Developing a strategic direction for heritage tourism in South Australia
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Cover: Bungaree Station, Clare Valley.
South Australian Tourism Commission.

Beehive Corner, Adelaide
Introduction

The South Australian government is exploring how SA’s heritage, its places and stories can be reimagined to help grow the Visitor Economy to $12.8 billion by 2030. There is significant potential to unlock our heritage places and stories to create experiences that showcase our state’s distinctive history, enhance the unique appeal of SA, and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more.

The purpose of this paper is to provide you with background information on heritage tourism and the role of heritage in the Visitor Economy to assist your participation in one of several engagement opportunities.
Be part of the conversation

We invite the tourism industry, heritage owners, operators and custodians, local government, regional communities, Traditional Owners, and those with an interest in heritage tourism to share their views and ideas and play a role in developing the strategy and action plan.

Your input will be used to help:

- identify SA’s unique heritage stories and places that have strong appeal to visitors
- determine the opportunities and challenges for developing heritage-based visitor experiences
- understand what needs be done and how we can all work together to realise the tourism potential of SA’s heritage.

Your involvement in the plan may help strengthen SA as a visitor destination, create jobs and economic opportunity in our towns and communities, and drive conservation of heritage places through investment and use.
Role of the strategy and action plan

The strategy and action plan will seek to maximise the value of heritage tourism in SA and contribute to achieving strong growth in the South Australian Visitor Economy by:

• establishing a vision for heritage tourism in South Australia
• articulating the unique heritage stories and experiences that define SA’s identity and will encourage visitors to travel to our state, stay longer and spend more
• identifying the best opportunities and priorities to grow heritage tourism in SA, including activating and repurposing heritage places for tourism purposes
• determining what needs to be done and how we can work together to realise SA’s heritage tourism potential.

What is heritage tourism?

For the purposes of this paper, heritage tourism is defined as activities, attractions and experiences that engage with, use or interpret heritage stories and places, including gardens, landscapes, sites, shipwrecks and objects.

Interacting with heritage can be either the primary tourism experience or an aspect of another tourism experience.

How to get involved

Online Questionnaire Sept 9 – Oct 7

Email Submission Sept 9 – Oct 7
Email a submission sharing your views and ideas on the topics raised in this paper to DEWheritage@sa.gov.au.

Workshops Aug 29 – Sept 30
A series of 2-hour long workshops will be held in Adelaide and across SA.

Places at each workshop are limited, register your interest at www.YourSAy.sa.gov.au or DEWheritage@sa.gov.au.

Feedback invited Jan 2020
A copy of the draft Heritage Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will be made available for comment and feedback in early 2020.

More information, including further background resources, can be found at www.YourSAy.sa.gov.au.
Driving our tourism future through our past
Heritage is what we inherit from the past and use in the present day\(^1\). It is both human-made and natural. Our heritage is reflected in our landscapes, in the buildings and places that survive to this day, in the stories we tell about ourselves, the traditions we maintain, and in the objects that connect us to the past.

South Australia’s cultural heritage stretches back 50,000-plus years, yet is as recent as living memory. Our heritage creates a sense of place, reinforces our identity and distinguishes SA from other states.

Heritage underpins many South Australian visitor experiences, either as a compelling drawcard or intertwined with another reason for visiting. Whether a visitor is exploring ruins from our mining heyday, staying in a luxurious former bank, visiting a museum, connecting with the ancient past in the outback, shopping in Hahndorf, paddling river and sea ports, or tasting wines produced from 150-year-old vines, SA’s historical legacy delivers memorable experiences by providing deep connections to local places and people.

While many visitors may not come to our state specifically for heritage reasons, we can take advantage of the benefits heritage provides by leveraging and repurposing our heritage assets for tourism. Research into heritage tourism consistently shows that visitors who engage with heritage spend more and stay longer than the average visitor.

Strengthening the connections between heritage and tourism can help grow the Visitor Economy and support tourism activity in our towns and regions. This can be achieved by developing a vision for heritage tourism and expanding the range, quality, and diversity of heritage activities and experiences that are available and appealing to visitors.

Importantly, rejuvenating heritage assets for tourism purposes will also deliver conservation outcomes by giving greater value and meaning to our historical stories and protecting SA’s built and natural heritage.

**We want your views and ideas on:**

- whether there should be a focus on growing heritage tourism in our state
- what successful and sustainable heritage tourism in SA looks like now and in the future
- examples of standout heritage tourism experiences and products – both here and elsewhere.

Developing a strategic direction for heritage tourism in South Australia

The state of heritage tourism in SA today

Globally, heritage tourism is one of the most popular and diverse types of tourism and is one of the oldest forms of travel. Unsurprisingly, research shows that European countries such as Italy, France and Greece are most likely to be considered ‘history and heritage’ destinations by international travellers. Australia is not top of mind for ‘history and heritage’, and is currently placed 23rd out of all countries with this attribute.

While travellers may not consider Australia, evidence shows that heritage tourism contributes significantly to Australia’s Visitor Economy. In 2015, spending by overnight visitors (both international and domestic) who engaged with heritage buildings and sites during their visit totalled $14.8 billion.

Among international visitors to SA, heritage-associated activities constitute 24 per cent of all activities undertaken. These activities include visiting museums or art galleries, visiting history/heritage buildings, sites or monuments, and experiencing Aboriginal art/craft and cultural displays.

It is important to note that measures of heritage activity do not include those activities where heritage may be one aspect of the overall experience (for example visiting a winery, sightseeing, or dining in a repurposed heritage building).

While 32 per cent of interstate travellers associate SA with ‘history and heritage’, our state falls behind NSW, Tasmania and Victoria as a heritage tourism destination. Domestic (both interstate and intrastate) visitors in SA are also much less likely than international visitors to engage with heritage – just 11 per cent of activities undertaken by interstate overnight visitors and only 6 per cent of activities undertaken by intrastate overnight visitors are heritage-related.

Participation in heritage activities by daytrip visitors is even less at just 4 per cent of all activities undertaken during the 14 million daytrips last year.

In 2015, the City of Adelaide surveyed overnight visitors to the city about their interactions with heritage during their stay. It was found that:

- 27 per cent of total visitor spend could be directly attributed to ‘cultural heritage’-related tourism, equating to $375 million (based on 2013/14 visitor numbers)
- 12 per cent of survey responses indicated cultural heritage was a main reason for visiting
- 28 per cent of respondents rated cultural heritage as ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to their visit.

Footnote 3: For the purposes of these statistics, heritage tourism includes the proportion of all activities undertaken by visitors that encompassed visiting museums or art galleries, visiting history/heritage buildings, sites or monuments and for experiencing Aboriginal art/craft and cultural displays.
In 2015, Heritage South Australia and the Department for Environment and Water released the discussion paper ‘Exploring heritage-tourism opportunities in South Australia’. This was followed by an April 2016 workshop that brought together stakeholders from across state and local government, community history organisations, museums, cultural and heritage attractions, and the tourism industry.

The discussion paper and workshop concluded that there is more to be done to realise the potential of SA’s heritage as a tourism experience. Opportunities and challenges for growing heritage tourism were discussed, including:

- identifying the stories and places that contribute to providing a unique South Australian visitor experience
- understanding the types of heritage experiences sought by visitors to SA
- improving the quality of existing heritage experiences and products, including interpretation and storytelling
- embracing technology and innovation to engage visitors
- improving the ability of heritage places and attractions to operate sustainably and within a Visitor Economy setting
- increasing the presence of heritage products and experiences in tourism promotion
- repositioning heritage and establishing partnerships to integrate heritage and tourism
- packaging experiences and linking products to create precincts and journeys
- connecting heritage to other tourism experiences, including SA’s iconic nature-based tourism
- attracting funding and investment in heritage
- promoting and enabling adaptive reuse of heritage buildings for tourism purposes.

A key recommendation of the workshop was to bring together the tourism industry and heritage sector to further explore opportunities and challenges, and develop a strategy to progress heritage tourism in South Australia.
The opportunity for regional South Australia

Forty-three per cent of SA’s Visitor Economy expenditure occurs in regional areas. With many heritage assets located in regional areas, there is significant potential to leverage heritage to support regional tourism growth. A recent Tourism Research Australia report into regional tourism investment found that the “protection and conservation of heritage assets is essential for the survival and sustainable growth of the regional tourism industry over the longer term”\(^6\). Understanding how to support and enable cultural heritage tourism goals and opportunities for Aboriginal communities was identified as being of particular importance.

South Australia’s heritage can support delivery of the South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2018). Along with helping destinations understand and share their unique stories and places and instigating the development of high-quality and authentic experiences, developing a strategy and action plan for heritage tourism may help regions to:

- link products and destinations to create experience packages and touring routes that support visitor dispersal and extend visitor length of stay
- attract investment in visitor infrastructure such as trails, interpretation signage, and jetties
- increase accommodation options by encouraging the conservation and reuse of heritage properties.

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We want your views and ideas on:

- the uniquely South Australian heritage stories and places that would appeal to visitors
- the types of heritage experiences that visitors to SA visitors seek
- the challenges and barriers to growing heritage tourism in SA
- the opportunities for developing and growing the heritage tourism sector in SA
- the specific actions required to leverage the potential of heritage and grow heritage tourism in South Australia.

For further information on developing a Heritage Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for SA:

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Email: linda.lacey@sa.gov.au

Steamtown Peterborough Sound and Light Show, Flinders Ranges & Outback
South Australian Tourism Commission/Adam Bruzzone.