



2023 - 2028

# Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre Business Plan

**District Council of  
Peterborough**

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## **1. Overview of Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre**

Peterborough's Steamtown was once a vast rail operation whereby over 100 steam locomotives passed through each day before heading to all corners of Australia. It was South Australia's busiest regional railway hub and employed more than 1,000 people. The old depot and its workshop is now home to Australia's most unique and fascinating Heritage Railway museum.

Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre houses Australia's only operational triple gauge turntable, as well as a wide range of rolling stock including elegant steam trains, powerful diesel locomotives, unique passenger trains and freight trains. All of which are exhibited in the original settings of the heritage listed roundhouse and original work sheds.

In the evening, Steamtown hosts South Australia's only Sound and Light show- a fabulous sound and visual spectacular about the railway history in Australia and Peterborough. Guests are seated in the historic railway carriage, which once a first class sleeper on the East West route between Sydney and Perth. The shows runs for 70 minutes.



## **2. Operations of Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre**

Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre offers guided Day Tours, self-guided Diesel Shed tours, and the Sound and Light show. All of these options are offered 7 days a week, during various times depending on the season.

### **2.1 Guided Day Tours**

Day Tours operate 7 days a week, during the following times:

- March to October: 9am-5pm (last tour at 3:00pm).
- November to February:
  - Monday to Friday: 10am-1pm (last tour at 11:30am)
  - Saturday and Sunday: 9am-12pm (last tour at 10:30am)

*Please note- Steamtown is closed on Christmas Day.*

Day Tours operate continuously during the above times by the Tour Guide on duty. The tour takes approximately 90 minutes and provides a fascinating insight into historic locomotives, carriages and other interesting freight vehicles.

The Day tour is booked online through the Steamtown website, face-to-face, via email or phone. Once the visitors arrive to the Visitor Information Centre for their tour, they are accompanied by a Tourism Officer to meet up with their guide.

The Day tour also includes a walk through the Radium Hill museum, accessible via the Steamtown yard.

## **2.2 Self-guided Diesel Shed Tour**

If a visitor is time poor, or does not wish to commit to a 90-minute tour, the Diesel Shed is an option and is self-guided, allowing visitors to manage their own time.

Upon booking the self-guided Diesel Shed tour, the patrons are provided with a handout of '20 things to see in the Diesel Shed'. This provides a guide and explanation of what they should be looking out for.

## **2.3 Sound and Light show**

The Sound and Light show operates in accordance Australian Central Standard Time (ACST), incorporating day-light saving.

- 1st Sunday in October to 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in April: Arrive 8:30pm for an 8:45pm start.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in April to 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in October: Arrive at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start.

*Please note:*

- *During November to February, there is a requirement to have a minimum of 6 people booked into the Sound and Light show, or 5 if bundles have been purchased (Day Tour and Sound and Light show), before it can be run.*
- *From March until October, the show will operate without a minimum number of people required.*
- *24 is the maximum amount of people per show. If more book, a second show is opened up (8:30pm).*

Visitors arrive at the Visitor Information Centre, from there are accompanied by a Guide or Tourism Officer to the Sound and Light carriage- a 1916 historic rail carriage which is placed on an 85-foot long, 3 gauge turntable. During the 70-minute show, visitors learn about Peterborough, railways in South Australia and the many fascinating personal stories associated with it. Some re-enactments and real-lift footage are also shown.

### **3. Staffing and hours**

Currently, there are 7 Tour Guides operating the Day Tours, and 4 Tour Guides or Tourism Officers whom operate the Sound and Light show.

#### **3.1 Day Tour staff hours**

March to October

- Monday to Friday: 9-12:30pm (AM shift) and 12:30pm-4/5pm (PM shift)
- Saturday and Sunday: 9am-1pm (AM shift) and 12pm-4/5pm (PM shift) *Tour guides required to cover weekend Tourism Officer Lunch break.*

November to February

- Monday to Friday: 10am-1pm
- Saturday and Sunday: 9am-12pm

#### **3.2 Sound and Light show staff hours**

- If operating first show (7:30pm)- Shift is from 6:45pm-9:00pm.
- If operating second show (8:45pm)- Shift is from 8:00pm- 10:15pm

#### **3.3 Volunteers**

Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre are very welcoming of volunteers for an array of tasks i.e. gardening, weeding, cleaning, archiving and general maintenance. Anyone interested in volunteering is required to complete a series of forms, be involved in an interview process, as well as a Workplace Health and Safety induction, and workplace induction by the VIC/ SHRC Manager or Supervisor.

Volunteers must comply with the District Council of Peterborough's Code of Conduct at all times.

#### 4. **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis**

<p><b><u>Strengths</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique, world class product i.e. Sound and Light show, Roundhouse and triple-gauge turntable</li> <li>• SHRC is open daily</li> <li>• Peterborough is the first major town (or last heading East) in SA, west of Broken Hill</li> <li>• Created jobs for people- currently 11 paid staff at SHRC</li> <li>• Excellent Visitor Information Centre linked to SHRC</li> <li>• Offers volunteer work- currently 5 active volunteers</li> <li>• Major tourism attraction in Peterborough- generating economic growth within the community</li> <li>• Support from the District Council of Peterborough</li> <li>• New roof on Roundhouse increasing longevity of site</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Weaknesses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal nature of visitor numbers</li> <li>• Weather dependent attractions</li> <li>• Perceived lack of community support</li> <li>• Expensive maintenance required on site</li> <li>• Insufficient reserves for major capital repairs/ works</li> <li>• High administration costs</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better showcase the history of trains</li> <li>• New interactive displays and products</li> <li>• To become year round/ non weather dependent attractions</li> <li>• Greater involvement with the Silver to Sea way project</li> <li>• Strengthen ties with kindred bodies- National Railway Museum, Port Adelaide, SteamRanger- Victor Harbour Tourist Railway, St Kilda Tramway Museum and Pichi Richi Railways</li> <li>• Target coach companies (long distance touring across Australia)</li> <li>• Target groups/ clubs/ schools i.e. Probus with a high propensity for travel</li> <li>• Grant funding from state and federal government</li> <li>• Use of facilities for various functions</li> <li>• Utilise the theatrette for movie/ history documentary viewing</li> <li>• Involve local group to enhance displays and information</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Threats</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theft of irreplaceable items- SHRC site is not secure</li> <li>• Tour Guides retiring thus losing the knowledge and stories of the individual</li> <li>• Other attractions in the region</li> </ul>

## **5. Operational Budget**

The 2023/2024 Operational Income and Expenditure for Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre has been provided below. This provides an outline on both the income the Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre generates, as well as approximate yearly expenditure.

<b><u>Income</u></b>	
Tours	\$200,000.00
Sound & Light show	\$60,000.00
Donations	\$750.00
<b>TOTAL Income:</b>	<b>\$260,750.00</b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	
Advertising/ Marketing/ Visitor Guide	\$5,000.00
Finance and Booking fees	\$6,000.00
Contractors	\$10,500.00
Insurance	\$27,500.00
Materials	\$7,000.00
Repairs and Maintenance	\$2,500.00
Stationery/ Printing	\$500.00
Staff Training	\$250.00
Upgrade to displays	\$2,000.00
Utilities	\$6,400.00
Wages- Administration	\$164,460.00
<b>TOTAL Expenditure:</b>	<b>\$232,110.00</b>

## **6. Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre projects (5 year duration)**

The District Council of Peterborough endeavours to introduce new infrastructure and attractions to Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre. This will ensure this major attraction is continuously enhanced, thus increasing visitation and driving economic growth.

There have been key initiatives identified, which reflect the objectives of the Tourism Strategy 2023-2028.

To ensure the Peterborough community, along with the District Council of Peterborough were involved in the decision making of projects to be established, a workshop and community survey was undertaken. Once project ideas were gathered, the Peterborough Tourism Management Committee (DCP) voted on the ideas that would be the most pertinent.

*Please note, projects have been prioritised (short, medium and long term) in regards to votes.*

Objective and time frame of implementation	Category i.e. VIC, Steamtown or Peterborough in general	Approximate cost.
<b>Short Term (1-2 years)</b>		
Seating in the Steamtown 'yard'	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	Wooden bench \$200 each x 5 = \$1,000 + 10% = \$1,100
Add Shelter and Lighting to the W907 at Steamtown	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$55,000
Installation of a photo gallery in the Diesel Shed	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$550
New displays in the Diesel Shed	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$3,300
Improve lighting in the train carriages	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$550
Crossing Keeper Hut project- displays and Perspex.	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$550
Disability access to Roundhouse carriage displays- Phase 2. <i>Part of the DCP strategy- still to be designed</i>	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$95,000
New sign for the Sound and Light Show- A –Frame	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$330
Continual improvement of the Sound and Light show	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	Ongoing cost
Erect new steel fence around Turn-table (series of gates, or railway iron with bolsters).	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	<i>To be advised</i>
Kalamazoo races- down at back the tracks at Steamtown- <i>Event. Utilise railway lines. Annual event.</i>	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$5,750



## Medium Term (2-3 years)

Lights to be installed on the engine out the front of Steamtown	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	LED Solar lights \$90.00 each x 6 \$550
Replicate old railway uniforms and use for dress-ups. Pose for a photo, then purchases of the printed photo can be made at the VIC	Visitor Information Centre/ Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$230 per uniform to re-create (x6) \$1330
Re-locate or put a cover over the 5 story boards at Steamtown to protect from deterioration. <i>Leftover timber and iron from Roundhouse restoration to be utilised.</i>	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$5,750
Transform Crib room into another area of interest for tourists: Featuring a Traffic Control desk, displays, and computers for interactive history.	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$11,500
Lighting up of the Steamtown Water Tower (Luminart) with various images to add to the experience upon completion of the Sound and Light show. Alternatively, one image may be projected at night i.e. Bob the Railway Dog.	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	<i>Proposal required</i>
Light in the Fire Box- in T199	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$60
Increase availability of refreshments available at the VIC	Visitor Information Centre	Initial cost \$350
Sign to define what the structure is in the VIC/ Steamtown car park	Visitor Information Centre/ Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$115
Create a 'Murder Mystery'. <i>Collaborate with Peterborough Players to create an event (during Peterborough Arts Festival).</i>	Steamtown	<i>To be advised</i>

## Long Term (5+ years)

Sign to define what the structure is in the VIC/ Steamtown car park	Visitor Information Centre/ Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$115
Create a 'Murder Mystery'. <i>Collaborate with Peterborough Players to create an event (during Peterborough Arts Festival).</i>	Steamtown	<i>To be advised</i>

Offer beer, wine, spirits and mini cheese platters (per individual) during the Sound and Light show	Visitor Information Centre / Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$700 liquor license \$350 p/week on supplies.
Future event: Roundhouse turning 100 years in 2026	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$5,750
Develop historic train carriage into upmarket conference venue	Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre	\$80,000 - \$100,000

## 7. **Concluding summary**

Steamtown Heritage Rail Centre is Peterborough's premier attraction. Being integrated within the Visitor Information Centre assists with sales, staffing, logistics, and safety of Steamtown.

Steamtown It is the most prominent reason that visitors plan a trip to Peterborough. DCP and the Peterborough community must ensure this attraction is continually maintained for the longevity of the site.