

Overview of Legislative Framework: Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)

Tuesday, 25 November 2025
Council

Strategic Alignment - Our Environment

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Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the *Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)* (the Act), introduced to Parliament on 20 August 2025 by the Hon. Nick Champion MP and passed on 14 October 2025. At the time of Agenda publication the Act was yet to be published and a link to the Bill is provided in [Link 1](#).

On 1 October 2025, the Local Government Association's President wrote to the Lord Mayor requesting that the City of Adelaide writes to the local member of State Parliament to express concern about the extraordinary new powers that the then Bill would give to a Minister and express support for amendments to the Bill that requires the local community to be consulted and the agreement of any impacted council to be obtained.

The report provides insight into the impacts to the local government sector and the management of parks and opens spaces through the Act.

It outlines the legislative framework for both the Northern Parklands and the Adelaide Park Lands, compares their management models, and provides high-level implications of the Act for local government including matters raised by the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA). A summary is provided in Attachment A.

The Act establishes the Northern Parklands Trust, a statutory authority to manage, maintain, and oversee development of the Northern Parklands in the Gawler region, adjacent to the Kudla growth area identified in the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan for residential expansion. The State Government's fact sheet on the Kudla growth area and Northern Parklands is provided in [Link 2](#).

The State Government through the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan identified its intent to prepare a master plan and confirm new governance and funding models for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of the Northern Parklands.

The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan outlines that a number of state significant infill areas (Southwark, Bowden, Glenside, Keswick) are located adjacent to the Adelaide Park Lands, and new funding and governance arrangements should be explored to provide equitable access to quality open space.

Governance of the Adelaide Park Lands is shared between the State Government and the City of Adelaide and managed according to the *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036* ([Link 3](#)).

Administration note that the Adelaide Park Lands Association has also provided a review of the Act and its potential implications for the Adelaide Park Lands ([Link 4](#)).

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Notes the introduction of the *Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)* and its potential implications for local government as contained in the report and Attachment A to Item 14.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of Council held on 25 November 2025.
2. Notes that the Administration will continue to monitor implementation of the *Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)* and governance arrangements by the State Government.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Environment The status, attributes and character of our green spaces and the Park Lands are protected and strengthened.
Policy	<i>Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036 (APMS)</i>
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The Adelaide Park Lands are specifically excluded under section 3 of the <i>Northern Parklands Act 2025</i> (SA) as ‘eligible land’. The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan outlines that a number of state significant infill areas (Southwark, Bowden, Glenside, Keswick) are located adjacent to the Adelaide Park Lands, and new funding and governance arrangements should be explored to provide equitable access to quality open space.
Opportunities	Opportunities to strengthen funding and governance arrangements for the Adelaide Park Lands, aligned with the <i>Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036</i> and the State Government’s Greater Adelaide Regional Plan.
25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 26/27 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
25/26 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

Purpose

1. This report provides an overview of the *Northern Parklands Act 2025* (SA) (the Act), introduced to Parliament on 20 August 2025 by the Hon. Nick Champion MP and passed on 14 October 2025. At the time of Agenda publication the Act was yet to be published and a link to the Bill is provided in [Link 1](#).
2. The report provides insight into the impacts to the local government sector and the management of parks and opens spaces through the Act.
3. It outlines the legislative framework for both the Northern Parklands and the Adelaide Park Lands, compares their management models, and provides high-level implications of the Act for local government including matters raised by the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA). A summary is provided in Attachment A.

Background

4. The State Government's Greater Adelaide Regional Plan identifies the need and prioritises the establishment of the Northern Parklands to service the northern metropolitan growth areas.
5. Located adjacent to the Kudla growth area, the Northern Parklands is intended to be a new interconnected network of linear parks that over time will provide a new green corridor loop of just under 40 kilometres, connecting the Hills Face to the Gawler River, via Karbeethan Reserve.
6. The State Government's fact sheet on the Kudla growth area and Northern Parklands is provided in [Link 2](#).
7. A short-term action of the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan is for the government to prepare a master plan and confirm new governance and funding models for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of the Northern Parklands.
8. Administration understand that this master plan is underway with a tender process now completed to appoint a consultant for these services. The Office for Design and Architecture SA will oversee the master plan process.
9. A new Northern Parklands sub zone in the State Government's Planning and Design Code will be investigated to guide the appropriate land uses with the Northern Parklands, its integration with a new town centre and appropriate form and density of housing along certain sections of the parkland's edge.

Local Government Association Sector Advice

10. The LGA has been following the Northern Parklands Bill/Act 2025 on behalf of the sector.
11. The LGA acknowledges that the legislation will support significant investment in public open space for Greater Adelaide but also that it will have statewide implications for councils due to the funding and governance model it establishes.
12. The LGA does not object to an increased focus on parklands in Adelaide's northern suburbs or the creation of a new State Government governance and oversight body.
13. The LGA has questioned the legislative mechanism, and the implications it may set, including which local government areas the Act will apply to in the future and whether councils will have meaningful input into the development of new parklands.

Overview of Legislative Framework: Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)

14. On 17 March 2025, the State Government announced plans to introduce the *Northern Parklands Bill 2025* (SA) to establish a new statutory authority, the Northern Parklands Trust, responsible for the management, maintenance, and development oversight of the proposed Northern Parklands.
15. The Bill, introduced to Parliament on 20 August 2025 by the Hon. Nick Champion MP, and passed on 14 October 2025, creates the Trust as an independent management body, with powers to administer leases and developments. It also provides a framework for establishing other parklands and statutory trusts in the future.
16. In summary, the Act:
 - 16.1. Establishes the initial phase of the Northern Parklands through a plan lodged in the General Registry Office (GRO).
 - 16.2. Creates the Northern Parklands Trust, a statutory body with broad powers, including the ability to acquire council-owned or managed land. Where this occurs, councils cannot object and are not entitled to compensation.

- 16.3. Details the GRO plan will identify existing land owned by both the State Government and local governments which will form part of the initial stage of the Northern Parklands. Upon commencement of the Act, the land identified within the GRO plan will immediately fall into the care, control and management of the Northern Parklands Trust.
- 16.4. Means affected councils, Gawler and Playford, will be the initial constituent councils, however the legislation is drafted such that any council could be included in the future.
- 16.5. Requires councils to pay the Trust's costs, recovered via a new 'Northern Parklands Levy' imposed on ratepayers, in a manner comparable to the Landscape Levy under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (SA). Details as to whether this is cost neutral to Council(s) is unclear.
- 16.6. Grants the Trust development powers over parklands land, such as the construction of roads, stormwater infrastructure, sporting, tourism, accommodation and other facilities with councils liable for associated costs.
- 16.7. Contains no formal mechanism for impacted councils to have meaningful input into the annual plans of the Northern Parklands Trust or to appeal against decisions.
- 16.8. Places the Trust under Ministerial direction and oversight.
- 17. The State Government has outlined that the proposed governance framework will be similar to the West Beach Trust model established under the *West Beach Recreation Reserve Act 1987* (SA).
- 18. The West Beach Trust manages the West Beach Recreation Reserve, a coastal precinct in Adelaide. The Trust oversees tourism, sport, and recreation facilities such as BIG4 West Beach Parks, a golf course, and other leisure amenities. Focused on providing leisure experiences, some areas of the Reserve are publicly accessible open space.
- 19. Under the model, the Northern Parklands Trust can generate its own revenue streams through commercial activities, such as through tourism or accommodation ventures, and employ staff to support operations and maintenance.
- 20. In comparison, the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) does not establish specific revenue streams, but enables commercial activities which are managed through leasing and licensing arrangements.
- 21. Implementation of the Northern Parklands will require targeted land acquisitions and the conversion of government-owned land to open space.
- 22. Section 6 of the Act provides provisions for the 'Establishment of other parklands'. The Minister may, by plan deposited in the GRO establish further parklands consisting of 'eligible land'.
- 23. The Adelaide Park Lands (within the meaning of the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA)) has been excluded from the definition of eligible land. It does however potentially impact other local government areas who hold land defined as 'eligible land'.

Legislative framework Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005 (SA)

- 24. The *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) establishes a statutory framework for the protection, management, and enhancement of the Adelaide Park Lands.
- 25. It designates the Adelaide Park Lands as community land under the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) and created the Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) to provide advice, prepare management plans, and oversee strategic initiatives.
- 26. The *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) ensures that land use, leases, and developments maintain the Adelaide Park Lands' cultural, historical, environmental, and recreational values, and provides mechanisms for funding, accountability, and community consultation.
- 27. The *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) establishes a clear governance framework for the management and protection of the Adelaide Park Lands. Key elements include:
 - 27.1. Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla):
 - 27.1.1. The Act creates the Authority to advise the City of Adelaide and the Minister on strategic management, planning, and policy matters.
 - 27.1.2. The Authority includes representatives from the City of Adelaide, State Government, and other stakeholders, ensuring broad input and oversight.
 - 27.1.3. Governance of the Adelaide Park Lands is shared between the State Government and the City of Adelaide.

- 27.1.4. Kadaltilla is the principal advisor to the State Government and the City of Adelaide on the Adelaide Park Lands and is responsible for preparing the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy.
- 27.2. City of Adelaide Responsibilities:
 - 27.2.1. The City of Adelaide retains the day-to-day management and operational control of the Adelaide Park Lands.
 - 27.2.2. Must prepare and implement Community Land Management Plans (CLMPs) for each precinct, aligning with the Authority's advice.
- 27.3. State Government Responsibilities:
 - 27.3.1. Each State authority to which the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) applies must prepare and adopt a management plan for that part of the Adelaide Park Lands which it owns or occupies.
- 27.4. Ministerial Oversight:
 - 27.4.1. The Minister retains powers to approve plans, grant leases, or intervene in management where necessary.
 - 27.4.2. Provides State-level accountability to ensure the Adelaide Park Lands' values are protected.
- 27.5. Strategic Planning and Reporting:
 - 27.5.1. Requires preparation of management strategies, master plans, and periodic reporting.
 - 27.5.2. Ensures integration of environmental, cultural, recreational, and heritage considerations in decision-making.

Comparison between the Acts

- 28. The *Northern Parklands Act 2025* (SA) and the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005* (SA) establish frameworks for two distinct parkland areas in South Australia, with their governing bodies having significantly different operating models and levels of responsibility.
- 29. A comparison between the Acts and the material difference / implication of each is provided in Attachment A and summarised below.
- 30. While the *Northern Parklands Act 2025* (SA) supports significant investment in public open space for Greater Adelaide, it has statewide implications for local government due to the funding and governance framework it establishes.
- 31. As a consequence of the establishment of the Northern Parklands under the Act, there are multiple implications to local government, including:
 - 31.1. **Transfer of Land:** Land currently owned by, or under the care, control, and management of local government or the State Government included in the initial Northern Parklands Plan will automatically transfer to the Northern Parklands Trust upon commencement of the Act.
 - 31.2. **Mandatory Contributions:** The Act empowers the Northern Parklands Trust to levy rates or charges from constituent councils (e.g., Gawler and Playford) to fund ongoing Parklands maintenance.
 - 31.3. **Cost Passed to Ratepayers:** Councils affected by the levy may recover these costs through a corresponding Northern Parklands levy on local rates. This introduces a new, mandatory financial contribution for ratepayers within the defined area akin to the Landscape Levy.
 - 31.4. **Planning Obligations:** The Act requires long-term strategic and annual business plan but is silent on the preparation of management plans akin to the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy and Community Land Management Plans. This limits the ability for local government and communities to meaningfully influence the Trust's annual plans or appeal its decisions, limiting local oversight over Parklands management.
 - 31.5. **Purpose of Open Space:** The Act establishes the Northern Parklands with envisaged commercial activity, and it is unclear how this will influence the provision of publicly accessible open space.
 - 31.6. **Service Agreements:** While operational control is centralised under the Trust, the Act allows the Northern Parklands Trust to enter into agreements with councils to use their existing workforce and resources for maintenance and operations.

31.7. **Development Powers:** The Trust is granted authority to undertake development on Parklands land, including roads, stormwater infrastructure, sporting, tourism, accommodation, and other facilities. Councils remain liable for associated costs arising from such developments.

32. The full implications of the Trust governance structure are unknown until such time that the Trust develops its long-term strategic and annual business plan.

Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036 and Greater Adelaide Regional Plan.

33. The State Government Greater Adelaide Regional Plan outlines that a number of state significant infill areas (Southwark, Bowden, Glenside, Keswick) are located adjacent to the Adelaide Park Lands, and new funding and governance arrangements should be explored to provide equitable access to quality open space.
34. The *Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036* identifies an opportunity for the City of Adelaide and the State Government to investigate amendment of the Planning and Design Code, to introduce an Adelaide Park Lands Open Space Offset Scheme or Adelaide Park Lands Overlay to unlock investment in the Adelaide Park Lands. This initiative would apply to future developments that will rely on the Adelaide Park Lands for open space provision.
35. The above-mentioned opportunities provide a mechanism to review the existing approach to the funding and governance of the Adelaide Park Lands. Administration are not aware of any proposed timeframes for which these opportunities may eventuate.

Next steps

36. Administration will continue to monitor the implementation of the Act to understand the implications for the City of Adelaide and the local government sector.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Northern Parklands Bill 2025 \(SA\)](#)

Link 2 – [The Kudla growth area and the Northern Parklands Fact Sheet](#)

Link 3 – [Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036](#)

Link 4 – [Adelaide Park Lands Association – Northern Parklands Blog – 23 October 2025](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Comparison of *Northern Parklands Act 2025 (SA)* and *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005 (SA)*

- END OF REPORT -