Future of Woodside Barracks

Community Engagement Summary Report

November 2026



Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

Table of Contents

1. About the project 2
2. How we engaged 2
   - How we heard from you 2
   - What people were asked to consider 3
   - The feedback posters 3
3. Participants 3
4. What we heard 4
   - Protect the natural environment 4
   - Improve connections and make access safer 4
   - Reuse existing buildings and community infrastructure 4
   - Create jobs and economic opportunities 5
   - Tourism, accommodation, education and recreation 5
   - Take a considered approach to housing 5
5. Ideas and priorities 6
   - What the poster exercise told us 6
   - A broad range of ideas 7
6. Where to from here? 7
   - What happens next? 7
   - Council's role 8
   - Thank you 8

1. About the project

The Australian Government has identified the Woodside Barracks as surplus to Defence requirements and the site is progressing through the Commonwealth divestment process.

Adelaide Hills Council does not own the Barracks and is not the decision-maker about its future sale or development. Council's role is one of advocacy: to understand and represent local priorities, opportunities and concerns as decisions about this significant site are made.

The Barracks is a large and complex site with existing buildings, sporting facilities, areas of native vegetation and connections to Woodside and surrounding communities. The engagement was designed to hear what people value about the site, what future opportunities they would like explored, and what impacts or constraints Council should consider in its advocacy.

2. How we engaged

How we heard from you

Four community drop-in sessions were held during July and August 2026. The sessions gave people the opportunity to speak directly with council staff, view information about the site and discuss possible future uses, priorities and concerns.

Feedback was also received through Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub and written submissions. Participants included local and surrounding residents, adjoining landowners, people with a direct connection to the site, and representatives with an interest in potential future uses.

Many people came prepared to discuss the Barracks in detail. The drop-in format allowed one-on-one and small-group conversations, giving Council the opportunity to explore local knowledge and the reasoning behind people's ideas and concerns.



4 community drop-in sessions



31 people in attendance



4 written and online submissions

08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
ahc.sa.gov.au

Adelaide Hills COUNCIL

What people were asked to consider

- Potential future uses and opportunities for the site.
- What should be retained, protected or enhanced.
- Community priorities and desired outcomes.
- Possible impacts or concerns associated with future development.
- Other matters Council should consider when advocating to the Australian Government.

The feedback posters

Participants could also add sticky-note comments to three themed posters covering the environment, people and community, and jobs and future opportunities. People could respond to comments already on the posters using green stickers for support, yellow for concern and red for non-support.







3. Participants

Participants in the engagement included local and surrounding residents, landowners and residents adjoining the Woodside Barracks, and representatives from industry and the development sector.

Participants brought a range of perspectives to the engagement, including those directly affected by the site's future use, community members interested in the future of Woodside and the surrounding area, and industry representatives interested in potential future investment and development opportunities.

Participation occurred primarily through the four community drop-in sessions, as well as through online and written feedback received during the engagement period.

4. What we heard

Protect the natural environment

Protection of the site's central bushland, native vegetation, waterways, flora and fauna was one of the strongest themes. The central natural area was seen as an important environmental asset, with one participant describing it as the site's "jewel in the crown".

There was strong, although not unanimous, support for some form of conservation effort in areas covered by Native Vegetation overlays. Participants also raised the importance of Mitchell Creek, large trees and wildlife, including kangaroos currently using the site.

Ideas included conservation or community land, environmental restoration, partnerships with relevant government agencies, learning from conservation models elsewhere in the Adelaide Hills, and involving community or volunteer groups in ongoing stewardship.

A recurring message

Protect significant natural areas while considering appropriate, managed community access for walking, cycling and nature-based recreation.

Improve connections and make access safer

Improved walking and cycling connections between the Barracks, CREST/Inverbrackie, Woodside township and the Amy Gillett Bikeway were repeatedly raised.

Pedestrian safety was a particular concern for people living in CREST and the surrounding area. Participants described people walking along roads and within drainage areas because of limited pedestrian infrastructure. Safe access to Woodside and public transport, including for school children, was identified as a priority.

People also wanted paths to be accessible to different users, including children, people with prams and people with limited mobility. There was interest in community access to parts of the Barracks, particularly natural areas, while recognising that access may need to be managed to protect environmental values and accommodate other uses.

Reuse existing buildings and community infrastructure

Participants strongly supported investigating the adaptive reuse of existing Barracks buildings and infrastructure rather than unnecessarily demolishing usable assets.

Suggestions included reusing accommodation buildings, workshops, sporting facilities and other structures. Existing sporting infrastructure, including the three football ovals, was identified as a significant opportunity.

Some participants suggested that sporting facilities could help address capacity pressures elsewhere in Woodside, while others saw potential for larger regional or state-level sporting activities. Additional community facilities, including childcare, were also raised.

The principle behind many comments
Before removing existing assets, understand their condition and whether they can be safely and practically adapted for a new community, commercial, tourism or recreation use.

Create jobs and economic opportunities

There was support for future uses that could generate local employment and economic activity. Participants raised a broad mix of ideas rather than one preferred industry.

Suggestions included a commercial or business precinct, small-scale industrial and employment uses, workshops, warehousing, storage, mechanics and trades, agricultural innovation, specialist defence technology, education and training.

Some participants supported a mixed-use or precinct-based approach rather than development of the entire site for a single purpose. One participant suggested that a significant anchor use or tenant could help make a broader precinct financially sustainable.

Other ideas raised included health and allied health services, repatriation or recovery services, and retaining part of the site for cadet, Defence-family or heritage-related purposes.

Tourism, accommodation, education and recreation

Participants saw opportunities to use the site's location, existing buildings and open space for tourism, accommodation, recreation and education.

Accommodation ideas included cabins, short-term visitor accommodation, youth or school camps, essential-worker or veterans' accommodation and retirement living. Nature-based tourism and recreation were also raised.

Education and training ideas included schools, tertiary or polytechnic-style facilities, vocational training and agricultural education. Participants considered these uses in the context of local education and training opportunities and the potential to reuse existing site infrastructure.

Take a considered approach to housing

Views on residential development varied according to the type and scale proposed.

There was concern about large-scale conventional residential development, including an outcome resembling broadscale development in Mount Barker. At the same time, some participants were open to more limited or differentiated residential uses.

Ideas included retirement living, affordable housing, reuse of existing accommodation and larger lifestyle allotments. The overall message was that any housing should be considered alongside environmental values, infrastructure capacity, traffic, community benefit and the character of the surrounding area.

Plan for infrastructure, safety and long-term management

Participants emphasised that future development would need to respond to practical constraints both within and beyond the Barracks.

- Road capacity, traffic and safe access.
- Water, sewer and other servicing requirements.
- Potential contamination and the condition of existing buildings and infrastructure.
- Bushfire considerations, security and ongoing maintenance.
- Lighting impacts on neighbours and the natural environment.
- The financial sustainability of future uses and long-term management of the site.

5. Ideas and priorities

What the poster exercise told us

The poster exercise gave participants another way to contribute ideas and respond to comments raised by others. It reinforced many of the themes heard in conversations, while also showing that some ideas attracted mixed views.

Comments attracting multiple green support stickers included restricting housing to avoid pressure on community infrastructure, improving pedestrian connections from CREST to Woodside, retaining green space, preserving heritage and memorial elements, vocational learning linked to Hills industries, emergency-services uses, and caravan or visitor accommodation.

Some proposals also attracted yellow concern or red non-support stickers, reinforcing that there was not complete agreement on every future use. This was particularly relevant to some housing, social accommodation, mental-health accommodation and equestrian ideas.

How to read the poster feedback

Sticker numbers should not be treated as a community vote. Comments were added at different times across the sessions, so not every participant had the opportunity to respond to every idea.

A broad range of ideas

Across conversations, posters, online feedback and written submissions, participants suggested many possible uses. These included:

- Conservation, environmental restoration, walking trails and community stewardship.
- Sporting and recreation facilities, community spaces, childcare and health services.
- Commercial, light-industrial, trades, agricultural innovation and defence-technology uses.
- Tourism, cabins, camps, caravan accommodation and nature-based experiences.
- Education, vocational training and research-related uses.
- Retirement living, affordable accommodation and lifestyle housing.
- Council or emergency-services facilities, depots and shared regional infrastructure.

The diversity of ideas is one reason a mixed or precinct-based approach emerged repeatedly through the engagement

Overall

There was no single preferred future use. Feedback generally pointed toward a managed, mixed or precinct-based future that balances environmental protection, community access and benefit, employment and economic opportunity, adaptive reuse and carefully considered development.

6. Where to from here?

What happens next?

Council is using the feedback received through this engagement to inform its advocacy and submission to the Australian Government as the Woodside Barracks progresses through the Commonwealth divestment process.

Council is also continuing discussions with government, regional development, industry and other stakeholders to better understand potential opportunities for the site, likely investment interest and the practical matters that would need to be addressed as part of any future use.

A Strategic Reference Group has been established to provide strategic advice from a regional perspective. Its role is to help Council consider and advocate for outcomes that deliver long-term economic, environmental and community benefit for the Adelaide Hills.

The community feedback summarised in this report will remain an important part of that work. Further investigations and stakeholder discussions will help Council refine its advocacy as the Commonwealth process progresses.

Council's role

Council does not own the Woodside Barracks and cannot determine the final sale or future development of the site. Decisions about disposal of the Commonwealth-owned land sit with the Australian Government, and any future development would also be subject to relevant planning, environmental, infrastructure and other approval processes.

Council will continue to advocate for local and regional priorities to be considered and will keep the community informed as the project progresses.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who attended a drop-in session or provided feedback. The time people took to share local knowledge, ideas and concerns has helped Council build a clearer picture of what the community values and what it wants considered in the future of this significant site.

Stay informed

Updates on the Future of Woodside Barracks project will continue to be provided through Adelaide Hills Council's usual communication and engagement channels.

08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
ahc.sa.gov.au

Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL



08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au

ahc.sa.gov.au

Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL