GIVING THE PAST A FUTURE NOW!

History Trust of South Australia
Strategic Plan 2017-2021
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The History Trust of South Australia respects the primary place of Aboriginal people in the history of this place. We acknowledge that our story commenced long before Governor Hindmarsh proclaimed the new Province of South Australia on 28 December 1836. Aboriginal people have a history that extends millennia into the past. We acknowledge that Aboriginal lands and sovereignty were not recognised and that building a shared understanding of history is critical to reconciliation.

We affirm our role in reconciliation as an essential part of Indigenous and non-Indigenous South Australians co-creating a positive future.
WHY DOES HISTORY MATTER?

We all grow up with stories about the past. Our landscapes and these stories hold markers and memories from those who were here before. These become anchors for many of us now living in a more fragmented world.

Understanding and appreciating our connection with those who came before us and what they did is critical to who we are today and how we act. We are shaped by our past and our identity as South Australians is made up of the threads of many stories woven into one complex tapestry. Sharing our stories creates common ground in our multicultural society. History was then. History is now.

Responsibility protected by legislation: The History Trust of South Australia Act (1981)
YOUR HISTORY – OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Our job is to encourage present and future generations of South Australians to discover that this state’s past is rich, relevant and fascinating. Among the many stories unfolding across South Australia in the present, there are many worthy of being preserved for sharing in the future.

The History Trust of South Australia is exactly what our name implies. We carry the community’s trust to safeguard our state’s stories and memory collections so that they will not be lost. This means that they will continue to enrich the lives of current and future generations.

As a statutory authority, we report to Parliament and our Board of Trustees are accountable through the Minister for the Arts.

Our Act safeguards South Australia’s material heritage and encourages research and the public presentation of South Australian history.

The Act requires us to carry out a number of roles and activities. We manage museums of our own and produce exhibitions and an annual History Festival. We promote programs that assist community museums and historical societies in every part of our State. We provide policy advice to the Minister for the Arts.

Good budget management is critical to the sustainability of our mission. We are mindful that the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly-changing world lead us to embrace digital platforms, diversify our sources of income, and focus on the most pressing and worthy areas for the benefit of all South Australia’s citizens.
VALUES

We recognise, that history is a complex tapestry woven of many stories, some incomplete, that capture people and their times and place – including what is happening now.

We research, collect, preserve and share material culture and document our non-material culture to better understand the past and the present.

We respect the dignity of every person, alive or deceased. We treat colleagues and the public with respect, demonstrating this through the highest standards of service, professionalism, honesty and integrity.

We connect with people in all locations using digital communication tools.

We celebrate diversity in all its many aspects.
VISION: GIVING THE PAST A FUTURE NOW!

We are a renewed and contemporary History Trust of South Australia. Our agenda is inclusive and adventurous. We remain as proudly expert and professional as we are accessible and open. We are an active partner in creating a positive future informed by our unique identity.

Our museums are welcoming and adaptable – social places where visitors of all ages, backgrounds, purposes and abilities know their community is included and their stories valued. They are places where visitors don’t have to whisper, and can be confident that their experience has integrity.

We will celebrate the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, relying on our excellent and extensive research.

We will take the collection out of the store, creating and presenting events and exhibitions that inspire curiosity for locals and for visitors alike. These will ignite spontaneous conversations between strangers and provide excitement for school-age children. We will explain how the connectedness between South Australians and the world has been shaped by our history.

South Australia’s unique history should be an essential part of what all South Australians and our visitors can experience. It explains our society and the way it works, and how this feeds into the giant story of human endeavour across our world.

We are dedicated to giving our special past a future.
YOUR MUSEUMS

People, boats and vehicles: poverty and prosperity, industry and community-building

We manage three museums: the Migration Museum, the National Motor Museum and the South Australian Maritime Museum. Complementing those established museums is the Centre of Democracy – an exciting new collaboration with the State Library of South Australia. We also partner with other Australian museums to present exhibitions.
YOUR COLLECTIONS - PROTECTING MEMORIES

As guardians of the State History Collection we care for approximately 38,000 objects that tell stories of our past.

We preserve Captain Cook’s travelling chest and Colonel Light’s original plan for the City of Adelaide. We keep safe Governor Gawler’s duelling pistols and Mrs Catford’s collection of 2000 costumes dating from the 1830s to the 1980s. We hold the 1908 Talbot – the first car to cross the Australian continent, and the Regent Garage that stood on Anzac Highway in 1928.

As treasured as these are, the once everyday objects documenting the lives of ordinary South Australians, are also safely in our keeping.
YOUR COMMUNITY HISTORY - TELLING LOCAL STORIES

In support of South Australia’s community history network of committed volunteer associations and local history specialists, we manage a Community Museums Program and offer annual grants for research and writing to promote the value of history and our place in the world.

Every year we present South Australia’s History Festival – a statewide celebration of community history, collections and heritage. We partner to present great community events such as the Bay to Birdwood vintage car run and other events, festivals and celebrations on South Australia’s cultural calendar.
OBJECTIVES 2017-2021

1. Where have we come from and where are we going?
We inspire curiosity and interest about South Australia’s diverse histories and our place in the world for locals and visitors alike

2. History matters
We champion the contemporary value of history in the community

3. Understanding through knowledge
We develop, promote and share research that deepens the community’s appreciation of history

4. Keeping the past safe and accessible
We collect, develop, preserve and share the State History Collection and make our history accessible through our museums and exhibitions

5. Raising our profile in the community
We build a sustainable, relevant and effective contemporary organisation bringing our collections, museums and expertise to the attention of our communities in creative ways
Picking grapes in the Adelaide foothills, January 1948
OBJECTIVE 1

1. Where have we come from and where are we going?
We inspire curiosity and interest about South Australia’s diverse histories and our place in the world for locals and visitors alike

STRATEGIES - Our job is to:

Create compelling exhibitions that present new research, that challenge and engage audiences, and showcase our collections

Bring the community into the museum and revitalise our museums to attract greater public interest

Tell engaging and relevant stories, providing a window into our history for every age group

Reach out to new, culturally diverse and cross-generational audiences in the community

Uncover South Australia’s hidden or untold stories

Embrace digital technology to provide exciting visitor experiences, using new modes of delivery and communication to enhance walk-in and face-to-face exhibition experiences

Meet the 21st century audience anywhere, ensuring that we provide a satisfying digital experience

Engage meaningfully with South Australia’s Aboriginal communities, culturally and socially diverse communities and regional communities across the state
OBJECTIVE 2

History matters
We champion the contemporary value of history in the community

STRATEGIES - Our job is to:

Develop the profile and content of the History Festival to embed the event on South Australia’s cultural calendar

Build capacity within the community history sector, recognising the value of local knowledge and expertise

Become a trusted and valued commentator in current debates about important topics, including positive ageing, health and wellbeing

Expand the impact and reach of our programs
OBJECTIVE 3

Understanding through knowledge
We develop, promote and share research that deepens the community’s appreciation of history

STRATEGIES - Our job is to:

Promote the value of historical research to the wider community, including the worth of the State History Collection as a resource for research opportunities

Strengthen partnerships with cultural institutions and research organisations in Australia and overseas

Promote reconciliation with South Australia’s Indigenous communities

Foster academic and formal historical research that is diverse, independent, and inclusive, and embracing oral as well as written history

Encourage popular, non-academic historical research that provides an extra dimension of public interest

Expand the community’s understanding of the role and function of museums, including community museums

Maximise research outcomes, focusing on knowledge gaps, promotable collection areas and staff expertise
OBJECTIVE 4

Keeping the past safe and accessible
We collect, develop, preserve and share the State History Collection and make our history accessible through our museums and exhibitions

STRATEGIES - Our job is to:

Promote, highlight and share our collections and their stories with the public in innovative ways

Safeguard and improve the depth, standard and accessibility of our State History Collection, ensuring that it reflects the diversity of South Australia, including: culture, location, gender, sexuality and disability

Provide timely and professional advice to other government departments about the care and documentation of their collections of objects
OBJECTIVE 5

Raising our profile in the community

We build a sustainable, relevant and effective contemporary organisation bringing our collections, museums and expertise to the attention of our communities in creative ways

STRATEGIES - Our job is to:

Improve public recognition and support for the organisation’s activities and museums

Collaborate and partner with business, government and non-government sectors, including education, tourism, the arts and other collecting institutions

Become a more trusted lead organisation within the broader history, collecting and museums sectors

Enhance the Trust’s financial sustainability

Advocate for an increased and enhanced footprint within which to present the State History Collection and our stories

Update online and social media presence so as to strengthen our impact

Resolve collection storage issues, keeping our focus on meeting both national and international standards

Build a highly motivated team and productive workplace culture with a strong service ethos

Embed and prioritise effective communication, proactive marketing, promotion and social media capacity across all teams

On display at the National Motor Museum Tom Kruse’s restored Leyland Badger truck: Tom delivered mail to isolated communities along the Birdsville Track
SO WHERE WILL WE BE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

By 2021 our unique South Australian stories and memory collections will enjoy a renewed and respected purpose in our society.

We will have grown public recognition of the value of South Australia’s own history in our communities.

We will know that our plan has succeeded because more South Australians will know who we are as “The History Trust of South Australia”.

National Motor Museum video game school holidays activity
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Elizabeth Ho OAM

Trustees
Carmel Zollo
Dr Eva Balan-Vnuk
Joost Den Hartog
June Roache
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