



Darebin Spending & Economic Snapshot

Economic Development Team
April 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

I acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi wurrung People who are the Traditional Owners of the Land. I recognise their continuing connection to Land, Water and Culture.
I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

*Artwork by Natashia Ellis-Corrigan, proud Jinibara/Bundjalung woman.
Aboriginal artist from Jinibara Designs.*

Headline Updates – April 2026

April Total Local Spend up, + 5.8% year-on-year

Shoes & Clothing (+16.3%) and Specialised & Luxury Goods (+14.8%) brought customers back into stores in April, making up for some of the March consumer caution in discretionary spending. Dining also turned its negative March result (-4.3%) back into positive territory (+4%) in April.

Fuel price mechanisms delivered a 22.5% drop in fuel spending in comparison to March, returning additional spending capacity into consumers pockets.

Uncertainty and fuel prices affected tourism

Resident spending across Travel & Tourist Activities, Hotels & Accommodation and Vehicles, Freight, & Other Transport was down -4% year-on-year in April. The main driver was a reduction in Resident Escape Spend. This is likely a result of changes to Easter, and other planned trips and activities, before the announcement and implementation of fuel excise cuts on 1 April.

Across the three categories, Resident Online Spend in April 2026, was nearly identical to 2025 levels. This suggests online booking platforms have reached a mature, stable level of engagement among Darebin residents and that residents remain positive when it comes to planning future travel.








The resident wallet (quarterly review)

Resident spending comparison, latest and previous quarter:

Overall, resident spending decreased by -8.9% from the October to December quarter to the January to March quarter. This is in line with expected seasonal trends.

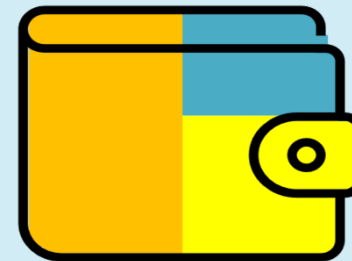
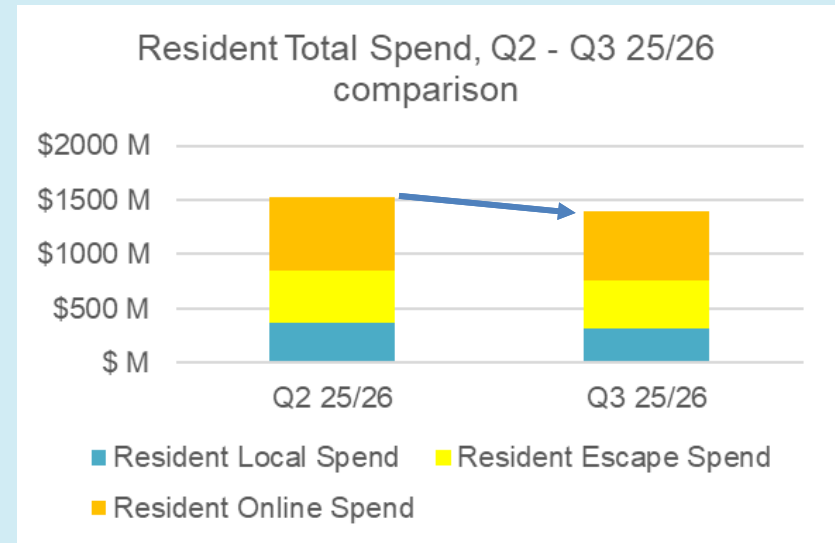
Over the past two quarters, the wallet share changes were:

-  Resident Local Spend decreased from 23.9% to **23%**.
-  Resident Escape Spend decreased from 32.1% to **32%**.
-  Resident Online Spend increased from 43.9% to **45%**.

Trend - Change in expenditure types:

Local Spend:	Victoria: -0.1%	Darebin: -0.9%.
Escape Spend:	Victoria: -0.7%	Darebin: -0.2%
Online Spend:	Victoria: +0.8%	Darebin: +1.1%

Compared with the previous quarter both Darebin and Victoria saw more online spend as a share of resident wallet.





April Spending Breakdown

Expenditure Types (April Total Local Spend & year-on-year change)

Total Local Spend:	Darebin: \$250M (+5.8%)	Metro +4.5%
Resident Local Spend:	Darebin: \$106M (+5.5%)	Metro +4.2%
Visitor Local Spend:	Darebin: \$158M (+6%)	Metro +4.8%
Resident Escape Spend:	Darebin: \$148M (+5%)	Metro +3%
Resident Online Spend:	Darebin: \$203M (+9.3%)	Metro +8.8%

Top 5 Expenditure Categories

(April Total Local Spend & year-on-year change)

Specialised & Luxury Goods:	<u>\$43.2M (+14.8%)</u>
Grocery Stores & Supermarkets:	\$42.2M (+4.3%)
Dining:	\$27.8M (+4%)
Healthcare:	\$17.5M (+2.1%)
Automotive Fuel	\$15.1M (+6.9%)

Darebin spending has returned to year-on-year growth rates above the Melbourne average. From March to April, spending declined by -4.7% in Darebin and by -5.7% across the Melbourne region.

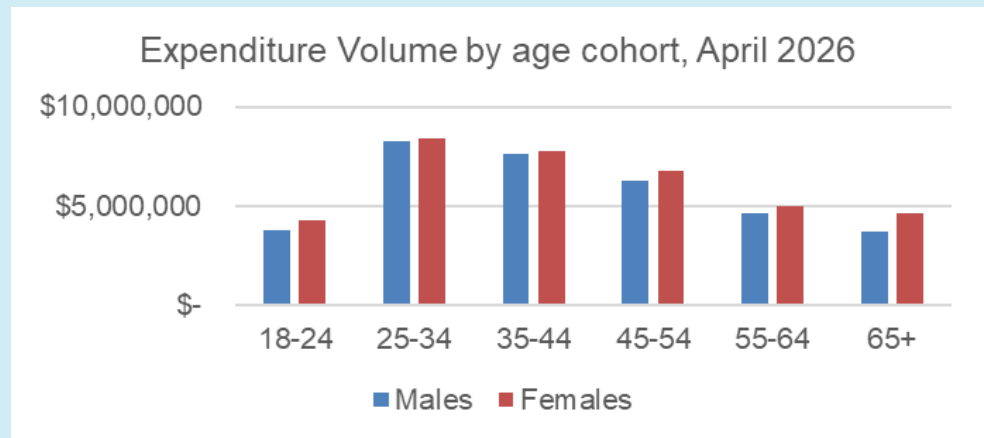
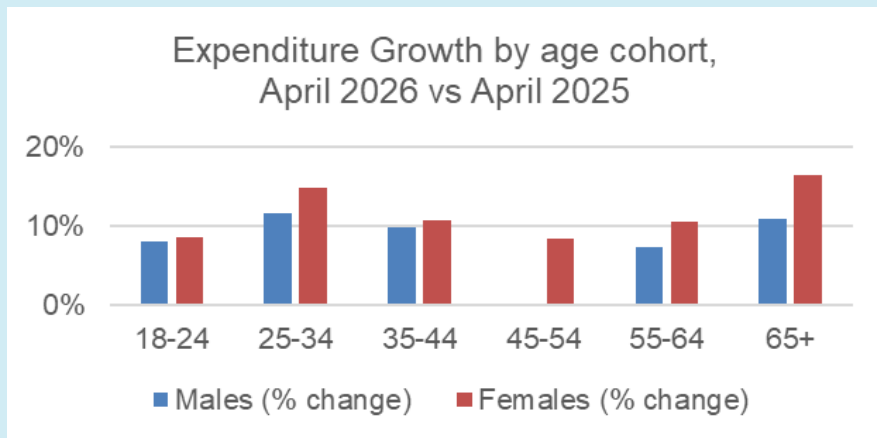
The Specialised and Luxury Goods sector posted a strong result, well above CPI increase of 4.6%. Visitor Local Spend was the main driver of this increase, growing \$3.9M or 16.7% year-on-year.



Customer insights

Demographic customer segmentation data provides insights that can inform businesses on a range of topics. For example: The customer and value proposition, inventory, marketing as well as the design of physical spaces or a website.

The charts below summarise April trends in the Specialised and Luxury Goods and Dining categories in Darebin, at a visitor spend level, during work and non-work hours.



The data shows that women over 65 and women between 25-34 were the two fastest growing customer groups in April in these sectors. Men between 45-54 were the only cohort that did not increase their expenditure. The biggest spending groups by volume were women and men between 25-34, closely followed by men and women between 35-44.

Overall women, across all of the six age groups, spent more and recorded higher spending growth than men in these categories.

Economic Outlook & Business Support



Outlook

The consumer sentiment index rose to 83 in May, up from 80.1

Fuel pressure eased in April but RBA's 25bp rate hike on 6 May is likely to offset fuel savings.

Consumer concerns easing on household finances and 12 months outlook, but more downbeat on economy on longer term horizon.

Job loss fears remain elevated despite some improvement.



Support & Opportunities

[Business Skills Workshops](#)

Our workshops are led by local industry experts.

Our workshops in June will strengthen your payroll from a legal, financial and reputational perspective, and help you adopt sustainable business practices that you can turn into business advantage.

Paying people right: Building better payroll
Friday 12 June

Environmental sustainability for businesses:
Thursday 18 June



Acknowledging current economic pressures

This snapshot outlines spending and economic activity across Darebin in March, and while there are some positive indicators, we recognise that increased spending does not always translate to improved financial sustainability for every business.

Council is also operating in a constrained financial context. We are focused on balancing immediate needs with long-term sustainability, while continuing to invest in the services, infrastructure and local economy that support our community.

We will continue to:

- support local businesses through programs, advocacy and partnerships
- prioritise what matters most for our community
- explore new and creative ways to strengthen Darebin's local economy.

If you or your business are experiencing financial pressure, support is available:

- Darebin City Council – [Crisis and support services](#)
- Business Victoria – [Managing business finances](#)
- Business Victoria – [Financial health checks](#)



City of
DAREBIN

Resources & Support

<https://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Business>

Contact:

Business@darebin.vic.gov.au