

# Adelaide Equestrian Festival Proposal for 2026-27 Water Jump

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

**Tuesday, 3 March 2026**  
**City Community Services and Culture Committee**

**Program Contact:**  
Jennifer Kalionis, Associate  
Director City Culture

**Approving Officer:**  
Jo Podoliak, Director City  
Community

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to receive feedback on a proposal received from the Adelaide Equestrian Festival (AEF) to establish a new shallow water jump feature in Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi.

The proposal entails a change to the landscape of the Park Lands, to create a depression for a natural water feature approximately 25.5m long and 13m wide. The design is proposed to be integrated into the existing landform of the site, appearing as a turfed depression outside the event period each year. The area will remain with grass cover throughout the year and only filled with water for the event period, for approximately five days.

The project would be funded and project managed by the AEF, with oversight and necessary approvals by the City of Adelaide.

The AEF is seeking to implement the project for its event in April 2027.

Detailed designs will be presented to Kadaltilla and Council when complete.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 10 March 2026 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves the proposal from the Adelaide Equestrian Festival for a new water jump feature in Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 3 March 2026.
2. Notes the proposal for a water jump feature would be funded and project managed by the Adelaide Equestrian Festival.

## IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<b>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</b> Create fun, lively and interesting experiences.
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Consultation on the proposal has occurred with Kadaltilla/Park Lands Authority and the South Australian Motorsport Board.
Resource	This project will be managed within existing resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Site impacts will be considered and managed through the design process to ensure the water jump is integrated into the existing landscape of Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi as much as is possible.
Opportunities	The proposal presents an opportunity to enhance the Adelaide Equestrian Festival which is recognised nationally and internationally as a premier equestrian competition and a major driver of tourism and economic activity in the state. The proposal also responds to its place in the Park Lands and seeks to create a finished result that does not significantly alter the proposed Park Lands location.
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	The new asset is proposed to become an ongoing feature of the Park Lands.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Any required future maintenance of the proposed water jump to ensure it remains fit for purpose would be the responsibility of the Adelaide Equestrian Festival.
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

# DISCUSSION

## Background

1. The Adelaide Equestrian Festival (AEF) is recognised nationally and internationally as a premier equestrian competition and a driver of tourism and economic activity in the state. The event has occurred in the Adelaide Park Lands since 1997.
2. The event organisers have advised that the AEF is the only urban-based 5-star horse trials in the world and the only one hosted in the Southern Hemisphere. However, one of the greatest ongoing challenges is the absence of a second water jump on the cross-country course, a standard feature at all other 5-star events in countries including the United Kingdom, USA, France and Germany. This limitation has affected the technical progression of the course and restricted the expansion of the spectator footprint.
3. A key element is the development of a second water obstacle within Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi, designed to draw larger crowds, elevate the spectator experience and strengthen the events commercial and community appeal.
4. In 2025, the AEF welcomed over 32,000 attendees and has a goal of reaching 50,000 attendees by 2029.
5. The concept of a second water jump was first raised in 2017 as a way to honour the legacy of the late Gillian Rolton AM, Olympian and driving force behind the growth of the AEF.
6. The AEF currently utilises the Rymill Park / Murlawirrapurka lake as its sole water feature during the cross-country event component each year.

## Current Proposal

7. The proposal is to excavate soil to a depth of 400mm, which would create a depression and be covered by turf to present visually as a natural feature of the Park Lands. Further sub excavation of 300mm would be required to construct the necessary sub surface rock base and crushed rock footings.
8. When the required water is added during the event period, it would be filled to a depth of approximately 250mm.
9. The design is proposed to be integrated into the existing landform of the site, appearing as a turfed depression outside the event delivery period each year. The area will remain with grass cover throughout the year and only filled with water for the event period, for approximately five days.
10. The proposal does not include any hardstand or built infrastructure. Any temporary physical timber horse jumps would be installed for the event period only under an approved event licence, consistent with the rest of the AEF cross-country course.
11. The proposal includes the creation of permanent grassed embankments, making use of the excavated material to create a viewing edge for spectators.
12. The AEF has engaged Luke Jones Architects to draft the current concept designs contained in **Attachment A**.
13. The AEF proposes to undertake the works ahead of their event in April 2027, with civil works taking up to a maximum of two weeks.

## Proposed Location and considerations

14. The water feature is proposed for an area in the northwest of Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi, as shown by the red cross in *Image 1*.
15. This area is not currently utilised under any ongoing Park Land lease or licence.
16. The proposal has been shared with the South Australian Motorsport Board.
17. The Masterplan for Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi does not envisage such a proposal, however the Masterplan recognises the AEF historical and current use of the park and also includes the aim to “Expand the diversity of offerings through developing site infrastructure that supports a range of events of various scales and a diverse range of passive recreational opportunities”.

Image 1.



### **Design and Operational Considerations**

18. Appropriate nearby water sources and draining methodology will need to be investigated and agreed as part of stormwater engineering advice through the detailed design process.
19. The City of Adelaide (CoA) would require final engineering and designs to be provided by AEF, to consider that water does not stand in this location throughout the year.
20. All costs for construction, remediation (in accordance with CoA standards), water (for filling and draining) are to be covered by the AEF.
21. The CoA would maintain the proposed area in line with current service levels however would take no responsibility for adequate maintenance of the water jump components. Any damage to or required remediation of the proposed features would be the responsibility of the AEF.

### **Next Steps**

22. Subject to Council confirming support for the water jump proposal, Administration will write to the AEF advising them of the outcome.
23. Work would continue between AEF and CoA to finalise design, engineering and operational considerations and requirements, ahead of any works commencing.
24. All works will be subject to:
  - 24.1. Operational agreement between CoA and the AEF on a suitable water filling and draining arrangement.

- 24.2. Final detailed designs being presented to Kadaltilla and Council.
  - 24.3. Agreement between CoA and the AEF on when the works would occur.
  - 25. The works are proposed to occur ahead of the 2027 AEF event.
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## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A** – Adelaide Equestrian Festival Water Jump Proposal and Concept Designs

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