

DRAFT CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

Summary of Consultation

April 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Adelaide acknowledges that we are located on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We also extend that respect to visitors of other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

DOCUMENT PROPERTIES

Contact for enquiries and proposed changes

If you have any questions regarding this document or if you have a suggestion for improvements, please contact:

Contact Officer: Felicity Edwards
Title: Strategic Project Lead
Program: City Culture
Phone: (08) 8203 7435
Email: f.edwards@cityofadelaide.com.au

Record Details

Container: 2024/01239

Version History

Version	Revision Date	Revised By	Revision Description
1	3 April 2025	F Edwards	Review post Council meeting

1. ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

This engagement was the second for the development of the Christmas in the City Action Plan. The first consultation to develop the project ran in September and resulted in 282 individual responses. The input from the first consultation was used to develop the draft document. The second consultation was to inform the public of the content of the draft Plan, and to create an opportunity for the community to indicate support and/or propose amendments.

Draft Christmas in the City Action Plan was open for public consultation and feedback on Council's Our Adelaide platform from 12 -31 March 2025.

Direct emails were sent to the contributors from the September consultation encouraging them to review the Draft Plan. The opportunity to provide feedback was also provided on City of Adelaide social media resulting in a reach of 1,271 and 71 clicks on post or link.

Summary

- The page received 259 visits and received 18 unique survey contributions.
- The Draft Christmas in the City Action Plan was downloaded 149 times.
- 89% of contributors voted YES to '**Do you support the Draft Plan**'
- There were no contributors who voted NO to '**Do you support the Draft Plan**'
- 89% of contributors worked in the City
- 33% of contributors were city residents
- 22% of contributors were business owners.

2. SUBMISSIONS

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) is a key partner for Christmas in the City. SATC, through Brian Gilbertson AM, Event Manager and Creative Director, National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant. The email by submission received on 25 March 2025 from Gilbertson, Brian (SATC) (Brian.Gilbertson@sa.gov.au) is as follows:

Hi Felicity

Sorry not to get back sooner.

I thought it best to take up your offer to receive this feedback by email.

The strategy looks to me the best I have seen on Christmas in the City so far. It is very detailed and covers a lot. I suppose the challenge is to now keep it simple in its implementation which will perhaps require a discussion about what comes first, second and third etc, to create the most cost effective first level impact which will create the opportunity for partnerships to want buy in.

The things that stood out for me were

High Impact

Trail of lighting

UNESCO City of Music

Global Creative (for me that implies high quality/world leading)

Culture inclusive

Bold

Impactful

Traditional

Major Event Draw Card (you mention Carols by Candlelight! The interstate Carols look tired and churned out. Is it time to partner with a TV station, bring in BIG names supported by National local entertainers, add Pageant floats as stage sets (ala Pageant stadium spectacular during Covid) to put Adelaide on the International map for best carols by Candlelight at Christmas? People pay to see it!)

Showcase

Global

Adelaide is “truly” magical at Christmas

These are the bullet point words that might keep the focus of planners simple.

Regarding the light trail, I would add the challenge that every installation also has to have a daytime “magical” component. You may recall in the presentation I provided, I referenced installations both light based and “shadow” or sound based. This means the “magical trail” can be experienced both day and night. If the designers get this right, the installations might just create a level of intrigue that people cross the border to experience. I say this based on feedback I have been given over some 20 years of promoting and urging Christmas light activations in the City. That feedback relates to daylight savings being a reason for not investing in lights. By doubling the creative output to allow for lights and daytime curiosities, we cover both bases. This should not be read as an acceptance on my part that daylight savings makes lighting less effective. The many families who stay up late to see lights at St Peters and Lobethal and other SA pockets is testament to the fact that “lights work” as an attractor to large numbers of the community, especially when done well. It is a global phenomena that the public will surge to light exhibitions.

There is a mention of lighting installation on light poles. I believe that if at all possible, they ought not to be on light poles but on central road poles (tram poles) or swung across major streets. Trees block some light poles and the impact of repetitive installations is seriously diminished, even if one goes missing. If they are to hang off light poles, I would recommend they be designed with a significant “L) shapes design to bring the installation out and above street level.

The plan also mentions new street banners. Some banners I have seen in the past are too busy. Big Bold images easily identified from a distance are more impactful than words.

The plan refers to markets. If the market tents or design is not Christmasified (© Brian Gilbertson ha ha!), then in my view the market has no impact whatsoever. White tents or allowing sellers to “bring their own” is not enough. The only Christmas market I have seen in Adelaide with a good feel was the one created by Stuart Duckworth at the Torrens Parade Ground some years ago with a purpose built gathering bar, an ice rink, and all white tents were consistent but all had a Christmas designed façade in the tradition of the winter Christmas markets in Europe. Without the dressing, it is just another market and the ambience is lost.

I hope my commentary is not presumptuous and I expect that most of what I have said has already been thought about. But these are my take outs and thoughts that are given with every good intention of your next iterations for Christmas in the City to go to that next level.

Lastly, once the strategy is settled and complete, can I suggest that a one or two pager summary dot pointing the core elements be drafted so that those looking in have a quick and impactful overview rather than having to sift through the detail.

Well done to the team that is bringing this together. Clearly a lot of work has gone into this strategy. Wishing you every success in your next steps.

Kind regards to you all.

BG

Hi Felicity

One other item for consideration. Pageant is planned usually for the 2nd Saturday of November each year. Your current practice is to put up your tree the week before so that it has presence on Pageant Day. The plan suggests the tree lighting ceremony will happen after the Pageant. Does that mean on Pageant night? Is it a better story to have it on the Friday eve the day before Pageant? This would certainly create a great start to a Pageant weekend festival should that be an intention into the future, creating a new tradition.

Cheers and again I hope my thoughts are helpful.

BG

3. ONLINE FEEDBACK

3.1 Question: Is there anything you think we should focus on more?

Responses:

1. Focus on high traditions such as the Christmas Pageant and Iconic destinations Rundle Mall, Adelaide Central Market and Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga is strongly supported. High impact lighting needs to be careful to burden the budget away from family friendly free activities.
2. I think you should utilise the River Torrens more. Have large decorations that light up at night. It would be so nice and people could walk around or sit and look at.
3. Sustainability and not promoting over-consumerism.
4. Not more but with more clarity - how will community groups and choirs be encouraged and supported? What will be done on the 3 newly activated streets? Will it be patchy or will the red and white petunia ""trees"" be a consistent theme in those streets too?
5. Since the pageant is our real point of difference, using some of the popular or long lasting floats as inspiration might be worthwhile.
6. I encourage the plan to give more attention to the focus/themes of Christmas displays, activities and events.
7. The City is a highly multicultural location - the people who live, work, shop and transit through the city come from a wide diversity of cultures.
8. Displays, activities and events should connect to the diversity of what Christmas means to these people. This will allow for a richness far greater than a Santa and Christian focus. And an inclusion of what Christmas means to Indigenous Australians would be important as well.
9. Adelaide City has many Christian places of worship. They are best places to lead on Christian focused displays, activities and events.
10. Christmas in the city of Adelaide is so special. Thank you for your strategy to make it even more special.
11. The new light decorations in the city on light poles last year really provided a much larger and more festive feel in city streets than have been there for many years. A further extension of these throughout main city streets would be great. It would be fantastic if the CoA could help Bring back Adelaide icons such as the Magic Cave. This has been lost in recent years due to David Jones pulling out of sponsorship.

It would be great to see it brought back to life. it was a must for all children to see in the Christmas period for such a long time and would bring many families back into the city. I would love to see the CoA encourage building owners, especially in key retail

precincts decorate their buildings as they do in other cities. A good example of this is Singapore's Orchard Road. Not only is the street itself decorated but all of the buildings have must see light and decorative installations.

12. The idea of sustainable decoration is great, allowing the displays to build each year
13. The plan aligns very well with my vision of how Christmas Celebrations and the Christmas Holliday period should be celebrated.
14. I think a christmas trail along O'Connell leader up Tynte to Wellington Square would be fantastic to encourage community engagement and coming together with some christmas events held in the Square.
15. How does the plan account for managing the extra traffic into the city during the christmas season and managing pedestrian crowds and safety - e.g. could free public transport into the city be a thing for the festive season to reduce traffic burden for locals? How will we manage crowd safety so everyone has a good experience?
16. Hi, We are located at the end of O'Connell St, North Adelaide, where the majority of foot traffic tends to move toward the city, towards the other end of the street. This has made it challenging for us to attract customers, as evidenced by the fact that most of the restaurants near us close during the day and only open in the evenings. We believe that the council should consider developing and improving the area at this end of O'Connell Street as well. Holding events, such as festivals, could significantly increase foot traffic and attract customers to our end. We've raised this issue with the council in the past, particularly regarding the street lighting around the tree-lined area ends just before our restaurant. Unfortunately, it feels as though there's a lack of attention and investment at this end of the street. We urge the council to consider development and improvements not just for the city end of the street but for our end as well, to help boost the business. Thanks.
17. Less focus on retail and selling product more focus on creating atmosphere and sense of community.

3.2 Question: Do you have any thoughts or ideas for improving the draft Plan?

Responses:

1. Clever lighting plan would be amazing. Maybe robust in pavement or in light pole structures would be amazing.
2. Inclusion of other holidays occurring during the festive period, not everyone celebrates that time for Christmas.
3. See previous comment re pageant
4. Please see earlier comment
5. No
6. Improving activity for visitors, maybe several different trails between displays, perhaps with drop ins linked to businesses
7. None.
8. See previous - I think we need a better focus on crowd and traffic management and safety during the festive season, especially as christmas events and markets have often been a target for bad actors overseas, and extreme weather makes the city center hotter during the summer months.
9. Hold street events on O'Connell St like Rundle St City, Jetty Road Glenelg and The Parade Norwood
10. Not really
11. I love the idea of the markets in Rundle Mall, and around the city! I can picture carol singers in Adelaide Arcade and a carousel in Rymill Park (Canberra do a carousel at

Christmas time and families all come out!). Having accessible and inclusive Christmas activities for all is a fantastic way to foster connection.

3.3 Question: Do you have any other feedback for us?

Responses:

1. No. Looking forward to seeing great ideas come together. Congratulations.
2. The new light decorations in Pultney Street were attractive and tasteful. I know some people were disappointed with the deflated Santas on the trail, but I think it's a great idea. Just keep up the maintenance once bad weather has passed.
3. One of the more memorable City Christmases was when there was an outdoor cinema in Rundle Mall showing Christmas movies. I fondly recall taking my children to these. It would be great to have that again.
4. Thank you for consulting.
5. Thanks for consulting widely on the offering for Christmas.
6. Great job in capturing the community feedback.
7. Please help to improve O'Connell St end of foot traffic. Not just focus on Adelaide city by holding events just there.
8. No. Thank you.
9. Just that NPS is a terrible metric and shouldn't be used. Simple satisfaction and sentiment surveys are better.