

Christmas Festival

Tuesday, 2 May 2023

**City Community Services and
Culture Committee**

Strategic Alignment - Dynamic City Culture

Program Contact:

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Public

Approving Officers:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 13 December 2022, Council resolved: [Council] 'requests administration to review the Christmas Festival and report to Council with proposals and costed options for consideration of the future program as part of the 2023/24 budget process'.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Christmas Festival costed options that include proposals for new decorations to amplify the impact of Christmas Festival in 2023 for consideration in the 2023/2024 budget process.

Christmas Festival 2023 will be the final year of delivery under the current Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024 which is a city-wide planning and delivery approach to Christmas delivered by City of Adelaide and integrated with specific approaches to the Adelaide Central Market precinct and to Rundle Mall, delivered by the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA).

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 9 May 2023 for consideration.

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL:

That Council

1. Endorses the proposed costed options for consideration and approval through the 2023/2024 Business Plan and Budget process, as outlined in Item 5.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 2 May 2023.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Dynamic City Culture</p> <p>The City of Adelaide Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021 to 2024 delivers on Council's aspirational vision to be the world's most liveable city. It delivers primarily on Council's Dynamic City Culture theme, particularly in enabling 'Beautiful, surprising places' and 'Celebration of diverse community, culture and creativity'. The Action Plan, through engagement with city businesses and mainstreets, delivers on the theme of Strong Economies. The Plan also contributes to Thriving Communities and encourages Environmental Leadership in the delivery of events and activity. Celebration of diverse community, culture and creativity and beautiful, surprising places.</p>
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	<p>MacGregor Tan market research occurred during the Christmas Festival in 2020, 2021 and 2022, informing programming and expenditure.</p> <p>Consultation and collaboration has occurred with the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA), Adelaide Central Market (ACMA) and the City Operations Team in writing this report and the recommendations.</p>
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The proposed annual capital expenditure across a program of four years of base capital budget allocation over two financial years in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years, the City of Adelaide could procure high quality, impactful decorations that may be used year on year, rather than adding minor decorations annually.
22/23 Budget Allocation	<p>The 2022/2023 City of Adelaide budget allocation for the Christmas Festival included a \$500,000 operating budget for delivery of Christmas Festival 2022, and a \$200,000 capital budget for the purchase of new decorations in the 2022/2023 financial year, for Christmas Festival 2023.</p> <p>The 2022/2023 budget allocation for Christmas Festival 2022 across CoA and ACMA was \$897,300 and with the additional of investment from the Rundle Mall Levy the total was \$1.829M.</p>
Proposed 23/24 Budget Allocation	<p>The proposed 2023/2024 budget to enable Christmas Festival 2023 for City-wide operations and capital (decorations) totals up to \$1.673M and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoA Operational Budget \$513,000 • Capital/Infrastructure \$200,000 • Rundle Mall Levy budget for Q2 Christmas and Summer Sales Campaigns, via AEDA are yet to be confirmed • Adelaide Central Market on market activation and promotion up to \$60,000.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
22/23 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report

Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024

- Council endorsed the Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024 (the Plan) in 2021 [Link 1 view [here](#)]. The Plan positions Adelaide as the premier location in South Australia to participate in the signature events of the Christmas season, enables innovation and invests in partnerships to grow and deliver must see dynamic lighting and decorative displays.
- The goals of the Plan are:
 - Goal 1: The City will be brimming with magical places, must-see dynamic destinations, decorations and lighting, and sensory experiences that draw people in day and night.
 - Goal 2: The City will be the premiere location in South Australia to participate in the signature events of a festive season that is culturally rich, meaningful, and prosperous.
 - Goal 3: City businesses, artists and makers will be directly supported to grow their cultural, artistic, and economic contribution to the city, to attract audiences, visitors, and givers.
- The Plan enables a holistic approach to Christmas, with City of Adelaide (CoA) and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) and the Adelaide Central Market (ACMA) working together to amplify festiveness throughout the City.
- The total investment for the Christmas Festival in November/December 2022 was \$897,300, excluding the Rundle Mall Levy. It consists of:

Delivery for Christmas Festival 2022 - Item	Investment	Delivered/Funded by
<i>Decorations , Plant and Labour</i>		
Project Coordination 2022/2023	\$100,000	Delivered by CoA
City Decorations (new \$18,000, install, maintenance, removal \$22,500)	\$40,500	Delivered by CoA
Lighting Lanes – lighting installations in Vaughan Place and Peel Street	\$127,300	Funded by CoA. Hired artwork through Atelier Sisu
Plant and Labour - Depot costs	\$50,000	Funded by CoA
Adelaide Central Markets decorations	\$60,000	Delivered by Adelaide Central Markets (ACMA)
<i>Sub-total decorations, plant and labour (inc ACMA activations & marketing)</i>	<i>\$377,800</i>	
<i>City-wide Events and Activation</i>		
Lighting of the Giant Christmas Tree Community event	\$82,500	Delivered and funded by CoA
Christmas Cracker Augmented Reality Trail	\$21,500	Delivered and funded by CoA
Christmas business window decals	\$10,000	Delivered and funded by CoA
Festive Weekends – Five events in Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga over five weekends	\$160,000	Funded by CoA. Delivered by local event companies
Christmas Incentive Scheme – Live music and performance day and night City and North Adelaide	\$37,000	Delivered by CoA with local artists
Christmas Pageant	\$75,000	AEDA sponsorship
Carols Carnival presented by Experience Adelaide -- Free community Christmas activation in Festival Plaza held as part of Carols by Candlelight	\$50,000	AEDA Strategic Events Fund – Expansion of Existing Events category

Sub-total City-wide Events and Activation	\$436,000	
Marketing and Insights		
Market research	\$13,500	Delivered by MacGregor Tan. Funded by CoA
Marketing campaign/website	\$70,000	Delivered by CoA
Sub-total Marketing and Insights	\$83,500	
Total CoA Investment 2022/2023	\$897,300	
Rundle Mall decorations, activations, operations, marketing for Christmas, Black Friday, Boxing Day and January Sales (over three months combined)	\$932,000	Delivered by AEDA, funded by Rundle Mall Levy

5. The 2023/2024 Business Plan and Budget bid seeks Council approval to increase the base operating budget by \$200,000. A consideration of costed options includes:

2023/2024 Business Plan and Budget bid costings – capital infrastructure	
Lighting Lanes – overhead decorative lighting installations in two City/North Adelaide lanes to be determined. Funded by CoA. Hired artwork through Atelier Sisu	\$140,000
Christmas Cracker Augmented Reality Trail	\$20,000
Main street businesses window decals	\$20,000
Additional funds for Lighting of Giant Christmas Tree Community Event to maintain 2022 funding level	\$20,000
Total	\$200,000

Christmas Festival Action Plan Evaluation 2020-2022

6. The Christmas Festival is evaluated annually, providing analysis to support effective decision making through:
- 6.1. An internal evaluation report, which includes analysis of data on visitation and foot traffic to Rundle Mall, main streets, and events; and
 - 6.2. Intercept surveys and analysis conducted by MacGregor Tan with visitors to the Christmas Festival. The MacGregor Tan Christmas 2022 Tracking Evaluation Report has tracked visitor sentiment from 2020 to 2022 and can be found here [Link 2 view [here](#)]. A summary of the MacGregor Tan research is below:

Measure	2020 Outcomes	2021 Outcomes	2022 Outcomes
Awareness of decorations overall	70%	76%	79%
Awareness of general decorations (street decorations)	9%	16%	13%
Awareness of activities	87%	84%	81%
Visitation – attended an event	40%	31%	26%
Christmas activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping • Christmas displays and decorations • visiting the Giant Christmas tree • The Pageant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dining out • Taking in the atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pageant • Shopping • The Christmas displays/decorations • Visiting the Giant Christmas tree
Festiveness	43%	49%	51%
Importance of activities	Supporting City businesses (89%) and supporting musicians, artists and creatives (88%)	Supporting City businesses (88%) and supporting musicians, artists and creatives (86%)	Supporting musicians, artists, creatives, designers, and makers (83%) Supporting City businesses (82%)

- 6.3. Awareness of decorations has positively improved from 2020 to 2022. In 2022, while improving, it was found that 49% of visitors surveyed felt that Adelaide could be more festive and provide more decorations.

Approach to Christmas in the City

7. The Christmas Festival Program traditionally runs from the installation of the Christmas Tree in Tarntanyangga / Victoria Square, and ends after the twelve days of Christmas on 6 January, when the Christmas Tree is de-installed. Activations throughout this period include:
 - 7.1. Five 'Festive Weekends' one and two-day family, community and inclusive events in Tarntandanyangga
 - 7.2. The Annual Community 'Lighting of the Christmas Tree'
 - 7.3. City-wide pop-up live music and performance including a range of community choirs and carols in the City and North Adelaide
 - 7.4. The Christmas Cracker Trail including digital scavenger hunt and Augmented Reality
 - 7.5. The National Pharmacies Pageant, which is facilitated on-street by City of Adelaide and sponsored through AEDA in 2022. The Pageant 2023 has been awarded \$75,000 subject to 2023/2024 budgetary approvals
 - 7.6. Additional Christmas events operated by third parties may apply for funding through AEDA
 - 7.7. Banners and decorations installed in streets and squares
 - 7.8. Rundle Mall decorations, promotion and activations for Black Friday, Christmas shopping and January sales
 - 7.9. The Adelaide Central Market hosts live music and performance and provides decorations, marketing and promotions for stall holders.
8. In response to Council's feedback for a more integrated Festival approach across the City and North Adelaide, AEDA and the CoA are working together to ensure a consistent look and feel of decorations and branding across the City.
 - 8.1. CoA Marketing supported the Festival with a paid media spend, highlighting the Festive Weekends program, live music and performance activations and array of Christmas experiences, working closely with AEDA and ACMA teams to align messaging and promotions.
 - 8.2. CoA, AEDA and ACMA creatives are linked through a shared colour palette, showing a consistent theme across the city.
 - 8.3. The Christmas Cracker creative was showcased in a centrepiece window display in Rundle Mall in 2022 and produced and distributed 1,000 branded Christmas Crackers throughout December. All crackers had a QR code inside which directed people to the CoA Christmas page so they could explore everything happening across the city during Christmas time. 100 crackers also had a \$30 Rundle Mall gift card.
 - 8.4. ACMA included the 'Cracker' on their Christmas creative and both ACMA and AEDA distributed CoA produced and branded 'Cracker' window decals to businesses.
9. The same approach with greater amplification is proposed for Christmas 2023.

Christmas Festival 2023 – \$430,000 Decoration capital expenditure and renewal

10. The total expenditure on new decorations and asset management renewal through the capital budget for Christmas Festival 2023, is \$430,000. This has been approved through the 2022/2023 Business Plan and Budget process and is made up of:
 - 10.1. \$200,000 capital
 - 10.2. \$230,000 renewal (replacement of end-of-life assets)
11. As stated above Christmas Festival 2023 decorations, creative and branding will have a shared colour palette to ensure consistency and impact across the City, North Adelaide and in Rundle Mall and the Central Market.
12. An audit of Christmas Festival decorations occurred in 2022/2023 to assess decorations at end of life and that require replacement. In addition to the base \$200,000 capital investment for 2022/2023, \$230,000 has been allocated within the Asset Management budget for this purpose.

13. Prior to the end of the 2022/2023 financial year a total of \$430,000 will be invested in decorations that complement existing Christmas Festival assets. This will ensure a new and consistent suite of decorations is available for display in City and North Adelaide streets and squares for the Christmas Festival 2023.
14. Additionally, the Giant Christmas Tree asset renewal process is underway, with planning phase commenced. It is anticipated that the full upgrade to the Tree's foliage and lighting system will be completed by 2025. This process is also managed through asset renewal and associated budget management.
15. Examples and indicative costs of new decorations available can be found in [Link 3 view [here](#)] – Christmas Festival - Renewal Decorations.
16. Request for funding through the 2023/2024 budget process is consistent with previous budget allocations.
17. The Christmas Festival will continue to be a collaboration between Administration, AEDA and ACMA to ensure a coordinated City-wide approach is delivered for Christmas Festival 2024. This will ensure a cohesive and impactful effect across the City and North Adelaide, linking Rundle Mall, Tarntanyangga / Victoria Square and the Central Market through high quality, creative decorations, and activations.
18. There is opportunity for Council to procure high quality, impactful decorations for Christmas 2024 and beyond to be used year on year in a Christmas Master Design Plan and Decoration Program, rather than adding minor decorations annually and this approach will be explored further.
19. This approach would align with a review of the end-of-life Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024 and the development of a new plan for Christmas in Adelaide from 2024-2028.

Next Steps

20. If Council endorses this approach, Administration will provide a detailed Christmas Event and Decoration Program for Christmas Festival 2024 via E-News.
21. Council will have opportunity to shape the next iteration of the Christmas Festival Action Plan in early 2024.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024

Link 2 – MacGregor Tan Christmas 2022 Tracking Evaluation Report

Link 3 – Christmas Festival - Renewal Decorations

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -