

Update on the World Heritage Listing for the Adelaide Park Lands and Rural Settlement Landscapes

Strategic Alignment - Our Environment

Public

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City Planning, Development and Business Affairs 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 provide an update on the progress of the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission for *Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes* (Tentative List Submission) since the Council decision on 12 March 2024, where the City of Adelaide elected to lead and fund the preparation of the Tentative List Submission ([Link 1](#)).

Preparation of the draft Tentative List Submission commenced in 2022 with the support of expert heritage consultants Duncan Marshall AM and Dr Jane Lennon AM (**Attachment A**). The draft has been prepared in accordance with the UNESCO World Heritage listing process.

The UNESCO World Heritage listing process involves multiple stages with the Tentative List Submission the first step in the process. To be included on Australia's Tentative List, a Tentative List Submission must have the support of the State and Federal Governments and Consent from Traditional Owners through the UNESCO Free, Prior and Informed Consent process (FPIC).

In relation to the latter, UNESCO requires that 'parties shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before including the sites on their Tentative List'.

The draft Tentative List Submission as contained in **Attachment A** reflects the format and length of the final Submission, with refinements to content of the draft Submission to be made following engagement processes.

The draft is substantially complete with the following tasks required prior to submission to the State Government:

- Review, amend and approve the portions of the Tentative List Submission relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history by First Nations communities.
- Engage with and receive Consent to lodge the Tentative List Submission from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities whose lands may one day form part of the World Heritage property.

Administration has undertaken a rigorous review of best practice for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding the FPIC process as required by UNESCO for World Heritage consideration.

The World Heritage bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscape (World Heritage bid) is identified as a measure of success in the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028. World Heritage listing has been a long-term ambition of the City of Adelaide and is identified in the Council's Heritage Strategy 2021-2036 – *Heritage: Our Future*.

The World Heritage bid is an objective, initiative and measure of success in the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority Strategic Plan 2023-2028, including obtaining State Government support for World Heritage listing submission by 2026. The Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) is a subsidiary of the City of Adelaide and meets monthly. Kadaltilla requested a standing item on their Agenda to consider progress with the World Heritage bid.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

THAT COUNCIL

1. Receives the draft World Heritage Tentative List Submission in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 5 August 2025.
 2. Notes that through the engagement with First Nations people under the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent required by UNESCO, an indication was provided that Consent for the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission may require a longer timeframe for relationship building which may result in the project timeframe for submission being February 2027 rather than February 2026.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Environment Achieve World Heritage listing of our Park Lands, and protect their national heritage listing status and pursue State Heritage listing to strengthen protections.
Policy	As an action identified in the Heritage Strategy 2021-2036, the World Heritage listing of Adelaide and its rural settlement landscapes seeks to landmark the site and protect the area for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.
Consultation	The City of Adelaide has been working closely with the State Government, other local government bid partners, the Federal Government and Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority for several years. Following a Council decision on 12 March 2024, the City of Adelaide has elected to lead and fund the preparation of the Tentative List Submission. Work has commenced on Aboriginal engagement and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes with the support of SA Native Title Services (SANTS). The Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC) has indicated a lead role in the FPIC process for the World Heritage Bid and has provided early Consent for the project.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The World Heritage listing process is contingent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's Consent through the FPIC process. The City of Adelaide has commenced consultation and Consent processes. In the circumstance that Traditional Owners do not Consent to the Tentative List Submission, the Submission will not be accepted by the Australian Government for consideration.
Opportunities	Opportunities created through World Heritage listing include: • Improved understanding and recognition of the significance of Adelaide and its rural settlement landscapes • Global profile and cultural tourism business and international investment attraction • Creating a shared narrative about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history that aligns with colonial settlement and promotes Reconciliation. • Greater levels of protection.
25/26 Budget Allocation	The 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget adopted on 24 June 2025 includes a strategic project allocation of \$178,000 for the World Heritage project.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	A funding allocation in 2026/27 will be subject to the City of Adelaide's Annual Business Plan and Budget processes.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The World Heritage bid process is complex and lengthy. The first step of achieving a Tentative Listing is expected to take 3-4 years. The City of Adelaide has been working to accelerate the Tentative Listing for completion by 2025 to enable submission by February 2026. Early engagement with Traditional Owners for Consent indicates that a 2027 submission timeframe may be required, rather than the 2026 timeframe, to enable relationship building with First Nations involved in the Tentative List Submission.
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	The Mount Lofty Consortium (the Consortium) has noted that there is approximately \$60,000 remaining in a fund set up by the Consortium to contribute towards the ongoing development of the World Heritage bid. Until there is clarity in the World Heritage Governance arrangements, this funding is being retained by the Consortium (Adelaide Hills Council). There is no external funding source currently committed or allocated to the project. Funding opportunities will be identified in the process and sought from partners. On 21 March 2025, the City of Adelaide made an application under the Federal Government's First Nations Heritage Grants Program Round 2 for a project to update the National Heritage Values of the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout to include Kaurna heritage values. If successful, this work will inform the World Heritage Bid (post Tentative List Submission) and strengthen National Heritage protections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Successful applicants were due to be announced in June 2025 but were unknown at the time this report was prepared.
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DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes since the Council decision on 12 March 2024, where the City of Adelaide elected to lead and fund the preparation of the Tentative List Submission ([Link 1](#)).

Tentative List Submission

2. The UNESCO World Heritage listing process involves multiple stages with the Tentative List Submission the first step in the process.
3. The steps to prepare the Tentative List Submission include:
 - 3.1. Prepare a draft Tentative List Submission
 - 3.2. Incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and Consent processes
 - 3.3. Finalise the Tentative List Submission
 - 3.4. Seek State and Federal Environment Minister Agreement to the Tentative List Submission
 - 3.5. Formal State and Federal Government support for the Tentative List Submission
 - 3.6. The Federal Government submits the Tentative List Submission document to the World Heritage Centre for inclusion in Australia's World Heritage Tentative List.
4. To be included on Australia's Tentative List, a Tentative List Submission must have the support of the State and Federal Governments and Consent from Traditional Owners.
5. In relation to the latter, UNESCO requires that 'parties shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before including the sites on their Tentative List'.
6. The draft Tentative List Submission prepared by expert heritage consultants Duncan Marshall AM and Dr Jane Lennon AM as contained in **Attachment A** reflects the format and length of the final Submission, with refinements to content of the draft Submission to be made following engagement processes.
7. The draft Tentative List Submission is substantially complete with the following tasks required prior to submission to the State Government:
 - 7.1. Review, amend and approve the portions relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history by these communities.
 - 7.2. Engage with and receive Consent to lodge the Tentative List Submission from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities whose lands may one day form part of the World Heritage property.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement and Free, Prior and Informed Consent

8. Administration has undertaken a rigorous review of best practice for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding the process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as required by UNESCO for World Heritage consideration.
9. FPIC is a process and methodology for undertaking early consultation and engagement to facilitate understanding and Consent from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for proposed actions affecting their lands and communities.
10. The UNESCO World Heritage listing process provides clear direction that FPIC must be demonstrated for all stages of the World Heritage Project.
11. The process must be free from coercion and allow the time and resources to enable traditional decision-making by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
12. Administration has engaged SA Native Title Services (SANTS) to facilitate engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
13. This engagement is also being informed by the City of Adelaide's work with Deloitte/Yamagigu Consulting to develop an Aboriginal Engagement Framework for City of Adelaide processes.
14. On 17 June 2025, SANTS, on behalf of the City of Adelaide, facilitated an information session with representatives of Aboriginal communities within the identified World Heritage Bid areas including:
 - 14.1. Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC)

- 14.2. First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee #2
- 14.3. Ngadjuri Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- 14.4. Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation
- 14.5. Peramangk Aboriginal Corporation
- 14.6. River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation.
15. Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation was invited to attend the information session however was unavailable.
16. The session was attended in part by members of the Administration to provide an overview of the project including a briefing from Duncan Marshall AM on the global context of UNESCO World Heritage and FPIC as it relates to World Heritage.
17. SANTS facilitated a closed session with First Nations representatives to discuss the information received. It is understood that from this session:
 - 17.1. First Nations representatives will discuss the project within their communities as a precursor to larger workshops for the broader communities focussing on truth-telling and reconciliation.
 - 17.2. Attendance by Administration has been requested at the initial community sessions which will require travel to the regions by the project team.
 - 17.3. Broader community works are tentatively being planned to occur in August - September 2025 pending the availability of First Nations communities.
 - 17.4. Early indications from the engagement are that the timeframe for Consent, if it is to be provided, may result in the Tentative List Submission being made in February 2027 rather than February 2026 to provide a longer timeframe for relationship building.
18. Administration has commenced, with SANTS' anthropologist, an early review of the Tentative List Submission with a view to incorporating feedback from First Nations engagement sessions as it is made available.

Next Steps

19. Next steps for the project are summarised as follows:
 - 19.1. The City of Adelaide has allocated \$178,000 to the World Heritage Project in the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget adopted by Council on 24 June 2025.
 - 19.2. Administration has reviewed resourcing and is commencing recruitment for a World Heritage Project Officer to assist with promotion, engagement and project management of the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission in 2025/26.
 - 19.3. Administration is working with SANTS to receive the feedback from the information session with First Nations People and to plan further engagements.
 - 19.4. Administration is planning a series of correspondences including to:
 - 19.4.1. Confirm State and Federal Government in-principle support for the World Heritage bid and Tentative List Submission contingent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consent.
 - 19.4.2. Update local governments that are party to the Tentative List Submission part of the World Heritage bid project.
 - 19.4.3. Inform local government areas where the City of Adelaide with the support of SANTS, is working with First Nations communities.
 - 19.5. Administration is continuing to progress work to refine research and attribute mapping undertaken through the heritage internship project for the purpose of clarifying the areas that may one day form part of the World Heritage area.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Agenda – City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee – Tuesday, 5 March 2024](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Draft Tentative List Submission

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