

# TRUE SOUTH

TOURISM AS A FORCE FOR GOOD IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

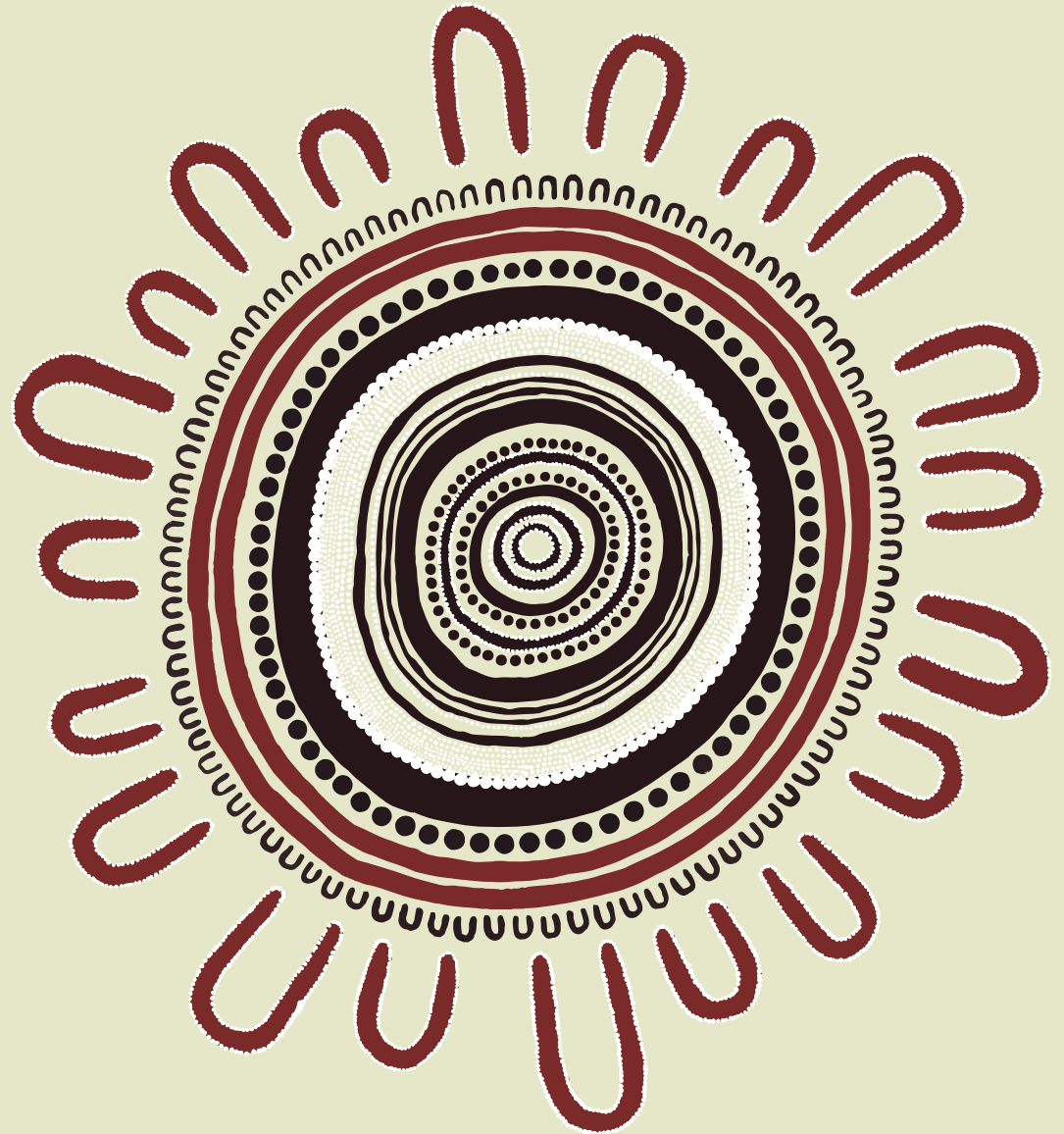


# Acknowledgement of Country

The South Australian Tourism Commission recognises the uniquely diverse Aboriginal communities across the state.

We value the knowledge Aboriginal people hold of Country and culture and are committed to grow genuine relationships with Traditional Custodians.

We will continue our journey of reconciliation and support Aboriginal tourism operators and communities to tell their own stories and share their culture with the world.



**A thriving tourism sector in South Australia relies on meeting the expectations of both visitors and the community, ensuring tourism delivers more than just economic benefit.**

**The South Australia Tourism Plan 2030 outlines ‘Tourism: a force for good’ as a key strategic priority - with a joint commitment by the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) and the Tourism Industry Council South Australia (TiCSA) to drive industry leadership in respect for culture, community and country.**

**Together we are working with tourism operators, Traditional Owners, stakeholders and partners to integrate the principles across the sector to reshape the visitor, operator and host community experience and position South Australia as a leader in Tourism for Good.**

**What does Tourism for Good look like in South Australia? Welcome to True South, our place-based interpretation of Tourism for Good.**

*A distinctly South Australian approach to tourism that celebrates people, place and planet.*

A significant opportunity lies ahead for our industry, and we invite you to join us in embracing Tourism for Good - ensuring our sector remains valued by South Australians, and our state as a destination continues to appeal to future generations of conscientious travellers.

## What is Tourism for Good?

Tourism for Good is an emerging global movement driving visitor experiences that contribute positively to host communities, the environment, and local economies.

It's about actively supporting healthier, more resilient destinations. Tourism for Good can also transform travellers in ways that create positive impacts in their own lives and home communities, ultimately making the world a better place.



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## What is Regenerative Tourism?

Regenerative tourism is about travel experiences that actively repair, restore, and enhance the environment, culture and communities for a net positive impact.

An example is leveraging tourism to support ecological research and restoration - engaging visitors in citizen science, volunteering, or financial contributions to help rehabilitate habitats and reintroduce threatened species.

Sustainable tourism is a more established term that was traditionally associated with minimising negative impacts and preserving the **existing** state of ecosystems and communities. Over time its definition has broadened, and many now view sustainable tourism as overlapping with, or even interchangeable with, regenerative tourism.

## How do they differ?

Tourism for Good incorporates a regenerative tourism focus and overlays an ethical perspective - reflecting a values-driven and purpose-led approach that drives social impact.

It's not just about creating benefits for the destination, but ensuring those benefits are **equitably distributed**. It's not just about developing and delivering meaningful visitor experiences, but ensuring those experiences are **accessible to everyone**.

Tourism for Good emphasises less tangible benefits like increased cross-cultural understanding, human connection to nature (leading to greater environmental responsibility) and social equity.

*Tourism for Good builds on the foundation of regenerative tourism where visitors leave a destination better than when they arrived.*



## What is True South?

**True South is a guiding vision for how South Australia delivers tourism that makes a positive impact on our state, its people, environment and economy.**

True South is our South Australian take on the global Tourism for Good movement.

True South isn't a new brand or marketing campaign, one-off training program or consumer-facing credential. It's a way of thinking about tourism that will shape how we portray South Australia as a tourism destination and deliver visitor experiences.



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## What are the True South Principles?

The True South visitor experience is:

**Guided by Aboriginal care for place and community**

Protecting our environment and culture for future generations and sharing the benefits of tourism with communities across the state.

**Inspired by regenerative principles**

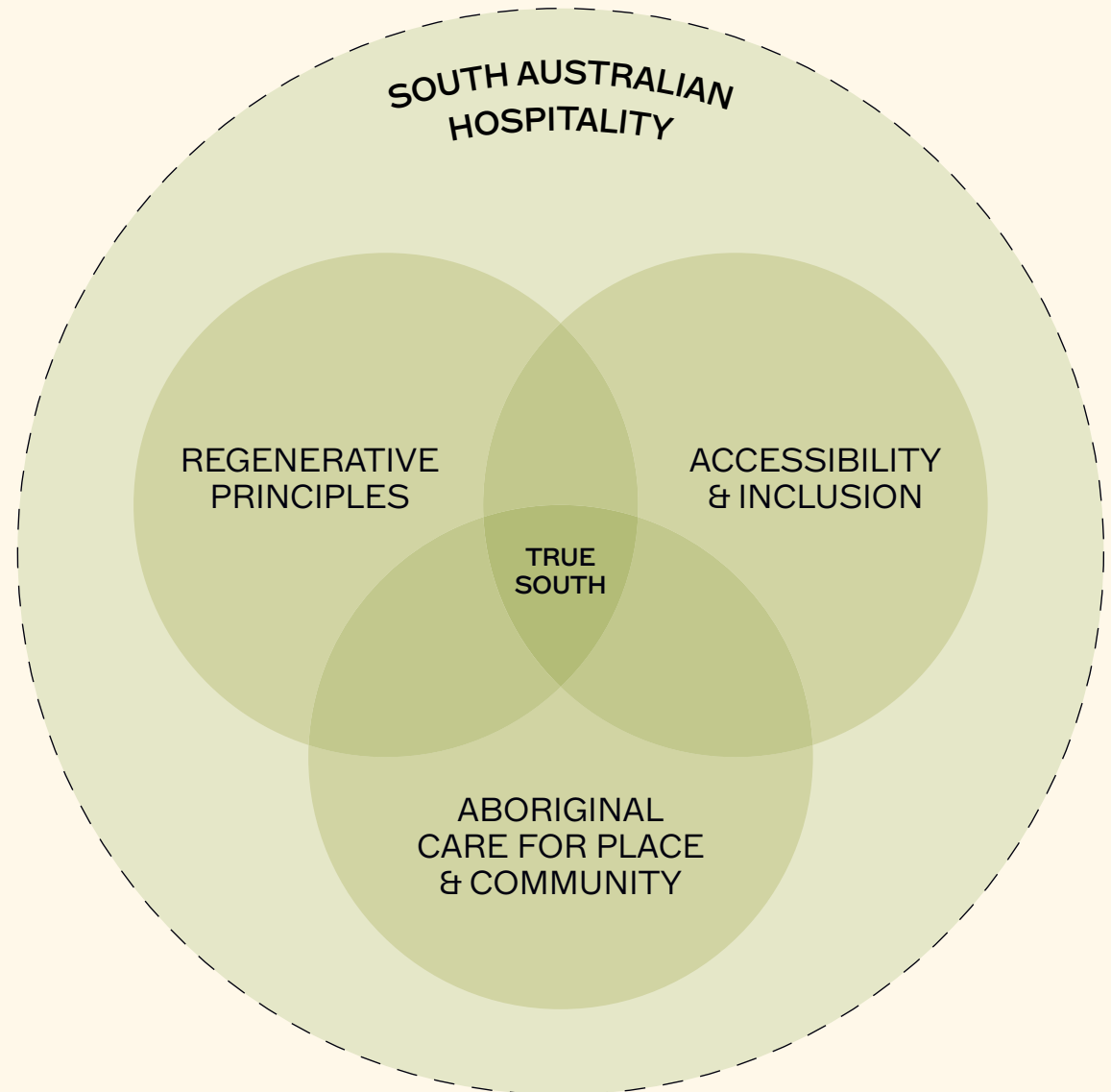
Helping to restore, renew, and enhance the places and communities that make South Australia unique.

**Committed to accessibility and inclusion**

Ensuring every person - regardless of background, ability or identity - can participate and feel genuinely welcome.

**Delivered through South Australian hospitality**

Reflecting the warmth, generosity, and authenticity of South Australians to create experiences that are welcoming, personalised, and built on meaningful connections with people, culture and nature.



## How was True South developed?

In 2025 SATC and TiCSA led a project to explore what an authentically South Australian Tourism for Good experience could look like.

This collaborative, hands-on process brought together South Australian tourism industry operators and experts, stakeholders, Aboriginal custodians and leaders in regenerative and inclusive tourism to create, test, and develop ideas and solutions. Together we created True South.

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## What is the purpose of True South?

Just as someone's 'true north' is their internal compass guiding purpose and values, our 'true south' represents what is most meaningful for delivering tourism benefits to South Australia - guiding our decision-making and actions, and keeping us steady, authentic and focused.

True South is a clear declaration of the values, aspirations, intentions, and commitments that can guide our industry in creating positive social, environmental, and community impact.

Our ambition is to unify our industry, foster the delivery of new and enhanced visitor experiences, and provide a platform to share our Tourism for Good stories with the world.

## Why is this important?

Tourism for Good presents an opportunity to strengthen South Australia's competitive position as a destination of choice by meeting rapidly growing traveller demand for regenerative and values-aligned travel.

Maintaining community support and social licence for the tourism industry is also essential to the long-term viability of the sector.

South Australia is well positioned to become a national leader in positive impact tourism and one of the world's most compelling sustainable destinations because:

- SATC is embedding Tourism for Good principles holistically, explicitly and strategically across the agency and the wider visitor economy.
- South Australia has some of the strongest renewable energy and sustainability credentials in the nation, providing a solid foundation on which to grow a globally competitive sustainable tourism offering.



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## How can I get involved?

Let us know you're on board!

If the True South principles resonate with you, we invite you to complete an online form to let us know you're keen to be involved.

From here we'll be in touch to find out more so we can share your stories of positive impact - and will keep you updated on True South initiatives and opportunities.

We are looking forward to working with all operators and partners, no matter where you are at on this Tourism for Good journey. So regardless of whether you have every relevant certification or you're just starting out, you are welcome.

[REGISTER INTEREST](#)

For more information email [tourismforgood@sa.gov.au](mailto:tourismforgood@sa.gov.au)

# True South Principles

In addition to regenerative tourism already covered, here's more detail about the other True South Principles:

## Accessibility and Inclusion

We want to ensure everyone can fully access, participate in and benefit from our visitor experiences regardless of age, ability, culture, language, gender, identity or background.

Every person in our tourism ecosystem - whether as a visitor, local resident, business operator or custodian of stories and culture - should feel valued, represented, comfortable and respected.

It's about making experiences universally accessible, celebrating diversity, and strengthening tourism and communities through inclusion.

The vision is to raise our profile as a destination that welcomes everyone - from people with disabilities or those who don't speak English as a first language, to older visitors or families with young children that require different levels of access, LGBTIQ+ travellers - and everyone in between.

## Aboriginal Care for Place and Community

We draw inspiration from and honour the enduring connection Aboriginal people have to Country, family and community. We are committed to reconciliation, listening and learning from this deep care.

By embedding First Nations values such as shared benefits and long-term perspectives into our decision making, we will shape tourism in South Australia in ways that respect, regenerate and connect.

Together with TiCSA and the South Australian Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council (SAATOC) - the authoritative voice for Aboriginal-owned tourism businesses in South Australia - SATC supports ongoing development of Aboriginal tourism in South Australia, ensuring Aboriginal cultural stories are owned and shared with our visitors by Aboriginal people.

## South Australian Hospitality

Customer service is merely the set of actions we take and the things we do. Hospitality is about how we make guests and visitors feel. It's relational rather than transactional - beyond a simple exchange of money for service - which enhances perceived quality and authenticity of visitor experiences.

It's the emotional experience we create for our visitors and guests - making them feel welcome, included, valued, comfortable, connected and cared for.

In South Australia we pride ourselves on the warmth, generosity and personalisation behind the service. We are known for our care, compassion and the way we connect deeply with nature and each other. It drives immersive and transformative experiences, meaningful and memorable moments, and hospitality where everyone is welcome.

# Priority Actions Driving Change

SATC, TICSA, tourism operators and other stakeholders have identified three key catalysts for True South and lasting change:

## Telling Compelling Stories

Across South Australia, many operators and industry partners are already leading tourism with purpose and care, delivering visitor experiences with positive impacts that exemplify the True South principles.

SATC and TICSA are committed to sharing stories and case studies of businesses using tourism as a force for good, to further inspire industry peers and drive visitation from our key markets.

South Australia has strong sustainability credentials as a global leader in renewable energy, recycling (through our container deposit scheme) and ban on single-use plastics. In combination with our True South visitor experiences we can leverage these advantages to grow appeal as a leading sustainable tourism destination.



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# Priority Actions Driving Change

(7) Exceptional Kangaroo Island,  
Kangaroo Island

## Building Sector Capacity and Capability

SATC and TiCSA are supporting operators to create and deliver products and experiences consistent with the True South principles.

Our approach is to partner with tourism operators at any stage of their journey, valuing participation and contribution over perfection. We recognise that every business has different resources and capacities, and that progress looks different for every business.

True South principles are being embedded across all our training and development programs.



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## Collaborating and Partnering

Destination management that harnesses tourism as a force for good involves interconnected systems that no single entity can manage alone.

Building industry resilience, delivering meaningful community benefit and solving complex challenges demands a broad range of stakeholders working closely together. SATC, TiCSA, operators, community and supporting industries and agencies must collaborate effectively to balance environmental, social, and economic impacts.

This is reflected in the development of regional Destination Management Plans, involving deep and wide engagement with stakeholders who bring unique and valued knowledge - from environmental stewardship (e.g. landscape boards) and safety/risk management (e.g. emergency services) to local culture and place-based insights (e.g. Aboriginal custodians, councils and residents).

We look forward to working with industry partners to create positive impact.

REGISTER INTEREST

Any questions, comments or ideas to share?  
Contact SATC's Tourism for Good team via email at [tourismforgood@sa.gov.au](mailto:tourismforgood@sa.gov.au)



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South Australia



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