

SUMMER 2014

gazette

ADELAIDE PARK LANDS GAZETTE | PUBLICATION OF THE ADELAIDE PARK LANDS PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.



Courtesy of Tony Kanellos Botanic Gardens



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EDITORIAL

The last issue featured an article on the botanic aspects of the Park Lands. This issue features an article by Peter Nicholls that suggests 'the Park Lands are for people'. Another article in this issue challenges us to look ahead to 2036 for a rather controversial view of what the Park Lands could be like. A very comprehensive website developed by Chris Peisch accompanies this article.

APPA gave a \$1,000 donation to the Adelaide City at the time the Park Lands Authority was established to encourage the creation an independent source of income for projects 'to protect and enhance the Park Lands' (Section 4 (f) Adelaide Parks Land Act 2005) from the corporate and community. Unfortunately, the Adelaide Park Lands Authority did not initiate any action to involve the public in financial support of the Park Lands. If the funds are just

sitting there, maybe some questions need to be asked about how the money could now be used. Over the years, the interest would have at least bought a few postage stamps.

The President has mentioned the great park lands support given over the years by David Plumridge as an Adelaide City Councillor and on occasions, Deputy Mayor. He was a member of the APPA Committee at a time when we were fighting against the construction of the Victoria Park Grandstand and his wise counsel was much appreciated over the years. His regular 'Notes from Councillor Plumridge's Desk' have been a source of what is really happening in Council and particularly the Park Lands Authority. An extract from his July notes on 'The Value of Trees to the Community' appears in the issue.

During 2015 we will be celebrating the centenary celebrations of the landing of ANZAC forces in Gallipoli, so it seems appropriate that the first 2015 issue will feature how the Park Lands have memorialised major military events in our history as a nation. Walter Dollman will contribute a feature article on "War Memorials in the Adelaide Park Lands". Some of our members might be interested in contributing to this special edition. Please contact me.

Jim Daly

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Adelaide City Council elections are over and a new Lord Mayor takes over Stephen Yarwood's role. I express our thanks for a friendly and helpful approach taken by Stephen towards APPA.

Sadly David Plumridge was not successful as a continuing Councillor. Analysis may highlight some possible reasons for his defeat but nothing will eclipse the admiration and thanks from APPA to David for his strong support for the Park Lands. Personally and with many others I have had great respect for his diligence and courage in fulfilling his whole Council responsibilities. We know Adelaide will continue to benefit from his wisdom and interest.

APPA sent a position paper on the future of the "old" RAH site to all Members of Parliament, authored by Vice President, Damien. We received a

few responses but the majority were from Ministers passing the buck to the Deputy Premier and Planning Minister the Hon John Rau! He was heading for a blast from me due to what I saw as a tardy or nil response to my follow-up email requesting a meeting. But V.P Damien has just received a sort of response with a hint of a contact in the future. So temporarily I will hold my fire. No shirt fronts involved!

We have triggered a discussion on pathway signage for bicycle and pedestrian joint use. Bicycle SA and the ACC have both indicated interest in ensuring adequate signage for informed and thoughtful use by both parties, both of course is warmly welcomed. Hopefully, the fruit of this initiative will be seen soon.

Please visit our Facebook site and encourage others to do the same.

Genius behind this is our Secretary Shane Sody, who persuaded the Committee to put \$23 towards a "sponsored" content, which can be seen on the site. It is good. The magic of this resulted in 3098 hits. The investment should be repeated.

My thanks are due to the Committee. In particular I appreciate the efforts of Shane as Secretary, Nigel as Treasurer and Membership Officer, V.P Damien for top class research resulting in APPA position papers, and Hero for heading the group providing the pithy responses debunking myths put out about the Park Lands. The rest of the Committee know they are loved as well. And they join me in wishing you all a blessed Christmas and an enriching New Year.

Ian Gilfillan
President

VISION FOR THE PARKLANDS 2036

Chris Peitsch

My vision for the Parklands has its origins in my first overseas trip to Europe. On this holiday I experienced so many wonderful cities from a myriad of cultures and it led me to reflect on my own home. I found Adelaide compared very well to the places I visited on that trip and subsequent trips through Europe and Asia. I believe any visitor to my city is able to have as enjoyable and exciting experiences as they discover the charms of Adelaide as I had visiting other boutique cities like Seville or Oslo; which in many regards were just as memorable as the big names of London or Rome. But at the same time there is that undeniable feeling that we could be greater, that underlying sentiment that we have got the potential but have not quite reached the turning point that takes our city to the next level.

When thinking about what Adelaide might do to change this, I considered what is Adelaide's identity, because surely enhancing our true self is the key to becoming the cool and confident city we deserve to be. Amsterdam has its canals, Kyoto its temples, Sydney its harbour and Adelaide its Parklands. The Parklands concept is what makes our city unique in the world yet I doubt if it ranks as the number one tourist attraction for our visitors. Even a large number of locals would not visit any part of the Parklands annually, let alone monthly or weekly. So there's a huge opportunity to renew our Parklands in such a way that it brings more people to the city's backyard; for the betterment of our town's greatest asset and with the combined benefit of potentially creating a world icon and permanently shifting the psyche of the city.

This got me asking, 'but how do we rejuvenate the Parklands and what are suitable developments for the city's green belt that will attract a wider repeat audience?' To answer these questions I looked at what is already great about our parks and what is great about parks I have seen around the world and the



Could this be a feature in the Park Lands by 2036?

Acknowledgement: <http://dinaclabaugh.files.wordpress.com>

world wide web. The Parklands' traditional metropolitan parks, sports fields and public institutions already gather thousands every week and are the current success stories. Then there are the numerous community gardens in their infancy and looking to grow, sometimes wildly. Corners of natural settings are idealistically planted, but do not capitalise on features such as outdoor adventure facilities. The many playgrounds serve their purpose but do not go beyond the realm of an ordinary playground. The southern Parklands' international Himeji Japanese Gardens are brilliantly authentic although lack the size to cope with more than a few dozen people at one time. Public art in the Parklands is welcomed but often lacks contextual meaning with its surrounds and suffers without a critical mass effect.

So there are some great fundamental building block concepts there already, in need of some polishing perhaps, but where the Parklands really fall down, I believe, is that we do not have a bold enough vision for them as a whole. An ambitious master plan that has each Park complementing the others with the whole being greater than the sum of its

parts. Something that if realised would be the envy of cities around the globe.

So I decided to create such a vision based on the conceptual principles that already exists in the Parklands, with an injection of imagination influenced by my understanding of Adelaide, my backpacking travels and my surfing the net. I decided to collate these ideas in the most efficient way I could think and so the 'Adelaide Parklands 2036' website was born. The 2036 of course references our city's bicentennial and our gift to us being the re-imagined Parklands.

Where to from here? I do not really know. I see my set of ideas as not the definitive vision of what the Parklands should become but rather an example of what they could be. I hope they will spark public debate and start the conversation of how can we finally harness the full potential of the Parklands for the benefit of our great city and its entire people. I would like for everyone to question my ideas on suitability among their social networks and if they come to different conclusions suggest alternatives of their own on what does belong in our Parklands. I feel if we do not come up with a holistic plan giving every Park purpose and a diverse community following, we run the continual risk of improper private interests stripping parts of Parklands away forever.

I hope you enjoy spending a day in my currently imaginary Parklands. I wonder what fun you will get up to?

<https://sites.google.com/site/adelaideparklands2036/>

Editor's note: I found the website the layout is easy to navigate. It is a worthwhile experience typing in the website above into your web browser and learning how Chris sees our Park Lands in 2036.

ADELAIDE'S PARK LANDS- A PEOPLE GARDENER PERSPECTIVE

By Peter Nicholls, Australia's People Gardener – Lifestyle Mentor, "Growing Better People"

My definition of parks and recreation planning: Creating space that provides for a diversity of active and passive pursuits in such a way that all participants go home at the end of the day fully satisfied with the quality of their desired experience.

We are part of nature, not above it.

There I was in the midst of a beautiful Park Lands setting . . . quiet, birds busily making a life for themselves and perhaps for their young, trees rustling gently in the breeze and a sense of peace that only nature can create. Yet the more I listened the more I heard, the more significant became the insignificant and the more I saw what I don't normally see. I felt like I was at home . . . and in some strange way I was.

We humans are an integral part of nature. We are therefore an integral part of the natural ecosystem and of the Adelaide Park Land's ecosystem.

Consequently it isn't surprising that we have a natural love of getting back to nature in one form or another, be it at the beach, in a park, in the country, around or on natural water. It's where we come to life, regenerate our energy, sustain our mental health and refresh our enthusiasm for living. When you lose yourself in nature you find yourself.

It means that people have a more than casual responsibility towards ensuring:

- the health and wellbeing of the Park Lands (and nature as a whole when it comes to that), and
- the Park Lands play their natural and important role in strengthening the health and wellbeing of the people of Adelaide.

The Role of the Park Lands in Adelaide's Lifestyle

The fact that the Park Lands circle the city means they cannot be ignored. We must pass through them every time we enter or leave the CBD. Depending on your frame of mind as you pass through them you can regard them with a variety of emotions - soothing, annoying, boring, envy of those using them, to

name just a few. *Few would rather the Park Lands were not there.*

Save Our Sanity

The role of nature doesn't change – but people do. The non-judgmental Park Lands seem to “keep their head while all around are losing theirs” (with apologies to Kipling). As people race through the Park Lands in their haste to keep pace with the stresses of work and daily living, they can perceive the Park Lands as:

- An opposite – not part of the typical 21st century lifestyle in which we have no time to waste
 - A supporter – providing visual and mental refreshment, an energizing force, opportunities to relax, family play, dog walking
 - Part of the busy life – the venue for active sport, supercar racing, AFL, etc.
- In an age of sophisticated technology in which we spend so much of our time indoors, seated and in front of computer screens, the Park Lands are an ever-present reminder of the health and wellbeing benefits of getting outdoors and back into nature. The Park Lands provide an excellent setting in which to practice mindfulness – awareness of surrounding sights, sounds, smells, experiences that bring a sense of presence into our frenetic lifestyle.

A Place to Call Home

Imagine you were able to enjoy the positives of home and family every day and the strength it would give your ability to cope with the stresses of daily life. When you travel through the Park Lands you are prompted – consciously or otherwise – to remember you are part of the ecosystem, the family that is nature, with the constancy that “mother nature” is always there, ready to welcome you without judgement, even when she knows you have not always been loyal to her.

People Purpose Parks

Typically the traditional suburban garden has a front yard for viewing and a backyard for using. The front garden is normally a carefully manicured space of flowerbeds and lawns. The back garden

is more your play area – patio, barbecue, seating, shade umbrella and play area, with a mix of lawn and hard-standing surfaces.

So it is with the Adelaide Park Lands. We enjoy :

- areas to visually enjoy, relax in and be mindful of our surroundings, and
- areas in which to participate in our favourite outdoor activities.

Together they form the total package of what I call people-purpose parks.

Equestrian events in the Park Lands Credit: “John Lechner Photography”.

Planning for the Future

The Adelaide Park Lands are not just for the people of today. Open space is, by its very nature, a resource intended for all future generations. Built structures that facilitate and support flexible uses are important. However structures that restrict flexible use of the Park Lands, or are primarily for commercial use, or otherwise inhibit public use for recreation or leisure enjoyment, require close consideration as to their long-term impact on opportunities for flexible use now and for future generations.

Park Lands Usage

My estimations suggest there would presently be over 60 types of public active and passive organised and casual uses of the Adelaide Park Lands (including the Torrens River riparian area – more when you include the many activities in the Adelaide Aquatic Centre). Council figures indicate the number of users as being in the millions per year. These reflect interests of people of all ages and backgrounds and occur on any day of the week. I see this diversity as a positive in sustaining the health of the ecosystem as defined in the footnote to this paper.

Farmers speak of the “carrying capacity” of their land when assessing the optimum number of sheep or cattle they can run and still sustain the health of the land. Ideally there is an optimum carrying capacity for the Adelaide Park Lands that maximises the quality and diversity of parkland uses without degrading its natural environment.

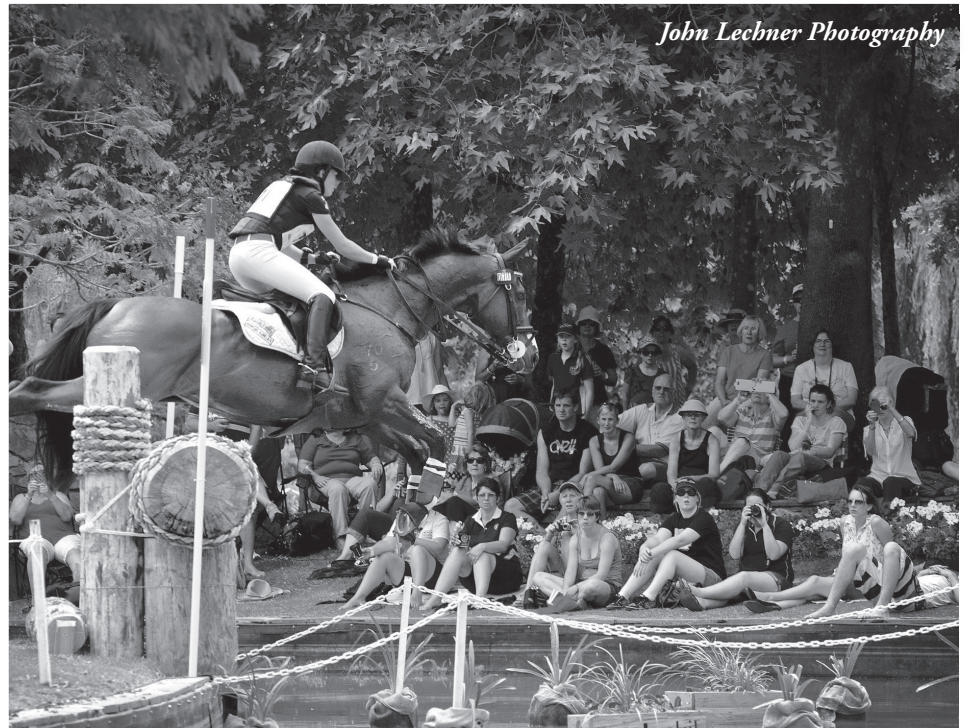
Conclusion

I believe it is in the short-term and long-term health and best interests of the Adelaide Park Lands to regard it as an ecosystem (as defined in the footnote to this article) that comprises living organisms including people, with all of these components interacting as a system. It also means that any system-changing impacts – on the natural environment or human use – need to be considered in terms of the overall ecosystem, not just in relation to the specific change/s being imposed.

¹An ecosystem is a community of living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in conjunction with the nonliving components of their environment, interacting as a system. The principles of ecosystem management suggest that rather than managing individual species, natural resources should be managed at the level of the ecosystem itself.

Editor's note!

Peter has been a recreation planner with both the state and local governments. He is now a lifestyle



John Lechner Photography

mentor (Australia's People Gardener) helping people grow, through mental health, work life harmony and retirement planning. His passion is understanding what makes people tick in their leisure. He has been a Professional Recreation

and Parks Planner for over 30 years, and life member and past SA and National President of Parks and Leisure Australia, the peak national professional association for recreation and parks managers.

PLANNING REPORT

Riverside Project Proposals

The state government has rezoned the land in the vicinity of the Festival Centre / Casino / Houses of Parliament for Commercial uses. APPA made a detailed submission opposing this, including appearing before the DPAC, *inter alia* arguing the *overwhelming character of the River Torrens should be as unencumbered open space. It is fundamentally inappropriate to convert the Festival Plaza into just another tawdry commercial / office development site with a twenty story tower and 1400 car park.*

However, the nature of what exactly is proposed is not clear at all. The possibility of a 1400 space car-park (which is larger than the capacity of the Rundle Street U-Park) seem 'certain'; but as to where and how high various other possibilities – a 20 level office tower, a super luxury hotel a similar height to the Intercontinental, a food and beverage- is yet to be revealed.

'Old' RAH Site

Members may recall, at the instigation of moving the RAH to a new location on the Park Lands in 2009, the then **Health Minister John Hill** on 25 March 2009 (Hansard

record), told Parliament: *It is definitely the government's intention that large parcels of that land be returned to the Parklands, and particularly to the Botanic Gardens, from which it was taken. As I said, I have had informal discussions with the Director of the Botanic Gardens about that suggestion. All of these matters are being considered in the master planning process. Eventually we will have a document which will be put out for public discussion.*

So far there has been no such master plan, and all sorts of vested interests are coming out of the woodwork looking for a free piece of the RAH site, including the state government promising at the last election to use it as a high school. APPA has written to all state parliamentarians pointing out the nature of Minister Hill's *definite intention* and reminding them that the relocation of the hospital presents a unique and unprecedented opportunity to reinstate a very significant component of the Adelaide Park Lands. APPA is currently undertaking further discussions with the responsible minister, Hon. John Rau, Minister for Planning.

Damien Mugavin
Vice President

APLA UPDATE FROM FLORENCE, TUSCANY

As I enjoy the delights of Florence and Tuscany I am often reminded of home. Adelaide, its park lands and its surrounding countryside have a lot in common with this part of the world, and a lot in common with many other parts of the world, I have discovered.

The ICOMOS General Assembly held in Florence, in November, focused on the landscape as human habitat. ICOMOS is the advisory body of the World Heritage Committee for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO. If the Adelaide Park Lands were to nominate for World Heritage listing it is likely the nomination would come under the category of cultural landscape.

The concept of landscape incorporates the notion of a view and our perception of it. More recently, our understanding of landscape has moved on from natural and rural contexts. Landscape can now mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range or rural idyll, while the concept of the ‘cultural landscape’ views the landscape as the product of interaction between the natural environment and human activity. In other words we are the landscape.

Similarly, the concept of heritage has evolved over time, from the idea of monuments and buildings “frozen” in a particular time or era, to that of an evolving urban and rural environment. Instead of focusing on isolated heritage sites we now consider cities and the surrounding countryside in their entirety. Environment and culture form a unique

and whole entity in which the cultural landscape represents the expression of the ever-evolving relationship between people and their habitat.

In this context the preservation of the heritage of the our park lands means managing change on the basis of the agreed values that we want to maintain, which is what APLA is currently attempting to do with its management strategy review.

10 “issues” facing the park lands (identified by various sources including council and APLA) might be of interest to readers of the gazette:

- “Hard to access”
- “Not safe”
- “Lacking activities and facilities”
- “Being unattractive and uninviting (not used or cared for)”
- Extent, nature and scale of built form including level of commercial activity
- Level of community access, ownership/ custodianship including access of clubs based in inner-rim Council to sport facilities
- Car parking – on and adjacent Park Lands
- Governance
- Funding
- Management of the National Heritage Values

On the matter of governance, readers of the gazette will be relieved to hear that the Adelaide Park Lands Authority Board has survived the state government’s recent massive purge of boards and committees (just). We have been placed in the category of “subject to further

investigation” for the time being.

Finally our attempts to reduce the prescribed works period for the Clipsal Car race have not been successful. This year, the period has been identified as being 21 November 2014 to 11 May 2015 – basically the same as the last three years, (which saw the time period increase by four weeks on previous years). That said, APLA and Adelaide City Council annual feedback to the SA Motor Sports Board and CEO does keep up the pressure, encouraging a sense of accountability.

Interestingly, the SAMSB did NOT survive the government purge, so watch that space.

Victoria Park – Clipsal 500

Council resolved to advise the South Australian Motor Sports Board of its requests following consultation on the operation of the Declared Area for the 2015 event in the East Park Lands. There were 16 specific items of concern to the Council speaking on behalf of the community including • issues of access for other Park users, • protection of native flora and fauna, • size and location of works compounds and plant sales activities, • containment of parking on the southern Park lands (sports playing fields), • the use of tree protection zones where required and • deletion of Gate 2 which is the source of much anti-social behavior in the adjoining residential streets after each day’s events.

Stephanie Johnston, (from World Heritage Listed Val D’Orcia, Tuscany).

Park Lands Fiction and Facts

FICTION (Misconceptions)	FACTS
APPA is so negative! You’re opposed to all uses of the Park Lands!	We’re not! We love to see people using the Parklands. “Free and unrestricted access” for everyone is our goal. What we object to is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fencing to keep people out, • commercialisation; and • any buildings that aren’t consistent with the character of the Park Lands as “a place for public recreation, leisure and enjoyment.”
The Park Lands are under-utilised. There’s no-one in them most of the time.	ADELAIDE City Council estimates there are 8.87 million annual ‘visitations’ to the Parklands each year. This figure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.87 million visits for informal recreation (e.g. running, cycling, picnicking) • 1.75 million visits for organised sport; (e.g. soccer, football, cricket, netball, lacrosse, croquet and more) • 1.68 million for “events” (e.g. Symphony Under The Stars, Writers Week and Soundwave Music Festival) • 1.32 million visits to the Botanic Gardens, Botanic Park and West Terrace Cemetery; and • 8,000 visitors for more than 100 weddings; • among other categories of visitations.

UNIVERSITY SPORTSMANSHIP - A KICK IN THE PARK

On February 27th, Lord Mayor Stephen Yarwood, visited our North Adelaide company to congratulate us on winning both the State and National “iAwards” (the most prestigious IT award in Australia) as well as the BusinessSA Export Award. He gave us a presentation on his vision to provide recreational and sporting facilities for all residents and workers of his city and encouraged us to use our bikes more often and play in the parks.

Six weeks later, we gathered a few of our engineers and had a 5-a-side soccer game at Park 12, off Frome Road. Half way through our game, a University of Adelaide Student Association representative visited us, handed us a vague letter that was addressed to “sporting clubs and organised social groups” and threatened us with police attendance if we did not leave the park immediately. There was no one from the University using the park at the time, but we left not wanting to cause trouble. We communicated our objections to the University and proceeded to play again the following week, only to be kicked out again. No one else was using the facilities on that night either. Much communication has been initiated from us on this matter both with the Adelaide City Council as well as the University, which has maintained a stubborn position, totally at odds with the agreements they have with the Council. Crucial questions remained unanswered.

It is interesting to note that our company has a very long and very deep association with the University, regularly employing graduates and also regularly sponsoring student research and prizes. We applaud the Vice Chancellor’s drive to engage with the community and with industry, but on this matter he has been briefed very poorly.

During this unpleasant saga, it has become apparent that the signage around the park is not appropriate, that the University has appointed themselves managers of the public’s access to the



park lands and that the Council – and the Lord Mayor specifically, who has refused to voice an opinion – is not going anywhere near this hot potato.

Secrecy covers the agreement between the Council and the University, and officers of the Student Association, precious about the turf their teams regularly destroy, kick the public out of the park (often in the name of turf rehabilitation!) while the University hierarchy is kept in the dark, believing that they are serving the community. They maintain that their management of the park lands ensures public enjoyment of the facilities.

Our experience has been that we were indeed enjoying using the parks. Until the University showed up!

Stephan Mavrakis, BE(Adel), BSc(Adel), GradDipBusEnt(Adel), APPA Member

Above: University sports pavilion (attributed to “Google street view”.)

Addendum from the President:

The imposition on the Park Lands by the University of Adelaide of this ostentatious sports and entertainment centre reflects how readily organisations benefiting from the privilege of use of the areas of our Park Lands can forget the “privilege” and assume the “rights” and the “authority” of ownership; as if it is theirs to do as they want with it and on it.

If the local community and the public at large had realised what was going on behind their backs, we believe they would have protested loud and clear!

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LORD MAYOR HAESE THE ADELAIDE PARK LANDS

A reminder of the new Lord Mayor Martin Haese's commitment to the Park Land that featured in the last issue of the Gazette.

"The future of the Adelaide Parklands cannot be left to chance. William Light's plan for a 'city within a park' was visionary. Light planned for the parklands surrounding our city to be the lungs of the city. In the future, more than ever, we will need to retain this (approx) 7.6 square kilometre green belt as a place for the men and women of Adelaide and their children to meet and recreate.

"Whilst I support the State Government's plan to gradually grow the population of our beautiful city - those residents will need a place to walk, run, exercise, play, compete and celebrate. The 29 parks that make up the Adelaide Parklands is their backyard. In a time of increasing urban density, we must maintain safe, green, clean, attractive and friendly areas for us all to enjoy. If we are to build a prosperous city with a growing population we will have to offer these residents world class amenities - housing, medical, education, business, cultural, retail and entertainment. But we must also provide them with a healthy, green city in which to live and our Parklands are the very key to this.

"William Light intended for the Parklands to contribute toward the healthy lives of Adelaide's residents and today's leaders and planners are the custodians of that responsibility. The Parklands are more than a nature reserve. They are more than beautiful open spaces. They are there for the people of Adelaide. Like the city itself, the Adelaide Parklands are a multi-purpose environment; enshrined to preserve the



health of the city and its residents. This includes festivals, playgrounds, sports, relaxation, entertainment and no doubt new uses we are still to discover – however, the heart of the Parklands, as the lifeblood of the city, must be preserved.

"When faced with any proposal for the Parklands, if elected as your Lord Mayor, I would ask three key questions:

- 1. Does it protect and preserve the beauty, safety and health of the Parklands?*
- 2. Does it benefit the people of Adelaide?*
- 3. Does it enhance the reputation of the City of Adelaide?*

"If the answer is yes to all three, I would encourage the council to consider it. If the answer to any is no, I would fight it with all my power. In order to protect William Light's vision, any decision regarding the Parklands must be made with due consideration to the long term impacts as the Parklands must be preserved for future generations."

Membership: Membership of the Association is open to all who support the objectives of the Association.

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