



AMIENS HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Amiens Legacy Centre

Shop Planning

Background

The Amiens History Association Incorporated (AHA) has been active since 2013 and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

It has created the Amiens Legacy Centre (ALC) at 17 Goldfields Road, Amiens as an interpretation centre for the Pikedale Soldiers ' Settlement that was created after WWI and headquartered in Amiens.

The AHA has an active research program that is discovering and documenting the history of the soldiers' settlement and the history of Amiens more generally. This information is made available to the public and is the foundation of the business plan which aims at **self sufficiency and financial viability in the long term**.

Complimentary to monetization of the presentation of Amiens history to visitors, we wish to diversity our income sources by establishing a community hub at the ALC that is attractive to local residents as well as visitors. This involves establishing quality retail and food service functions and this is the current focus of our development initiatives.

The economic and social benefits of the ALC to Amiens and the region that helps to increase community resilience is detailed below. This is evidenced by the community and visitor engagement and feedback received. Like other Australian communities we have experienced hardship due to natural disasters and Covid and these challenges are also detailed below.

Rationale

In order to increase income, it is planned to operate a shop at the Amiens Legacy Centre that sells items currently sold in an ad hoc manner to visitors. Many sale opportunities are missed because we currently have no POS equipment. Presentation is important and the tin jewellery and trinkets sell well when presented professionally. Much of the merchandise for sale are items made by AHA volunteers and this is a significant contribution of voluntary labour to the project. Other items will be standard drink and snack items that are always in demand.

Merchandise

Where possible with a theme that fits with AHA including, soldier settlement era, WWI, France, Italy, wool industry, fruit and vegetables, railway.

- Clothing including AHA t shirts, polo shirts, fleeces, socks, caps, jumpers, patches
- Food items with a long shelf life such as Pikedale Cannery products, Miss May's pies, fruit and vegetables, preserves, snacks, drinks, baked goods (biscotti), honey
- Art works including art canvases, prints
- Pottery items

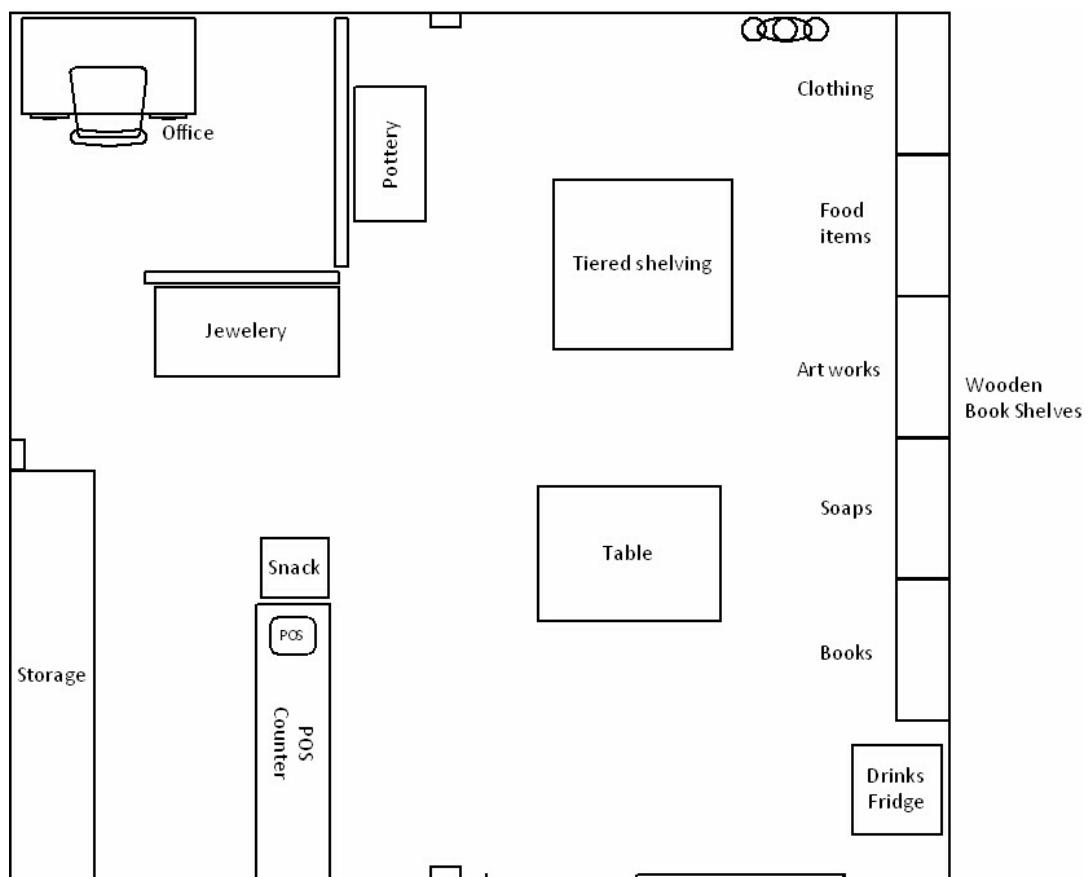


- Soaps, tea towels, towels, washers
- Books, booklets, CDs, stationery, postcards
- Tin jewellery items
- Carry bags and related sewing items



Shop Floor Plan

A purpose built area 5700 x 6200 mm has been built to accommodate a shop. The proposed floor plan for the shop fit out is shown below with the following features; office area enclosed by partitions, shop fittings to support merchandise for sale, wood and glass theme, décor bright and colourful with appropriate LED lighting.



Economic benefit to Amiens

Bus groups

Our current goal is to secure an average of one bus visit to the Amiens Legacy Centre (ALC) per week for the year. Summer is not the tourist season, so perhaps two visits per week are needed at busy times. Assuming 30 visitors per bus, then we are aiming for 1,500 visitors per year. Each spends at least \$10 per visit producing an income of \$15,000 per year. Sales of merchandise in a shop have the potential to increase this by \$10 per person adding another \$15,000 to income.

'Drop in' visitors

During our limited opening hours, when a visit is free, we perhaps average 5 visitors per week during the year. Other than donations, we derive no income from these visits. If we had an attractive shop with POS facilities open at these times, selling memorabilia, snack, and food items, our income would increase to \$10 per head or an annual income of \$2,500.

Local community

Having come once, there is no reason for locals to visit again, unless they bring friends to learn about our history. As we are 17k from the Stanthorpe, having a shop selling food and utility items will appeal to locals as a convenience. This is the business we wish to grow by progressively increasing opening hours and the associated amenity.

These measures are already generating sufficient income to meet our overheads and with a shop have the potential to generate \$32,500 per year.

Broader economic benefits for the region

A comprehensive report on tourism in the Southern Downs identified 822,294 visitors in 2016-17 or 1.28 million domestic visitor nights. This translates to 1.56 nights per visitor. 99% of visitors were self-drive and 54% were day visitors. Overall expenditure was worth \$99m. In 2018/19 the .ID consultancy reported visitor nights to be 986,309, but visitor numbers were not provided. Visitor nights had dropped to 968,940. In 2019/2020 visitor nights were 968,940 a further decrease. The present project would add 2,000 visitors per year to the region or a 0.24% increase on the 2016/17 figure, representing a gain to the regional economy of \$0.25m. Another methodology is to assume that if over night visitors spend \$100 per head on food and lodging (a conservative number) then 2,000 new visitors per year or 3,120 additional visitor nights will amount to a spend of \$0.31m. Amiens has a variety of accommodation available from serviced cabins to camping.. Currently, the biggest group of 'drop in' visitors to the ALC is from the camp ground. While a shop will increase visits by local residents, its impact on visitor numbers to the region is hard to gauge. Nevertheless, feedback from tourist operators indicate that a more attractive venue will increase numbers substantially.

Social benefit to Amiens

Like many country towns in Australia, Amiens has been in decline. From the boom era of the soldier settlement in the 1920s when the town and its service area had a population of over 2,000, its population is now 293. Changes in farming practices towards large scale enterprise has diminished the family farm and its associated population. Improved road transport resulted in the rail line to Amiens closing in 1974. The post office and shop closed a decade ago, but the small school is still functioning well. Amiens is now a dormitory suburb of Stanthorpe and people drive the 20 minutes into town to work, and shop. There is no reason to do anything in Amiens other than sleep.

The Amiens History Association (AHA) is trying to reverse this trend by creating the ALC as a community hub with a shop. The AHA interacts with many service clubs, schools, and the community generally. It provides historical information formally or informally to interested parties. The ALC site is an attractive meeting and

performance venue for various musical groups, car clubs and others. Volunteers have helped with restoration tasks. Internationally, a delegation visited France in 2018 and signed a 'Proclamation of Friendship' with Amiens in France. A TV crew from France 3 television visited and a pen friend exchange has been initiated between Amiens students in France and Australia.

Community Engagement

The AHA has engaged with a large number of community clubs and organizations. We have made formal presentations to them and have cooperated to stage community events and other projects.

Clubs and organizations who have engaged with the AHA are; Stanthorpe CWA, U3A, Stanthorpe Visitor Centre, Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Probus Club Warwick, Stanthorpe Lions Club, Southern Downs Regional Council, Granite Belt Wine and Tourism, St Joseph's School, Amiens School, Probus Club Stanthorpe, Stanthorpe Rotary Club, Stanthorpe Sub-Branch of RSL, Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce

Community and Visitor Feedback

Apart from signing a visitors book, visitors give feedback on Google Maps and directly by email. This is an example:

'We must congratulate you and the Amiens team on your achievements in creating the Amiens Legacy Centre. As we drove away we reflected on all the many facets of what you have created- the detail in the memorabilia in the railway carriage and of course the acquisition and renovation of the carriage itself, the sculpture, the flags, the hut and mural, the sophisticated AV presentation, the landscaping, including the beautiful red poppies,..... so much thought and labour amalgamated into a poignant and relevant local history. And the old china tea cups and morning tea was welcome and delightful.'

Exceptional circumstances and hardship

The negative environmental factors that have prevailed in the Granite Belt region of the Southern Downs in the last few years are extraordinary. Not just the drought in an area that is normally spared, but the ensuing fires and now Covid. We are cognisant of the problems elsewhere in Australia but this is our story.

The Stanthorpe district supplies food to the Brisbane and Sydney markets. It is quite productive, growing for example 14% of the Australian apple crop. It is an attractive landscape and a wine region that supports a growing tourist industry.

Drought

The recent drought was beyond a 1 in 100 year event. No one living remembers anything worse. The Southern Downs was drought declared in May 2018 and it is still drought declared in 2021. Stanthorpe's water officially ran out in December 2019. To meet the daily 1.3-million-litre requirement, 14 vehicles cart 42 truckloads of water from Connolly Dam near Warwick to Stanthorpe's Storm King Dam, in a 130-kilometre round trip. The emergency water solution costs \$800,000 a month, fully funded by the state. This is the largest water-carting project by a local government. The Granite Belt Growers Association estimates that the region lost \$100 million in the period 2019-2020 due to a loss of \$60 million in economic activity and \$40 million in lost employment.

Fire

In September 2018, Stanthorpe and nearby communities were hit by bush fires while scrambling to deal with

the prospect of running out of water, Many had to sacrifice precious stored water supplies to protect properties from fire. Smoke from the fires adversely affected the grapes used in wine production and this together with the drought crippled the 2019 and 2020 vintages.

Covid

The adverse effect of Covid on tourism in the Southern Downs and AHA is difficult to quantify, as it occurred when the region was beset by fire and drought.

A paper by Flew and Kirkwood “The impact of COVID-19 on cultural tourism: art, culture and communication in four regional sites of Queensland, Australia” published in Media International Australia” is useful with some moderately recent data. To quote from this paper “In Australia, the arts, cultural and creative industries have been among those sectors of the economy most seriously impacted by COVID-19, with responses at various levels of government focused upon social distancing, travel restrictions, prohibitions on gatherings of large groups and the resulting economic recession. Deloitte Access Economics estimated the cumulative impact on wages and profits of COVID-19 on arts and recreation to be AU\$6 billion, making it the second hardest-hit sector after accommodation and food services . The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that only 47% of businesses in the arts and recreation services sector were trading in the week commencing 30 March 2020, making it the sector hardest hit by COVID-19-related business shutdowns in Australia. The ABS also found that 94% of businesses classified as being in Arts and Recreational Services had been adversely affected by government restrictions arising from COVID-19, as compared to 53% of businesses as a whole” . Since, we are an arts, cultural and creative enterprise in Queensland this evidence supports our own experience that the virus has adversely impacted our activities.

The Amiens History Association was ‘open for business’ from mid 2020 having gained all the necessary local government approvals for operation at that time. This was the height of the Covid crisis and many of our signature events were cancelled or curtailed. For example, the Queensland governor was to officiate at the Amiens Centenary celebration on 26 July 2020 and he had to cancel. This event was scaled down to 100 attendees. A previous similar event, held with local government permission, drew a crowd of 1000. Another event that was cancelled was the opening of the Bailey bridge (a memorial to the Royal Australian Engineers) by the Governor General on 8 August, marking the centenary of the Battle of Amiens in WWI. It was coordinated with the opening of a similar bridge in Amiens France. Both events had to be postponed indefinitely because of the virus. The opportunity cost of not being able to stage a once in a 100 year events is a blow. A decline in visitor numbers at the Amiens Legacy Centre is impossible for us to estimate, as we were not open before the virus hit. Many of our clients are elderly, and they are clearly very nervous, so the virus has had an adverse impact on our business.

Increasing Community Resilience

Our response to Covid and other hardships is to work toward increasing community resilience. AHA is not a farm affected by drought, and while bush fires threatened our location, the wind blew the other way that day. However, Covid was a real problem for our tourist business and has contributed to “volunteer fatigue”. Our volunteers have lost morale and are finding it difficult to resume pre-Covid behaviour and regain enthusiasm. Our response has been to be positive and do something that will increase resilience through economic activity associated with tourism. The facility we propose to develop will drive economic prosperity as a way to recover from Covid and the other negative environmental factors that have beset the district. It will enhance the physical environment in which volunteers work and mitigate volunteer fatigue. Increased income will permit engaging contract staff to undertake routine chores further relieving the burden on volunteers..

Budget

These prices are from Internet shopping and are indicative only. We shall make every effort to buy equivalent items locally so they can be picked up from the supplier. If there is a transport cost it will be met by AHA.

Item	Number	Unit price Including GST	Delivery	Total Including GST
Shelving	5	769	500	3845
Display counter	1	981	Pick up	981
Drink fridge	1	1692	267	1692
Display cabinet	1	990	100	990
Tiered shelving	1	539	100	539
Grocery stand	1	361	Pickup	361
Table	1	200	N/A	N/A
POS	1	1149	Pickup	1149
Storage	1	500	N/A	N/A
Total			967	9557

Shop Furnishings and Equipment

Amsterdam Wide Bookcase, Wooden
Temple and Webster
1800 x 970 x 300 mm
\$769.00 includes GST



Display Counter Showcase Framed
Shopfittingsstore
1520 x 600 x 970 mm
\$981.36 includes GST



Deluxe Frameless Display Cabinet with storage and lighting
Shopfittings direct
900 x 510 x 1800 mm
\$989.94 includes GST



Drink Fridge
Restaurant Equipment online
1880 x 600 x 514 mm
\$1,691.82 includes GST



Retail shop display tiered shelving
Shopfittingsdirect
1180 x 1180 bottom tier
\$538.94 includes GST



4 tier Wooden Grocery Display Stand
ShopFittingsStore
485 x 390 x 1200 mm
\$361.46 includes GST



**POS Screen, printer, cash draw, POS software
and inventory control, bar code scanner.**
Requires Internet
\$1,149.00 includes GST





COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET SERIES



Amiens History Association

The friends of St. Mary's and French Canadian Settlement were organized to establish a society for the preservation of St. Mary's Church and its contents. This group now known as the Amiens History Association is planning to celebrate the centenary of Amiens during a year-long "Amiens Centenary Festival" from 2016 to 2018. As a focus for the celebration it is planning to establish an Amiens Centenary Museum to showcase the history of the district to all.

One of the important of the French Canadian Settlement School is Amiens, a name of the metropolitan district will be a museum display showing descendants of the original settlers to discover information about their family and to find out what they once lived.

The Amiens History Association is also active in organizing the annual "Amiens Centenary Festival" by participating in the 2016 Anniversary August & September Festival in 2016. They will also sell many goods at the Museum in the Amiens area and online at www.amienshistory.com.

If you would like to know more about this important part of local history, please visit our website by going to www.amienshistory.com.

