

Event Spread across City of Adelaide and North Adelaide

Tuesday, 19 November 2024
City Finance and Governance
Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Economy

Program Contact:
Greg Ratsch, General Manager
Adelaide Economic Development
Agency

Public

Approving Officer:
Anthony Spartalis, Chief
Operating Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its 26 March 2024 meeting, Council requested Administration and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) review sponsorship arrangements, and through engagement with significant event organisers, investigate ways to further spread the positive economic and cultural impact of events on Hutt Street, West End and North Adelaide.

Engagement with event organisations, State Government and other Stakeholders was undertaken and a range of barriers to holding events, and possible opportunities to incentivise event spread were identified.

These barriers and opportunities were presented to the AEDA Advisory Committee and Board for their review and this report provides those opportunities for consideration to Council.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL:

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Notes the findings of the engagement with event organisers and State Government.
 2. Notes that weightings in the AEDA Commercial Events Funds have been amended to encourage a spread of event activity across the city.
 3. Notes initiatives already being delivered by the City of Adelaide and AEDA which support event spread across the City and North Adelaide.
-

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Economy
Policy	Not as a result of this report.
Consultation	Consultation has been undertaken with over 13 event and festival organisers, State Government, the AEDA Advisory Committee (the Agency’s conduit to grass root businesses) and the AEDA Board.
Resource	Not as a result of this report.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report.
Opportunities	This report outlines opportunities to support and expand the economic and cultural benefits of events in the city and North Adelaide.
24/25 Budget Allocation	As per proposed Quarter 1 Budget Review, consistent with Council’s resolution on 25 June 2024 in adopting the 2024/25 annual budget, \$300,000 within the Commercial Events Fund.
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report.
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

Background

1. Council at its 26 March 2024 meeting, resolved:
 1. *“Notes the positive economic impact the festival season has had on the East End.*
 2. *Requests administration and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) to review all current sponsorship arrangements under their purview and investigate ways to collaborate with the State Government, significant event organisers, and festival organisers to spread further the positive economic and cultural impact of events on Hutt Street, West End, and North Adelaide.*
 3. *Requests a plan on a collaborative approach to develop a plan on specific actions to prioritise economic and cultural impacts of events in these regions of the City of Adelaide.*
 4. *Requests administration to report to the Council with the recommendations and findings from external event organisers on their views for council consideration.”*
2. The City of Adelaide (CoA) Administration requested the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) to lead a response to the motion. AEDA has worked closely with CoA’s City Experience team in the City Culture program and has engaged with significant event and festival organisers and State Government to inform the approach.
3. The findings and recommendations of the report have also been considered by the AEDA Advisory Committee (AEDA’s conduit to grass root businesses in the city), and the AEDA Board.

Discussion

4. Events and festivals play a significant role in attracting people to the city. Research undertaken by McGregor Tan in 2022 commissioned by CoA indicated that events are overwhelmingly viewed as the biggest opportunity to encourage more people back to the city. Employers consider events in the city provide incentive for employees to work from their city premises. It is a core part of what Adelaide is known for. Both the State Government and Council (including through AEDA) have invested significantly in supporting this sector.
5. The CoA Economic Development Strategy’s ([Link 1](#)) fifth goal is for Adelaide to be ‘Australia’s festival and creative capital’, and that ‘we will enable arts, culture and music through programs that support events and festivals’. A Strategic priority is to ‘enable events and experience of every size and scale.’
6. The benefits of events and festivals are distributed unevenly across the city. Physical constraints, the proximity of spaces to bricks and mortar businesses, and varying levels of public infrastructure to support events make some locations more attractive to hold events than others.
7. The East End has become Adelaide’s premium event space as there are three large parks in close proximity to Rundle Street - Rymill Park/Murlawirrapruka, Rundle Park/Kadlitpina and Victoria Park/Pakapakanthi. Power, water and sewerage infrastructure has been upgraded by Council in these locations in recent years, further enabling larger events to be held there.
8. Light Square/Wauwi infrastructure has recently been upgraded enabling additional power, incentivising and providing benefits for events to use this location in the City’s West. However being surrounded by roads creates a barrier. Preliminary concepts for the Light Square Masterplan provide some creative options for how this may be redressed.
9. Hutt Street and North Adelaide have no large open Park Lands suitable for a major event to be held. They are more suited to smaller events and ‘street party’ style activities.
10. The West End has two locations suitable for major events, namely Ellis Park and Bonython Park. Ellis Park has seen a sustained increase in major events held there (two in 2019/20, and eight proposed for 2024/25).
11. They are more difficult to access and may not provide the same economic benefit to City businesses in the West End, compared to events held in the East End.
12. Ellis Park/Tampawardli is more than 600m from Hindley Street and over 1km from Gouger Street and the Central Market, and separated by West Terrace (which is challenging to cross).
13. Bonython Park/Tulya Wardli, while connected by tram, is even further from the CBD and West End.

14. The Event and Festival Sponsorship Program and the Commercial Event Fund Program have been considered in light of this decision.
15. The Event and Festival Sponsorship program includes a standard set of criteria in the guidelines against which applications are assessed. A standard contract is put in place with the successful applicants but selection does not put a weighting on the dispersal of events. The operating guidelines for this fund are currently under review in line with the recently endorsed CoA Funding Policy.
16. The Commercial Events Fund guidelines have been reviewed in line with the CoA Funding Policy, and a weighting has been included for events that activate underutilised areas of the city.

Engagement

17. In line with Council's resolution, AEDA contacted 13 event organisers to seek their views on why they hold events in particular locations, what their experience has been in trying to expand into other parts of the City, the barriers to doing so, and what is required to incentivise event organisers to expand their events or create positive economic and cultural flow-on from their event to other parts of the city and North Adelaide.
18. Key themes and findings from the engagement are:

Rationale for Location

- 18.1 Accessibility such as proximity to public transport, parking availability and locations that are easily accessed by walking.
- 18.2 Event infrastructure and availability of venues and space is a significant factor for event organisers when choosing locations.
- 18.3 It is important that events are held in 'known event spaces' as this impacts patron behaviour and likelihood to attend.
- 18.4 Visible and prominent locations are highly desirable.
- 18.5 'Buy-in'/ engagement from the local precinct and the local stakeholders and traders is important.

Key barriers to holding events in less event activated areas

- 18.6 Event organisers cited the lack of event spaces/large Park Land spaces in areas such as North Adelaide, Hutt Street and the West End as key barriers to holding events there.
- 18.7 Poor location accessibility.
- 18.8 Holding events in Park Lands spaces is expensive (given the reintroduction of fees) and risky given weather implications.
- 18.9 Some locations aren't close to hospitality dense areas and therefore economic flow-on isn't as great.
- 18.10 Lack of knowledge of what those areas have to offer to events and what opportunities there are to host events in those areas.
- 18.11 Unwillingness to consider relocating or expanding outside of their traditional location due to the perceived risk of weakening their offering and potential financial loss.
- 18.12 Forcing the spread of activity across the city during peak festival season has the potential to dilute existing offerings. Those that have tried to activate underutilised areas of the city have lost money.

Opportunities to incentivise event spread

- 18.13 An increase in event infrastructure in underserved areas.
- 18.14 Funding tied to expanding event activity but it would need to be of a significant value to mitigate risk.
- 18.15 Support in strategic marketing and marketing to that specific precinct.
- 18.16 Partnerships and collaboration with other events and connection to precincts, venues and operators.

State Government

- 18.17 State Government's engagement indicated that their rationale for event locations is specific to increasing tourism and visitation. Locations for their key events such as Tasting Australia and Santos Tour Down Under are targeted at the city centre, hence their preference for the Victoria

Square location. Central locations showcase Adelaide, and the location's accessibility and visibility is key to their events and associated objectives. Proximity to event partner hotels is also a factor.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. AEDA encourages a spread of event activity through its assessment weightings, such as that applied within the Commercial Events Fund. This spread of activity relates to geography as well as timing.
 20. The City of Adelaide either organises or funds smaller scale activities across the city in these underutilised locations, through the City Activation and Place Making programs. Some examples include Fermoy on Foot in North Adelaide, Adelaide 500 Pitt Stop Party on Hutt Street, the Inflatable Church in Light Square during Adelaide Fringe 2024 and Winter Weekends in North Adelaide, Hutt Street and the West End.
 21. The City Experience team also works with event organisers to program new events into less traditional spaces. Examples of this in 2023/24 included 'Infamous' in Ellis Park / Tampawardli and 'Sanctuary' in Helen Mayo Park / Tulya Wardli during the Adelaide Fringe period.
 22. CoA's investment in such events is key as they demonstrate spaces that may not have been typically considered event spaces can be utilised for events and help change patron thinking of those spaces.
 23. All AEDA sponsored events appear on the Experience Adelaide website (average of 199k page views per month) and are featured in Experience ADL's EDM (149k subscribers), Facebook and Instagram (combined 60k followers).
 24. For selected major exhibitions or events that draw a significant number of visitors to the city (regardless of sponsored or not), AEDA works with the event organiser(s), state government and local traders to leverage visitor activity by delivering a range of initiatives and activations across the city. These can include city dressing, special product or service offerings from traders and live viewing sites. Examples of these activations include Frida & Diego City Trail, AFL Gather Round and LIV Golf.
 25. Existing City of Adelaide and AEDA activities and initiatives which can support further spread of positive economic and cultural impact of events on Hutt Street, West End, and North Adelaide are described below. It is recommended these continue with increased focus of spreading event activity.
 - 25.1 Include weightings within the Events and Festivals Sponsorship program and the Commercial Events Fund that encourage a spread of activity.
 - 25.1.1 In response to this the AEDA Board have endorsed the small-medium category within the Commercial Events Fund program to be restructured to address the spread of activity as well as other key priorities by placing greater emphasis on funding applications for events that activate underutilised areas of the city, support the night-time economy and target off-peak and shoulder event periods.
 - 25.2 Considering opportunities to achieve a greater spread of activity when Council prioritises investment in event and cultural infrastructure;
 - 25.3 The City of Adelaide continue to support or deliver the staging of small-medium events in different parts of the City.
 - 25.4 Use Precinct Groups and Place Partners to foster connection between event organisers, precincts and businesses.
 - 25.5 Provide businesses with more information about what events are happening in and around their precinct so they can adjust their marketing strategies/product offer accordingly.
 26. Note however it is inherently difficult and financially risky for some events and festivals to expand their footprint or change their location.
 27. The findings and recommendations of this report were discussed by the AEDA Advisory Committee, and the AEDA Board.
 - 27.1 The Advisory Committee noted the findings, supported the recommendations and commented on the importance leveraging the identities and strengths of different areas of the city.
 - 27.2 The Board noted the findings, supported the recommendations and noted the importance of functioning Precinct leadership on the matter.
-

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - [City of Adelaide Economic Development Strategy](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -