

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission on Australia's preparedness to host Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this topic. As residents of Cleveland in the City of Redlands, almost an outer suburb of Brisbane, we only feel competent to comment on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We understand that the International Olympic Committee has set new guidelines for Olympic hosts to help the local economy. That is, new venues should not be built when it is more cost effective to upgrade existing facilities. While we applaud this approach, we are at a loss to understand why members of the Australian Olympic Committee will apparently be going to Los Angeles for twelve months, at taxpayer expense, to see how it manages the 2028 Olympic Games when Sydney hosted an extremely successful Olympic Games in 2000 and helped Atlanta host the Games there. Why not seek Sydney's input?

At the outset, we question whether our local Redland City Council misled both the Queensland Government and the International Olympic Committee when, in the bid for the 2032 Olympic Games submitted on 24 February 2021, it said that the Birkdale Precinct would be developed as a white-water rafting venue. We understand that there was no business plan at this time. This Precinct is home to the heritage listed Willards Farm, the heritage listed WW2 US Radio Station and rhombic antennae site, a koala colony and indigenous artefacts. In fact, the Council, which was bound by certain conservation conditions when it purchased the land from the Federal Government, did not seek community consultation on the site until 16 and

17 April 2021 – two months after the Brisbane bid had been submitted! The survey of community wishes put white-water rafting eighth on the list. Clearly, the Council had already decided that it wanted to build a multi-million dollar white-water precinct.

Upgrading the White Water Rafting venue in Penrith, NSW, which was built for the 2000 Sydney Olympics seems to us to be a far better and more cost-effective solution than building yet another similar venue for the following reasons:

- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->We understand that building a new facility, when a similar venue is available and eminently suitable, is against the new International Olympic Committee Guidelines. Interestingly, the Redland City Council, instead of calling the proposed new venue a “White Water Rafting Facility”, has now changed the name to a “resistance training facility”. We read recently that resistance training is also being done at the Penrith site. The International Canoe Federation has recently selected the Penrith Facility for the [2025 Canoe Slalom World Championships](#). This venue is obviously suitable for international competition.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->We believe the Penrith facility continues to be a significant burden on the local community. We fear that a new facility at Birkdale will do likewise to a less populous community.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->Any need to upgrade the Penrith facility would be far less expensive than building a new facility.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->The Penrith site is approximately 1,000km from Brisbane, the host city. This is much closer than the site Los Angeles intends to use as the white-water rafting venue for the 2028 Games.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->There is a significant koala colony on the Birkdale site which will be decimated once building starts.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->The Birkdale Precinct is currently serviced by limited public transport and would require a major upgrade to accommodate an Olympic site as would road access and parking facilities.
- <!--[if !supportLists]-->● <!--[endif]-->Photographs we have seen of former Olympic white-water sites, many of which are now derelict, lead us to

believe that a new site will not encourage long term interest in the sport but rather could potentially be an expensive “white elephant”. We question whether a sport with so few competitors, events and likely limited spectators can justify the significant cost of building a new facility.

Jeannette and Brian Douglass