

South Australian Heritage Council

Report on Heritage Protection 2020 Summary



The Old Mount Gambier Gaol



COVID-19 response

Please note that this report was prepared before the COVID-19 disruption to our lives and the State's economy. The South Australian Heritage Council recognises that the focus for Government must be on helping our economy to recover.

It has stressed to the Minister that there are several opportunities in these recommendations which can provide an injection in to the state-wide economy and add jobs – particularly in the regions – at the same time as they are enhancing the future of our heritage and its adaption to the 21st century.

Introduction

One of the functions of the South Australian Heritage Council under legislation is to advise the Minister for Environment and Water (including Heritage) on *'matters relating to trends, shortcomings and opportunities with respect to heritage protection at the State and local level, and insofar as may be relevant, at the national level.'*

The Council recently presented its Heritage Protection Report 2020 to the Minister. This is a summary of its main points.

The South Australian Heritage Council supports any initiatives that seek to bring about significant positive change for heritage protection, conservation and management in South Australia, including:

- Making policy and legislative change that enables an integrated system for local and state listings.
- Maintaining separation of powers between the listing and management of Heritage Places in South Australia, with separate Ministers, vital to the ongoing protection for our State's heritage.
- Providing better and consistent South Australian Heritage Register information to provide certainty and clarity to owners, users and developers.
- Developing a funding model to underpin heritage that benefits owners, creates jobs and skills and incentivises redevelopment of our heritage.
- Encouraging and facilitating adaptive re-use of places with heritage value so that their future is assured.
- Supporting heritage tourism as an important economic driver.
- Reducing red-tape associated with heritage management.

With this lens the Council drew attention to six key themes that are important for South Australia and, in its opinion, will bring about the most benefit to the South Australian community and Government. Many of these themes are consistent with activity in other jurisdictions across Australia.

Theme 1

Refine the Planning and Design Code to support positive heritage outcomes and the ERDC Heritage Inquiry Report recommendations.

Recommended Actions:

- Refine the Planning and Design Code so that it will improve protection for State and Local Heritage while also facilitating complementary new development, reduce unnecessary referrals, provide better information and better access to new technology such as 3D modelling.
- Support the ERDC Heritage Inquiry recommendations. These will provide a streamlined integrated system for protecting our Heritage Places, audit the current Heritage Places to provide certainty for decision making and establish a sustainable funding model for heritage conservation.
- Refine the Heritage Places Act 1993, and include Maritime and Underwater Heritage in one piece of heritage legislation similar to other jurisdictions, make miscellaneous improvements and update the legislation to simplify compliance for owners and to also address demolition by neglect.

Theme 2

Improve the understanding of the economic and public value of heritage, including heritage tourism.

Recommended Actions:

- Invest in research on the economic contribution and public value of heritage.
- Encourage the South Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism Research Australia to capture data that better reflects heritage tourism.
- Establish opportunities to work with the Government, community, businesses and stakeholders to develop case studies and realise the economic potential that heritage places contribute to the South Australian economy.
- Implement the 'Activating Heritage' program within the Department for Environment and Water (as a pilot), to demonstrate a significant return on investment and improved heritage protection outcomes.

Theme 3

Develop a sustainable funding model that provides financial support for heritage.

Recommended Actions:

- Commit continued funding for the South Australian Heritage Grants Program which will acknowledge the public value of heritage, leverage private investment into conservation and activation and help to sustain specialised trades.
- Establish a Heritage Home Lottery (such as the lotteries in Western Australia and England) and/or other incentives.
- Establish a Revolving Fund for Heritage Conservation that provides start-up capital expenditure to revitalise Government-owned vacant and under-utilised heritage properties through conservation and adaptive reuse, and transitioning them to new ownership.
- Establish an Embodied Energy Fund to contribute to a 'circular economy' and recognise life cycle, embodied energy and energy efficient design principles of our heritage building stock. It could have a significant role in investor decision making concerning demolition versus adaptive reuse of our heritage building stock. Over time an Embodied Energy Fund has the potential to create significant funds, which could be invested by Government and gain interest revenue.

Theme 4

Increase access to skills and trades for heritage conservation.

Recommended Actions:

- Encourage heritage trades training development and heritage conservation modules within related tertiary qualifications.
- Support the National Trust of South Australia to establish the Australian Artisan Trades Academy and other programs such as Conservation Industry Training Board heritage trades initiative.
- Drive demand for trades in declining regional communities by restoring the main street of towns, which then re-establishes strong community identity and pride with flow on benefits of stronger regional economies and creation of tourism destinations.
- Re-establish the Regional Heritage Advisory Service, a program which co-funds a local heritage professional in the community to provide expertise that stimulates demand for conservation works. There is some evidence that for every dollar invested by State Government, Local Government matches it with a further \$2-\$3 and the community contributes up to \$10.
- Increase the demand for heritage trades through conservation grants.

Theme 5

Provide a high quality South Australian Heritage Register.

Recommended Actions:

- Improve the accuracy, consistency and quality of information about heritage places entered in the South Australian Heritage Register which is needed to support the Planning and Design Code.
- Improve and inform decision-making of investors and professionals resulting in better heritage conservation outcomes.
- Improve accessibility and functionality of the Register and associated supporting information.
- Provide owners and stakeholders with the information they need to understand, manage and interpret heritage places and areas.
- Address 'gaps' in the Register, including aboriginal contact sites, objects and cultural landscapes.
- Reduce red-tape, by providing clear information to support planners/architects to better manage development approvals for heritage places and areas.

Theme 6

Develop a Heritage Strategy for South Australia.

Recommended Actions:

- Create a governing document spanning 5 generations (not 5 years) that sets the vision for heritage conservation in South Australia as a contributor to our liveability, social fabric and economic prosperity, thus ensuring its protection for present and future generations.
- Position South Australia as a place where people benefit, value and care for our heritage.
- policy where appropriate, and recognising embodied energy and tax/rates incentives for heritage conservation).
- Recognise the public value of heritage places through grants which also benefit a resurgence of demand for heritage trades and skills.
- Re-establish a Regional Heritage Advisory Service to provide growth in the local economy.

Outcomes to be achieved should:

- Clarify the economic and public value of heritage (wellbeing, identity, liveability).
- Provide for long-term decision making – for 5 generations, not 5 years (looking beyond short-term thinking and short-lived economic gain).
- Provide an economic model for sustainable government investment in heritage (i.e. a heritage lottery, revolving fund; embodied energy fund).
- Balance the playing field – so that developing a heritage building isn't disadvantaged (including flexibility in planning
- Influence planning and design of our city and towns, so that architectural decisions contribute to the vibrancy and quality of built environment and avoid development that detracts from it.
- Enable the heritage tourism sector to tell its stories, which requires better technology, support of regional destination trails, capacity building, connection with our aboriginal history and promotion of maritime and terrestrial visitor experiences.
- Develop and support the heritage trades and skills training sector (demand for heritage conservation will help to drive this outcome).

For more information, please contact:

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