

City of Adelaide Review of Nuclear Free Zone Policy

Strategic Alignment - Our Environment

Public

Tuesday, 1 October 2024

City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee

Program Contact:

Sarah Gilmour, Associate Director Park Lands, Policy & Sustainability

Approving Officer:

Ilia Houridis, Director City Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Adelaide declared itself a Nuclear Free Zone on 27 February 1995 and reaffirmed this position on 24 July 2000 by updating its Declaration as a Nuclear Free Zone (the Nuclear Free Zone Policy) (**Attachment A**). Since 2000, the Council has consistently taken steps to confirm its position as a Nuclear Free Zone.

This report recommends that the Nuclear Free Zone Policy (**Attachment A**) be replaced with the Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy (**Attachment B**) as the most current statement of the Council's commitment to a Nuclear Free Zone.

The declaration of a Nuclear Free Zone is a symbolic statement banning nuclear weapons and nuclear power, while not prohibiting the use of radiopharmaceuticals in nuclear medicine.

In response to correspondence received in March 2024 from the Medical Association for Prevention of War and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom seeking Council's support for Australia to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Treaty), the Lord Mayor wrote to Mr Steve Georganas MP, Federal Member for Adelaide, asking that he support Australia signing the Treaty. A response to the Lord Mayor was circulated to Council Members in June 2024.

At its meeting held on 11 June 2024, Council received a deputation and considered a Motion on Notice regarding the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty ([Link 1](#)), and formally endorsed the following text of the Cities Appeal:

"Our city/town is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment. Therefore, we warmly welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017, and we call on our national government to sign and ratify it without delay."

Nuclear Free Zones cannot be implemented by a Local Government Authority. Local Nuclear Free Zone declarations and signs have limited legal significance; however, they are a public statement of the views of the Council and its local community.

The updated Policy (**Attachment B**) will continue to act as a public statement of the views of the Council and its local community where it opposes the storage, transportation, and establishment of nuclear facilities, weapons and power within the city, excluding the use of radioisotopes in medical facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 8 October 2024 for consideration

THAT THE CITY PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the 1995 Declaration of the City of Adelaide as a Nuclear Free Zone Policy (the Nuclear Free Zone Policy) reaffirmed in 2000 as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 1 October 2024.
 2. Adopts the Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy as contained in Attachment B to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 1 October 2024.
-

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Environment Outcome: Lead as a Low Carbon Emissions City
Policy	The City of Adelaide declared itself a Nuclear Free Zone on 27 February 1995 and reaffirmed this position on 24 July 2000 by updating its Nuclear Free Zone Policy Declaration. Nuclear Free Zones cannot be implemented by a local government authority and have limited legal significance; however, they are a public statement of the views of the Council and its local community. This report proposes a further update of the Policy.
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	In 1998 and 1999 the Australian Government passed laws to ban nuclear facilities being built in Australia. Australia’s only nuclear facility is in Sydney and is used for medical and industrial research, not energy production. The South Australian Environment Protection Authority (SA EPA) administers anything related to the safe storage, transport, and handling of radioactive substances (nuclear material) under the Radiation Protection Control (RPC) Act 2021 (SA). An expert advisory body has been established under section 8 of the RPC Act. This body advises the Minister and the SA EPA on all aspects of radiation protection in medical, industrial, scientific and public uses of ionising and non-ionising radiation. A range of Commonwealth and State legislation is broadly relevant to nuclear matters and is listed in the CoA’s Policy.
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
23/24 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
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. Council first formally resolved to declare the City of Adelaide to be a Nuclear Free Zone (the Nuclear Free Zone Policy) at its meeting on 27 February 1995. This position was subsequently reaffirmed by the Council on 24 July 2000 (**Attachment A**).
2. The declaration of a Nuclear Free Zone is a symbolic statement banning nuclear weapons and nuclear power, while not prohibiting the use of radiopharmaceuticals in nuclear medicine.
3. Nuclear Free Zones cannot be implemented by a Local Government Authority. Local Nuclear Free Zone declarations and signs have limited legal significance; however, they are a public statement of the views of the Council and its local community.
4. Council endorsed the “Abolition 2000 Local Authorities Resolution” on 14 July 1997 which supported the elimination of nuclear weapons early in the next century.
5. The City of Adelaide supported a Motion presented to the National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association in June 2021 that called on the Australian Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
6. In response to correspondence received in March 2024 from the Medical Association for Prevention of War and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom seeking Council’s support for Australia to sign the Treaty, the Lord Mayor wrote to Mr Steve Georganas MP, Federal Member for Adelaide, asking that he support Australia signing the Treaty. A response to the Lord Mayor was circulated to Council Members in June 2024.
7. At its meeting held on 11 June 2024, Council received a deputation, and considered a Motion on Notice regarding the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty ([Link 1](#)), and formally endorsed the following text of the Cities Appeal:

“Our city/town is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment. Therefore, we warmly welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017, and we call on our national government to sign and ratify it without delay.”

Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy

8. This report proposes that the Nuclear Free Zone Policy (**Attachment A**), is contemporised and replaced with the Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy (**Attachment B**), as the most current statement of the Council’s commitment to a Nuclear Free Zone.
9. A Nuclear Free Zone as defined in the CoA’s Policy is any geographic area, regardless of size, in which:
 - 9.1. There are no nuclear weapons, nor any facilities associated with the development, manufacture, transport or use of nuclear weapons, component parts and associated technology.
 - 9.2. There are no nuclear power plants, including power stations, uranium enrichment and reprocessing plants.
 - 9.3. No major radioactive materials or wastes are created, used, stored or transported.
 - 9.4. No uranium exploration, mining or export takes place.
 - 9.5. There are no ports of call or landing rights for any nuclear forces, including nuclear-armed and/or powered vessels and aircraft.
10. The purpose of the Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy is that:
 - 10.1. *The Corporation of the City of Adelaide declares a Nuclear Free Zone within the boundaries of the City of Adelaide, with the provision of exemption being made for the transport of small quantities of biomedical reagents to or from destinations in the city and radioisotopes used in medical facilities.*
11. A Nuclear Free Zone excludes any activities which are associated with nuclear radioactive material in its area, excluding the use of medical radioactive substances. Other fields such as geology, geophysics, forensic science, structural engineering and materials analysis use radioactive equipment.

12. The Policy includes the following statement:
 - 12.1. *A Nuclear Free Zone is the Council declaring its opposition to the nuclear arms race and all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle; nuclear power stations; and uranium nuclear waste and other material connected with the nuclear power industry being stored or transported through the city.*
13. The key changes to the Policy are:
 - 13.1. Clarifying Council's position on nuclear weapons.
 - 13.2. Clarifying the Policy excludes radioisotopes used in medical facilities.
 - 13.3. Replacing referencing with health risks from radiation which are more commonly understood from when the Policy was first introduced, with a reference to the *Public Health Act 2011 (SA)*.
 - 13.4. Removing references to other Australian local government authorities noting:
 - 13.4.1. Of the 10 South Australian Councils referenced, seven have subsequently been amalgamated and none of these listed Councils has a stand-alone policy position.
 - 13.4.2. The councils of more than 40 Australian cities, including Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney, have instead called on the Australian government to sign and ratify the Treaty, as has the Australian Local Government Association. The City of Adelaide has joined this list following the Council's decision at its meeting held on 11 June 2024 ([Link 1](#)).
 - 13.5. Updating references to Commonwealth and State legislation.

Next Steps

14. Should Council adopt the Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy (**Attachment B**), the Policy will be added to the CoA's Policy Register and published on the City of Adelaide website, replacing the Nuclear Free Zone Policy.
15. The next scheduled review of the Policy would be in 5 years and due in 2029.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Council Agenda – Tuesday, 11 June 2024](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Declaration of the City of Adelaide as a Nuclear Free Zone Policy (2000)

Attachment B – Nuclear Weapons and Power Policy (2024)

- END OF REPORT -