



BRAND NARRATIVE REPORT

MARCH 2023

WHO WE ARE

The Committee for Adelaide brings together businesses, industry bodies, community, and government to shape one of the most liveable cities in Australia.

Our membership is diverse and influential, making a significant contribution to the economy and society. Our members collectively employ over 45,000 South Australians and all have a clear and vested interest in our future.

We are focussed on harnessing the strengths, passion and insights of our members and partners to shape the future of Greater Adelaide.

THE CHALLENGE

Promoting our state's brand and competitive advantages, both interstate and internationally, is one of the top priorities for action identified by the Committee for Adelaide's member organisations.

In 2022 we held several focus groups to delve deeper into the problem with South Australia's brand narrative - the story behind who we are as a brand including our state's past, present and future brand narrative, and the essence of our identity with a business and talent attraction and retention lens.

Members felt that Adelaide's obscure and bewildering image - from a small country town that closes after dark to the City of Churches - continues to work against our bid to attract and retain talent here and build a globally competitive business sector. These perceptions don't accurately represent who we are or what we aspire to be.

The fear of growth presents another challenge to overcome with negative connotations often conveyed by locals when growth aspirations are raised. This too, impacts how we as a state are perceived by others. Adelaide's uniqueness does not need to be compromised if we achieve a modest 2 million population in the next decade and our brand story needs to reassure people of this.

To help shape the brand narrative discussion, we held a stakeholder panel hosted by NewsCorp featuring perspectives of the SA Tourism Commission, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency.

The major challenge the panel identified was decades of brand inconsistency which has led to confusion and misunderstanding. There was consensus amongst the panel and members that Adelaide (and SA) must articulate who we are more clearly and cease trying to be everything to everyone.

Here are the outcomes of our discussions and the recommendations that we believe will help to shift Adelaide's inconsistent brand narrative to a more purpose-driven, connected, and progressive identity.

A BRAND IS NOT A LOGO

One weakness identified by members has been the ten-year reliance on the logo of an open door.

While successive governments and many businesses have adopted the logo in the interests of consistency, it is unclear what it means.

The State Brand guidelines devotes just four paragraphs to a rationale: South Australia is the hub, the pivotal state, the natural entry point to the country. It talks of three key brand values: Creative, Innovative, Industrious. This lacks detail for marketing campaigns - does it mean that we are open for business, a welcoming open door to migrants, the centre of the nation and the most accessible and convenient place to do business and to live?

There is no articulated brand DNA associated with the open door because it is simply a logo, not a narrative. Every brand agency in the world knows that a brand is not a logo...a brand is a story.

A logo doesn't educate, inform, excite or communicate. It just creates a visual point of difference.



Brand South Australia logo

COLLABORATION ON BRAND IS A MYTH

Our size and geographic city-state centralisation is a place where government and business can collaborate to achieve goals. This is what sets us apart from other Australian capital cities.

However, when it comes to the branding of our city and state, collaboration appears more of a myth.

Over the last ten years we have seen successive state governments and their departments, the Adelaide City Council, and different industries – wine, agribusiness, food, energy, and the education sector all competing, focussing on their own interpretation of our brand and image rather than telling a consistent story.

These widely varying concepts of who we are and what we offer have confused everyone, not just locals, but also intending migrants, visitors, and investors.

This is not the time to introduce more new brand narratives about who we are.

We need to come together to decide collaboratively on one brand story and stick to it.

Think of the cost savings if SA committed to one brand instead of twenty. Think of the clarity for people and businesses looking to relocate to Adelaide for work and to do business.

Think of the potential for cut through in a cluttered communication market.



OUR AUTHENTIC STORY

South Australia has an authentic story that is rarely told.

We exist in the way that we do because of a 19th century Utopian movement to create a totally new way of living - a community based on social, religious, and political freedoms, on the free enterprise of small farmers and shopkeepers rather than aristocrats and the combined toil of free men and women not convicts.

Our DNA is illustrated by the long list of parliamentary firsts that have been underpinned and shaped by our collective values and beliefs.

Culturally, the arts are also embedded in our DNA with a rich history of music and festivals. We have one of the longest running arts festivals in Australia and the second biggest Fringe Festival in the world. We are host to WOMADelaide, Australia's greatest world music festival, and we are Australia's only designated UNESCO City of Music.

We have a long-standing commitment to environmental management and sustainability.

Our 45-year-old container deposit scheme, one of the first in the world, means that 600 million drink bottles are returned and recycled every year. More recently we were the first state in the nation to ban plastic shopping bags and single use plastics.

We continue our legacy through leadership in renewable energy generation - leading the nation and the world. In December 2022, we had a world-first run of more than ten consecutive days when wind and solar accounted for an average of 100 percent of local demand. We have the highest adoption of rooftop solar in Australia and we no longer have any coal fired power stations. We are also taking a leadership role in hydrogen generation, with plans to build the world's largest generator.

OUR BRAND DNA

We believe that South Australia has a brand DNA that has not been communicated concisely or consistently over time. We need to communicate the essence of who we are so that we can become front and centre of people's minds.

These are the values that we believe are intrinsic to our DNA:

**Value 1:
Sustainability**

Embedding sustainability in everything we do has given us global leadership in renewables, recycling and waste management. We are now acting to minimise our environmental footprint so that our future generations can thrive economically and socially.

**Value 2:
Connectedness**

We cherish the sense of belonging that being an Adelaidean provides. We want to be known for our inclusive and welcoming communities. We want to grow and share this sense of belonging and pride with locals and people that move here for employment and business purposes. We want people to feel that they are welcome and included and have access to equal opportunities. Feelings of connectedness are central to who we are.

**Value 3:
Creative**

We have an openness to new ideas and a sense of positivity and optimism. This is a place where progressiveness, innovation and creativity – in the arts, sports, technology, sustainability, music, fashion, food and wine – are encouraged and supported.

**Value 4:
Purpose**

Adelaide has always embraced the big social changes in history, not because of political expediency, but because equality, freedom and diversity are embedded within our rich cultural history. This forward-thinking DNA will solidify us as an emerging 'new world' city where people and businesses want to be.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. A collaborative brand summit

The consultation undertaken by the Committee for Adelaide regarding Adelaide's brand narrative has revealed a lack of collaboration. This has caused confusion with inconsistent state brands that currently exist.

To drive collaboration on brand, we recommend convening a collaborative brand summit.

The summit would be a joint and collective effort between government, business, and industry to reflect the connectedness that is inherent in the makeup of our DNA. It could be led jointly by the Committee for Adelaide, State Government, businesses, industry, and stakeholders within our community who have a vested interest in helping to shape our state's future.

Participants from all sectors and industries would be invited including state government departments and agencies, local government, SATC, media, peak industry and advocacy bodies, higher education institutions, key corporates and businesses, arts, sporting, and indigenous bodies.

The Committee for Adelaide could share this report as a starting point for discussion and leverage the findings of our soon-to-be-released Benchmarking Adelaide report, an independent report confirming Adelaide's strengths as a mid-sized city and growth opportunities compared to 19 peer global cities.



2. Create a uniting brand story and brand strategy

The Committee for Adelaide recommends the appointment of a State Government agency or representative body with a clear mandate to establish and drive a uniting brand story that has the political backing to deliver a brand with longevity beyond election cycles.

The new brand story should then be applied to a new brand strategy that clearly states our purpose, competitive position, personality, promise and proof points. These could be summarised in a concise brand story and elevator statement. This is when consideration should be given as to whether the current visual identity reflects our story or needs reviewing.

3. Develop a brand engagement plan

A brand engagement plan would provide the opportunity for all industries and sectors to come together to align their brands with an overarching state brand strategy and enable the brand to be embedded consistently across all communications and marketing platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our participating member organisations for their valued contributions:

Adelaide Fringe Inc.
Baukultur
Corporate Conversation
Deloitte
Fuller Brand Communication
Hays
JLL
JP Media
Junction
KPMG
Lumination
McGregor Tan
Michels Warren Public Relations
Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited
News Corp
ResourceCo
Skycity Adelaide Casino
Synergy Private Wealth
TiCSA (Tourism Industry Council South Australia)



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