

Queensland Sports Strategy 2025 submission

About Ipswich

Ipswich will grow at a faster rate than any other council in Queensland over the next twenty years. By 2046, our population is forecast to reach 533,802 – nearly double its current size. With such rapid growth, it is critical that sports infrastructure keeps pace to meet demand and support our expanding population.

The positive social and economic benefits sports participation offers the City of Ipswich are well documented including social cohesion, community pride, diversionary programs, improved physical well-being, improved mental health outcomes, improved productivity and participation in the workforce.

However, one of the main barriers to sport participation in Ipswich is lack of sport facilities that are appropriate and safe, particularly when compared to neighbouring local government areas. Ipswich is currently under provisioned in social infrastructure and this is resulting in an economic and locational disadvantage for residents.

The City of Ipswich is home to over 150 clubs and organisations across 47 locations providing 287 active playing spaces. Many of these require urgent upgrades to facilities to increase safety and community participation. A defined pipeline of Queensland Government sport and recreation grant programs would assist local governments in planning the upgrades to their sports infrastructure in the lead up to the 2032 Games to increase community participation and legacy opportunities.

Council is also advocating for a new synthetic athletics track to be built ahead of the 2032 Games to benefit local athletes and casual runners.

There is also a current under supply of indoor court space in the Ipswich region, which will be further exacerbated due to the doubling in population over the next 20 years and the lack of any planned development of indoor court space in the future.

Ipswich is also under-provisioned in facilities that are able to host major events for sporting and entertainment purposed such as a stadium over 15,000 or with a seated capacity of 10,000, which is why Council continues to seek funding for the next stages of the North Ipswich Sport and Entertainment Precinct.

With the forecast unprecedented growth in the City of Ipswich investment in sports infrastructure across the region is required to further opportunities for sport participation and alleviate social disadvantage.

In parallel, preparation is also underway for the opportunities presented by a successful Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games with Ipswich named as an official co-host city and Games Delivery Partner. Brighton Homes Arena has been included as a venue in the 2032 Delivery Plan and the City of Ipswich is keen to work with the Queensland Government over the next 12 months as the sports program is finalised to secure a sport for Games venue.

Ipswich is also home to other significant sports infrastructure which could be utilised as pre-Games training venues, however, some investment is required to meet elite athlete requirements.

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Infrastructure funding rounds

Through the *Active Ipswich Strategy 2031* Ipswich City Council has a vision to improve the quality of life and health of the community through greater access to passive and active recreation, sport and physical activity through the sustainable provision of land, infrastructure, facilities, services and opportunities. Greater Queensland Government funding is required to help realise this strategy, primarily through sport infrastructure upgrades.

The City of Ipswich is home to over 150 clubs and organisations that utilise more than 250 playing spaces. Many of these require urgent upgrades to facilities to increase safety and community participation.

Currently, there are no State Government sport infrastructure grant funding rounds open or planned. As part of the outcomes from the Queensland Sports Strategy it would be beneficial for local governments and community sports clubs to have a **planned defined forward program of Queensland Government sport infrastructure grant rounds**. In the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games a planned forward program of infrastructure funding opportunities would allow local communities to adequately prepare and plan submissions for sports infrastructure upgrades, which would deliver better participation and legacy outcomes for communities.

Synthetic Athletics Track

The rapid rise of local sprinter Gout Gout and the leadup to 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games have prompted Ipswich City Council to advocate for a synthetic athletics track to be built in the city.

Council had advocated in recent years for a new athletics track, proposed to be built at the University of Southern Queensland's Ipswich Campus in partnership with Bremer State High and to be funded by the State and Federal Governments – but it never got out of the starting blocks.

Council is in the process of identifying appropriate council-owned properties where a synthetic track could be located. This work is anticipated to be completed by June 2025 and **Council requests support from the State Government to help deliver this project.**

With a shortage of synthetic athletics tracks in South East Queensland and none situated in the Ipswich region, this project represents a key piece of sports infrastructure legacy for the region.

Currently, athletes need to travel a minimum of 40 minutes each way to access a synthetic athletics track at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre (QSAC), at Nathan. The City of Ipswich is on the lower end of socio-economic measures and this provides a further barrier for young aspiring athletes to participate and train in athletics.

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The development of a full size 400m synthetic track would complement other strategic investments into Ipswich infrastructure, increase sporting participation and aspirations, provide facilities that attract visitors from surrounding regions and support local clubs.

A new synthetic track would also position Ipswich to support the 2032 Games in delivering an additional elite ready athletics training venue in South East Queensland.

Indoor court space

The Ipswich City Council's 2023 *Ipswich Indoor Sports Facilities Preliminary Report* shows a current under-provision and undersupply of indoor facilities in the Ipswich region. The current provision rate of indoor courts, per head of population within the City of Ipswich (1 : 18,273), is relatively consistent with the average provision rate of the Gold Coast, Logan, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane local government rates.

However, while the following Brisbane 2032 venues are planned for delivery; Logan Indoor Sports Centre – new nine court multi-use facility, Moreton Bay Indoor Sports Centre - new 12 court multi-use facility and upgrades to Chandler Indoor facility to make is the Para-Sports Facility, there are no new planned indoor facilities for Ipswich. With the doubling of the city's population over the next 20 years, Ipswich risks further social isolation and disadvantage due to the lack of sports infrastructure adding greater barriers to community participation.

While it is acknowledged the Queensland Government's focus over the next few years is the delivery of venues for Brisbane 2032 Games, **the City of Ipswich requests Queensland Government assistance to plan for future indoor facilities that are ideally collocated within larger sport, recreation and community environments to increase participation and reduce social disadvantage.**

North Ipswich Sport and Entertainment Precinct

The City of Ipswich's local residents currently have limited access to high quality events and experiences across the region. This results in residents leaving the City of Ipswich region to consume these events and experiences elsewhere, representing a leakage to the local economy.

Access to cultural, sporting and other entertainment events can improve economic outcomes whilst promoting social progression and wellbeing through the provision of space for civic engagement, creativity and cohesion.

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The North Ipswich Sport and Entertainment Precinct is a revitalisation of North Ipswich Reserve, Ipswich's premier sporting facility with prime riverside location and city views.

The City of Ipswich is grateful for the \$40 million tripartite investment which will deliver initial modernisation and upgrades to the North Ipswich Sport and Entertainment Precinct in the form of a new western grandstand and field lighting.

However, **Council continues to seek delivery funding for the next stages of the development to deliver a Northern, Eastern and Southern seating area, upgrades to Len Johnson Oval and improved connectivity to the Ipswich Train Station and Ipswich Central.** This aligns with the City of Ipswich's desire to attract world-class events and leave a legacy for elite sport in Queensland.

The table below outlines a summary of the provision of selected social infrastructure types within the boundaries of comparable Local Government Areas, where residents can access high quality events and experiences. The infrastructure types selected for analysis include stadia, entertainment centres, convention centres, museums, and art galleries. The criteria by which it was determined whether a facility was included in the table was as follows:

- Stadia: Capacity of over 15,000 (or seated capacity of 10,000);
- Entertainment Centres: Capacity of over 1,500 (or seated capacity 800);
- Convention Centres: Capacity of over 1,500 (or seated capacity 800);
- Museums: Regional, State or National Museums or a museum with five or more exhibitions per year and
- Art galleries: Regional, State or National Galleries or a gallery with five or more exhibitions per year.

LGA	POPULATION 2016	SEIFA	STADIUM	ENT CENTRE	CONV CENTRE	MUSEUM	GALLERY
Ipswich	193,733	961	-	-	-	1	1
Wollongong	203,630	989	1	1	-	-	1
Townsville	186,757	989	1	1	-	1	2
Greater Geelong	233,429	994	1	-	1	1	1
Lake Macquarie	197,371	996	-	-	-	1	-
Penrith	196,066	999	1	-	-	-	1
Sutherland Shire	218,464	1080	1	-	-	-	1

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SEQ LGA	POPULATION 2016	SEIFA	STADIUM	ENT CENTRE	CONV CENTRE	MUSEUM	GALLERY
Ipswich	193,733	961	-	-	-	1	1
Logan	303,386	959	-	1	-	-	1
Gold Coast	555,721	1018	2	1	1	2	4
Moreton Bay	425,302	996	1	-	-	2	2
Sunshine Coast	294,367	1014	1	-	2	1	1

Source: ABS: 2033.0.55.001 Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA), 2016

The analysis shows that whilst the City of Ipswich may have a comparable provision of cultural assets (such as museums and galleries), it appears to be under-provisioned in the facilities that are able to host major events for sporting and entertainment purposes (stadia, entertainment centres, convention centres).

Brighton Homes Arena

Brighton Homes Arena has been listed as an existing venue in the 2032 Delivery Plan subject to the final sports program. With a 10,000 person capacity and state-of-the-art gender equal Elite Performance Centre for athletes it is easy to understand why it was secured as an Olympic and Paralympic venue.

While Brighton Homes Arena is listed as a venue its use during the 2032 Game is yet to be defined as the sports program for the Games is finalised.

Ipswich City Council requests engagement from the Queensland Government on how best to position Brighton Homes Arena as a 2032 Games venue as the Olympic and Paralympic Games sports program is finalised over the next 12 months.

Games Training Venues

Pre-Games training opportunities are identified as a key legacy in the City of Ipswich's *Leveraging 2032 Our Roadmap to the Olympic and Paralympic Games* document. The 2032 Games creates immense opportunities for pre-Games training camps across South East Queensland, particularly in the two year period leading into the

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Games. Ipswich is well poised to host international teams who are looking for a low-distraction environment, for highly-focussed training camps in close proximity to Brisbane.

Ipswich City Council has undertaken an audit of all public and private sporting facilities across the city at a state, national and international standard. While some venues in the Ipswich region are ready to host international teams as training venues, other venues have been identified as needing infrastructure investment to ensure they are ready for elite athletes. Some of these venues and the upgrades required are list in the table below.

This situation is not unique to Ipswich and a **Queensland Government sports infrastructure funding round to bring identified pre-Games training venues up to standard** would be a beneficial legacy which would provide the economic benefits of hosting international teams and the community legacy of improved sports facilities for the region post-Games.

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL VENUES PROPOSED FOR 2032 GAMES TRAINING

PARK	SPORT	UPGRADES REQUIRED
Brighton Homes Arena	AFL, Rugby League, Rugby 7s, soccer, flag, cricket	Olympic and elite sport ready, listed as an existing venue in the 2032 Delivery Plan
North Ipswich Reserve	Rugby League, Rugby7s, soccer, flag	Investment required to ensure elite readiness. \$40M in upgrades due to commence in November 2025
Ipswich Hockey Association Briggs Road	Hockey	Investment required to ensure elite readiness. Third synthetic turf field being delivered.
BMX Track – Willey Street Park	BMX Cycling	Requires minor works to meet elite athlete standards
Silver Jubilee Park	3x3 Basketball	Some investment required to meet elite standards.
Grande Park	Tennis	Minor improvement works required
Redbank Plans Recreation Reserve	Skateboard	Has hosted elite events, minor works required to prepare facility
Redbank Collingwood Park Sport Complex	Badminton, wrestling, indoor volleyball, various para sports, fencing	Some upgrades required to host elite able and para athletes
Limestone Park	Cricket, Rugby League, Rugby7s, soccer, flag	Major upgrades required to ensure elite readiness