

Live Music Circuit

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

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Infrastructure & Public Works
Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a Council decision of [10 March 2026](#) to present options for the delivery of a walkable Live Music Circuit of Adelaide’s live music culture.

The proposed Live Music Circuit would bring together the existing activities and initiatives including the City of Music Laneways trails, music-themed public art, venue decals, Heritage Plaques for an additional eight heritage-listed venues, an updated printed pocket guide, and additional communication materials.

By leveraging existing programs, platforms and partnerships, the Live Music Circuit would increase visitation to City businesses and sites of cultural and heritage significance, to strengthen Adelaide’s identity as a UNESCO City of Music, and avoid duplication of existing initiatives.

Several elements can be delivered through staged implementation in 2026/27 within existing operational budgets, including the expansion of the Heritage Plaques Program to recognise eligible live music heritage sites, updates to the pocket guide and digital content, and promotional activity through AEDA.

An options matrix (**Attachment A**) has been prepared to identify delivery models for a bespoke venue recognition scheme, and enable further scoping required before any future rollout.

Subject to Council endorsement, Administration will progress a range of Live Music Circuit elements in 2026/27 and further develop the preferred delivery model for the bespoke venue recognition scheme prior to Council approval. Administration will provide an update to Council before any rollout, outlining the recommended model, proposed pilot, cost implications and implementation approach.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 23 June 2026 for consideration

THAT THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL
THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the delivery of an integrated Live Music Circuit combining physical, digital and promotional elements, subject to stakeholder permissions for rollout as part of the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan..
2. Endorses Option 2 – Partnered Program, as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of Infrastructure and Public Works Committee held on 16 June 2026, as the preferred delivery model for a venue recognition scheme, noting that the detailed implementation approach, budget requirements, governance considerations and concept design will be subsequently approved by Council..

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community Vibrant, connected and inclusive. Our objective is to support our communities to thrive, create fun, lively and interesting experiences, celebrate and honour community and cultures.
Policy	This proposal aligns with the Cultural Policy principles of <i>Amplifying Creative Capital</i> , <i>Preserving Cultural Heritage</i> , <i>Embracing Progress</i> , and <i>Creating Space for Cultural Expression</i> . It also supports the Economic Development Strategy goal of <i>strengthening Adelaide as Australia’s festival and creative capital</i> by enabling live music, cultural experiences and creative industries.
Consultation	. Further consultation may be required to test the preferred delivery method, including input from sector partners, venue operators, property owners, heritage stakeholders, peer reviewers and relevant music-sector organisations.
Resource	Implementation requires; prioritisation of existing operational budgets; and leveraging existing programs, partnerships, platforms and channels.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Stakeholder approvals, property owner consent and policy compliance would be required. Recognition schemes may create governance and reputational risks if inclusion is contested, venues change, audiences shift or content becomes outdated. Clear criteria, transparent assessment, peer validation, review cycles and update or removal protocols would be required.
Opportunities	Drive visitation to City businesses and sites of cultural and heritage significance; deepen connection with Adelaide’s live music cultural heritage and venues; amplify Adelaide’s UNESCO City of Music designation.
25/26 Budget Allocation	\$7,500 allocated in the operational budget for 2026 edition of the pocket guide which could be refreshed to reflect the proposed Live Music Circuit.
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	\$29,800 is proposed through operational budgets, subject to the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan and Budget processes, comprising \$4,800 from Heritage and \$25,000 from Arts and Culture. Plaque and inlay unit costs exclude broader costs such as design, research, permissions, expert review, promotion, launch activity, maintenance and future review. Subject to future scoping and approval, a 5–10 plaque partnered pilot could indicatively require \$15,000–\$30,000.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Initial implementation is proposed over 12 months. The life of plaques or markers will depend on materials, location and maintenance requirements. Future updates, maintenance, replacement, relocation or removal would be managed through existing programs and budgets, with any ongoing scheme to be determined in the next stage.
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Ongoing costs would be subject to the preferred option and would need to factor in maintenance, content updates, review processes, partner involvement, promotion and any future intake requirements.
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. At its meeting of 10 March 2026, Council resolved:
 1. Requests Administration investigate options for a walkable 'Live Music Circuit' of Adelaide's live music culture, including:
 - a. the expansion of the Heritage Plaques Program to include a category for recognising Adelaide's live music history.
 - b. a bespoke plaque or footpath inlay recognition scheme.
 - c. promotional options available through AEDA to increase public visibility of historical and existing live music venues.
 2. Requests Administration produce a report detailing these possibilities for consideration in the 26/27FY business plan and budget.

Strategic Alignment

2. Adelaide is Australia's first and only designated UNESCO City of Music. Council's Strategic Plan 2024–2028 includes the success indicator to 'Amplify Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO City of Music' under the 'Our Community' outcome, 'An interesting and engaging place to live, learn and visit'.
3. The development of a proposed Live Music Circuit aligns with the [Cultural Policy](#) principles of, 'Amplifying Creative Capital', Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress', and 'Creating Space for Cultural Expression' as it seeks to recognise Adelaide's live music history including iconic cultural venues, and increase opportunities for participation, access and engagement.
4. Administration has undertaken a review of previous and existing heritage recognition and music experience-led approaches and benchmarked our activity with comparable cultural tourism trails in Australia and overseas, including the [St Kilda Music History Map](#), [Boston Freedom Trail](#), [York Historic Music Venues Trail](#), [Tamworth Country Music Trail](#), [Glasgow Music City Map](#) and [Liverpool Music Heritage Trail](#).
 - 4.1. These trails typically focus on either cultural history or active venues, combining heritage assets with sites interpreted digitally (where they no longer exist).
 - 4.2. Industry and community consultation, including the [Night Time Entertainment Economy Report](#) (May 2024), Live Music Forum (November 2024) and [Cultural Policy \(June 2025\)](#), identified visibility, promotion, accessibility and audience development as key challenges for Adelaide's live music sector.
 - 4.3. Subsequent City of Adelaide initiatives have focused on raising awareness of live music venues and businesses to encourage visitation and remove barriers to participation for performers and audiences.

Expansion of the Heritage Plaques Program

5. The Heritage Plaques Program has been operating for nearly 30 years and recognises Adelaide's built heritage.
 - 5.1. Heritage-listed properties are eligible for the voluntary program, with the approval and support of the property owner.
 - 5.2. The 'blue plaques' feature 45–70 words focused on earliest historical use, built date, architect, original owner, architectural features and property significance.
 - 5.3. Live music venues that operate within heritage-listed buildings with existing Heritage Plaques include The Austral, the Crown and Anchor, the Metropolitan Hotel and The Stag Public House; however, these plaques do not reference more recent live music history.
 - 5.4. Administration has identified eight heritage-listed buildings whose earliest recorded use was for live music, and which are eligible for Heritage Plaques.
 - 5.5. The [Adelaide Festival Centre](#), [Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's Grainger Studios \(former West's Cinema\)](#), [Adelaide Town Hall](#), [Elder Hall](#), [Queen's Theatre](#), [The Tivoli Hotel \(and former ballroom\)](#), [The Colonel Light Hotel \(and former theatre/concert hall\)](#) and [The Former Kings Hall](#).
 - 5.6. Heritage Plaques cost approximately \$600 to manufacture and install and require property owner approval.

- 5.7. Should the recommendation be supported, Administration will initiate the process of adding these heritage-listed properties to the program subject to permissions from property owners, including content research and promotion as part of a Live Music Circuit.
- 5.8. While the Heritage Plaques Program can recognise music or cultural significance where it aligns with existing criteria and a building's early history, it is not the most suitable vehicle for broader recognition of recent or current venue use.

Bespoke Plaque / Footpath Inlay Recognition Schemes

6. A bespoke venue recognition scheme involving plaques requires:
 - 6.1. Clear eligibility criteria based on cultural significance, supported by a formal nomination and assessment process, defined decision-making authority, and property owner consent.
 - 6.2. Consistent design and content standards, ongoing program and asset management, and processes to manage risks, disputes and reputational considerations.
7. A venue recognition scheme options paper (**Attachment A**) has been prepared to support this next stage of work, outlining four potential delivery models such as Council-led, partnered, invite / peer recognition, and open call with limited intake, which identifies considerations for each model.
 - 7.1. Each model has different implications for Council resourcing, partner involvement, assessment, communications, costs and ongoing review.
8. Consideration should be given to ensuring any bespoke recognition initiative does not duplicate existing programs, including the SA Music Hall of Fame or other relevant music-sector recognition initiatives.
9. Plaque and inlay options would need to have regard to City of Adelaide public realm and safety guidelines, accessibility and asset management requirements.
 - 9.1. Wall-mounted plaques would cost from approximately \$1,000 each to manufacture and install and require property owner approval.
 - 9.2. Footpath plaques or inlays would cost from approximately \$1,300 each to manufacture and install and may involve additional costs for site assessment, approvals, pavement works, reinstatement, maintenance and future replacement.
 - 9.3. Footpath plaques or inlays would require further consideration of safety, accessibility, maintenance, lifecycle impacts, paving infrastructure, visibility and legibility, including potential slip and trip risks and the need for plaques to sit flush with surrounding pavers.
 - 9.4. Additional costs may be required for site assessment, approvals, pavement works, reinstatement and future replacement, with consideration also needed for durability under pedestrian traffic, cleaning requirements and ensuring text remains legible over time
 - 9.5. In-ground plaques or inlays should only be considered where they can be integrated sympathetically or into significant public realm works, such as Mainstreet revitalisations, laneway improvements or other capital programs.

Other Proposed Live Music Circuit Elements

10. The proposed Live Music Circuit will consolidate and incorporate the following existing activities and be delivered in 26/27:
 - 10.1. The [City of Music Laneways trail](#) and music-themed public art.
 - 10.2. The current 125 live music venues and businesses with [existing 'Discover Music Here' decals with QR codes](#) noting that decals can be requested by community.
 - 10.3. Production of a new 2026 edition of the pocket guide *Adelaide: Your Guide to our City of Music*, that maybe rebranded as the *Live Music Circuit*. This will be made available in both physical and digital formats and distributed through street press, venues, City of Adelaide facilities, major festivals and events.
 - 10.4. Eight heritage-listed buildings with live music origins added to the Heritage Plaques Program, subject to permissions from property owners.
 - 10.5. A pilot number of QR-enabled signage or recognition markers installed in key precincts and music locations on existing City of Adelaide infrastructure such as light poles.
 - 10.5.1. Linking to existing music heritage and recognition assets such as the South Australian Music Hall of Fame venues, Jubilee 150 Walk, Adelaide Festival Centre's Walk of Fame, The

Beatles artwork at Adelaide Town Hall, and the Elvis Presley Memorial Cupola in the Botanic Gardens.

- 10.6. The new UNESCO City of Music Vinyl Collection exclusive to the new City Library on North Terrace that celebrates South Australian musical talent.
- 10.7. Refreshed digital platforms, including venue histories, archival material and contemporary narratives.
- 10.8. Installation of free-standing pop-up promotional pillars in key precincts to create a visible circuit presence and link to digital content via QR codes.

Live Music Promotional activities

11. The [City of Adelaide UNESCO City of Music webpage](#) is a primary source of information about our live music venues, history and culture. It promotes City of Adelaide initiatives, investment and facilities, with links to key industry and community partners and resources.
12. The Experience Adelaide platform features some music-related content, including [live music event listings](#), [blogs](#), [itineraries](#) and [trails](#). These will be refreshed, expanded and branded as part of the Live Music Circuit, using videos, storytelling and historic and contemporary imagery to support deeper discovery of Adelaide's live music culture.
 - 12.1. Events and businesses can be promoted via [Experience Adelaide through free ATDW listings](#), distributed across the What's On calendar, directories, blogs and partner platforms such as SouthAustralia.com.
13. Distribution of physical copies of the printed guide, physical signage and associated sponsorship benefits and opportunities at festivals and events sponsored by AEDA.
14. Promotional activity would be scaled to the preferred delivery model and may include launch or unveiling activity, Experience Adelaide content, eDMs, partner promotion, venue storytelling and integration with the Live Music Circuit guide.

Next Steps

15. Should the recommendation be endorsed by Council, Administration will:
 - 15.1. Reflect Council feedback in the scope, governance and preferred delivery approach for the Live Music Circuit, including alignment with future Live Music Action Plan work as part of Cultural Policy implementation.
 - 15.2. Progress confirmed and identified Live Music Circuit elements in 2026/27, including heritage plaques, printed materials, QR markers and signage, digital content and promotional activity, subject to budget, permissions and approvals.
 - 15.3. Engage with venue operators, property owners and sector partners to confirm participation, permissions and content inputs.
 - 15.4. Further develop the preferred delivery model for the bespoke venue recognition scheme, including criteria, assessment, expert or peer input, maintenance, review requirements and cost implications.
 - 15.5. Administration will review any further updates to relevant legislation such as the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (Designated Live Music Venues and Protection of Crown and Anchor Hotel) Amendment Act 2024 (SA)* to determine how this might enhance the delivery of options for the Live Music Circuit.
 - 15.6. Provide an update to Council before any rollout of the bespoke venue recognition scheme, outlining the recommended model, proposed pilot, cost implications and implementation approach.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Venue Recognition Scheme Plaque Options Matrix

- END OF REPORT -