

DRAFT TREE MARTIN MANAGEMENT OPERATING GUIDELINES

Date this document was adopted:

administration

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines (Operating Guidelines) is to provide a process and standards for monitoring and managing the annual migration and roosting season of the Tree Martins. It is to foster a coordinated approach to community amenity, public safety, business vitality and the welfare of Tree Martins.

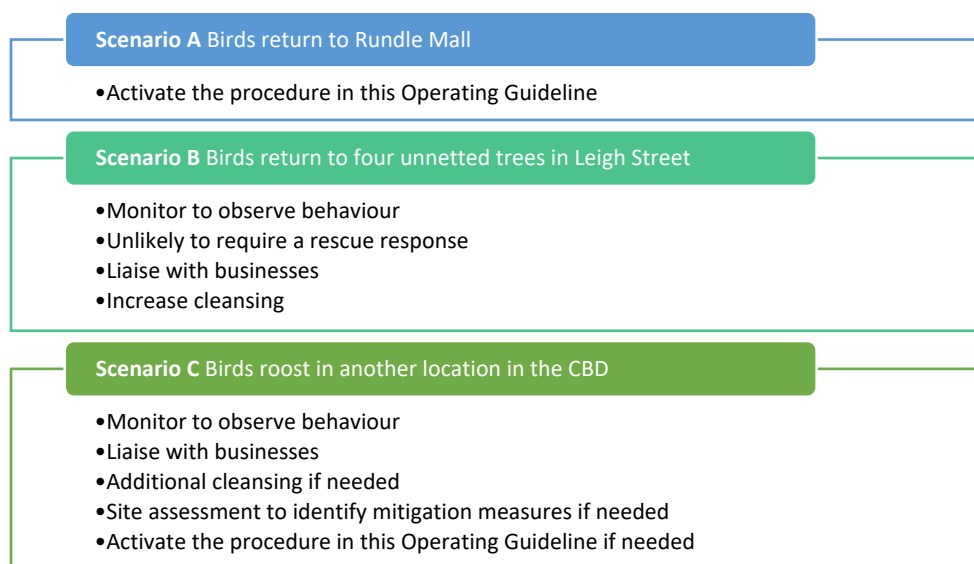
These Operating Guidelines guide the response to:

1. Monitoring of the return of Tree Martins to the Adelaide CBD
2. How the City of Adelaide will work with partners to prepare for and respond to issues and challenges associated with Tree Martins roosting in the CBD
3. Implementation of mitigation strategies to improve Tree Martin welfare outcomes
4. The on-the-ground response in attending to distressed, injured or deceased Tree Martins (a Tree Martin event) due to conditions at roosting sites.

STATEMENT

Tree Martins are small migratory birds who have visited the Adelaide CBD for approximately 10 years for their annual roosting season. Tree Martins roost at dusk between the months of December/January and April/May each year. In recent years Tree Martins roosting in urban areas has highlighted tensions in ensuring the operation of business precincts and the welfare of the Tree Martins that requires active management.

The behaviour of Tree Martins is uncertain as is their chosen roosting location. There are three potential scenarios, two of which may require active management and trigger the implementation of these Operating Guidelines.



MONITORING

The exact time that Tree Martins will return to the City of Adelaide for the roosting season is uncertain. To assist with being prepared for their return, Administration will monitor historical roosting sites and be alert to an increase in bird droppings and bird sightings from October of each year.

When the Tree Martins return to the City of Adelaide, Administration will monitor the return location to assess response requirements.

Refer to Appendix 1 to guide response if Tree Martins return to Rundle Mall.

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.

STAKEHOLDERS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - CITY OF ADELAIDE

Chief Executive Officer

Approve, or delegate approval, to adopt the Operating Guideline and to make amendments from time to time.

Director City Shaping

Oversee the implementation of the Operating Guideline.

Responsible for providing updates to the Chief Executive Officer or Executive as appropriate.

Associate Director, Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability

Responsible for delivery of the Operating Guideline.

Responsible for the annual review of the Operating Guideline.

Manager, Park Lands and Sustainability

Responsible for external relationships relating to the Tree Martin Events.

Responsible for developing partnerships for Tree Martin Events.

Preparing communications on Tree Martin Events.

Manager, City Presentation

Responsible for cleansing and operational support teams.

Responsible for after hours operational response teams.

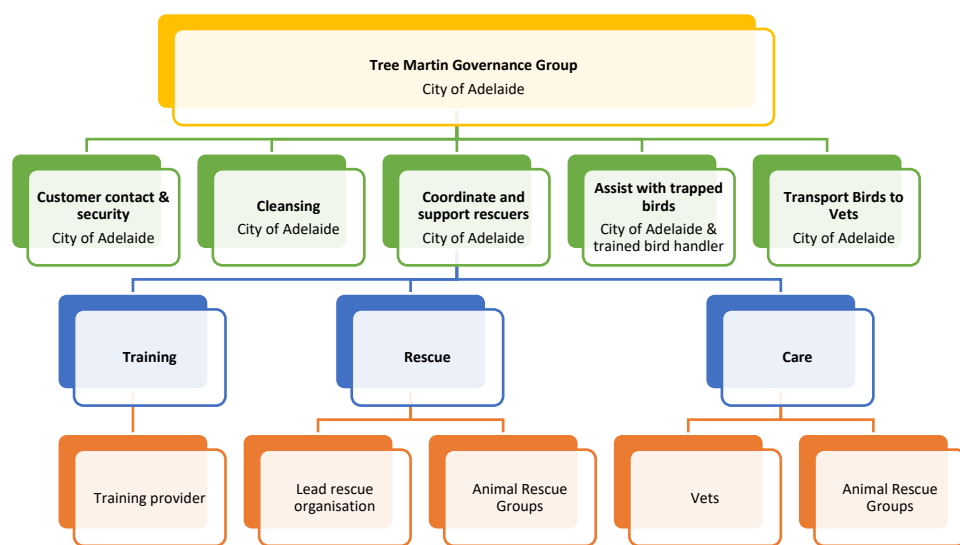
Manager, People Safety and Wellbeing

Responsible for WHS protocols.

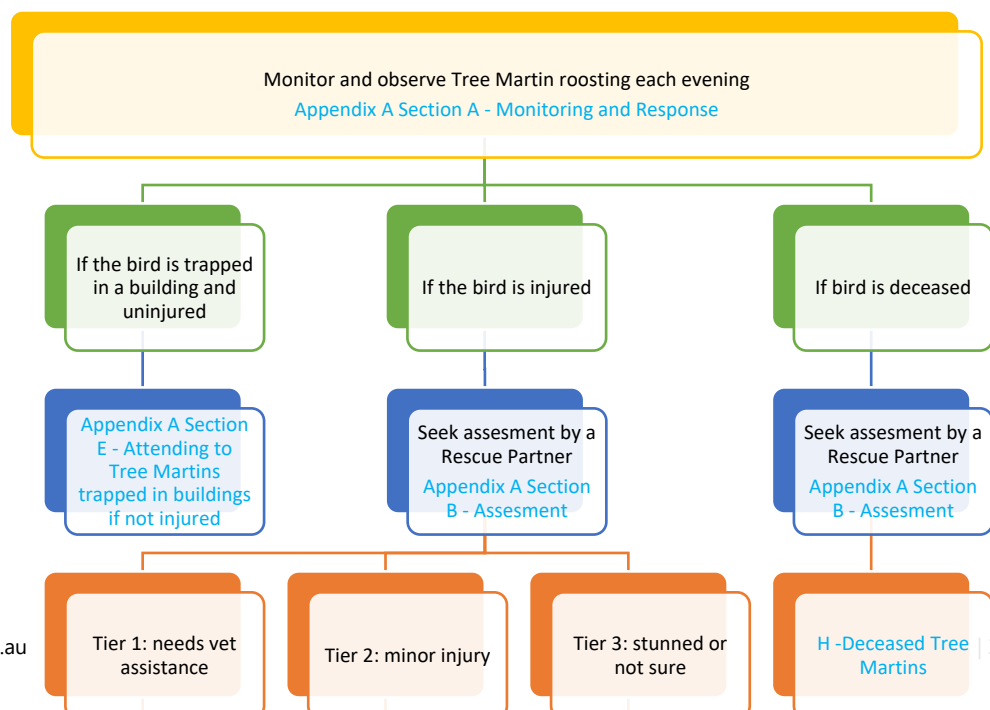
Responsible for risk assessment of a Tree Martin Event.

Tree Martin Coordination and Resource Partnership

See Appendix 2 for a list of rescue and response partners



Monitoring and Response Decision Matrix



PERMITS

- The City of Adelaide must ensure that City of Adelaide workers have appropriate permits, under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (SA)*, shown below, prior to undertaking wildlife management.
- Wildlife Management (Controller) Permit – for assisting birds who have become trapped in a building, catch and release stunned and injured birds and transporting for assistance
- Permits are for individuals rather than the organisation and are non transferrable.

TRAINING

City of Adelaide must ensure that all City of Adelaide workers (employees, temporary staff etc) have completed the education and training shown below, prior to undertaking this task (TBC).

APPROVED WORKERS

Only staff with a Wildlife Controller Permit should handle Tree Martins.

Only rescue partners with a Wildlife Carer or Wildlife Rescue permit can take Tree Martins into their care.

CLEANSING

If Tree Martins choose to roost in Rundle Mall or Leigh Street additional cleansing activities will be activated and will include cleaning of footpaths and urban elements, monitoring drains and flushing and deodorising when required, monitoring tree health and any maintenance required.

If Tree Martins return to a different location, the impacts will be assessed, and a cleansing program will be developed and implemented.

EVENTS

Advice on bump-in and out for events and associated noise or activities that could startle Tree Martins will be sought from wildlife experts. This is to reduce the risk of birds flying out of trees in large numbers and increasing chance of bird distress, bird strike or becoming trapped in buildings.

Event organisers should be made aware of bird droppings in and around roosting trees.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records and reporting must comply with permit regulations and conditions.

Records must be maintained in accordance with the current version of GDS40.

TREE MARTIN MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Tree Martin Management Plan (the Plan) is being developed by specialist environmental consultants to assist with a coordinated and specialist led approach to Tree Martin management and protection. The Plan will be developed to help prepare for the upcoming and future Tree Martin migration seasons and will involve consultation with key stakeholders.

REVIEW

This document will be reviewed by the City of Adelaide in July 2026 and then periodically as legislation or corporation needs change. This will include a review of:

- Feedback from Administration, health safety representatives, work health and safety committee, volunteers, contractors, businesses, Green Adelaide, and others
- Incident and hazard reports
- Safer Operating Procedures
- Any other relevant information.

OTHER USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Relevant legislation

- *Biodiversity Act 2025 (SA)*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (SA)*
- *National Parks and Wildlife (Wildlife) Regulations 2019 (SA)*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)*
- *Work Health Safety Act SA 2012 (SA)*
- *Work Health Safety Regulations SA 2012 (SA)*
- Relevant approved Work Health Safety Codes of Practice and Guidelines
- Public and Environmental Health Act 1987 (SA)
- Environment Protection Act 1993 (SA)
- Return to Work SA Performance Standards for Self-Insurers (PSSI)

GLOSSARY

Throughout this document, the below terms have been used and are defined as:

Animal: includes any species of the animal kingdom, other than a human being, at any life stage from birth, or hatching from an egg, to death

Native Animal: native animal means (a) an animal of a species that is indigenous to Australia or was present in Australia before 1400 AD; or (b) a migratory mammal, bird or reptile that periodically or occasionally migrates to Australia.

Rescue partner / organisation: wildlife carer group or organisation that has the appropriate expertise, facilities and permits from the Department of Environment and Water to rescue, rehabilitate and release native animals.

Tree Martins: migratory birds which fly annually to South Australia from northern Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, where they feed on small flying insects north of Adelaide before roosting from dusk to dawn within the Adelaide CBD.

Tree Martin event: when Tree Martins who have returned to the City of Adelaide become distressed, injured or die due to their surroundings. This may be due to relocating to an unfamiliar environment and/or the presence of predators or other factors. This may cause Tree Martins to fly into buildings, or strike glass doors and windows.

Wildlife: all native plants and animals indigenous to Australia existing apart from cultivation or domestication.

Wildlife rehabilitation means the temporary care of an injured, sick or orphaned protected animal with the aim of successfully releasing it back into its natural habitat.

Wildlife carer provider means an incorporated wildlife carer group, individually licensed wildlife carer or facility that has the appropriate permits from the Department for Environment and Water under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (SA)* to rehabilitate and release protected animals.

ADMINISTRATIVE

As part of Council's commitment to deliver the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan, services to the community and the provision of transparent information, all policy documents are reviewed as per legislative requirements or when there is no such provision a risk assessment approach is taken to guide the review timeframe.

This Policy document will be reviewed annually unless legislative or operational change occurs beforehand. The next review is required in July 2026.

Review history:

Trim Reference	Authorising Body	Date/ Decision ID	Description of Edits

Contact:

For further information contact the Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability Program

City of Adelaide

25 Pirie ST, Adelaide, SA

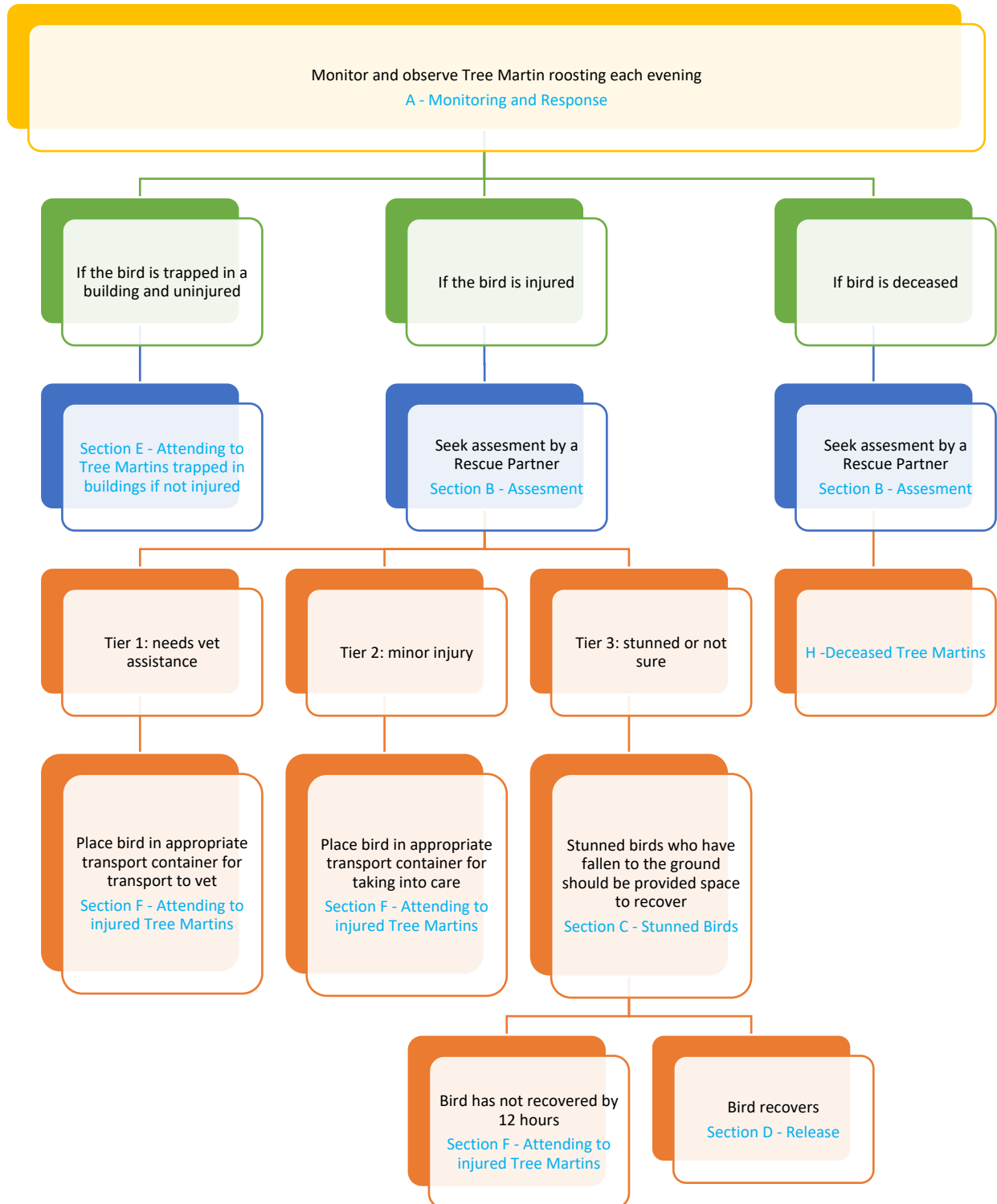
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APPENDIX 1: BIRD HANDLING AND RESPONSE TECHNICAL GUIDELINE

Monitoring and Response Decision Matrix



A. Monitoring

Prior to arrival of Tree Martins

Administration will monitor potential return areas to be aware when Tree Martins begin returning to the City of Adelaide for the roosting season. This includes:

- Operational staff to observe for an increase in bird droppings and bird sightings to help track roosting locations.
- Weekly monitoring before sunset in Leigh Street, Rundle Mall and Vardon Avenue for presence of Tree Martins.
- Customer Centre recording of requests for extra cleansing due to an increase in bird droppings, reports of bird strikes, and any Tree Martin related requests.

City of Adelaide and Rescue Partners

Role: To monitor Tree Martin roosting each evening and facilitate a coordinated response (Tree Martins arrive approximately 30 minutes before sunset) and to:

- Support rescuers by providing a controlled environment and setting up triage site.
- Minimise distress to stunned and injured birds by redirecting pedestrian traffic if needed.
- Respond to queries.
- Provide security service for those working at the triage site.

B. Assessment

Rescue partners

Assess condition of any stunned and/or injured birds using the following tiers:

- **Tier 1:** needs vet assistance
Place bird in appropriate transport container for transport to vet.
- **Tier 2:** minor injury
Place bird in appropriate transport container for taking into care.
- **Tier 3:** stunned or not sure
Place bird in appropriate onsite container for recovery and to be released onsite or for further assessment.

C. Stunned birds

- Stunned birds who have fallen to the ground should be provided space to recover and removed from where they have landed if there is a risk that they will be stepped on by passersby.
- Move the bird to a dark resting container.

D. Release

- TBC

E. Attending to Tree Martins trapped in buildings if not injured

Tree Martins may fly into buildings and may find it difficult to find their way out.

- Assess the situation to plan an approach that will minimise stress to the Tree Martins.
- Reduce lighting to encourage the bird to head outside the building.
- Isolate the area with cones/bunting/other to divert foot traffic and create a calmer space for the Tree Martins, if needed.
- Birds should be approached calmly and quietly and gently guided toward the exit without touching them. Do not chase the bird.
- Pressure must not be applied to the chest or abdomen of the Tree Martin as this can restrict breathing.
- If the bird is physically unharmed and deemed to be able to fend for itself if released, it should be released outside as soon as possible.
- Check the Tree Martin does not have feather damage and is able to fly.
- The time a bird is handled should be kept to a minimum and it should be released as soon as possible.

F. Attending to injured Tree Martins

Tree Martins may be injured if they fly into windows, while trying to exit a building, or other situation that causes flocks to become distressed.

- Isolate the area with cones/bunting/other to divert foot traffic and create a calmer space for the Tree Martins, if needed.
- Birds should be approached calmly and quietly.
- Pressure must not be applied to the chest or abdomen of the Tree Martin as this can restrict breathing.
- The time a bird is handled should be kept to a minimum and should be transferred to an appropriate transport container as soon as possible. Personal Protective Equipment should be used.
- Birds must not be removed from the location unless the person has been identified as holding the appropriate skills and/or are permitted carers.
- Rescuers must arrange for birds to be assessed by a veterinarian or experienced wildlife rehabilitator to ensure accurate diagnosis and prompt treatment.

G. Transporting Tree Martins

When transporting Tree Martins by vehicle ensure that:

- The container is secured so it cannot move around.
- Noise is minimised by not using the radio or talking loudly.
- The Tree Martins are not exposed to cigarette smoke or strong smells.
- On hot days ensure that the Tree Martins are not left in hot vehicles and that there is adequate ventilation.

H. Deceased Tree Martins

- Extra checks are to be undertaken to ensure that birds have not been mistaken as deceased. Observe closely to identify if they are breathing and monitor for up to 5 minutes before making a decision. Causing further harm to an animal through disposal method when not yet dead could constitute an offence under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985 (SA)* so care must be taken to decide that the bird is deceased.
- Administration is responsible for the collection and disposal of deceased Tree Martins.
- Deceased Tree Martins are to be handled with gloves to prevent the potential transmission of disease.

I. Equipment

- Administration is required to respond to a Tree Martins event and must bring a Tree Martin kit to site.
- Tree Martin kits are to be stocked with:

PPE	EQUIPMENT	SUNDRIES
Gloves	Small, light towels or cloths	Sanitiser (wipes, Glen 20, hand sanitiser)
Masks	Bird transport containers	Water
Vest	Masks	First aid kit
	Small torches	Bunting/cones
	Dark resting containers for stunned birds	Communication material

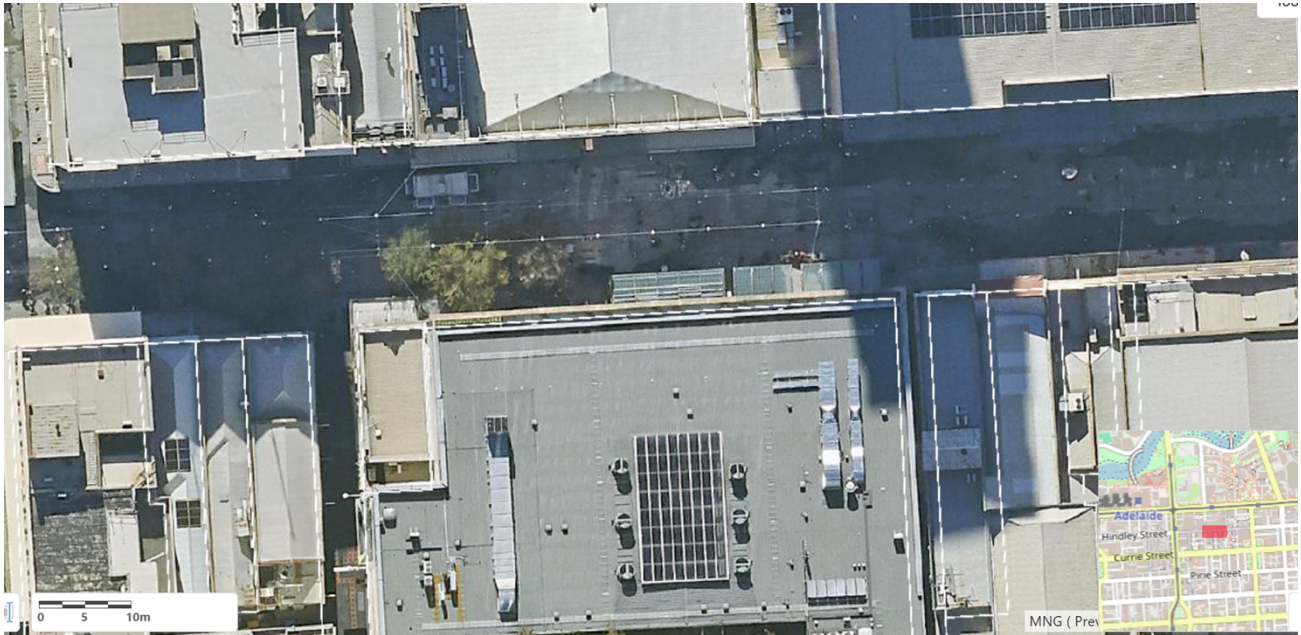
Transport containers

The container must:

- Allow the bird to stand and freely move their legs and turn around.
- Provide protection from the weather and changes in temperature.
- Protect the animal against injury.
- Prevent the animal from flying out.
- Not allow unauthorised access to the Tree Martins.
- Allow for good airflow.
- Have a non-slip or towel lined bottom.
- Include a rolled-up towel so they do not slip around during transportation.
- Be labelled with the permit number.

Site Area - Rundle Mall Response and Triage Area

Image shown for illustration purposes only



APPENDIX 2: TREE MARTIN EVENT AND RESCUE CONTACT LIST

Role	Name	Organisation	Contact Number	Email	Notes
[Role]	[Name]		[Phone]	[Email]	

APPENDIX 3: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Personal Protective Equipment

Rescuers must use suitable work health and safety techniques to minimise the risk of injury to the rescuer including:

- Appropriate disposable gloves.
- Identifiable project specific vest.
- Hands should be washed with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitiser after handling Tree Martins and removing gloves.

Avian Influenza

- Australia is currently free from H5 bird flu, but is alert to any potential outbreak.
- A strain of H5 bird flu (H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b) has quickly spread between continents and is of concern globally.
- H5 bird flu is highly contagious and causes disease and death in birds and mammals.
- H5 bird flu could most likely enter Australia through migratory birds.
- If H5 bird flu does arrive in Australia the Australian Government will lead a national response and the South Australian Government will lead the state response.

Hazards and Controls

Hazards	Controls
Birds strike windows and wires injured and/or die	Mitigation action plan implemented with partners Follow the Operating Guideline
Worker distress at injured birds	Staff to not work alone Leave work site if needed Seek assistance from Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Peer Supporter as necessary
Public want to assist	Provide information postcard
Anti-social behaviour	Security presence onsite
Birds stuck in buildings become increasingly distressed	Allow birds to rest Reassess approach
Blood / body fluids	Use gloves
Large number of injured birds/birds not assisted quickly	Identify potential additional assistance

Birds enter businesses who have not been engaged in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide prepared communication material• Follow the Operating Guideline
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Animal Welfare

- It is a priority to ensure the welfare of the Tree Martins and to avoid unnecessary distress. Birds can become further distressed by capture, handling and transportation, so each interaction should be undertaken to minimise stress.
- Staff training for Wildlife Management (Controller) permit will assist with understanding animal welfare needs.
- New situations should be discussed with the Tree Martins working group as they arise
- Note: worker safety is not to be placed secondary to animal welfare.