

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: REPUTATION MATTERS



“Its climate may be hot, but South Australia offers the coolest mix of brilliant wine country, abundant produce festivals, stark and stunning tracts of picturesque Aussie Outback and crowd-free beaches that could make even the Bahamas jealous...South Australia is a delicious feast suitable to anyone’s taste.”

When the world-renowned travel bible, Lonely Planet waxes lyrical about the charms of South Australia, we have reason to celebrate. Being named **Lonely Planet’s fifth best region** to visit in the world for 2017 is an honour. Lonely Planet isn’t the only one to recognise our state for its spectacular attributes. Over the years, Adelaide and South Australia have won a raft of awards and accolades that cement its reputation as a must visit destination:

- ▶ Adelaide named as the number one destination on popular travel site **Trip.com’s 2017 Rising Star awards**
- ▶ Becoming a member of the **Great Wine Capitals Global Network** in 2016
- ▶ Winning Best Australian Event State or Territory two years running at the Australian Event Awards (2015 and 2016)
- ▶ Adelaide listed on **CNN’s World’s 10 most liveable cities** in 2016

This is in addition to making it into the New York Times 52 places to go in 2015, **Coober Pedy being listed in CNN’s top ten destinations to visit in 2015** and **Adelaide listed in Lonely Planet’s Top Ten Cities to visit in 2014**.



South Australia’s appearance on these lists are money can’t buy opportunities to promote our state both domestically and internationally. It is one thing to know that our state is an amazing destination, but the impact of having our strengths endorsed by a key influencer gives it an edge.

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This third-party endorsement is important to growing tourism in our state even further as it provides more opportunities to showcase the very best of South Australia on a global scale. Take for example our most recent Lonely Planet listing, the initial announcement alone in October 2016 generated over 720 media items in the first month with an estimated media value of \$1.74 million. The potential reach of this coverage was 30 million.

The media coverage results ending June 2017 have been valued at an estimated \$3.91 million for 1,100 items with a potential reach of 300 million. What this means is millions of people around the world are hearing about South Australia and it acts as a trigger to inspire a visit. Latest statistics show there were 435,000 international visits to South Australia as of June 2017, an increase of 3.1 per cent.

This is great news for our 18,000 tourism businesses and the 36,700 people who are directly employed by the tourism industry. After all, when the world talks about South Australia as a tourism destination and visitors come here, it is local businesses that deliver South Australia’s tourism offering. The more visitors we attract, the more business is generated for tourism operators.

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) uses these accolades to further enhance its marketing activities to domestic and international audiences. We’ve undertaken activities such as:

Adelaide and SA have won a raft of awards recently





Gilbert Place, Adelaide

- ▶ Hosting street entertainment in October when the announcement was made so that all of South Australia could celebrate and become ambassadors for the state.
- ▶ Dedicated Snapchat story featuring South Australia as a travel destination. For 24 hours South Australian images were featured to over 100 million snap chatters around the world.
- ▶ Running a competition worth \$10,000 to experience Lonely Planet's 5th best region. Over 20,000 entries were received.
- ▶ Co-operative campaigns with Lonely Planet in three markets 1) Germany, 2) Italy, 3) Australia, UK, US and New Zealand to further promote South Australia on a microsite on lonelyplanet.com.

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Not only do these activities capitalise on our awards, but it also reinforces the message that South Australia is the place to visit right now, further enhancing our reputation.

In April this year we hosted a group of media and influencers who oversee the voting panels for the prestigious World's 50 Best Restaurants awards, known as The World's 50 Best Restaurants 'Academy Chairs'. The 26 Academy Chairs experienced the best of the Adelaide Hills and Barossa's vineyards, met with local producers and South Australian chefs and dined in some of Adelaide's best restaurants. The opportunity to host the Academy Chairs is a massive coup for the state and helps strengthen South Australia's reputation as a food, wine and beverage destination.

We know that South Australians are proud of their state and enjoy exploring their own backyard. According to SATC research, South Australians are very positive about the relaxed nature of their lifestyle, affordability and accessibility, the quality of the natural environment, the food, wine and beverage culture and the events and festivals that are hosted here. But it's important that this state pride is shared with visitors to encourage them to come back and share their experiences with others. All of the awards and accolades that our state and capital city have won provide an excellent

opportunity to do this. I encourage all South Australians to become ambassadors for the state and highlight all the great things we offer to family and friends living overseas and interstate. There is no point being Australia's best kept secret. We need to be advocates for our state.

Tourism is also critical to our transitioning economy. As manufacturing and mining slow down, tourism is and will continue to play an important role in our economy. Leisure visitors spend on average \$559 per trip. This is good for our economy – the more visitors spend in our local economy, the more jobs we create and sustain.



World's 50 Best Academy Chairs, St Hugo's Winery

All of the awards and accolades that our state has won in recent times is good for our state, tourism operators and our bottom line. Our state's visitor economy is now worth \$6.3 billion and growing, along with our national and international reputation as a tourism destination. We as a state have a lot to be proud of and our reputation is top of that list. ■

Rodney Harrex is Chief Executive of the SATC.

