

Adelaide Economic Development Agency

Quarter 4 Review

1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026

Between 1 April 2026 and 30 June 2026, items of note for AEDA:

- The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra celebrated its 90th birthday with the first orchestral performance in Rundle Mall in over a decade
- AFL Gather Round 2026 delivered its largest activation program including 18 events with a single focus in Rundle Mall
- AEDA represented City businesses and supported Tourism Australia's flagship event, the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE2026), attended by 2700 delegates and held in Adelaide
- Investment Attraction campaign launched to promote Adelaide as an Innovation City to interstate and national audiences.

Financial report

The preliminary end of year position is as follows:

Operating Position			
\$000s	2025/26 Actuals*	2025/26 Q3 Budget	Variance
Income			
Rundle Mall Levy	4,166	4,138	28
Rundle Mall User charges	528	380	148
Grants and other contributions	5	250	(245)
Other Income	75	10	65
Total Income	4,774	4,778	(4)
Expenses			
Employee Costs	4,519	4,834	315
Materials, Contracts and Other Expenses	5,191	5,637	446
Sponsorship, Contributions and Donations	3,371	3,346	(25)
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	126	72	(54)
Financing Costs	7	7	-
Total Expenses	13,214	13,896	682
Operation Surplus / (Deficit)	(8,440)	(9,118)	678
CoA Appropriation of Funds	8,702	9,118	(416)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	262	-	262

*2025/26 actuals are preliminary and subject to the finalisation through Financial Statement preparation and external audit. The final audited position is scheduled to be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in September 2026.

Board and Advisory Committee Term Changes

At its 9 June 2026 meeting, Council supported the Board Recruitment Selection Panel's recommendation to re-appoint Steve Maras as the Chair of the AEDA Board for a further term.

Due to availability constraints of Selection Panel members, recruitment for the two Board positions was unable to be finalised prior to 30 June. Accordingly, the current terms of Jim Kouts and Jaimee Charlton were extended for a further two months as an interim arrangement until the recruitment process is finalised.

Risks and opportunities being monitored

- potential impact of rising fuel prices and potential lack of fuel supply on commuter and visitor behaviour to the city, with consequent effect on City business reliant on foot traffic
- upward inflationary pressures (limiting real wage growth) and consequent interest rates resulting in reduced discretionary income
- continuing changes and activity within the higher education and international education sector, particularly as it impacts VET and ELICOS providers
- continued competition to Rundle Mall from suburban shopping centres and online shopping.

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.

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.

Grant Funding Approved

At the AEDA Board meeting on Wednesday, 13 May 2026, the Board agreed to fund the following organisations and events:

- Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium: **2026/27 Gather in the Garden** – \$50,000 from the 2026/27 sponsorship budget
- The Art Gallery Board: **2026, 2027 Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) Winter Arts Series** – \$55,000 from the 2026/27 sponsorship budget, \$55,000 as a pre-commitment from the 2027/28 sponsorship budget
- Adelaide Horse Trials Management Inc: **2027, 2028 Adelaide Equestrian Festival** – \$80,000 from the 2026/27 sponsorship budget, \$80,000 as a pre-commitment from the 2027/28 sponsorship budget
- Adelaide Festival Centre Trust: **2027 DreamBig Children's Festival** – \$70,000 from the 2026/27 sponsorship budget.

Business Plan and Budget and Strategic Plan Measures

The 2025/26 AEDA Business Plan and Budget include 22 measures across five key areas: Investment & Business Growth; Visitor Economy; Rundle Mall & Precincts; City Brand & Marketing and Governance & Operations.

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

- fourteen measures have been marked 'Completed or Achieved' indicating it has been finalised or the annual target met
- one measure was partially achieved
- three measures are 'underway', with completion to be achieved in the 2026-27 financial year
- two measures were 'not achieved'
- one measure is 'ongoing'
- one measure was removed during the year following the Board's annual evaluation review.

Please note the figures for spend and visitation are preliminary results at this stage and may change as other data comes to hand.

Activate Rundle Mall and Precincts

Operational Measures	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Total expenditure in Rundle Mall grows by at least three percent per annum	Achieved	3%	3.2%	+0.2 percentage points
Engage with at least eight new brands to promote Rundle Mall as a premium location to grow their businesses	Achieved	8	8	-
Rundle Mall visitation remains above 52 million*	Achieved	52 million – 12 month cumulative	52.8 million	+0.8 million
Three new major brand partnerships	Achieved	3	16	+13
Concession income exceeds budget	Achieved	Financial Year to Date	\$524,844	+\$140,844
ADL Fashion Week delivered	Completed	Y/N	Delivered October 2025	Completed

*YTD Q4 figures indicative as issues affecting one of the foot traffic sensors are currently being resolved

City Brand and Marketing

Operational Measures	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Brand identity created	Underway	Y/N	Project commenced	-
At least two cooperative campaigns delivered	Achieved	2	2	-
Increase Experience Adelaide newsletter metrics to 36%+ open rate and 1.9% click through rate	Partially achieved	36% 1.9%	27.3% open rate 4% click through	-8.7% points +2.1 % points
Provide at least three industry briefing events	Completed	3	3	-

Growing the Visitor Economy

Operational Measures	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
At least 20 events and Festivals supported through sponsorship	Achieved	20	28	+8
Maintain value of business event delegates	Achieved	Cumulative total	\$418.5m YTD	+\$78.5m YTD
Work with existing firms and new entrants to develop at least 10 bookable experiences	Not achieved	10	5	-5
Visitor Experience Centre opened	Underway	Y/N	N	N
At least 45,000 people provided with information through AEDA's visitor information services	Not achieved	45,000	31,088	-18,278
Greater Adelaide Destination Management Plan (DMP) completed	Underway	Y/N	N	N

Investment and Business Growth

Operational Measures	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Work with at least 75 inbound/expanding companies to identify an additional 2,000 new city-based jobs	Achieved	75	75	-
Work with the development sector to facilitate/support an additional three residential developments in the city	Achieved	3	19	+16
Provide/support at least eight programs to support emerging industries and the scaling up of businesses	Achieved	8	12	+4
Increase the number of users of the data and insights component of the AEDA website	Achieved	7,000	17,286	+10,286

Governance and Operations

Operational Measures	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Difference
Opportunities and issues identified in the Board's annual governance review are addressed	N/A	Y/N	No specific items identified in the Board's evaluation on 11 March 2026	
An approach to funding that supports multi-year planning is applied	Ongoing	Y/N	Ongoing as part of Council's Budget process and LTFP	

Delivery



Rundle Mall City Sessions

Rundle Mall City Sessions continued to strengthen the precinct's position as a live performance destination in Q4, delivering three activations aligned with AFL Gather Round, Rundle Mall's 50th anniversary program and the City of Adelaide's Make Music Day. Supporting the Rundle Mall Brand Strategy's ambition to position the precinct as a cultural hub and live stage, the program reinforced the Mall's role as more than a retail and civic destination.

Highlights included a special AFL Gather Round balcony performance at Adelaide Arcade, Make Music Day activations at both Mall entries, and a string quartet performance in the heart of the precinct.

Across Q4, City Sessions featured 31 performers, contributing to more than 70 paid performance opportunities for local artists delivered throughout FY2025/26.



Rundle Mall AFL Gather Round

AFL Gather Round 2026 delivered a record 18 activations across the precinct — the largest event program ever undertaken for a single event.

Visitation from Thursday to Sunday reached approximately 685,000, generating an estimated uplift of 61,000 visits compared to a typical week despite softer year-on-year results (influenced by wet weather and cost-of-living pressures). Longer-term trends highlight the event's growing impact, with visitation up 33% on 2022 and 39% on comparable 2019 periods.

A standout feature was the 50th anniversary giant gold Sherrin installation, which generated significant PR value and became one of the most recognisable images of Gather Round nationally.

Supported by the Rundle Mall Fan Hub, extended trading and diverse fan experiences, the program reinforced the Mall's role as a key destination before and after games, driving visitation, dwell time and national exposure.



Sponsored Events and Festivals

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

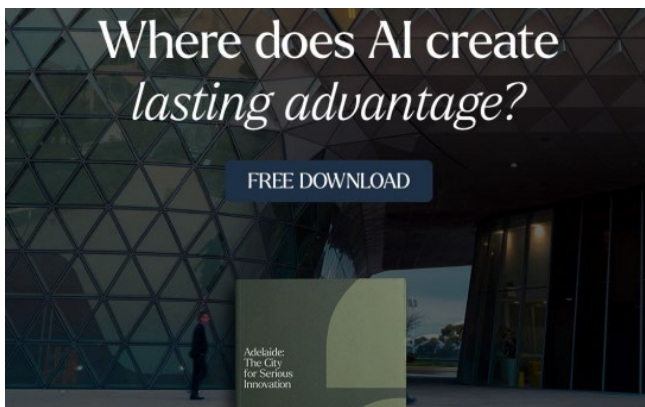
- Adelaide Equestrian Festival – \$80,000
- Tasting Australia – \$40,000
- Adelaide Cabaret Festival – \$40,000

These events/festivals are expected to generate an estimated gross economic impact of \$24,700,000 and an estimated total attendance of 155,000. Of this, city-based attendance is expected to be approximately 140,000. As acquittals are not yet due, these figures are based on application estimates.



Winter City Deals Campaign

To complement the South Australian Tourism Commission's *Celebrate the Simple Pleasures of Winter* campaign, AEDA launched *Winter City Deals* on 1 June. Promoted through digital, print, and Experience ADL channels, the campaign showcased 27 city offers and in its first weeks generated 507 leads, with activity continuing through July and August.



Investment Attraction Campaign

AEDA launched the *Adelaide: The City for Serious Innovation* investment attraction campaign, targeting interstate and international decision-makers across innovation-driven industries.

The campaign positions Adelaide as Australia's city for serious innovation, highlighting competitive advantages in artificial intelligence and big data, defence and space, health and medical technologies, and cyber security.

Designed to build awareness and generate qualified business leads, the campaign showcases Adelaide's innovation ecosystem, research strengths, industry collaboration and sovereign capability advantages.

Delivery is occurring in two phases: an awareness phase focused on targeted advertising and thought leadership content, followed by a lead generation phase using retargeting and platforms such as LinkedIn to capture and nurture investment and business development prospects.

**image is a mock up only.*



Australian Tourism Exchange 2026

ATE26 brought more than 2,700 delegates, including 730 international buyers, to Adelaide from 10 to 14 May for Australia's largest tourism trade event.

The AEDA visitor economy team met with more than 100 international buyers, the wholesalers and inbound operators who decide which Adelaide experiences make it into offshore travel packages and incentive itineraries. Each meeting was a chance to put a local operator in front of a global distribution channel, helping convert a week in Adelaide into future visitation.

AEDA created a distinctly Adelaide welcome experience in the Convention Centre forecourt, with a branded fresh produce cart showcasing local fruit, vegetables and flowers and highlighting the city's food and beverage strengths. Across four mornings, nearly 1,000 locally sourced products and city-based gift cards were distributed, complemented by a dedicated Rundle Mall retail offer map featuring 10 participating businesses. The initiative encouraged delegates to explore the city, with 34 of 150 Experience ADL gift cards redeemed during the conference period.



Strategic Partnerships

AUScelerate SA (formerly MTPConnect) continued to strengthen South Australia's life sciences ecosystem through international engagement, clinical trials facilitation and industry development initiatives.

Key activities included hosting an InvestHK delegation, facilitating targeted industry connections for South Australian organisations, supporting international engagement at BIO International Convention 2026, and delivering inbound site visits for six clinical trial companies. Industry development activities included a sold-out SouthStart masterclass for life sciences founders attended by 55 participants.

In June, MTPConnect rebranded to AUScelerate, with the South Australian operation now known as AUScelerate SA.

Festival City Adelaide convened approximately 250 government, industry and event professionals for a forum on 15 June exploring Innovation and Immersion as drivers of South Australia's festival and events sector. Through keynote presentations and panel discussions, the program highlighted innovation, audience engagement, collaboration and technology as priorities for maintaining the state's leadership as Australia's Festival State.

Renew Adelaide's Annual Report recorded 21 new ventures for the year, 17 'graduates' transitioning into lease arrangements, and the creation of 147 jobs.

ThincLab – startups from ThincLab's 2025 ThincSeed Accelerator cohort have collectively secured \$1.5 million in investment. In June, ThincLab announced a new ThincSeed Pre-Accelerator cohort comprising 22 startups selected from 50 applicants. Supported by AEDA, the seven-week program includes ventures spanning clean energy, artificial intelligence, health, education and social impact, with applications now open for the next ThincSeed Accelerator program.

Business Events Adelaide supported 25 business events, generating an estimated \$87.5 million in economic value, attracting 13,850 delegates and delivering 48,500 room nights. Major events included Hort Connections (3,300 delegates) and APPEA (2,000 delegates).

Planned Quarter 1 Activity

Coming up from 1 July 2026 to 30 September 2026:

- Co-Working Round Table
- Rundle Mall 50th Anniversary 'Spend and Win' campaign
- Rundle Mall 50th Anniversary celebrations
- Data4Lunch – Adelaide in Motion
- Illuminate Adelaide
- AGSA Winter Art Series
- SALA Festival
- Nature Festival