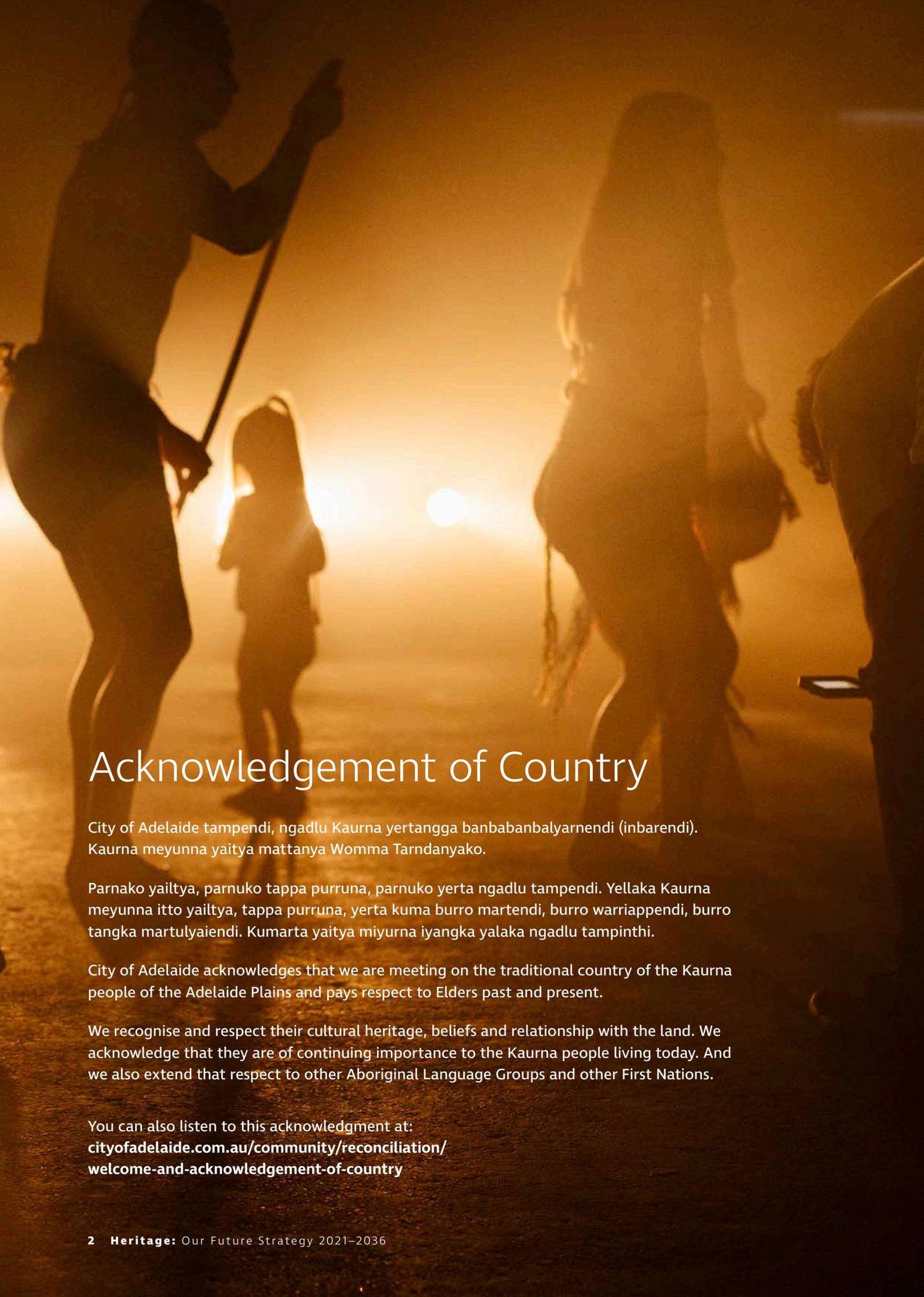


Heritage: Our Future Strategy 2021–2036



Our Adelaide.
Bold.
Aspirational.
Innovative.

The background of the page features a warm, golden sunset or sunrise over a flat landscape. In the foreground, several people are silhouetted against the bright light. On the left, a person stands holding a long spear. In the center, a smaller figure, possibly a child, stands with their back to the camera. On the right, another person is partially visible, also in silhouette. The overall mood is peaceful and evocative of traditional life.

Acknowledgement of Country

City of Adelaide tampendi, ngadlu Kurna yertangga banbabanbalyarnendi (inbarendi).
Kurna meyunna yaitya mattanya Womma Tarndanyako.

Parnako yailtya, parnuko tappa purruna, parnuko yerta ngadlu tampendi. Yellaka Kurna
meyunna itto yailtya, tappa purruna, yerta kuma burro martendi, burro warriappendi, burro
tangka martulyaiendi. Kumarta yaitya miyurna iyangka yalaka ngadlu tampinhi.

City of Adelaide acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kurna
people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We
acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. And
we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

You can also listen to this acknowledgment at:
[cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/
welcome-and-acknowledgement-of-country](https://cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/welcome-and-acknowledgement-of-country)

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
A message from the Lord Mayor	5
What is heritage?	7
Working together	8
Background	10
Our vision	12
Heritage management	16
Where we are today	16
Where we are heading	16
The strategic context	18
The value of heritage	19
What we have achieved so far	20
Protection	21
Preservation	22
Promotion	23
Partnerships	24





A message from the Lord Mayor

Adelaide is a city shaped by its stories. From the time of Indigenous Australia to the layered chapters of our colonial and contemporary past. Heritage lives in our buildings and boulevards, our laneways and landmarks, our languages and living traditions.

However, it's more than just relics of the past. It helps us understand who we are and how we come to be. The City of Adelaide's Heritage Strategy 2021–2036 sets a long-term vision for protecting and celebrating this shared legacy so that as our city evolves, its history continues to enrich and inspire.

Over the past year, we have made important progress on key strategic directions: embedding heritage considerations in our planning and policy frameworks; promoting adaptive reuse of historic buildings; and supporting initiatives that celebrate Kaurna culture and elevate First Nations voices.

We've worked closely with Traditional Owners, community groups, residents and industry to shape a more inclusive approach to heritage, one that reflects the diverse cultures, identities and histories that have helped shape Adelaide.

We've also focused on connecting people with place: supporting evolving interpretations of our past, strengthening access to local archives and stories, and ensuring that heritage places remain active parts of our civic and community life.

Importantly, the strategy also prioritises resilience and recognises the challenges of climate change, population growth, and economic pressures, and the need to protect our heritage in a changing world.

From conserving stone structures to revitalising laneways, from sharing migrant histories to protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, we are committed to ensuring our city's character is not just preserved but enhanced.

As we look toward Adelaide's bicentenary in 2036, we remain focused on honouring our past while planning for a future that respects and reflects all who call this place home.

Our city's story is still being written, and this strategy ensures history, in all its forms, remains part of Adelaide's rich legacy. This strategy ensures that history, in all its forms, remains part of Adelaide's living legacy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Jane Lomax-Smith'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dr Jane Lomax-Smith

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor



'Heritage acts as an anchor for people who work and live in the city and is an intrinsic part of its attraction for visitors. Our heritage places offer opportunities to tell our stories and define the city's unique sense of place.'

SA Heritage Council, November 2020

Introduction

The Heritage Strategy (the Strategy) outlines our aims for creating a city that respects and values its heritage, and our framework for heritage management up to 2036. The Strategy recognises that heritage is both tangible and intangible and embraces natural, historic, cultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values. It will guide our long term heritage management role in the identification and protection of our heritage places, how we can assist property owners and businesses conserve, manage and appreciate our city's heritage and how we can work with the community to recognise and celebrate our heritage.

Our vision for the future of heritage is to enable the full economic, cultural, community and sustainability potential of our built and cultural heritage to be realised. Three outcomes have been identified to deliver our vision:

- Our city's heritage is effectively protected
- Heritage is valued by our people and our communities
- Our city is renowned for its heritage.

The Strategy is executed through the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan.

What is heritage?

Our city's heritage enriches the city's heart and soul. It provides an anchor for people and communities. An acknowledgment of history provides our society with an understanding of the past and directions for the future. Appreciation of our heritage helps build strong, connected communities with access to rich cultural and social experiences.

Our community works, plays and lives in a rich variety of heritage places. Our local and wider communities are highly engaged with heritage, particularly protection of built heritage from demolition, and unsympathetic new development. Heritage stories regularly appear in the media and the City of Adelaide's engagement with the community on social media and other digital platforms continues to grow.

There is increasing recognition of the economic and social benefits of conserving heritage places and areas. Globally, adaptive reuse of heritage buildings continues to play a vital role in securing their future and defining the fine-grained character of cities and towns.

The tourism benefits of heritage places and areas which contribute to a city's unique identity are already recognised. Tourists now seek authentic experiences with interpretation that focuses on historical themes and historically inclusive perspectives.

The sustainability benefits of conserving embodied energy through retention of heritage places has been well documented and research is continuing in this sphere.

Working Together

Heritage is a complex issue and no one agency can tackle it alone. Collaborations and partnerships with Federal, State and local government agencies, business, educational and community organisations will play an important role in delivering the Strategy's objectives. The City of Adelaide already has well-established and wide ranging partnerships. We will look at building on these and extending our connections where necessary. We will also look at opportunities for community participation in achieving the aspirations and goals of the Strategy.





ESTABLISHED
1908

VOICE-REGAL.

L. LAWSON

Background

The Strategy reviews our heritage aspirations for the city within the framework of South Australian planning reforms, the state focus on heritage tourism, and recognition of the economic values of heritage. Culture and heritage play a vital role in defining Adelaide's unique brand. There are great benefits in developing strong linkages between the heritage and tourism sectors. The Strategy looks at ways we can facilitate these connections.

Research including contemporary heritage programs, economic studies of heritage buildings and conservation programs, and the impact of the South Australian Planning and Design Code, has informed discussions about future directions for the city's heritage management program.

This Strategy was developed in consultation with our community and heritage stakeholders in the government and private sectors. Council adopted a draft Strategy for engagement in November 2019. Public engagement occurred through Your Say between October and November 2020. We engaged with external stakeholders and our partners between October and December 2020.

The draft Strategy proposed Four Future Ideas which were well supported by stakeholders:

- **Tried and true**
- **World Heritage listing of the Park Lands and City Layout**
- **Making heritage places**
- **Sharing our heritage information.**

This Strategy guides the Council's response to built heritage. The City of Adelaide has separate policies and programs that promote and support the city's cultural identity, including moveable and intangible heritage and Aboriginal and Torres Strait heritage, which complement the objectives of this Strategy but are outside its scope.

The South Australian Productivity Commission identifies Heritage assessment and Heritage protection as mandatory Local Government activities. The city's heritage activities stretch beyond these mandatory requirements.

The City of Adelaide's role in heritage

- continuing to protect, preserve, and promote our heritage
- partnering with government, business and community organisations to promote and advocate for heritage
- identifying at risk and unprotected heritage places
- supporting heritage conservation through a range of initiatives
- understanding the challenges facing heritage places and identifying solutions
- enabling stories about European and Aboriginal heritage
- celebrating our city's heritage with events and activities



Our Vision

Enable the full economic, tourism, cultural, community and sustainability potential of our built and cultural heritage to be realised.



Strategic partnerships

Delivery of the Strategy's objectives relies on partnerships with government, industry, cultural and educational institutions, and our community for the identification, understanding, measuring and celebration of our built, cultural, and natural heritage.



'The Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout is widely regarded as a masterwork of urban design and signifies a turning point in the settlement of Australia. Adelaide was the first city in Australia to be planned and developed, not as a penal settlement or military outpost, but as a place for free settlers.'

National Heritage List inscription, 7 November 2008





Heritage Management

Where we are today

The City of Adelaide has been at the forefront of heritage policy development in Australia since the early 1980s. For over thirty years, we have supported owners of heritage-listed properties with financial incentives and professional advice.

We aim to continue influencing heritage policies and developing initiatives that conserve and celebrate our cultural and built heritage character and resonate with communities.

In 2021, Council adopted the Heritage: Our Future Heritage Strategy and Action Plan which was a bold vision for the future of the city's Built Heritage. The Strategy recognised the challenges faced by the introduction of new planning legislation, as well as the opportunities presented by the 2018 South Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into Heritage Reform¹. In June 2022 we released the City of Adelaide's Position on Heritage Reform and commenced Planning Code amendments to better protect the city's heritage.

We continued to provide expert heritage advice in the development assessment process and support owners in conserving their heritage places through the Heritage Incentives Scheme. We reviewed policies regarding unlisted historic elements in the public realm and supported this by expanding digital mapping.

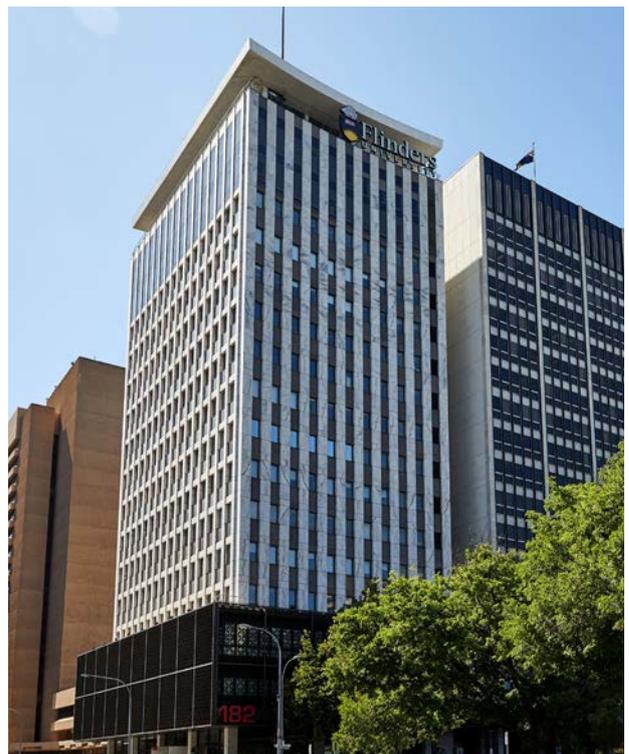
We responded to the need to better understand and manage our National Heritage-listed Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout through the development of a Heritage Management Plan (endorsed by the Australian Heritage Council in 2024), which allows us to effectively protect and advocate for ensuring their intrinsic values can be celebrated by all.

We progressed the World Heritage Bid for Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes by working with our partners and experts and by laying the groundwork for a path to greater shared understanding of the historical and enduring impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

We partnered with the State Government and supported heritage skills training organisations to deliver specialist heritage training, to allow opportunities for the passing down of heritage skills to the next generation of craftspeople.

The power of grassroots heritage protection was evident in the overwhelming support for the protection of the Crown and Anchor and our city's UNESCO-recognised live music culture.

We continued our Blue Heritage Plaques program and our sponsorship of South Australia's History Festival and expanded our walking trails and digital engagement.



¹Parliament of South Australia 'An Inquiry into Heritage Reform', 1st report of the Environment Resources and Development Committee, 30 April 2019

Where we are heading

Community support for heritage is strong, demonstrated by community response to heritage protection issues and support for our heritage program. As society changes, new challenges and opportunities arise with heritage places. We need to develop strategies to deal with those changes, to anticipate problems and harness opportunities. The City of Adelaide's very successful heritage protection, preservation and promotion program which commenced over thirty years ago is the foundation of our heritage management program for the future. This Strategy reflects the vision and outcomes of the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024–2028 and guides our long term heritage management of the city.

We recognise that the City of Adelaide is part of a global community, and our heritage protection efforts need to reflect how we understand the value of our heritage to the world and how valuing and conserving our heritage repays this investment many times over.

We see that our economic future can be enhanced through expanding opportunities linked to heritage tourism. Increasingly, our unique heritage will attract visitors to the city. We will explore the potential of heritage places as economic and sustainability drivers.

There are excellent opportunities for the cultural heritage of the Kurna People, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures to be respected, celebrated, and represented in all aspects of city life.

We understand the need to review the management of heritage places at all stages of the development life cycle – identification, policy formulation, assessment, construction, compliance and enforcement. We will develop a clear position on the desired direction for heritage policies affecting the city. The impact of the new statewide Planning and Design Code on our heritage places and areas will be monitored and evaluated and we will actively participate in the anticipated State Government heritage reform processes.

We will foster a greater understanding of the impact of climate change on our built heritage and be cognisant of the work being done in the fields of environmental sustainability, circular economies, climate change adaptation, and social planning.

Heritage is not only a function of history; it is a function of time, endeavours and culture. 'Modern or recent heritage' has as much a place for the heritage of the future as 'past or inherited' heritage has a place for the present.

North Adelaide Society, November 2020

The Strategic Context

Heritage management in the City of Adelaide, including identification, statutory protection, conservation and development affecting heritage places, is guided by international, national and state heritage legislation and policies. Development of the Strategy has also been informed by heritage studies and reports commissioned by the City of Adelaide.

World

UNESCO World Heritage Convention
International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter)
International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charters and Guidelines

National

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999
National Heritage Protocol 2004
Australian Heritage Strategy, December 2015.
Register of the National Estate (closed 2007 – archive only).
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
Native Title Act, 1993
Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986

State Government

Heritage Places Act 1993
SA Aboriginal Heritage Act 1998.
Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016, and the Planning and Design Code
Parliament of South Australia Environment Resources and Development Committee: An Inquiry into Heritage Reform 2018–2019

Local Government and City of Adelaide

Local Government Act 1999
City of Adelaide Strategic Plan
Built Heritage Management Policy & Public Realm Operating Guidelines
Heritage Plaques Program Operating Guidelines
City Plan – Adelaide 2036
Integrated Climate Strategy 2030
Housing Strategy: Investing in our Housing Future
Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy
Adaptive Reuse City Housing Initiative (ARCHI)
Adelaide Economic Development Agency Strategic Plan
Community Land Management Plans
Asset Management Plans

Best practice heritage management:

The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013)
Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout National Heritage Management Plan
Council owned heritage asset management plans

City of Adelaide heritage studies and reports, including:

Adelaide Heritage Tourism - Economic Value of Heritage Tourism, Adelaide, 2015
Economic Value of Built Heritage in the City of Adelaide, SGS Economics and Planning, 2025
Observations about Adelaide's heritage, Donovan Rypkema visit, May 2018
Heritage and character surveys of North and South Adelaide
Thematic history studies



The value of heritage

Our history, visible through our heritage places and cultural practices, enables us to tell stories which help establish our identity by explaining the past, understanding the present and setting the direction for the future.

The Strategy recognises the importance of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in recognition of their rich ancient and recent heritage. Traditional owners are the custodians of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The City of Adelaide is located on the traditional lands of the Kurna People and the Kurna heritage story is central to our history. Aboriginal truth telling must be represented in our narratives.

The city's unique built and cultural heritage is an important tourism driver. A 2015 study² revealed that direct cultural tourism expenditure in the City of Adelaide was \$111 million to \$375 million annually. The study also determined that an average of 27% of total visitor expenditure in Adelaide could also be directly attributed to cultural heritage tourism.

The City of Adelaide's built heritage is also an important contributor to the South Australian economy. For every \$1 spent on a Heritage Incentives Scheme (HIS) grant, \$1.94 is returned to the South Australian economy.

Donovan Rypkema, a world leading expert on the economic benefits of heritage preservation has documented the environmental, economic and cultural sustainability benefits of heritage preservation in cities across the world. In a visit to Adelaide in April 2018 Rypkema questioned:

'In an age where many cities are rapidly constructing each tower higher than the last, only to be nearly indistinguishable from one another – will Adelaide be a city that celebrates what is local, unique, and unexpected about its existing buildings? And will the city adequately position these heritage resources to springboard economic development, job growth, and creative industries.'

² 2013 – 2014 data – 'Adelaide Heritage Tourism – Economic Value of Heritage Tourism – Adelaide 2015', Tourism Research Services WA

What we have achieved so far

In the 1970s there was no statutory protection for any heritage places in South Australia and buildings valued by the community were demolished. In the late 1970s, Commonwealth and State Government heritage legislation was introduced. By the early 1980s, Council had endorsed a heritage program which consisted of three pillars:

- Protection – to create a list of protected heritage places in the city
- Preservation – how could Council best assist ratepayers to preserve the city's heritage
- Promotion – how could Council best get the message about heritage out to the community.





Protection

By the end of 1987, Council had established the City of Adelaide Heritage Register which contained 419 places in Adelaide, North Adelaide and the Adelaide Park Lands. We now have:

- Two National Heritage Places
- Two Commonwealth Heritage Places
- 649 State Heritage Places
- 1850 Local Heritage Places
- Fourteen Historic Area Overlays

Approximately 25% of South Australia's heritage listed places are located in the City of Adelaide.

The Park Lands and City Layout have been nominated as a State Heritage Area, but are not yet listed.



Preservation

In 1987, Council established the Heritage Incentives Scheme (HIS) to support heritage property owners in the conservation of their properties. The HIS provides free advice from the City of Adelaide's heritage architects, as well as grants for professional documentation and building conservation works.

The nationally awarded HIS program has provided over \$25 million of grants to over 3,000 conservation projects. On average, around 80 to 100 projects are delivered each year. The HIS is always fully allocated.

The city has also invested in the conservation of its heritage assets, preparing detailed management plans and undertaking conservation works. In 2024-2025, the city undertook comprehensive façade conservation works to the Adelaide Town Hall Complex, reflecting the city's commitment to protecting our heritage and leading with best practice.

The city has been proactive in showcasing the economic and tourism potential of our unique built heritage. Projects like Lot Fourteen which repurposed the former Royal Adelaide Hospital site as an environmentally sustainable innovation hub, exemplify collaboration with all levels of government and private enterprise to create a vibrant new precinct for Adelaide. The heritage listed buildings on the site have been transformed

and adapted into dynamic and valued places for work and leisure.

Historic laneway precincts such as Peel and Leigh Streets are vibrant places with wide visitor appeal that were created through collaboration between the City of Adelaide, the State Government and local businesses.

In 2019 the city entered into a partnership for a \$400 million redevelopment of the Adelaide Central Market Arcade. The mixed use retail, residential and office development, which has been designed to complement the historic character of the adjacent heritage listed Market buildings and connect with Victoria Square, will secure the Market's future as a premier tourist destination.

Since 2024, the city has moved to address housing shortages, with a view to promoting sustainability and preserving our city's unique architecture by introducing the Adaptive Reuse City Housing Initiative (ARCHI) and changes to the Heritage Incentives Scheme guidelines. Further policy work to protect and conserve the city's built heritage has been undertaken through the implementation of the Planning and Design Code Amendment Program, including the Historic Area Statement Update Code Amendment and the New Historic Areas (City Living Zone) Code Amendment.

Promotion

The City of Adelaide's heritage promotion program is well established.

Over the years the city has produced heritage studies, thematic histories, specifications, technical guides and numerous walking and cycling trails, in digital and printed formats.

Themed self-guided heritage walking and cycling trails for Adelaide and North Adelaide explain the history and significance of heritage places along the way in engaging formats.

Survey data associated with a heritage register study was compiled into a large format, lavishly illustrated book, 'The Heritage of the City of Adelaide – An Illustrated Guide' which was published in 1990. In later years, data information sheets from heritage surveys have been added to Council's website allowing widespread and convenient community access.

A popular and significant arm of the heritage promotion program, the Blue Heritage Plaques continues to be rolled out across the city. To date, over 850 plaques have been installed via the program.

We have also promoted the city's built heritage in conjunction with the History Trust of South Australia. The History Trust commenced a week-long community history festival in 2004 which the City of Adelaide was actively involved in. South Australia's History Festival now encompasses the entire month of May each year. Along with being the Major Partner of the Festival, the City of Adelaide offers a comprehensive range of events, alongside State Government and community group offerings, adding vibrancy to the city in late Autumn.

The city continues to grow its presence on social media and other digital platforms.



Partnerships

All levels of government, business, educational and community organisations own and manage heritage places and contribute to shaping heritage policies. We have established partnerships with the Australian Government, South Australian Government and the local government sector. We also have partnerships with businesses and community groups. We will continue to work collaboratively and in partnership with stakeholders towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Our key partners include:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:

We recognise the Kurna People as traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (Registered Native Title Body Corporate) and through the City of Adelaide Reconciliation Committee. We will also continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal cultural organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives.

South Australian Government agencies: We will continue our collaborations on heritage management and policies, with a wide range of government agencies, including the Department for Environment and Water, Attorney General's Department, Department of Housing and Urban Development (Planning and Land Use Services), the South Australian Tourism Commission, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, the South Australian Heritage Council and the History Trust of South Australia

Capital City Committee: We will continue our collaborative approach to managing heritage places through the Capital City Committee, which will focus on city building, partnerships, new initiatives, and incentives that benefit heritage.

Renew Adelaide: We will continue to collaborate with Renew Adelaide, a not-for-profit organisation that sources short-term rent-free accommodation for emerging businesses in vacant tenancies. The program assists property owners who are seeking to activate their buildings and facilitates the economic and social revitalisation of commercial areas.

National Trust of South Australia (NTSA): We will continue our longstanding collaborative relationship with the NTSA, which includes heritage promotions and advocacy.

International Council on Monuments and Sites

(ICOMOS): An international non-government organisation that is recognised as a worldwide leading authority on cultural heritage practice. We will maintain our corporate membership of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and continue to engage with ICOMOS about best practice conservation methodologies, World Heritage listing and heritage skills development.

Sister Cities: Provides opportunities for information exchange and shared learning on current trends and issues in heritage management programs and managing heritage assets.

George Town, the capital of Penang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2008, provides a lens to examine our own aspirations for recognising the World Heritage value of Adelaide and its Rural Settlement Landscapes.

Heritage buildings are always at risk – from physical deterioration, from inappropriate development, from an insufficient regulatory framework for protection, and from inadequate incentives for the private sector to invest.

Donovan Rypkema Heritage Strategies International, October 2018



