

Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

Tuesday, 6 May 2025

City Community Services and
Culture Committee

Program Contact:

Jennifer Kalionis, Associate
Director City Culture

Approving Officer:

Jo Podoliak, Director City
Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is present the final Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 (Attachment A) for approval. This document, once approved, will replace the Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024.

The draft Christmas in the City Action Plan (draft Plan) responds to combined Council and community feedback seeking a traditional Christmas, a desire to celebrate Adelaide's cultural heritage and icons Rundle Mall and the Adelaide Central Market, and to embrace bold new lighting and decorations. The draft Plan is shaped by what we heard from the community, and incorporates inclusive events, markets and city-wide experiences during the festive season.

The process of developing the draft Plan included two rounds of consultation, firstly in September 2024 to seek input, and again in March 2025 to seek feedback on the draft Plan. The overwhelming majority of public survey respondents and internal and external stakeholders support the draft Plan.

The annual scope of delivery for the Christmas in the City Action Plan, commencing this Christmas 2025, will be dependent upon funding allocation in the Council's annual Business Plan and Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 13 May 2025 for consideration

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

1. Receives the outcomes of the Christmas in the City Action Plan Consultation Summary Report as contained in Attachment B to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on Tuesday 6 May 2025
 2. Approves the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on Tuesday 6 May 2025.
 3. Notes that the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on Tuesday 6 May 2025, if approved, will replace the Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024.
 4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, to make minor, syntactical, graphical and technical amendments to the document contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on Tuesday 6 May 2025 for the purpose of finalising the document for publication.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community Will be vibrant, connected and inclusive by supporting our communities to thrive; create fun, lively and interesting experiences and celebrate and honour community and cultures; and drive social change and strengthen communities through locally-led arts, cultural and recreational activities; and Elevate the City's reputation for exceptional and unique arts and cultural experiences by encouraging and providing arts, culture and events partnerships, grants and sponsorship opportunities. Outcomes: An interesting and engaging place to live, learn and visit; and an inclusive, equitable and welcoming community where people feel a sense of belonging.
Policy	If approved, the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 (the draft Plan) will replace the Christmas Festival Action Plan 2021-2024. The Christmas in the City Action Plan contributes to the delivery of a number of Council strategies and plans, most notably the Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 and the draft Cultural Policy.
Consultation	Public consultation was conducted in September 2024, resulting in 282 community responses through the Our Adelaide portal to develop the draft Plan, which was presented for final consultation in March 2025. There were 259 visits to the consultation page on Our Adelaide, 18 survey respondents, and 149 downloads of the document. Consultation with key stakeholders and partners, including the State Government and cultural institutions, has occurred in addition to the Our Adelaide consultation. Key internal partners AEDA and ACMA have provided significant input into the development of the directions and deliverables of the new draft Plan.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The draft Plan identifies several opportunities to grow the Christmas experience in the City over the next four years, subject to the annual the Business Plan and Budget. Opportunities exist to seek external financial and/or in-kind support to deliver elements of the draft Plan.
24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	The total proposed 2025/2026 City of Adelaide budget for city-wide operational spend including all labour resources, events and activations is \$532,000, along with the proposed capital spend City of Adelaide (City-wide Decorations) (\$200k), Rundle Mall Decorations (\$200k) and Adelaide Central Market Decorations (\$175k). City Operations allocate funding annually for the Giant Christmas Tree installation, maintenance and removal. AEDA may allocate additional funds to support events with Christmas in the City through sponsorship support, subject to application and assessment.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	The delivery years of the Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 will be 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028.
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report

Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	The Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025- 2028 will be delivered in line with the annual business plan and budget allocation. There will be ongoing labour (installation and removal) and maintenance costs associated with all new decorations which are subject to assessment and maintenance as need arises. The renewal project for the Giant Christmas Tree aims to reduce the annual maintenance cost that has arisen from the existing asset. Procurement of high quality, more sustainable decorations minimises maintenance spend.
Other Funding Sources	A major asset renewal project is being undertaken to replace the current Giant Christmas Tree in Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga which is at end of life.

DISCUSSION

1. The development of the draft Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 was informed by community ideas and input from 282 respondents, gathered in September 2024.
2. Community input, partner input and key stakeholder feedback provided strong direction which has informed the themes for Christmas over the next four years. This included:
 - 2.1. Traditional Christmas
 - 2.2. Lights and Light Trails
 - 2.3. Bold Decorations
 - 2.4. Community Events
 - 2.5. Markets.
3. On 11 March 2025, Council approved the Draft Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 (the draft Plan) for public consultation.
4. The draft Plan was shared and promoted through Council's Our Adelaide platform from 12 March to 31 March 2025.
5. A summary of the public consultation conducted in March can be found in **Attachment B**. The page received 259 visits and received 18 unique survey contributions. The draft Plan was downloaded 149 times.
6. Internal partners including the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) and Adelaide Central Market Authority (ACMA) have been instrumental in building the draft Plan and both support the final document to be approved by Council.
7. Adelaide's iconic Rundle Mall and Adelaide Central Market remain our principal locations for Christmas shopping and traditions along with the central location of the Giant Christmas Tree in Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga.
8. Feedback to note includes the following:
 - 8.1. Lighting displays along city streets were strongly supported.
 - 8.2. In response to the question 'Do you support the Draft Plan?' 89% of contributors responded 'yes' and there were no contributors who responded 'no'.
 - 8.3. Key stakeholder Brian Gilbertson AM, Director of the Adelaide Christmas Pageant at the South Australian Tourism Commission, provided a detailed submission that strongly supported the draft Plan's approval by the Council.
9. There were no new actions or significant changes to deliverables included as a result of the March consultation on the draft Plan.
10. The following minor changes have been made to the previously approved draft Plan, which do not result in any change to Council approved direction or intent:
 - 10.1. Addition of City Lifestyle Program as also responsible for the delivery of 4.1 'The City of Adelaide to explore formal philanthropic partnerships to encourage community to support charitable causes'
 - 10.2. Update in the Strategic Links to include the draft Cultural Policy principles in development as endorsed by Council.

- 10.3. Update to add the State Government Strategic Links including the new State Cultural Policy released on 31 March 2025.
 - 10.4. Minor change to the introduction to read 'a strong, cohesive and complementary marketing campaign across the City of Adelaide, Rundle Mall and the Adelaide Central Market sharing themes and highlighting daily things to see and do'.
 - 10.5. Addition of naming South Australian Tourism Commission in the Introduction.
 - 10.6. Addition of a Lord Mayor Foreword.
 - 11. [Link 1](#) provides a track changes version of the draft Plan that highlights these minor changes.
 - 12. If approved, implementing the adopted Plan will include ongoing engagement with community members and partners.
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DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028 – with track changes following consultation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025-2028

Attachment B – Consultation Summary Report on Draft Christmas in the City Action Plan 2025- 2028

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