

Adelaide Economic Development Agency

Quarter 3 Report

1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025

The following matters that occurred between 1 January 2025 and 31 March 2025 are highlighted:

- Rundle Mall achieved record breaking foot traffic (681,000 people) between Friday 21 and Sunday 23 March coinciding with the Inaugural *Colours of Asia* Festival, last weekend of Fringe and an AFL game at Adelaide Oval.
- Events and festivals added to the buzz of the City. AEDA supported 5 events/festivals through the Events and Festivals Sponsorship program and 9 events/festivals through the Commercial Events Sponsorship Program.
- Continued interest in the City as a place to do business. AEDA has engaged with 74 businesses (YTD) on relocation and investment opportunities that have the potential of an additional 4,100+ jobs.
- Extended the *See for Yourself* campaign from January - April 2025 with a focus on Experiences, Food & Drink, Nightlife, Events & Festivals, Retail, and Families. Over 45 businesses/events were featured.
- The \$5.9 million Charles Street upgrade, completed by City Infrastructure in March 2025, transformed the laneway into a key pedestrian-focused link between North Terrace and the Rundle Mall precinct.
- Conducted a Visitor Economy Industry Update on 19 February at U-City for 60+ tourism representatives. The session included an update on visitor expenditure, travel behaviours and trends from the SA Tourism Commission, an outline on the AEDA Visitor Economy Guiding Framework, and an update on the latest destination marketing campaign encouraging South Australians to visit the city.

Financial Report

Operating Position				Annual			
March YTD				2024/25			
\$000s	2024/25 Actuals	2024/25 Q2 Budget	Variance	2024/25 Original Budget	2024/25 Adopted Q2 Budget	2024/25 Revised Budget	Variance
Income							
Rundle Mall Levy	3,048	3,036	12	4,017	4,017	4,017	-
Rundle Mall User Charges	441	285	156	380	380	500	(120)
CoA Appropriation of Funds	5,895	6,529	(634)	8,351	8,778	8,793	(15)
Other Income	5	14	(9)	19	19	119	(100)
Total Income	9,389	9,864	(475)	12,767	13,194	13,429	(235)
Expenses							
Employee Costs	3,058	3,531	473	4,843	4,743	4,722	(21)
Materials, Contracts and Other Expenses	3,365	2,840	(525)	4,629	4,608	4,828	220
Sponsorship, Contributions and Donations	2,620	2,744	124	3,249	3,749	3,764	15
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	67	66	(1)	88	88	88	-
Total Expenses	9,110	9,181	71	12,809	13,188	13,402	214
Operation Surplus / Deficit	279	683	(404)	(42)	7	27	21

Year to Date (YTD) Financial Summary

Income

- Rundle Mall concession stand income \$156k favourable to YTD budget.
- CoA Appropriation of Funds represents AEDA expenditure (excluding Rundle Mall activities) by March 2025.
- Other income includes retail sales from the Visitor Information Centre.

Expenditure

- Employee Costs has a \$473k favourable variance mainly within Business and Investment and Marketing.
- Materials, Contracts and Other Expenses has an unfavourable variance of (\$525k) mainly because of timing in Security Services (\$267k), Stage Hire (\$159k) and Promotions Material (\$48K). The timing for Security and Stage Hire has been adjusted in Q3. There is also an overspend of (\$47k) in engaging temp staff.
- Sponsorships, Contributions and Donations has a favourable variance of \$124k, mainly due to timing related to AEDA Commercial Events and Festival Sponsorship Program and Strategic Partnership.

In regards to the security and stage hire the timing of these has been fixed in Q3 (noting the figures in the table are based on the last adopted budget being Q2).

Projected Annual Financial Summary

Proposed Quarter 3 Variances and Budget Requests

Income

- Rundle Mall concession stand income increased by \$120k offset by additional expenditure in Materials of (\$120k).
- CoA Appropriation of Funds increased by \$15k to fund AEDA contribution to Committee for Adelaide.
- Other income increased by \$100k for AEDA Business Events Summit offset by additional expenditure in Materials of (\$100k).

Expenditure

- Employee Costs reduction of \$21k within Rundle Mall to fund Twin Street lighting capital project.
- Materials increased by (\$220k) for additional costs in Rundle Mall funded by the extra concession stand income (\$120k) and costs to put on the AEDA Business Events Summit (\$100k) funded by ticket sales.
- Sponsorships increased by (\$15k) for AEDA contribution to Committee for Adelaide.

Risks and Opportunities

- There is currently a high level of interest in external organisations collaborating with AEDA on various projects and opportunities. The agency has limited capacity to effectively collaborate on many of these opportunities given the extent of the current work program.
- There is no significant change in Australia's domestic economic environment, internationally however, the impact of global economic uncertainty including its potential impact on trade, investment and consumer confidence is one that will continue to be monitored.
- Safety and security remain an ongoing risk in Rundle Mall. Multiple high-profile incidents have received media coverage with the negative sentiment beginning to emerge in consumer research initiatives.
- Increased competition to Rundle Mall from suburban shopping centres e.g. Burnside Village \$350 million investment.

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

Board and Advisory Committee Term Changes

Three new appointments were made to the AEDA Advisory Committee following the 12 February 2025 AEDA Board meeting. These appointments were:

- Mirella Romano for a period of two years
- Alfredo Cabada for a period of three years
- Jasmin Ilic for a period of three years

Grant Funding Approved

Commercial Events and Festivals

At its meeting on 25 February 2025, Council approved the Business Plan and Budget Quarter 2 Update that included an additional \$200,000 allocation of funding to AEDA for the Commercial Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program 2025.

Commercial Events and Festivals funding of \$485k was approved to support the following 22 events and festivals to be held between 15 February and 31 December 2025:

Small to Medium Category

- A Decade in Gilbert Place - \$8,000
- Adelaide Polo Classic - \$14,000
- CheeseFest - \$20,000
- Colours of Asia - \$16,000
- Gathered Market in the Mall - \$16,000
- Gresham Street Gateway Festival - \$20,000
- Holi Festival - \$18,000
- Home Base: Footy at Gilbert Place - \$7,000
- Hongdae In Adl - \$14,000
- Laneway Festival - \$16,000
- Mary's in the Park - \$10,000
- Our Sound - \$16,000
- Rhino Room Street Fest - \$20,000
- Rock The Park 2025 - \$14,000
- Sidebyside - \$20,000
- The Courtyard of Curiosities - \$14,000
- Vegan Festival Adelaide - \$12,000

Medium to Large Category

- Adelaide Motorsport Festival \$40,000
- Fool's Paradise - \$50,000
- Gluttony - \$50,000
- Lucky Dumpling Market - \$45,000
- The Garden of Unearthly Delights - \$45,000

Mainstreet Development Program

The Hutt Street Traders Association received \$17,347 for 2024/25 through the Mainstreet Development Program.

Strategic Partnership Program

At the AEDA Board meeting on 12 February 2025, the Board agreed to support the following organisations through the AEDA Strategic Partnership Program 2025/26-2027/28:

- Strategic Partnership Submission 2025-27: Business Events Adelaide \$948,000
- Adelaide MTP Gateway - Connecting Global Innovation with Local Impact: MTP Connect \$460,000
- Economic Vibrancy Partnership: Renew Adelaide \$969,080
- ThincSeed CBD: ThincLab (The University of Adelaide) \$549,920

Visitor Experience Centre

Following discussions with the State Library of South Australia (SLSA) regarding utilising the Jervois Room in the Mortlock Chamber to accommodate the Visitor Experience Centre, it became apparent that the timeline for ensuring DDA compliance would not align with the Visitor Experience Centre's delivery schedule. Consequently, the alternative location in the Institute Building at the corner of North Terrace and Kintore Avenue has progressed.

The AEDA General Manager and Executive Manager Marketing and Tourism briefed the SLSA Board at its March 2025 meeting. The SLSA Board resolved to approve accommodation of the VEC and provided authority to the Director to negotiate the licence terms on their behalf. Discussions are progressing with the State Library of the terms of the licence agreement to occupy the premises and this is expected to be completed shortly.

The procurement process for the design of the VEC opened on 21 February and closed on 25 March 2025. Assessment of the submissions is currently underway.

AEDA Review Recommendations

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 outstanding action relates to the development of AEDA's Long Term Financial Plan which will be progressed in line with discussions and directions from the 2025-26 Business Plan and Budget process.

2024-25 Business Plan & Budget Measures

The 2024/25 AEDA Business Plan and Budget includes 18 measures across the four key areas, Business, Investment & Residential Growth; Visitor Economy; Rundle Mall and Brand and Marketing.

As at the end of quarter three, progress against the measures is as follows:

- *Eight measures have been marked 'Complete/Achieved' which would indicate they have been finalised or the annual target met;*
- *Four measures are 'On Track', meaning the pro-rata measure is tracking ahead or in-line with the target;*
- *Three measures are 'Partially complete', which indicates some progress has been made towards the target, but are not tracking ahead of the pro-rata benchmark and;*
- *Three measures are 'Active' which means work is being done towards the target but no numerical figure towards the target has been recorded.*

Business, Investment and Residential Growth

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Pro Rata YTD Difference*
50 inward investment proposals/local expansions supported with at least 1,500 jobs	Complete/Achieved	50	74	24
Increase of bookable tourism experiences in the city (delivery of Strategic Project)	On-Track	Consultant procured and industry engagement finalised		
30+ vacant shopfronts/premises activated	Partially Complete	30	14	-16
Deliver 3 industry briefing events	Complete/Achieved	3	3	Achieved
Outcomes from collaborative partnerships with MTPConnect; SouthStart and University of Adelaide/ThinLab to support small businesses to grow and scale	Complete/Achieved	Programs completed - 36 start ups and early stage businesses participated.		
5 projects/market interventions to support emerging industries in the city	Complete/Achieved	5	9	4
Supported/ facilitated 6 networking/knowledge transfer events for businesses.	Complete/Achieved	6	15	9

Rundle Mall

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Pro Rata YTD Difference*
Demonstrate uplift in market share and foot traffic across 3 core campaigns	Complete/Achieved	3	3	-
5 new brands commit to Rundle Mall	Complete/Achieved	5	6	+2.25
2 public realm infrastructure projects completed	Partially Complete	2	1	n/a
A minimum of \$20M new capital investment delivered or committed in the Rundle Mall precinct	On Track	\$20m	\$15,185,901	\$4.8m
10 Business or industry media stories relating to Rundle Mall	On track	10	5	-2.5
Uplift in Rundle Mall small business sentiment index over FY24/25	Complete/Achieved	n/a	60	n/a

Visitor Economy

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Pro Rata YTD Difference*
Delivery of the new Experience Adelaide Visitor Centre	Active	-	-	-
20 new bookable city tourism products/experiences	Partially Complete	20	11	-4
Visitor sentiment and community sentiment index (being developed)	Active	84	84	n/a

Brand & Marketing

Key Performance Indicator	Status	Annual Measure	Actual	Pro Rata YTD Difference*
10% increase to \$2.2m on 2023/24 in media mentions (advertising space rate) with reference to AEDA. – Maintain a variance of 85% – 95% neutral and/or positive sentiment of media mentions.	On Track	\$2.42m	\$2.19m	+\$378k
Increase the brand health metric for Adelaide as a destination to visit to 6.5/10. (Currently 6.35)	Active	6.5	Quarterly progress is not available as research is conducted annually	

*Difference relates to the difference between the measure and the quarter 3 pro-rata benchmark, not the annual target

Program Updates



Rundle Mall Activations

Colours of Asia: The Mall was enlivened between 21 and 23 March by the inaugural Colours of Asia Festival. Sixteen vendors served authentic street food, while live music and traditional dance created a vibrant atmosphere. The Mall registered its greatest ever level of visitors over a weekend (since foot traffic records have been maintained) with total visitors exceeding 680k over the period.

Mallfest: Rundle Mall benefited from exclusive extended trading hours granted by the State Government during the Fringe Festival, remaining open until 6 pm on five consecutive Saturdays (22 Feb–22 Mar). A curated program of street performers, live DJs, and vibrant activations boosted foot traffic and dwell time. Weekend activity was up 4% compared to Fringe 2024 and up 14% compared to the 12-month weekend average.

City Sessions: From 7–9 March, nine acts—from solo artists to a six-piece band—brought global sounds to the Mall to coincide with WOMAdelaide. The event ran alongside MallFest’s street performers and live DJs, reinforcing Adelaide’s UNESCO City of Music status.

LIV Golf: On Wednesday 12 February, Rundle Mall hosted a signing session with LIV Golf stars Cameron Smith and Louis Oosthuizen, provided a valet service and offered give aways. AEDA supported LIV by providing information through Experience Adelaide, driving ongoing engagement before, during, and after the event.

Lunar New Year: To celebrate the Year of the Dragon, Rundle Mall featured hourly lion dances from 12–6 pm on Friday 31 January, with acrobatic performers visiting 24 stores.

Gathered Markets: Gathered Market was held in the Mall on a Friday for the first time with a special edition on 28 March.



Charles Street Upgrade

The \$5.9 million **Charles Street upgrade** in Adelaide, completed in March 2025 by City Infrastructure, transformed the laneway into a pedestrian-focused link between North Terrace and the Rundle Mall precinct. Featuring kerbless streets, high-quality paving, improved lighting, and upgraded drainage, the project enhances safety, access, and the retail experience. Bollards and a gate limit vehicle access while allowing loading and emergency use.

Rundle Mall Industry Promotion

Rundle Mall’s business and investment attraction plan aims to position the precinct as SA’s top retail, dining, and entertainment hub. On 20 March, part two of a sponsored **Inside Retail** feature highlighted how events are boosting the precinct’s economy, supported by a new brand video. A media release on Rundle Mall’s low vacancy rates gained coverage in Shopping Centre News, InDaily, and The Advertiser.



Visitor Economy Industry Update

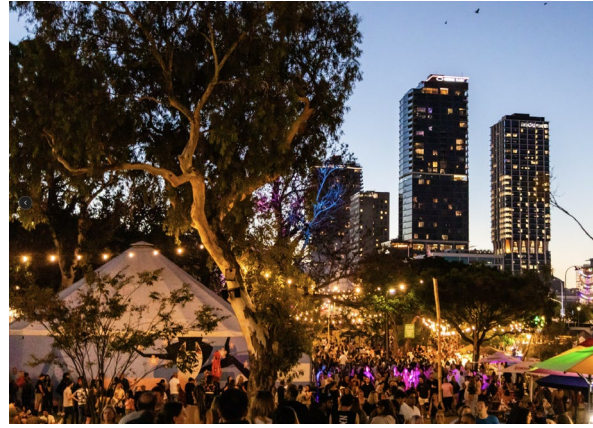
AEDA provided a **Visitor Economy Industry Update** on 19 February at U-City for 60+ tourism representatives. The session included an update on visitor expenditure, travel behaviours and trends from SA Tourism Commission, an outline on the AEDA Visitor Economy Guiding Framework, and an update on the latest destination marketing campaign encouraging South Australians to visit the city.

See for Yourself

Building on the initial **See for Yourself** campaign (June–September 2024), an extended campaign is running between January–April 2025. The campaign focuses on six key pillars: Experiences, Food & Drink (with a new daytime focus), Nightlife, Events & Festivals, Retail, and Families.

Results to date include:

- 18,600 views on Featured See For Yourself pages
- A total of 16,144 leads across Experience Adelaide, which is a 44% increase in leads compared to last year.
- Over 45 businesses/events featured
- Campaign materials on display in 11 hotels across city and North Adelaide



Sponsored Events and Festivals

In quarter three, the following events took place that were supported by the **Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program**:

- Chihuly in the Botanic Gardens**
- Adelaide International (Tennis)
- Santos Tour Down Under
- Adelaide Festival
- Adelaide Fringe
- WOMAdelaide

A total of \$975k was invested into 5 events/festivals held in Q3 (excluding Chihuly). These events are expected to generate an estimated gross economic impact in excess of \$353 million to the State with estimated city-based attendance of approx. 4.67 million.

**please note estimated figures are derived from 23/24 acquittal report data with the exception of the Adelaide International, which has provided actual results, and Chihuly which concludes in Q4.*

***Chihuly in the Botanic Gardens has continued from Q1 and Q2 into Q3 and will conclude in Q4. The investment has been included in previous quarter reports so has not been added here.*

In the quarter the following events supported by the **Commercial Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program** took place:

- Laneway Festival
- Garden of Unearthly Delights
- Gathered Market in the Mall
- Fool's Paradise
- The Courtyard of Curiosities
- Gluttony
- Sidebyside
- Adelaide Motorsport Festival
- Colours of Asia

A total of \$267,000 was invested into 9 events/festivals held in Q3 with estimated attendee expenditure of \$127.57 million and total attendance of 1.69 million expected (based on estimates provided in application forms).

**Gathered Market in the Mall runs from Feb – Dec. Data is derived from 2 markets delivered in Q3 and is based on estimates in the original application. please note estimated figures are derived from initial applications.*



Strategic Partnerships Program 2025/26

Organisations supported through the Strategic Partnerships Program have delivered the following:

Business Events Adelaide: Business Events Adelaide announced that \$540m worth of business events had been won in the first six months of this financial year. Business Events Adelaide (BEA) hosted **Destination South Australia** at the Adelaide Convention Centre 19-21 March 2025. AEDA participated in an aligned Business Exchange Roundtable with a targeted group of Indian travel agents to Adelaide.

Study Adelaide: Study Adelaide delivered its **Global Familiarisation Program** for 90 international student agents, including 56 visiting from other countries. AEDA participated in the Access Adelaide Exhibition on Monday 17 March where those agents had the opportunity to understand all aspects of living, studying and working in Adelaide.

Renew Adelaide: Renew Adelaide facilitated the attraction of Van Brussell to the city which opened at 18 Ebenezer Place on 21 February 2025. Van Brussell is a curated boutique offering European-inspired fashion, lifestyle, and homewares. It is expected that three new Renew Adelaide supported ventures will open in April.



Industry Support

AEDA sponsored the **SA Gaming Expo (SAGE)** on 7–8 February 2025 to support the growth of the gaming sector. As part of this, AEDA partnered with Youth Options to launch a new Quality Assurance training program for neurodiverse and marginalised youth. The expo showcased 37 locally developed games, including 16 from AEDA-supported studios, and attracted more than 3,000 attendees over two days. AEDA's Business Investment Advisor also participated as a panel speaker in the Industry Talks program.

As a sponsor and judge, AEDA also supported the inaugural **South Australian Games Association (SAGA) Awards**, held on 9 February 2025. The event, attended by over 200 industry professionals, celebrated the achievements of the local gaming community.

AEDA supported a **Media Hosting Program** to attract interstate journalists to attend SouthStart (4–6 March 2025), with the goal of showcasing Adelaide's startup ecosystem and the success of local scale-up companies. The initiative attracted 8 journalists, including six from interstate. Coverage was positive, with stories appearing across 58 online news platforms, reaching a collective reach of 19.2 million.

A business case was received through AEDA's Advisory Committee, for the **establishment of BioAdelaide**, an initiative to develop Adelaide's health and medical sector. This will be further progressed with stakeholders.



Investment Support

During the quarter, six firms that AEDA had assisted (either directly or via property owners) moved into and/or opened offices in the City collectively adding over 850 jobs to the CBD workforce.

These companies included firms that relocated from the City Fringe and operate in engineering, healthcare, defence, manufacturing, utilities and agriculture.

Services provided by AEDA to these businesses included welcome packs, data and qualitative information, property advice and parking options (including referral to U Park).

The principle drivers for firms securing a City location include better access to clientele, amenities, property options, proximity to events and festivals and a wider pool of skilled talent.



Data and Insights

AEDA's data and insights function has become increasingly well utilised as awareness of the data it has available and capability becomes more well known. Examples of the team's work in the past has included economic assessment to help inform the Botanic Gardens' business case for Chihuly, provision of city data to support inbound investment decisions and regular briefings to the AEDA Board on trends in the City.

In Q3, the team presented at:

- Property Council of South Australia Office Market Report Breakfast on 6 February
- AEDA's Visitor Economy Update / Tourism Forum on 19 February
- AEDA's Advisory Committee on 24 January
- AEDA's Board on 12 March

During the quarter the team received approximately 100 requests for information and data. This is in addition to increased usage of AEDA's data and insights webpages which had:

- 1,305 users (+36% vs same quarter last year)
- 3,833 views (+50% vs same quarter last year)
- 13,000 engagement events (+66% vs same quarter last year)
- Increase in average time spent on site

Quarter 4

Coming up from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025:

- Gather Round
- AEDA Business Summit 2025 – 20 May at Adelaide Oval
- Winter Experiences campaign
- Urban Kitchen
- 2025/26 Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program applications close 21 April 2025