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Daryl Tian  
Park Lands Planner  
Park Lands & Sustainability  
City of Adelaide

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Dear Daryl:

**South East City Residents Association's ideas and recommendations for the masterplan for Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi (Park 16)**

Thank you for reaching out to SECRA to participate in the initial engagement stage of the master planning for Victoria Park/ Pakapakanthi

Since its establishment in 2005, SECRA has had a strong interest in ensuring that Victoria Park is accessible for all to enjoy. The Park has an essential function in contributing to the physical and mental health of Adelaideans through its role as a place for personal and family recreation and exercise and team sports and as a place for quiet reflection and connection with nature. The Park has also contributed to the success of major and mid-sized events including the 3-Day International equestrian event, Pedal Prix, amateur and professional cycling races and motor sport events such as the Adelaide 500 race.

Striking a balance between these two types of uses is challenging, the danger being that the voices clamouring for 'activation' through large-scale events and sporting fixtures will drown out those of the many hundreds who each day use the Park Lands in quieter, less obvious ways that enhance community health and wellbeing. Adelaide already has the second lowest area of green space per capita of all Australian capital cities. High-rise residential city buildings and suburban in-fill (e.g. at the old Glenside Hospital site) are facilitating inner city population growth highlighting the need to preserve and, where possible, increase the green space available for exercise and recreation in Victoria Park and elsewhere. On top of this, the climate change-related longer and hotter summers in Adelaide are reducing public access to the Park in summer and contributing to a decline in biodiversity.

SECRA offers the following high-level ideas and recommendations for the Victoria Park/ Pakapakanthi master plan.

**1. Climate proof Victoria Park.**

Reduce heat stress by increasing the tree canopy in both the southern and northern sections of the Park and remove, or shade, as many bitumen surfaces as possible.

Members of SECRA through a community action group, Reimagining Victoria Park, presented data to Council in October 2021 showing that the historical lack of trees and tree canopy on Victoria Park makes it one of the hottest parks in Adelaide rendering it virtually unusable for walkers, runners, and organised sports for many days in summer. Summer overheating will inevitably worsen over the next two to three decades because of climate change. Trees must be

planted now as a matter of urgency to shade walking and cycling paths and provide shade for sports spectators.

SECRA has started the ball rolling by partnering with Council, nearby schools, other residents' groups and the Adelaide Park Lands Association in an application to the Green Adelaide Grassroots scheme to fund the planting of 100 eucalyptus trees in the southern section of the Park. SECRA hopes to crowd-fund the project if the application is not funded by Green Adelaide. We request that this project be included in the masterplan. Furthermore, we ask that the City of Adelaide Council, Kadaltilla and the masterplan consultants explore with the Motor Sports Board how the tree canopy can be increased to shade roads and walking/ cycling paths in the northern section of the Park to improve the comfort and safety of both motor sports spectators and every day recreational users.

## 2. **Emphasise and enhance biodiversity.**

Significant success has already been achieved in restoring biodiversity in the southern section of Victoria Park and its immediate environs e.g. the remnant grey box grassland project, the new wetland, southern woodland and the native grassland restoration project in Parkin Tuthangga (Park 17).

SECRA recommends that in addition to the above-mentioned areas, dense small-area understory plantings be incorporated in the wetland and in the southern section of Park to reintroduce small birds, terrestrial mammals, and reptiles. SECRA believes that mini or "pocket" woodlands would complement the existing biodiversity projects and help to create a world-leading *Urban Biodiversity Renewal Precinct* in the SE corner of the Park Lands. Such a well-defined biodiversity precinct would be an invaluable asset for South Australia for education (schools and community) and ecological research and provide the opportunity for Council to support and develop an educational/interpretation centre.

The Miyawake mini forest method could be deployed for the small-area plantings. It is a new dense planting method that produces very rapid multispecies growth. SECRA has included in its Green Adelaide application a Miyawake Workshop (to be held in March 2023) that has been co-designed with Miyawake specialists from Canberra, Perth and the University of Adelaide (Landscape Architecture Department).

## 3. **Increase access for recreation and appreciation of nature, with a focus on families**

Access to open green space is critically important to the health and well-being of urban populations. Adelaide's increasing population, relative lack of easily accessible open green space and climate change-related overheating in summer requires careful consideration and planning to ensure that more people can use and appreciate the Park. SECRA believes this should be tackled in several complementary ways

- a) Increase the Park's tree canopy to create shade and allow greater use in the summer months.
- b) Enhance the natural environment and create pathways for people to draw close to nature. This is clearly popular as is evident from the very large numbers of people visiting the new wetland since its opening. Attractive dense plantings in the Park of indigenous species that increase bird life would add to this appeal.
- c) Increase access by creating active and public transport options - not by building car parks. Provide bike racks to encourage people living in the city and suburbs to cycle to the Park. For those living in more distant parts of the city increase and publicise public

transport options. One suggestion is to re-route the City Connector Bus at weekends to transport people/ families between the central train station, Victoria Park and other popular Park Land venues

**4. Reduce the negative impacts of the Supercars Adelaide 500 car race and other major events.**

SECRA continues to oppose on public health, environmental and economic grounds the use of Victoria Park for a car race and is concerned that the race is having an enduring negative impact on the amenity of the Park. SECRA's wish is that ultimately the race be relocated to another venue or abandoned. Nonetheless, we accept that the current Government has locked SA into a contract with Supercars over several years and our attention is therefore directed here toward minimising its negative impacts, where possible

To appreciate the health and wellbeing benefits of the open green spaces of Victoria Park, it is important that the public be able to access the park for general recreation for as long as possible during the year. SECRA is of the view that cordoning off a large part of the northern section of the Park for five months each year to construct and dismantle race infrastructure is excessive. A five-month occupation of Park Lands for a four-day event is not a good use of vital open space. SECRA recommends that race organisers be required to erect and dismantle the race infrastructure in 8-9 weeks as is the case for the Supercars street race in Newcastle, NSW, for example. Further, we recommend that all efforts be made to negotiate with the Motor Sport Board to immediately improve the amenity of the northern end of Park by planting canopy trees and ensure that existing trees are not removed or damaged.

We also urge the City of Adelaide and Kadaltilla to oppose any further extension of hard surfaces in the northern section of the Park and to require other major events organisers to cause as little disruption to general public access as possible.

**5. Encourage community participation in maintaining and managing Victoria Park as a People's Park.**

The threats to our way of living from climate change and the progressive decline in biodiversity in cities has resulted in an upsurge of interest by people of all ages in finding solutions and participating in community-based projects to mitigate the effects of these challenges. Several of SECRA's members, for example, have volunteered each week over several years with Bush for Life to restore the remnant grassland in Park 17. And just recently, SECRA was overwhelmed with the hands-on support offered by teachers, parents and students of nearby primary and secondary schools, and by other residents' groups for its Green Adelaide proposal to restore the tree canopy in Victoria Park.

There is also a shared pride and enjoyment in the multifaceted recreational use of the Park by sporting groups and in bringing to life the rich history and heritage of Victoria Park and the Park Lands in general – several of SECRA's members, for instance, conduct regular public tours of Victoria Park and elsewhere in the Parklands on behalf of the Adelaide Parklands Association.

Many, possibly most, of SECRA's 105 members walk and exercise on Victoria Park several times a week.

Thus, we believe more effort should be made by City of Adelaide Council and Kadaltilla to engage city residents in maintaining and managing Victoria Park, be that to aid Council with weeding, planting and keeping the Park free of waste or to advise Council and major event organisers on how to minimise disruption to residents and commuters who regularly use the Park.

We trust these comments and suggestions are helpful in the formation of a masterplan for the future of Victoria Park / Pakapakanthi. Please feel free to contact SECRA at [secra.sa@gmail.com](mailto:secra.sa@gmail.com) or the undersigned ([dougmcvoy@hotmail.com](mailto:dougmcvoy@hotmail.com); M 0434 812 043) if you, or the Council's consultants, require further clarification on any of the points we have raised, or have other questions.

Yours sincerely



R Doug McEvoy AM

On Behalf of the SECRA Committee

Cc:

The Lord Mayor, Ms Sandy Verschoor, Presiding Member, Kadaltilla / Park Lands Authority

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