

TOURISM IN VICTOR HARBOR –AN OVERVIEW

City of Victor Harbor Profile

The township of Victor Harbor has long been a favoured holiday destination. Many of the visitors of the past have returned to Victor Harbor as residents in their retirement. In fact, Victor Harbor continues to be amongst the fastest growing communities in the State, with an average growth in excess of 3 % per annum for the past 10 years. But Victor Harbor today is attracting more than just retirees. The lure of a leisurely lifestyle has seen many families settle in the area. The combined schools of the city have in excess of 1,800 students who are drawn from across the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula. Victor Harbor's close proximity to metropolitan Adelaide has seen an emergence of commuters who live in Victor Harbor for the lifestyle and travel to the metropolitan area for work.

The population of the City of Victor Harbor Council area is approximately 11,500 residents. At any given time it is estimated that 2,000 or more additional visitors are residing in our community as tourists or people frequenting their holiday home. At peak tourist season from December to February the population grows to almost 30,000.

The major employers in the region are in tourism, retail, light industry and primary production. As the regional centre for the southern Fleurieu Peninsula' Victor Harbor provides a broad range of retail, commercial and public service facilities.

The Victor Harbor Council covers an area of 34,463 hectares and shares boundaries with [Yankalilla](#) and [Alexandrina Councils](#). The City is located 80 kilometres south of Adelaide on the shores of Encounter Bay.

Encounter Bay was named by Matthew Flinders in 1802 to commemorate his encounter with Captain Nicholas Baudin in the French ship La Geographe. Captain R Crozier anchoring in the lee of Granite Island in 1837 gave to the adjacent part of the mainland the name of his ship, Victor. The name was changed to Port Victor in 1865 but because of shipping confusion with Port Victoria on Yorke Peninsula, the town was renamed Victor Harbor in 1921. The town is now the largest of the south coast resorts.

Victor Harbor is now recognised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as the fastest growing regional town in South Australia.

Number of Tourists to Victor Harbor:

It is suggested by the South Australian Tourism Commission that Victor Harbor had around 1.1 million visitors in 2002/2003. The South Australian Tourism Commission is the best source for statistics of this sort as they receive the information from figures undertaken by The National Visitor Survey and other sources. Visit www.tourism.sa.gov.au for this information.

From the figure supplied by SA Tourism it can be surmised that the Victor Harbor Visitor Centre has around 5.23% of the total estimated visitor numbers. From July 2003 to June 2004 the visitor number to the Centre were 57,511. Of this total 32,951 through the Centre stayed for one or more nights on the Fleurieu Peninsula. This equated to of 99,735 bed nights.

One of the most visited attractions in Victor Harbor is The Victor Harbor Tramway that crosses over the Causeway to Granite Island. Figures for 2003-2004 had around 160,000 people travel on it.

Reasons people come to Victor Harbor:

VICTOR HARBOR TOURISM INFORMATION FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

There are many reasons visitors come to Victor Harbor. Victor Harbor is an easy 1 to 1 ½ hours drive from Adelaide and is a popular day trip destination. The Horse Tram that runs from the mainland across to Granite Island and back daily is a major tourist attraction as are the Penguins who live on the Island. During June to October Whales frequently visit the area and when sightings are reported via the media visitors flock to the area. There are numerous other attractions as listed below:

- ◆ SA Whale Centre
- ◆ Encounter Coast Discovery Centre
- ◆ Penguin Tours
- ◆ Whale Cruises (seasonal)
- ◆ Greenhills Adventure Park.
- ◆ Wild Rose Miniature Village.
- ◆ Urimbirra Wildlife Experience
- ◆ Victor Harbor Winery.
- ◆ Glacier Rock
- ◆ Nature based tourism such as walking, water sports, Heysen Trail and bird watching.

There are also many options in accommodation including Self Contained Apartments, Bed & Breakfast, Caravan Parks, Backpacker, Camping, Guest Houses, Hotels, Motels, and self contained Holiday Homes for rent with pricing to suit all budgets.

Length of Stay:

Based on the figures taken on visitors in the Information Centre, the majority of visitors are day-trippers; the next highest figure is 1 & 2 nights. During peak season December to February and other school holidays, longer stays of 1-2 weeks would be higher.

Concern for the Environment:

Concern for the environment is increasing. Coastcare, South Coast Dune Care, Waterwatch and Whale watching guideline brochures are available in the Visitor Centre. In the Victor Harbor Strategic Plan the following environmental issues were listed as the most important to address;

- ◆ Upgrade the existing Victor Harbor Sewerage Treatment Plant
- ◆ Improve the water quality of the Hindmarsh and Inman Rivers.
- ◆ Protection of the hills and rural areas.
- ◆ Protection of wildlife.
- ◆ Involve school children and the broader community in local and environmental projects.

Income from tourism in Victor Harbor

Figures that are normally used to work this out are around \$59.00 per day per person for a day tripper and \$90.00 for an overnight stay.

It is estimated that 49% of all retail expenditure in Victor Harbor is by visitors to the region, and that 1 in 3 jobs in Victor Harbor are tourism related.

Environmental Expenditure:

City of Victor Harbor budgeted in 2003/2004 over \$100,000 in the budget for Protection of Environment. A large percentage of work though is carried out through volunteer workers, with such organisations as Coast Care and Water Watch. These organisations receive funding through different organisations and grants so it would be hard to put a figure on total amount spent.

City of Victor Harbor Expenditure on Tourism:

The City of Victor Harbor's net expenditure on tourism in the 2003-2004 Financial Year was \$550,000. This was distributed between the following Council run operations:

- Tourism Marketing.

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- Victor Harbor Visitor Information Centre.
- SA Whale Centre.
- Victor Harbor Tramway.

Increasing interest in Cultural Pursuits:

Interest in Aboriginal history of the area is growing. Refer to brochures – “Kondoli” and “On Occupied Territory”. Granite Island Nature Park conduct tours which incorporate Aboriginal History. Contact Granite Island for more details on (08) 8552 7555 or visit Granite Island Nature Park website on www.graniteisland.com.au
The SA Whale Centre www.sawhalecentre.com.au and Encounter Coast Discovery Centre also have exhibits with historical information on the Aboriginal people of this area.

Water sports and recreation -The growth of surfing as a culture and sport attracts many thousands of enthusiasts each year. Surfing was first introduced by University students in the summer of 1924. Boating was offered on the Inman and Hindmarsh Rivers. On New Years Day, 1920, more than 12,000 people visited by dirt road and rail – many to swim in the popular sea-baths off the causeway, or to hire boats on the rivers or the sea. Apart from the southern surfing beaches, Encounter Bay offers a range of safe water activities – canoeing, diving, sailing, wind surfing, fishing and kite surfing.

Appreciation of precious and non renewable resources:

Fairy Penguins:

Protection of the Penguins is a high priority. Over the past few year changes have occurred to assist with their protection and visitors are not allowed to wander around the north shore of Granite Island during the time the penguins are coming back to their burrows unless they are on a guided tour. Construction of man made burrows and boardwalks in 2001 have also helped in their protection

Whales:

Whale cruises have now been in place for a couple of years and there are strict guidelines for the operators of these cruises as to how close they can come to whales (300 metres).

Dune Care:

Signage, building of walkways, dune stabilisation by planting and fencing off sensitive areas, and education by having information brochures available is all helping to protect the dunes.

Whale Centre

New displays in the Whale Centre have been undertaken with the message of responsible Whale Watching and looking after the coastal environment.