of Olympics infrastructure was at the cost of a local primary school, this is a cost that is too high to bear for the future generations of Queenslanders who will miss the opportunity to have a local school in the East Brisbane area.

#### *Our community's views about the impact of the Gabba rebuild*

In March 2023, the East Brisbane State School P&C surveyed over 1000 local residents to gain their views about the impact of the Gabba rebuild on East Brisbane State School<sup>8</sup>.

- 77% of respondents were dissatisfied with the Queensland Government's decision to spend \$2.7 Billion on rebuilding the Gabba stadium
- 92.7% of respondents rejected the options presented by the state government for East Brisbane State School
- 81.5% of respondents were dissatisfied with the Queensland Government's communication regarding the future of East Brisbane State School
- 71.5% of respondents thought that the Queensland's Government's plans for East Brisbane State School diminished the heritage value of the site

#### *Our conclusions regarding the costs to our community*

As previously mentioned, the Gabba rebuild project requires that the largest local park, Raymond Park, is used for a temporary Olympic/Paralympic warm-up track. The loss of use of this park, and neighbouring homes, is a further cost to our community.

To measure the cost of Olympic infrastructure in our community, we need to consider a child living in Kangaroo Point in 2032, when Brisbane is fleetingly known as the sporting capital of the world. There will be a child who can see the Olympic Stadium from the windows of their apartment, but who can't walk to the nearest flat piece of lawn to kick a soccer ball around. They can't walk to school either. This child's school is seriously lacking in playground facilities for a growing number of children, but no-one can quite agree to pick up the cost of excavating tons of soil to repair a reclaimed rubbish dump before putting in any new playground facilities.

It is clear that only good planning and urban design will leave an Olympic legacy that we are proud to give to the next generation of children in our community.

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<sup>8</sup> The EBSS P&C survey was overseen and reported by Professor Daniel Angus of Queensland University of Technology, who is also a parent at the school. A copy of Professor Angus' full report is available on request.

### **Recommendations:**

The East Brisbane State School Parents and Citizens (EBSS P&C) Association respectfully asks that the Senate consider making the following recommendations:

- The Queensland Government be asked to present a rationale for the choice of the Gabba rebuild project as the chosen stadium for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, including a detailed analysis of why the Gabba rebuild project was favoured over other stadium options.
- The Queensland Government be asked to engage in meaningful and open consultation with the Queensland community regarding the community impacts of the Gabba rebuild project, including the impacts on East Brisbane State School, Raymond Park, local residents and businesses.
- The Queensland Government be asked to present further information about the options considered for East Brisbane State School. The Queensland Government be further asked to address how community concerns about the proposed site at Coorparoo are going to be addressed.

### **Contact Details**

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