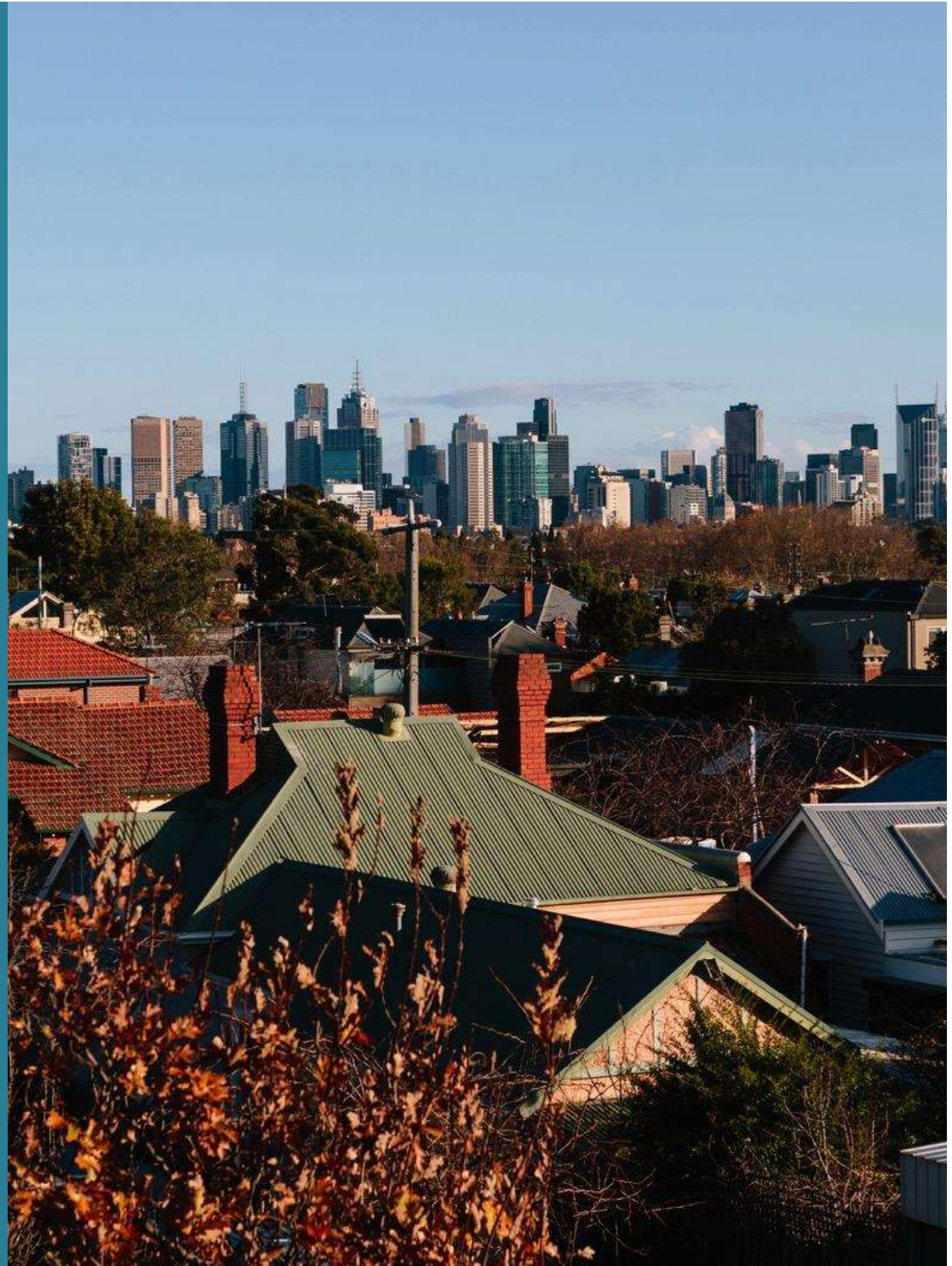


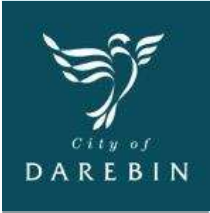


City of
DAREBIN

Our Darebin Spending Snapshot & Economic Outlook

January 2026





Darebin: Spending and Economic Outlook Snapshot

January 2026

Headline Updates + Economic Development Unit Responses



Online Spending Growth Continues to soar (+10.4% year-on-year)

RESPONSE

The Darebin Economic Framework's "empowering all businesses for sustainable growth pillar" allows for future capacity building through business partnership programs to build the online presence of Darebin's businesses.



Increase in Resident Local Spending (+ 6.7% year-on-year)

RESPONSE

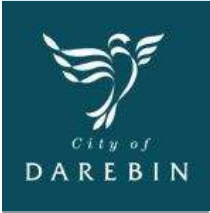
The year-on-year increase in Resident Local Spend (RLS) in January 2026 is the highest gain over the past 13 months and a continuation of RLS recovery, that commenced in September 2025, after a period of negative or stagnating, year-on-year results from February – August 2025. Council revitalisation interventions, improved perceptions of safety and shopper confidence, and a steady RBA cash rate from August until December supported this result.



Preston: Remains Top Suburb of Choice for Spending

RESPONSE

The Darebin Economic Framework will continue to support strong spending in Preston and increased spending in other suburbs through collaborative mainstreet revitalisation and lighthouse projects. These projects aim to increase the customer and visitor numbers across our activity centres.



Darebin: Spending and Economic Outlook Snapshot

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Local Spending in Darebin

- **Surge in online spending** . Year on year growth for local residents of over 10%. Whilst the ROS growth has dropped under its six-month average of 12.1%. It remains high, in line with national trends.
- **6%+ year-on-year increases in both Resident Local Spend and Resident Escape spend**, trending slightly above Melbourne RDA figures. Spending dropped from the annual peak in December, following expected, seasonal patterns.
- **Clear implications for Council** highlighting the importance of main street revitalisation, active spaces programs, as well as ways to proactively address perceptions of safety.

Spending Trends

Total Local Spend: \$257M	+5.99%	from January 2025	↑
Resident Local Spend: \$106M	+6.72%	from January 2025	↑
Visitor Local Spend: \$151M	+5.48%	from January 2025	↑
Resident Escape Spend: \$157M	+6.02%	from January 2025	↑
Resident Online Spend: \$203M	+10.37%	from January 2025	↑



Spending Categories

- Designer clothing, luxury cars, beers from small breweries, gourmet chocolates, jewellery and sporting goods, to name just a few '**specialised and luxury goods**', continue to soar. This was our top placed spending category in January.
- Spending across **grocery stores and supermarkets** dropped to second rank from January 2025 to January 2026.
- Darebin's reputation as a destination for **dining** and excellent **healthcare**, and its high proportion of professional workers with disposable income, is reflected in the top spending categories listed below.

Top 5 Spending Categories


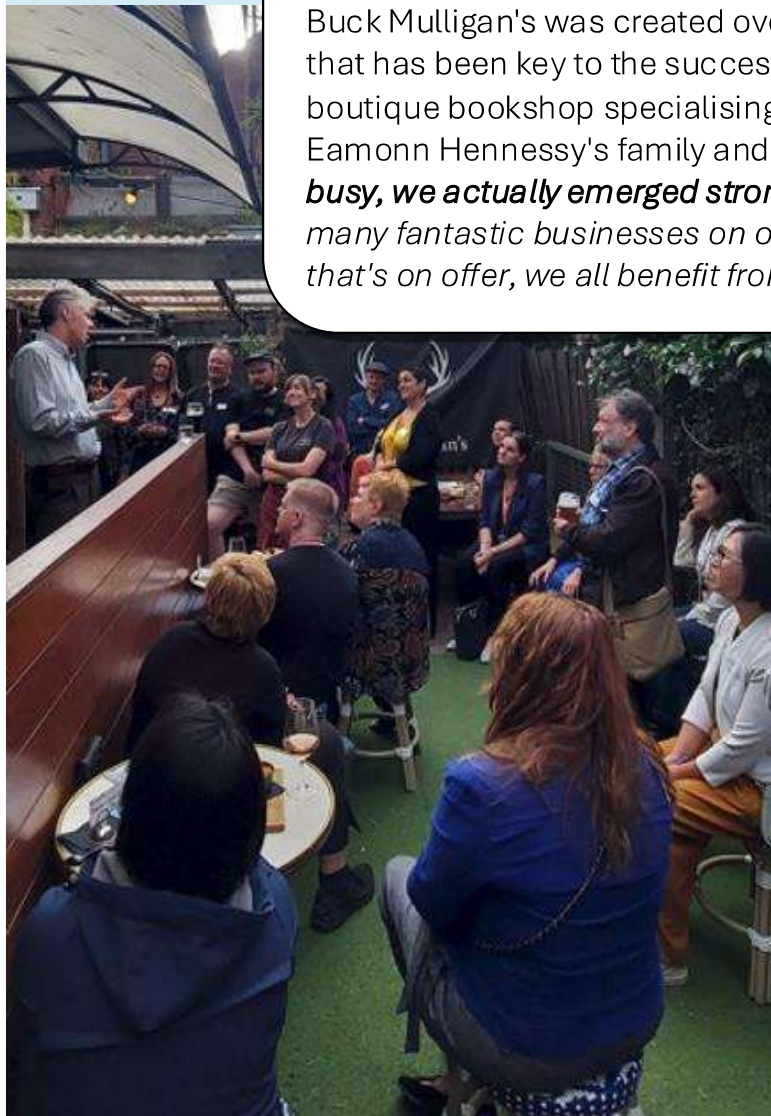
	Specialised & Luxury Goods: \$42.22M (\$37.37M in 2025)
	Grocery Stores & Supermarkets: \$41.42M (\$39.45M in 2025)
	Dining: \$27.26M (\$25.54M in 2025)
	Healthcare: \$16.14M (\$15.54M in 2025)
	Vehicle, Freight & Other Transport: \$15.69M (\$14.93M in 2025)



Event Spotlight: DEFN Networking Event at Buck Mulligan's

Buck Mulligan's Whiskey Bar & Bookshop hosted a Darebin Economic Futures Network event in February.

Buck Mulligan's was created over nine years ago, as a place that fits the local community needs, a strategy that has been key to the success of the business. The stylish and laid-back Irish whiskey bar, combined with a boutique bookshop specialising in Irish fiction, plays and poetry, has become the second home for owner Eamonn Hennessy's family and many regulars from the local community. Eamonn says *'The area is always busy, we actually emerged stronger coming out of the Covid years. It's great having Northcote Theatre and so many fantastic businesses on our street. People come here to bar hop, shop, dine and take in everything that's on offer, we all benefit from each other.'*



Contact Council to get involved and to attend or host a networking event.

[Enquire](#)



Darebin: Spending and Economic Outlook Snapshot

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Economic Outlook

- **Consumer Sentiment falls from 94.5 in December to 92.9 in January**
- Consecutive falls from November's 103.8 index (the first 'net positive' rating since pandemic reopening)
- About two thirds of consumers now expect mortgage rates to rise in 2026
- Homebuyer sentiment improved marginally in January but remains pessimistic overall. The 'time to buy a dwelling' index rose 4% to 89.6
- The monthly CPI indicator rose 3.8% in January compared to the same period in the previous year.
- RBA's 25 basis points rate hike in February – the first in two years – will put pressure on finances and spending.



Spotlight: Business Network Thrives

- In 2025 Darebin Council launched the Darebin Economic Futures Network (DEFN) in partnership with La Trobe University
- The network is open to all businesses in the City of Darebin
- The initiative is a direct response to the community's request for a dedicated platform to connect and grow.
- The network is built on the principle that strong business communities lead to a more resilient local economy.
- The first 2026 DEFN event attracted over 20 local business owners, offering opportunity for networking within the group and engagement with council officers.

"I [enjoyed] the opportunity to meet lovely, interesting, likeminded business people, who I would otherwise be unlikely to meet."



City of
DAREBIN

Resources & Support

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

Contact:

Business@darein.vic.gov.au