

SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

Business with purpose

Re-creating a leading light in luxury tourism

When **Southern Ocean Lodge (SOL)** opened in 2008, it was lauded for setting a new standard in Australian luxury tourism; a property that could hold its head high among the finest in the world. However, it wasn't the traditional concept of 'luxury' that set the lodge apart; it was the holistic approach taken by Baillie Lodges to creating a premium nature-based experience and a sense of place with a strong focus on sustainability.

"We engaged Kangaroo Island-born architect, Max Pritchard – known for his organic forms and environmentally considerate approach – to create a high-end property that paid homage to its wild location and astonishing Southern Ocean views," said Baillie Lodges Founder, James Baillie.

"The lodge itself was sensitively designed to minimise its impact on the landscape and delicate coastal ecosystem. We cleared just one-hectare – less than one per cent – of the total property," said James Baillie.

"Southern Ocean Lodge was an absolute catalyst and leader in the evolution of the Australian luxury lodge. It gave quality tourism and hospitality operators the confidence to invest deeply in this style of high-end experiential product in incredible, often very remote Australian regions. It was a game changer for Kangaroo Island, South Australia, and Australia globally," said Luxury Lodges of Australia Executive Chair Penny Rafferty.

In January 2020, Southern Ocean Lodge was razed by devastating bushfires that swept across Kangaroo Island, affecting around half of the 440,500-hectare island.

"Our immediate response was to pledge to rebuild Southern Ocean Lodge," said James Baillie.

Two years on, the rebuild of 'SOL 2.0' has commenced. With an investment forecast of \$50 million and up to 70 tradespeople engaged for the duration of the build, the new-look Southern Ocean Lodge is slated to open in December 2023, providing employment to more than 50 staff.



Southern Ocean Lodge 2.0

Max Pritchard was again commissioned as architect for the rebuild, with the South Australian Government, National Parks and Adelaide University joining in a whole-of-government approach to create a property that is a model for sustainable development.

"Thankfully, we can use the original designs for Southern Ocean Lodge to recreate our vision, with some exciting new enhancements, and take advantage of the technological advances of the past 13 years – particularly in the areas of energy sustainability and fire resilience," said James Baillie.

Once again, Southern Ocean Lodge 2.0 will showcase contemporary Australian design, drawing on the strong connections – forged over a decade ago – with South Australia's leading designers. Custom furnishings and local artworks have been commissioned, with more expected as the project nears completion.

Setting the standard for sustainable luxury

SOL 2.0 will largely maintain the original lodge footprint with 25 luxurious guest suites, but with a subtle design change that provides each suite with even better views of the ocean and coastal wilderness. At the same time, the design makes the most of aspect and weather patterns to encourage flow-through ventilation, and strategic glazing captures sunlight and helps store natural heat.

Advances in building materials and energy-efficient technology – such as LED lighting, double insulated glass and wall insulation – will see a 25 per cent reduction in energy use over the original lodge.

“Given our learnings from the fires, our plans for a ‘Southern Ocean Lodge 2.0’ include a strong focus on the property’s operational sustainability and consideration for the environment in which the lodge stands,” said James Baillie.

Hybrid solar and battery infrastructure allows the lodge to continue to run off-grid in its remote location while reducing diesel fuel consumption by more than 50 per cent. The combined effect of the sustainability measures undertaken in the new

lodge’s development will likewise result in a 50 per cent reduction in carbon emissions.

For water, a larger reverse osmosis system designed to produce the same amount of fresh water from bore water in half the amount of time allows the process to run under the solar curve. Potable Water storage capacity has been increased to 5.2 million litres. Rain savers installed on each tank will increase rainwater harvesting capabilities with 12,000 litres of pure rainwater being collected for every 1mm of rain that falls on site.

The SOL team has cleared the fire-ravaged coastal mallee from a 20-metre buffer around the lodge and is replanting the area with fire-retardant succulents and native juniper. The external bushfire and internal sprinkler system will be state-of-the-art and pressurised by both electric pumps in standby mode and a huge diesel pump when operated at full capacity.

Sitewide CCTV camera coverage and web-based software will enable all these safety systems to be activated quickly and managed remotely.

Other sustainability initiatives (Our mandates):

The new Southern Ocean Lodge will operate under a detailed and evolving Sustainable Management Policy, which will steer operations and use the best available technology to reduce energy consumption and waste and to minimise environmental impact, ultimately enhancing guests’ experience of the destination.

Top level environmentally sustainable initiatives include:

- State-of-the-art hybrid power generation harnessing the latest in renewable technologies.
- Wastewater converted for use on native plantings as part of new bushfire protection buffers.
- Rainwater harvesting from roof surfaces, delivering 12000L per 1mm of rain to the potable water storage facility which has a capacity of 5.2 megalitres.
- Hydronic underfloor heating powered by a heat pump uses considerably less energy than electric or gas heating.
- Low volatile organic compound paints and natural timbers limit the use of harmful chemicals and ensure the lowest environmental impact at end of life.
- Native vegetation has been planted over 200-acres of the property, helping to offset carbon emissions.
- Boardwalks and signed walking tracks have been established around Southern Ocean Lodge to minimise potential ‘edge effect’ of guest movements and protect the coastal heathland, while offering learning opportunities for guests.
- Toiletry amenities are presented in refillable vessels in guest suites.
- The original Southern Ocean Lodge Environmental Fund contributed \$10 per guest to Kangaroo Island environmental projects, raising more than \$500,000 in its first decade.

