



Darebin Spending & Economic Snapshot

Economic Development Team
August 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 Natasha Ellis-Corrigan, proud Jinibara/Bundjalung woman.
Aboriginal artist from Jinibara Designs.*

Headline Updates – August 2026



August Total Local Spend up, + 4.1% year-on-year

After recording strong monthly growth in July (+6.84%), Total Local Spend growth moderated in Darebin and across the region in August. Household spending remained concentrated on essentials, with increases in groceries and supermarkets (+10.1%), automotive fuel (+22.9%), personal services (+7.1%) and professional services (+19.8%). At the same time, spending weakened across several discretionary and household-related categories, particularly trades and contractors (-12.9%), vehicles, freight and other transport (-12.3%), and furniture and household goods (-5.7%). Lifestyle spending was similarly subdued, with declines in dining (-0.3%), bars and clubs (-3.3%), and packaged alcohol (-3.2%), while entertainment recorded modest growth (+2.5%).



Resident Escape Spend records lowest monthly growth in August

From January to July 2026, Resident Escape Spend (RES) averaged year-on-year growth of +4.7%. The August RES result of +2.2%, following July, marks the first two months of 2026 when RES growth was lower than Visitor Local Spend growth, a positive sign for Darebin.



August Spending Breakdown

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

Total Local Spend:	Darebin: \$279M (+4.1%)	Metro +2.5%
Resident Local Spend:	Darebin: \$111M (+4.4%)	Metro +2.3%
Visitor Local Spend:	Darebin: \$168M (+3.8%)	Metro +2.6%
Resident Escape Spend:	Darebin: \$147M (+2.2%)	Metro +1.9%
Resident Online Spend:	Darebin: \$214M (+5%)	Metro +7.6%

Top 5 Expenditure Categories

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

Grocery Stores & Supermarkets:	\$45.9M (+9.7%)
Specialised & Luxury Goods:	\$44.4M (+5.1%)
Dining:	\$30.8M (-0.3%)
Healthcare:	\$20.1M (+5.2%)
Automotive Fuel	\$18M (+22.9%)

Darebin spending growth is slightly above regional comparison figures, both for visitor spending and local resident spending, whilst resident online spend grew at a slower rate than the regional average. A positive sign for local businesses.

Household budget allocation towards groceries and food continues to increase and impact discretionary spend categories. Automotive fuel remains the 5th biggest expenditure category and had the highest growth in August.



Spotlight on Thornbury

The suburb of Thornbury has a 2026 estimated residential population of 20,259. The population is forecast to grow to 25,500 by 2046 bringing opportunities for new investment in the area.

Thornbury has long been a popular dining destination, with nearly 17.7% of all Total Local Spend (TLS) attributed to Dining, and another 5.3% added by Bars & Clubs, from 2019 until 2025. When comparing long-term spending trends with more recent data, we can see signs of gradual transformation and diversification. Whilst Dining remains the strongest category by a significant margin, other sectors are growing their share of TLS as Thornbury's economy diversifies.

In total Thornbury generated \$213.5M in Total Local Spend over the past 12 months, with a strong contribution of 54.1% from people visiting from outside of Darebin.

Thornbury, TLS % share (selected expenditure categories)

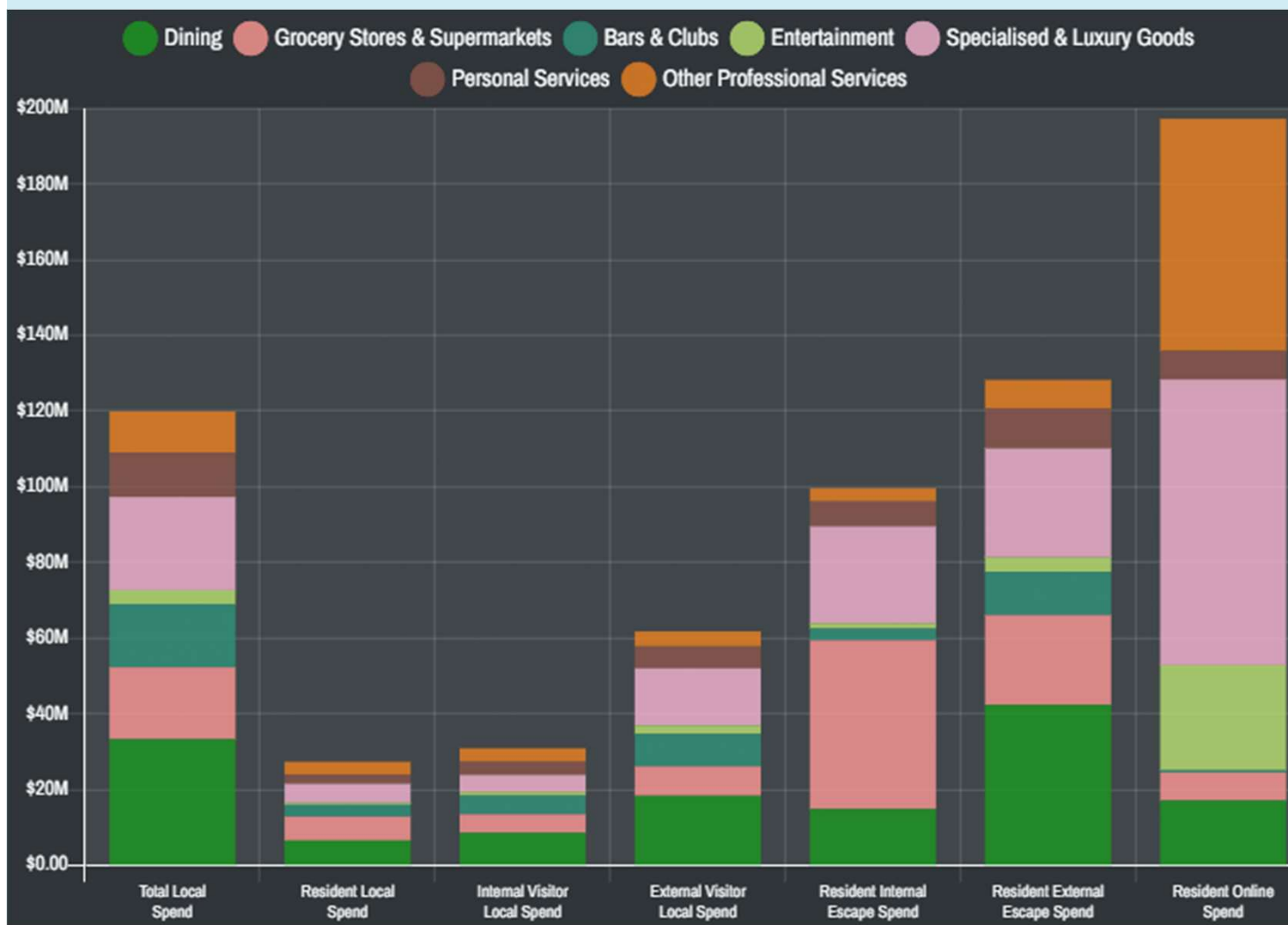
Dining:	Trend (17.7%), past 12 months (15.6%)
Specialised & Luxury Goods:	Trend (10.3%), past 12 months (11.5%)
Healthcare:	Trend (8.7%), past 12 months (9.6%)
Bars & Clubs:	Trend (5.4%), past 12 months (7.8%)
Professional Services:	Trend (4.2%), past 12 months (5.1%)
Shoes & Clothing:	Trend (3.1%), past 12 months (4.1%)





Thornbury – expenditure by type

Analysis for 7 of 22 categories



Thornbury residents spend approximately \$27M in Thornbury annually, \$100M elsewhere in Darebin and \$128M outside Darebin (column 6).

They also spend \$197M online, with professional services and luxury goods (discretionary retail) accounting for 70% of online spend across the seven categories.

Online spend includes local merchants and businesses elsewhere.

Thornbury residents and visitor spending, September 2025 – August 2026

Economic Outlook & Business Support



Outlook

The consumer sentiment index dropped to 84.4 in September, down from 88.9 in August.

Finances coming back under pressure from higher fuel and rate rise fears.

Nearly two thirds of consumers now expect mortgage rates to rise.

Consumers uneasy about jobs, especially construction and hospitality workers.



Support & Opportunities

Stay connected with other business owners, grow your network, find local suppliers and new customers.

To ensure that you never miss any of our upcoming workshops, events and grants, subscribe to Darebin City Council's monthly Business eNews.

[Subscribe to Council newsletters](#)



Acknowledging current economic pressures

This snapshot outlines spending and economic activity across Darebin in July, 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 Council - [Crisis support](#)
- Business Victoria – [Managing your mental health and wellbeing](#)
- Business Victoria – [Managing business finances](#)
- Business Victoria – [Financial health checks](#)



Resources & Support

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

Contact:

Business@darebin.vic.gov.au