

KAURNA KARDLA PARRANTHI

Pilot Bio-Cultural Burn in Golden Wattle Park / Mirnu Wirra (Park 21 West)

Engagement period closes **5pm, Friday 24 April 2020**

PROJECT INFORMATION

Background

Since mid-2019 the City of Adelaide (CoA) has been working with the Kurna community, Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and other key stakeholders to undertake a pilot bio-cultural burn in a small area of the Adelaide Park Lands.

This project was initiated in response to outcomes from CoA's Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan 2018 – 2023 and Stretch Reconciliation Plan 2018 – 2021 related to incorporating Kurna knowledge into management of the Park Lands.

On 4 Dec 2019 the Reconciliation Committee recommended that Council supports this project, and this motion was passed by Council on 10 Dec 2019. This project was presented to the Adelaide Park Lands Authority on 5 March 2020.

This project carries significant cultural importance for the Kurna community, the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide region. The City of Adelaide is proud to be working with the Kurna community to trial the return of fire to the Adelaide Park Lands.

The trial bio-cultural burn is intended to assist in the ecological management of a section of the Key Biodiversity Area in Golden Wattle Park / Mirnu Wirra (Park 21W). The fire will be low in intensity and pose no public health or safety risk to nearby residents, businesses or Park Lands users. The bio-cultural burn will be undertaken by trained members of the Kurna community alongside DEW fire management personnel.

Pre-burn ecological surveys have already been conducted and ongoing monitoring and management will allow CoA to assess and respond to the effects of the burn.

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Timeline

Community engagement opens on Friday 6 March and closes at 5pm on Friday 24 April 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is cultural burning?

Aboriginal people have been using fire to maintain the health of the Australian landscape for tens of thousands of years. Cultural burning is the skilled and intentional use of fire by Aboriginal people for improved environmental, land management and spiritual connection. These burns are typically characterised by low-intensity, small flames and typically occur during the cooler months. A national conversation is occurring amongst fire authorities and other organisations around the integration and expansion of cultural burning programs into land management practices to better care for country and assist in the prevention of large-scale, destructive wildfire.

2) Why burn in the Park Lands?

Native vegetation across Australia, including the Adelaide Park Lands, has a strong association and reliance on fire for maintaining condition and healthy regeneration. The City of Adelaide (CoA) maintains Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA – see Appendix 1) to conserve the natural flora and fauna.

As the traditional custodians of the region, the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains have a strong historical association of applying cultural burning techniques to their Country for environmental and cultural reasons.

This project will allow the Kaurna people to continue their significant cultural practice, with the benefit of assisting CoA to improve the condition of this KBA.

About the Burn

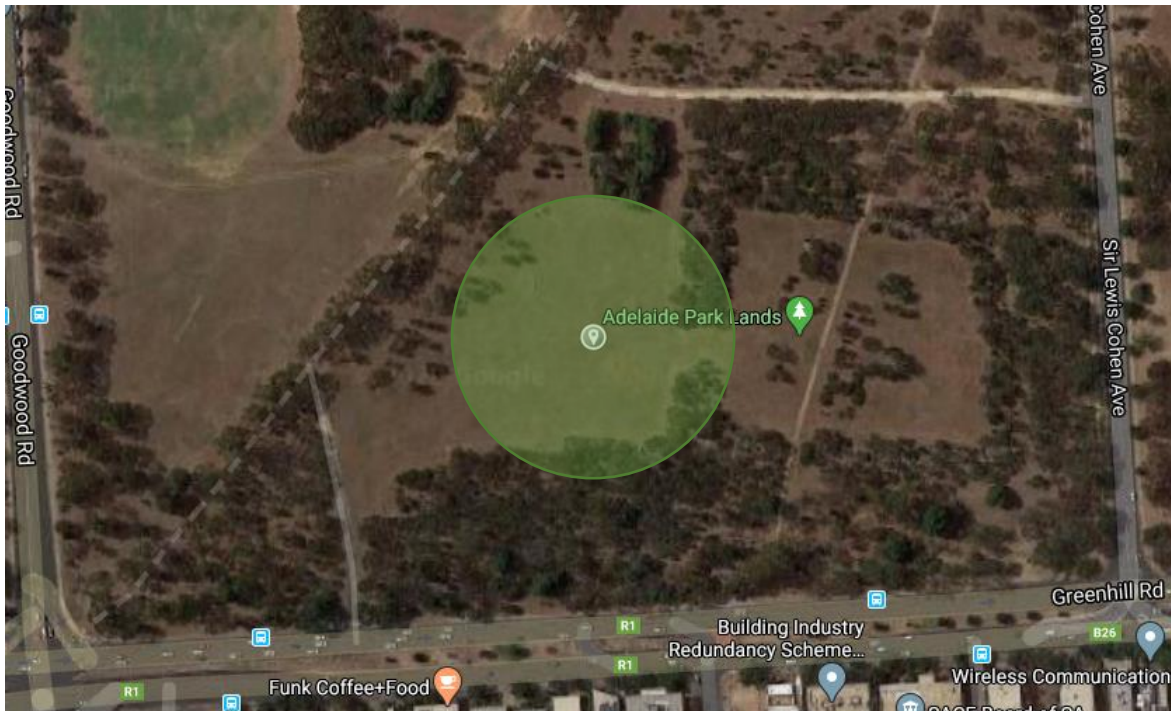
3) Where is the bio-cultural burn taking place?

The bio-cultural burn (burn) will take place in an area of grassland in Golden Wattle Park / Mirnu Wirra (Park 21W), see location map below. The area burnt will be patchy and less than 1 hectare in size.

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4) Why did you choose that spot to burn?

The CoA maintains KBAs to protect the natural ecosystems in the Adelaide Park Lands. This area is within one of these KBAs, contains remnant native grassland species and any fire within the area can be easily controlled. It provides all the conditions necessary for a safe pilot burn.

5) Can I attend the burn?

We are still finalising details of the burn event. If an opportunity exists for members of the public to attend the burn, we will publicise it on [Your Say Adelaide](#), on our Facebook page and What's On listings. Stay tuned for more information.

6) When will the burn occur and why then?

The burn will occur in late April or early May 2020, dependent on weather conditions. Many of the ecological systems in southern Australia have adapted to thrive with infrequent 'cool' burns during Autumn or Winter. These burns are closely associated with the intentional and skilled use of fire by Aboriginal people.

At this time there should still be adequate fuel (e.g. dry grasses) to burn, but the risk of producing a damaging fire will have passed.

7) Who is going to conduct the burn?

Trained members of the Kaurna community will work alongside personnel from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) fire team to ignite, maintain and manage the burn. Ultimately, the DEW team will be responsible for fire control and safety.

8) Can the fire get out of control?

It is highly unlikely that the fire will pose any risk. These burns are conducted under extremely controlled conditions that consider many conditions including weather, fuel load, soil and vegetation moisture, etc.

The DEW fire team will be onsite with suitable equipment for containing the burn and the Metropolitan Fire Service will be on standby in the unlikely event that more assistance is needed.

9) What happens to the animals?

Bio-cultural burns are low in intensity and move slowly, which means wildlife can move or take shelter away from the fire easily.

Other Questions

10) Will the fire smoke affect my asthma?

Given the small size of these fires, unless you are very close to the burn it is unlikely that the fire will affect your asthma. There may be minimal amounts of smoke if you attend the event, but you may notice the smell of fire in the air.

However, it is recognised that fire smoke can be a major trigger for people with asthma and other respiratory conditions. If this is the case, we recommend you stay away from Golden Wattle Park / Mirnu Wirra (Park 21W) during the burn.

For more information please refer to the [Asthma and bushfire smoke fact sheet](#) or visit the [Asthma Foundation SA website](#).

11) How does burning align with the Council's carbon reduction goals?

The CoA is committed to reducing emissions with a goal of becoming carbon neutral.

The small scale of this burn means that the greenhouse gas emissions are immaterial under the Commonwealth Government's [Climate Active](#) guidelines, which the CoA follows for its greenhouse gas accounting. As a result, the emissions related to this event will not be included in our greenhouse gas inventory.

12) Will traffic be affected?

No. The fire will be confined to small patches in the park that are away from any nearby roads. Any smoke produced will be negligible and not affect traffic.

13) What will happen after the Burn?

In the winter months following the burn we expect a flush of native plants and non-native weed species to temporarily take advantage of the bare ground.

Any weeds will be carefully managed by the CoA's Biodiversity Team to favour any native plants in the area.

It is expected that after approximately three years the site will resemble a similar condition to how it appeared before the burn, but with small improvements to the native vegetation. The area may undergo further bio-cultural burns that will improve the condition of native vegetation over time.

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14) Kaurna event and monitoring of burn site in the Park Lands:

The reintroduction of cultural burning is a significant event for the Kaurna community. Kaurna cultural monitors will be staying onsite the night preceding the burn, and Kaurna members will also be staying onsite the night of the burn to monitor the fire and ensure the area is safe.

The Kaurna community would like interested members of the public to know they are welcome to engage, interact and show their support whilst they are onsite.

Further Resources

Websites

- [Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub: Traditional Owners and cultural burning](#)
- [Firesticks Alliance - Cultural burning: healthy communities, healthy landscapes](#)

Articles

- [Adelaide Living article on cultural burning and Adelaide's Kaurna people](#)
- [Aboriginal Way article on Victor Steffensen's visit to Adelaide](#)
- [The Weekly: staff newsletter article for the Department for Environment and Water](#)
- [The Conversation article: *Our land is burning, and western science does not have all the answers*](#)

Videos

- [ABC Australia: Indigenous fire methods protect land before and after the Tathra bushfire](#)
- [DELWP Victoria: Djidak Wi – Traditional Burning Returns](#)
- [ABC The Drum: Three things I know about fire management](#)

How do I provide my feedback?

There are a number of ways in which you can provide feedback:

Online

yoursay.cityofadelaide.com.au

Contribute your queries and thoughts via the online **Live Q&A** (12 March 2020).

Email your comments to yoursay@cityofadelaide.com.au

Visit us at our **Conversation Drop-In Sessions** at the Adelaide South West Community Centre, 171 Sturt St, Adelaide SA 5000:

- Wednesday 18 March 2020, 12pm – 2pm; and
- Wednesday 25 March 2020, 12pm – 2pm.

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Attend our **Community Information Evening** at the Adelaide South West Community Centre, 171 Sturt St, Adelaide SA 5000:

- Thursday 26 March 2020, 5-7pm.

Engagement period closes at 5pm Friday 24 April 2020.

What happens next?

We will acknowledge your feedback as it arrives.

Your feedback will assist us in assessing public sentiment and understanding about the planned burn and about cultural burning in the Park Lands more generally.

For enquires please contact:

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Appendix:

Appendix 1: Map of Key Biodiversity Areas in the Adelaide Park Lands. The burn site is circled in orange.

