



Kings Reserve, Torrensville

An open letter to residents of West Torrens

Michael S. Coxon, Mayor, City of West Torrens

March 2023

Dear residents and property owners.

As Mayor of the City of West Torrens, I'd like to address concerns that have been raised about the Adelaide Football Club (AFC) receiving rent and rate relief as part of its proposed move to the Thebarton Oval Precinct.

Rent and rate relief

First, it is important to understand that rent and rate relief is an option which Council can provide to support businesses and stimulate economic growth in the area. Rent and rate relief do not affect the amount that residents pay in rates. In this instance, the rent and rate relief that would be afforded to the AFC recognises the Club's substantial contribution to community facilities, which would be delivered by the AFC project, and also the expenditure incurred by the AFC in solely maintaining the Thebarton Oval and the proposed secondary training oval on Kings Reserve in the future.

The current tenant of Thebarton Oval is the South Australian National Football League (SANFL) and its lease provides exclusive use of Thebarton Oval that is not available for general community use.

The proposal from the AFC to locate to the Thebarton Oval Precinct will, for the 42 year life of the lease term and taking account of the initial rent and rate relief offered by Council, generate income of \$9.35 million (indexed). Additional to this income will be the investment by the AFC into the Thebarton Oval Precinct of some \$85 million. Around \$45 million of this investment will be to provide and maintain community facilities as well as the second training oval. Further, the AFC will have non-exclusive use of the open space areas within the Precinct, such as open spaces and specifically the playing fields; these will be open to the public when not required by the AFC. While use arrangements are still be finalised, it is anticipated that the AFC will use the playing fields approximately 30% of daylight hours (averaged over the year), meaning these will be available for community use around 70% of daylight hours.

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What we know

Rent and rate relief do not affect the amount that residents pay in rates.

Adelaide Football Club will maintain Thebarton Oval and the proposed secondary training oval on Kings Reserve in the future.

For the life of the lease, Council will receive \$9.35 million.

The Adelaide Football Club will have non-exclusive use of the open space within the Precinct.

The masterplan will contain elements from Council's original Kings Reserve Masterplan.

The agreed masterplan will not only meet the needs of the Adelaide Football Club, but the wider community of West Torrens.



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Our current situation

Let’s compare this with our current situation. If the SANFL was to occupy Thebarton Oval for the next 42 years, income generated by this lease arrangement would be \$4.51 million (indexed). At this stage no capital investment by the SANFL into Thebarton Oval is contemplated, however, over a 42 year period it is not unreasonable to assume that the SANFL would make some capital contribution to Thebarton Oval.

These figures do not support claims that general rates will increase to cover the shortfall in income from rates which the Council will forgo because of the proposed leasing of the Thebarton Oval Precinct to the AFC. The real numbers show income from the AFC proposed move to the Precinct will generate a 107% increase in Council income over the 42 year lease term, as against maintaining the status quo for the same period. This is in the interest of all ratepayers in West Torrens.

In the case of the AFC proposal for the Thebarton Oval Precinct, Council has determined that providing rent and rate relief will result in significant benefits for the local and wider West Torrens community. It is important to note that rent and rate relief is not given out arbitrarily, but rather is subject to considered evaluation and assessment.

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Masterplan

The AFC, through input from the Thebarton Oval Precinct Masterplan Advisory Group (MAG), is preparing a masterplan for the site, which will be subject to further community consultation. No lease for the use of the Thebarton Oval Precinct by the AFC will be entered until all consultation stages are complete and Council is satisfied that the agreed masterplan not only meets the needs of the AFC, but also acknowledges and reflects the needs and feedback of the local and wider community of West Torrens.

Once this masterplan is approved by the Thebarton Oval MAG, it will be presented to Council for consideration and approval; it will then be subject to a further round of community consultation. The masterplan will contain elements from Council’s original Kings Reserve Masterplan, including a new playground, skate park, new native trees and barbecues.

I trust this has provided some useful information and has helped clarify why the AFC will receive rent and rate relief. I understand that this may be a contentious issue for some ratepayers, but I would like to reassure you that the Council is committed to making decisions that are in the best interest of the community as a whole.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or your local Ward Councillors.

Regards

Michael S. Coxon

