

Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 Public Consultation Outcomes

Tuesday, 5 November 2025
City Community Services and
Culture Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

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Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The festive season encompasses significant civic, traditional and cultural celebrations for our communities and in Capital Cities globally. The 2024 Christmas season is the final delivery year under the current City of Adelaide (CoA) Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024.

On 14 May 2024, Council approved the development of a four-year Christmas in the City Action Plan in collaboration with key stakeholders, notably the CoA's subsidiaries, the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) which manages the Rundle Mall precinct; and the Adelaide Central Market Authority (ACMA).

This report presents the outcomes of the public consultation undertaken in September 2024, and the themes drawn from this to inform the development of the new Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025 to 2028.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on Tuesday 12 November 2024 for consideration

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL
THAT COUNCIL

1. Receives the outcomes of the public consultation, Attachment A, to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 5 November 2024, on Christmas in the City, held from 9 - 27 September 2024.
 2. Approves the principals as stated in paragraph 16 of this report, which will form part of the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025- 2028.
 3. Approves the themes as stated in paragraph 18 of this report, which will form part of the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025- 2028.
 4. Notes the presentation that accompanies this report, Attachment B to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 5 November 2024.
 5. Notes the draft Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025 to 2028 is to be presented to Council in early 2025.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</p> <p><i>Create fun, lively and interesting experiences</i></p> <p>The proposed Christmas in the City Action Plan, through engagement with and benefits to city businesses, also delivers on the theme of Our Economy, aligned with the outcome: <i>Adelaide’s unique experiences and opportunities attract visitors to our City.</i></p>
Policy	<p>The proposed Christmas in the City Action Plan will deliver on the City of Adelaide’s Economic Development Strategy, which includes a priority to:</p> <p><i>Enable events and experiences of every size and scale</i></p> <p>The Christmas in the City Action Plan is proposed to contribute to the delivery of Council’s Cultural Policy (in development) as a key cultural celebration on the city community calendar.</p>
Consultation	<p>Community consultation through Our Adelaide was undertaken from 9 - 27 September 2024, with 282 contributions. There were 1,580 visits to the Our Adelaide page. The summary report can be found in Attachment A.</p>
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	<p>Council has an opportunity to review community feedback to inform their new directions for a four-year Christmas in the City Action Plan that will align with the new Strategic Plan 2024-2028.</p>
24/25 Budget Allocation	<p>The new Christmas in the City Action Plan will be funded annually through Council’s Business Plan and Budget.</p> <p>The total 2024/2025 expenditure allocated to Christmas activities across the CoA, AEDA and ACMA is \$1.837M, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoA Operational Budget \$529,130 • Rundle Mall \$900,000 (including Black Friday and Boxing Day activity) • Adelaide Central Market \$70,000 • Capital (New and Upgrade) \$188,174 • AEDA Festival and Events Sponsorship to the National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant and Carols by Candlelight of \$150,000.
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	<p>Budget allocation for Christmas 2025 will be considered as part of Council’s 2025/2026 Business Plan and Budget process.</p>
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	<p>The proposed Christmas in the City Action Plan will direct the planning and delivery of Christmas seasons 2025 to 2028.</p>
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. On 14 May 2024, Council approved the development of a four-year Christmas in the City Action Plan in collaboration with key stakeholders, notably the City of Adelaide's (CoA) subsidiaries, including the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) which manages the Rundle Mall precinct; and the Adelaide Central Market Authority (ACMA). Council also noted at this time that Christmas 2024 was the final delivery year under the current Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024.
2. Christmas activity in the city each year traditionally includes, in chronological order based on 2024;
 - 2.1. Decorations, events, activities and a marketing campaign across the city through November and December, commencing from 26 October 2024.
 - 2.2. The National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant on 2 November.
 - 2.3. The free CoA Community Lighting of the Christmas Tree event on 9 November.
 - 2.4. Black Friday trading and activations on 29 November through to Cyber Monday on 2 December.
 - 2.5. Increase in activity from 13 December (the Twelve Days of Christmas).
 - 2.6. St John's Carol's by Candlelight on 14 December.
 - 2.7. The period traditionally concludes with the New Year's Eve celebration in the City.
3. The CoA leads the city-wide policy planning and integration of Christmas, including:
 - 3.1. city-wide decoration purchases, installation and renewal.
 - 3.2. community-based Christmas experiences including the Giant Christmas Tree and events in Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga,
 - 3.3. community activities and decorations in all precincts.
 - 3.4. facilitation of land use and road closures for small and large Christmas events.
 - 3.5. Each year, the planning and distribution of Christmas experiences is based on a considered assessment, to maximise geographic spread and impact, aligned with available financial and human resources to enable delivery. The CoA coordinates communication with the subsidiaries and works together to provide integrated high impact experiences.
4. AEDA leads the delivery of the Christmas experience in our award winning Rundle Mall, our premier shopping precinct and Black Friday and offers sponsorships through grant programs for major events.
5. ACMA leads the delivery of the Christmas experience for the Central Market.
6. The City of Adelaide and its subsidiaries deliver decorations, activations and events across the city, with a focus at three geographic 'hubs' of Christmas activity, in order of investment from highest to lowest are:
 - 6.1. Rundle Mall
 - 6.2. Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga
 - 6.3. Market Precinct
7. CoA resourcing for Christmas is supported through CoA Place Partners, who support and connect with community opportunities in our precincts, including for 2024:
 - 7.1. Taste of Melbourne Street Meander Market
 - 7.2. Melbourne Street Christmas Gnome trail, wreaths and mannequin decorations.
 - 7.3. Carols and other community events in city squares and streets in precincts
 - 7.4. Christmas lighting in Whitmore Square.
8. AEDA leads a marketing campaign through Experience Adelaide to attract visitors to Adelaide during the festive season including the important retail event 'Black Friday'.
9. Rundle Mall, operated through AEDA, delivers a two-month calendar of decorations and activations, funded through the Rundle Mall trader levy. The primary purpose is to welcome and attract shoppers to the precinct at Christmas time, in support of the traders. This investment is approximately \$900,000 which includes AEDA's broad marketing campaigns and inclusions for Black Friday and Boxing Day.
10. AEDA financially supports major Christmas events including the National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant (\$75,000 sponsorship) operated by the South Australian Tourism Commission, and the St John Carols by Candlelight (\$75,000 sponsorship).

11. Rundle Mall is developing a four-year Christmas in the Mall strategy that will encompass a detailed two-year plan for retail marketing and activation. This strategy will reference a new creative suite which will integrate with CoA city-wide new creative and asset suite for the new 2025-2028 Christmas in the City Action Plan.
12. ACMA has a remit to support the traders within the Market. Through trader levies, ACMA delivers promotions, decorations and activations, with a focus on the unique and iconic offerings of food and produce within the Market. The Giant Santa purchased and installed by Andrew Costello 'Cosi' in 2022 still attracts visitors to the City and ACMA is supportive of it as a Christmas feature. Cosi is required by Agreement with CoA to display the Giant Santa in the City of Adelaide for 5 years from 2022- 2026. Consideration will need to be made from 2027 onwards as to the ongoing display of the Giant Santa.

Community Engagement

13. Community engagement was undertaken from 9 - 27 September 2024, with 282 contributions. There were 1,580 visits to the Our Adelaide page. The summary report, including key themes, can be found in **Attachment A** and a summary presentation provided as **Attachment B**.
14. During Christmas 2023, Rundle Mall initiated a visitor survey with 99 respondents. The survey data can be found at [Link 1](#).

Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028

15. The proposed Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 will deliver on the CoA Strategic Plan 2024-2028, through contributing to 'Our Community: Vibrant, connected and inclusive' and aim to meet Council's vision of being Bold, Aspirational and Innovative. The delivery of Christmas supports our communities to thrive, to create fun and interesting experiences and to celebrate and honour community and cultures. The proposed Christmas in the City Action Plan will also contribute to and align with Council's Cultural Policy, which will be developed following public consultation in late 2024.
16. The Christmas in the City Action Plan will be developed in accordance with the principles of the CoA Strategic Plan, with those most relevant including:
 - 16.1. Unique Experiences – Create interesting experiences for our residents, workers and visitors.
 - 16.2. Community Connection - Strengthen connection, accessibility, diversity and inclusivity by putting people first.
 - 16.3. Economic Growth – Adelaide's unique experiences and opportunities attract visitors to our City.
17. The delivery of Christmas activity also aligns with the Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 as the festive season is one of the most important retail shopping periods of the year and incorporates associated events such as Black Friday (29 November). City-wide Christmas activity plays a role in supporting visitation to businesses across all City precincts and North Adelaide.
18. Based on the public consultation and past experiences, emerging themes for consideration to develop the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025 to 2028 include:
 - 18.1. Bold, impactful and traditional street decorations and entry statements
 - 18.2. Events and activities
 - 18.3. A global Christmas and welcoming communities
 - 18.4. Showcase Adelaide's unique cultural heritage and traditions.
19. Next steps and priorities:
 - 19.1. AEDA will lead Rundle Mall's four-year Christmas strategy for new creative assets, retail marketing and activation
 - 19.2. A draft Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025 to 2028 will be presented to Council in early 2025
 - 19.3. Update provided to community members who responded and engaged with the 2024 Christmas consultation.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - Rundle Mall 2023 visitor survey

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Christmas Action Plan - Community Engagement Report September 2024

Attachment B - Christmas Action Plan supporting information

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