

Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Noon - MoN - Torrens Lake Water Quality Pilot Trial

Tuesday, 8 September 2026
Council

Council Member
Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor
Carmel Noon

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City
Infrastructure

MOTION ON NOTICE

Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Carmel Noon will move a motion and seek a seconder for the matter shown below to facilitate consideration by the Council:

‘That Council:

1. Notes the recurring water-quality issues and closures affecting Torrens Lake and the resulting impacts on recreation, tourism, businesses and the amenity and reputation of the City.
2. Notes that, under section 25 of the Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005, Council has the care, control and management of the Torrens dam and the water held by it, subject to the Landscape South Australia Act 2019.
3. Notes advice that nanobubble oxygenation and controlled ozone technology has been used successfully elsewhere and that a six-month independently monitored research trial involving the University of Adelaide, Monash University and appropriately qualified scientific oversight has been proposed. Further notes that TLCAC remains open to considering new scientific evidence and that the Chief Executive Officer has requested that relevant representatives be invited to present updated evidence and information to TLCAC.
4. Supports in principle the development of a proposal for a controlled six-month pilot trial of nanobubble oxygenation and controlled ozone technology in Torrens Lake during the 2026–27 spring/summer period, incorporating independent scientific monitoring, baseline testing, defined success criteria and appropriate environmental and public-safety safeguards.
5. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to progress development of the pilot proposal, in consultation with TLCAC, relevant State Government agencies and regulators, and to identify any approval, permit or authorisation required by law. Where an impediment to the proposed trial is identified, Administration is requested to advise Council of the legislative, regulatory, scientific or safety basis for that position and the available options or pathway to address it.
6. Requests a report to Council by 13 October 2026 setting out the proposed scope and location, scientific methodology and monitoring, consultation outcomes, environmental and public-safety safeguards, required approvals, indicative costs, external or research funding opportunities, proposed commencement date and any further Council decision required; and notes that any subsequent permanent deployment or long-term procurement of the technology would be considered separately following receipt of the independent results.’

ADMINISTRATION COMMENT

1. In May 2025, the Torrens Lake Cyanobacteria Advisory Committee (TLCAC) considered a proposal to trial ozone nanobubble technology in Torrens Lake and determined not to support the proposed trial based on the information available at the time.

2. The TLCAC's considerations included the absence of a clearly identified management need, uncertainty around the technology's effectiveness and potential ecological impacts in a biodiverse, flow-through river system, regulatory requirements, and the cost of undertaking a scientifically robust trial and associated monitoring program.
3. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has subsequently determined that the ozone nanobubble technology meets the definition of an agricultural chemical product and therefore requires a "permit" for use under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Products (Control of Use) Act 2002*. Should the necessary permit(s) be obtained, the proponent may submit a revised proposal for consideration.
4. The City of Adelaide (CoA) continues to work in partnership with the participating State Government agencies represented on TLCAC, which collectively provide the scientific, regulatory and environmental expertise required to manage the health of the broader River Torrens / Karrawirra Parri system.
5. The CoA has recently requested that TLCAC invite the proponent of Nanobubble technology to present any updated scientific evidence, approvals, monitoring methodologies and trial results directly to a future TLCAC meeting.
6. The TLCAC is open to considering a revised proposal where there have been significant advancements from the proposal previously presented and declined, such as new evidence, relevant approvals or permits, or a revised trial and monitoring approach that addresses the committee's previous feedback. Any future proposal would be considered on its merits through the appropriate governance processes.
7. It is therefore suggested that the proponent secure all relevant permits, such as the APVMA permit, and then take the opportunity to present to TLCAC, which includes members from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Green Adelaide, SA Water, Coastal Board, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), the City of Charles Sturt and City of Adelaide who collectively are responsible for the ecological and biodiversity impacts to the greater River Torrens system.
8. It should be noted that the CoA is only responsible for the supporting infrastructure surrounding the river within the City of Adelaide council boundary. The CoA does not own the water or biodiversity within the river. The State Government, through DEW, Green Adelaide and EPA, is responsible for regulating the river system, which includes being the authority for assessing and approving any future proposed treatments.
9. It is recommended that the proponent seek the appropriate permits, which would then allow for engagement with TLCAC to explore any advancements since the previous presentation in May 2025.
10. It is recommended that the proponent present to TLCAC any advancement in technology. TLCAC has advised that they remain open to a presentation where there has been demonstrable advancement in technology and where all permits have been secured.
11. It is recommended that any pilot proposals / trials are subject to the above approvals and assessment prior to any commitments on behalf of the City of Adelaide.

Should the proposed motion be supported by Council, the following implications of this motion should be considered. Note any costs provided are estimates only – no quotes or prices have been obtained:	
Public consultation	Not applicable
External consultant advice	TLCAC Committee assessment
Legal advice / litigation (eg contract breach)	Not applicable
Impacts on existing projects	To be determined
Budget reallocation	Cost to be determined
Capital investment	Not applicable
Staff time in preparing the workshop / report requested in the motion	Not applicable
Other	Not applicable
Staff time in receiving and preparing this administration comment	To prepare this administration comment in response to the motion on notice took approximately 6.5 hours.