

29th January 2020

Community Consultation
AFC Unsolicited Proposal – Draft Proposal
GPO Box 2252
Adelaide SA 5001

South East City Residents Association (SECRA) Submission on the Adelaide Football Club's Unsolicited Draft Proposal for a Sport and Community Centre on the Adelaide Park Lands

SECRA has a number of concerns regarding the draft proposal for a Sport and Community Centre on the Adelaide Park Lands with the prime concern being that the establishment of the Adelaide Football Club's headquarters is an inappropriate commercial development in the Park Lands. SECRA was formed over 14 years ago in opposition to the proposed permanent pavilion in Victoria Park and has actively opposed proposed inappropriate developments in the Park Lands since that time.

The Unsolicited Draft Proposal from the Adelaide Football Club (AFC) was prepared without the benefit of being able to take into account the Aquatic and Leisure Centre Draft Needs Analysis report. The draft proposal will therefore need to be modified to take into account the Needs Analysis.

SECRA is therefore of the view that it is inappropriate for the City of Adelaide Council to seek consultation on a draft proposal that will almost certainly need to be modified. The modified proposal amongst other things could mean an increase in the footprint of the development.

While there are a number of club and changing rooms leased to small community sporting organisations within the Adelaide Park Lands the AFC cannot be compared to these organisations as it is a multi million dollar commercial organisation operating under an Australian Football League licence. It is more appropriate to compare the AFC to a multi million dollar commercial company. The major difference between the AFC and a large multi million dollar company is that the AFC has members and the other has shareholders. If such a company submitted an unsolicited proposal similar to that proposed by the AFC, the City of Adelaide Council, as custodian of the Park Lands, would be seen to be irresponsible if it did not reject such a proposal. Why then did Council not reject the unsolicited proposal from the AFC?

Was the Council's decision to consider the AFC's proposal influenced by the fact that the AFC was an organisation with members? If this was the reasoning behind Council's decision then it is pointed out that the AFC's proposal has little to do with its members as its prime purpose is the provision of facilities for its administration and the training of its footballers. Its offer to incorporate community swimming and recreational facilities is being made in order to enable it to relocate to the Park Lands. The only reference in the proposal to its members is *"The Centre would become a place where Crows fans can come and watch training, view memorabilia and other interactive displays, enjoy a light meal, have a kick on the oval and engage with their Club on year around basis."*

Because there will be no liquor licence AFC members will need to go to a licenced venue for a chat over a beer or a meal with a glass of wine. The nearest licenced venues are located on Torrens Road, a distance of 0.6kms away, and at the corner of Barton Terrace and O'Connell Street, a distance of 0.7 Kms away. If members want to go to the centre of O'Connell Street it is a distance of 1.3 Kms and from the Aquatic Centre to the Adelaide Oval is approximately 2 Kms.

Also the Aquatic Centre is not well served by public transport so one would assume that the majority of AFC members would need to drive to the centre where they would compete with patrons of the swimming centre for limited parking. If they want to visit local licenced premises they would either need to walk the above distances or if driving a car be restricted to on street timed parking which would incur infringement notices if they over stayed the time limit.

The proposed AFC relocation of its headquarters to the Aquatic Centre site does not compare favourably with the other South Australian AFL Club, Port Adelaide. At the Port Adelaide Football Club headquarters members can have a chat over a beer at the bar or enjoy a meal and a glass of wine in a venue with photos of past players, trophies, honour boards, etc. The proposal put forward by the AFC cannot be likened to that of a Club that provides facilities for the benefit and enjoyment of its members. Instead it will be a headquarters for the Club's administration and footballers with the provision of swimming and recreational facilities that are primarily for the general public.

The AFC claim that the relocation of its headquarters to the Aquatic Centre site will lead to increased trade in O'Connell Street is questionable. As the majority of Crows fans use public transport to attend games at Adelaide Oval it is considered most unlikely that they would be prepared to walk uphill to either a licenced O'Connell Street venue or the AFC facility at the Aquatic Centre site especially if that facility does not have a liquor licence. In any event if they are currently not visiting licenced venues in O'Connell Street after matches at Adelaide Oval why would they do so in the future?

SECRA also questions if AFC members have been consulted on the proposed relocation of the AFC to the Aquatic Centre site and made aware that the proposed AFC headquarters will not be able to provide the social atmosphere that would normally be expected to be provided to members of such an organisation. If this hasn't been done surely it shows that the AFC places more value on its Board, administration and players than on its members and fans who will be disadvantaged by the relocation of the AFC to the Park Lands.

It is therefore not unreasonable to predict that if the proposed development is to proceed then there will be considerable pressure from members for a permanent liquor licence to be granted even though the lease prohibits such a licence.

Council's response to control of the Aquatic Centre is as follows:

Will the Council hand over control of the Adelaide Aquatic Centre?

As the custodian of the Adelaide Park Lands and Lessor to Adelaide Football Club as Lessee, the Council retains control of any development. Council will have control of the aquatic and recreational facility – whether owning and operating the facility directly or whether, via a management agreement, imposing conditions of operation on an operator.

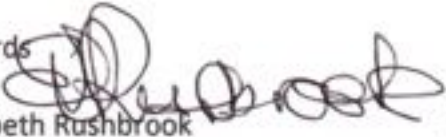
It is pointed out that in the case of the Adelaide Oval Hotel the City of Adelaide Council was the Lessor and the SA Government was the Lessee and yet even though the Council opposed the construction of the Hotel the Government ignored the leasing arrangements and approved the construction of the hotel. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that if considerable pressure is put on a future State Government that a permanent liquor licence may be granted to the AFC. The fact that the Centre is on Park Lands is unlikely to be of concern to a State Government as State Governments in the past have not respected the value and importance of Adelaide Park Lands and have ignored the fact that the City of Adelaide is the custodian of the Park Lands.

The current City of Adelaide Council in making a decision to consider this unsolicited proposal from the Adelaide Football Club to establish its headquarters in the Adelaide Park Lands before considering all other options to address the aging Aquatic Centre is irresponsible and in conflict with its role as custodian of the Park Lands on behalf of all South Australians.

The Draft Needs Analysis shows that of those persons using the Adelaide Aquatic Centre 22.6% are from the Port Adelaide Enfield council area, 17.1% from Charles Sturt, 16.5% Prospect and only 7.7% from Adelaide.

SECRA opposes the relocation of the Adelaide Football Club to the Adelaide Park Lands and is of the view that the City of Adelaide Council should be pursuing all alternatives to address the problem of the aging Adelaide Aquatic Centre and should not be considering the unsolicited proposal. One such alternative would be to consult with the above Councils and the State and Federal Governments with a view to redeveloping the Adelaide Aquatic Centre as a joint venture for the benefit of the wider community.

Regards


Elizabeth Rushbrook
Chairperson, South East City Residents Association