

Former Belair National Park Golf Course and Country Club Precinct Master Plan

DRAFT

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Foreword

The Belair National Park is South Australia's oldest national park. It's a place that has seen visitors for family picnics, bushwalks, horse riding, mountain biking and to simply be at peace in nature. The park holds special intergenerational appeal, building a sense of belonging, social connection and opportunities for learning – all known determinants that contribute to happy, healthy and resilient communities.

The return of the lease over the Belair Golf Course and Country Club (the precinct) now provides the Government an opportunity to reinvigorate the site and offer new experiences to benefit all visitors of the Belair National Park. It's an opportunity to reimagine what this site could offer, and in doing so, reunite this precinct back into the broader national park.

I invite you to participate in shaping this master plan by providing feedback on how we propose to transition this land from its former use to a current proposal that builds the capacity of the Belair National Park, conserves its environment and creates more opportunities for community enjoyment.

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Kaurna Nation as Traditional Custodians whose ancestral lands we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

We also pay our respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their nations in South Australia, as well as those across Australia.

Vision

The Former Belair Golf Course and Country Club Precinct Master Plan (the master plan) brings together the influences inherent in the landform of the surrounding site, its heritage as a cherished icon as the State's first national park and the Government's aspirations to progress a state-wide park renewal agenda.

In essence, the master plan aims to:

'reinvigorate and reconnect the precinct into the broader National Park, strengthening its conservation significance and service to provide social, health and wellbeing benefits to the community'

It details the use of existing and new infrastructure to create an accessible and inclusive new area of space for the community to be proud of.





Introduction

The Former Belair Golf Course and Country Club Precinct is situated in Belair National Park and is approximately 51 hectares in size. It has been a venue for golf, weddings and other events over many years. This precinct was managed through a lease under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* from the 1980s, until business operations ceased in 2018.

Recognising the Belair National Park's long history of community involvement, the return of the site presented the opportunity to first consult with community, local government and business. This was to gain a better understanding of the community's needs and expectations that would later inform an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to seek new management for the site. The consultation process generated over two thousand comments and suggestions and informed the EOI process which resulted in thirteen proposals from private businesses and community organisations, including a mix of hospitality, community, recreational, sporting and educational activities.

Two proposals have been identified for further consideration, these include:

1. a proposal to operate a mountain bike hire and skills training business and;
2. a proposal from the Sturt Lions Football Club to establish a new home ground and clubrooms noting this proposal requires further consultation, assessment and development approvals needing to take place following the master plan process.

The master plan will integrate the two EOI proposals and the community engagement outcomes into a plan that will communicate Governments vision for the precinct and ensure that the proposed future uses meet the community's expectations and objectives of the park.

Regional context

The Belair National Park is one of South Australia's most loved destinations, attracting around 500,000 visitors each year. Set in beautiful natural bushland, the park is located at Belair in the Mount Lofty Ranges, 13 km southeast from Adelaide city centre. Its positioning within the Mount Lofty Ranges makes the park an important biological corridor, preserving the region's natural biodiversity.

Belair is South Australia's first National Park and Australia's second oldest National Park and is, therefore, highly treasured for its historical value. It is listed on the Register of the National Estate and on the State Heritage Register as a State Heritage Area. It holds Old Government House, fire scares on ancient trees and Aboriginal tree carvings.

There are woodlands, waterfalls, lakes, creeks and geological formations to discover, trails to suit every fitness level, recreational facilities available for hire, playgrounds and open spaces for group celebrations. This variety of landscapes together with its proximity to the urban area, makes it extremely attractive for a range of outdoor recreational uses including bush-walking, mountain bike riding, jogging, picnicking, tennis, cricket just to name a few.



History of Belair National Park Golf Course precinct

The timeline below outlines key moments in the history of the Belair Golf Course Precinct

Pre Site establishment-Now

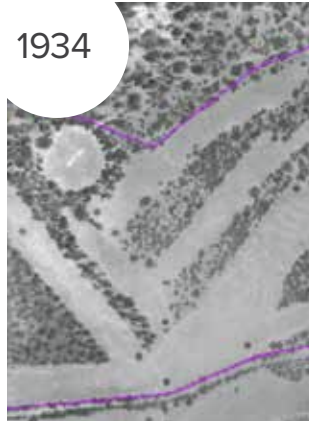
1891



First National Park

The park holds significance as South Australia's first national park (1891) and the second national park in Australia after Royal National Park near Sydney (1879). Initially established after a decade-long campaign, it signified the growing public commitment at the time to retain natural areas for both conservation and recreation and is now a designated State Heritage Area in its own right.

1934



Establishment of Belair Golf Course

The Belair Golf Course was established in the southwest corner of the 835 hectare national park. The course was created during the depression to raise revenue during the winter months.

1941-1970



Golf Course extended

Golf Course extended and was further redeveloped through clearing for the fairways on the western side of the course in the 1970s.

1980s



First private lease issued

Up until 1980 the site was managed by the Department until a lease was issued for the golf course and soon after the caravan park.



The Kurna people have been the traditional custodians of the land in this area for hundreds of generations and maintain a strong Connection to Country through their cultural practices and commitments to Kurna heritage, language and youth.

2005



Golf course subleased

The golf course and function centre was then subleased in 2005.

2018



Return of the leases

Following several years of difficulty, in early 2018 both leases were put into voluntary administration following by liquidation and return of the leases in March 2018.

2018-2019



Expression of interest

A series of community engagement exercises about the future uses of the precinct informed an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, launched in September 2018.

2020



Master Plan process

Outcomes of the EOI and views expressed during community engagement informed a master plan process.

Community partners

Belair National Park is supported by many established community groups whose members volunteer in, and provide support for, the protection and preservation of the natural and historical values of the Belair National Park and Old Government House.

The Friends of Belair National Park contribute significant hours in on grounds works such as weed control and are key promoters of the park to the general public. In addition to environmental work, the group provides cultural and social activities for both its members and the general public.

The Friends of Old Government House are an active group of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds with a common interest in preserving Old Government House and its gardens. Both groups raise funds for special projects and provide voluntary assistance to the park in close cooperation and liaison with DEW staff.

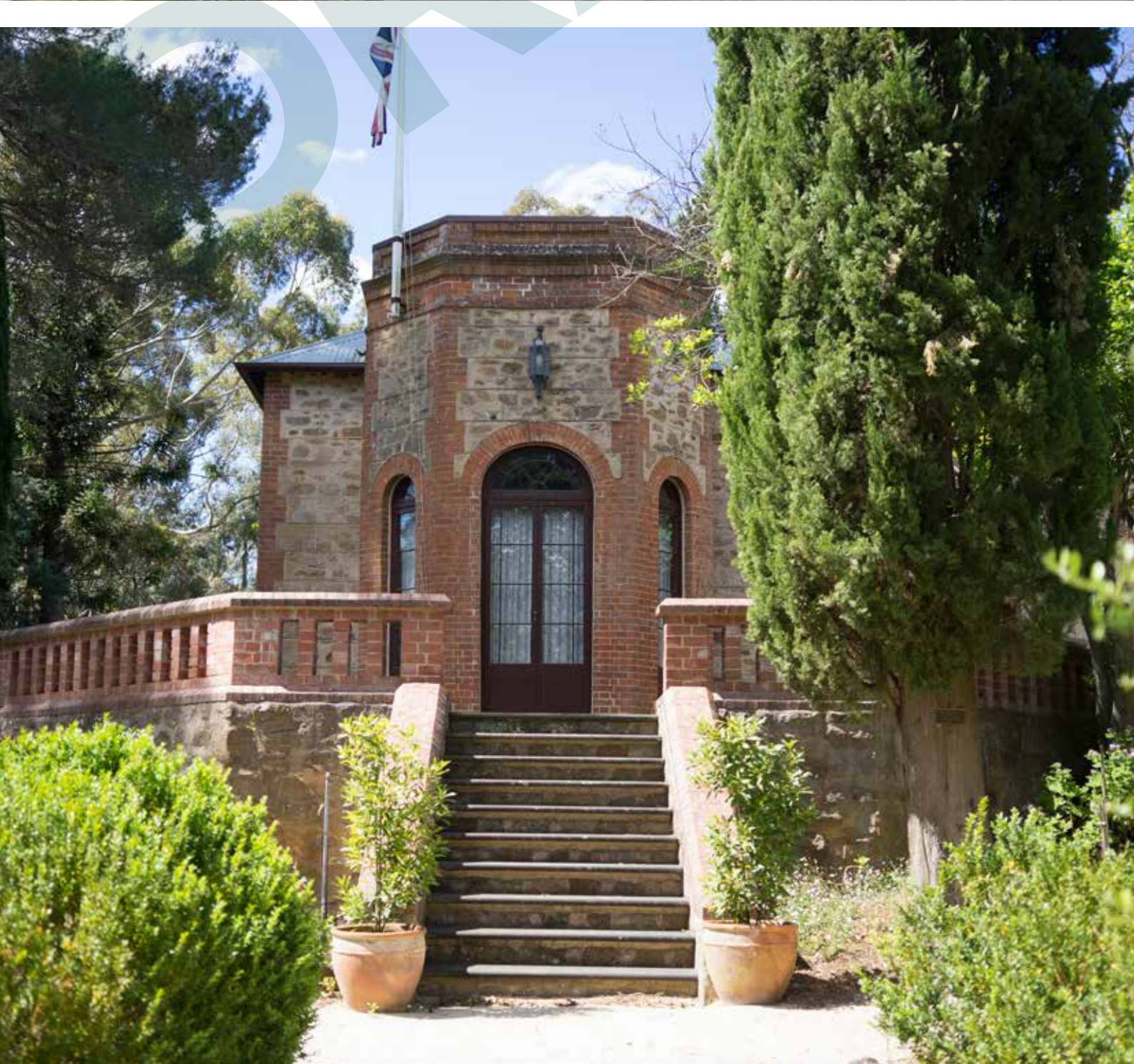
The National Parks Heritage Committee has an interest in heritage sites in national park reserves across the State raising funds to protect and upgrade heritage assets.

In addition, a number of local schools and interested community groups and individuals have informal arrangements with the park and play an important role in park management.

Precincts interface with legislation and policy

The Belair National Park is managed in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 and the Belair National Park Management Plan. These are the key pieces of legislation and policy that authorize the master plans vision for the precinct.

The Belair National Park Management Plan sets out objectives and strategies for the management of five zones within the park, including a Golf Course/Caravan Park Zone which encompasses the former Golf Course and Country Club. An amendment to several of these zones is proposed in order to facilitate a range of alternate land uses within the precinct- transitioning this piece of land to future users.



Guiding Principles

The three guiding principles for the Belair master plan have been developed based on

- community consultation that supported the EOI process
- the Belair National Park Management Plan
- Government's vision to build the capacity of parks across our state.

The principles intend to foster inclusive, coordinated decision-making to help transition the precinct into future uses that have minimal environmental impact and meet the community's expectations and objectives of the park.

Each principle is explained in an overarching statement with supporting objectives.

Principle ①

Protection and restoration of the natural environment and heritage

Conservation of the natural environment and heritage, habitat restoration and revegetation will be a key role in transitioning the former site into a future use of the highest environmental standard.

Objectives

- Protect the natural features of the site that include significant areas of intact native vegetation protected under state and Commonwealth legislation.
- Promote the significance of habitat restoration and revegetation in any activity that transitions the site to a future use.
- Ensure that areas of high species diversity in the precinct, is recognised as a biodiversity corridor to others areas within the Belair National Park.
- Manage weeds and public access within areas of native vegetation to prevent any future decline in vegetation.
- Maintain the integrity of the Belair National Park as a state heritage area, noting its significance as South Australia's first National Park (1891).
- Maintain appropriate bushfire management strategies that are consistent with the response plans outlined in the Fire Management Plan Reserves of the Hills Face Zine, Mount Lofty Ranges.

Principle ②

Respect Cultural Heritage

The Kurna people are the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of this area and maintain a strong Connection to Country through their cultural practices and commitments to Kurna heritage, language and youth.

Objectives

- Respect the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners for their Country and advocate for cooperative partnerships with the Kurna Community to promote opportunities for Connection to Country - a determinant of health and wellbeing.
- Understand and deliver our obligations under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA) and commit to the protection and continuation of living Kurna culture and heritage



Principle ③

Promote Community Health and Wellbeing

Access to quality green public space, in the form of an urban national park, supports the physical and mental health of our communities by providing welcoming, safe and educational settings for outdoor pursuits, relaxation and social interaction. A well designed public open space creates settings that respond and adapt to demands and aspirations as the community changes socially, culturally, physically or environmentally.

Objectives

- Enhance nature experiences that promote the mental health benefits of contact with nature.
- Encourage greater cycling, running, walking and other forms of physical activity through the site with well connected, inclusive path networks.
- Utilise existing and new infrastructure to create an accessible and inclusive network of open spaces within the precinct that connects to the adjoining areas of the Belair National Park.
- Design opportunities for people of all abilities, ages and cultural backgrounds to connect with and learn about nature.
- Encourage the site to be used by third parties to deliver meaningful connection to nature experiences for the community with minimal environmental impact.
- Promote inclusion and minimise conflicts between user groups and individuals.
- Promote design responses that support neighbourhood character and community values

BELAIR NATIONAL
PARK ENTRY GATE

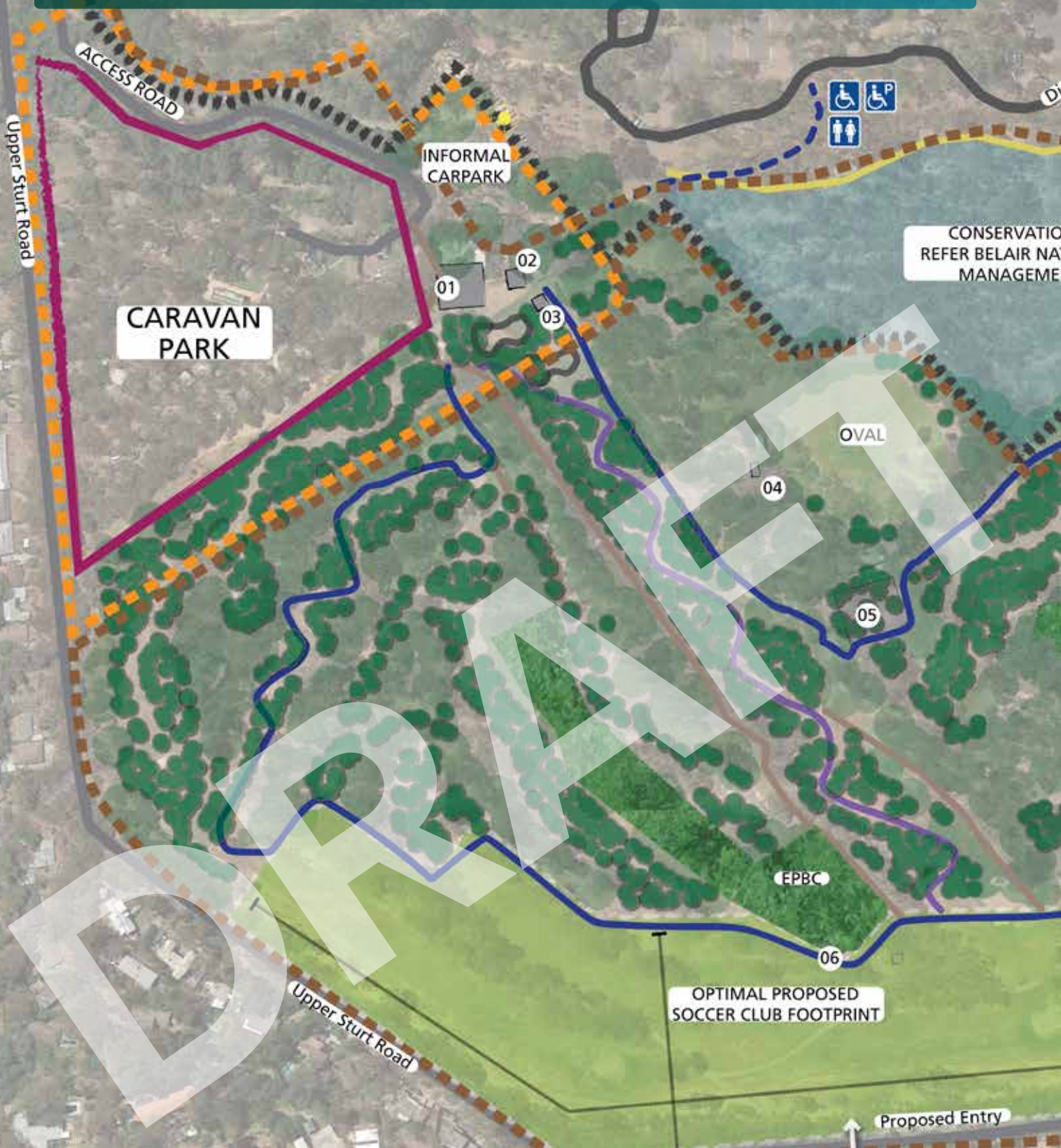
GUMS OVAL

The Valley Road

Belair Precinct Master Plan

A renewed precinct within the Belair National Park, strengthening its conservation significance and service to deliver broader returns to the South Australian community.

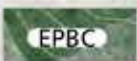
Cree



Feedback from the EOI process consistently highlighted that the community:

- value the site's natural setting
- enjoy access to the site, including the network of trails
- favour a range of activities on the site rather than a single use
- support commercial activities on the site, including accommodation, hospitality, tourism and recreational opportunities
- support the site becoming a hub for arts, events, cultural educational and recreational activities.

LEGEND

-  Existing Trail
-  Fire Tracks
-  Fence
Golf Course / Belair NP
-  Caravan Park
Lease Boundary
-  New Accessible Trail Link
-  Gate Access into Belair NP
-  Existing vegetation
-  Revegetate
-  Vegetation
Areas meet criteria for Environment Protection & Biodiversity Act (1999). For further information regarding vegetation please refer to the Great Australia Vegetation Survey Report
-  Tourist Accommodation/Development Zone
-  Heritage/recreation zone

STAGE 1 TRAILS

-  New Birdie Loop Trail
Utilising existing trail networks + tracks

STAGE 2 TRAILS

-  Flow and Jumps Trail
(bike only)

- 01 Function Centre
- 02 Clubhouse
Currently used by Escapegoat Adventures
- 03 Gazebo
- 04 Pavilion
- 05 Workshop & Sheds
Removed & revegetated
- 06 Toilets Removed & revegetated
- 07 Sheds Removed & revegetated

Note: All dimensions shown are approximate.

CONSERVATION ZONE
REFER BNP
MANAGEMENT PLAN



Key features of the master plan

The Belair Function Centre

Constructed in the early 1990's the building previously operated as a golf clubhouse and function centre, particularly for weddings and conferences. To date, the department have investigated a number of management options for the future operations of the function centre. The EOI process focused on finding management for the centre, however no suitable proposals were identified, which would warrant Government investing in an asset in such poor condition which is unlikely to yield a financial return.

Through the master plan process, it is proposed that the Belair Function Centre is removed and appropriate re-use of the site is an option for further investigation. A draft amendment to the Belair National Park Management Plan proposes that the land occupied by the function centre is re-zoned to Tourist Accommodation/Development Zone. This amendment allows for future tourism developments that have minimal environmental impact and keep with the natural bushland setting to be assessed under normal development approval processes.

Site access

The main entry point to the precinct is through the gates off Upper Stuart Road where car parking can be found at the front of the parks entry gates or within the park following Creek Road and turning right at the second sealed road going towards the tennis courts and accessible toilets.

To ensure the precinct is connected to the broader Belair National Park and its facilities, a new accessible shared use trail is proposed from Dianella Road, near the accessible toilets and parking, going around the Conservation 1 Zone and into the precinct.

Access to the precinct from the Adventure Loop, popular with mountain bikers, will be made available through a gate on the eastern boundary of the precinct.

Access Road, off Upper Stuart Road, provides access to the Belair Caravan Park.

Some car parking at the end of access road within the precinct will be retained.

Existing buildings and adaptive reuse

The precinct contains a number of built assets and visitor infrastructure, some of which is valuable and should be maintained and others that can be removed in accordance with heritage considerations.

Remove:

- workshop (5) and sheds (5)
- water tank and toilet block (6)

Refurbished:

- Clubhouse (2) in partnership with a private business as an outcome from the EOI.
- Pavillion, based on heritage status.

Trails

One of the key objectives of the transition of this precinct back into the broader Belair National Park is to create more opportunities for people to engage with nature. Shared use trails create a diverse array of experiences that are suitable for walking, running, bike riding and horse-riding. Stage 1 has commenced as a result of a trail audit as part of the master planning process. The audit concluded a network of existing trails on the precinct that are suitable for grade 2 classification with minimal upgrade. Stage 2 trails, which propose mountain bike only flow and jump trails, are presented for further consultation with the community.

Stage 1: The new Birdie Loop Trail

This consists of existing trail networks and tracks that begin at the Gazebo (3) looping around the entire precinct finishing near the Function Centre. It has compacted gravel surfacing, constructed on a shallow gradient providing a relatively smooth path of almost 3 km ready to access with the addition of an accessible shared use path that links the precinct into the broader Belair National Park and its facilities. The low gradient of the Birdie Loop encourages a diverse array of usages such as running, walking, bike riding and horse-riding, with scope to add further value to the trail, with the addition of training stations outlining exercises to include in a loop trail workout. Minimal assistance is required to make full use of this track ensuring that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy the grade 2 shared use trail.



Stage 2: Linking, Flow and Jump Trails

The second stage of trail construction will provide more mountain bike specific trail opportunities on the former fairways of the golf course. These may include a flow trail (where the trail is shaped with berms, crests, and troughs) down the main fairway and a jump trail towards the eastern end of the area (which would have options for easy, intermediate and advanced riders).

The transition of the precinct back into the Belair National Park will also see the Department undertake a trail evaluation across the entire park, to ensure the best experiences for cycling and mountain biking in Belair National Park are appropriately supported and promoted.

Building more opportunities for nature based tourism experiences in National Parks

An outcome from the Belair EOI process was the operation of a mountain bike hire and skills training business. Escapegoat Adventures is currently operating from the old Clubrooms, now named the Goatshed, providing services such as bike hire, bike maintenance, coffee and snacks. Future services include MTB skills training, bike sales and nature therapy sessions.



Healthy Parks Healthy People SA

Spending too much time indoors (even exercising) can become limiting. Outdoor workouts and activities are a great supplement and do not need to be strenuous. Low intensity exercises such as walking and strength training intervals can be a powerful tool for recovery from intense, structured gym workouts. They increase blood flow to trained muscles and help deliver oxygen and nutrients. Outdoor trail activities, like the new loop trail, utilise different muscle groups than structured indoor workouts. The uneven terrain requires more lateral movements and the activation of stabilizer muscles throughout our ankles, knees, and core.

Sturt Lions Football Club

An outcome from the EOI process is the proposal from the Sturt Lions Football Club to establish a new home ground, comprising of pitches and a clubroom on the southern boundary of the precinct. The footprint the SLFC is proposing to occupy is up to 10ha, which equates to approximately 7 pitches and a clubroom(Figure 1). This is to meet the growing demand for the sport in the local community and provide the necessary infrastructure to enable future growth for a broad range of participants.



The club has an ethos of inclusivity and supports a broad range of teams from MiniRoos (6-11 yr olds), Juniors and Seniors, as well as women's teams and a Bedford inclusive team. An alternative footprint is to construct fewer pitches over 5ha, with younger leagues sharing the space.

The development of this land aligns with the national park objectives and community expectations in the following ways:

1. There would be minimal vegetation removed with pitches placed upon existing cleared fairways where possible
2. The proposal is open to co-exist with other potential partners providing an inclusive community hub that can be enjoyed beyond the use of soccer
3. The proposal will promote further usage of the national park from SLFC members and visitors

It is expected that a proposal of this nature will be accompanied by some impacts, including traffic, noise and light spill with mitigation of these getting explored as part of the planning assessment process. The department is interested to test the concept of supporting a community club within a national park with the broader community. Proposals with complex leasing arrangements, like SLFC, need to progress through different portfolios of government, undergoing further assessment and development approvals . If the proposal is supported from the Environment portfolio, there will still be many opportunities for the community to add further feedback around concerns such as lighting, noise, traffic control etc. through the state government planning and development processes.

A further outline of the additional development approval processes SLFC would need to adhere to are outlined in the accompanying FAQ document.

Revegetation

Revegetation efforts will be focused along the fairways with an emphasis on ensuring plantings can be maintained both in the face of climate change, shorter term vegetation dynamics and respond to risks such as drought and fire. Additional priorities will also include allowing some of the remanet grey box areas within the western side of the precinct to regenerate naturally, improving the sites retention of *Environment Protected and Biodiversity Conservation* (EPBC) Act listed vegetation.

Existing vegetation

There are ten main vegetation types found in the Belair precinct including species of Red Gum, Blue Gum, Grey Box and Aleppo Pine. There is a lot of variance in condition within and between vegetation patches, with the eastern end of the precinct, which abuts large areas of less disturbed native vegetation, in better condition than others.

Providing access for all using Mountain Trikes

The department is committed to ensuring that South Australia's natural environments are accessible and inclusive for all of the community, including those living with a disability. If funding can be secured, the purchase of Mountain Trikes will enable visitors that have a physical disability to have improved access to the Belair National Park, including the new 5km Loop trail. The Trike can be used across all ages and will contribute to a standard of excellence in access and inclusion in national parks across the state.



There is an opportunity to further progress discussions for education and community participation across the whole of Belair National Park. Outdoor education that involves students and the broader community participating in authentic learning experiences is of interest to the department.

Trail heads, information and directional signs

Trailheads, information and directional signs in the precinct will assist with establishing the precincts identity and wayfinding for users. It is also proposed to install training stations with signage outlining exercises that can be incorporated at various intervals along the 5km path and built into a workout routine.

Open space

Retaining areas of open space, for formal and informal recreation, contributes to the parks history of building a sense of belonging and social connection for the community and abroad. A large oval is available for use, suitable for sports training and also a space that could be utilized by third parties for events or health/fitness business enterprises.

The Belair precinct also has scope to welcome sports, like Disc Golf, that can be played as a recreational activity by all ages and fitness levels. Unlike traditional golf, played with a ball and a club, disc golf is played with flying discs (like a frisbee). The aim is to get the frisbee into a chain and metal disc golf basket, which can be a removable structure in a park setting. Each time you throw a disc, you walk to the spot where your disc landed and take the next shot from there. The disc golf course would utilise the natural setting of the Belair precinct therefore having minimal environmental footprint and has been a recent successful inclusion in the Adelaide City parklands.



How you can contribute

There are opportunities to provide feedback on the draft master plan by visiting:
yoursay.sa.gov.au/decisions/belair-national-park-masterplan/about

DEW also has an email address for community questions and input regarding the master plan

DEWProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au

For further information on this project please contact the project manager:

Rachel Pfitzner, rachel.pfitzner@sa.gov.au

Next Steps

Following adoption of the master plan and amendment to the Belair National Park Management Plan the precinct will be managed as part of the Belair National Park and hence subject to any of the legislation and policies that govern this site.

Implementation of any projects and initiatives outlined in the master plan are subject to available resources. Any private sector led proposals that secure in principle support by DEW will require further assessment and development approvals as per the Planning and Design Code.

Any future tourism proposals within the precinct are welcomed following outcomes of the master plan and will be considered on a case by case scenario. We have also recently released the Nature Based Tourism

Co-investment Fund that is designed to assist eligible businesses and organisations to partner with the South Australian Government to deliver sustainable, quality tourism experiences in South Australia. The fund applies to proposals located in national parks as well as crown lands, forestry, reservoirs and Aboriginal managed lands. For more information on the Fund please refer to coinvest.parks.sa.gov.au/







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**Government
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Department for
Environment and Water