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Facelift for our 'disgusting' ship terminal

OUTER Harbor's ageing passenger terminal - described by tourists as "dirty", "disgraceful" and "disgusting" - will get a long-overdue facelift before the next cruise ship season this summer.

Despite a modest \$500,000 price tag - split between operator Flinders Ports and the State Government - the Government said the upgrade, announced yesterday, would match the quality of an airport terminal. Work will start this month and is expected to be finished by November.

Included will be a new retail area, visitor information desk and direct walkway from the terminal to the Outer Harbor railway station.

There will also be a new vehicle access point, so cars can drop off passengers with luggage at the terminal, similar to an airport operation.

The terminal has earned the ire of visiting tourists in recent years, with many labelling it archaic.

Among the common complaints have been the terminal's unsightly appearance, lack of vehicle access and long walk from berths to clear the secure area.

"Many will say the upgrade is long overdue, and they are probably correct," Flinders Ports CEO Vincent Tremaine said yesterday.

"We've gone from 10 ships in a very good season to 25 to 27, so there comes a time when you need to upgrade for that increased volume of people and increased volume of ships. It is along the lines of an airport terminal and allows people to come right up to the terminal while also covering the security issues that we have to deal with."

This summer's cruise season will be the busiest in the state's history, with a record 27 ships expected to berth at Outer Harbor. Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said there had been a 300 per cent increase in arrivals at the terminal in the past two years.

"We expect 35,000 tourists to be coming through this port; it's an important mechanism for promoting South Australia," she said.