

# GETTING STARTED WITH SEO

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## CHECKLIST



# INTRODUCTION

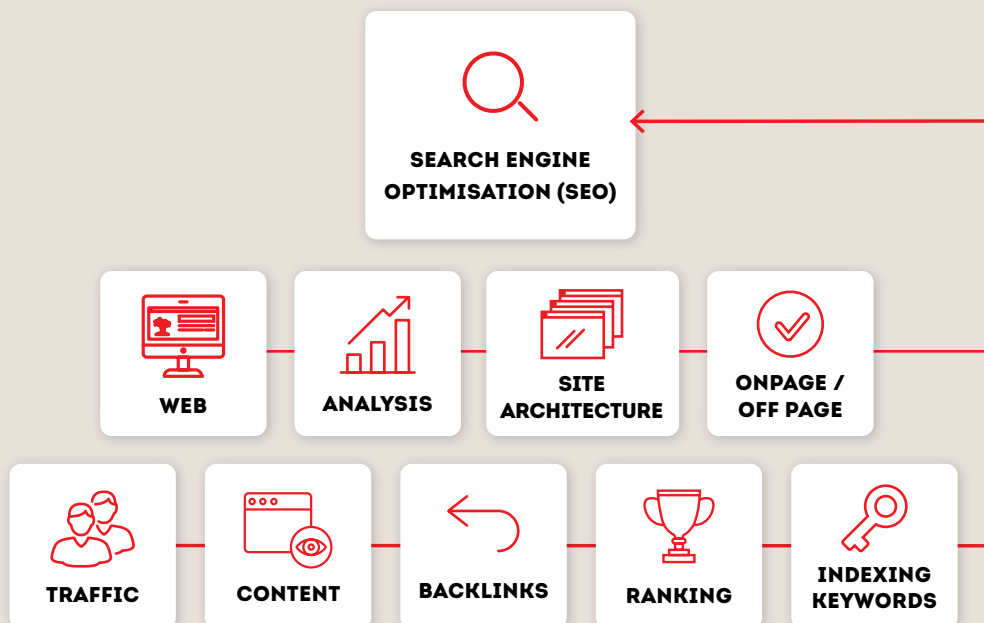
This guide is to help tourism operators understand the basic principles of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and how to effectively consider and create a webpage that is optimised for search engines.

This document helps to understand:

- ▶ Search engine optimisation and how it works
- ▶ Google Trends and how to use this to identify seasonal trends
- ▶ On-page SEO
- ▶ Meta titles and descriptions
- ▶ The four different types of user search intent
- ▶ Internal linking and earning backlinks

**“ SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO) IS THE PRACTICE OF INCREASING BOTH THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WEBSITE TRAFFIC, AS WELL AS EXPOSURE TO YOUR BRAND, THROUGH NON-PAID (ALSO KNOWN AS “ORGANIC”) SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS.”**

- Moz | [www.moz.com](http://www.moz.com)



# GETTING STARTED

## WEBSITE ARCHITECTURE

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It is important to consider website architecture to ensure it meets the needs of the consumers whilst they're on site, whilst also driving conversions for the business.

Consider the relevance and importance of information to identify what information should be presented where. Keeping in mind, every decision should be made with the consumer in mind, ensuring delivery of a frictionless journey, after all, we don't want them to jump through hoops to book with the business.

Once the website is established, be sure to take advantage of Google Analytics which can help you to identify what kinds of traffic are coming to your website, what information is most popular and where people are exiting from, helping to inform your decisions when it comes to continuing to optimise the website for the best user experience and conversion rate optimisation.

## HOW DO SEARCH ENGINES WORK?

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Google "spiders" crawl websites following links between pages - they do not follow 'no-follow' links. Google analyses page content, stores it in an index, and evaluates them against ranking algorithms. Ranks are determined based on relevance to user queries. This is a dynamic process which means SEO is an on-going activity.

## WHAT IS KEYWORD RESEARCH AND HOW DO I USE IT?

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Keywords are the words and phrases that people are typing in and searching for via search engines, such as Google. These are known as search queries or keywords and are important because they're the linchpin between what people are searching for and the content you are providing to fill that need.

Keyword research can help to answer questions such as:

- ▶ What content should I be creating?
- ▶ What search terms should my business be ranking for?
- ▶ What keywords align with my target audience so I can turn them into a customer?

A useful way to start thinking about keywords is to consider how potential customers might be searching for your business or website online. From here, you can start to map, research, and understand four different areas.

- 1 Seed keywords for your business
- 2 Researching what keywords your competitors are ranking for
- 3 Identifying potential gaps in keywords where you could rank highly
- 4 Understand your niche offering by deep diving into what questions are people asking about the industry or business you're in

The Meta Title and Meta Description can be edited in the business's website.

## ON-PAGE SEO

On-page SEO refers to optimising the searchable content on your webpages including both worded text and visual imagery.

The labels displayed below are On-page SEO techniques that allow you to embed your keywords within a website to optimise it for search engines. The Meta Title and Meta Description is what's displayed on the SERP. Google ranks a page higher on the SERP if it aligns with the user's search intent.

The diagram illustrates various on-page SEO techniques for a travel website page. It shows a browser address bar with the URL `southaustralia.com/destinations/flinders-ranges-and-outback`, with callouts for 'CHOOSE A RELEVANT CATEGORY' and 'CHOOSE A PAGE URL'. The main content area features a large image of a sunset over mountains, with callouts for 'IMAGE ALT TEXT' and 'H1 HEADER TAG' pointing to the title 'FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK'. Below the image is a text block with the heading 'DISCOVER THE FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK' and a paragraph of text, with a callout for 'ON-PAGE CONTENT'. To the right of the text is another image of a person sitting on a bench, with callouts for 'YOU CAN EMBED KEYWORDS WITHIN YOUR IMAGES' and 'ENSURE YOUR IMAGE FILES ARE BELOW 80KB (100KB FOR HEADER IMAGES)'. At the bottom, a search engine results page (SERP) snippet is shown, with callouts for 'PRIMARY TERMS', 'SECONDARY TERM', and 'BRAND TERMS' pointing to the breadcrumb trail. The meta title and description are also highlighted, with callouts for 'META TITLE' and 'DESCRIPTION'. Two boxes on the right indicate character limits: 'MAXIMUM OF 60 CHARACTERS' for the meta title and 'MAXIMUM OF 160 CHARACTERS' for the meta description.

**CHOOSE A RELEVANT CATEGORY**   **CHOOSE A PAGE URL**

**URL** → `southaustralia.com/destinations/flinders-ranges-and-outback`

**IMAGE ALT TEXT** → [Image of sunset over mountains]

**H1 HEADER TAG** → **FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK**

**ON-PAGE CONTENT** → **DISCOVER THE FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK**

**YOU CAN EMBED KEYWORDS WITHIN YOUR IMAGES**

**ENSURE YOUR IMAGE FILES ARE BELOW 80KB (100KB FOR HEADER IMAGES)**

**PRIMARY TERMS**   **SECONDARY TERM**   **BRAND TERMS**

**META TITLE** → **Flinders Ranges & Outback | Attractions & Places To Go | SA ...**   **MAXIMUM OF 60 CHARACTERS**

**DESCRIPTION** → **Driving through the Flinders Ranges and Outback, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were navigating the unexplored face of Mars. Towering ancient cliffs and ...**   **MAXIMUM OF 160 CHARACTERS**

## USER INTENT

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Google understands that a user's search intention varies and this will determine the search terms they entered into the search engine. Search intent falls into four categories:

▶ **Informational intent**

When a user is after specific information on a topic e.g. How to overcome travel sickness?

▶ **Preferential intent**

When users begin their commercial investigation before they're ready to make a purchase e.g. Best restaurants in Kangaroo Island.

▶ **Transactional intent**

Refers to when users are looking to make a purchase e.g. Qantas flights to Adelaide.

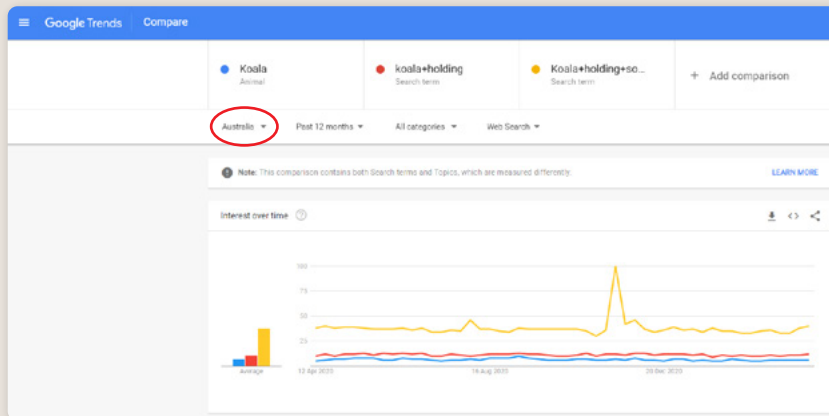
▶ **Navigational intent**

When users are looking to navigate a specific website e.g. SA tourism contact page.

It is important to consider your users intent when creating unique content, that way there is a better chance of reaching your target audience.

[Google Keyword Planner](#) is a useful tool for helping to better understand the high-ranking keywords relevant to your brand. We recommend discussing how you can leverage this information to inform your google Ads and more with a marketing agency.

[Google Trends](#) is also useful for understanding seasonality and trends of specific search terms. Remember to filter by Australian data.



To start analysing the keywords, consider search volumes, clicks, traffic potential, keyword difficulty and Cost Per Click (CPC).

This will help determine the potential unique content that could be created for the website to rank higher on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) when a potential customer is searching for it.

## LINK BUILDING

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There are two types of links in SEO, Internal links and Backlinks:

▶ **Internal links**

Internal links connect internal pages of the same domain. High amounts of internal links pointing to a page on your site tells crawlers which page is important. This is achieved by using anchor texts, which are hyperlinked keywords embedded within content that direct users to a page relevant to that keyword.

▶ **Backlinks**

Backlinks are the process of acquiring hyperlinks from other websites. They are considered as the currency of internet where a website earns domain authority by other websites that have referred users to a particular domain.

Both are equally as important and should be accounted for within your SEO strategy.



# CHECKLIST

To help ensure that SEO best practice is implemented when creating new pages within your website, we've created a useful checklist to help you prepare prior to publishing your new webpages.

## TOPICS & KEYWORD RESEARCH

Does the page have a clear focus topic?

Does the page compete with existing content?  
(If **YES**, please refer to **INDEXATION** for steps to deal with duplicate content where page creation is still necessary)

Have SEO tools been used to identify opportunity and seasonality?  
(Google Ads Keyword Planner, Google Trends, Answer The Public, FatRank)

Has the most relevant popular keyword related to this topic been identified?  
(**NB:** Pages should have a unique target keyword to avoid internal competition)

Have related keywords been identified to support the primary target keyword? (i.e. similar phrases and synonyms)

## URL STRUCTURE

Is the URL simple and readable for humans, and provides context for search engines? (e.g. southaustralia.com/destinations/flinders-ranges-and-outback)

Does the URL align with the associated Page Title & target keywords?

Does the URL only include lowercase letters?

Is the URL as short as possible (under 100 characters), and avoids repetition?  
(i.e. <https://southaustralia.com/destinations/fleurieu-peninsula/things-to-do>)

Does the URL only use hyphens between words (no underscores, no spaces, etc)?

Are "stop words" removed (including and, or, but, of, the, a)?

Are special characters and other punctuation/symbols avoided (excluding hyphens) in URLs?

## PAGE/META TITLES

Is the keyword included in the Page Title, as close to the beginning as possible?

Is the Meta Title unique and accurately indicates the main topic of the page?

Is the Meta Title between 30 – 60 characters including spaces?

Is the brand included in the Meta Title?

Does the Meta Title adhere to sitewide structure?

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## META DESCRIPTIONS

Does the Meta Description include an accurate summary of the page contents?

Is there a clear Call To Action in the Meta Description to engage users?

Is the primary keyword used towards the beginning of the tag?

Does the Meta Description only include alphanumeric characters?

Is the Meta Description between 120 – 160 characters including spaces?

## HEADER TAGS

Is there only one H1 tag on-page?

Is the primary Header Tag (H1) consistent with the Meta Title (including synonyms & keyword variations)?

Is the Header Tag short and concise, while still clearly explaining what the page is about? (i.e What's on in South Australia vs. Events)

Are there sub-headings supporting the H1 tag coded as H2 tags?

Are any additional sub-headings coded as H3 to support the H2 headings?



## CONTENT

Is content on the page useful for readers?

Are target keywords & semantically related terms included in the on-page content? Are these included naturally, without keyword stuffing?

Is there a minimum of 500 words on page?

Does it include relevant internal links to other pages with keyword rich anchor text?

Does the content adhere to the tone of voice and legal guidelines of your business?

## IMAGES

Do the Image File Names use descriptive language to provide additional information to both search engines and humans? (e.g. **what's-on-in-south-australia.jpg** vs. **349853495.jpg**)

Are your image files below 80KB (100KB for header images) and compressed for the web?

Is any text locked in images included in plain text on-page?

Is the image responsive to all screens (desktop, mobile, etc.)?

Does the Image Alt Text accurately and succinctly describe what's in the image? (**NB:** Say what you see and use less than 100 characters where possible)

Are target keywords incorporated naturally, and only where appropriate?

## VIDEOS

Is the video title/heading descriptive? (i.e. **SATC's Holiday Deals and Offers** vs. **HDO #4**)

Is the video file optimised for web?

Is the video responsive to all screens (desktop, mobile, etc.)?

Is there a transcript of the video included?

## REDIRECTIONS

Does this page replace an existing page?

Where URLs are different, has the old URL been permanently redirected to the new URL? (301 – Permanent, passes a portion of existing SEO value, 302 – Temporary, does not pass SEO value)

## INDEXATION

Does this page need to be visible to search engines? (i.e it is exclusively administrative, etc)

If it does not need to be visible, is a NOINDEX directive included?  
(Using this directive incorrectly can negatively affect a website. Please request a review if unsure whether the page should be indexed before using this directive.)

Does this page include duplicate or very similar content to another page?

If **YES**, is a canonical tag included to point to the absolute URL of the “primary copy”?

If **NO**, is a self-referential canonical tag included? (i.e. the absolute URL of the page being created)

## CONTACT US

ATDW & DIGITAL MARKETING TEAM

[onlineservices@sa.gov.au](mailto:onlineservices@sa.gov.au)

### WEBSITES

[southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com)

[tourism.sa.gov.au](http://tourism.sa.gov.au)

