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Brisbane City Council
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Victoria Park

Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Incorporated (QORF) is the peak body representing the interests of the outdoor recreation sector in Queensland, which incorporates nature-based and outdoor recreation, outdoor education activities, adventure tourism, adventure therapy, and adventure racing. As a member-based, not-for-profit association, QORF is charged with representing and advocating on the behalf of a coalition of outdoor recreation groups and individuals.

In addition to our role as peak body for outdoor activity, QORF manages the Nature Play QLD program, which advocates for outdoor play to be a normal part of childhood again.

Queenslanders highly value and enjoy experiences in the outdoors and QORF advocates and acts to protect the legacy of participation in outdoor activities for our current and future population. According to the project website, the stated intention of Brisbane City Council for the Vision for Victoria Park is to “protect green space for future generations and guide future enhancements.” We applaud that approach to this planning process.

The provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and locations provide Queenslanders with positive quality of life choices, experiences and social connections. Outdoor recreation spaces and activities connect people to place, self and others and enable communities to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

We note that in *Brisbane. Clean Green, Sustainable 2017-2031*, Brisbane City Council (BCC) commits to having parks that are diverse and accessible, while valuing, nurturing and protecting its urban forest.

QORF believes that the decision to turn Victoria Park into a world-class parkland is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the connection between Brisbane people and their sub-tropical environment.

Given the area available, the widest possible range of outdoor activities should be incorporated into the design of the parklands, from nature play spaces and outdoor classrooms, through to event spaces and connected pathway systems. The park could be promoted as a health-giving hub for all visitors through the provision of nature play, discovery and adventure, walking and nature rich experiences, fitness and challenge opportunities, places for improving mental and physical health, wellbeing tourism and maybe even growing

healthy food. It is essential that Victoria Park be designed to be accessible and inclusive of the needs of all people.

QORF understands that there is significant Indigenous cultural heritage value on the Victoria Park site. We believe that cultural heritage value should be recognized, not just as a nod to pre-colonial history, but as an on-going opportunity to allow current and future generations to connect to this place.

QORF suggests that Victoria Park should become an urban forest, not a manicured botanic garden. This could be seen as an opportunity to create some wild-ness so close to the central business district. We believe that there are opportunities for significant walking and running tracks to get people active, as well as mountain bike trails and skills parks.

Consideration should be given to emerging outdoor activities, such as slack-lining, parkour and bouldering. If the right infrastructure is provided in the right places, participants will be drawn to the park to participate in these activities.

Nature play spaces need to be as natural as possible and do not need to be elaborately landscaped or expensive to maintain. The whole park has the potential to link people with nature and enable children to play. The key elements to nature play spaces are that they engage children (and adults) in the natural environment. Nature play spaces can provide opportunities for children to collaborate and they can provide space for solo experiences – Victoria Park is large enough to successfully accommodate all types of play, so that it will be a place that might be fondly remembered by generations to come.

Serious consideration should be given to ensuring the whole parkland is playable for people of all ages, with no areas out of bounds. Garden beds should be accessible for play as well as plants.

Consideration should also be given to providing outdoor classroom spaces that do not require major infrastructure. Yarning circles can activate spaces without requiring significant investment. It would be useful to consider outdoor classroom spaces that could be used by educational services through a booking system at no or low cost.

A key opportunity is improved connection between the Spring Hill side of the parklands and the Herston side. Although additional pedestrian and cycle crossings of the Inner-City Bypass and railway line would be expensive, they would also serve to activate the spaces and could literally bridge the divide between what currently appear to be two very separate parks.

Activation of the parklands will be of particular importance once the redevelopment work has taken place. QORF through its membership welcomes the opportunity to be involved in activation programs and projects into the foreseeable future. We hope that the parklands are accessible to commercial and public providers either free or at reasonable fees to ensure accessibility for everyone.

We believe that all stakeholders in close proximity to Victoria Park, from the hospital complex, local schools, QUT, and other organisations, should be engaged in the activation of the parklands.



QORF thanks Brisbane City Council for the opportunity to provide this submission, and we look forward to further involvement in this exciting project.

If there are any queries about this submission, please contact me by telephone on 07 3369 9455 or by email eo@qorf.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dom Courtney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dom Courtney
QORF Executive Officer

