

Park Lands Licence Request

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

**City Community Services and
Culture Committee**

Program Contact:

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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 (Wirrarninthe/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 Wirrarninthe / 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.

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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.