



General Manager, Finance and Risk

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To whom it may concern,

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## **RE: Draft Business Plan and Budget for 2011/12**

As the peak conservation body for South Australia, the Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Business Plan and Budget for Adelaide City Council for 2011/12.

CCSA is an independent, non-profit and strictly non-party political organisation representing over 50 of South Australia's environment and conservation organizations and their 60,000 supporters. Its headquarters are located at 157 Franklin Street in the city.

CCSA developed, in 2009, a comprehensive view of environment policy in "South Australia in a Changing Climate: A Blueprint for a Sustainable Future" (<http://www.conservationsa.org.au/blueprint.html>). This document sets out, at a strategic level, policy positions in six key environmental areas: Biodiversity, Coast and Marine, Water, Planning and Development, Energy and Waste. CCSA's comments on the draft Business Plan and Budget reflect those policy positions.

CCSA supports many of the directions outlined in the Draft Business Plan and Budget – particularly the emphasis on Adelaide as:

- An Accessible and Connected City with sustainable transport: "A walkable City", "A cycling City" and "An efficient public transport system".
- An Environmentally Sustainable City where "ecological systems and habitats thrive and enrich the City", "Climate change is addressed and water, energy and natural resources are conserved", "People in the City use fewer resources and generate less greenhouse gases" and "A City that continues to adapt to climate change and has transitioned from oil dependency".

The Council's Sustainable City Program outlined in the Draft Business Plan and Budget highlights many of the initiatives that the Council plans for 2011/12, including reduction of greenhouse emissions from Council activities (e.g. the Go Green LED public lighting project), reduction in water use from Council activities, kerbside waste diverted from landfill, reduction in paper usage by the Corporation and improvements in management of the city's ecological systems (e.g. restoration of the SA Water site (Urban Forest) to Parklands).

CCSA broadly supports these initiatives but notes that the primary focus of the Council's Business Plan and Budget is on improvements to its **own** operations. There appears to be a relatively limited focus on providing opportunities for citizens living within the city, or using the city for work and study, to improve **their** approach to living sustainability. As examples:

- The Budget appears to provide only limited support for safe cycling: the net budget cost to "improve cycling conditions in identified black spots along Weymouth Street, Gouger Street and Whitmore Square" is \$40,000 out of a total allocated for this task of \$120,000 (Project T6). However, there is a major need for the city to become safe for cyclists and to encourage alternatives to usage of cars. We simply must find a way to implement much safer cycling solutions within the City area, potentially through collaboration with other partners and as a key part of development.
- While the Budget provides for upgrades of street trees and irrigation systems of \$350,000 (Project PL6), there is no mention of the possibility of those upgrades providing for food trees (e.g. fruit and nut trees) as canvassed in the emerging Transition Towns movement. This movement advocates for local production of food, given the significant contribution of food production and distribution to ecological footprint. There are numerous other potential opportunities for the Council to foster local food growing by its citizens. There should also be an emphasis on providing endemic vegetation in the right locations that can best support biodiversity such as birdlife. Ornamental trees that are not local, do not provide food and provide little benefit for biodiversity should not be the first preference.
- The Conservation Council would also encourage additional support in the Business Plan to provide information to community groups on operating sustainably. CCSA has developed proposals for Green Hubs which can address this need and would be happy to collaborate with Council in this area.

Finally, CCSA suggests that there would be value in Council creating a community-based advisory group on sustainability to provide a voice for citizen-based actions which Council can support. Some metropolitan councils have set up an arrangement along these lines (e.g. Unley Council) and have found it useful and well-supported by the community.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Committee to expand on these comments.

Yours sincerely



Tim Kelly

Chief Executive

cc Lord Mayor  
Minister for Environment and Conservation