LIVE MUSIC CIRCUIT - VENUE RECOGNITION SCHEME FRAMEWORK & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Purpose, Governance and Assessment

October 2026

CITY OF ADELAIDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Adelaide acknowledges the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and gather.

We acknowledge and honour their spiritual and cultural stewardship of this country and recognise their deep and enduring relationship with its lands, waters, the sky, and all living things.

We pay our respects to Kaurna Elders past and present and recognise the important role of emerging leaders in sustaining and strengthening culture.

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:

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Version History

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1. PURPOSE

The Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme Framework & Implementation Plan (Framework & Implementation Plan) provides a transparent and evidence-led approach to recognising active and former Adelaide CBD venues and sites that have made a significant cultural contribution and demonstrated community value within Adelaide's live music culture and communities.

The Scheme forms part of the broader Live Music Circuit and supports implementation of the City of Adelaide Cultural Policy and Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation and the City of Adelaide's Strategic Plan 2024-28.

The Scheme is intended to preserve and interpret Adelaide's live music stories, strengthen connection to place and encourage discovery of contemporary and historic live music experiences.

1.1 Objectives

The Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme aims to:

- **Amplify Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation** by making the city's live music heritage and contemporary music ecology more visible and accessible.
- **Recognise significant live music venues and sites** including different genres, communities, venue scales and cultural histories, that have made a sustained cultural contribution and demonstrated community value.
- **Preserve and interpret Adelaide's live music stories**, including the contribution of both active venues and culturally significant former venues or sites.
- **Strengthen connection to place and encourage discovery** of Adelaide's live music culture through coordinated physical, digital and promotional interpretation.
- **Provide a transparent, evidence-led and sector-informed recognition process** supported by clear governance, peer expertise, consistent assessment and ongoing review.
- **Recognise the diversity of Adelaide's live music ecology**, including different genres, communities, venue scales and cultural histories.
- **Complement existing civic and sector-led recognition programs**, rather than duplicate or replace them.
- **Establish a sustainable recognition model** that can be evaluated, reviewed and appropriately resourced before any future continuation or expansion.

1.2 Principles

The principles guiding the scheme will be:

- **Culturally focused**: recognising cultural significance and community value rather than commercial success, while reflecting the diversity of Adelaide's live music ecology.
- **Evidence-led**: decisions supported by credible and appropriately documented evidence.
- **Sector informed**: drawing on independent music-sector, cultural, heritage and specialist expertise.
- **Transparent and accountable**: using clear criteria, documented assessment and defined decision-making responsibilities.
- **Place based**: recognising the relationship between live music, venues, communities and the City of Adelaide.

- **Sustainable**: considering permissions, assets, maintenance, review and ongoing resourcing before recognition is implemented.

1.3 Strategic Alignment

The Scheme supports the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024–2028, particularly the Our Community aspiration for a vibrant, connected and inclusive city and the outcome of Adelaide being an interesting and engaging place to live, learn and visit.

It contributes to the Strategic Plan indicator to amplify Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO City of Music by making the city's live music heritage, venues and contemporary music ecology more visible, accessible and connected to place.

The Scheme also provides practical implementation of the City of Adelaide Cultural Policy, particularly through:

- *Amplifying Creative Capital:* recognising and promoting the venues, artists, workers and communities that contribute to Adelaide's live music ecology and strengthening the visibility of Adelaide's cultural stories.
- Culturally Inclusive and Socially Connected – recognising diverse genres, cultures and communities and strengthening connection and participation through shared music histories.
- *Preserving Cultural Heritage, Embracing Progress:* documenting and interpreting active and former music venues, including cultural histories that may sit outside conventional heritage recognition.
- *Creating Space for Cultural Expression:* increasing awareness and discovery of places that enable live music, creative practice and cultural participation.

The partnered model further supports the Cultural Policy emphasis on collaboration and shared cultural responsibility, leveraging Adelaide City of Music Office, Board and independent sector expertise to deliver recognition credibly and sustainably.

2. SCOPE

The pilot recognition cohort will be limited to venues and venue sites within the City of Adelaide local government area.

2.1 Recognition Types

Recognition may include:

- **Active venues** – operating venues making a sustained and significant contribution to Adelaide's live music culture.
- **Legacy venues or sites** – former venues or places with significant live music histories and positive community impact that warrant cultural interpretation.

Heritage-listed places with current or historical uses as live music venues may continue to be recognised separately through the existing City of Adelaide, Heritage Plaques program where appropriate.

2.2 Pilot Recognition Cohort

As a pilot initiative, any establishment of an ongoing intake would require evaluation, appropriate resourcing and further governance consideration, including a decision of Council.

2.3 Nature and Limitations of Recognition

While the Scheme provides formal civic recognition, recognition of a venue or site does not:

- Constitute an award, ranking or popularity contest;
- Represent commercial endorsement of a venue or operator;
- Provide an entitlement to funding or commercial benefit;
- Confer heritage listing, planning protection or regulatory status;
- Guarantee permanent recognition; or
- Automatically follow recognition through another industry, cultural or heritage program.

2.4 Relationship to Other Recognition Programs

The Scheme also recognises the value of existing sector-led and civic initiatives within South Australia and abroad. This scheme is intended to complement, rather than duplicate or replace, programs such as the SA Music Hall of Fame and the City of Adelaide Heritage Plaques Program, with those initiatives continuing to provide their own distinct forms of recognition, commemoration and interpretation.

3. DELIVERY PARTNER

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Council has endorsed a partnered delivery model for the Scheme. Subject to agreement regarding scope, capacity, governance and resourcing, Adelaide City of Music is recommended as the delivery partner, working with the City of Adelaide and a time-limited Advisory Group.

City of Adelaide (Administration)

- Leads development and implementation of the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme within the Council-approved Framework & Implementation Plan.
- Retains responsibility for due diligence, permissions, procurement, expenditure, public assets, content, evaluation and Council reporting.
- Prepares evidence dossiers, coordinates stakeholder engagement and manages the delivery partner and Advisory Group arrangements.
- Ensures implementation complies with relevant City policies, delegations and operational requirements.

City of Adelaide (Council)

- Approves the Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme Framework & Implementation Plan.
- Provides strategic direction on the Scheme's objectives, principles and governance arrangements.
- Considers any future material changes to the Framework & Implementation Plan or continuation of the Scheme.

Adelaide City of Music Office (Delivery Partner)

- Provides sector knowledge and independent expertise.
- Supports development and testing of criteria, evidence and assessment arrangements.
- Convenes relevant music-sector and specialist expertise, including the Advisory Group.
- Supports sector engagement and connection with artists, venues and music organisations.

- Strengthens alignment with Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation and positions the Scheme within a broader international City of Music context.
- Supports the Scheme to complement, rather than duplicate, existing local and sector-led recognition initiatives.

Advisory Group

- Provides arms-length sector and specialist advice to complement the roles of Adelaide City of Music and the City of Adelaide.
- Reviews evidence and supports assessment and moderation of the proposed recognition cohort.
- Identifies gaps, conflicts or areas requiring further research or specialist input.
- Provides advice only, with decision-making, expenditure and formal recognition remaining with the City of Adelaide and Council under the approved Framework & Implementation Plan.

3.2 Advisory Group

The Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme Advisory Group will be convened through Adelaide City of Music, with its membership, scope and participation developed in negotiation with the City of Adelaide.

Membership would be targeted and time-limited, drawing on the expertise required for the pilot recognition cohort rather than seeking representation from every stakeholder organisation.

Potential participants and contributors may include:

- Adelaide City of Music Board and Office, including select members of its Artist Advisory Committee;
- MusicSA, APRA AMCOS and the Music Development Office / CreateSA, providing contemporary industry knowledge and sector connections;
- current and former live music venue operators, promoters and music workers;
- artists and musicians representing different genres, career stages and communities;
- music historians, journalists, broadcasters, archivists and heritage specialists, including relevant collecting institutions where appropriate;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and cultural organisations, and culturally and linguistically diverse artists and organisations.;
- other cultural, community or specialist expertise identified as necessary through the assessment process.

The City of Adelaide would also draw on relevant internal expertise, including Arts and Culture, Heritage, City Experience, Marketing and Communications, Asset Management, Public Realm, Procurement, Legal, Access and AEDA particularly in relation to permissions, interpretation, visitor experience, asset management and implementation.

Participation in the Advisory Group would be distinct from broader stakeholder consultation. Some organisations or individuals may contribute targeted evidence, historical knowledge, factual review or specialist advice without being formal Advisory Group members. This allows the group itself to remain small and workable while still drawing on a broad sector evidence base.

4. IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, AND CRITERIA

4.1 Venue Identification

The pilot venue pool will be developed through a combination of:

- Existing City research and data;
- Adelaide City of Music and broader sector expertise;
- The Live Music Census and Live Music Guide;
- Archival and historical research;
- Existing industry and cultural recognition programs;
- Targeted engagement with artists, venues, historians and relevant communities; and
- Insights from the Advisory Group, including venues or sites that may warrant further consideration.

This approach enables the Scheme to draw on both documented evidence and sector knowledge, helping identify significant venues and histories that may not be captured through formal records alone.

4.1.1 No Public Callout

The Scheme is not proposed to operate through a public callout or open application process. Suggestions and referrals provide an additional source of information to support research and venue identification, rather than a separate or preferential pathway to recognition.

Suggestions will:

- Be recorded and considered by City of Adelaide Administration and Adelaide City of Music alongside other research and sector evidence;
- Not constitute a formal nomination, application or guarantee that a venue will progress to assessment;
- Be subject to the same eligibility requirements and cultural assessment framework as all other venues;
- Be considered having regard to the scope, timing, available resources and size of the relevant recognition cohort; and
- Not receive additional weight because of the number of suggestions received or the profile of the person or organisation making the suggestion.

4.1.2 Progression to Eligibility

Venues identified through these pathways will only progress where there is a reasonable basis for further consideration and will then be subject to the same preliminary eligibility, evidence and cultural assessment process.

4.2 Eligibility

Following venue identification, a preliminary eligibility assessment will be undertaken by City of Adelaide Administration, with input from Adelaide City of Music and relevant technical or specialist areas where required.

A venue or site must satisfy the eligibility requirements before progressing to cultural assessment by the Advisory Group.

Eligibility will consider:

- Location within the approved City of Adelaide local government area;

- Credible evidence of a current or substantial historic live music function;
- Sufficient evidence to support accurate assessment and interpretation;
- Distinct community value without unnecessary duplication of existing recognition;
- A realistic pathway to operator and property-owner consent; and
- City due diligence identifying no unresolved material legal, safety, integrity or reputational barrier.

Where appropriate, venue operators or site representatives may be contacted at this stage to clarify factual matters, permissions or available evidence. Participation will be proportionate and will not require preparation of a formal application or business case.

4.3 Cultural Criteria

Eligible venues or sites will then progress to cultural assessment, informed by City of Adelaide, Adelaide City of Music and the Advisory Group.

Assessment will consider four proposed cultural criteria:

1. **Longevity:** considers the extent to which a venue or site has made a sustained contribution to live music over time, including continuity through changes in ownership, operation or venue identity.
2. **Cultural and community significance:** Considers the extent to which a venue or site has influenced Adelaide's music culture, identity and communities, including significant performances, artistic milestones, recognised cultural histories, and meaningful opportunities for diverse genres, cultures and participation.
3. **Contribution to the live music ecology**: considers how a venue or site has supported artists, audiences, promoters, technicians and other music workers, including pathways for performance, development, collaboration and participation.
4. **Connection to place:** considers the relationship between the venue or site, its precinct and the City of Adelaide's broader music narrative, including how the location contributes to a coherent understanding of Adelaide's live music history and culture.

The Advisory Group will provide peer and specialist advice against the agreed criteria, supported by the evidence prepared through the City and delivery partner process. Final recognition will remain subject to the approved City of Adelaide governance and decision-making pathway.

4.4 Evidence and Assessment

4.4.1 Preparation

The City of Adelaide and delivery partner, Adelaide City of Music, will prepare a standardised evidence dossier for each venue progressing to cultural assessment.

The depth of research will be proportionate to the significance and complexity of the venue and scaled according to available budget, staff capacity and competing program priorities.

Where required, the City of Adelaide and Adelaide City of Music may engage an appropriately qualified third-party researcher, contractor or advisor to support dossier preparation.

4.4.2 Evidence Sources

Evidence may include:

- Venue and artist records;
- Archival and historical material;

- Independent media and published histories;
- Oral histories and community testimony;
- Sector knowledge; and
- Available quantitative information.

Quantitative or commercial information may provide useful context but will not be mandatory or decisive.

4.4.3 Venue and Stakeholder Input

Where appropriate, venues or site representatives may be contacted to verify information, address evidence gaps, identify relevant records or histories, and provide contextual information.

Requests will be proportionate and limited to information reasonably available. Venues will not be required to undertake extensive data collection, provide commercial information or prepare an advocacy submission, and their capacity to provide information will not advantage or disadvantage their assessment.

4.4.4 Evidence Gaps

Where documentation is limited but cultural significance appears credible, additional research, oral-history collection or specialist input may be undertaken where proportionate and resources allow.

Non-response will not automatically exclude a venue where sufficient independent evidence is available.

4.4.5 Assessment Record and Confidentiality

The evidence dossier will record supporting sources, key findings, material gaps and contested information.

Venue-provided information will be considered alongside independent and sector evidence, providing a consistent basis for Advisory Group assessment and moderation.

Evidence dossiers will be internal assessment documents and will not ordinarily be published. Public-facing recognition and interpretation will instead draw from verified and approved content developed through the assessment process.

4.5 Integrity and Moderation

Advisory members will declare and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest, including recusal where appropriate.

Assessment will apply the same approved criteria and evidence standards across all venues and will draw on multiple sources. It will not rely solely on information provided by a venue or the testimony of one individual.

Lobbying or advocacy outside the agreed assessment process will not form part of the evidence considered.

The proposed pilot cohort may be moderated to ensure a balanced and representative recognition outcome aligned with the objectives of the Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme.

Where required, the Advisory Group may seek further independent research before reaching a finding.

Assessment and moderation findings will be documented, including the evidence relied upon and reasons for the outcome. Where significant differing views remain, these will also be recorded.

Moderation will support balance across the overall cohort but will not introduce additional criteria or override the requirement for each venue or site to demonstrate cultural significance against the approved framework.

5. DECISION RIGHTS

Clear decision rights are required to preserve the independence of the assessment process while ensuring accountability remains with the City of Adelaide.

The Scheme separates the roles of the elected Council, City Administration, delivery partner and Advisory Group so that advice, assessment, implementation, review and formal decision-making are clearly distinguished.

Council (Elected Body) retains decision-making authority for matters expressly reserved to Council under the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme Framework & Implementation Plan.

- Approves any material changes to the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme's purpose, scope or governance framework.
- Determines whether to continue, expand, materially amend or discontinue the Scheme following evaluation or review.
- May consider matters escalated by Administration where the significance, risk or public interest warrants Council determination.

City of Adelaide (Administration) manages development and implementation of the Scheme within the Council-approved Framework & Implementation Plan, including research, due diligence, stakeholder engagement, permissions, procurement, budget, assets, content and reporting.

- Administrative and expenditure decisions will be made in accordance with relevant delegations and policies.
- Administration may manage factual corrections, routine content updates and lifecycle reviews.
- Where new evidence, process concerns or material changes in circumstances arise, Administration will determine whether further research, Advisory Group consideration or referral to Council is required.
- Temporary suspension of active recognition or promotion may be considered, subject to relevant delegations, while a material matter is reviewed.

Adelaide City of Music – delivery partner supports delivery of the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme through sector expertise, partnership coordination, development of the assessment approach and convening of relevant industry and specialist input.

- The delivery partner may also support further research or reassessment where new evidence or material issues arise.

Advisory Group provides arms-length peer and specialist advice on evidence, assessment and cohort moderation.

- It may reconsider matters where substantive new evidence, an identified conflict or an assessment integrity issue warrants further review.
- Its role is advisory and it does not independently confer, suspend or remove recognition, commit City expenditure or exercise decision-making authority reserved for the City of Adelaide or Council.

Venue operators and property owners may be requested to provide information and permissions where required, but do not determine cultural assessment or recognition outcomes.

- They may raise factual inaccuracies or provide new material information, but do not determine cultural assessment, moderation or recognition outcomes.

6. PERMISSIONS AND DELIVERY

Physical recognition will only proceed once all relevant approvals, permissions and implementation requirements have been addressed, including:

- Venue/operator and property-owner consent;
- Public realm, asset and site-specific technical approvals;
- Accessibility, safety and cultural review requirements;
- Factual verification and content approval;
- Rights and permissions for images, archival material or other content;
- Procurement, fabrication and installation requirements; and
- Confirmation of asset ownership, maintenance and replacement responsibilities.

The standard recognition plaque and installation will be funded through the Scheme and will not be at the cost of the recognised venue or property owner.

Where installation on the venue or property is not feasible or supported, alternative recognition treatments may be considered, including placement on nearby City of Adelaide-managed infrastructure or public realm assets. Any alternative treatment will be subject to site suitability, relevant approvals, accessibility, maintenance requirements and an appropriate cost-benefit assessment.

Digital interpretation may also be used where a physical marker is not practical, feasible or does not represent value for money.

7. RECOGNITION LIFECYCLE

7.1 Changes to Recognition

Recognition will be supported through physical and/or digital interpretation and integrated into the broader Live Music Circuit.

Active venue recognition will remain current through event-based updates where material changes occur. A change of ownership or operator will not automatically affect recognition where the venue's live music function and cultural significance continue.

A review may be triggered where:

- A venue closes, relocates or substantially changes its live music function;
- Ownership or operation changes in a way that materially affects the basis for recognition;
- A recognised building or site is significantly altered or demolished;
- Credible new information affects the accuracy or appropriateness of recognition;
- A marker requires significant repair or replacement; or
- Reputational or integrity concerns arise.

Where a venue closes or changes use, active recognition may transition to *legacy recognition* where the site retains cultural significance.

Where a building is demolished or a marker can no longer remain in place, alternative physical or digital interpretation may be considered, subject to significance, feasibility, approvals and value for money.

7.2 Review and Evaluation

Following delivery of the pilot recognition cohort, the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme will be reviewed and individual acknowledgements evaluated every four years to confirm their continued relevance, accuracy, condition and alignment with the approved Framework & Implementation Plan.

7.3 Administrative and Council Decisions

Routine factual, digital and asset-management updates may be managed administratively between review cycles. Temporary suspension or other interim action may be undertaken in accordance with relevant delegations while a matter is reviewed.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

8.1 Cultural Recognition

Recognition will clearly distinguish *cultural recognition* from commercial endorsement. Inclusion in the Scheme recognises a venue or site's cultural significance and does not represent endorsement of its current business operations, commercial performance or services.

8.2 Branding and Identity

Adelaide City of Music and UNESCO-related branding will only be used in accordance with agreed protocols and approvals.

Use of the UNESCO City of Music identity will reflect Adelaide's designation and connection to the broader City of Music network but will not imply endorsement of individual venues by UNESCO internationally.

8.3 Promotion and Storytelling

Recognised venues and their stories may be promoted through the broader Live Music Circuit, including:

- Digital content and mapping;
- The Live Music Circuit printed guide and related visitor information;
- City of Adelaide and Adelaide City of Music communication channels;
- Social media and media activity; and
- Coordinated launch, unveiling or showcase activity.

Promotional activity will focus on the cultural significance, history and contribution of recognised venues and sites, while supporting discovery of Adelaide's broader live music culture.

The scale, format and frequency of promotional and storytelling activity will be determined by the City of Adelaide and its delivery partners, having regard to available resources, communication priorities, audience value and the most appropriate treatment for each recognised venue or site.

Recognition does not create an entitlement to a particular level, format or frequency of promotional activity.

9. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Evaluation measures will align with the City of Adelaide Cultural Policy and Strategic Plan, enabling the Live Music Circuit – Venue Recognition Scheme to be assessed both on its own performance and on its broader contribution to cultural outcomes.

The pilot cohort will be evaluated against measures that may include:

- Contribution to Cultural Policy and Strategic Plan outcomes;
- Community and sector engagement;
- Representation and diversity across the cohort;
- Quality, accessibility and cultural value of interpretation;
- Digital and visitor engagement;
- Stakeholder confidence in the assessment and governance process;
- Effectiveness of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide City of Music and Advisory Group model;
- Delivery effort, cost and value for money; and
- Asset, maintenance and lifecycle requirements.

Evaluation will be led by City of Adelaide Administration, informed by the delivery partner and relevant stakeholder feedback.

Findings will inform whether the Scheme should continue, expand, be refined or conclude, including any future governance, funding and resourcing requirements. Material expansion or change will remain subject to Council consideration.

The Framework & Implementation Plan will be reviewed following completion of the pilot cohort. Thereafter, the Scheme and individual acknowledgements will be evaluated every four years, or earlier where material governance, policy, integrity or delivery issues arise.

10. CONTACT AND INTERNAL LEAD

The Arts and Culture team within Creative City, City of Adelaide is the internal lead for the Live Music Circuit - Venue Recognition Scheme and will coordinate its development, implementation and ongoing administration.

The Arts and Culture team will:

- Lead delivery of the Scheme within the approved Framework & Implementation Plan;
- Coordinate the partnership with Adelaide City of Music and the Advisory Group;
- Oversee venue identification, research and evidence development;
- Coordinate stakeholder engagement and relevant internal City advice;
- Manage governance, Council reporting and implementation requirements;
- Coordinate permissions, content, procurement and asset considerations with relevant City teams;
- Oversee budget, resourcing, evaluation and periodic review of the Scheme;
- Maintain key Scheme records, assessment documentation and implementation decisions; and
- Escalate material governance, risk or policy matters through the appropriate pathways.

Internal Lead: Arts and Culture, Creative City, City Culture, City Community.
City of Adelaide.