



CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Agenda and Reports

for the meeting on

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

at 5.30 pm

in the Colonel Light Room, Adelaide Town Hall

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Our Adelaide.
Bold.
Aspirational.
Innovative.

CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
Meeting Agenda, Tuesday, 5 August 2025, at 5.30 pm

Members – The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Dr Jane Lomax-Smith

Councillor Snape (Chair)

Councillor Giles (Deputy Chair)

Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Martin and Councillors Abrahamzadeh, Couros, Davis and Dr Siebentritt

Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	Acknowledgement of Country At the opening of the City Community Services and Culture Committee meeting, the Chair will state: ‘Council acknowledges that we are meeting on traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations who are present today.’	
2.	Apologies and Leave of Absence Nil	
3.	Confirmation of Minutes - 1/7/2025 That the Minutes of the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 1 July 2025, be taken as read and be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings. View public 1 July 2025 Minutes.	
4.	Declaration of Conflict of Interest	
5.	Deputations	
6.	Workshops	
	6.1 Park Lands Licence Request – Department for Human Services - External Presentation	3 - 13
7.	Reports for Recommendation to Council	
	7.1 Park Lands Licence – Extension Request	14 - 18
8.	Reports for Noting Nil	
9.	Closure	

Park Lands Licence Request - Department for Human Services - External Presentation

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

**City Community Services and
Culture Committee**

Presenter:

Sandy Pitcher, Chief Executive
Department for Human Services

PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

The Department for Human Services (DHS) has requested an opportunity to present an update on the Safer Place to Gather (SPTG) initiative at Edwards Park / Wirraninthi (Park 23).

DHS will be represented by, Sandy Pitcher, Chief Executive Department for Human Services. DHS has not requested that the presentation is given in confidence.

The current licence, approved by Council on 25 February 2025, was granted for a period of up to 6 months (until 31 August 2025) such that DHS could implement alternate measures to support remote and regional Aboriginal visitors, subject to State Government budget deliberations.

A further licence request has been received from DHS that would enable the extension of the operation of the SPTG from 1 September 2025 to 30 June 2026. The new licence request is on the Agenda at Item 7.1 for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee to be held on 5 August 2025.

- END OF REPORT -

Safer Place to Gather

City Community Services and Culture Committee
5 August 2025



**Government of
South Australia**



human
services

Acknowledgement

Marni Ngadlu Tampinhi Ngadlu Kurna Yartangka Inparrinhi

*Ngadlurlu Iyangka Yaitya Miyurnaku Taikurtirna kuma Parnaku Pirkurna-Purrutyi
Karrpanthi, Parnaku Tapa-Purruna-itya*

Kumartarna Yaitya Miyurna iyangka yalaka ngai tampinhi

It's good that we acknowledge that we are meeting on Kurna land

We are here to support Aboriginal families and their communities in their way of life

I also acknowledge all other Aboriginal people here today



Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce

- Multi-agency group across three tiers of government, including the City of Adelaide.
- The Taskforce works collaboratively to develop strategies and place-based responses.
- Developed the Safer Place to Gather initiative in August 2023 and the licence currently ends 31 August 2025.
- It provides vulnerable remote Aboriginal visitors a culturally safe, temporary, place to socialise, seek shelter and access support.

Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce

- The Taskforce is progressing work to develop alternative options to support visitors from remote Aboriginal communities; however this work is ongoing.
- Convened a cross-border consultation with key Aboriginal and agency stakeholders, including those responsible for management of temporary accommodation facilities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and senior officials from the City of Adelaide.
- DHS are finalising terms of reference for the development of an options business case and will engage with senior City of Adelaide officials to finalise and progress this important work.
- Aboriginal stakeholders, including land holding, cultural authorities and those with lived and living experience, must inform service models.

Safer Place to Gather

- The Safer Place to Gather continues to be well-utilised as a place for people to connect, come together, and camp overnight. It has been instrumental in maintaining consistent engagement with at-risk and vulnerable individuals.
- Security shift reports detail regular help seeking from clients which demonstrates trust.
- Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, as the land-holding body, do not object to the initiative, and this was re-tested in February 2025.
- SA Police and City of Adelaide staff continue to divert people from other parts of the CBD to Edwards Park.
- Drug and Alcohol Services SA and SA Police have expressed support for the initiative.

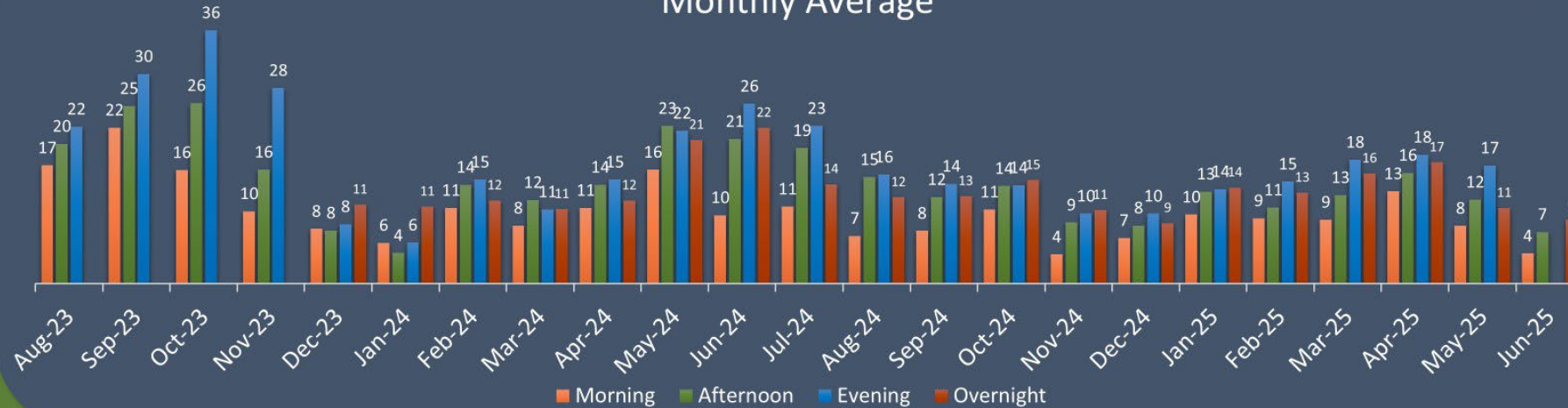
Safer Place to Gather

- The Safer Place to Gather continues to reduce rough sleeping in public parks, streets, and key business precincts across the Adelaide CBD.
- Additionally, antisocial behaviour is reduced, due to the presence of DHS staff, which includes Aboriginal Cultural Advisors, who are able to de-escalate conflict and refer individuals to appropriate services in a timely manner.
- There has been an improvement in the perceptions of safety and cleanliness in surrounding areas, benefiting the broader community.

SAFER PLACE TO GATHER EDWARDS PARK

Data Update – August 2023 to June 2025

Number of People in Edwards Park Monthly Average



Average Number of People at SPTG



Individuals Engaged

21,207

Groups Engaged

1,530

H&W Bus Pick-ups

Jan-25 to Mar-25

260

Return to Country from Adelaide



Statewide

Return to Country Program Statewide

Data Update – April 2022 to June 2025



Return to Country in South Australia



WHO ARE WE SUPPORTING & HOW ARE WE SUPPORTING?

6,868
Journeys Supported

88% 11%

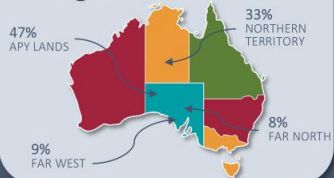
Age Groups of Travelers

Age Group	Percentage
<=17	31%
18 - 25	14%
26 - 34	18%
35 - 44	17%
45 - 64	14%
65+	4%
Unknown	4%

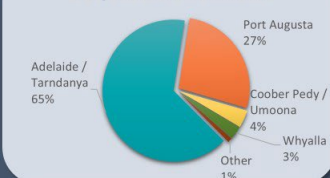
18 Languages Regularly Spoken

96 Home Communities

Region of Destination



Departure Location



Adelaide / Tarndanya

Return to Country Program Adelaide / Tarndanya

Data Update – April 2022 to June 2025



Return to Country from Adelaide / Tarndanya



WHO ARE WE SUPPORTING & HOW ARE WE SUPPORTING?

4,438
Journeys Supported

87% 11%

88 Home Communities

17 Languages Regularly Spoken

Region of Destination



Age Groups of Travelers



- Since commencement, 65% of all Return to Country trips depart from Adelaide.
- Demand for Return to Country, with peak periods consistent with the summer surge.
- APY Lands (44%) and the Northern Territory (40%) are the most frequent destinations.

Service model evolution

- Service delivery has evolved since the establishment of the Safer Place to Gather, and now includes frequent, assertive outreach by service providers, and harm minimisation strategies.
- Considerably enhanced clinical services are now available to remote visitors including culturally appropriate testing for tuberculosis (TB) and other illnesses and a weekly mobile clinic providing diagnostic and primary health services alongside alcohol and other drugs assessment and support.
- The service model will continue to evolve through the life of the initiative and will soon include an additional night transport option for people and families.

Ngaityalya

(Kurna - thank you)



**Government of
South Australia**



human
services

Park Lands Licence Request

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

**City Community Services and
Culture Committee**

Program Contact:

Sarah Gilmour, Associate
Director Park Lands, Policy &
Sustainability

Approving Officer:

Ilia Houridis, Director City
Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to consider a request from the Department for Human Services (DHS) (**Attachment A**) seeking an additional licence until 30 June 2026 for the operation of the Safer Place to Gather (SPTG) in the Adelaide Park Lands (Wirraninthe/Edwards Park - Park 23) to support visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities.

The current licence, approved by the Council on 25 February 2025, was granted for a period of up to 6 months such that DHS could implement alternate measures to support remote and regional Aboriginal visitors, subject to State Government budget deliberations.

A licence was first granted to DHS to operate the SPTG in Wirraninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23) on a temporary basis from 1 August 2023 until the end of February 2024. A new licence was approved from 1 March 2024 until 1 March 2025 and the most recent licence was approved until 31 August 2025.

DHS has not sought consideration of this item in confidence. Previous reports have been considered in confidence to allow DHS to inform stakeholders of the outcome. These earlier reports have been released from confidence.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 12 August 2025 for consideration

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

1. Notes that the Adelaide Park Lands Community Land Management Plan (CLMP) references the licenced use of the Adelaide Park Lands for emergency measures where the use is temporary and it provides an essential or urgent health, social or community service.
2. Approves the request from the Minister for Human Services, 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 5 August 2025, for an additional licence from 1 September 2025 to 30 June 2026.
 - 2.1. Requests that the Department of Human Services attend the April 2026 meeting of the City Community Service and Cultural Committee to provide information on the alternate longer-term measures being implemented to support remote and regional Aboriginal visitors.
3. Requests that the Department of Human Services and the Administration implement a communication plan to create community awareness that the Safer Place to Gather will conclude on 30 June 2026, no less than two months prior to the licence end date.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to negotiate with the State Government to grant an additional licence from 31 August 2025 until 30 June 2026 and to execute all documentation to give effect to the Adelaide Park Lands Licence Agreement.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Places Create safe, inclusive and healthy places for our community.
Policy	Community Land within the Adelaide Park Lands may be subject to licences. The City of Adelaide, as a member of the inter-agency Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce led by DHS, granted an extension to the operation of a temporary hub in the Adelaide Park Lands as a social service response for visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities. The City of Adelaide's Unauthorised Camping Operating Procedure was updated by Administration in June 2023 to support the temporary use of Park 23 as a gathering space for visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities.
Consultation	Consultation is ongoing through the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce led DHS. DHS provides regular reports to Administration and Council has received E-News updates.
Resource	The City of Adelaide incurs costs for essential infrastructure, including, but not limited to, power, water, toilets, phone charging, and Wi-Fi. For the duration of the initiative, the City of Adelaide has been delivering increased levels of service to the site, primarily for additional waste collection, grass cutting, and site visits/monitoring. DHS has implemented regular industrial cleans to supplement existing cleansing.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The City of Adelaide sought advice from the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme in relation to the initial license. The advice requires the City of Adelaide and DHS to consider potential issues arising from increased patronage and take measures to ensure that the facilities are fit for the intended purpose.
Opportunities	The City of Adelaide is leading an action item through the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce to investigate culturally appropriate gathering spaces in the Adelaide Park Lands. The SPTG initiative is broadly consistent with the intent of a cultural gathering space.
25/26 Budget Allocation	All costs incurred by the City of Adelaide are being covered by existing budgets.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The SPTG was introduced as a temporary response to anti-social behaviour being experienced on and around North Terrace in 2023.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	For the duration of the initiative, the City of Adelaide has been delivering increased levels of service to the site, primarily for additional waste collection, grass cutting, and site visits/monitoring.
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. The Safer Place to Gather initiative (SPTG), occupying a section of Wirrarninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23), is a temporary hub for visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities led by the Department of Human Services (DHS).
2. The Minister for Human Services first sought and was granted a license for the site from 1 August 2023 until the end of February 2024 by Council on 1 August 2023.
3. The Minister has subsequently sought two further licences from 1 March 2024 until 1 March 2025, and the current licence which is approved until 31 August 2025.
4. When the request for the current licence was made, the Minister indicated that the intention was to transition from Wirrarninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23) and put alternate longer-term measures in place to support regional and remote Aboriginal visitors.
5. The Council's most recent approval was conditional on DHS providing a communication plan to the Administration by 1 July 2025, outlining how community awareness will be created that the SPTG is no longer in place. A draft communication plan ([Link 1](#)) was provided to Administration in accordance with the Council's decision, noting DHS is now seeking an additional licence to continue current arrangements through to June 2026.

Park Lands License Request

6. DHS is seeking an additional licence from 31 August 2025 to 30 June 2026.
7. Since the SPTG commenced, it has been well utilised. As of 31 May 2025, DHS report that the cumulative number of individuals recorded at the location exceeds 21,005 (a person may be recorded more than once).
8. Individuals using the site receive daily support and services by multiple Agencies and service providers. DHS report 1,501 interactions with groups at Wirrarninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23) by service providers.
9. Since its establishment, service delivery to Wirrarninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23) has evolved to include harm minimisation supported by cultural, clinical, outreach and security staffing daily. This includes clinical services for regional and remote visitors including culturally appropriate testing for tuberculosis (TB) and other illnesses, and a weekly mobile clinic providing diagnostic and primary health services alongside alcohol and other drugs assessment and support.
10. SAPOL continues to divert people from other parts of the City of Adelaide to Wirrarninthe / Edwards Park (Park 23).
11. DHS proposes to evolve the service model if the initiative is to continue, including an additional night transport option for people and families.
12. DHS advises that since March 2025, the Taskforce has substantially progressed work to develop alternative options for services to support visitors from regional and remote Aboriginal communities; however, this work is ongoing.
13. This has included convening a cross-border consultation with key Aboriginal and agency stakeholders, including those responsible for management of temporary accommodation facilities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and senior officials from the City of Adelaide.
14. DHS is finalising Terms of Reference for the development of an options business case and has indicated that they will engage with Administration to finalise and progress this work.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Draft Communication Plan](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Correspondence seeking extension from the Department for Human Services.

- END OF REPORT -

Ref: 25BDHS/1141



Dr Jane Lomax-Smith AM
The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Adelaide
City of Adelaide
GPO 2252
ADELAIDE SA, 5001
Email: lordmayor@cityofadelaide.com.au

Office of the Chief Executive

Level 8 North
Riverside Building
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 292
Adelaide SA 5001

DX115

Tel: 08 7424 5980

Fax: 08 8413 9002

ABN 11 525 031 744

Dear Lord Mayor

I am writing to seek an extension of the Park Lands Licence Agreement for the use of Edwards Park for the purpose of the Safer Place to Gather (SPTG) for visitors from remote communities until 30 June 2026.

The SPTG is an initiative of the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce (the Taskforce) and provides remote Aboriginal visitors who are rough sleeping and impacted by alcohol misuse and chronic health conditions a safe setting to seek shelter, socialise, and access culturally appropriate support services. The Edwards Park SPTG site commenced in August 2023 and the current licence with the City of Adelaide (CoA) ends on 31 August 2025.

Since the SPTG commenced, it has been well utilised. As of 31 May 2025, the cumulative number of individuals recorded at the location exceeds 21,005 (a person may be recorded more than once). This demonstrates the significant support and services provided by multiple providers each day to remote visitors congregating at Edwards Park. There have been 1,501 interactions with groups at Edwards Park by service providers.

The SPTG continues to effectively reduce rough sleeping in public parks, streets, and key business precincts across the Adelaide CBD. This has contributed to a reduction in public complaints and concerns, particularly from key stakeholders and businesses in high-traffic areas. Additionally, antisocial behaviour has decreased, due to the presence of DHS staff, which includes Aboriginal Cultural Advisors, who are able to de-escalate conflict and refer individuals to appropriate services in a timely manner. As a result, there has been an improvement in the perceptions of safety and cleanliness in surrounding areas, benefiting the broader community.

Stakeholders have all noted the value of a single, central, accessible, and safe location for outreach staff to identify and support remote visitors. It has been instrumental in maintaining consistent engagement with at-risk and vulnerable individuals.

Since its establishment, service delivery to Edwards Park has evolved to include harm minimisation supported by cultural, clinical, outreach and security staffing daily.

Considerably enhanced clinical services are now available to remote visitors including culturally appropriate testing for tuberculosis (TB) and other illnesses and a weekly mobile clinic providing diagnostic and primary health services alongside alcohol and other drugs assessment and support.

On occasion, individuals are discharged from the Royal Adelaide Hospital to the SPTG with the knowledge that there is a degree of monitoring which occurs by either outreach or security staff. SAPOL and CoA staff continue to divert people from other parts of the CBD to Edwards Park. The service model will continue to evolve through the life of the initiative and will soon include an additional night transport option for people and families.

Since the last extension, the Taskforce has substantially progressed work to develop alternative options for services to support visitors from remote Aboriginal communities; however, this work is ongoing. This has included convening a cross-border consultation with key Aboriginal and agency stakeholders, including those responsible for management of temporary accommodation facilities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and senior officials from CoA.

It is critical that Aboriginal stakeholders, including land holding, cultural authorities and those with lived and living experience, inform service models for these longer-term temporary services including accommodation. We are finalising terms of reference for the development of an options business case and will engage with senior CoA officials to finalise and progress this important work.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) seeks to progress the necessary authorisations to extend the City of Adelaide Park Lands Licence for the continuation of the SPTG at Edwards Park until 30 June 2026.

Please liaise with Ms Alex Reid, Executive Director, Community and Aboriginal Partnerships in DHS if you require any further information to consider this request. Ms Reid can be contacted on 0401 125 191 or via email at alex.reid@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Sandy Pitcher
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

04 / 07 / 2025