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Uniting Communities submission to Adelaide City Council regarding Parklands Management Strategy

Summary

Uniting Communities expresses its appreciation to the council for the opportunity to comment on the Parklands Management Strategy. Uniting Communities proposes that the Parklands Management strategy still needs careful consideration around:

1. Utilising the parklands to showcase Kaurana history and culture
2. Enabling informal gathering by people of different ages and cultures

Context for the Parklands

Uniting Communities recognises that as a significant modern city, Adelaide and its relationships with the Parklands, will continue to change from the original vision and application when the city was designed using Colonel William Light's designs.

We recognise that some critical changes in contemporary society are creating additional expectations on the role and use of the Parklands, however many of the original shared use functions remain for the community of South and its visitors.

We recognise the following contextual elements which are pertinent to the development of a Parklands management strategy:

1. The strong desire for governments - Federal, State and Local - to increase the residential density in the CBD, for example to better utilise infrastructure and top build on Adelaide's reputation as one of the most liveable cities of the world. (Adelaide ranked 5th in 2015 in the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) liveability survey of 140 cities.) Uniting Communities supports the objective of increased residential density and recognises that this means that the Parklands become increasingly important for apartment dwelling CBD households who

need open space for recreation, informal gathering and community gardens/ orchards. The Parklands are critical for this new group of residents who will move to the city. It will be their play space, their backyard and their meeting place

2. The Parklands also need to be a part of telling the story of our State, our city and most importantly, our communities. We contend that the most important community story to be told in the Parklands is that of the history and culture of the Kurna people, one of the older continuing cultures on earth.

We recognise that these and other competing priorities make management of the Parklands a critical issue, and also present the risk of trying to make the Parklands meet too many objectives. We propose that the highlighting the lifestyle and meeting place functions of the Parklands, as well as environmental functions, is a priority over and above commercial use of the Parklands for which there is growing pressure.

Social Inclusiveness

For Uniting Communities the priority driving objective for the Parklands needs to be one of promoting social inclusion, and the priorities that contribute to this should be afforded highest focus.

In the context of promoting social interaction, we also believe that the priority which is least developed in the consultation document is Parklands priority number 5 which is listed as 'Recognising and incorporating Aboriginal heritage management principles and protocols'.

We strongly believe that meeting places for Aboriginal people is an important part of the Parklands now and into the future. The Parklands should be a place that is able to promote the culture of traditional owners of the area in which the Adelaide Parklands are located, the Kurna people.

Interpretive and cultural elements to highlight Aboriginal culture is essential for the development of the Adelaide Parklands, and indeed, for promoting Adelaide's uniqueness as an international city.

We note that the culture of the Kurna people is amongst the older continuing cultures on planet Earth and is consequently a unique attribute that is worthy of active promotion for the city of Adelaide.

Don't move the problem, rather seek a resolution

As a significant community service provider, we make the following comments regarding more specific aspects of the proposed plan with consideration to the interests of particular groups of people with whom we work.

Adelaide City Council introduction of "Dry Zone" Parklands has had an impact on Aboriginal people who have congregated in the city parklands as a place of gathering. At times Aboriginal people found in the parklands are rural and remote Aboriginal people, who have had to travel from APY lands or rural areas for a number of reasons like medical, support family, funerals - but have found themselves in either a transitional homeless situation or overcrowding at housing has led to gatherings in city parklands.

Intoxicated groups were gathering at city parklands, which prompted Adelaide City Council to implement the "Dry Zone" trial. As so often happens when "Dry Zones," are enforced by the police – the issues have been displaced and the cause or needs of homeless groups gathering has not truly been explored. In the past few months there has been an increase of Aboriginal groups gathering in the Kilburn/Blair Athol/ Prospect parks drinking daily and intoxicated. This has had an effect on residents in northern suburbs with unwanted visitors harassing residents for a bed at night time. Clients of Kurlana Tampawardli who hold a tenancy in the Kilburn area have reported unwanted visitors knocking at their doors late at night, intoxicated demanding a bed. Clients have expressed anxiety about repercussions if they say no to other Aboriginal people and if they call the police for assistance. As a result there have been increased neighbourhood complaints and residents have been evicted at short notice due to large intoxicated groups being present at their homes. Now local councils are talking about implementing Dry Zones, to "fix the issues" in their council areas. Moving people on doesn't actually fix the issue.

We offer the following suggestions;

- Seek assistance of social services in Adelaide CBD to perform assessments and refer homeless Aboriginal people to services.
- Rather than displacing clients – do outreach street work with groups in Parks (ie community BBQ). Find out client needs, links to services and resources.



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- Speak to rural and APY lands community leaders to let communities know the realism of house shortages in Adelaide.
- Seek a discussion and advice from the Park Lands Operations Group re these matters.
- Seek a deeper discussion about these issues with the Adelaide City Council RAP committee.

Uniting Communities

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter McDonald', is written over a faint, illegible background of text.

Peter McDonald

Exec Manager Advocacy and Community Development