



QUEENSLAND CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK

Queensland Construction Outlook: 2032 and Beyond

Construction and infrastructure outlook for Brisbane and South East Queensland to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

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Where the 2032 venue, village and transport program stands at September 2026, who is building it, and why market capacity – not project demand – is the constraint that decides whether it lands on time.

17

New or upgraded venues

seven new, ten upgraded (GII/CA)

\$7.1bn

Venues funding envelope

state and federal, plus \$3.5bn for villages

\$75bn

Queensland pipeline peak

in 2027–28 (CSQ)

35,000

Peak workforce shortfall

statewide, 2027–28 (CSQ)

~8,000

Games construction workforce

at the 2030–31 venue-and-village peak

\$19bn+

Cross River Rail

first passenger services expected 2029 (QAO)

Geographic focus. Greater Brisbane and the connected South East Queensland Games system, with selected regional projects included where they materially affect Queensland-wide contractor and workforce capacity.

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Establish one integrated baseline

Coordinate the market

Protect specialist capability

Expand supply without weakening standards

Use ECI selectively and rigorously

Integrate permanent and temporary design

Build schedule contingency

Publish legacy conversion plans

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Executive Summary

Brisbane's 2032 infrastructure task is no longer principally a venue-planning exercise. It is a concurrent, fixed-deadline program combining 17 new or upgraded competition venues, athlete villages, rail and road capacity, public-transport fleet and systems, precinct works, temporary overlay, accommodation and Games-time operations. The permanent venue program has moved from review and option selection into design, early works and staged procurement, but the maturity of individual projects varies materially.^{1, 2}

The most important change since the March 2025 infrastructure review is the consolidation of the principal Brisbane venues into the Victoria Park precinct. The current program includes a 63,000-seat Brisbane Stadium at Victoria Park and a National Aquatic Centre adjacent to Centenary Pool, with a permanent capacity of approximately 8,000 and Games-mode capacity of 25,000. Brisbane Showgrounds will provide the main athlete village and an upgraded arena, while the separate Woolloongabba program is being developed as an arena and housing-dominant precinct.^{3, 4, 5}

Delivery momentum has increased. Initial stadium works commenced in June 2026; National Aquatic Centre site works commenced in September 2026; the stadium principal-architect team is appointed; two stadium construction joint ventures are undertaking Early Contractor Involvement (ECI); the aquatic-centre architect team is appointed; and design or early procurement is under way across several minor venues. Unite32, the Laing O'Rourke–AECOM joint venture, is the program Delivery Partner responsible for integration, controls, procurement support, design coordination and construction oversight across the authority venue portfolio.^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11}

The primary delivery constraint is market capacity rather than aggregate project demand. Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) forecasts an average Queensland construction pipeline of about \$69 billion per year to 2031–32, peaking near \$75 billion in 2027–28. Average labour demand is projected to rise from approximately 126,600 workers in 2025–26 to 148,300 in 2027–28, while the average workforce shortfall is forecast at 19,100 and the peak shortfall at 35,000 in 2027–28. The Games venues and villages alone are forecast to require nearly 8,000 workers at their 2030–31 peak, including around 5,000 in Brisbane, 1,600 on the Sunshine Coast and 1,100 on the Gold Coast.¹²

The practical implication is that Brisbane 2032 will compete with Cross River Rail, Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail, The Wave, Queensland Train Manufacturing, health expansion, housing, water and energy projects for many of the same engineers, project managers, trades, operators, subcontractors and materials. Cost escalation, packaging strategy, interfaces, labour mobility and design freeze therefore matter as much as the nominal capital budget. The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) found that, as at 30 June 2025, 11 of 17 assessed Games venues remained in detailed business-case processes and six were in early procurement, illustrating the relatively late transition from planning into delivery.¹³

The overall outlook is **deliverable but highly capacity-constrained**. Schedule confidence is strongest where scope, site, designer, delivery model and early contractor participation are already aligned. It is weakest where land, private-sector commercial arrangements, legacy development, transport interfaces or concept scope remain unsettled. The decisive period is 2026–28: this is when major designs must be resolved, enabling works completed, long-lead items secured and the contractor ecosystem expanded before statewide Games labour demand rises sharply from 2028–29.¹²

Research Scope and Method

This paper uses a project-and-market outlook rather than treating every announced development as an “Olympic project.” Three categories are distinguished:

- **Games-critical infrastructure:** facilities or systems required to host athletes, spectators, media and competitions.
- **Games-enabled legacy infrastructure:** projects accelerated or justified partly by 2032 but serving long-term growth, such as faster rail, urban renewal and housing.
- **Concurrent infrastructure:** other major capital works competing for the same resources, even when not operationally required for the Games.

The evidence base prioritises the GIICA 100 Day Review and current venue material, Queensland budget documents, the QAO major-project review, Department of Transport and Main Roads announcements, CSQ’s 2026 workforce forecast, government procurement information and primary contractor disclosures. Status statements represent publicly available information at 15 September 2026; “construction” may refer to investigation, demolition, site preparation or enabling works rather than full structural construction.

Strategic Requirements

Venues and precincts

The Games require an integrated master plan spanning competition and training venues, villages, media and non-competition facilities. The original value proposition described more than 50 sites linked by a resilient transport network, while current GIICA responsibility covers 17 new or upgraded permanent venues: seven new and ten upgraded, delivering more than 50 fields of play.^{14, 1}

The current 17-venue program comprises:

- **New:** Brisbane Stadium, National Aquatic Centre, Logan Indoor Sports Centre, Moreton Bay Indoor Sports Centre, Para Sport Facility, Redland Whitewater Centre and Sunshine Coast Mountain Bike Centre.
- **Upgraded:** Anna Meares Velodrome, Barlow Park Stadium, Brisbane Aquatic Centre, Brisbane International Shooting Centre, Brisbane SX International BMX Centre, Chandler Sports Precinct, Queensland Tennis Centre, Rockhampton Flatwater Facility, Sunshine Coast Stadium and Toowoomba Showgrounds.¹

Permanent construction is only part of the venue task. Existing and temporary facilities remain essential, and the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee—not GIICA—will be responsible for temporary overlay and venue operation, including temporary seating, broadcast compounds, security, signage, utilities, technology, logistics and reinstatement. Temporary-infrastructure procurement and operational planning are scheduled broadly from 2026 to 2031, followed by testing and readiness in 2031–32.^{2, 15}

Athletes and accommodation

The current delivery plan uses athlete villages at Brisbane Showgrounds, Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast, Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton, with Games-wide accommodation required for athletes, officials, media, workforce and spectators. The original accommodation study identified approximately 41,000 rooms for Games stakeholders—including 18,000 for media and broadcasters—plus a further 40,000 rooms for spectators and workers.^{16, 14}

Village delivery is both an event requirement and a property-development program. The 2026–27 Queensland budget provides a total \$3.5 billion villages envelope and forecasts \$348 million of expenditure during 2026–27, with delivery intended in partnership with the private sector. This structure creates opportunities for residential builders, services contractors and developers, but also introduces commercial-close, finance, sales, tenure and post-Games conversion risks that do not arise in a conventional government venue contract.^{17, 5}

Transport and mobility

Games-time transport planning assumes that public transport carries the overwhelming majority of additional demand. The 100 Day Review identified nine necessary programs: Brisbane public-transport uplift; Gold Coast public transport; Sunshine Coast public transport; Games Route Network road upgrades; an SEQ Transport Coordination Centre; expanded European Train Control System (ETCS); fleet and facility uplift; active travel; and accessibility improvements.¹⁸

The operational requirement is broader than completing several megaprojects. It includes reliable intercity movement, high-frequency local feeder services, accessible stations and vehicles, additional buses and trains, depot and layover capacity, integrated control systems, venue pedestrian dispersal, shaded active-transport links, wayfinding and incident management. This creates a second wave of smaller but time-critical work packages in transport systems, station accessibility, civil works, digital systems, communications, traffic engineering and urban realm.

Utilities, digital and resilience

Every major precinct also requires power redundancy, water and sewer capacity, communications, broadcast connectivity, temporary utility connections, cyber-resilient operational technology and emergency access. The IOC's host assessment framework explicitly considers sustainability and legacy, funding, accommodation, transport, safety and security, requiring projects to align with long-term development plans rather than operate as stand-alone event assets.¹⁹

Brisbane's heat, storms and flood exposure elevate requirements for shade, drainage, waterproofing, resilient power and network redundancy. Climate resilience is not merely a sustainability objective; it is a schedule and continuity requirement for construction and Games operations. CSQ notes that Queensland is Australia's most disaster-affected state and that the 2024–25 disaster season interrupted work across much of the construction market, adding reconstruction demand to an already stretched pipeline.¹²

Major Project Register

Core Brisbane venue program

PROJECT	REQUIREMENT AND SCOPE	PLANNING/DESIGN STATUS AT 15 SEP 2026	DELIVERY AND CONTRACTOR STATUS	OUTLOOK
Brisbane Stadium, Victoria Park	New 63,000-seat oval stadium for ceremonies and athletics; long-term home for cricket and AFL. ⁶	Principal architects COX Architecture, Hassell and Azusa Sekkei appointed; field-of-play and location decisions resolved; design continuing with fan experience, precinct and transport interfaces under development. ^{3, 11, 20}	Initial works began 1 June 2026. Built-SACYR and John Holland-BESIX Watpac are the two ECI teams; final builder is due after the competitive ECI process, with main construction targeted from 2027. ^{11, 6}	Advancing but high-risk. Site and design leadership are established, but cost, transport, park interfaces, ground conditions and schedule integration remain critical.
National Aquatic Centre, Spring Hill	New elite aquatics complex adjoining Centenary Pool; permanent capacity around 8,000 and Games-mode capacity 25,000 for swimming and other aquatics. ^{4, 21}	ARM Architecture, NH Architecture and Arkhefield appointed as the design team. Design is being progressed in parallel with contractor procurement. ^{10, 22}	Site possession and initial works commenced from 1 September 2026. Four unnamed contractors were reported shortlisted in July, with a two-party ECI and preferred contractor selection expected in early 2027. ^{9, 22}	Advancing. Heritage integration, pools technology, temporary seating, roof solution and simultaneous procurement/design are key controls.
Brisbane Showgrounds and Brisbane Athletes Village	Main village at Bowen Hills; more than 10,000 athletes and officials across about 1,800 apartments, plus Main Arena uplift and post-Games housing. ²³	Design collective appointed: Woods Bagot, Cottee Parker, DBI, Plus Studio and Howells. Early works and arena design activities began after the 2025 Ekka. ^{24, 25}	Project partners include Lendlease and the RNA. Delivery combines precinct works, residential construction, showgrounds operations and conversion planning. ²⁴	Moderate-to-high interface risk. Strong partners and design mobilisation are positive, but the constrained operating site, event calendar and conversion program require detailed staging.
Gabba Entertainment and Housing Precinct	Proposed 17,000-seat indoor arena integrated into a housing-dominant Woolloongabba development. ¹¹	Site investigations were under way by March 2026. The state is progressing commercial and early-works activity with the private sector. ^{11, 5}	The 2026–27 budget provides \$45.6 million over two years for early works and a competitive market process. ⁵	Earlier maturity than core venues. Private finance, mixed-use feasibility and Cross River Rail/precinct interfaces are the principal uncertainties.
Queensland Tennis Centre	Permanent practice-court and facility upgrades, with Games overlay and accessibility requirements.	Included among GLICA's 10 upgraded venues; detailed project validation and investment decisions are still required for venues not yet in early procurement. ^{1, 17}	No principal delivery contractor publicly confirmed in the reviewed sources.	Planning-stage. Scope control and venue-operation staging will determine schedule pressure.

PROJECT	REQUIREMENT AND SCOPE	PLANNING/DESIGN STATUS AT 15 SEP 2026	DELIVERY AND CONTRACTOR STATUS	OUTLOOK
Chandler Sports Precinct program	Upgrades to the precinct, Brisbane Aquatic Centre, Anna Meares Velodrome and BMX centre; new Para Sport Facility; shooting-centre works at Belmont. ¹	Projects remain at differing validation, concept and design stages. The precinct must integrate multiple operating venues and Games overlays.	No complete set of head contractors publicly confirmed in the reviewed sources.	Portfolio interface risk. Multiple smaller projects can become schedule-critical if procured too late or delivered concurrently within an active precinct.

SEQ and regional venues

PROJECT	SCOPE	CURRENT STATUS	NAMED DESIGNERS/CONTRACTORS	RESOURCE IMPLICATION
Moreton Bay Indoor Sports Centre, Petrie	New 12-court multi-use indoor centre for community sport and wheelchair rugby. ²⁶	Design and planning progressing; council undertaking early site works; construction anticipated from 2027. ²⁶	Principal architect: Populous. ²⁶	Large building-services, structural, façade, fit-out and sports-equipment demand north of Brisbane.
Logan Indoor Sports Centre	New nine-court accessible centre with Games capacity of 7,000. ²⁷	Demolition and site-preparation works began in February 2026. ²⁷	Head contractor not publicly confirmed in the reviewed sources.	Adds southern-Brisbane demand for indoor-sports trades and specialist equipment.
Redland Whitewater Centre, Birkdale	New specialist whitewater venue on Redlands Coast. ¹	In procurement/delivery and funded within the venues program; 2026–27 budget supports commencement alongside the stadium and aquatic centre. ^{17, 5}	Head contractor not publicly confirmed in reviewed sources.	Specialist hydraulic, earthworks, concrete, pumping, electrical and water-treatment supply chain.
Sunshine Coast Stadium	Upgrade to host up to 20,000 Games spectators, including grandstands, amenities and supporting facilities. ^{28, 29}	Architect appointed; design continues through 2026. Early-works contractor EOI closed in September 2026; site preparation is planned before the end of 2026 and main construction from 2027. ^{28, 29}	Architectus with HKS. ²⁸	Contributes to the Sunshine Coast's simultaneous 2030–31 labour peak and competes with The Wave and housing.
Sunshine Coast Mountain Bike Centre	New permanent mountain-bike venue near Maroochy River. ¹	Listed by the 2026–27 budget as already in procurement and delivery. ¹⁷	Head contractor not confirmed in reviewed sources.	Civil, landscape, environmental, trail-building and temporary spectator infrastructure.
Toowoomba Showgrounds	Equestrian venue upgrade. ¹	Part of the authority upgrade program; remaining validation and investment decisions continue where not already procured. ¹⁷	Contractor not confirmed in reviewed sources.	Regional contractor participation reduces some SEQ concentration but competes with Toowoomba's broader pipeline.

PROJECT	SCOPE	CURRENT STATUS	NAMED DESIGNERS/CONTRACTORS	RESOURCE IMPLICATION
Barlow Park Stadium, Cairns	New western grandstand, increased permanent seating from about 1,700 to 5,000, amenities and athlete facilities. ³⁰	Architectus developing preliminary design. Services relocation starts September 2026, GIIICA demolition/site preparation follows late 2026, and main construction is expected from mid-2027. ^{31, 30}	Architectus; delivery-contractor prequalification commenced July 2026. ³⁰	Regional mobilisation and accommodation add cost, while delivery spreads demand beyond SEQ.
Rockhampton Flatwater Facility	Fitzroy River flatwater venue upgrade. ¹	Included in the authority's upgraded-venue portfolio.	Contractor not confirmed in reviewed sources.	Marine, river, civil, environmental and temporary-overlay packages.

The table highlights a recurring pattern: architect appointments and early investigations are well under way on flagship venues, while several medium-sized venues remain at project-validation, concept design or early procurement. Medium projects should not be treated as low risk merely because their values are smaller; they draw from the same building-services, concrete, structural steel, fit-out, civil and project-management markets as larger programs.

Transport Project Outlook

Cross River Rail

Cross River Rail remains the backbone project for inner-Brisbane rail capacity, but it also illustrates the risks facing the broader 2032 program. The QAO reported in December 2025 that total cost would exceed \$19 billion and first passenger services were expected in 2029, following labour and material increases, supply-chain disruption, industrial action and expanded associated works.¹³

The principal delivery teams are already embedded: PULSE—Pacific Partnerships, CPB Contractors, UGL, DIF, BAM and Ghella—delivers the tunnel, stations and development PPP; UNITY—CPB Contractors, UGL, AECOM, Jacobs and specialist partners—delivers rail integration and systems; and the Sequence Alliance includes Hitachi Rail and Queensland Rail for ETCS. By 2026, the critical path has shifted from bulk civil construction toward integration, testing, signalling, operational readiness and the reliable transition into passenger service.^{32, 33}

Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail

The \$5.75 billion Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail program will expand capacity between Kuraby and Beenleigh and is intended for completion before 2032. ActivUs—ACCIONA, CPB Contractors, UGL, SMEC and WSP—has entered the major-works alliance with TMR and Queensland Rail; site establishment and early works were planned for the first half of 2026 before major construction.^{34, 35}

This project has one of the clearest contractor structures in the pipeline and is beyond preliminary procurement. Its resource profile is intensive in rail civil works, brownfield interfaces, signalling, electrical systems, station works, track, structures, utilities, possession planning and stakeholder management. It directly competes with The Wave and remaining Cross River Rail systems activity for specialist rail personnel.

The Wave

The Wave is intended to connect Beerwah to Caloundra by heavy rail and ultimately extend through the Sunshine Coast urban corridor toward Maroochydore and the airport. Stage 1 comprises 19 kilometres of dual-track rail, stations at Aura and Caloundra and Beerwah station upgrades.³⁶

Design and pre-construction packages were awarded in May 2026 to Beerwah Coast Connect—Georgiou, Hatch and Laing O’Rourke—for brownfield works, and CoastalTraX—ACCIONA and Georgiou—for greenfield works; Alstom and UGL hold the ETCS signalling role. Detailed design, investigations and station consultation will continue into 2027, with major construction expected from early 2027 subject to environmental approvals.^{37, 36}

The Sunshine Coast is therefore a national market-capacity hotspot rather than an isolated regional market. Rail, stadium, village, housing and other civil programs converge geographically and peak in a similar period, increasing the need for workforce accommodation, travel planning, local subcontractor development and coordinated procurement.

Rolling stock and road capacity

Downer’s Queensland Train Manufacturing Program includes 65 six-car trains, the Torbanlea manufacturing facility and the Ormeau rail facility under a design-build-maintain contract. The program supports SEQ growth, Cross River Rail and 2032 readiness, with all 65 trains intended for the network by 2032.^{38, 39}

On the Gold Coast, Coomera Connector Stage 1 is split among major packages. ACCIONA—Georgiou is delivering Stage 1 North, while Seymour Whyte holds the South main-works contract and Fulton Hogan has delivered central-package activity. These road programs improve network resilience but also extend demand for bulk earthworks, structures, pavements, plant operators and materials through the pre-Games period.^{40, 41, 42}

Contractor Landscape

Program integrator

Unite32 combines AECOM’s planning, design and program-management capabilities with Laing O’Rourke’s construction delivery expertise. Its stated role covers portfolio integration, cost and schedule controls, risk and assurance, procurement and market engagement, design coordination, construction oversight and handover readiness. This delivery-partner model is appropriate for a multi-venue program because it can standardise controls and aggregate market intelligence, but it also concentrates responsibility for interface management and requires clear boundaries with GLICA, venue owners, designers, head contractors and the Organising Committee.⁷

Major venue contenders

The Brisbane Stadium ECI shortlist demonstrates the likely concentration of major vertical-construction work among tier-one and international joint ventures. Built—SACYR and John Holland—BESIX Watpac are competing through ECI, working independently with the design team to improve buildability, innovation and cost certainty before final selection.⁶

The National Aquatic Centre is following a similarly staged process: prequalification, invitation to offer and ECI before final contractor appointment. The model allows contractor input before full design maturity, which is

valuable for pools, long-span roofs, temporary seating and operational staging, but the benefits depend on disciplined scope decisions and transparent conversion from ECI to final contract.^{43, 44}

Transport contractors

The rail pipeline is dominated by overlapping consortia:

- **CPB Contractors and UGL** participate in Cross River Rail and Logan–Gold Coast Faster Rail.^{35, 32}
- **ACCIONA** participates in Logan–Gold Coast Faster Rail, The Wave and Coomera Connector.^{34, 36, 40}
- **Laing O’Rourke** participates in Unite32 and The Wave’s brownfield package.^{8, 36}
- **AECOM** participates in Unite32 and Cross River Rail integration.^{7, 32}
- **Georgiou** participates in both Wave civil teams and Coomera Connector North.^{45, 36}
- **WSP, SMEC, Hatch, Jacobs, Alstom, Hitachi Rail and Downer** hold significant design, systems or manufacturing roles.^{36, 32, 38, 34}

This overlap provides institutional knowledge and delivery capability, but it is also evidence of a finite tier-one management and specialist-engineering pool. Resource conflicts may appear within firms—not only between projects—when the same people are required for bids, design reviews, independent verification, systems assurance, commissioning and commercial management.

SME and supply-chain opportunities

GIICA tenders are advertised through QTenders, while operational Games opportunities are released through the Brisbane 2032 Supplier Portal. The Queensland Procurement Policy 2026 emphasises local suppliers, small and family businesses, regional participation, apprentices and trainees, Indigenous and female-owned businesses, social enterprises, local manufacturing and environmental outcomes.⁴⁶

The Organising Committee separately expects more than \$2.5 billion across hundreds of procurement contracts, with packages spanning technology, temporary venues, signage, market research and event production. Contractors and suppliers should therefore distinguish the **permanent infrastructure market** led by GIICA and government agencies from the **Games operations and overlay market** led by Brisbane 2032.⁴⁷

Resourcing Requirements

Aggregate demand

CSQ forecasts Queensland’s seven-year construction pipeline to average about \$69 billion, comprising approximately \$42 billion of building and \$27 billion of engineering activity. Average annual labour demand is approximately 138,000, divided between about 100,000 building workers and 38,000 engineering workers.¹²

For the Games venues and villages specifically, CSQ estimates approximately \$11.2 billion of construction work, of which \$9.3 billion is engineering and \$1.9 billion is building. Games labour demand is forecast to average approximately 750 workers over the first three financial years, rise to about 5,000 on average from 2028–29 to 2030–31, and approach 8,000 in 2030–31.¹²

These figures should not be interpreted as the total Olympic workforce. They cover construction-relevant occupations for identified venue and village projects and exclude many clerical, legal, finance, event-operations, security, hospitality, volunteer, logistics and technology roles. They also do not fully represent the labour embodied in Games-enabled transport and broader concurrent infrastructure.

Occupational needs

The principal building occupations forecast in sustained demand include:

- Carpenters and joiners.
- Building and plumbing labourers.
- Painting trades workers.
- Plumbers and electricians.
- Concreters, plasterers, bricklayers and stonemasons.
- Construction managers and project administrators.
- Structural-steel construction and welding workers.
- Architectural, building and surveying technicians.
- Civil engineers, architects, landscape architects and surveyors.
- Air-conditioning and refrigeration mechanics.
- Safety inspectors and earthmoving plant operators.¹²

For engineering infrastructure, the critical capabilities extend to rail systems, signalling, overhead traction, communications, systems integration, geotechnical and civil design, structures, utilities, transport planning, possession management, commissioning and assurance. The QAO found shortages across engineers, scientists and architects; project-management professionals; and trades and labourers, with risk especially acute for transport projects in planning or early delivery.¹³

Regional demand

Brisbane accounts for approximately 68% of forecast Games venue-and-village construction value. CSQ expects Brisbane Games labour demand to exceed 1,000 from 2027–28 and peak near 5,000 in 2030–31; Sunshine Coast demand rises from about 150 in 2026–27 to 1,600 in 2030–31; Gold Coast demand rises from about 70 to 1,100 over the same broad period.¹²

The simultaneous SEQ peak means labour cannot simply be shifted from one nearby submarket without affecting another. A worker moved from the Gold Coast to Brisbane may relieve one project while increasing travel time, fatigue, road demand and wage pressure. Effective planning must therefore consider where workers live, transport to work, roster patterns, affordable rental stock, regional accommodation and project sequencing.

Workforce gap

CSQ's 2026 outlook projects an average workforce shortfall of 19,100 workers across the forecast period and a peak shortfall of up to 35,000 in 2027–28. The QAO's earlier assessment similarly warned that venue projects, transport works and capital-grant programs compete for the same labour and that shortages create delay and escalation risks.^{13, 12}

Apprenticeships are necessary but insufficient as a short-term solution because completion takes several years. CSQ reported that Queensland construction-apprentice commencements fell from approximately 15,800 in 2021–22 to about 11,000 in 2024–25, with declines across carpentry, painting, plumbing, electrical and plant-operation streams. The jointly funded \$73.8 million Construction Tech TAFE Centre of Excellence is a positive capacity measure, but its new Caloundra and Moreton Bay facilities are not scheduled for completion until 2028.^{48, 12}

Planning and Design Status

Program maturity

The program has crossed an important threshold since the 2025 review. The QAO's position at 30 June 2025—11 venues in detailed business cases and six in early procurement—has evolved into active design, early works and procurement across the stadium, aquatic centre, Brisbane village, Logan centre, Sunshine Coast Stadium, Barlow Park and other initial venues.^{27, 11, 30, 13}

Nevertheless, “program in delivery” does not mean every project has completed investment approval or detailed design. The 2026–27 budget states that Sunshine Coast Stadium, Sunshine Coast Mountain Bike Centre, Moreton Bay Indoor Sports Centre, Logan Indoor Sports Centre, Barlow Park and Redland Whitewater Centre are in procurement and delivery, while Project Validation Reports will be developed for remaining venues to support state and federal investment decisions.¹⁷

Precinct planning

The Victoria Park draft legacy plan integrates Brisbane Stadium, the National Aquatic Centre, Brisbane Showgrounds, public space and transport connections. The draft was released for consultation from 3 August to 27 September 2026, with the final legacy plan expected in 2027. This timing means precinct planning and individual venue design are partly concurrent, making interface control essential.^{49, 50}

The stadium location and principal field-of-play decisions have been locked in, and design continues. However, pedestrian flows, event-mode transport, public realm, service access, utilities, security perimeter, temporary compounds and post-Games park operations must be resolved at precinct scale rather than independently by each venue designer.^{11, 20}

Approvals framework

Queensland amended the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act to create streamlined delivery pathways. Chapter 3A makes specified venue, village and Games transport development lawful despite requirements under several state planning, environmental, heritage and water statutes, while building legislation and federal environmental law continue to apply.⁵¹

The streamlined framework reduces schedule exposure to conventional state approvals and third-party appeals, but it does not remove the underlying technical, cultural-heritage, environmental, building-safety or stakeholder risks. In practice, faster statutory pathways increase the importance of strong front-end investigations, transparent consultation, design assurance and documented environmental and heritage management.

Funding and Commercial Outlook

The permanent venue program retains a \$7.1 billion funding provision, jointly supported by Queensland and the Australian Government. The 2026–27 budget forecasts \$417 million for venues during that year, while project allocations remain subject to investment decisions following project assessment. A further \$348 million is forecast for athlete villages in 2026–27 within the \$3.5 billion village envelope.¹⁷

The original 100 Day Review warned that the February 2023 venue funding basis had already lost purchasing power through delay and estimated approximately \$1.1 billion of escalation by early 2025. The final scope has

since changed, so this historic comparison is not a current cost estimate, but it demonstrates the sensitivity of a fixed-envelope program to delayed scope decisions.¹⁸

Current market forecasts remain adverse. RLB expects 2026 tender-price growth of about 5% in Brisbane and 6% on the Gold Coast, with the strongest cost growth in SEQ and Townsville as Games work expands. WT forecasts that national building and infrastructure escalation will increase again toward 2028 and expects Brisbane building escalation to be particularly severe.^{52, 53}

Commercial strategy should therefore avoid assuming that competitive ECI alone will neutralise inflation. Cost protection will depend on early definition of scope, realistic contingencies, long-lead procurement, package sequencing, design standardisation where appropriate, balanced risk allocation, viable subcontract terms and active monitoring of contractor financial health.

Key Risks

RISK	EXPOSURE	LIKELY CONSEQUENCE	PRIORITY RESPONSE
Labour shortfall	Statewide shortage peaking before major Games construction reaches its own peak. ¹²	Wage escalation, productivity loss, delayed packages and competition between public projects.	Integrated workforce plan, apprenticeships, skilled migration, interstate attraction, diversity, retention and project sequencing.
Design-construction concurrency	Venue design, ECI, precinct planning and early works overlap.	Rework, provisional pricing, interface gaps and late scope change.	Freeze critical requirements by gateways; manage a single interface register and digital common-data environment.
Cost escalation	SEQ tender prices remain elevated and may accelerate toward 2028. ^{52, 53}	Budget pressure, descoping or delayed awards.	Early long-lead packages, independent cost assurance, market testing and explicit escalation allowances.
Tier-one concentration	The same contractors and consultants appear across multiple venue and transport programs.	Bid fatigue, constrained senior personnel and reduced competitive tension.	Stagger procurements, widen international/local joint ventures, use sensible package sizes and monitor corporate capacity.
Rail systems integration	Cross River Rail, faster rail, The Wave, ETCS and fleet programs converge.	Civil completion without operational readiness; commissioning bottlenecks.	Treat systems assurance, testing, possessions and operator readiness as standalone critical paths.
Village commercial close	Private-sector delivery combines Games deadlines with long-term property feasibility.	Delayed construction, tenure uncertainty or conversion risk.	Conclude land, finance, delivery and post-Games operating arrangements early; maintain fallback accommodation options.
Precinct interfaces	Stadium, aquatic centre, showgrounds, village, park and transport are interdependent.	Conflicting access, utilities, security, logistics or crowd-flow design.	Integrated Victoria Park precinct authority and consolidated logistics/transport model.
Temporary overlay deferred too long	Organising Committee packages run later than permanent works.	Permanent venues designed without sufficient overlay space, loads or utilities.	Embed overlay requirements into 2026–28 permanent designs and conduct early test events.
Extreme weather	Heat, storms and flooding affect both works and Games operations. ¹²	Lost workdays, damaged works, drainage failure and operational disruption.	Weather allowances, resilient design, off-site fabrication, emergency access and redundant services.

RISK	EXPOSURE	LIKELY CONSEQUENCE	PRIORITY RESPONSE
Community and social licence	Fast-tracked statutory framework reduces conventional review avenues. ⁵¹	Opposition, reputational damage and pressure for late design changes.	Maintain meaningful consultation and publish evidence on parkland, heritage, access, housing and legacy outcomes.

Delivery Outlook by Period

2026–27: mobilisation and definition

This is the most important period for de-risking. Principal designers, ECI contractors, delivery teams, precinct plans and baseline controls must converge. Initial works at Victoria Park and other sites need to validate ground, utilities, access, heritage and logistics assumptions before major construction commitments.^{9, 11}

Key expected activity includes stadium ECI, aquatic-centre contractor selection, regional-venue procurement, village design and commercial arrangements, Logan site preparation, Sunshine Coast early works, Faster Rail mobilisation and The Wave detailed design.^{22, 29, 27, 35, 6, 36}

2027–28: major construction ramp-up

Venue main works are expected to expand from 2027, coinciding with CSQ’s statewide peak labour shortfall and approximately \$75 billion construction pipeline peak. This is the period of greatest tender and mobilisation risk, even though the Games-specific labour peak occurs later.^{28, 6, 12}

Projects entering the market after the major contractor and subcontractor allocations of 2026–27 may face weaker competition and higher premiums. Procurement calendars should therefore be coordinated across GLICA, TMR, Queensland Rail, Health, councils and major government-owned corporations.

2028–31: peak production and integration

Games venue-and-village labour demand rises sharply from 2028–29 and peaks near 8,000 in 2030–31. Structural completion must be followed by fit-out, commissioning, testing, defects closure, operator training and temporary-overlay trials; these activities often require different specialist resources from bulk construction.¹²

The target should not be “construction complete by 2032.” Permanent venues and transport systems need sufficient operational runway for test events, security exercises, accessibility trials, broadcast testing and multi-agency rehearsals. A portfolio-wide readiness date in 2031 is more credible than relying on project practical-completion dates immediately before the Games.

2031–32: readiness and overlay

The final phase shifts toward temporary works, technology, signage, security, transport operations, workforce and volunteer mobilisation, venue overlay, broadcast systems and rehearsals. Brisbane 2032’s supplier program already anticipates procurement waves across these categories and more than \$2.5 billion in organising-committee contracts.⁴⁷

Late civil or building work during this phase would compete with overlay installation and test events. Major venue scope should therefore be protected from nonessential late legacy enhancements that can be completed after the Games.

Recommendations

Establish one integrated baseline

GIICA, TMR, the Department of State Development, Queensland Rail, Brisbane 2032 and relevant councils should maintain a single public-facing milestone framework covering design freeze, investment approval, procurement, early works, main works, commissioning, test events and Games handover. Public labels such as “under construction” should distinguish investigations, enabling works and main construction.

Coordinate the market

Major procurements should be sequenced across the wider Queensland capital program, not only within the venues portfolio. A quarterly capacity forum should track bid calendars, tier-one commitments, key-person conflicts, subcontract capacity, long-lead items, industrial conditions and geographic accommodation pressures.

Protect specialist capability

Workforce action should prioritise bottleneck occupations rather than rely solely on headline worker numbers. Immediate focus is required on construction managers, civil and rail engineers, building-services trades, electricians, plumbers, concreters, carpenters, steel workers, earthmoving operators, surveyors, safety professionals, signalling specialists and systems-assurance personnel. ^{13, 12}

Expand supply without weakening standards

The response should combine apprenticeship retention, rapid recognition of prior learning, skilled migration, interstate attraction, increased participation by women and Indigenous Queenslanders, and technology-enabled productivity. The Construction Tech TAFE initiative and procurement commitments to apprentices and local suppliers provide a foundation, but contractor-level workforce plans need measurable targets and verified delivery. ^{46, 48}

Use ECI selectively and rigorously

ECI is appropriate for flagship venues and brownfield transport because it brings buildability and market knowledge into design. Conversion to final contracts should nevertheless be gated by independent cost review, open-book validation, agreed risk allocation, design maturity, quantified contingency and tested subcontractor pricing.

Integrate permanent and temporary design

Brisbane 2032 overlay teams should be embedded in venue design during 2026–28. Designs should explicitly reserve space, structure, power, data, access and logistics for temporary seating, media, security, ceremonies, athlete movement, workforce facilities and sponsor operations.

Build schedule contingency

Each critical asset should target operational completion well before the Games. The program should maintain contingency not only within individual construction schedules but also between construction completion, commissioning, test events and final overlay.

Publish legacy conversion plans

Village housing conversion, stadium and aquatics operating models, community access, parkland outcomes and post-Games financial responsibilities should be resolved before main construction peaks. Legacy certainty is essential because it determines design standards, financing, whole-of-life costs and community support.

Conclusion

Brisbane and SEQ face a large but manageable 2032 construction task if the next two years are used to turn scope certainty into construction readiness. The program's strengths are clearer governance, a dedicated delivery partner, appointed flagship designers, early contractor involvement and substantial state and federal funding. Its weaknesses are uneven project maturity, a fixed deadline, significant precinct and transport interfaces, and an already overloaded construction market. [7](#), [17](#), [13](#)

The central strategic issue is not whether Queensland can physically construct the required assets. It is whether government and industry can coordinate designs, approvals, commercial models, people and supply chains across venues, villages, rail, roads, housing and other concurrent programs without allowing one project's acceleration to destabilise another. The most credible path is early design discipline, portfolio-wide market coordination, targeted workforce expansion and completion milestones that leave 2031–32 for testing and Games readiness rather than unfinished construction.

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