ORDINARY MEETING 25 NOVEMBER 2026	5.11

BARLOW PARK REDEVELOPMENT - FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW

L&C | 52/8/10-01 | #7969675

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **Notes the impacts of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games Barlow Park redevelopment project on venue operations and user access during the construction period;**

2. **Approves a temporary 20% reduction to applicable Barlow Park venue hire fees and charges for all eligible bookings affected by redevelopment-related restrictions, effective from commencement of redevelopment works until practical completion;**

3. **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to negotiate and finalise any and all matters relating to the above.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

NA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The planned upgrade of Barlow Park to meet the requirements of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will deliver significant long-term benefits for Cairns and Far North Queensland. Since the announcement, Council has been collaborating with the Australian and Queensland Governments through the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority (GIICA) on the design and delivery of this landmark project.

Due to the scale and complexity of the upcoming works, planning has occurred to manage the short-term disruption to existing Barlow Park users and stakeholders during construction. The aim is to enable the upgrade to proceed while maintaining, where practical, continued access to the venue and alternative arrangements for displaced users.

Demolition of the existing grandstand and amenities is anticipated to commence in late 2026 and the redevelopment will continue through to early 2029. During this period, sections of the venue will be unavailable or operating in a restricted capacity as construction activities are undertaken.

Impacts are expected to include:

- Restricted athletics track access and reduced operations;
- Reduced seating capacity;
- Reduced spectator amenities;
- Reduced sheltered areas, reduced parking availability; and
- Modified access arrangements for athletics and other users.

Whilst Council and the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority (GIICA) have worked to maintain ongoing operations wherever practical, the user experience and event functionality available during construction will be materially different from normal venue operations.

Accordingly, this report recommends a temporary 20% reduction to applicable venue hire fees and charges for affected bookings during the redevelopment period. The proposed reduction recognises the diminished venue offering during construction while supporting community access for users and hirers.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2021, Council unanimously resolved to enter into a Delivery Partner Guarantee Deed with the State of Queensland, committing Barlow Park as a host venue for football preliminary matches during the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

To support this commitment, the Australian and Queensland Governments have jointly committed to a significant redevelopment of Barlow Park. The project will see the existing 1,700-seat western grandstand demolished and reconstructed, increasing permanent seating capacity to 5,000 seats and substantially enhancing the venue's capability as a major events and sporting facility.

During the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games, Barlow Park will host football preliminary matches, with approximately 15,000 temporary seats to be installed, increasing the venue's overall capacity to approximately 20,000 spectators.

The redevelopment will deliver significant legacy benefits for Cairns and Far North Queensland, including improved spectator amenities, enhanced sightlines, upgraded food and beverage facilities, new function spaces, and the incorporation of contemporary sustainability and accessibility standards. The redevelopment is expected to commence in late 2026 and conclude in early 2029.

On 11 September 2024, Council resolved to enter into a Project Framework Agreement (PFA) which establishes the respective roles and responsibilities of the project partners in relation to the redevelopment. Under the PFA, the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority (GIICA) is responsible for delivering the redevelopment works, while Council, as venue owner and operator, is responsible for facilitating the ongoing management and operation of Barlow Park throughout the construction phase and following project completion.

As construction progresses, Council will continue to operate Barlow Park wherever practical. However, the scale and complexity of the works will result in temporary reductions to venue functionality and user amenity, necessitating consideration of the fees and charges framework applicable during the redevelopment period.

COMMENT:

The redevelopment is expected to commence in late 2026 with completion anticipated in early 2029. During the construction period, portions of the venue, including the athletics track will be inaccessible or subject to operational restrictions to ensure public safety and facilitate construction activities.

Whilst Council will continue to operate Barlow Park wherever practical, hirers and patrons can expect a range of temporary impacts including:

- Reduced seating capacity;
- Reduced spectator amenities;
- Reduced shade and weather protection;
- Reduced vehicle parking availability;
- Construction interfaces and restricted pedestrian access;
- Modified venue presentation and event-day experience;
- Restricted athletics track access and reduced operations; and
- Periodic access limitations associated with specific construction activities.

Council and GIICA have developed a range of operational measures and displacement initiatives to support venue users throughout the project. These include restricted ongoing use of the athletics track, operational overlays to maintain venue functionality and alternative arrangements for impacted user groups where required.

Notwithstanding these measures, it is recognised that users booking Barlow Park during the construction period will receive a reduced level of service and amenity compared with the standard venue offering.

To acknowledge these impacts and support continued venue utilisation throughout the redevelopment period, it is proposed that a temporary 20% reduction be applied to applicable venue hire fees and charges at the time of booking. The reduction would apply only to bookings impacted by redevelopment-related restrictions and would remain in place until practical completion of the project.

No changes are proposed to West Barlow hire fees, staffing charges or floodlighting charges, as these fees are primarily cost-recovery based and are not materially affected by the temporary reduction in venue amenity associated with the redevelopment.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That Council:

1. Notes the impacts of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games Barlow Park redevelopment project on venue operations and user access during the construction period;

2. Approves a temporary 20% reduction to applicable Barlow Park venue hire fees and charges for all eligible bookings affected by redevelopment-related restrictions, effective from commencement of redevelopment works until practical completion;

3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to negotiate and finalise any and all matters relating to the above.

OR

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the recommendation and adopts an alternative course of action.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Financial Management

The proposed reduction will result in a temporary decrease in venue hire revenue during the construction period.

However, maintaining existing bookings and supporting continued venue utilisation is expected to assist in retaining key users and event activity during the redevelopment phase. The recommendation recognises that venue functionality and customer experience will be impacted through no fault of venue users.

Reputation

Providing a fee reduction demonstrates Council's commitment to supporting community organisations, sporting groups and event organisers affected by redevelopment-related impacts.

The initiative is expected to strengthen stakeholder relationships while acknowledging the inconvenience associated with construction activities.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The proposed 20% fee reduction will result in reduced venue hire revenue during the construction period.

Revenue generated by Barlow Park over the previous three financial years is outlined in the table below:

BARLOW PARK	24 ACT	25 ACT	26 ACT	27 BUD	20% Revenue Reduction
Fees and charges (hire premises)	(66,317)	(75,755)	(61,025)	(53,020)	10,604
In-kind Revenue					
	(191,141)	(277,696)	(158,083)	(344,000)	68,800
Total Revenue (Cash and In-kind)	**(257,458)**	**(353,451)**	**(219,108)**	**(397,020)**	79,404

As noted above, the recommended 20% reduction in venue hire fees will translate to:

- $10,604 decrease in cash revenue; and
- $68,800 decrease in in-kind revenue.

Given the temporary nature of the arrangement and the unique circumstances associated with the Brisbane 2032 redevelopment project, the reduction is considered a reasonable response to the operational restrictions experienced by venue users.

The financial impact will be monitored through Council's normal budget review processes.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The recommendation in this report aligns with Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Focus Area 5: "Delivering for community through strong governance and informed decision making".

Policy:

The recommendation aligns with all relevant policies including Financial Assistance for Not-for-Profit Organisation – Fees and Charges Policy.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1 – Barlow Park fees and charges with applicable hire fees highlighted.

Tim Dendle
Executive Manager Community Spaces

Destry Puia
Director, Lifestyle and Community

Attachment #1 – Barlow Park fees and charges with applicable hire fees highlighted

Venues, Parks and Sporting Grounds

Description of Fee, Charge, Penalty plus conditions	Unit	2026/27 Rate Including GST ($)	GST Component
Premium Venues - Barlow Park			
Athletics Options			
Athletics Carnival Basic			
Access to track/field; bar & canteen in main building; grandstand; toilets in grandstand & bar	per hour	255.00	23.18
For groups of up to 250 people.	per half day (Up to 4hrs between 8am - 9pm)	635.00	57.73
	per day (More than 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	890.00	80.91
Athletics Carnival Intermediate			
Access to track/field; bar & canteen in main building; grandstand; toilets in grandstand, bar and carpark.	per hour	290.00	26.36
For groups of 250 - 1,000 people.	per half day (Up to 4hrs between 8am - 9pm)	770.00	70.00
	per day (More than 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	1,060.00	96.36
Athletics Carnival Major			
Access to track/field; canteen in corporate building, communications room; bar area in main building; grandstand; all toilets in facility, West Barlow for field events, and carpark. For major athletic events over 1,000 people.	per day (More than 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	1,740.00	158.18
Lighting and Scoreboard			
Floodlights			
100 lux (recreation / training)	per hour	55.00	5.00
200 lux (local competition)	per hour	70.00	6.36
500 lux (elite competition)	per hour	150.00	13.64
1400 lux (television broadcast standard)	per hour	350.00	31.82
Video Replay Screen	up to 4 hours	750.00	68.18
	full day	1,500.00	136.36
Multiple Hire Bookings			
6-10 bookings 10% off fees			
11+ bookings 15% off fees			
Note: Discount off above package fees only.			
Athletics Single Portion Hire			
Athletics Single Portion Hire (eg. Long Jump, Shot Put, Track and Field, includes Toilet access)	per session (max 4 hours)	93.00	8.45

Venues, Parks and Sporting Grounds

Description of Fee, Charge, Penalty plus conditions	Unit	2026/27 Rate Including GST ($)	GST Component
Football Field Options			
Main Barlow Training			
Access to track/field; full use of one change room & showers. Basic line marking included. *For groups of up to 100 people.*	per hour	260.00	23.64
Main Barlow Football			
Access to track/field; bar & canteen in main building; grandstand; full use of change rooms, showers, first aid room, referees room and administration office; toilets in grandstand & bar. Basic line marking and carpark included.	per half day (up to 4hrs between 8am-9pm)	1,325.00	120.45
	per day (over 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	1,840.00	167.27
Main Barlow Premium			
Access to track/field; corporate room; corporate boxes x3; bar & canteen in main building ; corporate kitchen & canteen, grandstand; full use of change rooms, showers, first aid room, referees room, all toilets in facility and carpark.	per day (over 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	3,130.00	284.55
Main Barlow Major Event			
Full use of full Barlow Park Facility *For groups of 4000+ people.*	per day (more than 4 hours)	POA	1/11th
Main Barlow Event Options			
Portable Grandstands - Set-up & dismantling (cost recovery)	per booking	POA	1/11th
Portable Grandstands - seat hire	per seat	POA	1/11th
Private Suites – Grandstand (25% of net Income derived from sales)	per booking	POA	1/11th
Coaches Boxes – Grandstand (use of both boxes inc power)	per booking	198.00	18.00
Spence Street Toilets, Entry and Kitchen	per booking	728.00	66.18
Lighting and Scoreboard			
Floodlights			
100 lux (recreation / training)	per hour	55.00	5.00
200 lux (local competition)	per hour	70.00	6.36
500 lux (elite competition)	per hour	150.00	13.64
1400 lux (television broadcast standard)	per hour	350.00	31.82
Video Replay Screen	up to 4 hours	750.00	68.18
	full day	1,500.00	136.36
Multiple Hire Bookings			
6-10 bookings 10% off fees			
11+ bookings 15% off fees			
Note: Discount off above package fees only.			
Barlow Park Car Park			
Barlow Park Car Park			
Access to car park & public toilets	per hour	97.00	8.82
For groups of up to 500 people.	per half day (Up to 4hrs between 8am - 9pm)	310.00	28.18
	per day (More than 4 hours between 8am-5pm or 12-9pm)	440.00	40.00
Services and Consumables	POA	Cost plus 10%	