



# FROM CLIMATE-POSITIVE HYPE TO ENGAGEMENT THEATRE: BRISBANE 2032, OLYMPIC GOVERNANCE, AND THE POLITICS OF URBAN SPECTACLE

Seminar held by Professor Marcus Foth, School of Design, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Stanza dello Zodiaco or online ([link](#))

June 15, 2026: h. 9:00

## Brisbane 2032

Olympic Games Host

*Queensland*



### PROGRAMME

**Welcome address:** M. Santangelo

**From climate-positive hype to engagement theatre:** M. Foth

**Discussion:** M. Bottero, C. Caprioli

**Bio:** Marcus Foth is a Professor in Strategic Design in the School of Design and a Chief Investigator in the QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC), Faculty of Creative Industries, Education, and Social Justice, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

Brisbane's successful bid for the 2032 Olympic Games was globally promoted as the world's first "climate-positive" Olympics. Yet this contractual commitment was later quietly removed from the Olympic Host Contract, replaced by weaker aspirational language with no enforcement mechanisms. Drawing on comparative research with colleagues at Politecnico di Torino and recent developments in Brisbane, this talk examines how sustainability rhetoric, visual spectacle, and governance practices intersect in contemporary Olympic planning. The presentation introduces the concepts of "engagement theatre" and "bedazzlement" to analyse how political legitimacy is manufactured through imagery and promise-making rather than participatory decision-making. By situating Brisbane 2032 within a longer lineage of Olympic governance failures and sustainability backtracking, the presentation reflects on what these dynamics reveal about the limits of mega-event-led urban transformation and the urgent need for more accountable, transparent, and genuinely regenerative planning models.