

Council Assessment Panel - Annual Report 2025

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 3 March 2026

City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee

Program Contact:

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Approving Officer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the workload and performance of Council's Assessment Panel (CAP) and Development Assessment function for 2025.

The report demonstrates that both CAP and Council's Development Assessment functions are performing their legislative obligations.

Data shows that while the number of development applications received within the City of Adelaide was similar to 2024, the number of developments determined by CAP reduced further. CAP noted this trend and provided recommendations to enhance public messaging on aspects of the Planning & Design Code which often cause concern for the community, such as minimum car parking requirements and interface transitions.

Administration continues to progress proactive development matters, including pursuing Council's request for a review of the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) threshold with the State Government, continuation of the Local Design Review trial, and seeking greater controls for roller shutters.

Following this report, the Lord Mayor will write to the Minister for Planning, sharing CAPs Annual Report and seeking an update on the request for a review of the SCAP threshold.

RECOMMENDATION

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

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the Council Assessment Panel Annual Report 2025 contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 3 March 2026.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<i>Strategic Alignment – Our Places</i> Encourage bold, interesting and purposeful development.
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
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

Background

1. The Council Assessment Panel (CAP) is established under section 83 of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (SA) (PDI Act). The CAP acts as the Relevant Authority for performance assessed development applications (DAs) that require public notification in the City of Adelaide.
2. The CAP delegates the assessment of these applications to Council’s Assessment Manager when no speaking representations are received.
3. DAs are assessed against the relevant provisions of the Planning and Design Code.

CAP Annual Report

4. The CAP Annual Report (**Attachment A**) provides an overview of the CAP workload and performance throughout 2025.
5. While not a legislated requirement, the Annual Report was introduced in 2023 and is considered good governance for providing transparency and awareness to Council.
6. The Annual Report provides evidence CAP and Council’s Development Assessment Function are performing their legislative obligations effectively and efficiently.
7. When endorsing the Annual Report at their 28 January 2026 meeting, CAP provided advice on a number of key topics, including:
 - 7.1. No minimum car parking for developments in various zones in the city is a complex issue that could benefit from additional messaging from the State Government explaining the intent of these policies.
 - 7.2. There is community concern regarding high scale developments at the interface with low scale residential zones. Additional information from the State Government could explain the intent of this transformational policy.
 - 7.3. The reduced number of DAs being assessed by the Panel should be considered as the planning system continues to evolve. The Council Assessment Panel should be the Relevant Authority for more applications.
 - 7.4. The SCAP threshold of \$10 million needs to be reviewed or possibly removed.
 - 7.5. Concerns with the increase in demolition in the city not requiring development approval and an associated increase in open lot car parks.
8. Regarding 7.2, Council has previously sought a review of catalyst sites which includes consideration of policies to address the interface concerns with lower scale buildings. The State Government has advised catalyst sites will be addressed through the ‘Strategic Infill Code Amendment’ proposed to be initiated in 2026.
9. Regarding 7.5, the Park Lands, Policy & Sustainability Program is currently undertaking a Strategic Project funded through the 2025/26 budget considering policy interventions to address long term land and building vacancies (over 2 years). This study is considering the increase in open lot car parks and policy or legislative responses. The study is due for completion in June 2026.

Development Assessment Activity within the City of Adelaide

10. Tables 1-3 provide a summary of development applications received across the City of Adelaide, in comparison to 2024.

TABLE 1 – CITY OF ADELAIDE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS						
Year	DAs Submitted*	Development Cost	Assessment Manager DAs	CAP DAs	Average Assessment Time	DAs Processed Within Statutory Timeframe
2025	829	\$229.2 million	482	4	15.2 days	96.9%
2024	827	\$294.9 million	402	7	17.3 days	93.6%

**Total DAs submitted includes applications where external Accredited Professionals were the Relevant Authority – such as Accepted or Deemed to Satisfy Developments, often approved by Private Certifiers*

The 'Assessment Timeframe' does not include time waiting for external referrals, or when further information is requested from the applicant, in line with PlanSA's criteria.

TABLE 2 – STATE PLANNING COMMISSION DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS			
Year	SCAP Over \$10 Million DAs Submitted	DA Referral Comments (including over \$10 million and Crown applications)	Development Cost
2025	19	52	\$1.02 billion
2024	23	46	\$4.0 billion (includes New Women's and Children's Hospital)

TABLE 3 – PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS			
Year	Applications Publicly Notified	Representations Received	Speaking Representations
2025	25 (3% of DAs)	49	12
2024	20 (2.4% of DAs)	68	23

11. In 2025 there were no Appeals against CAP decisions. There were two Appeals against the refusal of applications by Council's Assessment Manager.
12. The data demonstrates Council's Assessment Manager and the Development Assessment function more broadly are continuing to perform their legislative obligations effectively and efficiently.
13. The volume of development applications in City of Adelaide which trigger public notification has decreased since planning reforms came into effect in 2021.
 - 13.1. A decrease was anticipated given the changes to public notification triggers within the Planning and Design Code.
 - 13.2. Including more localised and discretionary public notification settings for development in the City of Adelaide formed part of Council's submission to the State Government's Expert Panel review in 2023, however Administration is not aware of any planned amendments to public notification requirements.
14. Of the applications granted Development Approval in 2025, 52.4% notified Council that construction had commenced. This compares to 58.1% in 2024. Not all builders/applicants notify Council of the commencement of construction, particularly for shop and office fit-outs.
15. The Development Assessment function is also responsible for undertaking 'Section 7 searches', which are requested during the sale of properties and subject to legislated timeframes. A total of 1,644 requests were processed in 2025, with an average turnaround time of 1.93 days.

Council's Continued Response to Planning Skills Shortage

16. To help address the significant statewide shortage of planners, a Graduate Planner commenced in the Development Assessment team in early 2024 and this will continue until early 2028, as part of Council's Graduate Program endorsed in the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Local Design Review Pilot

17. In December 2024 Council launched the Local Design Review Pilot in partnership with the Office for Design and Architecture (ODASA), one of the first Councils in South Australia to undertake this.
18. Local Design Review provides independent expert design advice during the development process to generate quality built-form outcomes.
19. A development in the City of Adelaide was the first in the State to be presented to Local Design Review in July 2025. The process was successful and resulted in improvements to the design of the building prior to lodgement.
20. In November 2025 ODASA confirmed the Local Design Review Pilot Program will be extended for a further two years until 3 December 2027, allowing more applications to take part in the process.

SCAP Threshold

21. In 2024 Council requested Administration prepare a report requesting an increase in the \$10 million financial threshold for the State Commission Assessment Panel to be the relevant authority for development applications in the City of Adelaide.
22. The resolution followed the Council-endorsed response to the State Government's 2023 Planning System Implementation Review, in which Council recommended the SCAP threshold be reviewed and increased.
23. In March 2025 the Lord Mayor wrote to the Minister for Planning, formally requesting consideration be given to increasing the SCAP threshold from \$10 million to \$20 million within the City of Adelaide.
24. The case for increasing the threshold centred on:
 - 24.1. The rising cost of development and CPI increases since the threshold was set in 2008.
 - 24.2. The type of developments under \$20 million which would benefit from local knowledge and expertise.
 - 24.3. Allowing SCAP resources to focus on major developments.
 - 24.4. The performance of City of Adelaide's Administration and CAP in determining applications within legislated timeframes.
 - 24.5. City of Adelaide's focus on high quality built form outcomes, demonstrated through being the first Council in South Australia to commence a Local Design Review trial, in partnership with the State Government.
25. Senior members of the City of Adelaide and State Government's Administration have met to discuss the request. The State Government has advised they have all the information they require at this stage. A formal response has not been received from the Minister.

Roller Shutters

26. In 14 October 2025 Council resolved *'that Administration prepare a report on when and where it is acceptable to install roller shutters to business frontages and opportunities to improve current practice and streetscape amenity.'*
27. The 'accepted development' pathway in the Planning and Design Code for roller shutters means planning consent is not required and there is limited ability to control their installation.
28. Administration recently progressed this with the Department for Housing and Urban Development (DHUD) by submitting a minor change request under Section 76 of the PDI Act, seeking to rectify this deficiency in the Planning and Design Code.
29. If supported, the change would ensure roller shutters on business frontages require a planning consent, leading to improved outcomes such as ensuring they are visually permeable.
30. If the change is not supported, a report will be presented to Council outlining alternative options.
31. Administration has met with DHUD to discuss the improved pathway and the request is currently under consideration.

Next Steps

32. Following this report, the Lord Mayor will write to the Minister for Planning, providing CAPs Annual Report, and seeking an update on the request for a review of the SCAP threshold.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Council Assessment Panel Annual Report 2025

- END OF REPORT -