

Adelaide Economic Development Agency

Quarter 4 Report

1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025

Between 1 April 2025 and 30 June 2025, AEDA:

- engaged with 12 additional businesses in the quarter, bringing the total number of business engagements on relocation and investment opportunities to 86 in 2024/25 with the potential of an additional 3,860+ city jobs
- delivered AEDA Summit attended by approximately 450 attendees
- supported seven events/festivals through the Events and Festivals Sponsorship program and four events/festivals through the Commercial Events Sponsorship Program which were delivered in the quarter
- City Sessions completed which featured 113 musicians over the course of the year
- delivered Rundle Mall activations including Urban Kitchen (1,034 tickets sold across the program) and Gather Round (with extended trading, football themed attractions and pop-ups). Over 744k visitors came into the Mall over Gather Round, with visitation up 9% vs. Gather Round 2024
- funding recommendations completed for the Events and Festivals Sponsorship program and the Strategic Partnerships program
- commenced delivery of Winter Campaign promoting events and festivals being held in the City over the winter period
- attended Destination Australia and promoted the City through meetings with over 30 travel buyers and wholesalers.

Financial Report

Preliminary end of year position is as follows:

Operating Position			
\$000s	2024/25 Actuals*	2024/25 Q3 Budget	Variance
Income			
Rundle Mall Levy	4,049	4,017	32
Rundle Mall User charges	579	500	79
CoA Appropriation of Funds	8,420	8,794	(374)
Other Income	92	120	(28)
Total Income	13,140	13,431	(291)
Expenses			
Employee Costs	4,183	4,722	539
Materials, Contracts and Other Expenses	4,858	4,830	(28)
Sponsorship, Contributions and Donations	3,605	3,764	159
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	95	88	(7)
Total Expenses	12,741	13,404	663
Operating Surplus / Deficit	399	27	372

*2024/25 actuals are preliminary and subject to the finalisation through Financial Statement preparation and external audit. The final audited position will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in September 2025.

Income

- Rundle Mall income from user charges \$79k favourable
- CoA Appropriation of Funds represents AEDA expenditure (excluding Rundle Mall activities) to June 2025
- Other income was unfavourable (\$28k) due to AEDA summit (\$14k) and retail sales from the Visitor Information Centre (\$13k), both of which are offset by favourable variances in expenditure

Expenditure

- Employee Costs were \$539k favourable mainly within Business and Investment \$294k and Marketing \$195k
- Materials, Contracts and Other Expenses were unfavourable (\$28k). This was driven by overspend in advertising for the Event and Festival Sponsorship (\$85k), Adelaide Fashion Week (\$72k) and temporary contractors (\$70k) to backfill vacancies, superannuation for contractors (\$54k), offset by underspend in Rundle Mall of \$234k (to be carried forward)
- Sponsorships, Contributions and Donations were favourable \$159k, mainly due Event and Festival Sponsorship \$101k (offsetting overspend in advertising per above), and Commercial Events and Festival Sponsorship program \$29k

Risks and Opportunities

- There is currently a high level of interest in external organisations collaborating with AEDA on various projects and opportunities. The agency has limited capacity to effectively collaborate on many of these opportunities given the extent of the current work program
- There is no significant change in Australia's domestic economic environment, internationally however, the impact of global economic uncertainty including its potential impact on trade, investment and consumer confidence is one that will continue to be monitored
- Safety and security remain an ongoing risk in Rundle Mall. Multiple high-profile incidents have received media coverage with the negative sentiment beginning to emerge in consumer research initiatives.
- Continuing changes and activity within the higher education and international education sector.
- Increased competition to Rundle Mall from suburban shopping centres e.g. Burnside Village \$350 million investment

NB: AEDA's strategic risks are included within the City of Adelaide's Strategic Risk Register, which is reported through the Strategic Risk and Internal Audit Group that then reports into the Audit and Risk Committee

Board and Advisory Committee

On 27 May 2025 Council endorsed a recommendation from the AEDA Board Selection Panel (comprised of Councillor Couros, Councillor Giles, City of Adelaide's Chief Executive Officer, Associate Director of People, and AEDA Chair) to re-appoint Timothy Last and Denise von Wald for three-year terms. Council endorsed the recommendation and both Tim Last and Denise von Wald were reappointed to the AEDA Board until 30 June 2028.

Matthew Poblocki resigned from the Board in May 2025.

Grant Funding Approved

Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program

The Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program is funded annually through the AEDA operating budget and is designed to support not-for-profit organisations, incorporated associations, and companies limited by guarantee to assist in the staging of medium and major public-facing events/festivals.

Applications for the 2025/26 Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program funding round opened on 17 March 2025 and closed on 21 April 2025. This is the next cycle offering multi-year funding of up to three years for events/festivals held in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 with each year subject to successful delivery and funding being made available through Council's annual business plan and budget process.

The AEDA Board approved the following:

Applicant	Event	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Adelaide Festival Corporation	Adelaide Festival	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000
Adelaide Fringe Inc	Adelaide Fringe	\$290,000	\$290,000	\$290,000
Illuminate Adelaide Foundation	Illuminate Adelaide	\$175,000	\$180,000	\$185,000
Womadelaide Foundation	WOMADelaide	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
South Australian Motorsport Board	bp Adelaide Grand Final	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Adelaide's LGBTQIA Arts & Cultural Festival Inc	Feast	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
South Australian Tourism Commission	Santos Tour Down Under	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
Volleyball Australia	FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships	\$100,000	-	-
Adelaide Festival Centre Trust	OzAsia Festival	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Tennis Australia	Adelaide International	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
SA Living Artists Inc	SALA Festival	\$50,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Adelaide Festival Centre Trust	Adelaide Cabaret Festival	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Nature Festival Ltd	Nature Festival	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Adelaide Horse Trial Management Inc	Adelaide Equestrian Festival	\$80,000	-	-
South Australian Tourism Commission	Tasting Australia	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Adelaide Festival Centre Trust	Adelaide Guitar Festival	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Adelaide Film Festival	Adelaide Film Festival	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
St John Ambulance Australia SA Ltd	Carols by Candlelight	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
South Australian Tourism Commission	National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
South Australian Motorsport Board	Bridgestone World Solar Challenge	-	\$35,000	-

Strategic Partnerships Program

Applicant	Project Name	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Festival City Adelaide	Festival Forward: A Strategic Approach to Event Development	\$107,000	\$107,000	\$107,000
Study Adelaide	Global Agent Familiarisation	\$119,000	\$119,000	\$119,000

AEDA Review Implementation

Since Council's adoption of the AEDA Review Implementation Plan on 24 October 2023, which detailed how the 36 actionable recommendations from the Deloitte and KPMG reviews of AEDA would be addressed, 35 actions have been completed. The one remaining item relates to the development of a long-term financial plan for AEDA which is being progressed within the process of revising Council's long term financial plan.

Business Plan and Budget and Strategic Plan Measures

The 2024/25 AEDA Business Plan and Budget includes 18 measures across the four key areas, Business, Investment & Residential Growth; Visitor Economy; Rundle Mall and Brand and Marketing.

As at the end of quarter four, progress against the measures was as follows:

- fourteen measures have been marked 'Complete/Achieved' which indicates they have been finalised or the annual target met
- two measures are 'Partially complete', which indicates some progress has been made towards the target, but have not met the annual target; and
- two measures are 'Active' which means work is still being done to achieve the target.

Business, Investment and Residential Growth

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
50 inward investment proposals/local expansions supported with at least 1,500 jobs	Complete	50	86	36
Increase of bookable tourism experiences in the city	Complete	Strategic Project to identify new experiential tourism product completed – discussions with potential operators commenced.		
30+ vacant shopfronts/premises activated	Partially Complete	30	20	-10
Deliver 3 industry briefing events	Complete	3	5	2
Outcomes from collaborative partnerships with MTPConnect; SouthStart and University of Adelaide/ Thinclab to support small businesses to grow and scale	Complete	Programs completed and supported 36 start up and scale up businesses.		
Five projects/market interventions to support emerging industries in the city	Complete	5	10	5
Supported/ facilitated six networking/knowledge transfer events for businesses	Complete	6	18	12

Visitor Economy

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Delivery of the new Experience Adelaide Visitor Centre	Active	-	Underway	n/a
20 new bookable city tourism products/experiences	Partially Complete	20	18	-2
Visitor & community sentiment index (being developed)	Complete	n/a	84	n/a

Brand & Marketing

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
10% increase to \$2.2m on 2023/24 in media mentions (advertising space rate) with reference to AEDA. – Maintain a variance of 85% – 95% neutral and/or positive sentiment of media mentions.	Complete	\$2,420,000	\$3,549,775	\$1,129,775
Increase the brand health metric for Adelaide as a destination to visit to 6.5/10. (Currently 6.35)	Active	6.5	6.39	-0.11

Rundle Mall

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Demonstrate uplift in market share and foot traffic across 3 core campaigns	Complete	3	3	0
5 new brands commit to Rundle Mall.	Complete	5	8	3
2 public realm infrastructure projects completed.	Complete	2	2	1
A minimum of \$20M new cap investment delivered or committed in the Rundle Mall precinct.	Complete	\$20m	\$271m	\$251m
10 Business or industry media stories relating to Rundle Mall	Complete	10	12	2
Uplift in Rundle Mall small business sentiment index over FY24/25	Complete	50+	64+	14

Delivery



Investment Attraction

Over the quarter, 12 additional businesses were engaged as investment leads, totalling 86 for the full year representing a potential 3,860+ jobs.

The investment team continues to see strong interest in co-working space opportunities, with three interstate operators – Tank Stream Labs, CreativeCubes.Co, and Space&Co (SpaceWorks) – securing facilities in Adelaide and planning to open between July and August 2025. These operators bring a strong commitment to building thriving innovation ecosystems and offer unique opportunities for Adelaide businesses to connect with tenants across their national and international networks.



AEDA Business Summit

The sold out 2025 AEDA Business Summit, was attended by over 450 attendees. Keynote speakers included Simon Kuestenmacher on demographic shifts, Peter Tullin on the visitor experience economy, and Bree Whitford-Smith from Rising Sun Pictures discussing Adelaide's role in the global visual effects industry. Premier Peter Malinauskas joined a panel discussing Adelaide's growth opportunities along with SA Productivity Commissioner Adrian Tembel; CMX Clinical Research CEO, Jane Kelly; and Chief Strategy Officer Qinetiq, Rebecca Humble.

Other sessions highlighted local success stories and strategies to enhance the city's brand and tourism appeal. Sponsored by Adelaide University, the event emphasised innovation, investment, and global positioning for Adelaide's future.

Post Survey feedback showed 96% of respondents reported being satisfied with the overall event.



Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program

The following events, supported through the Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program, were held during Q4:

27 Sept 2024 – 29 April 2025 Chihuly in the Botanic Gardens \$50,000

1-4 May 2025 Adelaide Equestrian Festival \$40,000

2-11 May 2025 Tasting Australia \$40,000

7-17 May 2025 DreamBig Children's Festival \$60,000

23 May – 1 June 2025 Adelaide Cabaret Fringe Festival \$40,000

6-29 June 2025 Viking Fest \$50,000

5-21 June 2025 Adelaide Cabaret Festival \$50,000

A total of \$280,000 was invested into six events/festivals held in Q4 (excluding Chihuly). These events are expected to generate an estimated gross economic impact in excess of \$66,000,000 to the State and an estimated total attendance of 967,232. Of this, city-based attendance of approx. 932,314 is expected.

Acquittal reports are not yet due so estimates are derived from previous acquittal report data. For Chihuly and Viking Fest (new events) estimates are based on forecasts included in application forms. As the Chihuly season was held across all four quarters the anticipated impact is not attributed to Q4 exclusively.



Commercial Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program

The following events, supported through the Commercial Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program, were held during Q4:

16 Feb – 7 Dec 2025 Gathered Market in the Mall \$16,000

5 April 2025 A Decade in Gilbert Place \$8,000

11 – 13 April 2025 Home Base: Footy at Gilbert Place \$7,000

14 June 2025 Future Sounds Festival \$15,000

A total of \$30,000 was invested in three events/festivals (excluding Gathered Market in the Mall, which was reported in Q3). Across all four events/festivals delivered in Q4, there was a combined estimated attendee expenditure of \$3,105,192 and total attendance of 29,819. These figures are based on application estimates (Future Sounds Festival and Gathered Market in the Mall) and acquittal reports (A Decade in Gilbert Place and Home Base: Footy at Gilbert Place).



Rundle Mall Activations

A range of activations have been delivered in the Rundle Mall precinct to increase vibrancy and driving foot traffic and spend, including:

Gather Round

From Thursday 10 – Sunday 13 April, Rundle Mall came alive with the energy of the 2025 AFL Gather Round, offering fans a line-up of footy-themed activations, entertainment, and shopping experiences.

Extended trade until 6pm on Saturday 12 April, giving fans more time to shop, explore and enjoy the festivities.

Over 744k visitors came into the Mall over Gather Round, with visitation up 9% vs. Gather Round 2024.

Urban Kitchen transformed Rundle Mall into a vibrant culinary hub from 2–11 May as part of Tasting Australia, marking its fifth iteration.

This year's expanded program included new masterclasses from Rundle Mall businesses and the Myer store and Myer Centre also joined the program with additional cooking demonstrations.

1,034 tickets sold across the 10-day program, with all Sprout sessions selling two weeks before the event commenced.

Two-thirds of attendees shopped in the Mall after attending, reinforcing Urban Kitchen's effectiveness in encouraging visitation and dwell time.

Rundle Mall City Sessions

Twenty six performers participated over the Gather Round weekend as part of Gather Sounds and 27 performers participated for 'Make Music' Day/weekend to round out the Live Music Program. The Rundle Mall City Sessions program was delivered in partnership with the City of Adelaide and UNESCO City of Music.

In total, 114 artists have provided performances that coincided with specific events throughout this financial year.

Another three Gathered Markets in the Mall took place in the quarter Sunday 27 April and Sunday 11 May to coincide with Mother's Day and a Friday market to support late night trade on 20 June.



Winter Events Campaign

The 2025 Winter Events Campaign amplifies city vibrancy and economic opportunity by encouraging spending across hospitality, accommodation, and entertainment, while reinforcing the City's reputation as a cultural, activity and entertainment centre.

Featured Festivals

- Tasting Australia
- DreamBIG Children's Festival
- Cabaret Fringe Festival
- Adelaide Cabaret Festival
- Viking Fest
- Illuminate Adelaide

The campaign is running across Experience Adelaide, the consumer-facing channel for AEDA, from May until July 2025.

Interim results show strong early performance across awareness, engagement, and conversion touchpoints.



Strategic Partnership Program 2024/25

Organised by Business Events Adelaide, “Destination South Australia 2025”, held 19-21 March 2025 was the largest in its history, attracting 52 hosted buyers and seven media delegates from Australia, India, Singapore, China, New Zealand, and the US, and generating strong business leads for future conferences and incentive events. Early modelling suggests the event could generate over \$30 million in future business for South Australia’s visitor economy.

StudyAdelaide announced the winners of the Closer to Adelaide Office Competition in March 2025, with the major prize awarded to Blue Studies International, Colombia. This marketing initiative has been widely recognised for meaningfully engaging agents and encouraging them to promote Adelaide as a study destination..

Festival City Adelaide’s Festival & Event Policy Summit took place on June 12 2025, in Adelaide, gathering industry leaders to discuss policy development, sustainability, and strategic growth for festivals and events.

Within the quarter the following city ventures opened through Renew Adelaide’s program:

- Cosmos Pizza – 149 Hindley St (launched May '25)
- Block Ya Dot – 69-71 Light Square (launched May '25)
- Pink Short Press – Shop 151 Adelaide Arcade (launched May '25)
- Flowerbug – Shop 6, 189-211 Pirie St (launched May '25)
- True Finance – L3 49 Gawler Pl (launched Apr '25)
- Fauna Studio – 470 Morphett St (launched May '25)



Business Support

The third round of AEDA’s flagship Games Plus Support Program (\$20K) supported 12 early-stage developers with funding, mentoring, and marketing guidance at Games Plus co-working space. AEDA supported four studios to participate at major events including PAX Australia, GCAP, SXSW Sydney, and BitSummit (Japan)—providing global exposure and pitching opportunities.

AEDA’s support allowed South Australian Games Association to host nine+ industry events (including two this quarter) with 943 attendees.

AEDA supported SAGE (SA Game Exhibition) which attracted 3,000+ attendees and 35+ exhibitors over two days. AEDA also participated in panel session to help those navigating their way into the industry.

AEDA helped launch Adelaide’s first structured playtesting service in partnership with Youth Options, a structured quality assurance (QA) program that pairs neurodiverse and marginalized youth (aged ~16–25) with game testing roles while providing studios with feedback and polished pre-launch user input.

Four games companies are currently being pursued to attract to Adelaide.

Planned Quarter One Activity

Coming up from 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025:

- Data for Lunch: to be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor 6 August 2025, At the upcoming session (What's hot and what's not – how Adelaide stacks up), Committee for Adelaide Chief Executive Sam Dighton will present highlights from the 2025 Benchmarking Adelaide Report while Jordon Tomopoulos will present an analysis of Adelaide's economy.
- ASEAN Business Forum 2025: to be held on 26-27 August in Adelaide. AEDA will collaborate with Study Adelaide to exhibit at the event to showcase Adelaide and the economic and education opportunities in the City.
- Rundle Mall City Sessions
- Gathered Market in the Mall Returns to the Mall on Sunday 31 August