



Storytelling Toolkit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

About this project

ABOUT THE STORYTELLERS NETWORK

The Storytellers Network is an online collaborative forum for all residents, community groups, tourism operators, businesses and members of the cultural and creative industries who want to tell Ballarat's stories. It creates links between not only local people but also local people and key stakeholders (such as the City of Ballarat) in order to make new connections, promote work and share knowledge, experience and skills.

Many local businesses (particularly those in the cultural, creative and tourism-related industries), community organisations and residents benefit from our city's heritage. The website component of the Storytellers Network helps you tap into Ballarat's stories. It contains guidelines and resources for telling stories in an innovative way so that you can create new ways for people to experience Ballarat's heritage.

The Storytellers Network also delivers a range of initiatives to build our city's storytelling capacity by supporting local businesses and involving community organisations and residents in interpreting Ballarat's history and heritage.

Explore this Toolkit to find inspiration for how to engage with and attract new audiences and customers by utilising Ballarat's heritage.

USE THE BRANDING!

The Storytellers Network contains distinctive branding for you to use. The brand can be used by community organisations as well as businesses, tourism operators, and people working in the cultural and creative industries. This forms part of a citywide approach to heritage interpretation.

ONLINE COMMUNITY (FACEBOOK, AND LINKEDIN)

The Ballarat Storytellers Network online collaborative forum is for residents, community groups, tourism operators, businesses and cultural and creative industries who want to tell Ballarat's stories. You can access it via Facebook (to share your stories) or LinkedIn (to find people).

City of Ballarat



WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

This Toolkit is for anyone who wants to tell a story about Ballarat. It contains the Storytellers Network logo and brand and ideas for how and where you can use storytelling in different situations.

The stories you tell, and the way you choose to tell them, are limited only by your imagination! They can be told in any format, ranging from face-to-face storytelling, to telling stories through 'incidental' interpretation in your business (such as interpretation on coasters in a restaurant) to installations, to public art and displays in a shop. This is only the beginning of the program and more storytelling formats will be developed as it rolls out across the city.

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

The Storytellers Network forms part of a broader suite of heritage interpretation planned for Ballarat. The term 'heritage interpretation' refers to all the ways of communicating the significance and meaning of an historic object, place, site, event or person to other people. Interpretation is also used as a tool to educate, promote and engage stakeholders, residents and local communities.

Ballarat is rich in heritage and has a long history of public interpretation, beginning as far back as the 1960s. You'll find interpretation

in places such as parks, city streets, art galleries, museums, Sovereign Hill, on walking tours, and via events and public programs, such as Ballarat Heritage Weekend. Much more interpretation is planned for the future!

INTERPRETATION AND INFORMATION - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

In general, information presents facts about a place, while interpretation communicates what those facts mean. Sometimes the two overlap, but your aim should be to communicate the *meaning* of your place to residents and tourists.

WHY INTERPRET?

Ballarat is a living place with a deep and fascinating history. The role of interpretation is to help Ballarat's visitors, residents and workers discover its past through stories linked to its history. This will not only give people a new way of seeing Ballarat, but also help them appreciate all the city has to offer.

Interpretation will be used in Ballarat to help revitalise the CBD, promote a strong sense of community identity, provide employment and training opportunities for residents and to encourage visitors to stay longer and enjoy Ballarat's unique character and history. Whether you want to let tourists know what

Ballarat has to offer, or want local people to know more about the history of your place, your story will play an important part in conveying what's special about Ballarat.

GUIDELINES

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter, 2013 (Burra Charter), Australia ICOMOS, 2013

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), *The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*, 2007

SOME REFERENCES FOR INTERPRETATION

Lisa Brochu, Tim Merriman and Alan Leftridge, *Interpretive Writing*, InterpPress, 2006 NSW Heritage Office, *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items*, 2005

Doug Knapp *Applied Interpretation: Putting Research into Practice*, InterpPress, 2007

Douglas M. Knudson, Larry Beck, Lawrence Beck, and Ted T Cable, *Interpreting Cultural and Natural Heritage: For a Better World*, Sagamore Venture, 2018

The National Trust of Australia (WA) & Museums Australia (WA) in partnership with Lottery West, *Sharing Our Stories*, 2007

Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2009

SOME REFERENCES FOR DESIGN

<https://www.johnlovet.com/design-overview>

Paul Caputo, Shea Lewis, and Lisa Brochu, *Interpretation By Design: Graphic Design Basics for Heritage Interpreters*, InterpPress, 2008

Robin Williams, *The Non-Designers Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*, Second edition, by, Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2004



**Storytellers
Network
Ballarat**



Bridge Street, Ballarat, c. 1930
Gold Museum (The Sovereign Hill Museums Association), Ballarat, 09.0555

BRIDGE STREET, BALLARAT

Storytelling

Getting started

VISION

Begin with an overall vision to guide your storytelling and link it to wider interpretation within Ballarat. The vision can be linked to a key message – something you really want to communicate to visitors.

Example:

‘The vision for my shop is that I want visitors to understand the importance of the 19th century history of East Ballarat.’

The key message is:

East Ballarat was crucial to the growth of Ballarat as a city.

AUDIENCE

Who is your audience? Do you want to attract new people to your heritage site, museum, business, shop or venue, or create a new experience for existing visitors?

If you want your business to be on a tour itinerary, put your special place on the city’s list of routes and itineraries.

CAPACITY

Do you have the staff or time to manage a storytelling program? If you have an existing business, and want to bring new visitors in, what do you need to do to be ready for new customers? Do you need to engage volunteers or train staff in telling stories? Can you partner with another program or business to deliver and manage the program? Can your project contribute to the community by creating training or employment opportunities or by developing people’s skills?

IDEAS

What kind of experience will stories create for your visitors? Will it involve a display, incidental interpretation, a face-to-face talk or online communication? Can you mix some of these things together to create a really memorable, multi-faceted experience for visitors? Can you work with other nearby sites to create an experience that encourages people to spend more time in Ballarat?

A SITE OR STORY

You may only have a face-to-face story to tell, but the same rules apply—it still needs to be linked to Ballarat's history and heritage, directed at an audience and told in a way that captures their imagination. This applies if you're also the owner of a shop, trade or business and want people to stay longer and buy your merchandise. If your customers are having a great experience, they're more likely to stay longer in your shop and buy more goods!

There are also many fascinating heritage sites in Ballarat. Some of you will know these inside out, but it's still useful to walk around and assess your site with a fresh pair of eyes.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Research involves creating stories based on the historical evidence that is connected to your site. Your research can include primary sources, such as documents, films and images, and secondary sources (e.g. history books).

You may already have found inspiring stories in your research; you can gather others by doing oral and video histories.

Research sources can be divided into:

Primary sources

This is original material and includes: archival documents, photographs, films, oral histories, video histories, newspaper reports and land titles.

Secondary sources

These are books, films, documentaries and other works that give you an overview of your site. They're all based on original material – in fact, they are other historians' interpretations of primary source material.

You should begin your secondary source work by reading as much as you can about the topic. You then move on to primary source research. Once you've finished that, go back to the secondary sources again to see if you've missed something. Sometimes you'll need to comb through all your research four or five times before it's complete. You'll know you've finished your research when you feel in command of the topic.



Planning site-based stories

Telling your story

PUTTING YOUR STORY TOGETHER

You're about to tell your story. Luckily, there are many ways you can do this. If you work in a shop or business, you might always tell your story to customers in person. Or, if you're associated with a heritage site or business, you may tell your story through a shopfront interpretive display, exhibition, themed fitout of your building, film, sculpture, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, a cartoon, a sign, public art, a painting and so on.

WHERE ARE YOU TELLING YOUR STORY?

Before you begin, understand where you'll tell your story

You may want to tell your story at a large or small heritage site; your story may be self-contained or run across many sites in Ballarat. Or you may simply have a story to tell at your community centre, workplace or historical society.

Large/medium heritage site

These sites are self-contained and can form interpretation centres in themselves. They include municipal buildings, historic sites, museums, parks, information

centres, theatres, large churches and other places of worship and large publicly-accessible commercial buildings.

Small heritage site

These include smaller shops, cafes, businesses, small museums, sites where a particular event occurred and public art. They can also include clothes and fashion shops, book shops, markets, hotels and accommodation venues, cafes, art galleries and bars—any commercial environment.

'I just want to tell my story'

You may have a particular story to tell about a place and your connection to it.



Ballarat, Victoria, c. 1854
National Library of Australia



1000



Large sites

Large sites

TOOLS

Vision/key message for your site
.....

Site Plan
.....

SUPPLY YOUR OWN

Historical research
.....

Stories
.....

Design
.....

Content
.....

Budget
.....

Labour
.....

STEP 1 Define what's special about your site

It's important to understand what's significant about your site. What sets it apart from other places in Ballarat? What makes it special? Why would people come to see it?

STEP 2 Define your target audience

Define your target audience and their preferences. Also find out what tourists ask questions about, what they notice about your site and what they like and dislike about existing interpretation (if there is any).

STEP 3 Analyse your site

Take some time to think about your site. Is it big or small? What spaces are available for interpretation? For instance, there's no point planning a large exhibition if your site is tiny! At this stage, walk around your site and note what it's made of—its materials, colours and any other special decorative or symbolic elements it has.

Ask yourself:

- What type of site is this?
- What are the past and present stories it tells?

- Is the story I want to tell limited to this site only, or does it run across many sites?
- What are the key physical features I want to draw attention to? (Remember that visitors should be looking closely at the site wherever possible—it makes the stories much more interesting)
- How can I use the physical parts of the site (its ‘fabric’) to tell stories?
- Are there any conservation regulations or other policies governing what I can do?
- How much money do I have?

STEP 4
Define your vision and key message, and decide what kind of experience you’re offering

Identify the vision and key message for your site. Write them down. These should be based on what’s significant or special about your site in comparison with other sites. What do you want people to know about your site? What do you want storytelling to achieve?

Then, identify the kind of experience you want your visitors to have. Will this be passive (i.e. reading a text panel), active (interacting with physical or digital media on site) or participatory (workshops,

guided tours)? Will you use social media to involve people with your site?

STEP 5
Assess your site again

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your site? If you already have visitors, note how they use the site and what they find interesting. Take note of where interpretation could be located. For instance, some parts of your site may have heritage legislation applying to them that means that there may be constraints for interpretation there.

At this point, you need to consider if any intangible stories are attached to your site. Are there trades and traditions that have been practised over the years that are attached to your site? How can you include stories about these and the people connected to them in the interpretation? You could, for instance, have open days at your site where people practise their trade.

STEP 6
Using stories

Stories can be site-specific or general—related to people and events outside the site. The idea is to use interesting stories to

build a connection with visitors to your site.

How do I choose the best stories to tell?

There's no formula for this, but try to choose a story that helps tell part of the bigger story Ballarat: just as a lamp illuminates a whole room, so your story should cast light on the larger themes and patterns in Ballarat's history.

Stories with drama and colourful incidents work, as do stories about people and their joys and struggles, since visitors often find it very hard to understand abstract concepts. Choosing a story about a person, which tells a much bigger story about a place, will help connect your visitor to the town by seeing it through the eyes of someone in the past.

STEP 7 **Map interpretation across your site**

Look at your site plan.

- Identify the spaces available for interpretation
- Consider how visitors will move around your site. See if there are any special features on the site that you can use as a 'hook' for storytelling. These can be physical items/parts of the buildings, fixed elements on the site (such as a gate or bricks), or objects located at the site.
- Draw a 'mud map' of interpretation at your site—a simple diagram showing where interpretation might go in the different spaces across the site.

STEP 8

Develop a visual concept and sketch plan of the site

If you have a large site, it's important to do a visual concept and sketch plan, which is a set of drawings showing what the story-based interpretation will look like.

The design work will need to be undertaken by an architect, industrial designer or draftsman and will show how the interpretive installation will work in three dimensions.

STEP 9

Decide what interpretive media you'll use

The concept design stage is also the point where you evaluate the kind of media you'll use and how it will work on your site. Do this as early as possible, because it will help you tailor your research to a specific outcome for your site: there's no point writing thousands of words if you are only doing one sign!

When thinking about interpretive media, always consider how well the particular medium will communicate your message and stories. Also consider your budget and how all the media you use will work together across the wider site.

Will you use fixed media, such as signs, interactive physical elements (such as a flap that lifts up, or people responding in a visitor's book to a story you've told) or digital elements (where visitors contribute their own stories through social media)?

You may need to revise your site plan after completing this step.

STEP 10

See who else wants to be involved

Now it's time to identify partnerships, sponsorship opportunities and social enterprises associated with the interpretation. How can your work be extended and developed beyond the physical site?

Use this section if you have a shop, factory, market stall, small business, small heritage site, a piece of public art or even a statue!



Joyce's JUNKATIQUE

ANTIQUES

ANTIQUES



ALL CLEARANCE 7/19

ALL CLEARANCE 7/19

SKY

Small sites

Small sites

TOOLS

Vision/key message for your site

Site Plan

SUPPLY YOUR OWN

Historical research

Stories

Content

STEP 1

Define the vision and key message for your site

Identify the vision and key message for your site. Write them down. These should be based on what's significant about your site in comparison with other sites. What makes it special? Why would people come to see it? If you're not sure, ask some of your customers or visitors.

STEP 2

Define your target audience

Talk to people at your site to find out why your visitors have come there and if there's anything special they'd like to know about it.

STEP 3

Define what's special about your site and what kind of storytelling is best for it

The experience you're offering should be based on what's unique and special about your site, to help set it apart from other places in Ballarat.

STEP 4
Investigate the possibilities
for your site

Next, look around the site to see if you have room for some physical interpretation based on stories about Ballarat. You might be able to put interpretation on the walls or on a table, or simply use a menu, playing card or coaster to tell your story. If you can't find a place to put interpretation, then you can still use your site as a venue for telling your story.

STEP 5
Choose what form of physical
interpretation is best

Now look at the to see if there's a suitable template for storytelling. For instance, you might decide to use a menu, coaster, sticker or a coffee cup to tell your story.

STEP 6
Tell your story

Once you've decided on some physical interpretation, look at the later part of this Toolkit—'I just want to tell my story'—for guidelines on how to tell your story, and the story of your site, to visitors.



Producing site- based stories

Producing site-based stories

STEP 1

Develop content

Once you have the themes, stories and media for your interpretation, you can start creating detailed content for your interpretation. Here's how this usually works:

Plan the order of your information

Make sure all the material links together to create a logical visitor experience by creating an interpretive framework. This is a document in a spreadsheet that integrates all you're doing. Although the thinking behind your work should be invisible to visitors, they should leave your site with a good understanding of the key message and themes you're trying to communicate based on the stories you've told, the images you've used and the objects you've displayed.

Select your objects

Choose your objects. What stories will they tell? How will they be displayed?

Write final text

If you're producing graphic panels (also known as 'text panels'), decide how the information will flow across them. Keep the text as short as possible, use original quotations from your research wherever possible, and try to make sure each paragraph has only one key thought. Use simple sentence structure

and language: people visiting your site won't want to read an academic treatise. If you do use complex terms, explain what they mean somewhere else in your writing.

Select quotes

A person's own words are always the best way to communicate a story, so try to find quotes from people associated with the site that relate to the themes and stories you want to tell.

Decide on final images

Select final images and obtain permissions for use and copyright clearances, where relevant. Remember to use low-resolution images for proof versions and high-resolution images for the final, print-ready art.

Write label text for objects

Tell a story about the object wherever possible. Include details about when and where the object was made if you know it and also who used it, when, where and how.

Choose images for other media and script other media

If you've employed a multimedia specialist, work with them to identify the kind of content you will need for the different media platforms.

STEP 2

Develop design

This is the stage where you work closely with a designer to see how your content will be transformed into visual elements. Ideally, you should work with the designer throughout the project to make sure the design for the space, as well as the graphic design, communicates the content accurately.

The designers will then provide:

- Final construction drawings for the build of the interpretation if required (industrial designer)
- Final graphic design for the text panels and other graphic elements (graphic designer)
- Final design for the multimedia (multimedia designer and/or graphic designer).
- Finished art (print-ready art) once the proofs have been approved/signed off.

STEP 3

Implement your project

This is where you produce your project. You may need a range of specialists to be involved, from carpenters and builders to printers and media specialists. You'll need to supervise these trades, or you may want to hire someone to do this for you.



Ballarat, Victoria, c. 1854
National Library of Australia

**'I have a
story to tell'**

Face-to-face storytelling

TOOLS

Vision/key message for your site

SUPPLY YOUR OWN

Historical research

Stories

STEP 1

Know your audience

What are your customers interested in? Ask questions to find out why people are visiting your business. What are they here for? Are they interested in history, or in the products from your store?

Once you know this, it makes it easy to move to the next step.

STEP 2

Create a link with your audience

Effective storytelling helps your audience understand the new idea or information you're presenting to them, by connecting this information with something familiar that they already know. For instance, if you're asking visitors to taste a dish made with wattle seed, you might ask them if they have ever seen wattle in the bush or eaten a dish made with bush foods. This simple reminder of a past environment or experience will help the visitor feel more familiar and connected with what you're saying.¹

Leading interpreters Ted Cable and Larry Beck call this the process of 'meaning making', where individuals receive new information shape its meaning based on their store of past knowledge and experiences.²

STEP 3

Link the stories of your products or services with Ballarat's development, history and culture

How does your merchandise or the services you provide tell something about the bigger picture of Ballarat? For instance, has your family worked in the same trade for many generations? Use this to talk about your family's connection with Ballarat: how they arrived there, where they lived and how the trade has been passed down through the family.

Then, look at what you're selling. Can you create a story based on this? Try to create a link between what you have for sale and the history and traditions of that merchandise.

STEP 4

Create the right environment

Ensure your visitors have a memorable time by getting the environment right. If you can, serve refreshments and set out chairs. Make sure you can be clearly heard. Be friendly and welcoming.

STEP 5

Link your story to a theme

Link your story to a theme to make it more interesting. For instance, if your story is linked to the theme ‘The industrial spirit’, look at how the stories of the products in your business illustrate this theme—you might even be working in a trade that has been practised in Ballarat for 200 years!

STEP 6

Use good storytelling techniques

Start by telling people what you’ll be saying, and how the experience will be structured. Here’s an example:

Hi, and welcome. My name’s Joe and today I’ll be telling you all about the furniture you can see here in the shop. My family’s had a connection to Ballarat for over 150 years but I’m not that old! We’ll show you some of the furniture-making techniques that my family has used since my great-grandfather’s time, then you can have a cup of tea and wander around. We’ll be here for an hour, so please make yourselves comfortable and have a cup of tea while I’m talking.

Keep your story short and simple—between 5 and 15 minutes is a good length. Ask questions of your visitors throughout your talk to keep them interested and know that they understand what you are saying. You could even use a phrase such as ‘Does everybody understand what I mean?’.

Also create empathy wherever possible. For instance, if you are discussing the migration of your family to Australia in the 19th century, ask visitors: ‘Do you think you could have made such a dangerous journey?’

STEP 7

Use physical demonstrations

If you can, show people how things work by giving a physical demonstration of something and getting people to try it. It may be as simple as stirring a dish in a wok, or using a lathe, but physical activity helps keep your audience interested and retain the information. You could even create classes around the activity.

Sample designs

Stickers

HOW TO USE THEM

Select a location on your window or door that has optimal visibility to passersby and prospective customers.

STEP 1

Apply the sticker to the inside of the window.

How will these enhance the customer experience?

The stickers will let prospective customers know that they are welcome to enter and hear your story about the history of this place.



Coasters

HOW TO USE THEM

STEP 1

Conduct historical research (images).

STEP 2

Select an image for the coaster.

STEP 3

Make sure you've got permission and/or copyright clearances from the relevant repository.

STEP 4

- Design the coaster
- Print the coaster

How will these enhance the customer experience?

The coasters are a subtle way of alerting customers to the history of your business.



Story cards

HOW TO USE THEM

Select a story that you want to communicate to your patrons.

STEP 1

Conduct historical research (primary and secondary sources, including images).

STEP 2

Select a quote from the primary source material that captures the essence of your story.

STEP 3

Validate the accuracy of your research with an historian.

STEP 4

Make sure you've got permission and/or copyright clearances from the relevant repository.

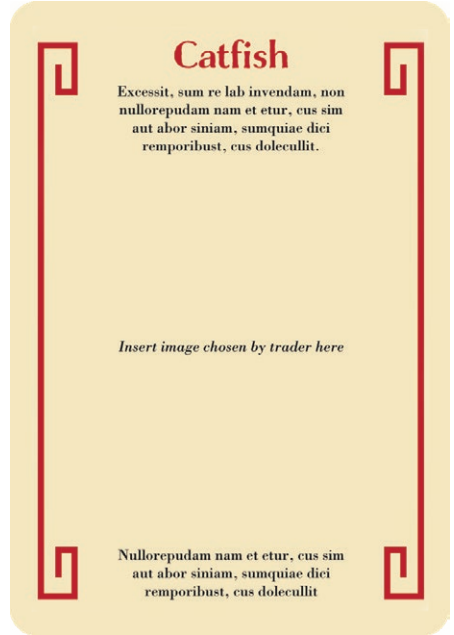
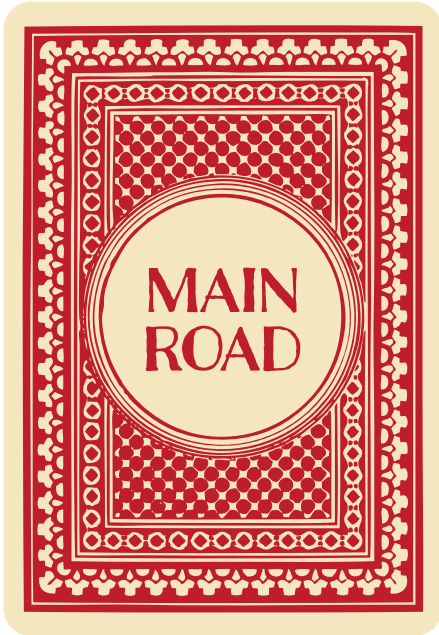
STEP 5

The next steps are:

- Writing the text for the story card
- Designing the story card
- Printing the story card.

How will these enhance the customer experience?

Story cards are a fun and lively way to communicate the history of your site or place.



Shopfront installations

HOW TO DO THEM

Select a story that you want to communicate to your patrons.

STEP 1 Research

Conduct historical research (primary and secondary source, including images). Make sure you validate your research with an historian.

STEP 2 Know your site

To work out what kind of shopfront installation you want, you'll need to understand the opportunities and constraints of your site.

Here are some key questions you'll need to ask:

- How big is the available space?
- Is there power to the space? (this will be relevant if you intend to produce an animatronic or lighting display)
- Will my installation comply with DDA (disability) and OHS (safety) legislation?
- How much money do I want to spend?

STEP 3 Identify the ideal installation

Here comes the exciting (but hard!) bit - what kind of installation you want. This could range from lighting to animatronics, to screening on the interior shopfront, to a display of objects.

To get inspiration, look on Pinterest or simply search the key words on Google. You will find lots of examples of people who have done this work before.

STEP 4 Find a supplier

You can find suppliers through an Internet search, but it's best to get recommendations.

STEP 5 Develop the creative concept

Once you've selected a supplier, devise a brief for them. This will include:

- The key story for your installation (this is based on the historical research you did in Step 1). This story should be exciting and interesting.
- Information about the site (based on Step 2)
- Your budget.

STEP 6

Produce the installation

You'll need to communicate closely with the specialist supplier throughout this stage. He or she may produce shop drawings, which you'll need to check. You'll also need to contact the City of Ballarat to find out if there are permit requirements or other things you'll need to think about.

STEP 7

Install the installation

You will need to ensure that your installation complies with all regulations. Contact the City of Ballarat for further information about compliance.

How will these enhance the customer experience?

These installations will draw people to your shop.

