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Community Consultation
Park Lands Dry Area
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Via email: yoursay@cityofadelaide.com.au

Re: Proposed 24/7 Dry Area in All Adelaide Park Lands

I am writing to express SACOSS' deep concerns about the proposal for a 24/7 Dry Area to be imposed across all the Adelaide Parklands. SACOSS (the South Australian Council of Social Service) is the peak body for the non-government health and community service sector in this state and many of our member groups provide services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Adelaide, including homeless people, Aboriginal people and others who use the park lands.

The proposal for a 24/7 dry area across all of the Adelaide park lands is a significant change from the existing 24/7 dry area in the CBD and North Adelaide, and the timed zone across the whole of the Park Lands that bans drinking or carrying alcohol there from 8pm to 11 a.m. everyday all year.

I also note the current 3 month trial 24/7 ban in Kurangga/Blue Gum Park and Walyu Yarta/Veale Park, Parks 20 and 21 in the South Park Lands. However, according to the Council's information package on the proposed dry area, the Council's resolution to apply for the 24/7 dry area was made before the commencement of this trial and therefore was not based on any outcomes from the trial. Further, the Council's information package contains no assessment of the success, failure or any outcomes of this trial. This does not instil confidence in the trial process or the proposal, and on its face it appears to be a poor public policy process.

The City Council's information package says that the proposal for a 24/7 Dry Area is part of addressing concerns about 'excess alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour in the South Park Lands'.

Of course SACOSS recognises that the Council has a responsibility, in collaboration with other agencies including the State Government and SAPOL, to maintain or improve community safety. The City Council is also correct in identifying recent changes in patterns

of Aboriginal mobility in and around Adelaide: more people, more often, longer stays, more diversity and often people visiting without affordable and culturally safe spaces to stay.

However, SACOSS has consistently argued over many years that the impact of the Dry area will be to affect the entire public by deterring them from normal ('traditional') social activities in the Park Lands from picnics and weddings to drinks after sport. The impact on family picnics and barbeques is explicitly recognised in the Council's information package, but is unlikely to be known or understood by the broader public simply because of that. I believe that many people will see it as a step too far when it is understood.

More importantly though for SACOSS' concerns, the proposed Dry Area will affect Aboriginal people disproportionately, and result in criminalising their behaviour. It won't address the underlying issue of the tension between modern Adelaide and traditional Aboriginal mobility which needs collaboration, engagement and some innovation if we're going to move forward.

I know that the City is engaged in a number of forums working on precisely addressing that tension and those issues. The proposed dry zone undermines that engagement and could sabotage its success.

Accordingly, SACOSS is opposed to the proposed 24/7 dry zone across all Adelaide park lands.

Yours,

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

Ross Womersley, CEO
20 February 2020