

Media Release



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Adelaide named the Most Improved Destination in Global Sustainability Index

Adelaide won a major international award on Wednesday morning (SA time) for its sustainability performance in a global cities program.

The Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement) is a pioneering change agency that acts to catalyse socio-economic and environmental transformation in cities and regions across the world. It benchmarks and enhances the sustainability strategies, action plans and initiatives of over 100 destination management organisations worldwide.

2024 was the first year that Adelaide took part in the GDS-Index. This year, the city was named as 'Most Improved Destination' and placed 54th on the list overall.

Business Events Adelaide coordinated Adelaide's entry into the index, with strong support from the South Australian Tourism Commission, the Adelaide Convention Centre, the City of Adelaide and a host of other leading Adelaide organisations. With Adelaide still strongly tipped to host COP31– the global sustainability conference – next year, the coveted award demonstrates Adelaide's growing status as an environmentally focussed business event destination.

Business Events Adelaide Chief Executive Officer, Damien Kitto, said that the organisation was delighted with the result. "The Index requires a high level of detail, with some 76 criteria and 300 sub-questions. Our aim in the first year was to get an understanding of the areas that Adelaide was strong in and those that we needed to focus on, and it is fantastic to see such a big improvement in a short space of time," he said.

"We are aware that sustainability issues are becoming an increasingly important consideration for business event organisers and delegates." Mr Kitto continued. "This was one of our motivations for getting involved with GDS-Movement. Adelaide has a great story to tell in regard to sustainability, being a city in a park and with easy, walkable accessibility. GDS-Movement provides a stamp of approval to validate our initiatives and allows us to talk about Adelaide as a clean and green destination with some confidence".

Emma Terry, Chief Executive, South Australian Tourism Commission, said "Adelaide has always sought to take a leadership position in urban sustainability. From pioneering renewable energy to fostering green infrastructure and circular economy practices, our city has consistently demonstrated its commitment to a cleaner, more resilient future. While there is still much to be done, we are pleased that Adelaide has been recognised as the Most Improved Destination for 2025, which is reflective of our commitment to be a tourism destination that has people, place and planet at its heart".

Sarah Goldfinch, General Manager Adelaide Convention Centre, said "As a new participant in the GDS-Index, Adelaide's 'Most Improved Destination' score is indicative of the strength of our sustainability credentials. We're optimistic that we will continue to improve our indexation in future years to best reflect our destination's true sustainability leadership.

At Adelaide Convention Centre, we're proud to play our part. Sustainability is embedded in everything we do, guided by our world-first EarthCheck Master certification for a convention centre."

Greg Ratsch, General Manager of the Adelaide Economic Development Agency, said "Adelaide's recognition is a testament to the city's commitment to sustainable innovation, collaboration, and global leadership. This award not only highlights the progress we've made but also positions us strongly on the world stage as a destination that prioritises people and planet. It reflects the hard work of partners across government, industry, and community, and it gives us momentum to keep pushing forward."

Mr Kitto was keen to stress that this was not the end of Adelaide's ambition, especially with the prospect of COP on the horizon. "If Adelaide is the chosen host, COP - and the increased exposure that will result from it - offers a unique opportunity to position Adelaide at the forefront of environmentally and socially progressive measures. It could attract a significant number of future business events related to sustainability, clean energy generation and associated fields, along with leading experts from around the world sharing their knowledge with local environmentally focussed organisations. The legacy opportunities will provide Adelaide with greater understanding to further boost its sustainability credentials in years for come."

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About Business Events Adelaide

Business Events Adelaide is an independent, not for profit, member-based organisation. Its purpose is to win business events for South Australia, a valued and proven economic driver in both the long and short term.

The business event sector is worth more than \$2.5bn to SA, and *Business Events Adelaide* contributes some \$600m of that.

Beyond the high daily spend of delegates, business events provide an economic tail of multiplying benefits that often endure years into the future. Long-term benefits can be seen in research collaborations, business partnerships, company startups and even a contribution to population growth with the arrival of new professional and skilled workers.

Further information on *Business Events Adelaide* activities can be found at www.businesseventsadelaide.com.au

About The Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement)

The GDS-Movement is a pioneering, international change agency that acts to catalyse socio-economic and environmental transformation in cities and regions across the world. Our mission is to empower tourism and events professionals with the mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets to co-create more regenerative and resilient destinations to visit, meet, and live in. Discover more at www.gds.earth.