

Tentative List Submission for World Heritage Bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes - Progress Report

Thursday, 18 September 2025

Board Meeting

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Public

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Tentative List Submission for the World Heritage Bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes (Tentative List Submission).

The remaining tasks required prior to submission to the State Government are to:

- Review, amend and approve the portions of the Tentative List Submission relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history by First Nations communities.
- Document the process to engage with First Nations communities applying the Free, Prior and Informed Consent principles and seek support 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.

Since the last progress report, Administration has:

- Progressed its work on the Tentative Bid Submission and its work towards FPIC.
- Appointed a World Heritage Project Officer to assist with promotion, engagement and project management of the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission in 2025/26.
- Progressed correspondence through the Lord Mayor to the Deputy Premier Susan Close, on 8 August 2025, advising of our continuing efforts to seek World Heritage status for the Adelaide Park Lands and its Rural Settlement Landscapes, including our engagement with Aboriginal communities. The letter seeks confirmation of the State Government's ongoing support for the Bid. A response has not been received at the time of the Agenda publication.

Additional background to these tasks was provided to the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority (Kadaltilla) on 22 May 2025 ([Link 1](#)) and 28 August 2025 ([Link 2](#)).

A summary of FPIC was provided to the Kadaltilla at its meeting held on 27 March 2025 ([Link 3](#)).

Recommendation

THAT THE KADALTILLA / ADELAIDE PARK LANDS AUTHORITY ADVISES COUNCIL

That the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority:

1. Receives the report contained in Item 6.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the Board of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on 18 September 2025.
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Implications

Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy: Towards 2036	Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy: Towards 2036 Priority: UNESCO World Heritage Bid Recognised as one of the most complete examples of nineteenth-century colonial planning, achieving UNESCO World Heritage status for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout would bring international recognition and attention to our region, be a source of local, state and national pride, and boost optimism and investment. Strategy 3.21 Progress World Heritage Listing of the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout.
2023-2028 Strategic Plan	Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Strategic Plan Alignment – Cultural Value Objective 1.4 Champion the development of World Heritage listing nomination. Initiative 1.4 Regularly review World Heritage listing submission progress. Measure of Success 1.4 State Government support for World Heritage listing submission by 2026.
City of Adelaide Strategies	Achieving world heritage listing for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout aligns with the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Kadaltilla Strategic Plan 2023-2028, the Heritage Strategy 2021-2036 and the Adelaide Park Lands National Heritage Management Plan.
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	The City of Adelaide has been working closely with the State Government, other local government bid partners, the Federal Government and Kadaltilla 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 First Nations consent through the FPIC process. The City of Adelaide has commenced consultation and is documenting consultation activities and processes as is required for the bid. 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.
Design	The World Heritage Listing supports the principles of good design, including: - Context – Good design is contextual because it responds to the surrounding environment and contributes to the existing quality and future character of a place. - Value – Good design adds value by creating desirable places that promote community and local investment and enhance social and cultural value. The National Heritage Management Plan (NHMP) for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout includes a policy of pursuing World Heritage Listing for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout as a place of outstanding universal value.
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 First Nations culture and history that aligns with colonial settlement. • Greater levels of protection for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout.
City of Adelaide Budget Allocation	The City of Adelaide's 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 which includes a small consultancy budget and recruitment of a World Heritage Project Officer dedicated to managing the Tentative List process.
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	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. This funding is being retained by the Consortium (Adelaide Hills Council). In August 2025, the City of Adelaide was successful in securing a grant of \$167,710 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. Once complete, this work will inform the World Heritage Bid (post Tentative List Submission) and strengthen National heritage protections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Discussion

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Tentative List Submission for the World Heritage Bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes (Tentative List Submission).
2. The remaining tasks required prior to submission to the State Government are to:
 - 2.1. Review, amend and approve the portions of the Tentative List Submission relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history by First Nations communities.
 - 2.2. Document the process to engage with First Nations communities applying the Free, Prior and Informed Consent principles and seek support 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.

Project overview background

3. The World Heritage List is a list of cultural and/or natural places considered to have outstanding universal value to humanity.
4. The settlement of Adelaide and the surrounding rural settlement landscapes c1840 was a major turning point in the way colonisation was planned and implemented, as it was for the health, well-being and prosperity of all social classes rather than just the wealthy or political classes.
5. An expert review of South Australia's early settlement landscapes has identified that collectively they are likely to be of Outstanding Universal Value and worthy of World Heritage listing.
6. Areas must clearly demonstrate the value that is being ascribed to them to be included in a World Heritage listing.
7. The areas being investigated include Adelaide, Port Adelaide, Holdfast Bay, the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Cornish mining settlements, German agrarian settlements and early settlements such as Kingscote.
8. World Heritage listing has many benefits, including increased visitation through tourism.
9. To be included on the World Heritage List, a place (or series of connected places) must be assessed through the World Heritage process that includes 3 distinct stages:
 - 9.1. Tentative List Submission— a submission is prepared that includes a description of the place and outlines the potential Outstanding Universal Values. This document is submitted to the State and Federal Governments for inclusion on Australia's Tentative World Heritage List.
 - 9.2. Preliminary Assessment – a more detailed submission is prepared to be assessed by UNESCO's independent heritage advisors (International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS) to determine if there is sufficient Outstanding Universal Value for a Nation to continue pursuing World Heritage listing.
 - 9.3. Nomination Dossier – a finalised submission made to the World Heritage Centre for decision by the World Heritage Committee, and includes full details of Outstanding Universal Values, how the places will be protected and promoted, and other matters required by the World Heritage Committee.
10. Council is currently preparing a Tentative List Submission.
11. To be included on Australia's Tentative List, a Tentative List Submission must have the support of the State and Federal Governments.
12. For the Tentative List Submission to be accepted by State and Federal Governments, as well as the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, there must be evidence of Consent from the Traditional Landowner groups achieved through Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes.
13. A summary of FPIC was provided to the Kadaltilla at its meeting held on 27 March 2025 ([Link 3](#)).
14. The project is an opportunity to progress reconciliation through truth-telling about this period in history.
15. The Deputy Premier, Dr Susan Close wrote to Council in 2023, advising of her support for the preparation of a Tentative List Submission.
16. Administration has been progressing the preparation of the Tentative List Submission. Additional background to these tasks was provided to Kadaltilla on 22 May 2025 ([Link 1](#)) and 28 August 2025 ([Link 2](#)).

First Nations Engagement

17. Administration has engaged SA Native Title Services (SANTS) to facilitate engagement with First Nations communities.

18. This engagement is also being informed by the City of Adelaide's work with Yamagigu Consulting (yamagigu) on an Aboriginal Engagement Framework for the City of Adelaide's processes.
19. 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. An update was provided to Kadaltilla on 28 August 2025 ([Link 2](#)).
20. SANTS have since provided formal feedback to Administration which is currently being reviewed for integration into future project planning, including the progressing of larger workshops for the broader communities focussing on truth-telling and reconciliation.
21. Administration is working with SANTS to action the feedback from the information session with First Nations communities and to plan further engagements. These have been tentatively scheduled for late 2025 with final arrangements to be confirmed.
22. As previously advised, the timeframe for consent, if it is to be provided, may result in the Tentative List Submission being made in 2027 rather than 2026 to provide a longer timeframe for relationship building.
23. Based on a review of the broad and wide-reaching engagement planned, the Administration, in collaboration with SANTS, is investigating opportunities to partner with additional consultants to undertake this work.

Project Management and Governance

24. Administration has appointed a World Heritage Project Officer to assist with promotion, engagement and project management of the World Heritage Bid Tentative List Submission in 2025/26.
25. On 8 August 2025, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Deputy Premier Susan Close advising of our continuing efforts to seek World Heritage status for the Adelaide Park Lands and its Rural Settlement Landscapes, including our engagement with Aboriginal communities. The letter seeks confirmation of the State Government's ongoing support for the Bid. A response has not been received at the time of the Agenda publication.
26. Correspondence has been prepared for local governments that are party to the World Heritage bid project and to inform local government areas where the City of Adelaide, with the support of SANTS, is working with First Nations communities.
27. In August 2025, the City of Adelaide was successful in securing a grant of \$167,710 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. Once complete, this work will inform the World Heritage Bid (post Tentative List Submission) and strengthen National heritage protections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Next Steps

28. Next steps for the project are summarised as follows:
 - 28.1. Continued engagement with First Nations communities.
 - 28.2. Following response from the State Government, write to the Federal Government to confirm support for the World Heritage bid and Tentative List Submission contingent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consent.
 - 28.3. Ongoing 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. This work is approximately 60% complete.

Data and Supporting Information

Link 1 – [Agenda – Kadaltilla/Adelaide Park lands Authority Meeting – 22 May 2025](#)

Link 2 – [Agenda – Kadaltilla/Adelaide Park Lands Authority Meeting – 28 August 2025](#) (adjourned from 17 July 2025)

Link 3 – [Agenda – Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority Meeting – Thursday, 27 March 2025](#)

Attachments

Nil