

# Tree Martin Management - 2026 Migratory Season

Strategic Alignment - Our Environment

Public

**Tuesday, 4 November 2025**  
**City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee**

**Program Contact:**

Matt Field, Acting Associate Director Park Lands, Policy & Sustainability

**Approving Officer:**

Sarah Gilmour, Acting Director City Shaping

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the proposed management actions for the upcoming Tree Martin migratory season which occurs for approximately five months between December/January and April/May each year.

The Council received an update on Tree Martin management at its meeting on 14 October 2025 ([Link 1](#)). The report responded to Council's resolution of 22 April 2025 that sought advice in relation to Tree Martin management support measures. The 14 October 2025 report was focused on the previous 2025 migratory season.

In 2025/26 concurrent work is being undertaken to deliver:

1. Phase 1 – A coordinated approach to community amenity, public safety, business vitality and the welfare of wildlife for the 2026 migratory season (operational response).
2. Phase 2 – A Tree Martin Management Plan that looks at operational, medium and longer-term strategies for managing the annual tree martin roosting season.

The operational response for the 2026 migratory season will be guided by new Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines (Operating Guidelines) (Attachment A). The Operating Guidelines are a matter for finalisation and decision by the Chief Executive Officer.

It is not proposed to remove netting from Leigh Street or net trees in Rundle Mall during the 2026 migratory season to enable data and evidence to be collected in 2025/26 to inform future management actions.

A coordinated communications approach will be delivered to inform the community, businesses, and key stakeholders about the Tree Martin management response. The City of Adelaide's Place Coordinators, in collaboration with the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA), are supporting with the distribution of information across business precincts.

A dedicated webpage is being hosted on the City of Adelaide website as the central source of information on Tree Martin management and the 2026 operational response. To help raise awareness, postcards will be distributed in early November to businesses in Leigh Street and Rundle Mall, supported by public signage in Rundle Mall highlighting the presence of the birds and featuring a QR code linking directly to the website for more details.

During the operational response, data and information on bird behaviour and management measures will be collected and assessed to inform the operational response and medium to longer-term management strategies. This work is informing the development of the Tree Martin Management Plan (the Plan) in 2025/26 which will inform future roosting seasons.

The City of Adelaide is preparing the Plan with the expertise of Ecosure Environmental Consultancy, and Avisure Consulting.

A Governance Group providing oversight of the delivery of the operational response and development of the Plan is in place. There is ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and representation from the Department of Environment and Water (DEW), Green Adelaide, the City of Adelaide and AEDA.

# RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 11 November 2024 for consideration

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

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the Administration is developing the draft Tree Martin Management Plan (the Plan) and that a copy of the draft Plan will be presented to the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee for consideration on 3 February 2026.
  2. Notes that it is not proposed to remove netting from Leigh Street or net trees in Rundle Mall during the 2026 migratory season to enable data and evidence to be collected in 2025/26 to inform future management actions.
  3. Notes a Budget Review of \$150,000 will be submitted for Quarter 2 of the 2025/26 financial year to manage the operational response for the 2026 Tree Martin migratory season including costs for security, staffing of the response over extended hours, bird welfare and veterinary expenses, and additional training.
  4. Notes the working draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 November 2025.
  5. Notes that the working draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 November 2025 are an administrative matter for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
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## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p><b>Strategic Alignment – Our Environment</b></p> <p>Lead and advocate for the environmental value, productivity, quality and biodiversity of the Park Lands, squares, open space and streetscapes.</p> <p>Protect and restore native habitat in our city.</p>
Policy	<p>Management of Tree Martins aligns with the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036, the City of Adelaide's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, and the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan's commitments to biodiversity protection, city amenity, business vitality and community wellbeing. It supports the Council's objectives for a sustainable, liveable, and biodiverse capital city where people and wildlife coexist harmoniously.</p> <p>The Tree Martin Management Plan will be developed in alignment with the Council's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, Goal 3: A City Where Nature Thrives. It supports a comprehensive body of work by the City of Adelaide in relation to surveying and mapping urban biodiversity.</p> <p>The State Biodiversity Plan is yet to be developed following the assent of the <i>Biodiversity Act 2025</i> (SA).</p>
Consultation	Since May 2025, the Administration has continued to liaise with DEW and Green Adelaide to align approaches to Tree Martin management and protection.
Resource	The Tree Martin management response is being undertaken using a combination of internal and external resources, including specialist consultancy services.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Tree Martins are a "protected animal" under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i> (SA).
Opportunities	In 2025/26 the City of Adelaide is taking a planned and measured approach to managing the Tree Martin migratory season and planning for future roosting seasons. This approach will enable data and evidence to be collected in 2025/26 to inform future management actions.
25/26 Budget Allocation	Approximately \$40,000 has been reallocated within the Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability operating budget to prepare a Tree Martin Management Plan in 2025/26.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	A budget proposal based on the current operational response will be submitted to the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan and Budget process for the 2027 Tree Martin roosting season.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Tree Martin migration is expected to occur seasonally to the City of Adelaide for the five months between December/January and April/May.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	A Budget Review of \$150,000 will be submitted for Quarter 2 of the 2025/26 financial year to manage the operational response for the 2026 Tree Martin migratory season. The Budget Review will cover costs including security, staffing of the response over extended hours, bird welfare and veterinary expenses, and additional training.
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Operating costs for additional cleansing as part of the 2025 migratory season were managed within existing resources in 2024/25 by adjusting cleansing standards within precincts. The same approach will be applied in 2025/26.

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## DISCUSSION

### Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the proposed management actions for the upcoming Tree Martin migratory season which occurs for approximately five months between December/January and April/May each year.

### Background

2. The Council received an update on Tree Martin management at its meeting on 14 October 2025 ([Link 1](#)). The report responded to Council's resolution of 22 April 2025 that sought advice in relation to Tree Martin management support measures.
3. At that meeting, Council resolved to:
  - 3.1. *Notes the progress regarding Tree Martin management as contained in Item 15.2 on the Agenda for the Council meeting held on 14 October 2025, in accordance with Council's decision on 22 April 2025.*
  - 3.2. *Requests administration bring forward as a matter of urgency a Committee workshop in relation to the Tree Martin action plan for spring/summer 25/26.*
4. A separate workshop item is included in the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee meeting on 4 November 2025. This report provides additional information regarding the management response for the 2026 Tree Martin migratory season.
5. Further recent background information was provided on 13 May 2025 in response to a Question on Notice ([Link 2](#)). In summary:
  - 5.1. Tree Martins (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) are a native migratory bird species that seasonally roost in large numbers within the Adelaide city centre.
  - 5.2. Roosting in large numbers may present a tension in the urban realm between the public health and amenity considerations of hospitality and retail businesses, and their customers, and the Council's strategic commitments to promote urban biodiversity and protect the welfare of wildlife.
  - 5.3. This tension has been encountered since 2015 in Leigh Street (a key food and beverage zone) and most recently in 2025 in Rundle Mall (the city's premier retail precinct).

### Tree Martin Management 2025/26

6. In 2025/26 concurrent work is being undertaken to deliver:
  - 6.1. Phase 1 – A coordinated approach to community amenity, public safety, business vitality and the welfare of wildlife for the 2026 migratory season (operational response).
  - 6.2. Phase 2 – A Tree Martin Management Plan that looks at medium and longer-term strategies for managing the annual tree martin migratory season.
7. The 2026 migratory season will be managed using a structured approach based on learnings from previous seasons. It is guided by three key objectives:
  - 7.1. Ensure bird welfare and compliance with wildlife protection and animal welfare legislation.
  - 7.2. Maintain business operation, public amenity and safety in high-use areas, including Rundle Mall and adjacent laneways.
  - 7.3. Enhance community understanding of the species and the City of Adelaide's role in managing urban wildlife responsibly.

### Phase 1 – Operational Response

8. The operational response is focusing on preparedness, staff training, operational consistency, data collection, and collaborative partnerships to ensure bird welfare, business operation and city amenity are effectively managed.
9. The operational response for the 2026 migratory season will be guided by new Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines (Operating Guidelines) (Attachment A).

10. Proposed actions for the 2026 Tree Martin migratory season include:
- 10.1. Pre-season Preparations, Monitoring and Early Detection of Tree Martin Arrivals
    - 10.1.1. Procedures for safe management of injured or deceased birds developed in partnership with SA Native Animal Rescue and local veterinary partners.
    - 10.1.2. Monitoring of historical roosting sites from early November 2025 to detect early signs of arrival.
    - 10.1.3. Assistance with roost identification, data collection, and impact assessment to be undertaken by Ecosure environmental consultants.
    - 10.1.4. Coordination with DEW and Green Adelaide on ecological observations.
    - 10.1.5. Implementation of pre-season cleaning and maintenance in known roosting areas.
  - 10.2. Operational, Staff and Contractor Support During Peak Season
    - 10.2.1. Daily inspection and cleaning protocols during peak season to maintain public hygiene and amenity.
    - 10.2.2. Distribution of updated operational guidance and safety protocols.
    - 10.2.3. Delivery of targeted training for Cleansing and City Operations teams to build capability and confidence in managing Tree Martin roost sites, including safe handling practices, hygiene protocols, and clear reporting and escalation procedures.
    - 10.2.4. Clear escalation pathways for incident response and reporting.
    - 10.2.5. Collaboration with SA Native Animal Rescue and wildlife networks to promote shared understanding and coordinated care.
  - 10.3. Tree Netting
    - 10.3.1. It is not proposed to remove existing netting from trees in Leigh Street. This step will maintain the health and safety measures put in place in relation to outdoor dining.
    - 10.3.2. It is not proposed, at this time, to net trees in Rundle Mall during the 2026 migratory season. A management response will be in place to manage Tree Martins in Rundle Mall for 2026, should they return to this location.
    - 10.3.3. With the support of Green Adelaide and specialist consultancy services, detailed assessment of options and data and evidence collection will be undertaken in 2025/26 to inform future management actions.
  - 10.4. Communication and Community Engagement
    - 10.4.1. In preparation for the return of the Tree Martins, communications are being shared with community, businesses and key stakeholders.
    - 10.4.2. The City of Adelaide's Place Coordinators and AEDA are supporting the distribution of information to business precincts.
    - 10.4.3. A webpage is being hosted on the City of Adelaide website as a central location for information about Tree Martin management and the 2026 operational response.
    - 10.4.4. Postcards will be distributed in early November to businesses in Leigh Street and Rundle Mall.
    - 10.4.5. Installation of signage in Rundle Mall informing the public of the Tree Martins' presence and providing a QR Code link to further information on the City of Adelaide website.
  - 10.5. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement
    - 10.5.1. During the operational response, data and information on bird behaviour and management measures will be collected and assessed to inform the operational response and medium to longer-term management strategies.
    - 10.5.2. This includes collecting monitoring data to assess trends in roosting behaviour and community feedback.
    - 10.5.3. This work is informing the development of the Tree Martin Management Plan in 2025/26 which will inform the current and future roosting seasons.

## Phase 2 – Tree Martin Management Plan

11. The City of Adelaide is preparing the Tree Martin Management Plan with the support of Ecosure Environmental Consultancy, and Avisure Consulting.
12. The Tree Martin Management Plan will include:
  - 12.1. Review of past issues and challenges associated with the Tree Martin roosting aggregation
  - 12.2. Tree Martin behavioural review and analysis, including observations and field research
  - 12.3. Scenario planning and options for the seasonal return of the Tree Martins
  - 12.4. Consultation with relevant stakeholders
  - 12.5. Roost management recommendations to guide actions into the future. Recommendations may include (but are not limited to):
    - 12.5.1. Modifications and/or management requirements of roosting sites
    - 12.5.2. Dispersal of populations over multiple sites
    - 12.5.3. Relocation to alternative preferred sites
    - 12.5.4. Novel roost management techniques, deterrents and/or intervention techniques
    - 12.5.5. Community/stakeholder education and awareness
    - 12.5.6. Documentation of proposed seasonal response actions to provide stakeholders with management and conservation clarity.
13. The Tree Martin Management Plan will continue to be refined throughout the 2026 migratory season, integrating operational learnings, ecological monitoring data, and key stakeholder feedback.
14. The Tree Martin Management Plan will be finalised at the conclusion of the 2026 migratory season to guide future Tree Martin roosting seasons across the city.

### Next steps

15. The draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines will be used for the 2026 migratory season.
16. The Phase 1 operational response will be live from November 2025 with monitoring and action throughout the migratory season (expected to conclude in May 2025).
17. A dedicated webpage will go live on the City of Adelaide website from early November, providing central information on Tree Martin management and the 2026 operational response.
18. To support businesses and the public, postcards will be distributed in early November to traders in Leigh Street and Rundle Mall, and public signage with QR codes linking to further information will be installed in Rundle Mall in the week commencing 10 November 2025.
19. A Project Governance Group overseeing the delivery of the operational response and Tree Martin Management Plan is in place.
20. There is ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and representation from the DEW, Green Adelaide, the City of Adelaide and AEDA.
21. Administration will conduct a post-season review in June 2026 to enable finalisation of the Phase 2 – Tree Martin Management Plan and reporting early in 2026/27.

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## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** – [Agenda – Council – Tuesday, 14 October 2025](#)

**Link 2** – [Council - Question on Notice Reply – Tuesday, 13 May 2025](#)

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## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A** – draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines

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