



History Council of South Australia (HCSA)  
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OPEN LETTER TO THE PREMIER:  
OBJECTION TO PROPOSED REZONING OF ADELAIDE CITY PARK LANDS

26 October 2021

The Honourable Steven Marshall MP  
Premier of South Australia  
Parliament House  
North Terrace  
Adelaide, SA, 5000

Dear Premier,

The History Council of South Australia (HCSA) is an independent, non-government body whose membership is comprised of individual members, cultural, academic and government institutions, local libraries, museums and historical societies. On behalf of our members, the HCSA opposes the South Australian Government's proposal to change the zoning of north/west sections of the City of Adelaide Park Lands for uses other than open space and community recreational facilities.

**HISTORY AND HERITAGE:** The Adelaide Park Lands are an integral component of our state's heritage. In his 1837 survey, Colonel William Light included 2,300 acres (930 hectares) of land surrounding the city to be reserved from sale and dedicated as parklands for the use and recreation of the citizens. The exception was 9 blocks of land Light specified for use for government buildings and facilities (including government house, a botanic garden, a hospital and a cemetery).

Light's visionary plan is regarded throughout Australia and the world as a masterwork of urban design. It ensured Adelaide had the world's first public park (10 years ahead of the next public park in Merseyside, England). Light's model is recognised by town planners and historians as a major influence on the Garden City planning movement, one of the most important western urban planning initiatives in history.

The Adelaide Park Lands received National Heritage Listing in 2008, and in December 2018, the State Heritage Council recommended them to the Minister for Planning for State Heritage Listing (although progress has been disappointingly slow). Unfortunately, throughout the history of the city, there has been an ongoing battle to protect the Park Lands from built development.

**THE PROPOSED REZONING:** In 2021, 760 hectares of Parklands – about 80% – are under the custodianship of the City of Adelaide Council and are mostly open space, with the South

Australia Government the custodian of the remaining 20% (comprising government buildings and facilities and the (mostly open space) Adelaide Botanic Gardens).

The highly controversial Planning and Design Code, introduced this year (2021), designates the 80% as the Adelaide Park Lands Zone. The remaining 20% of the Parklands is divided into different Zones and Subzones with variously named Precincts designated by the Government.

The HCSA objects to the Government's proposal to acquire the below listed land for Government purposes, and to rezone it for uses other than open space and community recreational facilities.

The Park Lands proposed for acquisition for Government purposes (stated in Attachment A of the consultation paper) include:

- rezoning land at Port Road, North Terrace, War Memorial Drive and Gaol Road from Adelaide Park Lands Zone to City Riverbank Zone and apply the Health Subzone. The intention being to extend the designated medical precinct to Parklands on which the old gaol, police barracks and historical olive grove sit to service the proposed Women's and Children's Hospital. The Government proposes converting the State heritage listed Old Adelaide Gaol and Police Barracks into biomedical and ancillary health services.
- Rezoning land at Montefiore Road, North Terrace and Festival Drive from Adelaide Park Lands Zone to City Riverbank Zone and apply the Entertainment Subzone. The intention being to extend the designated entertainment precinct to the west of the Morphett Street bridge and claim this section of the Parklands for a sports arena.
- Rezoning land around Frome Road from Adelaide Park Lands Zone to City Riverbank Zone and apply the Innovation Subzone. The intention being to extend the designated innovation precinct by rezoning a small portion of the Parkland adjacent to the Botanic High School.
- To apply the new Riverbank Subzone to land around War Memorial Drive, Victoria Drive, King William Road, Montefiore Road and Park Terrace which is currently in the Adelaide Park Lands Zone, the intention being to provide opportunities for a riverbank or waterfront precinct, and to sublet sub-let the riverbank to commercial activities, such as retail and hospitality, and allow for low-rise buildings (up to 2 stories) on the riverbank to house these commercial activities.

The HCSA strongly objects to each of these proposals that will decrease the area of the green belt encompassing the city.

We argue that, as a hallmark of the city's original design, which has maintained elements of its historical layout for more than 170 years, the Adelaide Park Lands are of great historical and heritage significance. They continue to be a unique and highly valued aspect of our wonderful city and are important to the identity of South Australia. We also suggest that, as there is little Kauria land in the Adelaide area that has not been built over or bitumenised, it is disrespectful to build over the few remaining natural areas. In addition, global warming is increasingly recognised as an eminent threat to city dwellers' lifestyles; planners recognise

that Green areas decrease the temperature of cities and assist in the retention of water and should be protected and expanded.

The HCSA draws attention to the health, environmental and economic benefits that green, treed and community accessible spaces provide. They also form a major aspect of Adelaide's unique character which appeals not only to residents but to visitors from interstate and overseas.

Accordingly, the HCSA asks the Government to reconsider this proposed rezoning of the Parklands.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dooley', written in a cursive style.

Dr Gillian Dooley  
President,  
History Council of South Australia