

7.4 Washpool Lagoon – Council’s roles

Report contact

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Meeting

Strategic Directions Committee

Date

4 May 2021

1. Purpose

This report seeks to better define our desired outcomes for, and roles in, the future management of the Washpool Lagoon.

2. Recommendations

That the Strategic Directions Committee approve the Washpool Lagoon role statements as per attachment 1 to the agenda report.

3. Executive summary

The Washpool is one of the last intact coastal lagoon systems in the Adelaide region. It is part of the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track and is of spiritual and cultural significance to the Kurna Nation and the wider Aboriginal community. It is also a site of considerable interest to the local non-Aboriginal community.

At its meeting on 6 April 2021 the Strategic Directions Committee considered an update on the Washpool and resolved:

That a report outlining our desired future roles in the management of the Washpool Lagoon be presented to the 4 May 2021 Strategic Directions Committee meeting.

Our proposed roles are presented in attachment 1 for the Committee’s consideration and summarised below. These largely confirm positions we have held over a number of years, but have not been brought together in one document. Their formal adoption will support our efforts to protect and enhance the site, including current discussions with the South Australian government and future advocacy. The proposed roles have been used to inform our draft submission on Green Adelaide’s draft Regional Landscape Plan, which is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Proposed Washpool roles

We will **advocate** to the South Australian Government for:

- all public land within the site to be proclaimed as a reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*
- Kurna co-management
- the continuation of the Washpool Working Group arrangements as a mechanism to provide for local community involvement in the management of the site

- the formation of a working group of senior staff from council and South Australian Government to provide input into planning for the new reserve.

We will **contribute** land that we own on the site to the establishment of the reserve, subject to:

- appropriate easements for our storm water management requirements over the basin itself and works to mitigate the current and future flooding risks to the Silver Sands residential area
- the formal process steps required for the transfer of land in our ownership and
- achieving an outcome that benefits the community.

We will **partner** with South Australian Government agencies, Kaurna and the local community:

- to implement on-ground restoration works as we transition to new management arrangements
- to plan for visitor facilities on site and infrastructure that connects the Washpool to its surrounds, including a potential north south trail connection
- to plan for and deliver works to improve management of the Silver Sands catchment.

We will **lead** the planning and implementation of measures to mitigate the current and future flooding risks to the Silver Sands residential area.

4. Background

Community Plan 2030	<p>prosperity: economically strong, environmentally thriving</p> <p>The protection and rehabilitation of the Washpool Lagoon directly aligns with our focus outcome of: <i>We champion our environment, reinforcing its strengths, regenerating its losses and protecting its vulnerabilities.</i></p>
Policy and/or relevant legislation	<p>The Washpool includes a temperate coastal saltmarsh community which is listed as a vulnerable threatened ecological community under the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>. Several registered Aboriginal sites under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988</i> are also present.</p>
Who did we talk to/who will we be talking to	<p>Since 2019 the AMLRNRM Board, and now Green Adelaide, has convened the Washpool Working Group. Its membership comprises representatives from various local community groups (including Friends of Aldinga Scrub, Aldinga Washpool and Silver Sands Heritage Committee and Friends of the Willunga Basin), Kaurna representatives, government agencies and City of Onkaparinga. Cr Peat is the current elected member representative on the group.</p> <p>Subject to their approval, we will seek to present the roles to the next meeting of the Washpool Committee. We are not proposing wider community engagement at this point given they primarily seek to confirm and formalise existing positions.</p> <p>Future community engagement(s) will be required on specific proposals and initiatives associated with the establishment and management of the Washpool as a reserve.</p>

5. Discussion

With renewed political and community focus on creating a path forward to protect the Washpool Lagoon at Aldinga Beach, it is an opportune time for Council to develop a position that builds on our history of supporting, protecting and advocating for the area, and outlines our future goals for this unique and significant site in our city. This will support our current discussions with the South Australian Government and other stakeholders. It will also ensure we are prepared should we need to advocate on specific issues at the 2022 State Election. Attachment 1 presents the draft roles statement and the topics are discussed below.

Protected area status

The Washpool comprises a complex mix of land parcels owned and managed by different state government agencies and council. Since 2016 the South Australian Government has been working on the consolidation of titles on the site to enable the proclamation of the site as a reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

The exact boundaries of the proposed reserve have not been publicly identified. However, the local community expect to see all public land included in the new reserve. This will ensure that the whole of the site is protected and managed in a holistic manner.

We have supported this aim via our previous communications with the South Australian Government including:

- advising that we have no objection to the revocation of Crown land under our care and control in 2017
- indicating willingness to consider the transfer of freehold land in 2018
- advocating to the Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon David Speirs MP, for his intervention to prevent the potential sale of SA Water land in 2019.

The role statement (Attachment 1) confirms our position that all public land be included in the reserve and our willingness to contribute land we own for this purpose.

A map of land ownership forms attachment 2. It highlights the desired outer boundary of the new reserve, with the inclusion of all relevant public land. This includes the following parcels managed and/or owned by the City Onkaparinga:

- H106000 Section 296 - Crown land vested under our care and control
- H10600 Section 682 - Crown land vested under our care and control
- D6804 A239 - in freehold ownership
- D6326 A116 - in freehold ownership
- F10453 A11- in freehold ownership
- Button Road reserve - both the western section and southern extension
- Esplanade Road reserve - section running along the coastal frontage of the Washpool
- Drainage reserve D7917 A2 - portion directly abutting the Washpool (and subject to ongoing access arrangements for management).

In our discussions with the South Australian Government we have sought easements for our stormwater management requirements. These are discussed further below.

As noted in the roles statement, there will be a number of formal process steps that will be required for the transfer of land in our ownership.

Future Kurna management arrangements

The Washpool forms part of the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track and is of spiritual and cultural significance to the Kurna Nation and the wider Aboriginal community. It includes a number of registered Aboriginal sites under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. The Green Adelaide Landscape Board is currently facilitating Kurna involvement via membership of the Washpool Working Group and on-ground works at the site, including planting and monitoring of any ground-breaking activities.

Since 2013 we have consistently advocated for Kurna involvement in its future management given the site's spiritual and cultural significance to the Kurna Nation. The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* includes provisions for the co-management of reserves and a number of such arrangements are in place across the state.

In considering the future tenure and management of the site the Council will work with the recently established First Nations People Advisory Group to explore if there is an appetite for future Kurna ownership or co-ownership and if so how could this be achieved.

Visitor access and infrastructure

The value of the Washpool is well recognised by the local community, and the site has potential as a regional ecological and cultural tourism attraction.

Planning will be required for potential facilities and infrastructure and also to create external links with surrounding areas such as with the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park, the beach and existing and future trail networks. This will require a partnership approach.

Two specific opportunities are highlighted in the roles statement.

- Button Road currently cuts across the Washpool Lagoon. There is potential to improve access and environmental outcomes via modifications to its current form and/or alignment. This has been proposed in a number of the previous planning iterations for the site.
- The creation of a north-south trail connection through or along the edge of the Washpool site could complement our existing trail network.

Both of these concepts will require significant further planning and engagement.

Flood protection

Catchment management planning undertaken by council has identified flood risks for the adjoining Silver Sands residential area and potential options to mitigate this. Further investigations and planning are required. We have a leadership role for these investigations and the implementation of any works. Opportunities for external funding will be investigated. In our discussions with the Department for Environment and Water we have requested an easement to allow works to be undertaken as required.

Catchment management

The Washpool is a water dependent ecosystem that receives surface flows from the Silver Sands Catchment. Like the Washpool, the broader catchment has been significantly modified since European settlement and further development pressures are likely. Sediment generated from across the catchment is having an impact on water quality in the Washpool, and also exacerbating the flooding on site.

In our discussions with the Department for Environment and Water regarding the consolidation of titles, we have sought to ensure ongoing rights to allow the continued discharge of water from our stormwater drainage network to the Washpool.

The roles statement reflects that:

- an integrated whole-of-catchment management, involving multiple stakeholders, is required to improve the management of water across the catchment
- given the environmental significance of the site, we will seek guidance from the Department for Environment and Water on the environmental water requirements, including seasonal water levels, to inform our stormwater planning and management
- via our role in the development assessment process, we will seek to ensure, where possible, that stormwater outflows from future urban development within the catchment conforms to pre-development flow regimes.

Our Coastal Scoping Study has examined the likely impacts of sea level rise on the Washpool. We will continue to investigate and plan for the impacts of sea level rise on the Washpool and adjoining Pebble Banks via the development of a coastal adaptation plan.

Community involvement

Many individuals and community groups have been involved in efforts to protect and restore the site over a long period of time. Since 2019 the AMLRNRM Board, and now Green Adelaide, has convened the Washpool Working Group. Its membership comprises representatives from various local community groups government agencies and City of Onkaparinga. This group has provided an effective mechanism for local community input into the management of the site and should continue.

The role and function of this group would be supported and complemented via the creation of a separate working group of senior staff from council and the South Australian Government to provide input into planning for the new reserve.

On ground works

Rehabilitation of the Washpool will require long-term effort which addresses complex issues and involves multiple stakeholders. We are currently actively involved in delivering on ground rehabilitation works. These works are guided by the 2018 Aldinga Washpool and Blue Lagoon Revegetation Plan which identifies a staged approach to revegetation across the whole site. Once the site is established as a reserve primary responsibility will rest with the South Australian Government. However, the role statement recognises our continuing role during the transition period.

6. Financial implications

Scope of impact

It is expected that negotiation and advocacy activities for the Washpool will be undertaken within existing resources.

We have budgeted \$8,700 in 2020–21 as our contribution to the implementation of the Aldinga Washpool and Blue Lagoon Revegetation Plan from our coastal conservation management annual operating budget.

In our draft 2021-22 Budget allocations have been made for:

- a further contribution to the implementation of the Aldinga Washpool and Blue Lagoon Revegetation Plan
- renewal of the beach access at the end of Button Road to address safety risks.

Any works identified from our investigations into the flood risk for the Slivers Sands residential area will be considered via the Water Resources category of Project and Capital Works in future years.

7. Risk and opportunity management

Risk	
Identify	Mitigation
Another layer of planning – multiple plans and studies have been prepared for the Washpool over many years	Attachment 1 seeks to clearly articulate the roles we intend to play in the future management of the Washpool. It draws on directions and positions we have adopted over time and is not intended to replace or duplicate existing technical studies or plans.

Opportunity	
Identify	Maximising the opportunity
Improved outcomes for the future management of the site	Being clear on what outcomes we are seeking and the roles we will play in achieving these will assist our engagement with other stakeholders and advocacy efforts.

8. Next steps

Further reports will be prepared as required, including updates on advocacy, planning investigations and formal process steps associated with land transfers.

9. Attachments

Attachment 1 –Draft Washpool Lagoon - Proposed roles for City of Onkaparinga (2 pages)

Attachment 2 – Land tenure map (1 page)

- END OF REPORT -

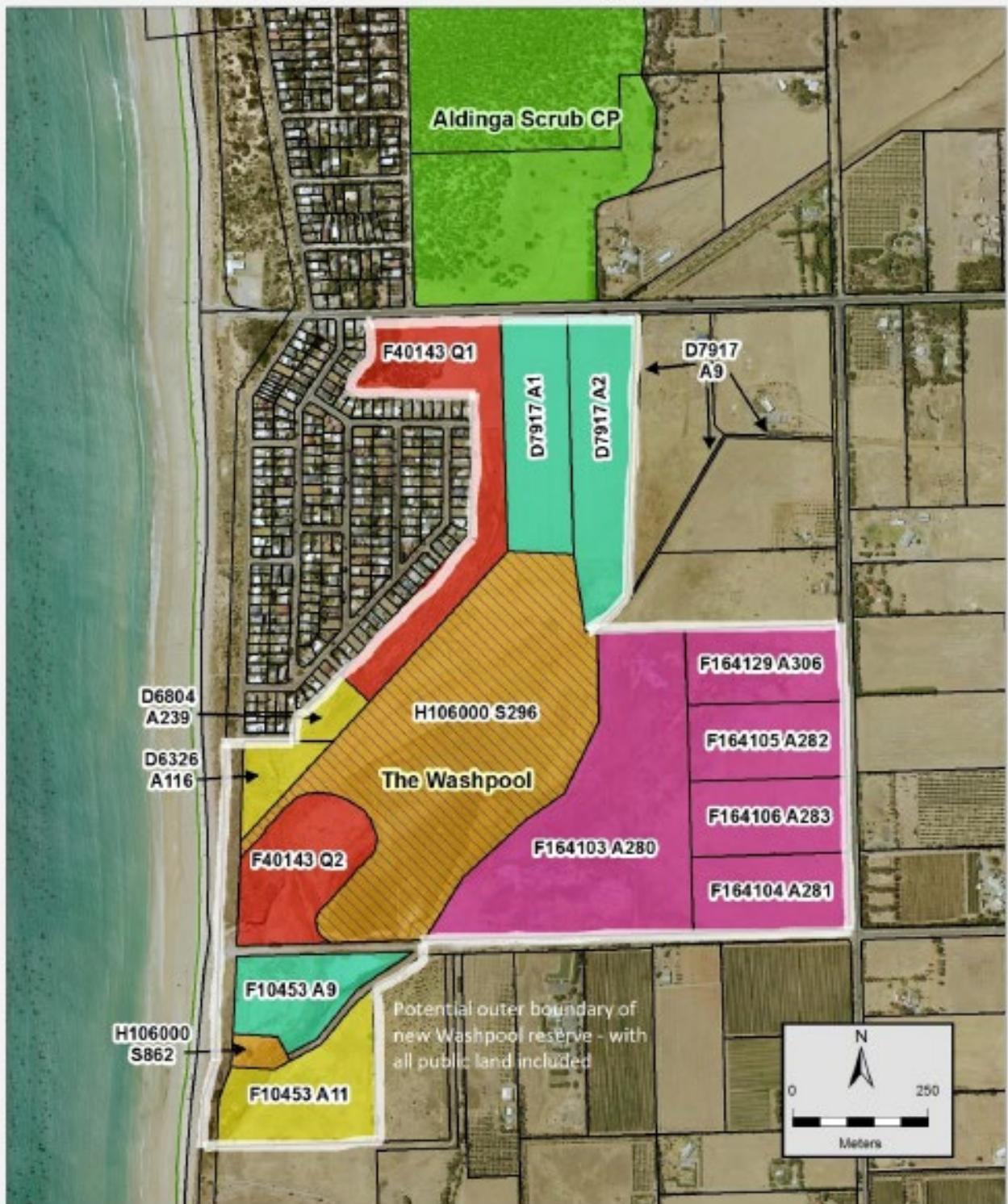
Attachment 1 Washpool Lagoon – proposed roles for City of Onkaparinga

Topic	Our role
<p>1. Protected area status</p>	<p>The Washpool has unique conservation and cultural values. It needs to be formally recognised, and protected and managed holistically.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocate to the South Australian Government for all public land within the site to be proclaimed as a reserve under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act</i>. • contribute land that we own on the site to the reserve, subject to appropriate easements for our storm water management requirements over the basin itself and to protect Silver Sands residences from possible future flooding. This may include relevant portions of our legal roads (potentially the western end of Button Road and its southern extension and a portion of the unmade Esplanade) and will require a revocation of community land process to be undertaken if our reserve land is proposed for addition. • advocate for a working group of senior staff from council and the South Australian Government to provide input into planning for the new reserve.
<p>2. Future management arrangements</p>	<p>The Washpool forms part of Tjilbruke Dreaming Track and is of spiritual and cultural significance to the Kaurna Nation and the wider Aboriginal community. Ongoing Kaurna involvement in the site is critical to protect these values.</p> <p>We will advocate for Kaurna co-management and/or co-ownership of the site.</p>
<p>3. Visitor access and infrastructure</p>	<p>The value of the Washpool is well recognised by the local community, and the site has potential as a regional ecological and cultural tourism attraction.</p> <p>We will partner with the South Australian Government to plan for visitor facilities on site and infrastructure that connects the Washpool to its surrounds within site including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a north-south connection • opportunities to improve access via modifications to Button Road’s current form and/or alignment.
<p>4. Flood protection</p>	<p>Catchment mapping has identified flooding risks for the Silver Sands residential area.</p> <p>We will lead the planning and implementation of measures to mitigate the current and future flooding risks to the Silver Sands residential area. This will include investigating opportunities for external funding.</p>

Attachment 1 Washpool Lagoon – proposed roles for City of Onkaparinga

<p>5. Catchment management</p>	<p>The Washpool receives water flows from the larger Silver Sands catchment. Coordinated efforts are needed to ensure that the water quality and flow regimes protect and enhance the Washpool.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partner with other agencies and the community to plan for and deliver works to improve management of the Silver Sands catchment, including investigation of opportunities for water quality and sediment control infrastructure within the site. • seek direction from the Department for Environment and Water on the seasonal water level requirements for the Washpool. • via our role in the development assessment process, where possible ensure that stormwater outflows from future urban development within the catchment conforms to pre-development flow regimes. • continue to investigate and plan for the impacts of sea level rise on the Washpool and adjoining Pebble Banks via our coastal adaptation plan.
<p>6. On ground restoration works</p>	<p>Recent on-ground works have been highly successful. However, the rehabilitation of the Washpool will require a long-term program of work.</p> <p>We will continue to partner with Green Adelaide and the local communities to implement on-ground restoration works as we transition to new management arrangements.</p>
<p>7. Community involvement</p>	<p>Many individuals and community groups have been involved in efforts to protect and restore the Washpool.</p> <p>We will advocate for the continuation of the Washpool Working Group arrangements as a mechanism to provide for local community involvement in management of the site.</p>

Land Tenure of the Washpool Area



-  Potential Future MEW Land
-  Min. Housing & Urban Development
-  Min. Environment & Water
-  SA Water
-  City of Onkaparinga (dedicated land)
-  DEWNR Reserves
-  City of Onkaparinga
-  DCDB.PARCEL

Note - some agencies and ministerial roles have since changed

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