

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

### *Motions*

#### **NORTH ADELAIDE GOLF COURSE**

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.A. Simms:

That this council—

1. Notes that:

(a) in February 2025 the Malinauskas government announced plans to redevelop the North Adelaide Golf Course in order to secure the future of LIV Golf in the state;

(b) the redevelopment will cost taxpayers at least \$45 million and result in the destruction of 585 trees;

(c) the future of LIV Golf is in doubt and there are media reports that Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund has ceased its support while a LIV Golf tournament in New Orleans has been postponed; and

(d) South Australians are struggling with the increased cost of living, with the costs of fuel, groceries, power, rent and mortgages continuing to rise.

2. Calls on the Malinauskas government to:

(a) cancel the North Adelaide Golf Course redevelopment and instead allocate the \$45 million to measures to assist South Australians in dealing with the cost-of-living crisis; and

(b) return the Adelaide Parklands annexed for development to the management of the Adelaide City Council

**The PRESIDENT:** Before I call upon the Hon. Mr Hanson to start the debate, I will make it quite clear that I expect the debate to proceed respecting the appropriate standing orders and rules for debate. We have a number of people in the gallery, who I am sure share strong views on these matters and, of course, you are welcome here in parliament today. While we are glad to see people here observing the operations of parliament, as the Presiding Officer I will not tolerate any interruptions from the gallery. I now call upon the Hon. Mr Hanson.

**The Hon. J.E. HANSON (16:24):** In speaking to this, I think I will break it down into a few different things; the first is to provide some general comments. Redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course does represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a world-class public golf facility in the heart of Adelaide. The Adelaide City Council has

wanted to upgrade the golf course for many years. It has been unable to make a financial commitment to do so.

What is being sought to be achieved here is balancing environmental considerations and the protection of the Adelaide Parklands, and that the environmental impacts are carefully managed and minimised through evidence-based planning and expert oversight. Despite the motion, the redesign of the golf course was actually released in December 2025, which included released information about the removal of trees at that time.

While the government continues to await the information from LIV about their long-term sustainability, we have successfully secured the Australian Open for the next six years, which will include three men's and, indeed, three women's events that will make Adelaide the centre—I think it is pretty clear—of a world-class competition.

The relevant history of golf in the Parklands goes quite some distance backwards. Following World War I, the popularity of golf grew quite remarkably, resulting in the formalisation of the golf course and what is now known, of course, as our Parklands. In 1921, the Adelaide City Council assumed control of that land and expanded the basic offering that was provided, creating the second public golf course of its kind in Australia.

At this time, a major planting of trees was undertaken, with the aim of creating a challenging golf course design. Since then, many South Australians and visitors to the city have enjoyed recreational golf played amongst the most unique and beautiful flora and fauna that have come to call the once-dry field home.

Tourism provided by golf is something that is pretty relevant to talk to if you are upgrading a golf course, and in recent years major golfing events have seen over \$200 million in economic benefit to our state. This investment in the North Adelaide Golf Course enables future opportunities to attract further and even more major events, increasing the economic return to the state.

In terms of environmental management, the impact of the project has been assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and it has been found that the project will not result in a real chance or possibility of significant impacts to matters of national environmental significance. Trees are an integral part of golf course design, contributing not only to the amenity environment but also, obviously, the challenges and features that make golf so popular.

Over 9,000 trees are located within the project area. Following multiple design iterations to minimise impacts on trees, around 585 trees are being removed under the guidance of a network of specialist ecologists, fauna handlers, landscapers and arborists working with the team. All trees felled will be reused on site in a variety of ways, including timber material for design and construction elements to be determined and recycled for landscaping across the site.

As legislated by the North Adelaide Public Golf Course Act 2025, for every impacted tree, regardless of size, at least three replacement trees must be planted. As a result, over

1,700 new trees will be planted, which will lead to tree canopy expansion, with every opportunity being taken to provide advanced tree planting where possible. Tree and landscaping selections will be made in consultation with ecologists, biodiversity consultants, native vegetation experts and Kaurna traditional owners nominated by KYAC to maximise the environmental and cultural objectives for the project.

On completion of the project, there will be more trees, greater amenity and environment of a world-class golf course to replace the existing Adelaide Parklands golf course. This government has a strong track record in our revegetation strategy for major infrastructure projects, including targeting a 30 per cent canopy increase in line with the Urban Greening Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide from 2025 through 2030. This includes the developments for Majors Road, the Adelaide Aquatic Centre, the T2D, the tram grade separations and the new Women's and Children's Hospital. Licensed fauna handlers, in conjunction with ecologists and arborists, are coordinating all activities on site during tree removals to ensure wildlife is appropriately protected throughout the process.

In terms of the cost-of-living elements, in its first term the Malinauskas Labor government invested over a billion dollars in practical cost-of-living relief measures, providing cheaper public transport, reducing the materials and services charge for students and increasingly improving cost-of-living measures.

We will continue to provide targeted support to South Australians through a range of new initiatives, including improving public transport, expanding Seniors Card eligibility, abolishing school fees and improving access to sport and music vouchers, and many more provisions that we are doubtless going to make.

In closing, the government will not be supporting this motion nor supporting any amendments from either the Hon. Ms Selwood or the Hon. Mr Hood. The Hon. Dennis Hood's amendments ignore that the tree removals for the championship golf course upgrade have already been completed. If the government changed designs now, that would risk even more trees being removed. Extensive design work has occurred to ensure that the least amount of tree removals were required.

Both chambers of this parliament supported the passage of the North Adelaide Public Golf Course Act 2025 last year. The government was open and transparent with the people of South Australia that 585 trees would be removed, and we took that to the election. The government won the election, and we are getting on with the job of delivering what we promised. The government was open and transparent with the people of South Australia that 585 trees would be removed, we took that to the election and now we are proceeding with that plan.

**The Hon. C. BERNARDI (16:31):** I thank the council, because I do have leave for the moment for personal reasons. I just want to put on the record that One Nation does not support this motion. The reason we do not in principle is the fact that the government did go to an election seeking to redevelop the North Adelaide Golf Course. Yes, we have

concerns about the money that has been spent. I am less concerned about the trees, because I actually believe they are going to plant more.

I recognise the government's intentions with LIV Golf have changed. I also understand we are quite right to point out that the government was re-elected with an overwhelming mandate. In the seat of Adelaide, where the North Adelaide Golf Course is, I would also point out that the candidate there was re-elected, with overwhelming support of Greens preferences. So it strikes me as a little hypocritical that 70 per cent of Greens voters decided to support the government, which was absolutely transparent in its pursuit of redeveloping the North Adelaide Golf Course.

As a personal aside, I would say that, unlike many of the boondoggles, events and circuses the government has put on, after spending \$45 million, which may indeed be much more, at least we will actually have something that is going to be of a permanent status that will draw tourists to this state. A championship level golf course on the cusp of the city that is open to the public and that is affordable to the public will actually be a drawcard to the state.

One Nation does not support this motion. We do support the amendments that the Liberals are putting forward. We do not support the Greens' amendments. With that, I thank the council.

**The Hon. M. SELWOOD (16:33):** I move:

Paragraph 1—After subparagraph (c) insert new subparagraph as follows:

(ca) More than 47,000 people have signed a Change.org petition in opposition to the redevelopment; and

LIV Golf has been another failed project by the Malinauskas government. In his speech when he introduced this motion the Hon. Robert Simms spoke about the \$45 million price tag of LIV Golf and how that money should be spent on higher priorities. He spoke of how this legislation was rushed through the parliament. He spoke of how the state government took control of the Parklands for another one of the Premier's pet projects.

Today, I want to highlight what the destruction of the environment means for our Parklands, our future generations and the habitat for precious wildlife that still resides in our city. This state government love to control everything, and their attitude to the Parklands is another example. They were not happy to work collaboratively with the local council, instead they rushed through this legislation to make themselves the sole tsars of the Parklands. Now we know what sort of custodians the Labor government intend to be of our Parklands. They care more about golf than 150-year-old trees. They care more about their sporting mates than the community that has been out protesting.

Last week, we saw the disturbing images of the trees being cut down, massive eucalypts lying on their sides. I do not think the Labor government has realised the impact that this has had on people. It is emotive. Seeing these images has stirred us to act. People want the government to know that they care about our Parklands and they care about our trees. We have seen protesters putting their lives on the line for the trees and the wildlife. We have stood on the steps of this building in the thousands, but Premier Malinauskas keeps doubling down. He keeps saying this project matters to South Australia, but is he even listening when the community is clearly saying that the trees matter to South Australia and the wildlife matters to South Australia?

Last year, the government passed the Biodiversity Act, but it has not come into effect—very convenient, is it not? The government has been able to chainsaw these trees down, reducing biodiversity while we wait for its own legislation to be enacted. The preamble to that act says:

*An Act to provide for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in the State for the benefit of current and future generations...*

Which future generations are benefiting from these trees being cut down? The Biodiversity Act, which includes in its objects 'to promote halting and reversing biodiversity loss', is still to come into force. While we wait, we are losing precious biodiversity. This Labor government claim to be doing the right thing by the environment, but actions speak louder than words. They have gone ahead and cut down the trees while we should be increasing our tree canopy.

When we look around the country, the City of Adelaide has a lower tree canopy than Brisbane, Perth, Hobart and Canberra. Urban trees play a vital role in cooling our urban environments, reducing urban air pollution, increasing human wellbeing, mitigating stormwater run-off and building social and cultural connection. We are unique in that our city is surrounded by parklands of trees. We cannot underestimate the impact that has on our city. We are at risk of losing our urban trees if we are not taking active steps to protect them. Sebastian Pfautsch, an academic from Western Sydney University, has said:

*The lack of large old urban trees today is a result of past decisions...*

*The consequences of not promoting and protecting old trees in our cities will be dire. If we lose them altogether, likely, we will never get them back due to the type of human-nature relationship that allowed them to disappear in the first place.*

The government's argument at every opportunity has been to say that they are replacing these majestic trees with three saplings for every one removed. I remind members that the Greens moved amendments to the North Adelaide Public Golf Course Bill to protect significant trees and to ensure trees were replaced with mature trees instead of saplings. The Labor government did not support those changes to their bill, and now we are stuck with the destruction.

If you take a proper look at the science behind how many trees must be planted to replace one tree that is 150 years old, it can vary between 100 saplings and 800 saplings. It

depends on the type of tree and whether you are measuring the impact to wildlife, habitat or carbon. Scientific research by Australian academics has shown that it can take centuries for a sapling to contribute the same ecological role as an older tree that was cut down. In a piece they wrote for *The Conversation* in 2024 titled 'Large old trees are vital for Australian birds', the authors stated:

*Planting saplings or installing nest boxes cannot replicate the ecological value of large, mature trees.*

The people who have been protesting know that three saplings is not the same as a mature tree. The scientists know that is true. The government has chosen not to acknowledge it. There has been no negotiation with the traditional custodians of this Kurna land regarding the removal of these trees, and the government has not worked collaboratively with the Adelaide City Council. Shame on this government for their arrogance.

This is a government that is willing to take a wrecking ball to something we love—the Parklands—for no other reason than a golf course redevelopment. This motion calls for the control of the Parklands to be returned to the City of Adelaide. That is a good thing, because the Labor government have proved they cannot be good custodians of our Parklands and I trust that the Parklands will be in better hands with the city council.

I also use this opportunity to put the government on notice: we will be scrutinising your plans for the MotoGP in the Parklands. We call on the government to protect the trees in that development and we urge the government to bring the Biodiversity Act into effect so we can see the real protection of our environment.

Regarding my amendment, it recognises that over 47,000 people have signed a petition calling for the Labor government to stop the chop. This is huge and we need to take notice. One of the unfortunate consequences of the archaic practices of this place is we cannot table e-petitions, even though the federal parliament allows it. The threshold for a paper petition to be automatically referred to an inquiry is 10,000 signatures and now this petition has over 47,000. How many people need to join this fight before the government actually listens? Forty-seven thousand people believe we need to protect our Parklands; why doesn't the Labor government?

**The Hon. S.L. GAME (16:40):** I rise briefly to put down my position. I will not be supporting the Greens' motion or the amendments put forward by the Greens. I also will not be supporting the amendments by the Hon. Dennis Hood that I believe are going to be put forward, primarily because of paragraph (b), 'Urgently consider alternative course designs', which I understand is not feasible at this stage. I do support other parts of that motion, for example paragraph (c), 'Commit to protecting the precious Adelaide Parklands', although I do believe that the Labor government has already undertaken to do that and that they have outlined how they will be doing that in an extensive and thorough way, so I will not be supporting the motion or the amendments.

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (16:41):** As shadow minister for tourism and shadow minister for sport, I rise to speak to the motion on behalf of the opposition and deliver our considered position on this matter. The motion calls on the South Australian government to cancel the North Adelaide Golf Course redevelopment and instead allocate the \$45 million to measures to assist South Australians in dealing with cost-of-living issues while returning the Adelaide Parklands annexed for development to the management of the Adelaide City Council.

It is pertinent to note that this motion was introduced by the Hon. Mr Simms after it was confirmed that funding from Saudi Arabia for the LIV Golf tournament had ceased and the future of the tournament was uncertain, as was the necessity for the North Adelaide Golf Course upgrade to progress as a result of that.

However, the following day, you would recall no doubt that the state government had announced via the Premier that they had secured an agreement for South Australia to host an Australian Open tournament each year from 2028 to 2034, including three men's and three women's Australian Opens at the upgraded course. I want to make it crystal clear that the Liberal Party supports the moving of the Australian Open golf tournaments to Adelaide, and the government will enjoy bipartisan support on that venture.

It is true that the Liberal Party strongly supports our state investing in hosting major sporting events in South Australia because they drive tourism, they create jobs and they stimulate economic activity in our state—all good things which will enjoy our support. Having said that, at times but especially amidst cost-of-living crises where power, housing, grocery and fuel costs and pretty much everything else are rapidly rising, all government expenditure must be scrutinised to ensure that priorities are in step with community expectations and represent value for money, particularly when projects involve public land and have considerable environmental impact.

Taxpayers deserve transparency from the state government at all times, and whether the \$45 million earmarked for this initiative is justified must be queried—indeed, as an opposition that is our job. The state government should be producing a business case for the redevelopment, outlining the cost to South Australian taxpayers, including any fees payable to Greg Norman for his input throughout the design process as well as any costs incurred for attracting high-profile players to this state.

Unfortunately, to date we are yet to see any such modelling or figures produced to justify this not insignificant expenditure. These are, I think, not unreasonable requests and just go to holding the government to account and providing appropriate scrutiny of what is a very significant project.

The Greens, I think unsurprisingly, have expressed concern at the removal of close to 600 trees through the current course design, and, I must say, the opposition is also concerned about this. It does seem a very large number and we are interested to know whether any alternative plans or construction approaches had existed or do exist or were actually even considered that do not require the removal of so many trees. Nearly 600 trees is a lot,

and, as we understand and as we have seen the footage, some of them are quite mature trees, which are really virtually irreplaceable.

We understand that the state government's intention is to replace the loss of these trees elsewhere, as they have said, and indeed repeated today, but mature trees and established habitats cannot simply be replaced, and the Liberal Party would hope that the minimisation of environmental impact was given the due attention and consideration in the government's planning processes, and indeed that was one of their highest priorities in this venture.

More than 500 trees does seem excessive—in fact, just short of 600 as I understand it—and the question has to be: were alternatives adequately explored and considered? We are yet to have an adequate explanation to that pretty simple question.

Further, it has been confirmed that the Women's Australian Open is being held at Kooyonga Golf Club in 2026 (this year), and at the Royal Adelaide Golf Club in 2027. The Men's Australian Open was also previously held at the Royal Adelaide Golf Club in 1998. There is clearly a precedent for this event to be successfully hosted elsewhere in South Australia, so we will continue to prosecute legitimate questions to determine what opportunities the state Labor government had to avoid both the significant public funding required for the upgrade of the North Adelaide Golf Course and the consequences to the environment, especially in our precious Parklands.

Again, I ask the question: what alternatives were considered? We do not know because the government simply will not divulge this important information and, in my view, and indeed in the view of the opposition, that should be publicly available. The opposition, however, cannot support the motion as it stands, and, as such, for the reasons I have just outlined, I move to amend the motion on behalf of the opposition as follows:

*Delete paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) and replace with:*

*(a) release the full business case into the \$45 million redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course;*

*(b) urgently consider alternative course designs that do not destroy hundreds of mature trees in the Adelaide Parklands; and*

*(c) commit to protecting the precious Adelaide Parklands.*

I think these are modest requests of the government. I understand they are not going to support them, and I am disappointed to hear that. I think these were drafted with the intention that we thought they may be supportable by the government and I still hold out some hope, although it seems I may be disappointed.

I reiterate that the Liberal Party is strongly supportive of attracting sporting events to our state for all of the economic and social benefits that they bring. We support the Australian Open Golf tournaments coming to South Australia, but an opposition's job is to hold all government decisions to account, and that is precisely what we are committed to doing with respect to this project and every other one for that matter.

To be abundantly clear, we strongly support the attraction of significant events to South Australia, including LIV Golf, although the future of that is somewhat unclear, including the Australian Golf Open tournaments that we are discussing presently. Again, it is our role to scrutinise these and that is exactly what we will do. We want the best events, but we want them at the minimum cost and at the minimum not only economic cost but social and environmental cost.

It is simply not acceptable from the opposition's perspective that we cannot get answers to these simple questions: (1) Where is the business case? (2) How much was Greg Norman paid? (3) How much are the so-called 'star players' being paid to join these tournaments in South Australia?

Just one final matter before I resume my seat regarding the Hon. Ms Selwood's amendment: we will support the amendment. It is a statement of fact. There are, I think, 47,000 people who have signed that petition—I presume it is more by now, but at least that anyway—and for that reason we will support it. It is merely a statement of fact.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:48):** I thank all members for their contributions today. I might just start by clarifying the Greens' position. We will support the amendments being put by the opposition. Politics is a numbers game and, regrettably, it is clear today that there is not support for the Greens' original motion to axe the redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course, and so, reluctantly, we will support the Liberals' amendment because that gives this motion the best possible pathway of success.

I hope that One Nation will reconsider their position, because the Hon. Cory Bernardi indicated in his remarks that he is supportive of the amendment. From the Greens' perspective, we recognise that, whilst the amendment does not go as far as we would like, it is an advance on the status quo. It calls for the government to release the business case, which I think is a basic, bare requirement for any project such as this. It asks them to minimise any future tree loss, which is a very sensible proposal, and it also calls for the government to protect the Parklands. Why on earth would a crossbench party in this place oppose such a proposition?

I remember when, back in February, to much fanfare, the Hon. Cory Bernardi announced that he had joined One Nation. He said at the time, and I quote from his public comments:

*There's been no opposition in this state...the only competition we have between the two major parties is who's going to manage the social, economic and cultural decline...less badly than the alternative...*

*Whether we have one seat, we have five seats or 22 seats, we will be the strongest voice of opposition that this government has ever faced.*

The strongest ever. What happens when One Nation faces its first test in this place? Who do they support? Do they support the opposition parties in this place and send a strong message to the Malinauskas government? No, they fold like a cheap suit at the very first test and fall into line with the Malinauskas government. It is pathetic, absolutely pathetic.

Might I say, if this is the kind of weak positioning we can expect from One Nation in the days ahead—I mean, I am sure Peter Malinauskas is shaking in his boots.

The 'most effective opposition this government has ever faced', and they cannot even support a simple motion in this chamber calling for the release of a business case. How pathetic is that? A lot of people in the community know that One Nation are racist and homophobic, and now they know they hate the environment as well. They are absolutely pathetic and they are failing the test of playing the role of an opposition in this place.

To turn to the substance of this issue, the Greens have been very clear in our position all along. We opposed this redevelopment when it was first suggested back in May last year. We fought tooth and nail to amend the legislation, and all those efforts were blocked by the Malinauskas government. We called for the government to release a business case, to be transparent with the people of South Australia. We tried to protect significant trees from the chop.

What we have faced in response has been an arrogant and belligerent government that has refused to provide any of the key information to the people of South Australia and has refused to undertake even the most basic environmental protections. Now they are being aided and abetted in that endeavour by the One Nation party, under the leadership of the Hon. Cory Bernardi. It is very disappointing that we find ourselves in this position, but I urge the two One Nation members who are present to think carefully about their position. They do have an opportunity to do the right thing and to support this motion, albeit in an amended form.

Might I also just say that I know lots of people in the community have approached both the Hon. Ms Selwood and myself, expressing their profound concern and sadness over what has happened with our public green space. My fear is that what we have seen with the Parklands over the last few weeks could just be a curtain-raiser for what the government has in store for MotoGP.

This is a reminder that we all have to be vigilant and we have to continue with the campaign. I have never seen so much public momentum and enthusiasm for the campaign to protect our Parklands. I have a sense that this is just the beginning. The community will not be silenced. Shame on the members of this place who thumb their noses at the community and disregard their concerns.

**The PRESIDENT:** This motion has two amendments proposed. We will deal with them slowly and methodically. The first amendment for which we will put the question is the amendment made by the Hon. Ms Selwood.

The council divided on the amendment:

Ayes .....7

Noes .....12

Majority .....5

AYES		
Centofanti, N.J.	Girolamo, H.M.	Hood, B.R.
Hood, D.G.E.	Lensink, J.M.A.	Selwood, M.
Simms, R.A. (teller)		
NOES		
Bourke, E.S.	El Dannawi, M.	Game, S.L.
Gumbys, H.J.	Hanson, J.E.	Hewett, R.J.
Hunter, I.K.	Maher, K.J.	Ngo, T.T.
Quaremba, C.L.	Scriven, C.M.	Wortley, R.P. (teller)
PAIRS		
Henderson, L.A.	Bernardi, C.	

Amendment thus negatived.

**The PRESIDENT:** We will now deal with the second amendment in the name of the Hon. Mr Dennis Hood.

The council divided on the amendment:

Ayes .....10

Noes .....9

Majority .....1

AYES		
Centofanti, N.J.	Girolamo, H.M.	Henderson, L.A.
Hewett, R.J.	Hood, B.R.	Hood, D.G.E. (teller)
Lensink, J.M.A.	Quaremba, C.L.	Selwood, M.
NOES		
Bourke, E.S.	El Dannawi, M.	Game, S.L.
Gumbys, H.J.	Hanson, J.E.	Hunter, I.K.
Maher, K.J.	Ngo, T.T.	Wortley, R.P. (teller)
PAIRS		
Bernardi, C.	Scriven, C.M.	

Amendment thus carried.

**The PRESIDENT:** We now have the final motion that has been moved by the Hon. Robert Simms and amended by the Hon. Dennis Hood. The question is that the amended motion be agreed to.

The council divided on the motion as amended:

Ayes .....7

Noes .....12

Majority .....5

AYES		
Centofanti, N.J.	Girolamo, H.M.	Hood, B.R.
Hood, D.G.E.	Lensink, J.M.A.	Selwood, M.
Simms, R.A. (teller)		
NOES		
Bourke, E.S.	El Dannawi, M.	Game, S.L.
Gumbys, H.J.	Hanson, J.E. (teller)	Hewett, R.J.
Hunter, I.K.	Maher, K.J.	Ngo, T.T.
Quaremba, C.L.	Scriven, C.M.	Wortley, R.P.
PAIRS		
Henderson, L.A.	Bernardi, C.	

Motion as amended thus negatived.