



## Burra South Australia

There are thousands of towns across Australia offering heritage buildings and 19<sup>th</sup> century street-scapes to attract visitors, but the people of Burra, 170 Km north of Adelaide, realised more than 30 years ago that heritage needed to be well packaged and interpreted for the public.

Through the vision and drive of individuals and community groups – primarily the National Trust – the community has turned what was once the world's richest copper mine and Australia's largest inland town into one of the country's priceless cultural heritage tourism destinations.

The frenzy of mining activity in Burra's copper laden hills started in 1845, but had stopped by 1877. The town continued primarily as a pastoral service centre, which helped to preserve its 19<sup>th</sup> century streetscapes and stone buildings. However, sheep don't provide a reason to preserve history and by 1970 the town's centrepiece – the Redruth Gaol – had become little more than a home for the local flocks.

A community meeting in 1965 had started the push for preservation and by 1970 the re-opening of the Burra Mine created a new surge of interest. A few years later the local branch of the National Trust introduced the idea of a key hire system. This allowed visitors to inspect the gaol and the Miners Dugouts on a self-guided tour, using a publication jointly produced by the Trust, the Council and Apex. The 1979 feature film 'Breaker Morant' – set in and around Burra – boosted the town's future as a low key, cultural tourism destination.

The public's desire to explore more of Burra's architectural gems resulted in the community introducing the Burra Heritage Passport scheme in 1988.



This built on the previous key system, by providing a passport to allow access to eight locked heritage sites and interpretation points on an 11 km heritage trail. Not only did it expand Burra's heritage tourism offering, but it also provided the Trust with a steady income stream to preserve the buildings and to conserve the key sites.

Thus, a small community – almost entirely dependent on the wavering fortunes of the pastoral industry – realised that their future as a tourism destination lay in the perseverance and presentation of its history. What began as a pocket-money earner is now a very significant income stream, which also supports many businesses and funds community endeavours.

### Key findings:

*Things are possible when community groups, individuals and local government share the vision and work collaboratively.*

*The power of a controlled and well coordinated tourism industry can enliven, preserve and enhance a community and its natural and social heritage.*