

The Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands

**Thursday, 30 July 2026
Board Meeting**

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Public

Purpose

This purpose of this report is to present a draft assessment of the economic value of the Adelaide Park Lands (**Attachment A**), prior to finalising the report for public release.

The report titled '*More Than Green Space: The Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands*' delivers against the following objective and initiative in the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) Strategic Plan 2023-2028:

Objective 3.5 – Assess the landscape value of the Adelaide Park Lands including economic, environmental and cultural significance.

Initiative 3.5 – Undertake an assessment of economic, environmental and cultural significance of the Adelaide Park Lands.

The report establishes a consolidated evidence base across visitation, recreation, employment, business activity, education, sport, transport, cultural, environmental and asset value indicators.

The draft assessment was developed through a staged approach. The City of Adelaide completed Stage 1 in 2024/25 with the support of Michael Connell and Associates, Hirst Projects and Brave and Curious consultant teams, to prepare a comprehensive and academic report on economic methods for valuing the Adelaide Park Lands.

Administration completed Stage 2, the draft assessment of economic value in 2025/26 is based on internal and external data sources, with specific investigations completed by Westlink Consulting, Geografia, Pathzz and Economy Id.

The draft assessment is intended to inform future decision-making, advocacy and investment cases relating to the Adelaide Park Lands.

Recommendation

THAT THE KADALTILLA / ADELAIDE PARK LANDS AUTHORITY ADVISES COUNCIL:

That the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority:

1. Receives the draft assessment of the Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands as contained in Attachment A of Item 5.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Board of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on 30 July 2026.
2. Notes the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, may amend the draft assessment of the Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands as contained in Attachment A of Item 5.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Board of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on 30 July 2026 for the purposes of finalising the document.

Implications

Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy – Towards 2036	Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy - Towards 2036 Strategy 1.3 Promote the Adelaide Park Lands as a visitor and tourist destination. The <i>Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005</i> (SA) includes the following statutory principle for planning for the future of the Adelaide Park Lands: <i>The Adelaide Park Lands provide a defining feature to the City of Adelaide and contribute to the economic and social well-being of the city in a manner that should be recognised and enhanced.</i>
2023-2028 Strategic Plan	Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Strategic Plan Alignment – Management and Protection Objective 3.5: Assess the landscape value of the Adelaide Park Lands including economic, environmental and cultural significance Initiative 3.5: Undertake an assessment of economic, environmental and cultural significance of the Adelaide Park Lands.
City of Adelaide Strategies	The City of Adelaide's Economic Development Strategy includes that the City of Adelaide <i>will advocate for an assessment of the economic, environmental, social and cultural contributions of the Adelaide Park Lands to the city and South Australia.</i>
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Stage 1 of the project to establish the methodologies for valuing the Adelaide Park Lands included advice on cultural values; cultural value is acknowledged but not monetised in the draft assessment. The Kaurna Culture and Heritage indicator identifies economic opportunity associated with Kaurna-led activity, procurement and cultural tourism. The City of Adelaide is separately working on the Kaurna Values of the Adelaide Park Lands with the support of KYAC and an Australian Government grant to update the National Heritage Management Plan for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Several indicators within this report use overlapping proxy-value methodologies to express different dimensions of Adelaide Park Lands use and contribution. These indicators should not be interpreted as additive economic totals. Some indicators represent: • Direct economic activity • Indicative recreational value • Avoided cost/value transfer estimates • Contextual or strategic indicators. In some cases, multiple indicators draw upon the same underlying visitation and participation patterns to illustrate different aspects of Adelaide Park Lands contribution.
Design	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The report is intended to support future advocacy, funding submissions and business cases, by demonstrating economic value.

City of Adelaide Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Capital Infrastructure Projects	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	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

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Discussion

Purpose

1. This purpose of this report is to present a draft assessment of the economic value of the Adelaide Park Lands (**Attachment A**), prior to finalising the report for public release.
2. The report titled '*More Than Green Space: The Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands*' delivers against the following objective and initiative in the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) Strategic Plan 2023-2028:
 - 2.1. Objective 3.5 – Assess the landscape value of the Adelaide Park Lands including economic, environmental and cultural significance.
 - 2.2. Initiative 3.5 – Undertake an assessment of economic, environmental and cultural significance of the Adelaide Park Lands.
3. The project responds to the following Kadaltilla decision on 18 April 2024:
 - 3.1. Suggests that Administration consider the opportunities for progressing economic/environmental and social value assessment in future Adelaide Park Lands Management Plans and other relevant plans and strategies.
4. The draft assessment is intended to inform future decision-making, advocacy and investment cases relating to the Adelaide Park Lands.

Stage 1 – Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands

5. The project is being undertaken in a staged approach. The City of Adelaide completed Stage 1 in 2024/25 with the support of Michael Connell and Associates, Hirst Projects and Brave and Curious consultant teams, to prepare a comprehensive and academic report on economic methods for valuing the Adelaide Park Lands.
6. Part 1 of the project focused on background research, literature review and the development of economic methodologies.
7. Part 1 was informed by international approaches and extensive internal engagement including Park Lands Policy and Sustainability, City Experience, City Culture, Infrastructure, Strategic Property and Commercial, Social Planning and Governance.
8. Since the completion of the initial consultant-led research and economic methods, Administration has continued to refine the methodology to:
 - 8.1. Consolidate and review available datasets across economic, environmental, social and cultural domains.
 - 8.2. Simplify and adapt the methodologies to reflect data that is currently available or feasible to maintain.
 - 8.3. Develop a staged and scalable methodology that can be expanded as additional datasets or resources become available, including measures and indicators and data gaps.

Stage 2 – Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands

9. Stage 2 of the project was completed by the Administration in 2025/26 based on the Stage 1 methods and internal and external data sources, with specific investigations completed by Westlink Consulting, Geografia, Pathzz and Economy Id.
10. The subsequent draft assessment of economic value of the Adelaide Park Lands (**Attachment A**) establishes a consolidated evidence base across visitation, recreation, employment, business activity, education, sport, transport, cultural, environmental and asset value indicators.
11. This includes economic value across:
 - 11.1. Visitation and recreational use
 - 11.2. Consumer spending and business activity
 - 11.3. Employment, major institutions and State-managed assets
 - 11.4. Education and student activity
 - 11.5. Sport and recreation, including school sport and personal training/group exercise
 - 11.6. Cycling and walking
 - 11.7. Kaurna culture and heritage (non-monetised)

- 11.8. Events, arts and cultural activity
- 11.9. Environment, including biodiversity, urban heat and stormwater management
- 11.10. Property and embedded asset value.
- 12. The draft assessment values the Adelaide Park Lands as more than open space and demonstrates their role as civic infrastructure, a visitor and recreation destination, a setting for major institutions and events, an environmental asset, a contributor to health and wellbeing, and a place of continuing cultural significance.
- 13. The draft assessment recognises that not all Adelaide Park Lands value is captured through direct revenue or market transactions.
 - 13.1. Many benefits, including recreation, health, cooling, biodiversity, stormwater management, cultural significance and preservation value, are experienced as public or non-market benefits.
 - 13.2. The draft assessment therefore uses a combination of direct economic measures and proxy indicators to provide a fuller picture of the Adelaide Park Lands' economic contribution.
- 14. Across some of the assessed areas, there are generally accepted measurement methods although benchmark values may vary significantly.
 - 14.1. This is particularly true in valuing an individual's visit to a park (e.g., walking, running, or cycling).
 - 14.2. Given that park visits are typically free, various methods have been employed to assign an economic value to the park/green space experience.
 - 14.3. For transparency, methods and values used in the draft assessment are disclosed in the assessment report.
- 15. The draft assessment draws on data and reports sourced through existing City of Adelaide programs and records, as well as external datasets, including:
 - 15.1. Pathzz mobile device visitation and movement data
 - 15.2. Spendmapp consumer transaction data prepared by Geografia
 - 15.3. City of Adelaide commercial lease, permit and rates records
 - 15.4. Independent asset valuations
 - 15.5. ABS and .id population, business and employment data
 - 15.6. Environmental monitoring and program data relating to biodiversity, urban heat, stormwater, greening and open space management.
- 16. The timescale for data within the report is drawn from the most current available period for each indicator, generally 2024/25 or 2025/26.

Adelaide Park Lands Visitation

- 17. Critical for assessing economic value of the Adelaide Park Lands is access to reliable data on park users.
 - 17.1. This includes information on the number of users, the activities they engage in, the frequency and duration of their visits, and their places of residence.
 - 17.2. This data is crucial for measuring the recreational/leisure value of individual visits, as a key input in assessing health benefits, and for defining the catchment areas for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Squares.
- 18. The literature review completed in Stage 1 indicates that international studies typically have access to high-quality park user data, whereas this data is not recorded for the Adelaide Park Lands.
- 19. Adelaide Park Lands visitation is based on mobile phone data as shown in Table 1 below. Visitation data is sourced from Pathzz mobile device analytics, covering the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Table 1: Adelaide Park Lands Visitation

Total Visits	41,586,210 *
Unique Visitors	3,019,479 **
% of visits under 1 hour	79%
% of visits more than 1 hour	21%
Average duration of visits	47 minutes

* Visits include when a mobile phone device entered the Adelaide Park Lands, the same device can contribute a single or multiple visits over the period.

** Unique visitors refer to a distinct mobile phone device, where each device is counted once regardless of how many times it entered the Adelaide Park Lands.

Economic Value

20. The draft assessment of economic value reinforces that investment in the Adelaide Park Lands is not solely an amenity or conservation outcome; it is a strategic economic investment that supports productivity, resilience, property value creation, and the enduring attractiveness of Adelaide as a globally recognised liveable city.
21. The following highlights use overlapping proxy-value methodologies to express different dimensions of Adelaide Park Lands use and should be read as indicative rather than additive. Whilst not cumulative, key highlights include the following:
 - 21.1. The Adelaide Park Lands are visited 41.5 million times annually, with an indicative annual recreational use value of approximately \$328.1 million.
 - 21.2. The indicative preservation value of the Adelaide Park Lands and its heritage assets, based on willingness to pay modelling, for the population living within a 45-minute catchment to the Adelaide Park Lands is approximately \$44.9 million, which scales significantly with population, and contributes approximately \$19.1 billion when applied to the Australian population as a whole.
 - 21.3. Spendmapp analysis estimates approximately \$331.5 million in parks-attributable consumer spending per year in the broader Adelaide Park Lands catchment.
 - 21.4. There are approximately 1,400 people directly employed within the Adelaide Park Lands based on select publicly available workforce information for major institutions, venues and businesses located within to the Adelaide Park Lands. These include the Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide Zoo, Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australian Museum, and Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, contributing approximately \$138 million per year in labour and approximately \$2.4 million per year attributed to volunteer labour.
 - 21.5. The city workforce provides an indicative workforce income base of \$12.8 billion, and whilst not directly attributable to the Adelaide Park Lands it demonstrates the scale of the workforce passing through the Adelaide Park Lands.
 - 21.6. As a contextual indicator of the scale of the education sector activity in the immediate Adelaide Park Lands precinct, the Education and Training sector contributes \$2.2 billion in value added annually within the City of Adelaide. Adelaide University, whose main campus site is adjacent the Adelaide Park Lands, is projected to contribute approximately \$4.7 billion per year to the economy.
 - 21.7. The total combined annual income in 2024/25 generated from commercial leases and licences in the Adelaide Park Lands was \$522,581.
 - 21.8. Major institutions and State-managed assets within the Adelaide Park Lands generate approximately \$167 million in economic activity per year.
 - 21.9. The estimated annual contribution of sports use of the Adelaide Park Lands is \$150 million, highlighting the importance of preserving, enhancing, and investing in sporting infrastructure and community participation opportunities. School based use represents between \$1.2 million and \$5.1 million in recreational value per annum. Lease and licence arrangements associated with sporting facilities generate approximately \$205,000 per annum.
 - 21.10. The estimated direct annual economic value generated by cycling and walking within the Adelaide Park Lands is \$196 million in direct health, transport and environmental benefits alone.
 - 21.11. Events within the Adelaide Park Lands generate between \$32.6 million and \$81.5 million in event participation per year.
 - 21.12. The health benefits from the Adelaide Park Lands' cooling effect are estimated at \$56.8 million per year.
 - 21.13. The 485 hectares of canopy in the Adelaide Park Lands are sequestering approximately \$699,782 per year through greenhouse gas emission reductions.
 - 21.14. The estimated value of air quality benefits from the Adelaide Park Lands is \$71,357 per annum and the estimated value of avoided emissions is \$42,687 per annum.
 - 21.15. The Adelaide Park Lands provide stormwater management benefits of \$180,420 per year.

- 21.16. The combined biodiversity associated with the Adelaide Park Lands is estimated to generate approximately \$376.2 million in national ecosystem service value.
- 21.17. In 2024/25, products and service income associated with the City of Adelaide nursery, mulch and green waste activities generated revenue of \$982,330. This figure does not represent profit, net economic benefit or total environmental value.
- 21.18. Properties fronting the Adelaide Park Lands receive an observed valuation uplift of approximately 5% with Adelaide Park Lands view contributing additional premiums of up to 50%.
- 21.19. Proximity of Adelaide Park Lands frontage generates an approximate annual rental uplift of up to \$854,000 per annum with a midpoint estimate of approximately \$518,500.
- 21.20. The City of Adelaide's Park Lands Open Space and Building assets have a combined asset base of \$131.2 million based on infrastructure assets only, including playgrounds, sports fields, irrigation, water features, community buildings, structures and facilities.
- 21.21. The City of Adelaide invests \$25.6 million annually in the maintenance of open space and the Adelaide Park Lands.

Next steps

22. The draft assessment is pending finalisation and public release by the City of Adelaide.
23. The draft assessment is intended to inform future decision-making, advocacy and investment cases relating to the Adelaide Park Lands.

Data and Supporting Information

Nil

Attachments

Attachment A – More Than Green Space: The Economic Value of the Adelaide Park Lands (draft)

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