

Renew Adelaide and Steve Maras

Renew Adelaide is the South Australian version of the successful Renew Newcastle project, a not-for-profit enterprise which allows cultural and community organisations to occupy empty buildings. When it began, the volunteer group behind Renew Adelaide was highly skilled in the arts; however they needed someone who knew the local property industry to really succeed.

Steve Maras, the Managing Director of Maras Group, joined the Renew Adelaide board in 2011 and filled this crucial gap. Through Steve's connections, Renew Adelaide was introduced to a number of high profile commercial property owners who were able to provide empty spaces. These included 199 and 200 North Terrace – buildings which had stood vacant for almost 10 years and were successfully transformed into key venues for the Adelaide Fringe Festival in 2012 with a bar, a café and six theatres.

Since Steve joined the board, Renew Adelaide has more than doubled the amount of vacant spaces it has been able to activate, including spaces from Steve's own Maras Group. As a result, the business benefits for Steve Maras have included greater interest from potential commercial tenants.

As well as his own properties and professional networks, as a board member Steve Maras has generously shared his detailed understanding of the property industry, governance and regulatory issues. Thanks to his mentorship, Steve has helped Renew Adelaide shift from a volunteer board of five young people with limited experience to an incorporated organisation with an eight-person board consisting of highly skilled professionals.



Woodside Better Business Award winner South Australia

Both the Maras Group and Renew Adelaide share a belief that nobody benefits from empty shops, unused buildings or vacant streets. The passion Steve Maras shares with Renew Adelaide for urban renewal has made him not only an invaluable member of the board but also an ideal advocate for the organisation as it continues to grow.

Benefits for Renew Adelaide

- Spaces for cultural groups including Adelaide Festival
- Mentorship and professional development for staff
- Legal, accounting and insurance services via professional networks

Benefits for Steve Maras

- A better understanding of the nature of alternate uses for empty spaces
- A positive impact on the Maras Group business and its public image
- A better position to lease spaces to commercial tenants

"With Steve Maras' networks in the property industry, his business and management skills and his sheer enthusiasm, our organisation has effectively doubled in size ... allowing us to assist over 100 individual exhibits, events and performances in the Adelaide area during the last year."

Dr Ianto Ware, CEO, Renew Adelaide