

## STATUE OF HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII

### North Terrace

This statue is the work of Sir Bertram Mackennal and is placed on a podium designed by the sculptor. The composition is 32 feet high and weighs 102 tons. The statue was paid for by public subscription and was unveiled on 15 July 1920 by the Prince of Wales, during his visit to South Australia, in front of what was described as one of the largest crowds Adelaide had ever known.

The *Register* of July 1920 recorded,

The most historically noteworthy of the numerous and varied engagements of the Prince of Wales in this state will take place today when his Royal Highness will unveil the statue erected on North Terrace in honour of his grandfather Edward VII.

In C 1910 the Mayor Lewis Cohen initiated the movement to provide a statue to His Majesty King Edward VII. It was initiated primarily in response to the King's sudden death. The cost of the statue, some £6000 was raised by public subscription prior to the War and the statue was practically completed when the War began. In 1918, the sculptor reported that all the full scale models were complete and the granite pedestal was ready. Unfortunately all bronze foundries in England were contributing to the War effort and there was no hope of finishing the statue until the end of the War. The statue was erected some ten years after the idea was proposed by Cohen and this fortuitously allowed for its unveiling by the King's grandson, the Prince of Wales. The paper commented that the statue was placed in front of a public building, the Institute, reopened by the Prince's father, George V during his visit some twenty years previously.



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The statue was said by the paper to be the “finest memorial of its kind in the Commonwealth.” The sculptor's concept for the statue was that of the King on a pedestal in his coronation regalia. At the base of the pedestal there are three symbolic figures depicting South Australia, standing with her arms outstretched welcoming the world, together with the figures Peace and Justice.

Sir Bertram Mackennal was born in Melbourne in 1863 and died in England in 1931. During the years 1878-1882, he studied at the National Gallery School in Melbourne under Frederick McCubbin and Tom Roberts. In 1882 Mackennal moved to England to assist the sculptor Marshall Wood. Unfortunately Wood died shortly before his arrival. Mackennal stayed in England, studied at the Royal Academy School and travelled to Rome before setting up a studio in Paris. During his career he worked for Coalport Potteries and as an assistant to William Birnie Rhind in Edinburgh.

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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Mackennal was awarded a knighthood in 1921, and in 1922 was elected a full member of the Royal Academy. He was the only Australian ever to do so.

Mackennal was a prolific and very talented sculptor. His works include panels for buildings (including Parliament House in Melbourne and Australia House in London), statues, war memorials, busts of famous people, figurines, coronation medals and coinage, equestrian monuments and cenotaphs and tombs. Mackennal's work is held in many Australian and English museums. Mackennal worked with Sir Edwin Lutyens and was well known and popular in Australia despite his infrequent and brief visits to Australia from London. Mackennal's three equestrian sculptures of Edward VII (located in Melbourne, Calcutta and London) are variations of a similar theme. The Adelaide work however, was quite different and is therefore quite particular to the City of Adelaide.

Mackennal's death in 1931 was widely reported. His obituary in the *Times* commented that he "was a classical realist with a strong decorative bent". He was described as versatile and adaptable, an excellent craftsman who produced an enormous amount in mainly marble and bronze.

City of Adelaide, *City of Adelaide Reference Book*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1983, p 111; *Register*, 15 July 1920, p 6; *The Advertiser*, 16 July 1920, p 7; Scarlett, Ken *Australian Sculptors*, Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1980, pp 403-14; *The Observer*, 15 February 1919; *The Advertiser*, 12 August 1918; Town Clerk's Digest 1919-20, p 188, 349, 358; ACC Annual Report, 1919, p 9; ACC Annual Report, 1920, pp 5-6.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **City of Adelaide Heritage Study**, October 1990, Volume Two, part of a review of the City of Adelaide Plan 1986-1991. The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places.  
A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

*The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.*

*Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.*