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Press release: Ayers House

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.

AYERS HOUSE.

5.5.72

Plans for the restoration of historic Ayers House on North Terrace and its development as a tourist and civic attraction were today announced by the Premier, Mr. Dunstan.

The scheme, approved by State Cabinet, includes:

- . Two restaurants, one with outdoor eating facilities.
- . A permanent home for the National Trust incorporating a museum.
- . Reception rooms suitable for concerts and similar functions.

"Ayers House is of very great historic and architectural importance", Mr. Dunstan said.

"It is included in the National Trust's "A" classification list of buildings considered to have such great historical significance or high architectural quality as to warrant preservation.

"The scheme we are proposing will ensure that it is preserved, restored and that the people of South Australia get the maximum pleasure from it".

The property is the work of George Strickland Kingston.

It was bought by Sir Henry Ayers in 1855 who made extensive additions to it and lived there until his death in 1897.

It was bought by a syndicate in 1914 who renamed it "Austral Gardens" and built an open-air theatre and dance palais at its sides.

Mr. Dunstan said the house showed mid to late nineteenth century elegant domestic architecture in a relatively unaltered and authentic state.

The redevelopment scheme now to be undertaken follows a feasibility study, by Hannaford and Associates, and a thorough investigation by a government committee.

It provides for the restoration of the whole of the existing building.

Parts of the house would then be allocated to the National Trust - whose present headquarters are in the adjacent Coach House.

The Trust would establish its administrative offices in the house and also set up an historic museum.

A formal restaurant - to be run by a lessee would be established on part of the ground floor.

A bistro style indoor-outdoor restaurant - also operated by a lessee - would be created in the Coachhouse area.

The grounds would be improved to provide a suitable relaxing atmosphere that would be attractive both to tourists and Adelaide residents.

"The scheme when complete will make Ayers House once again one of the focal points of the city and will bring pleasure to thousands of people", Mr. Dunstan said.
