

Park Lands Licence Request – Safer Place to Gather

Wednesday, 3 December 2025
Reconciliation Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Program Contact:
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Public

Approving Officer:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the State Government's Safer Place to Gather initiative operating from Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) in the western Adelaide Park Lands.

The Safer Place to Gather has been operating from Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) since 1 August 2023. The previous licence expired on 31 August 2025.

On 5 August 2025, the City Community Services and Culture (CCSC) Committee considered a request from the Minister for Human Services for an additional licence from 1 September 2025 to 30 June 2026 ([Link 1](#)).

The CCSC Committee resolved to recommend to Council that an additional licence be provided for the Safer Place to Gather in the Adelaide Park Lands until 30 June 2026, alongside additional measures to ensure community awareness and review of longer-term solutions. Council approved the request on 12 August 2025 ([Link 2](#)).

On 4 November 2025, the CCSC Committee received an external presentation from the Department of Human Services (DHS) on the Safer Place to Gather initiative in line with the Council's decision on 12 August 2025. The presentation ([Link 3](#)), delivered by Sandy Pitcher, Chief Executive of the DHS provided an overview of the initiative's objectives, outcomes, and continued contribution to community wellbeing and safety.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE

1. Notes that the Council has provided an additional licence for the operation of the Safer Place to Gather in Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) from 1 September 2025 to 30 June 2026.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Places</p> <p>Create safe, inclusive and healthy places for our community</p>
Policy	Community land within the Adelaide Park Lands may be subject to licences. Council 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 Wirrarninthi/Edwards Park (Park 23) as a gathering space for visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities.
Consultation	Consultation with the City of Adelaide is ongoing through the inter-agency Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce led by the Department of Human Services (DHS).
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 the 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 Safer Place to Gather 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 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 Safer Place to Gather initiative 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

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the State Government's Safer Place to Gather initiative operating from Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) in the western Adelaide Park Lands.

Background

2. The Safer Place to Gather initiative is a temporary hub for visitors from remote and regional Aboriginal communities, led by the Department of Human Services (DHS).
3. The Minister for Human Services first sought and was granted a licence for the site from 1 August 2023 until the end of February 2024 by Council on 1 August 2023.
4. The Minister subsequently sought two further licences from 1 March 2024 until 1 March 2025, and the most previous licence was approved until 31 August 2025.
5. When the request for the current licence was made, the Minister indicated that the intention was to transition from Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) and put alternate longer-term measures in place to support regional and remote Aboriginal visitors.
6. The DHS subsequently requested a new licence from 1 September 2025 to 30 June 2026 to continue the use of Wirrarninthi / Edwards Park (Park 23) for the purpose of the Safer Place to Gather for visitors from remote communities.

Park Lands Licence Request

7. The City Community Services and Culture (CCSC) Committee met on 5 August 2025 ([Link 1](#)) and considered the licence request which included an external presentation on the Park Lands Licence Request from the DHS.
8. Council considered the matter on 12 August 2025 ([Link 2](#)) and expressed reservations about another extension to the operation of the Safer Place to Gather, but subsequently resolved to approve the request as follows:
 - 8.1. *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.*
 - 8.2. *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.*
 - 8.2.1. *Requests that the Department of Human Services attend the November 2025 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.*
 - 8.2.2. *Requests the Lord Mayor write to the Minister for Human Services expressing Council's concern with the lack of permanent solutions and funding to develop such a solution.*
 - 8.3. *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.*
 - 8.4. *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.*
9. Council maintains a view that there is a need for the State Government and partners to work towards a longer-term accommodation solution for remote and regional visitors and requested that:
 - 9.1. The DHS attend the November 2025 meeting of the CCSC Committee to provide information on the alternate longer-term measures being implemented.
 - 9.2. The Lord Mayor write to the Minister for Human Services expressing Council's concern with the lack of permanent solutions and funding to develop such a solution.
10. On 4 November 2025, the CCSC Committee received an external presentation from DHS on the Safer Place to Gather initiative.

- 10.1. The presentation ([Link 3](#)), delivered by Sandy Pitcher, Chief Executive of the DHS, provided an overview of the initiative's objectives, outcomes, and continued contribution to community wellbeing and safety.
- 10.2. DHS also indicated that alternate longer-term measures are being explored and may be implemented in the future.

Next Steps

11. Administration will continue to provide regular updates to the Reconciliation Committee as the matter progresses.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [City Community Services and Culture Committee - Tuesday, 5 August 2025](#)

Link 2 – [Minutes – Council - 12 August 2025](#)

Link 3 – [External presentation from DHS on the Safer Place to Gather initiative, 4 November 2025](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -