

# Adelaide Aquatic Centre Redevelopment - Consultation Results

Tuesday, 19 September 2023  
City Community Services and Culture Committee

Strategic Alignment - Thriving Communities

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the results of the community consultation undertaken on the draft Construction Licence (draft Licence) and the essential terms of the draft 42-year Lease Agreement (draft Lease Agreement) to facilitate the Adelaide Aquatic Centre Redevelopment (AACR) in Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2).

At the March 2022 State Election, the incoming Labour Government committed \$80 million to redevelop and operate a new Adelaide Aquatic Centre at Park 2. Through its 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget, Council consulted with the community on its commitment for \$20 million in the Long Term Financial Plan for the purpose of demolition of the current venue to facilitate delivery of the AACR and reinstate a community oval on Park 2.

Consideration of the draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement through consultation is part of the process that follows earlier decisions by Council to seek investment for the redevelopment of the current Adelaide Aquatic Centre. Prior to this consultation process by Council, significant consultation had already been undertaken by the State Government on the project scope and location.

The purpose of Council's consultation was regarding the terms and conditions for the draft License and draft Lease Agreement. It is noted that the majority of responses represent a part of the community that does not support the project. Although the consultation on the draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement follows previous consultation processes and decisions regarding the State Government's AACR announcement, the results illustrate that there is still opposition to this project proceeding, or to elements of how it is proceeding.

Except for the submissions that sought to have the AACR built elsewhere, the concerns and objections raised regarding the draft License and draft Lease Agreement are minimal and are mitigated through commitments already in place, and outlined in this report.

The consultation closed on 3 August and generated 280 responses, 15% percent came from respondents within the City of Adelaide (postcodes 5000 and 5006) and 85% from outside the City of Adelaide. This report provides an overview and assessment of 'what we heard' from the community.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 26 September 2023 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the assessment of the community consultation findings.
  2. Notes that a further report detailing the essential terms and the negotiated draft Lease Agreement will be presented to Council in November 2023.
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## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<b>Strategic Alignment – Thriving Communities</b> Outcome 1: Thriving Communities – 1.1 Leverage the Adelaide Park Lands to promote health, wellbeing and lifestyle experiences.
Policy	<a href="#">Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-2025</a> Continue to enhance the Adelaide Aquatic Centre to meet community expectations. Generate a greater focus on servicing the play space and picnicking areas through increased offerings and better access to the existing commercial operations. <a href="#">Community Land Management Plan</a> The current Community Land Management Plan (CLMP) for Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2) envisages an Aquatic Centre – however it requires updating to accommodate the State Government project and the long-term leasing of the new Adelaide Aquatic Centre. Consultation on the CLMP occurred at the same time as consultation on the draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement. Results of the CLMP consultation will be presented to Council separate to this report.
Consultation	<i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i> Section 202 – Community consultation occurred over a three-week period (13 July 2023 to 3 August 2023).
Resource	Undertaken within current operational resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Risk mitigation approach has been considered in the Administrative actions in the Consultation Summary Report – view Link 1 <a href="#">here</a> .
Opportunities	The State Government’s Adelaide Aquatic Centre Redevelopment provides a unique opportunity re-build an aged and highly valued community asset.
23/24 Budget Allocation	Within existing resources
Proposed 24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
23/24 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

# DISCUSSION

## Background

1. As part of the State Government's election promise, \$80 million was originally committed to redevelop the existing Adelaide Aquatic Centre in the Park Lands located in Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2).
2. The State Government, through the Department for Infrastructure presented their original proposal to Council, which included public consultation by the State Government with relation to the location within Park 2, where the south west corner of Park 2 was ultimately selected.
3. The State Government further developed their proposal and provided plans that took into account feedback from Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) and Council.
4. Importantly, to meet feedback received through consultation processes relating to the project, its scope and its location, the State Government determined to deliver on a request to increase the buffer zone to the residents of Barton Terrace West. This was achieved with the buffer increasing from approximately 40 metres to 70 metres.
5. As a result, the State Government also announced a change to the timing of the delivery of the project. To accommodate the increased buffer zone, the current facility requires earlier demolition. This has resulted in a period of time, currently August 2024 to December 2025, where current users will need to temporarily use alternate venues, until the new facility opens.
6. The State Government increased the scope of the building, however its physical footprint on the Park Lands was decreased by 1,000 square metres.
7. Council and Kadaltilla expressed a desire for fewer car parks at the facility on Park Lands. The State Government has predicated its design on increased visitations from the current 700-750,000 annual visitations to between 1.2-1.3 million annual visitations. This has necessitated a higher number of car parks, albeit on an overall reduced footprint for the development.
8. The State Government has also committed to an overall decrease in the total footprint of the building, car park and hard stand areas to provide a net return of Park Lands of 1,000 square metres. It also committed to look at further reductions of hard stand areas.
9. On 10 June 2023, the State Government announced that it had increased its investment to \$135 million as part of the 2023/24 State Budget process to accommodate its final design and cost escalations.
10. These design and program changes were noted by Council and Kadaltilla, with Council giving approval to enter into a Project Agreement with the State Government, subject to progressing and finalising its statutory obligations.
11. In consideration of those changes, Council made provision for up to \$20 million in the Long Term Financial Plan which was presented to the community as part of Council's consultation on its 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget. The purpose of these funds were specific to the demolition of the existing centre and to reinstate a new community oval on Park 2, effectively in place of the current Adelaide Aquatic Centre.
12. At its meeting of 27 June 2023, Council received an update on the Adelaide Aquatic Centre Redevelopment (AACR) revised project timeline, confirmation of the final location of the redeveloped centre and an overview of the proposed Project Agreement between the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Minister) and The Corporation of the City of Adelaide (CoA). Two of the key guiding principles associated with the Project Agreement, are:
  - 12.1. agreement on a form of licence for the purpose of commencing construction that is in line with Council policy, and
  - 12.2. to negotiate a long-term lease to commence after construction is complete that does not exceed 42 years.
13. Community consultation was undertaken in accordance with Council Consultation Policy (2019) between Thursday 13 July and Thursday 3 August 2023 on:
  - 13.1. the draft Construction Licence to facilitate the construction of the State Government's AACR, and
  - 13.2. the essential terms of a draft 42-Year Lease Agreement for an area in Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2) between the Minister and CoA.
14. A comprehensive summary of the results of the community consultation, Administration commentary and recommended actions are in Link 1 to this report - view Link 1 [here](#).

## **Community Engagement Process and Methodology**

15. The consultation objectives and engagement approach are detailed in Link 1 to this report - view Link 1 [here](#).
16. All submissions that were emailed directly to the Your Say Adelaide email address were personally acknowledged by Administration and where necessary, Administration requested that additional residential information be supplied to enable a broader demographic analysis.
17. The content of each submission was reviewed and grouped into key themes to enable a statistical analysis.
18. In total 280 submissions were received from respondents:
  - 18.1. 5.7% reside in North Adelaide (postcode 5006)
  - 18.2. 9.3% reside in Adelaide (postcode 5000)
  - 18.3. 31.8% reside in South Australia
  - 18.4. 1.4% reside outside of South Australia, and
  - 18.5. 50.7% did not supply an address.
19. During the consultation period the Adelaide Park Lands Association (APA) proactively engaged their community to submit a standard 'pre-drafted' submission that reflected the collective views of the APA.

## **Representative Organisation Submissions**

20. Of the 280 submissions, 217 were pre-drafted submissions, representing 78% of the total submissions. Each individual submission has been included in the total summary of assessment. These groups included Adelaide Park Lands Association, North Adelaide Historical Society and the South West Residents Association, the three key themes raised were:
  - 20.1. Construct the new aquatic centre on a brownfield site
  - 20.2. Prioritising protection and conservation of the Park Lands
  - 20.3. World Heritage Listing.

## **Individual Responses**

21. A summary of the remaining responses received from individuals were consistent with the three key themes outlined above:
  - 21.1. 57% concerned with the site selection on the Park Lands and had preference for a brownfield site
  - 21.2. 36% seeking the prioritisation and protection of the Park Lands
22. The individual responses, also raised the following concerns:
  - 22.1. 12% concerned with prioritising sustainability and climate change mitigation
  - 22.2. 10% were concerned that the location had resulted in the early closure and loss of facility during the construction period
  - 22.3. 7% were concerned the site did not provide adequate public transport options and resulted in greater carparking on the Park Lands
  - 22.4. 2% were concerned that the project was a waste of money
  - 22.5. 2% were concerned with the impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

## **Responses Directly Attributable to the License**

23. Respondents highlighted the following concerns:
  - 23.1. License fee should not be nominal, but a commercial rate
  - 23.2. Size of the compound and alienation of Park Lands during construction.
24. 2.1% of respondents also supported the granting of the draft Licence and draft 42-Year Lease to commence after the AACR construction is complete.
  - 24.1. Supportive respondents recognised that a diversity of uses across the Park Lands encourages greater use by the community. These respondents:
    - 24.1.1. requested that adequate cycling infrastructure and good secure bike parking be included with this project.

24.1.2. recognised that trees will be lost but see this as an opportunity for additional trees to be planted as part of the AACR project.

### **Responses Directly Attributable to the Lease**

25. Respondents highlighted that:
- 25.1. Full particulars of the actual Lease were not provided.

### **Analysis of Consultation Responses**

26. We note that common amongst the majority of the submissions were three key themes. Below is commentary with regard to those concerns.
27. Construct new aquatic centre on a brownfield site
- 27.1. These responses were the majority and were seen across the 217 pre-drafted submissions and some of the individual responses.
- 27.2. The State Government have previously advised of work they undertook to assess alternative sites when first announcing the project. The details of those assessments were not formally provided, but the advice provided to Council as the basis for not progressing with an alternative site was that none met the State's criteria for size, location and financial viability of the project, including the cost to acquire land.
- 27.3. It is further noted that in the previous term of Council, all major political parties were approached to seek funding contributions towards replacement of the current facility. This was on the basis that the current facility is at the end of its useful life, requires significant maintenance and as currently operating requires annual subsidisation by Council to support the community to continue its use of the facility and offset the operational loss of the venue.
28. Prioritising protection and conservation of Park Lands
- 28.1. Respondents considered AACR a lost opportunity to return existing site to Park Lands for more green space and biodiversity.
- 28.2. The draft License and draft Lease provided for consultation adhere to all legislative and policy requirements as they relate to the Park Lands.
- 28.3. Their purpose is to ensure that any uses approved for the Park Lands are managed in accordance with the expectation of Council and in line with its policies and governing legislation.
- 28.4. In review of the submissions received it is evident that respondents deemed the use of the Park Lands for the purposes of an Aquatic Centre inappropriate, and on that basis sought that the draft License and/or the draft Lease not be endorsed, as opposed to any issues with the draft License or Lease themselves.
- 28.5. The Community Land Management Plan (CLMP) for Park 2, including the revisions that have been out to consultation do envisage an Aquatic Centre on Park 2. The CLMP has been part of a separate consultation process and report.
29. World Heritage Listing
- 29.1. Council has supported the progress of a Joint World Heritage Bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes (World Heritage Bid) Submission with support from the State Government to progress to the Tentative Bid Submission Phase.
- 29.2. In the preliminary work to date, there is no indication that any of the northern Park Lands and the current or proposed uses of those Parks (Parks 2 – 6) create a threat to the bid proposal.
- 29.3. This portion of the Adelaide Park Lands represents a largely intact and highly representative and consistent application of the original form of Colonel Light's Plan. It should be noted that this is consistent with the East, South and West boundaries of the Park Lands and its Squares.
- 29.4. Whilst we acknowledge the concern raised, there is no evidence on the work undertaken to date that the granting of a Licence and Lease presents any risk to the progress of the World Heritage Bid.
30. Consideration of the other issues raised through the balance of the individual responses is provided below:
31. Environmental impacts/sustainability outcomes associated with development
- 31.1. State Government has completed an Environmental Assessment Report for the project as part of the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) planning assessment.

- 31.2. DIT have presented a range of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles, the northern orientation of the facility for passive solar benefits, its commitments to planting and landscape and a range of Environmental Sustainable Development (ESD) principles applied to the built form.
- 31.3. DIT have committed to using locally sourced and low carbon emission materials and for the new facility to be powered using 100% renewable energy, attracting a 5-star Green energy rating.
32. Early closure of existing Adelaide Aquatic Centre
- 32.1. It is notable that this concern included support for the delivery of the new venue, but focussed on the impact of having to attend elsewhere during the demolition and construction to facilitate delivery of the new venue.
- 32.2. The current venue will remain operational until demolition, which is currently scheduled for August 2024.
- 32.3. The State Government have committed through the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing to provide alternative locations for the groups and individuals during the period where the current facility will not be available, and the new facility is under construction. The State Government will work with users of the current facility to link them to alternatives over the coming year.
- 32.4. As stated previously, to meet the need to move the facility further north into Park 2, it is not possible for the State Government to progress delivery of the new facility without demolishing the current facility.
33. Lack of public transport options to new AACR, and increased Car Parking on the Park Lands
- 33.1. Council also provided this feedback to the State Government, which recommended consideration of a reduction in the size of all hard stand areas and the number of car parks, as a result DIT committed to:
- 33.1.1. Look at further reductions to the overall hardstand and to consider car park removal in the future should public transport improve along with any increases in alternative active modes of transport.
- 33.1.2. Council remains committed to looking at removal of other hard stand and car parks on the Park Lands.
34. Loss of trees and loss of recreational facilities (Barton East/West Ovals)
- 34.1. Kadaltilla expressed concern about the potential loss of up to 15 significant and / or regulated trees and recommended all measures be taken to reduce the loss through the design phase and building process.
- 34.2. Kadaltilla requested a commitment from DIT to a net increase in the tree canopy in the area of the proposed lease.
- 34.3. DIT has committed to replanting in excess of the number of trees proposed for removal, with final details to be provided as they finalised their detailed designs.
- 34.4. Administration is working with DIT to formalise the tree planting plan, which includes semi mature replacements and seeks a minimum replacement ratio of between 3:1 and 6:1 for those trees proposed for removal.
- 34.5. Some responses also illustrated conflict with other objectives or priorities sought by this proposal. In this instance, some respondents prioritised the loss of trees and recreational facilities over the increased buffer to the residents of Barton Terrace West and supported development on the original site on Park 2 over the final site selection.
- 34.6. Council has made provision in the LTFP through its endorsed 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget to deliver a new community oval on Park 2.
- 34.7. Council will receive a Prudential Report on that investment in September.
35. 97.9% of respondents raised concerns which reflected non support for the license on the basis of non support for the State's project. On that basis, the results relating to specific feedback on the License and Lease Agreement were minimal. These responses were not related directly to the consultation content but centred on the State Government's AACR project more broadly. These respondents raised concerns about the AACR project and some included:
- 35.1. climate responsiveness through the re-establishment of vegetation.
- 35.2. loss of trees and the impact of this loss on bird life and resident koala population.
- 35.3. concern about whether Kaurua Traditional Owners had been engaged in relation to the AACR project.

## Summary

36. Prior to the consultation being undertaken, the Council had resolved to partner with the State Government for the AACR to be in Park Lands, with the construction of the project and the ongoing use of the facility to be facilitated via a draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement (respectively).
37. The purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback on the draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement.
38. The consultation results did not respond directly to the purpose of the consultation process, rather comments related to the location of the AACR within the Park Lands.
39. As a result, the majority of the 'No' vote is aligned to the existing decision of Council relating to location, not necessarily to the draft Licence or draft Lease Agreement.
40. In good faith, all comments received will be sent to the Minister with the aim to help inform final designs and management outcomes for the AACR.

## Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority

41. At its meeting of 24 August 2023, Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority considered the results of the draft Licence and draft Lease Agreement consultation and resolved to provide Council the following advice:
  - “1. *Receives the community engagement findings.*
  2. *Endorses the assessment of the community consultation findings provided in Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on 24 August 2023.*
  3. *that a further report detailing the essential terms and the negotiated draft Lease Agreement will be presented to Council in November 2023.*”

## Next Steps

42. Subject to Council's consideration of the consultation findings on 26 September 2023, the Lord Mayor and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) are authorised to finalise negotiations for the draft Licence.
43. To accommodate AACR project timeframes, the draft Licence will need to be finalised prior to the formal set up of works compound in (Park 2) proposed to commence in October 2023.
44. Notes that a further report detailing the essential terms and the negotiated draft Lease Agreement will be presented to Council in November 2023.

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## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** - Consultation Summary Report

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## ATTACHMENTS

Nil

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- END OF REPORT -