

Councillor Noon - QoN - Water Quality Management and Algal Bloom Mitigation in the River Torrens Lake and City Water Bodies

Tuesday, 28 October 2025
Council

Council Member
Councillor Carmel Noon

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City Infrastructure

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Carmel Noon will ask the following Question on Notice:

In the context of ongoing algal blooms, faecal and other contamination, and repeated lake closures over the years- I seek answers to the following questions.

- How much is the Adelaide City Council expending on water quality per annum?
- What technology/technologies are currently being deployed?
- Given recurrent blooms and ongoing lake closures, what criteria are used to evaluate the efficacy of these technologies?
- Other than the one/s already being deployed, what technologies has the ACC been made aware of with regard to improving water quality?
- What, if any, other technologies have actually been trialled?
- If other technologies have not been trialled, on what basis have these trials been rejected?
- What plans does Council have to improve the water quality in the Torrens Lake and other water bodies, especially given the possibility of Adelaide hosting COP31?

REPLY

1. The City of Adelaide (CoA) allocates an annual budget of \$200,000 for water quality monitoring across the River Torrens and other Council maintained water bodies.
2. While CoA does not currently employ active water treatment technologies, aerators have previously been used in an attempt to improve dissolved oxygen levels and prevent thermal stratification. In place of aerators, CoA now collaborates with SA Water to undertake controlled release of flows from Kangaroo Creek Reservoir in coordination with operations at the Adelaide Weir. Releasing cooler water from the bottom of the reservoir helps disrupt the condition that promotes the blue green algae growth.
3. In addition to controlled releases, the fountain off the Riverbank Precinct Pedestrian Bridge further acts to move and aerate water adding oxygen which makes the environment less likely for the growth of blue green algae.
4. Noting that the last Torrens Lake closure for an algal bloom occurred in 2013, both of these actions are examples of how the movement of water has helped prevent the stagnant condition that can contribute to algal blooms. It is important to further note that the last closure of Torrens Lake was in March 2025 due to

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the high level presence of E. coli and Enterococci, and not caused by an algal bloom.

5. Having no algal bloom-related closures of the Torrens Lake since 2013 suggests that the current practice of controlled releases from the Kangaroo Creek Reservoir have been an effective management strategy. The more recent closure of the Torrens Lake was due to the presence of E. coli and Enterococci and not caused by algal bloom.
6. A further initiative is the Rymill Lake Renewal Project, which has been designed with functionality upgrades to harvest stormwater from the Victoria Park wetland. The system includes a biofiltration component that cleans water through a circulation system integrated into the garden beds. This biofiltration system is continually monitored to ensure its long-term effectiveness.
7. To manage water quality in all our water bodies (which includes the River Torrens), CoA, in collaboration with the Torrens Lake Cyanobacteria Advisory Committee (TLCAC), has established a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that includes
 - 7.1. Weekly monitoring from December to the end of March
 - 7.2. Monthly monitoring is undertaken for the remainder of the year.
8. CoA was recently approached by a technology provider proposing a trial at the River Torrens and Rymill Park Lake. The proposal was assessed and declined due to:
 - 8.1. A lack of scientific evidence to support the proposal
 - 8.2. Insufficient peer reviewed research supporting the effectiveness of the technology
 - 8.3. High establishment costs
 - 8.4. Lack of alignment with CoA Unsolicited Proposals guidelines.
9. Consultations with agencies also highlighted concerns raised by peak water and environmental scientists regarding potential adverse impacts on aquatic organisms.
10. Any new innovative approaches and/or technologies are always assessed based on their sustainability and effectiveness with regard to maintaining the health of our water bodies.
11. CoA is open to trialling innovative technologies that are scientifically validated and do not have any adverse impact on aquatic organisms within our water bodies. We also consider the sustainability and overall merit of such technologies as long-term solutions for improving and maintaining water quality.
12. Currently, the most effective strategy for controlling cyanobacterial blooms in Torrens Lake and other water bodies during summer involves releasing water from Kangaroo Creek Reservoir into the River Torrens. The released water travels downstream, helping to disperse and dilute cyanobacteria in the Lake and prevent bloom formation.
13. The timing of these releases, known as managed flow events, is informed by regular monitoring of cyanobacteria concentrations in Torrens Lake, weather forecasts, tidal conditions, and planned activities around Torrens Lake, River Torrens and coastal areas near the River Torrens estuary.
14. This approach has successfully controlled cyanobacterial growth and kept Torrens Lake open for recreational use over the past eight years, since the program was formalised in 2015–16 following four years of trials. While the managed flow events are effective in preventing Torrens Lake closures and provide environmental benefits along the river, they can have some impacts on beach users near the River Torrens outlet.
15. The Torrens Lake Cyanobacteria Advisory Committee (TLCAC) and CoA are always open to any potential technology and sustainable option to help prevent algal bloom in River Torrens or other water bodies.

Staff time in receiving and preparing this reply	To prepare this reply in response to the question on notice took approximately 5.5 hours.
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- END OF REPORT -

Councillor Freeman - QoN - Integrated Transport Strategy - Implementation Plan - Increasing Active/Sustainable Transport

Tuesday, 28 October 2025
Council

Council Member
Councillor Eleanor Freeman

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City Infrastructure

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Eleanor Freeman will ask the following Question on Notice:

'The City of Adelaide's Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) sets an aspiration to significantly increase the proportion of people in the city using active and sustainable travel modes. This aspiration is shared by other Council strategies, including the Strategic Plan 2024-28, City Plan 2036, Integrated Climate Strategy 2030 and Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028.

To achieve this aspiration, the ITS outlines commitments to be delivered by the City of Adelaide and partners over the next decade.

An implementation plan is required to understand how the commitments in the ITS will be delivered, and when.

Administration is requested to confirm:

1. The approach taken to developing an implementation plan that delivers upon the commitments made by the ITS and other strategies.
2. The timing of when an implementation plan will be presented for Committee consideration and Council approval.
3. If the implementation plan will include projects to be considered by Council for inclusion in the 2026-27 Budget process.'

REPLY

1. The Administration is in the process of developing an implementation plan for the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) based on a prioritisation framework. The prioritisation will be based on the contribution of the proposed intervention towards the commitments made by the ITS and other strategies, whilst also considering other variables such as costs/resources and opportunities to reduce costs/impacts through alignment with existing programs, infrastructure renewal works and grant funding opportunities.
2. A report with the implementation plan is scheduled for presentation to the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee in February 2026.
3. The Administration has commenced a review of projects for inclusion in the 2026-27 Budget process as part of internal planning processes. The selection of these projects is and will be informed by the key actions and

services in the ITS, ongoing projects, the renewal and new project program and projects identified by the community.

Staff time in receiving and preparing this reply	To prepare this reply in response to the question on notice took approximately 4 hours.
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- END OF REPORT -

Councillor Freeman - QoN - Capital City Celebration of National Events

Tuesday, 28 October 2025
Council

Council Member
Councillor Eleanor Freeman

Public

Contact Officer:
Michael Sedgman, Chief Executive
Officer

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Eleanor Freeman will ask the following Question on Notice:

'As the Capital City, the City of Adelaide is looked to for recognition and promotion of relevant national events. This is particularly important when national events align to aspirations documented within Council's adopted strategies – such as the Integrated Transport Strategy's target to triple the number of people cycling to the city by 2030.

National Ride2Work Day was held on 15 October 2025 and celebrated across Australia. However, for the first time since 2014, the City of Adelaide did not celebrate the event due to budget constraints.

Can the Administration advise:

1. What national events does the City of Adelaide currently commit to?
2. How are national events identified, prioritised and funded within the City of Adelaide's broader program of events?
3. What proportion of the 2025/26 budget is allocated to the celebration of national events?
4. What consideration of national events will be included for prioritisation in the 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget process?

REPLY

1. In 2025/26 the City of Adelaide has committed to supporting the following national events either through Strategic Project funding allocations as part of the annual Business Plan and Budget (BP&B) process, or funding being included in specific operational budgets. These events are:
 - 1.1. Australia Day – Strategic project funding for a partnership with the Australia Day Council of South Australia to deliver community events in the city.
 - 1.2. ANZAC Day Service - March and related activities – funding included in the operational budget.
 - 1.3. NAIDOC Week Celebrations – funding included in the operational budget.
 - 1.4. Adelaide's New Years Eve Celebrations – funding included in the operational budget.
2. In response to part two of the Question on Notice:
 - 2.1 The events noted in parts 1.1 to 1.4 of this response are considered by Council for funding as part of the annual BP&B process. Support for these specific events has been determined by Council decision (Australia Day and New Years Eve) or as a specific action within Council's endorsed Stretch

Reconciliation Plans (NAIDOC Week) or to support the state's largest commemorative activities (ANZAC Day).

- 2.2 As noted in the [Civic Recognition and Protocol Policy](#), civic recognition can take the form of a number of events or acknowledgements, including Lighting of the Adelaide Town Hall.

2.2.1 Requests to light up the Adelaide Town Hall must meet at least one of six different criteria. One of the criteria is "Significant public events, celebrations or occasions that are of state, national or international significance". All requests are directed to the Lord Mayor for consideration and decision.

2.2.2 Previous occasions or events of national significance have included National Police Remembrance Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Volunteers Week and support for the Matildas campaign in the FIFA Women's World Cup.

3. The 2025/26 Annual BP&B includes funding for the four national events outlined in points 1.1 to 1.4 above as follows:

3.1 Australia Day event - \$100,000

3.2 ANZAC Day Service - \$57,000

3.3 NAIDOC Week events - \$54,000

3.4 Adelaide's New Years Eve Celebrations - \$585,000

3.5 The total budget for these events is \$796,000 being 0.33% of the 2025/26 total operating expenditure of \$240.428 million.

4. Funding for national events is considered by Council Members as part of their deliberations during the annual BP&B process. In addition to the events noted in points 1.1. to 1.4., Council Members have the opportunity to propose funding be allocated for specific activities that may be linked to national events. It is Council's decision whether funding will be allocated.

Staff time in receiving and preparing this reply	To prepare this reply in response to the question on notice took approximately 5.5 hours.
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