

Tree Martin Management – Feasibility, Benefits & Disbenefits of Netting Trees in Rundle Mall

Strategic Alignment - Our Environment

Public

Tuesday, 2 December 2025
Special Council meeting

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to 'provide preliminary advice regarding the feasibility, benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall' in accordance with Council's resolution on 11 November 2025 regarding Tree Martins.

It is important to note that the reason to net trees is based on addressing conflicts between consistently unsafe environments for the Tree Martins and the existing uses of our urban environments, which include the safety of city visitors. The goal is to balance the conflicts that do occur between biodiversity in the urban realm and the existing land uses that have been implemented in the city, noting there can be instances where the two can be balanced.

If trees in Rundle Mall are netted, there is no certainty regarding where the Tree Martins may elect to roost during 2025/26.

During the 2024/25 migratory season (December 2024 to May 2025), Tree Martins roosted in six (6) trees located near the centre of Rundle Mall near Optus, OPSM, Sunglass Hut, Michael Hill Jewellers, Apple Store and Rundle Place.

Preliminary advice received from Ecosure Environmental Consultancy (Ecosure) on the feasibility, benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall is contained in **Attachment A**.

The following options for netting trees in Rundle Mall were considered:

1. Not netting any trees for the upcoming roosting season and maintaining a management regime, assuming the Tree Martins return to the same roosting site,
2. Netting the six trees used during the 2024/25 roosting season, or
3. Netting all 40 trees along Rundle Mall.

There are a range of benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall with considerations across business impacts, animal welfare, community expectations, Council's reputation and strategic objectives, urban ecology considerations, Rundle Mall objectives and stakeholder relationships.

Advice from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is that should the City of Adelaide seek to net trees in Rundle Mall; it could do so without a permit. This is subject to the netting of trees not requiring any protected animals to be caught, restrained or trapped and subsequently relocated, which would require a permit under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (SA). To avoid such issues, trees should be netted prior to being used by the birds (if netting will occur).

Netting creates risks of bird entrapment and in addition would require ongoing monitoring, maintenance and compliance checks to meet animal welfare obligations, including obligations under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (SA).

While netting may mitigate issues at previously affected locations, it carries the risk of displacing impacts to other areas within Rundle Mall or alternative locations that cannot be pre-determined across the wider CBD. The potential risks at these other locations are unknown, and in addition to the monitoring of the netted trees, the City of Adelaide will need to maintain an on-ground response to support management and coordination at any new location the Tree Martins identify to roost in.

Enquiries have been made with external suppliers who advise that the earliest that netting could be sourced and installed in Rundle Mall is late January 2026. This could put the installation of the netting into the start of the 2025/26 migratory season and on that basis should Council resolve to proceed with that option, the Administration will seek a permit from DEW for that purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Receives the preliminary advice provided regarding the feasibility, benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall as contained in Attachment A to Item 6.1 on the Agenda of the Special Council meeting held on 2 December 2025.
 2. Notes that while netting is technically feasible, it poses operational, welfare and reputational risks, and therefore is not recommended for implementation in Rundle Mall during the 2025/26 Tree Martin migratory season.
 3. Approves the continued mitigation and monitoring strategies for the 2025/26 Tree Martin migratory season and reviews the data collected and options developed through this season for implementation ahead of the 2026/27 season in partnership with the Department for Environment and Water and Green Adelaide.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Environment</p> <p>Lead and advocate for the environmental value, productivity, quality and biodiversity of the Park Lands, squares, open space and streetscapes.</p> <p>Protect and store native habitat in our city.</p>
Policy	<p>The Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy Towards 2036, the City of Adelaide's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, and the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan's have commitments to biodiversity protection, city amenity, business vitality and community wellbeing. They support Council's objectives for a sustainable, liveable, and biodiverse capital city where people and wildlife coexist harmoniously and management of the Tree Martins aligns with these commitments.</p> <p>The Tree Martin Management Plan will be developed in alignment with Council's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030, Goal 3: A City Where Nature Thrives. It supports a comprehensive body of work by the City of Adelaide in relation to surveying and mapping urban biodiversity.</p> <p>The State Biodiversity Plan is yet to be developed following the assent of the <i>Biodiversity Act 2025</i> (SA).</p> <p>Management of the Tree Martins is being undertaken with regard to implications for businesses and Council's Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>On this basis, the development of long term options proposed across this next season to identify appropriate roosting locations and strategies to encourage relocation to these locations is being progressed with DEW and Green Adelaide to best balance biodiversity goals with Economic Development goals.</p>
Consultation	<p>Since the 2024/25 roosting season ending in May 2025, the Administration has continued to liaise with DEW and Green Adelaide to align approaches to Tree Martin management and protection.</p> <p>Administration has been in contact with businesses in Rundle Mall and briefed the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) at their Board meeting held on 19 November 2026.</p>
Resource	<p>The Tree Martin management response is being undertaken using a combination of internal and external resources, including specialist consultancy services. Guidance and advice is being provided by AEDA, business stakeholders, Government agencies and stakeholders.</p>
Risk / Legal / Legislative	<p>Tree Martins are listed as a marine species under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) (EPBC Act). Under ss 254–254E of the EPBC Act, offences apply to actions that harm, take, trade, keep, or move listed marine species; however, these provisions only apply within a designated "Commonwealth area" as defined in s 525. Based on current review, this definition has little to no application within the Council area, and neither Leigh Street nor Rundle Mall fall within Commonwealth land. Consequently, these EPBC Act provisions do not apply to Council actions.</p> <p>Tree Martins are a "protected animal" under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i> (SA). Advice from DEW is that a permit is not required for the netting of trees within Rundle Mall if the netting occurs ahead of the tree martin roosting behaviour.</p> <p>The <i>Animal Welfare Act 1985</i> (SA) requires that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent unnecessary harm, injury, or distress to wildlife. This includes monitoring for impacts of netting.</p> <p>The <i>Biodiversity Act 2025</i> (SA), which has not yet come into operation, introduces a general duty of care, requiring reasonable practical measures to prevent harm to biodiversity in any acts or actions undertaken.</p> <p>The City of Adelaide also considers public health and safety risks in the public realm, noting responses actioned at previous roosting sites to address conflicts for public health at outdoor dining venues.</p>

Opportunities	In 2025/26 the City of Adelaide is taking an informed approach to managing the Tree Martin migratory season, taking advice from DEW and Green Adelaide to have robust data and science led strategies to plan for future roosting seasons. This approach will enable on-ground actions to be tested for effectiveness, and data and evidence to be collected in 2025/26 to inform future management actions.
25/26 Budget Allocation	<p>There is no current budget allocation for netting trees in Rundle Mall.</p> <p>A budget review will be required for operational measures associated with the Tree Martin management response. Additional costs will be incurred if a decision is taken to net trees in Rundle Mall including net installation, management of tree litter (leaves) as the trees are not evergreen, and any other actions required. The cost for netting trees is estimated to be between \$25,000 for six trees and up to \$150,000 for more comprehensive additional netting, plus installation and ongoing maintenance costs.</p>
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Subject to decisions by Council, a budget proposal will be submitted to the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan and Budget process for the 2026/27 Tree Martin roosting season.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Annual with the Tree Martin migratory season between November/December and April/May.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	<p>A CEO Undertaking was given at the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 November 2025. The Undertaking was to provide Council Members with a further breakdown of the proposed 2025/26 Quarter 2 budget review of \$150,000 for the management of the operational response for the 2026 Tree Martin Migratory Season, prior to consideration by Council in early 2026.</p> <p>Planned 2025/26 on-ground response (Option 1)</p> <p>Based on the current preparations for the 2025/26 migratory season and probable return of Tree Martins to Rundle Mall, a Budget Review of \$150,000 is proposed for Quarter 2 of 2025/26.</p> <p>The Budget Review will cover costs including security, staffing of the response over extended hours, bird welfare and veterinary expenses, and additional training.</p> <p>The budget review seeks to manage the operational response which comprises a dedicated on-ground response team, costed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional security officer to be in Rundle Mall from 15 December 2025 for three nights per week; and if required, a nightly presence if the Tree Martin colony establishes and the size of the colony increases to levels experienced in 2024/25. • A staff member to be available and on-site over extended working hours (3 hours per night approximately ½ hour before sunset adjusted for daylight savings). • A bird welfare organisation to support the on-ground response as required, including allowance for veterinary expenses. <p>Costs of approximately \$6,500 has been incurred to date on training requirements for on-ground responders.</p> <p>Option 1 does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree netting in Rundle Mall. • Potential markers on catenary wires as an engineering assessment is not available to confirm if additional weight can be supported on existing wires. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Costs to businesses for taking action to reduce impact on their trading and bird welfare. Based on the actions taken by businesses these costs are anticipated to be in the order of \$60,000 to \$250,000 depending on the extent of preventative measures deployed.

	<p>Additional cleansing costs associated with the 2024/25 migratory season were accommodated within existing City Operations 2024/25 resources by adjusting precinct cleaning standards. The same approach will be adopted for 2025/26.</p> <p>Netting of Trees in Rundle Mall (Option 2)</p> <p>The cost for netting trees is estimated to be between \$25,000 for six trees and up to \$150,000 for more comprehensive additional netting of potentially all trees along Rundle Mall, including installation and maintenance costs.</p> <p>This cost would be in addition to the costs identified in Option 1 as a level of management action is likely to be required in alternative locations that the Tree Martin's subsequently choose to roost.</p> <p>The cost for mitigation measures by businesses is location dependent but the indicative range of \$60,000 to \$250,000 is considered a reasonable estimate for other locations (pending final assessment).</p> <p>Tree Martin Management Plan</p> <p>Approximately \$40,000 has been reallocated within the Park Lands, Policy and Sustainability 2025/26 operating budget to support preparation of the Tree Martin Management Plan in 2025/26. This cost does not form part of the Budget Review proposal and applies to both options as it is focused on the future scenarios and locations for management.</p>
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Tree netting in Rundle Mall will require ongoing monitoring and maintenance, the cost of which is dependent on the number of tree nets installed.
Other Funding Sources	Administration has raised the potential for external funding support from the State Government.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to 'provide preliminary advice regarding the feasibility, benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall' in accordance with Council's resolution on 11 November 2025 regarding Tree Martins.

Background

2. At its meeting on 22 April 2025, Council noted a range of actions had been undertaken by the Administration in collaboration with Green Adelaide and requested further advice in regard to Tree Martin management support measures ([Link 1](#)).
3. At its meeting on 13 May 2025, in response to a Question on Notice, Administration provided further background information on when the Tree Martins were first identified as significant problem ([Link 2](#)).
4. At its meeting on 14 October 2025, Council received an update on the matter ([Link 3](#)).
 - 4.1. The report responded to Council's resolution of 22 April 2025 that sought further advice regarding Tree Martin management support measures.
5. A workshop ([Link 4](#)) and report ([Link 5](#)) were presented to the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs (CPDBA) Committee on 4 November 2025 where an update on the current planning and response was provided.
 - 5.1. The workshop was delivered by Administration with the support of Professor Chris Daniels and Dr Stuart Collard from Green Adelaide; and Dr John Martin from Ecosure Environmental Consultancy.
 - 5.2. The 2025/26 response includes on-ground actions and longer-term data collection and planning.
6. At its meeting on 11 November 2025 Council resolved:
 - 6.1. **THAT COUNCIL:**
 - 6.1.1. *Notes the Administration is developing the draft Tree Martin Management Plan (the Plan) and that a copy of the draft Plan will be presented to the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee for consideration on 3 February 2026.*
 - 6.1.2. *Notes that it is not proposed to remove netting from Leigh Street.*
 - 6.1.3. *Requests administration provide preliminary advice regarding the feasibility, benefits and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall at a special meeting of Council to be held on Tuesday 2 December 2025.*
 - 6.1.4. *Notes a Budget Review of \$150,000 will be submitted for Quarter 2 of the 2025/26 financial year to manage the operational response for the 2026 Tree Martin migratory season including costs for security, staffing of the response over extended hours, bird welfare and veterinary expenses, and additional training.*
 - 6.1.5. *Notes the working draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 November 2025.*
 - 6.1.6. *Notes that the working draft Tree Martin Management Operating Guidelines as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 4 November 2025 are an administrative matter for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.*

Tree Martin Roosting – 2024/25 Season

7. During the 2024/25 migratory season, (December 2024 to May 2025), it is estimated that approximately 10,000 Tree Martins roosted in six trees in central Rundle Mall. Note that there have been no formal counts undertaken and the Tree Martin is too small to tag.
8. The roosting behaviour created bird welfare concerns and operational impacts for nearby retailers that became evident when day light savings commenced (March/April 2025) which changed environmental conditions, in particular light conditions at the time the Tree Martins were returning to roost, resulting in bird collisions on shop fronts, droppings, and birds entering stores. Birds were disrupted from roosting due to several factors including natural predation and human interactions.

9. Tree Martins are thought to select urban roosting sites like Rundle Mall because these urban environments mimic the natural environmental locations they typically seek, where multi-story buildings, noise, light, tree canopy and human activity reduce predation risk.
10. The trees selected for roosting by the Tree Martins were located near Optus, OPSM, Sunglass Hut, Michael Hill Jewellers, Apple Store, and Rundle Place.
11. There are 40 trees in total along Rundle Mall.

2025/26 Roosting Season

12. The City of Adelaide is seeking to deliver a collaborative approach to Tree Martin management that aims to minimise bird fatalities and ensure business operations, customer amenity, and public spaces remain clean, safe and attractive throughout the summer trading period.
13. The specialist advice is that Tree Martins show site fidelity and while there is no certainty of roosting location in 2025/26, a probable scenario is that the birds return to Rundle Mall.
14. On this basis, the proposed approach for the 2025/26 roosting season is to seek to contain the number of affected businesses that require mitigation measures.
15. Administration, in partnership with the Rundle Mall Management team through the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA), is coordinating engagement with businesses affected last season should roosting occur in the same location.
16. In the 5 months since the 2024/25 migratory season concluded in May 2025, Administration has undertaken the following steps in preparation for the upcoming migratory season:
 - 16.1. Completed procurement and engagement of expert environmental consultancy Ecosure to develop an on-ground response for the 2025/26 migratory season and a Tree Martin Management Plan to guide future seasons.
 - 16.2. Collaborated with the Department of Environment and Water (DEW) to address training and permit requirements.
 - 16.3. Engaged in ongoing discussions with veterinarians and wildlife rescue volunteers to ensure a coordinated response and observe animal welfare standards.
 - 16.4. Developed draft Operating Guidelines to provide clear escalation pathways for incident response and reporting with advice from Green Adelaide and DEW.
 - 16.5. Established an on-ground response which involves deploying dedicated customer service and security staff to support management actions in 2025/26.
 - 16.6. Briefing of AEDA including their Chair, Board and Administration.
 - 16.7. Met with key businesses, such as Apple, Rundle Place, and Optus Adelaide seeking support from businesses to reinstate successful measures from the previous season and trial additional measures for the upcoming season, including:
 - 16.7.1. Installation of temporary window film on affected shopfronts
 - 16.7.2. Installation of internal netting to prevent birds entering atriums
 - 16.7.3. Mobile installations
 - 16.7.4. Dimming of lighting; and
 - 16.7.5. Closure of doors at dusk, where feasible, to reduce bird entry into premises.
 - 16.8. Investigating illuminated markers to catenary lighting in affected areas. The catenary wires in Rundle Mall are for the purpose of providing safety lighting along the length of Rundle Mall. There is currently no option to remove these wires, and preliminary assessment has not been able to confirm the wires can support additional weight.
 - 16.9. Monitoring for the return of Tree Martins to the CBD has commenced and preparation of inspection and cleaning schedules to be increased during the peak season to maintain public hygiene and amenity.
17. A communications plan has been developed to keep businesses and the community informed throughout the season. Key initiatives ready to be deployed pending Council's decision on netting trees, include:
 - 17.1. A dedicated webpage on the City of Adelaide website providing up-to-date information on Tree Martin management and the 2025/26 on-ground response.

- 17.2. Postcards to be distributed from approximately 8 December 2025 to businesses in Leigh Street and Rundle Mall, pending Council's decision regarding netting, and other locations as required.
- 17.3. Public signage in Rundle Mall highlighting the expected presence of the Tree Martins and providing a QR code link for further information.
18. The City of Adelaide's Place Coordinators and AEDA are continuing to support the delivery and distribution of information across business precincts.
19. A high-level review of businesses adjacent to trees along the length of Rundle Mall has been prepared. Should the trees immediately adjacent to the Apple Store be netted and the birds dispersed, similar or greater implications are considered possible along the length of Rundle Mall.
20. With the support of DEW, Green Adelaide and the consultant team, detailed assessment of management options, along with data and evidence collection, is being undertaken to inform management actions in the 2025/26 roosting season and future strategies. These assessments need to take place during the season to continue to observe Tree Martin behaviour and their responses to the various mitigation strategies put in place.
21. The best opportunity for detailed review and analysis of Tree Martin colony behaviour, observations, and field research, is to capture the full roosting season. This requires a level of certainty regarding where the birds will roost. Tree Martins have not yet been sighted in Rundle Mall or Leigh Street.
22. Administration has undertaken site assessments at previous roosting locations. Should the birds choose an alternative location or be displaced from Rundle Mall (as was the case for Leigh Street), the early stages of the season could be redirected to assessing, negotiating and putting in place mitigation measures suitable to the roosting location.
23. While the City of Adelaide is better placed to respond in the upcoming season in terms of communications, partnerships and welfare responses, specific mitigation measures are location dependent.
24. In addition to the on-ground operational response, the development of a Tree Martin Management Plan has commenced and will continue to be refined during the 2025/26 migratory season, incorporating operational learnings, ecological monitoring data, and stakeholder feedback and endorsement from Green Adelaide and DEW.
25. The finalised Plan will be completed at the conclusion of the 2025/26 season to guide future management of Tree Martin roosting across the city.

State Government Advice

26. Tree Martins are classified as a "protected animal" under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (SA). Actions such as netting or otherwise interfering with roosting trees may require a permit from DEW.
27. Accordingly, advice was sought from DEW regarding the legal implications, if any, of installing netting to some or all trees within Rundle Mall ([Link 6](#)).
28. DEW has advised that a permit is not required under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (SA) to take pre-emptive action to net trees provided the netting is installed before Tree Martin roosting behaviour.
29. DEW further advised that whilst a permit is not required, Council has obligations under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (SA) to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent unnecessary harm, injury, or distress to wildlife.
30. As netting creates risks of bird entrapment, ongoing monitoring, maintenance and compliance checks would be required to meet animal welfare obligations.
31. DEW's advice is provided below:
 - 31.1. Should the City of Adelaide seek to net trees in Rundle Mall, it could do so without a permit. This is subject to the netting of trees not requiring any protected animals to be caught, restrained or trapped and subsequently relocated, which would require a permit under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. To avoid such issues, trees should be netted prior to being used by the birds (if netting will occur).
 - 31.2. DEW's advice to the City of Adelaide remains consistent, that netting trees to restrict Tree Martin roosting has been shown to have significant consequences for those birds and should be very carefully considered before being implemented. All reasonable measures should be taken by the Council and local businesses to address and mitigate the impacts of the Tree Martins before trees are netted to relocate the birds.

- 31.3. Netting of the trees in Leigh Street contributed to animal welfare issues for the Tree Martin colony. Netting trees in Rundle Mall, whether it was all the trees or only a sub-set of them, could conceivably have similar consequences. In assessing future management options, the Department encourages Council to consider the potential animal welfare implications and seek to reasonably mitigate or prevent that harm occurring should it net roosting sites.
- 31.4. DEW recommends co-existence with the Tree Martins at roosting sites under a colony management plan as the best approach to address the environmental and animal welfare concerns, recognising the unique wildlife phenomenon that it is.
32. In the event Council determines to net trees in Rundle Mall and the Tree Martins have returned to roost, Administration will seek the appropriate permits from DEW in line with the legislative requirements.

Consultant Advice

33. Ecosure was engaged to provide preliminary advice on the feasibility, benefits, and disbenefits of netting trees in Rundle Mall (**Attachment A**).
34. The following options for netting trees in Rundle Mall were considered:
 - 34.1. Not netting any trees for the upcoming roosting season and maintaining a management regime, assuming the Tree Martins return to the same roosting site,
 - 34.2. Netting the six trees used during the 2024/25 roosting season, or
 - 34.3. Netting all 40 trees along Rundle Mall.
35. In summary, the benefits of netting the six trees in front of businesses affected last season or all the trees in Rundle Mall include:
 - 35.1. Reduction in bird welfare incidents: Netting would likely prevent collisions with shopfronts and entrapment within buildings associated with roosting in trees in Rundle Mall but would need to have monitoring in place for trapped birds.
 - 35.2. Minimised impacts on specific retailers: Reduced faecal contamination, fewer birds entering stores in that part of Rundle Mall, and lower operational disruption and costs associated with installation of mitigation measures (e.g. decals on glazing).
 - 35.3. Potential cost savings: Lower ongoing costs for the City of Adelaide relating to on-ground management, monitoring, and mitigation in Rundle Mall (pending where the Tree Martin colony subsequently establishes).
 - 35.4. Stakeholder and community consideration: Businesses operating in locations impacted by the Tree Martin roosting colony are concerned about impacts on business branding and trading.
36. Disbenefits of netting include:
 - 36.1. Animal welfare concerns: Netting may entrap birds if poorly maintained, cause Tree Martins to relocate to other (potentially higher-risk) areas, limit effective management due to site constraints, and potentially impact other bird and wildlife species.
 - 36.2. Ongoing maintenance required: Regular inspection, repair, and compliance checks of netting are necessary to meet obligations under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (SA).
 - 36.3. Visual and urban amenity impact: Netting may alter the streetscape and affect the appearance of the city's premier retail street.
 - 36.4. Displacement risk: Netting may cause Tree Martins to relocate to other trees in Rundle Mall or nearby locations creating new, unpredictable roost sites of which the management implications are unknown. Experience in Leigh Street shows that while netting reduced impacts locally, it shifted welfare and business issues to other locations and the issues remain (i.e. food and beverage locations, large windows, internal malls, catenary wires).
 - 36.5. Strategic and management considerations: Netting promotes reliance on hard exclusion rather than co-existence-based management, may set a precedent for wildlife exclusion elsewhere, may conflict with Council's goal of a 'city where nature thrives', and could limit opportunities for behavioural research needed to inform medium- to long-term management.
 - 36.6. Stakeholder and community consideration: Netting is non-preferred by environment agencies, Green Adelaide, DEW, wildlife groups, and the broader community, who expect nature-positive management approaches. The situation has a high potential for negative media or community sentiment, especially if welfare incidents occur.

36.7. Operational / cost: Additional upfront costs for netting and installation.

37. It should be noted that even with ongoing monitoring and operational responses, including the positive support through volunteer and veterinary groups, bird strikes are still likely to be seen within Rundle Mall when considering the volume of Tree Martins in a confined space, the natural and pre-existing urban elements and noting that predators are also aware of the roosting location. In combination this means that just like in nature, there will continue to be impacts seen at Rundle Mall, albeit these impacts are anticipated to be far fewer with the bird welfare measures in place.

Summary

38. Based on current information, the preliminary advice is that netting remains feasible provided it occurs before the birds return to roost.
39. Enquiries have been made with external suppliers who advise that the earliest installation could commence is late January 2026.
40. If netting were to occur after the Tree Martin colony has returned, this process is dependent on a permit from the Department for Environment and Water.
41. While netting may mitigate issues at previously affected locations, it carries the risk of displacing impacts to other areas within Rundle Mall or the wider CBD. The potential risks at these other locations are unknown, and in addition to the monitoring of the netted trees will need to include an on-ground response to support management and coordinated action at any new location.
42. Council will be required to monitor netted trees to ensure any trapped or injured birds are promptly managed.
43. The State Government recommends co-existence with the Tree Martin colony at roosting sites under a management plan as the best approach to address the environmental and animal welfare concerns.
44. The preliminary advice provided by Ecosure recommends that netting not proceed without further collection and assessment of data, and that the City of Adelaide adopt an adaptive mitigation approach for the upcoming season, with a review following the 2025/26 migratory season.

Next Steps

45. Subject to Council's consideration, Administration will:
- 45.1. Work with Rundle Mall retailers, Green Adelaide, and DEW to implement an on-ground management approach for the 2025/26 migratory season.
- 45.2. Implement a coordinated on-ground welfare response and community engagement to minimise disturbance within Rundle Mall, or other location, including managing volunteers and communications with stakeholder groups.
- 45.3. Monitor conditions and bird activity throughout the season and adjust management as required.
- 45.4. Conduct a post-season review in June 2026 to enable finalisation of the Phase 2 – Tree Martin Management Plan for reporting early in 2026/27.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Meeting Minutes – Council – Tuesday, 22 April 2025](#)

Link 2 – [Council – Question on Notice Reply – Tuesday, 13 May 2025](#)

Link 3 – [Agenda – Council – Tuesday, 14 October 2025](#)

Link 4 – [Agenda – Workshop - City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee –Tuesday, 4 November 2025](#)

Link 5 – [Agenda – Report - City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee –Tuesday, 4 November 2025](#)

Link 6 – [Advice from DEW regarding the legal implications](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Preliminary Advice - Feasibility, Benefits and Disbenefits of Netting Trees in Rundle Mall (Ecosure)

- END OF REPORT -