



## PLANNING IMPACT STATEMENT #1

### National and World Heritage listing and their potential relationship with character preservation districts and proposed environment and food production areas

A consortium of six councils in partnership with Regional Development Australia Barossa and the University of Adelaide are proposing a bid to nominate parts of the Mount Lofty Ranges for UNESCO World Heritage listing as a 'working agricultural landscape'. The process comprises two stages: inclusion on Australia's National Heritage list followed by a bid for World Heritage listing.

National and World Heritage listing would recognise and celebrate the national and international significance of the landscape's links to South Australia's utopian origins, not just for future generations of Australians but also for the world. UNESCO listing also creates global branding opportunities for the region and its produce, and paves the way for new high value niche markets. The listing of cultural and agricultural values is not about imposing an additional layer of control or regulation, creating a museum, or changing current planning rules. Rather it is about encouraging the area to continue to evolve and develop under local and state government policies, and delivering real and lasting economic, cultural and environmental benefits.

UNESCO listing will complement, not duplicate, existing character preservation legislation and provision for 'environment and food production areas' under proposed planning reforms.

The bid is pro-development and pro-business, just as it is pro-landscape and pro-environment. The creation of character preservation or food production areas on their own won't facilitate development or drive investment. The character preservation designation is designed to protect existing character and constrain urban development, with a focus on what shouldn't occur rather than proactively supporting the prosperity of the region. Similarly, the provisions for environment and food production areas would essentially only create areas in which residential development cannot take place, without effectively driving sustainable primary production and profitable economic activity.

UNESCO listing, on the other hand, works as an enabler and a celebration. Unlike legislation, which is generally restrictive in form, and which only comes into effect or has relevance if and when someone proposes to undertake development, National and World Heritage listing is expected to be an ongoing economic driver for alternative forms of development. It aims to stimulate owners and operators to invest, and to commence new employment generating activities, some of which may comprise development guided by local policies, but some of which may lie outside the planning and development system.

National and World Heritage listing could provide the catalyst or incentive for a landowner or business operator to capitalise on increased national and world recognition, awareness and visitation to improve standards (including environmental standards), to add premiums to the selling price of food and drink products, to construct new buildings or introduce new activities or experiences – all providing economic as well as possible cultural, aesthetic and environmental benefits. In such a way, listing becomes an enabler of a development approach built on the uniqueness of the Mount Lofty Ranges and its agricultural systems.



It is expected that some actions will require referral under the Commonwealth Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, but these are expected to be of a scale or nature that would already be controlled by the character preservation legislation in any case (e.g. an open cut mine or large scale residential development). In this context listing would strengthen the intent of a character preservation district or food production area, as projects which require referral under the Commonwealth legislation are also likely to be contrary to those designations.

In addition to the assessment of individual projects, the Commonwealth Act provides for a strategic assessment process to review and approve new plans, policies or proposals (defined as 'actions' under the Act) over a much larger scale and timeframe, where such actions are likely to have a significant impact on National and World Heritage values. These landscape-scale assessments can consider a broader set of issues, and are expected to take place early in the planning process, to assess and address the potential impact of the proposed actions.

In this context a potential implication of National or World Heritage listing is that a strategic assessment may be required or recommended in relation to proposed changes to the planning strategy (e.g. the 30-year Plan for Greater Adelaide), to extend the 'urban lands boundary' into a primary production area or in the context of a proposed rezoning to create a new rural living area. Again this process is likely to complement existing state legislation and processes aimed at supporting primary production in the region.



## FACT SHEET #1

## BENEFITS, PROCESSES AND PLANNING IMPACTS

### Why make the Mount Lofty Ranges a UNESCO World Heritage area?

UNESCO World Heritage listing of the agricultural landscapes of the Mount Lofty Ranges would put our region on the world stage for the long-term benefit of our food, wine and tourism industries. It would celebrate our diverse and dynamic agricultural landscapes and underpin the state's aims to nurture innovative manufacturing enterprise, and cultivate premium food and wine from our clean environment.

### What are our chances of success?

South Australia's utopian origins were shaped by some of the greatest thinkers of the colonisation era. Colonial entrepreneur Edward Gibbon Wakefield, free market economist John Stuart Mill and philosopher Jeremy Bentham all had a say in the founding of the state. Heritage experts have confirmed that the international significance of our role in world colonisation history meets UNESCO criteria. Other values, such as Aboriginal culture, geology, ecological and cultural diversity, agricultural and viticultural production, adaption, innovation, tourism, recreation and aesthetics also underpin the national and global significance of the contemporary landscape.<sup>1</sup>

### What are the benefits of UNESCO World Heritage listing?

Ongoing studies show that UNESCO listing can bring instant global profile, open up premium and high value niche markets, stimulate business innovation and attract international investment. In the case of an agricultural landscape, the management of a UNESCO listed site can underpin 'smart' farming practices, create agribusiness and agritourism catalyst effects, strengthen resilience in the face of drought and fire risk, and attract investment to regional infrastructure. However, the benefits are not guaranteed, as the motivation and management behind the listing matter. According to a UNESCO report 'those sites that go through a detailed process of consultation and strategy development looking at what World Heritage status will mean for their communities and economy tend to be the sites that go onto to deliver these impacts.'<sup>2</sup>

### What is the nomination process?

The bid is currently being progressed by a consortium of six councils in partnership with Regional Development Australia Barossa and the University of Adelaide. The process comprises two stages: inclusion on Australia's National Heritage list followed by a bid for World Heritage listing. Our bid process has a core ambition to promote collaboration between all tiers of government and the private sector to deliver real and lasting economic, cultural and environmental benefits to the region.

### What are the boundaries of the proposed World Heritage site?

The boundaries of the proposed site will be determined in consultation with local property owners, state and federal government agencies and heritage experts. The site could eventually be one large continuous area, or a series of smaller linked locations across the region that best demonstrate the agricultural and historical values being listed.

### How will UNESCO listing affect development in the region?

World Heritage listing for a working, evolving agricultural landscape is pro-development and pro-business. It is a pro-growth strategy for a productive landscape that enables farmers, food and beverage processors and tourist businesses to market the region and add value to its produce. It is not 'heritage listing' in the traditional sense and does not freeze the landscape in a moment in time. Producers can still shift crops, change practices, build new buildings and take down old ones subject to obtaining approval from the relevant local or state government authority.



## Would UNESCO listing duplicate existing character preservation legislation and proposed environment and food production area legislation?

National and World Heritage listing will complement and enhance, not duplicate the state's planning legislation and character preservation legislation. Including landscapes in a preservation area does not drive investment or make primary production viable. It simply creates an area where residential development can't take place. UNESCO recognition will provide the economic driver and global branding opportunities for producers, landowners and business operators to invest, innovate and generate employment.<sup>3</sup>

## Will listing add another layer of 'red tape' to planning processes?

The state's planning legislation and character preservation legislation currently protects the agricultural and character values of our productive landscapes through an urban boundary, rural zoning, local development controls and imminent environment and food production legislation. It is unlikely that National Heritage listing or World Heritage listing would impose any additional controls or approval requirements, as projects that might impact on the national or world heritage values (such as a large scale housing development) will already be contrary to the existing and currently proposed state planning legislation and local planning rules. We note also that it is likely that referred decisions under the Commonwealth Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 will be delegated to the state government in the near future.<sup>4</sup>

## How does the Mount Lofty Ranges bid relate to the state government's proposed planning reforms?

If our bid for UNESCO listing is successful local councils or the relevant state authority would continue to make decisions under existing development policies on the vast majority of development applications. Councils in the bid consortium are already working to improve policy to create investment and employment opportunities. These initiatives, in conjunction with proposed state government planning reforms, are creating a positive policy framework that aims to encourage diversity and good design outcomes while also recognising community, industry and business needs. UNESCO listing and the associated management framework would reinforce this policy agenda and allow for the ongoing reform of planning controls to support the agriculture and tourism values and remove 'red tape' that might unnecessarily restrict enterprise in the region.

## Who benefits?

While UNESCO listing is not a guaranteed panacea to all the challenges facing our region, it does offer the potential of being a 'rising tide that lifts all boats'. UNESCO recognition is, quite simply, the biggest branding opportunity the greater Adelaide region will ever have, as the economic projections show that 50% of the economic benefit of UNESCO listing would go to Adelaide CBD businesses involved in food, wine and tourism accommodation.<sup>5</sup> If industry and government fail to take up the idea, it is likely to represent a lost opportunity for the state's important food, wine and tourism sectors. Failure to underpin and enhance the multiple values provided by Adelaide's agricultural hinterland through all available means will only augment the ongoing threats to our region's long-term sustainability.

1. Exploring UNESCO World Heritage Site listing for the Mount Lofty Ranges agrarian landscape (Johnston et al 2012)

[http://www.mountloftyranges.org/uploads/2/1/4/7/21479742/exploring\\_unesco\\_world\\_heritage\\_listing\\_full\\_report1.pdf](http://www.mountloftyranges.org/uploads/2/1/4/7/21479742/exploring_unesco_world_heritage_listing_full_report1.pdf)

2. World Heritage Status: Is there opportunity for economic gain? (Rebanks 2010) <http://icomos.fa.utl.pt/documentos/2009/WHTheEconomicGainFinalReport.pdf>

3. National and World Heritage listing and the relationship with character preservation and potential environment and food production areas (Mount Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid 2015)

4. National and World Heritage listing: Commonwealth legislation effects and day to day impacts (Mount Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid 2015)

5. Economic Impact Projections for UNESCO World Heritage Site listing of the Mount Lofty Ranges Agrarian Landscape (Econsearch 2012)