

THE CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

—
2021-2031





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“Our creation story and songlines are all connected, Country is a living entity. We can close our eyes and hear our language from our Country being spoken by our birds and all things around us. We can open our eyes and see our stories and connection, we can walk barefoot and feel our Mother Earth. We can traditionally burn Country for it to heal and renourish. Our cultural structures cared for our Country for thousands of years”.

We as Wadawurrung People will continue to advocate, care and walk together for our future generations and all people living and visiting our Country, ‘Wadawurrung Country’.

Wadawurrung woman - Corrina Eccles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of these lands, waters and skies, we pay our respects to their elders and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.

Disclaimer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are advised that this Strategy may contain the names and images of deceased people.

Cover photo: Cormac Hanrahan - *Geelong After Dark*
Photo left: Ed Sloane Photography - *Mountain to Mouth*

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



It is my great pleasure to present the City of Greater Geelong's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Our Arts and Cultural Strategy presents a vision for a city transformed through culture and the spirit of our creative community. It has been developed in close conversation with our residents and is shaped by the strength of our diversity.

Through investing in arts and culture, rebuilding and supporting our creative community and enabling all to participate, we will create through this Strategy a more sustainable, flourishing and inspiring City. As is well evidenced, arts, culture and heritage are significant contributors to local employment, community wellbeing, pride of place, tourism and economic development.

The Arts and Cultural Strategy is also key to realising our Clever and Creative vision, and strengthening the city's cultural, social, economic and environmental aspirations.

Our Strategy will focus on our artists and audiences, our community and our stories. We have exceptional cultural facilities, significant cultural collections and programs admired locally, nationally and internationally. With rapid growth and an evolving community, we recognise, however, there is much still to do to meet the needs of our whole community.

This deeply considered Strategy provides the direction we need over the coming years to focus our attention, and demonstrate leadership with an ambition to create space for new ways of imagining, understanding, creating and connecting across our whole region as well as our city centre.

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to exploring our creative potential and realising our vision as expressed in this exciting future Strategy.

I look forward to working with our community to achieve this.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie A". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'A' at the end.

CR STEPHANIE ASHER

Mayor, City of Greater Geelong

VISION

With respect for the past, and passion for the future, Geelong is a City of boundless creativity, fuelled by a thriving arts and cultural community.

From March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had and continues to have a major impact on the creative industries, our communities and business as usual.

*'In times of crisis, arts and culture are more critical than ever. The world has changed in 2020, and the evidence about the impacts of arts and culture are more relevant than ever. Research shows that, during and following major crises such as health emergencies or natural disasters, effective arts and cultural activities are those that aim to reconnect affected communities, reduce feelings of isolation, strengthen people's connection to place, provide opportunities for reflection and commemoration, and foster a shared sense of hope and optimism.'*¹

Photo: Georgina Savage
Sonia Teuben as Tam in ODDLANDS, Back to Back Theatre

1. A New Approach, 2020, 'Education and learning: Transformative impacts of arts, culture and creativity' [Factsheet 5]. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

MISSION

To bring our unique arts, culture and heritage into the life of every resident, and the experience of every visitor. To care for our cultural assets and creative community, building the City's cultural, social, economic and environmental fabric through our cultural investment.



PRINCIPLES

The Arts and Cultural Strategy will reflect the following high-level principles which frame all our work in the arts and cultural sector:

- Build a strong relationship and partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Greater Geelong today
- Advance the role of Artists
- Nurture our local identity and heritage, and connect to our stories
- Connect with our natural environment, our urban city and neighbourhoods
- Activate our places and spaces
- Focus on diversity, equality of access and inclusion
- Collaborate across industries and the sector to develop creative networks

The values and beliefs which underpin these principles include:

- Wadawurrung culture is our city and region's most valued and enduring asset
- Initiative, experimentation and enterprise are the foundation of creative culture. Creative risk is a prerequisite for innovation and industry growth
- Culture and creativity are central to all our lives and to our community's sense of identity
- Culture reflects and reinforces our sense of pride and belonging
- Our citizens and visitors have the right to access and contribute to the city's cultural and creative life; its heritage and future

OUTCOMES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

OUR OUTCOMES

CULTIVATE

Geelong's creative community thrives, making it a great place for artists and creative entrepreneurs to work, learn, collaborate, and grow.

ENGAGE

Geelong's First Nations People's and diverse communities actively participate in the City's arts and cultural life, making it a great place to live.

CELEBRATE

Geelong is recognised as a clever, creative, and culturally dynamic City, making it a great destination for visitors.

OUR OBJECTIVES

CULTIVATE

Cultivate the strength, diversity and vitality of our City's arts and cultural ecosystem.

ENGAGE

Engage the whole community in our City's cultural life.

CELEBRATE

Celebrate our City's distinct, diverse and evolving cultures.

OUR STRATEGIES

CULTIVATE

1. Invest in our artists, arts and cultural organisations and creative enterprises.
2. Invest in our arts and cultural collections, venues and infrastructure.

ENGAGE

3. Consult Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community at all stages of relevant cultural planning.
4. Enable and enhance the community's access to, and engagement with our City's cultural life.

CELEBRATE

5. Showcase and promote our City's arts and cultural strengths.
6. Build upon our City's signature arts and cultural programs, festivals and events.

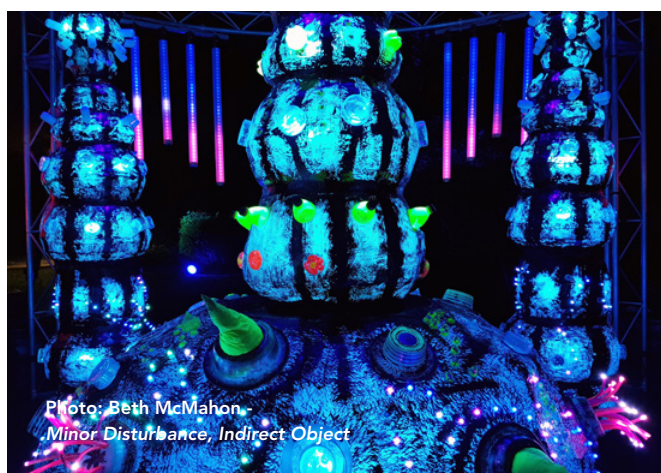




Photo: Jeff Busby - *Back to Back Theatre*,
The Shadow Whose Prey The Hunter Becomes

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arts and Cultural Strategy lays out our strategic framework for supporting and growing arts and cultural activity in Greater Geelong for the next ten (10) years. It contains practical steps and performance measures for realising this vision and unlocking our community's creative potential in a four (4) year action plan. This Arts and Cultural Strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Positive Solutions.

More than 1,700 voices were heard in the consultation process that has defined our key themes and informed the development of the Strategy. Each voice has assisted us to shape a vision which centres creative and cultural leadership as an integral component of a clever and creative city. The views, advice and ideas that were shared were strongly reinforced by up-to-date research and evidence into the benefits of arts and culture for communities.

1.1 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ARTS AND CULTURE?

Arts, Culture and Heritage industries are significant contributors to local employment, community wellbeing and vitality, tourism, economic development - and provide an essential government service to communities.

In our strategy we take a broad view of arts and culture which draws together two main meanings. 'The first meaning refers to the beliefs, values, ways of living and everyday forms of creativity' including our histories, heritage and our stories.

The second meaning refers to our institutions, cultural facilities, creative industries and individual actions that produce and distribute performances, exhibitions and events. 'These activities include for example galleries, libraries, archives and museums, music, screen, radio, video gaming and digital arts, performance, literature, visual art, community-engaged practice, hybrid and experimental forms, language, festivals, craft, heritage, design, and live art.'

'The interactions between these two areas of arts and culture are crucial to understanding the issues at stake in assessing the public value of expenditure on arts, culture and heritage.'¹

The Arts and Cultural Strategy will see the City play a greater role in fostering creativity. This approach supports a growing understanding that creative and cultural expression and participation is not only an essential ingredient for community wellbeing but a strategic factor in our City's sustainable development.

Geelong's accreditation as a UNESCO City of Design and the connection this gives us into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network also provides a unique opportunity to set the direction for arts and culture in Geelong. The City of Design designation is about using creativity and innovation to build more sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities. It fits perfectly with our vision to be internationally recognised as a clever and creative city-region.

GREATER GEELONG

A CLEVER and CREATIVE FUTURE

By 2047, Greater Geelong will be internationally recognised as a clever and creative city-region that is forward looking, enterprising and adaptive and cares for its people and environment.

1. Fielding, K., Trembath, J., 2020, A View from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

1.2 WHY AN ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY?

In a rapidly growing city, it is vital that we have a route-map if we are to harness our arts and cultural assets and create a strong community. The practical purposes of the Strategy, therefore, are to:

- Focus resources and provide direction, leadership and clarity around the role of Council in arts and cultural development
- Support whole-of-Council engagement in arts and cultural development
- Signal our priorities to the arts sector, the wider community, and our partners
- Enable progress to be monitored

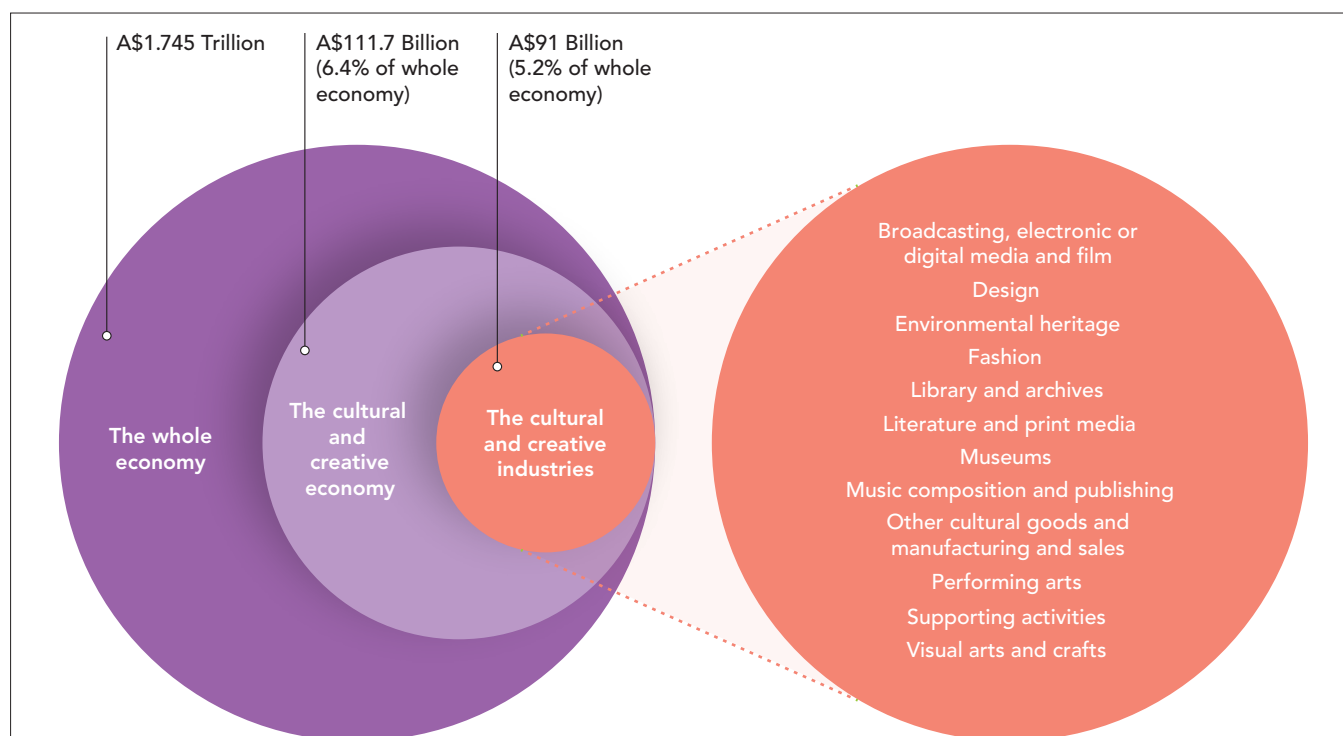
‘The significance of the cultural and creative sector is much broader than its economic scale or impact. Increasingly, the value of arts and culture is recognised across many aspects of our lives, individually and collectively. This includes personal health and community wellbeing, intellectual development and innovation, and place-making in our cities and public spaces. Evidence from recent research into the impact of the arts highlights this growing awareness of the positive impacts of cultural and creative activity.’²

2. A New Approach, 2020, ‘Society and place: Transformative impacts of arts, culture and creativity’ [Factsheet 1]. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra.

1.3 THE VALUE OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

Some of the notable recent trends in arts and cultural development which will have an impact upon the arts in Geelong, and on community engagement include:

- Mounting evidence for the impact of the arts and creativity on the well-being of the community and on the health of the individual.
- The impact of digitisation on all aspects of arts and culture, in creation, conservation, marketing and distribution, and on the consumption of cultural products – the latter accelerated by the impacts of COVID-19.
- Growth and a growing understanding of the value of arts and culture-related tourism - travel that incorporates arts and culture activities and experiences as a key driver.
- The opportunity to identify live music precincts through changes to planning provisions recognising the social, economic, and cultural benefits of live music.
- Attention to sponsorship and philanthropy as additional sources of financing to government grants, and the exploration of new models of arts financing, including loans and equity.
- The use of Public Art to enliven spaces with cultural assets and ephemeral experiences.
- Placing education, learning and engagement at the heart of a cultural facility's offer – including space for events and performance activity, contemplation and learning as well as social interaction.



The Australian cultural and creative economy in context (2016-17). The cultural and creative industries are a subsection of Australia's cultural and creative economy. 'Creative arts' includes several industry subdivisions within the cultural and creative industries. Source: Adapted from BCAR 2018 by ANA. Reproduced with permission of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

VICTORIA'S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECONOMY ³			G21 REGION ⁵		
6.9%	\$31.6 billion	292,000	5,252		
Of total Victorian economy (2019-20)	Annual gross value to the Victorian Economy. (2019-20)	People employed in commercially-driven as well as community- based creative industries in Victoria (2019-20) ⁴	Creative industry businesses in the G21 Region	Creative Industries contributed \$2.1 billion (5.9%) to the overall regional output (2017)	Rise of 16.4% creative industry jobs in the G21 region (2017)

3. <https://creative.vic.gov.au/research/creative-impact-framework/economic-impact/value-add>.

4. <https://creative.vic.gov.au/major-initiatives/creative-state/2025>

5. <http://creativegeelong.com.au/CreativeGeelongBooklet.pdf>



Photo: Jesse Lehman - Blues Boot Camp 2019 at the Potato Shed

1.4 WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING?

As we prioritise our actions it is important to recognise that much is already happening. This Strategy is not occurring in a vacuum – but builds upon the work which the City's arts, culture and heritage team have been undertaking in recent years. These include, for example:

- A major COVID recovery program for the arts and cultural sector in Geelong
- Ongoing grants programs
- A new Arts Industry Commission initiative to support local artists through 15 individual commissions
- Arts and Cultural Events (currently in review), Trails App, Live Music program
- A considerable cross-section of both Wadawurrung and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and projects; including planned mentorships and traineeships
- An extensive public art program
- Public programs, exhibitions and performances of the National Wool Museum and Potato Shed (these have continued online during Covid)



Photo: Tiny Empire Collective - Geelong Arts Centre - Opening Night

- The City's collections management programs
- Support for our Libraries, Gallery and Cultural Facilities (Courthouse)
- Social Infrastructure Projects across the municipality embedding arts, heritage and culture.

1.5 GREATER GEELONG – A CULTURAL SNAPSHOT



8,000+

objects from the
National Wool Museum
made available online



\$40M

invested in new
community
infrastructure



77.3%

of homes have an
internet connection



6 million

visitors to the region



2.29%

population growth
rate (2019-2020)



16%

of population born
overseas



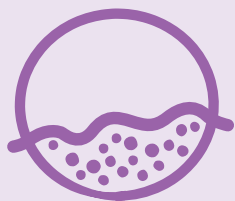
2,407

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander People



\$13.1M

Value of Public Art
Collection



**80+ Aboriginal
artworks**

featured as part of
2019 Reconciliation
Projections Program

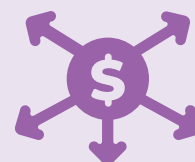


18,700

Total number of
objects in City's
Collection



Visitation to Central
Geelong accounted
for **53%** of the **5.8
million** trips to the
Greater Geelong and
Bellarine region (pre-
COVID-19)



\$510,000

COVID-19 Arts
and Culture
Recovery Package



\$220,000

Arts and Cultural
Grants



\$100,000

Heritage grants for
Central Geelong
2021



**1.8M
combined**

Visitation to key
cultural facilities (pre-
COVID-19)



Australia's first
**UNESCO
City of Design**

2. ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN GEELONG



Photo: Ed Sloane Photography

Wadawurrung People have and continue to care for their lands, waters, culture, designs, and the tangible and intangible heritage of their Country. Wadawurrung Country covers over 10,000km² from the Great Dividing Range in the north, to the coasts in the south, from the *Werribi/ Werribee River* in the east, and to *Mangowak/Aireys Inlet* in the west, which includes *Djilang/Geelong* and *Ballaarat/ Ballarat*. *Djilang* was the traditional Wadawurrung name for Geelong, meaning a "Tongue of Land".⁶

Today the City of Greater Geelong is Victoria's largest provincial city. With more than 50 suburbs and townships, Geelong's population continues to expand, with nearly 265,000 now, to a projected population of 393,216 in 2041.⁷ Like many regional areas, the population is increasingly aging. However, as the birth rates have also increased significantly over the last decade, the population of young children is growing.⁸ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations are also continuing to grow and establish in Geelong.⁹

Geelong is welcoming an increasing number of young families, who bring with them new ideals relating to



Photo: Matt Houston - *Pako Festa*

arts, culture and lifestyle, and who will inform future cultural and creative considerations for our city. Whilst some artists are moving to Melbourne to access resources, work and funding opportunities, Geelong has a great many new people – including travelling audiences for events and activities.

6. The City of Greater Geelong: Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan May 2020 – May 2021, p10

7. <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/geelong/article/item/8d4ada1a54c1202.aspx> / <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal/regional-snapshot>

8. <https://app.rempln.com.au/geelong/community/summary?state=0V9yFwL9mSbQj1MIm0oWWzCktVtXVM>

9. <https://app.rempln.com.au/geelong/community/summary?state=0V9yFwL9mSbQj1MIm0oWWzCktVtXVM>

2.1 CREATIVE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Arts and Creative Industries in Geelong

The growth of the **creative industries within Geelong** during the past five years is clearly visible, with design as the largest sector.

These businesses range from sole traders – by far the largest sector, with more than 5,000 businesses in this category – to proprietary limited companies, other limited companies, trusts and partnerships.

In a recent report *Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis Geelong and Surf Coast* identified that 'Geelong has a diverse creative scene with a relative strength in Creative Services, especially Software and Digital Content. In 2016, 4,386 people earned their primary income in the Creative Industries, an average of 6.25% each year since 2011.

Geelong's Creative Services sub-sector is a key growth area for both specialists and embedded creatives. Cultural Production is mature, with a lively night-time music economy and a strong performing arts scene.

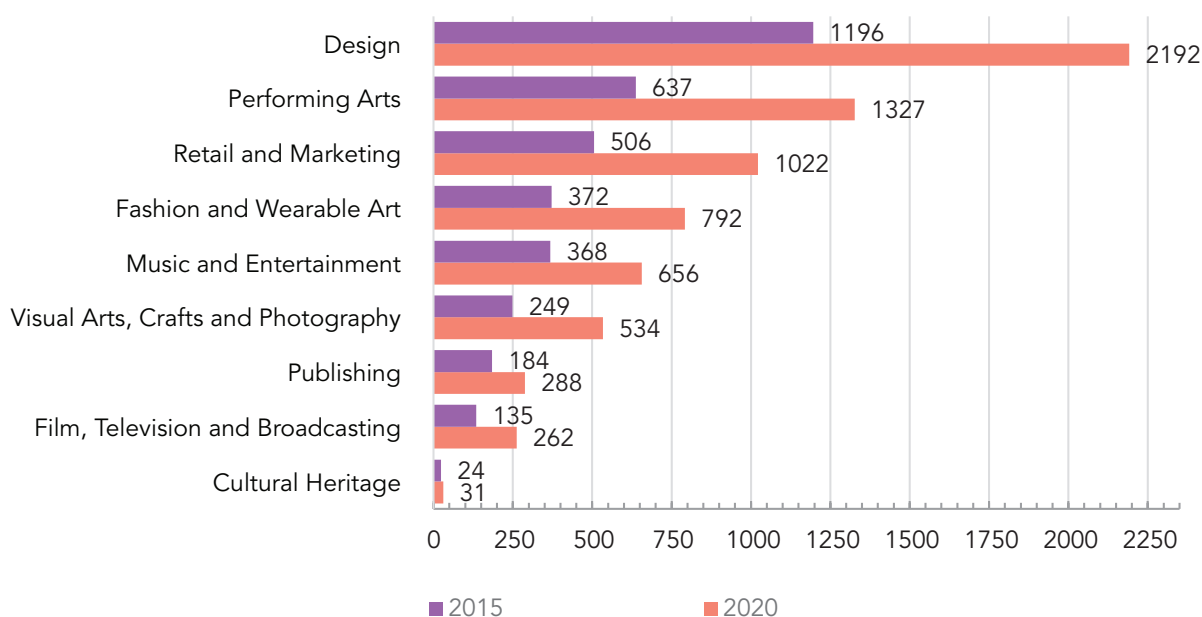
- Geelong is being referred to as 'Australia's Silicon Valley', with a developing boutique app industry.
- Geelong has repurposed many decommissioned industrial sites as co-working hubs, connecting the city's 'maker spirit' with entrepreneurship, innovation and fabrication.¹⁰

Over 670 Arts and Cultural Places

In 2020 a quantitative baseline assessment was undertaken to identify existing arts and cultural assets across the municipality. **Over 670 arts and cultural places were identified** and split into 10 categories. These assets have been mapped in order to understand the spatial factors that interact with and influence creative activity and include buildings, creative spaces, studios, workspaces and social assets such as community groups, not for profit organisations, philanthropic and interest groups with a public interface. Having this focus meant that some cultural places and networks were omitted due to them not having a formal physical address. This data does not include the many individual practising artists in our region who often practise in their homes, however we continue to work with them and build our knowledge of their needs and contribution.

This dataset establishes an evidence base that will assist us in effective decision-making related to creative space provision and diversity, place-making, cultural identity and the creative economy.

Figure 1 | Listings categorised by business area or sector¹¹



10. Susan Kerrigan, Phillip McIntyre, Marion McCutcheon, and Stuart Cunningham. 2020. *Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis: Geelong and Surf Coast*, Brisbane. Digital Media Research Centre. Available <https://research.qut.edu.au/creativehotspots/>.

11. Reference REMPlan

2.2 PLACES AND SPACES

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

There are excellent cultural resources in Geelong, ranging from the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, Geelong Arts Centre, Geelong Gallery, National Wool Museum, the Bellarine Multi Arts Facility – The Potato Shed, Back to Back Theatre Company and Platform Youth Arts housed in Council's Courthouse building in the City Centre.

Council commits significantly to infrastructure, including fostering sustainable design and architecture and major public infrastructure for example the Green Spine and Drysdale Library (in design and planning stage) and Grove Pavilion in Ocean Grove. However, through our engagement it is evident that gaps remain in fit for purpose cultural infrastructure and services across the municipality that is affordable and meets the needs of our diverse community. This remains evident even as the State Government invests heavily in Geelong's existing arts and cultural facilities.

Cultural infrastructure will continue to play an important role encouraging creative expression and enabling more social connection between community members in affordable fit for purpose facilities. Through grass-roots community-led initiatives, skills and capacity are developed, and arts and cultural activity enhanced. Council's investment and support through our libraries network providing creative spaces and learning hubs, the development of new facilities and community hubs for eg. Barwon Heads Arts and Community Centre and Northern Aquatic and Community Hub will all provide increased access addressing the lack of available and affordable community spaces for arts and community groups.

Already co-working spaces, collective practices and entrepreneurial activities exist throughout the region and are supported through our funding programs. We know that connections are enhanced through multiple co-working spaces, for example creative hubs in locations such as Creative Geelong's ExChanGe program in Little Malop Street and the makers hub; Federal Mills Park, which has attracted digital innovation businesses; Deakin University, for advanced manufacturing and Pakington Street, Newtown, for creative services. Our challenge is to continue to identify gaps and address issues and needs around equity and access not only in our City Centre but across our Municipality.

COUNCIL OPERATED CULTURAL FACILITIES

The National Wool Museum

Since 1988 the National Wool Museum (NWM) has had pride of place as an iconic Australian institution;

representing that which will forever be part of our collective story. Like the rest of Australia, Geelong is rapidly changing and with that, community and cultural tastes have changed since the NWM first opened its doors. A 30 Year Vision for the National Wool Museum is currently in development and will guide the future direction of this important heritage listed cultural facility. It will respond to our community's values highlighted in Clever and Creative, Our future (30-year community vision). It will also support the opportunity arising from Geelong's designation as UNESCO City of Design.

The Potato Shed

Multi arts facility on the Bellarine

The Potato Shed opened in 2001 as a multi-purpose arts centre with a focus on the performing arts. It was built as a joint venture by the City of Greater Geelong, the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), Bellarine Secondary College (BSC) and the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation (on behalf of the Catholic Regional College, now Saint Ignatius College Geelong).

Over a period of 20 years population growth and the public's appetite for live performances have exceeded forecasts and expectations. A report Redevelopment Business Case – Strategic Assessment Study has been completed and will inform further actions to address the need for regeneration of the Potato Shed into a cultural centre that can meet the long terms needs of the community, schools and broader creative industries sector. Further work is now required to refine design solutions, secure funding and put in place the necessary management and governance frameworks that will ensure future successes culturally, socially and financially.

Cultural venues, like educational, health and sporting facilities play a key role in sustaining a healthy, fulfilled and engaged society. Further work is required to develop a holistic vision and clarity in the provision, refurbishment and management of cultural assets.

Alongside core cultural venues, opportunities to create and experience live arts and music in the region's music venues, non-conventional and public spaces remains important. Festivals and events such as Geelong After Dark, Mountain to Mouth, Pako Festa, White Night Geelong and the Archibald Prize have also provided valuable platforms for experimentation, experience, participation and economic benefit.

Future events will require careful consideration to ensure appropriate resourcing, planning and intended impact. Live Music will also continue to play a major role as a cultural and economic driver for the region with the Strategy providing a means to further influence Geelong's Live Music Action Plan.



Photo: Diary of Victorian woollen mill worker John Fraser, 1872. National Wool Museum Collection.

2.3 COLLECTIONS

The City of Greater Geelong is the owner of an Art & Heritage Collection of major national, state and local significance. It is made up of more than 12,000 heritage objects, artefacts and artworks, with an estimated value of nearly \$28 million. Spread across numerous locations throughout the municipality, the collection is incredibly diverse and reflects Geelong's history as a vibrant and progressive city.

Although a collection of significance, the City of Greater Geelong's Heritage Collection faces many challenges that prevent appropriate care and community access. Challenges such as a clearly unified approach to Geelong's heritage collections and appropriate resourcing, prevent many objects and stories from being cared for and accessed.¹²

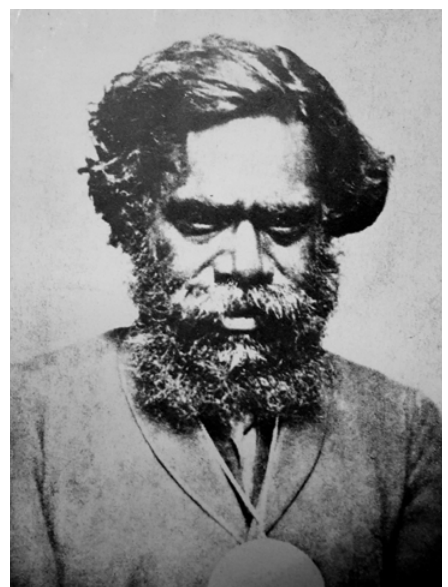
2.4 GEELONG STORIES

Revealing the stories of Geelong, and celebrating its rich and diverse heritage, are regarded as important for building awareness and our common identity. These are also the bedrock for the many opportunities that exist to develop cultural tourism as a significant element in the Geelong economy, to celebrate what makes Geelong unique.

'Intangible cultural heritage, while fragile, is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of globalisation. Intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary and living, all at the same time. It is inclusive, representative and community based (recognised and validated by relevant communities).¹³

Strategies for conservation and sharing may include cultural facility public programs, place-making, revitalisation projects, public art projects, oral history and community projects, social media platforms and current programs, for example 'Connecting Memory'.

Our stories and memories of special places and sites remain with us and in this way live on in the present. Utilising current technology 'digital place-making' initiatives can draw upon the history of a given site to capture and convey a distinct character and atmosphere. Projects like these can educate and inspire visitors and residents increasing our understanding, value and recognition of Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and knowledge.



Photos: Stories featured in the *Connecting Memory* project

Image from Art Trail App - *Bronze stories: Remembering Dan Dan Nook*

12. The City of Greater Geelong – Our Heritage Our Collection 2020

13. Malcolm McKinnon, 1 May 2020, City of Greater Geelong – Preservation & Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage – a discussion paper

3. WHAT YOU, THE COMMUNITY, HAVE SAID

To understand the needs of the arts, culture and heritage sectors, we initially engaged in a series of individual interviews, focus groups and a community survey. Over 100 individuals attended the ten focus group sessions, and 174 people responded to the survey. The consultation was targeted at those working in and connected with these sectors. In total more than 1,040 individuals participated. The draft Strategy was then promoted to the wider community for public comment and feedback. A further 750 individuals participated in the engagement with 33 contributions.

The consultation process has been framed by a strong sense of optimism for Geelong's future, supported by population growth and the identification of new opportunities. Through the discussions undertaken, we have identified a collection of key themes, which focus on laying strong cultural foundations and investing in the arts ecology from the ground up, bolstering Geelong's identity as a creative city and further integrating the arts into the everyday life of our residents.



Photo: Chrissie Francis - *Pako Festa 2020* portrait

- **Foregrounding Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples generally** - You strongly advocated for Wadawurrung and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and cultural activity in the region to be supported as a distinctive and valued part of cultural life in Geelong, and for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be meaningfully included and consulted throughout the life of a project.
- **Pride in Place** - You are deeply proud of your city-region, and arts and culture developed is locally considered to be meaningful and important work for the community.
- **Inclusive Culture** - You expressed the need for engagement with different sub-sectors such as young people, Wadawurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples generally, culturally and linguistically diverse, heritage groups with response to specific needs designed appropriately. Ongoing barriers to participation can include cultural, financial, physical and geographic elements.
- **A Changing City** - Geelong is seeing a shift in its demographic. Over the last ten years Geelong has welcomed many young families to the region who are seeking aspirational lifestyle and affordable housing, and who bring an interest in arts and culture alongside lifestyle needs such as access to the beach, heritage and smaller more inclusive communities.
- **Stories and Meaning** - Revealing the stories of Geelong, and celebrating its rich and diverse heritage, are regarded as important for building our common identity and awareness. These are also the bedrock for the many opportunities that exist to develop cultural tourism as a significant element in the Geelong economy, and in support of our creative and heritage practitioners.
- **Nurturing and Investing in our Creatives and Cultural Leaders** - With many having suffered financial, career-related and mental health impacts as flow-on effects from Covid-19, artists' mental



Photo: Reg Ryan - *Memorial Sunrise (Solace)*

health and wellbeing, and artist retention, are key priorities for the industry. You requested that focus be directed towards opportunities that foster career pathways, that seed funding for creative developments is available, and that artists are upskilled in areas of professional practise and business management. In addition, the industry recommended that artists and creatives be further involved in decision-making by their inclusion on boards of organisations and on committees, nurturing cultural leadership. The economic, social and environmental benefits of the arts continue to be proven and published; however, these benefits are still not adequately understood by the public and policymakers.

- **Spaces and Places** - You emphasised affordable, accessible and satisfactorily equipped venues, studios, exhibition and rehearsal spaces as integral to fostering of creative activity in Geelong. You were enthusiastic for a precinct planning strategy to guide development and creative activity, including temporary creative and experimental contemporary interventions in addition to well-curated “iconic” public artworks to help define our creative identity. This activity should be relevant in its content and celebrate the history and diverse communities of Geelong. Aspirations for more active use of the city’s outdoor spaces for cultural activity were expressed. Investing in our non-built environment – for example a green spine, pop-up parks, pathways and places to walk which could create linkages from existing areas to new areas, and also open up new possibilities for creative activation and engagement in a broader area of the city.
- **Creative Process and Strategy** - You asked for flexibility and openness to clever, creative solutions from artists and increased risk appetite in implementing this Strategy. This could occur through presenting more experimental and

innovative works, finding imaginative solutions for areas of resource scarcity, supporting ingenious use of our outdoor spaces, opening up atypical venues and restructuring grant systems where necessary in order to customise our offerings to your needs. An increased risk appetite increases the vibrancy, relevance and contemporaneity of our city’s creative activity.

- **Incubating and Connecting** - You asked for us to better connect you with the spectrum of society, and with each other, as the arts industry in Geelong is missing out on opportunities for cross-pollination and collaboration between artforms, between industries and across the urban-regional divide. Suggestions for connecting the creative community included a centralised point of communication for the industry, exploring collaborative research, digital gathering formats, offering networking opportunities and a creative hub for cross-pollination between different art areas. More broadly, you would like opportunities for artists to be integrated into major city events, support to connect across sectors (for example food and tourism) and artist involvement in other aspects of society such as education, hospitals and aged care. The education sector saw particular potential to enhance the lives of young people through creative engagement.
- **Council Leadership** – You want Council to listen, learn and act to address our community’s arts and cultural aspirations, and to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and other crises on the arts, live performance and related sectors – with carefully crafted forward planning and realistic timeframes. City of Greater Geelong can increase and re-prioritise its strategic investment, led by consultation, and giving the creative sector the support to flourish long-term.



Photo: Nathan Kaso -
OK Motels, Arts Industry
Commission recipients
Shaun Adams and Kate Berry.

4. STRATEGIES AND KEY INITIATIVES

CULTIVATE	
STRATEGIES	WHAT THESE STRATEGIES WILL DO
<p>1. Invest in our artists, arts and cultural organisations, and creative enterprises</p> <p>Grow the Arts by supporting organisations and creative enterprises, facilitating professional development, commissioning and platforming local artists, increasing the vitality and reach of our cultural economy and supporting experimental, contemporary practices.</p> <p>Community Plan alignment: <i>Strong Local Economy/Healthy Caring and Inclusive Community/High Performing Council and Organisation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop creative skills, business skills and professional practice • Encourage collaboration and partnerships • Deliver arts and cultural programs across the whole municipality • Build cultural sector leadership through arts reference group • Build resilience in response to pandemic and COVID 19 • Advocate on behalf of the community • Communicate and engage effectively with our community • Provide care for City's cultural collections • Increase access to affordable cultural infrastructure
<p>2. Invest in our arts and cultural collections, venues and infrastructure</p> <p>Caring for Culture through our collections, cultural planning and asset management and the diversity of our culture, ensuring affordable and appropriate spaces and appropriate preservation of our cultural assets.</p> <p>Community Plan alignment: <i>Strong Local Economy/Healthy Caring and Inclusive Community/High Performing Council and Organisation/Sustainable Growth and Environment</i></p>	
KEY INITIATIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a major annual live music program and establish Live Music Precincts in the CBD and regional districts as beacons for local and visiting artists and audiences. • Invest in professional development, artist residencies, cross-sector networking, capacity-building for artists and creative enterprises, and initiate an Arts and Culture Reference Group to advise on sector challenges and opportunities, including the employment and retention of local creative talent. • Continue to deliver competitive one-off project funding and annual operational funding for local artists and arts organisations to augment Council's ambitions for a vibrant arts and cultural ecosystem which supports local and municipal-wide creative endeavour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the business case and plans for the redevelopment of the National Wool Museum and Potato Shed Multi-Arts complex, and secure the resources required to modernise and enhance these iconic regional facilities. • Support Geelong Gallery through its business case to provide an expanded, vibrant cultural learning and social space that connects visitors to the unique heritage of the historic City Hall building. • Collaborate and support Geelong Regional Library Corporation to realise their new Library Plan, including expanded opportunities for artists and creative enterprises through the establishment of collaborative workspaces, including residencies, skills development, and training.

ENGAGE

STRATEGIES

3. **Consult with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community at all stages of relevant cultural planning.**

Build awareness, knowledge of First Nations People's Culture and provide opportunity for First Nations People's led active engagement and consultation in local art offerings.

Community Plan alignment:

Healthy Caring and Inclusive Community/High Performing Council and Organisation/ Sustainable Growth and Economy

4. **Enable and enhance the community's access to, and engagement with, our City's cultural life.**

Enable and enhance our community's access to, and engagement with, our City's cultural life.

Increase opportunities for participation, diverse engagement, and support through accessible cultural programs, strategic partnerships and collaborations.

Community Plan alignment:

Strong Local Economy/Healthy Caring and Inclusive Community/Sustainable Growth and Environment

WHAT THESE STRATEGIES WILL DO

- Support First Nations Peoples' led cultural engagement and participation
- Encourage collaboration with First Nations Peoples' in local art offerings and programs
- Support day and night arts and cultural activation across the municipality
- Provide dedicated arts and cultural programs that meet the needs of the community and enhance all abilities, youth, seniors and diverse participation
- Support cultural venue public programs that attract residents and visitors and build audiences and participation
- Deliver contemporary public art initiatives and commissions in our public spaces
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with key stakeholders across our diverse community.



Photo: Mike Dugdale - Word for Word National Non-Fiction Festival, Archie Roach and Norm Stanley

KEY INITIATIVES

- Formally engage a First Nations People's Arts Advisor to guide and support Council's arts and cultural policies, processes, and programs.
- Collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to conserve, digitise and interpret artworks and artefacts of regional importance from across Council's arts and heritage collections, and expand these collections through the commissioning and acquisition of new works and objects.
- In consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, support the development of Wadawurrung arts and cultural tourism experiences, to cultivate a wider appreciation for, and understanding of, our region's First Nations People's history, heritage, and stories, and to promote an enduring respect for Wadawurrung Culture and Country.
- Continue to tell the stories of our region through a suite of digital, interactive apps, and commission new digital assets created by, with, and for, the community.
- Continue to deliver a diverse and dynamic public art program across the municipality, and develop a business case for future public art works in support of Geelong's international designation as a UNESCO City of Design.
- Work with our City's major cultural organisations to facilitate and enhance collaborative programming and marketing, with a particular focus on night-time activation and attracting new audiences.
- Support diverse communities of Geelong to inform a lively program of festivals and events reflecting our cultures across the municipality.

CELEBRATE

STRATEGIES

5. Showcase and promote our City's arts and cultural strengths.

Develop industry collaborations, stimulate creative connections physically and digitally through community and creative leadership and strengthen our cultural identity through our cultural programs.

Community Plan alignment:
Strong Local Economy/Healthy Caring and Inclusive

6. Build upon our City's signature arts and cultural programs, festivals and events.

Celebrate our local heritage and stories, activate our public spaces across the municipality through high quality contemporary practice.

Community Plan alignment:
Strong Local Economy/Healthy Caring and Inclusive/High Performing Council and Organisation

WHAT THESE STRATEGIES WILL DO

- Enhance Geelong's brand as a creative City.
- Extend the reach of arts, cultural and heritage experiences across the region
- Develop cultural networks and hubs
- Attract visitors to the City and region
- Launch major new initiative and annual music program
- Strengthen existing cultural programs for example, NAIDOC Week projections
- Program arts and cultural activities in diverse and non-traditional locations across municipality
- Communicate and engage effectively with our community to understand their needs and advocate on their behalf

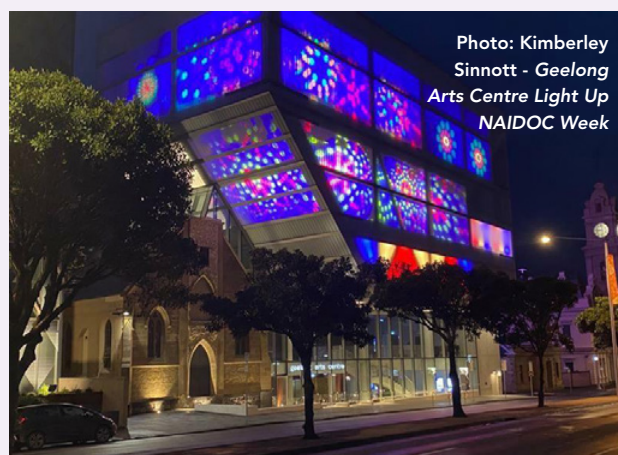


Photo: Kimberley Sinnott - Geelong Arts Centre Light Up NAIDOC Week

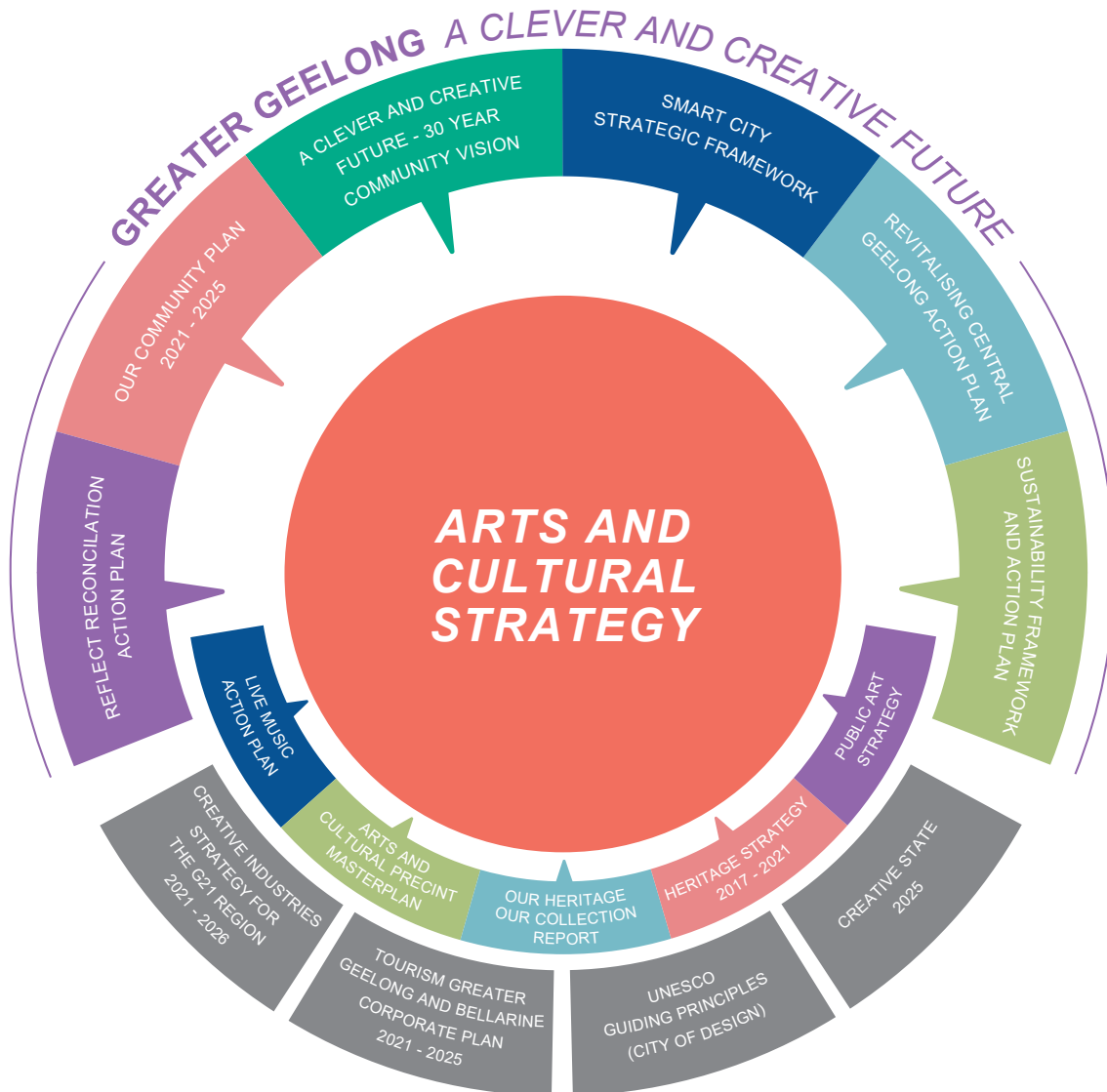
KEY INITIATIVES

- Launch Arts Geelong a digital mechanism for showcasing and promoting our City's rich, diverse and evolving arts and cultural landscape, including information and stories on Wadawurrung Culture, social history, heritage, regional artists, events, public art, live music scene, pop-up creative enterprises, cultural tourism attractions, exclusive offers for residents, and more.
- Continue a partnership with Tourism Greater Geelong and Bellarine to broker strategic partnerships between local arts producers and businesses to leverage more opportunities for local and visiting artists and audiences, encourage events' organisers to promote a seasonal calendar of arts and cultural experiences through Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, and enhance cultural tourism across the region.
- Continue to support major events and programs such as NAIDOC Week, Design Week, White Night, among others, and identify new opportunities to partner with non-arts venues (e.g., shopping centres) and events (e.g., sporting gatherings), to present arts and cultural programs to the wider public.
- Continue to present an annual program of live and virtual arts, design and heritage exhibitions, education programs, and live performance for all ages at the National Wool Museum and Potato Shed.
- Maximise the community's access to Council's arts and heritage collections and optimise the care of these 12,000+ valuable objects, artworks, and artefacts.

PLATFORM



6. POLICY LINKAGES



A CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY FOR THE G21 REGION 2021-26

The development of a Creative Industries Strategy was commissioned by a consortium of G21 Geelong Region Alliance partners, chaired by the Committee for Geelong in November 2020.

The objective of the Creative Industries Strategy for the G21 Region is to provide a framework for a more strategic and coordinated approach between the public, private and not for profit sectors for the development of the region's creative industries. The strategy aims to inform and guide government and industry priorities, investments and initiatives to achieve sector development, economic growth and employment and to contribute to the prosperity and liveability of the G21 region. It will provide a framework for the region to respond to and adapt to the many impacts of the COVID 19 shutdown on the creative industries. It also builds on the work and research developed as part of the Greater Geelong Arts and Cultural Strategy, the Clever and Creative vision and Geelong's accreditation as a UNESCO City of Design.

This is the first Creative Industries Strategy for the G21 region which includes five municipalities: Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast. The G21 region has a population of over 340,000 people and covers 8972 sq km. The region's population is the fastest growing in Victoria, outside of the Melbourne metropolitan area.



Photo: Carbie Warbie - UPSCALE - Tim Hulsman,
Nina Grant and Mike Patton, Geelong After Dark

7. THE ROLE OF COUNCIL



Photo: Reg Ryan - National Wool Museum

The City of Greater Geelong has a key part to play in connecting the creative sector and providing a holistic approach across the region. Its role includes facilitating activities, operations, funding and opportunities between sectors. A cohesive and collaborative strategy is required to bring focus to the work of the municipality and to align the work of advocacy groups, corporate partners, the tourism sector, venues and organisations.

Key roles for Council include:

Enabler	Creating an environment for arts, culture and heritage to flourish - through capacity building, brokering partnerships, improving access and opportunity, providing cultural facilities, and actively supporting community-led initiatives and networks.
Leader	Being proactive and progressive, taking the first step to make things happen in the interests of the cultural life of the area
Host	Making council spaces available to support local artists and creative businesses, and to improve community access
Customer	Engaging local artists and creative businesses to work on council projects
Funder	Helping communities to realise their own creative initiatives, encouraging diversity and vibrancy through strategic funding programs
Advocate	Championing local arts, culture and heritage, leveraging Council's position to generate new opportunities
Partner	Collaborating with the community and other agencies to support arts and cultural activity



Photo: Mike Dugdale - On the Land, National Wool Museum



Photo: Daniel Martin - Olaf Meyer projection response, Geelong After Dark 2019



Photo: Moby Dick - Third Image Destination Accessible



Photo: Matt Houston - Pako Festa



Photo: Geelong Arts Centre - Tiny Empire Creative

8. KEYS TO SUCCESS



Photo: Patrick Callow - Sweethearts performing at Sweetfest

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

In response to sector engagement and our aim to work closely with our creative community we will establish clear governance arrangements. This will help us remain focussed on achieving our goals while we're learning and collaborating with stakeholders. As an organisation we will lead by example, championing the value of arts and culture, developing awareness and understanding, and building cultural leadership within our community.

FOUR-YEAR ACTION PLAN

This strategic framework is an overarching and guiding document. Our four-year Action Plan 2021-25 outlines specific, measurable objectives, strategies and actions which will be reviewed annually to ensure efforts remain aligned with current local context, resourcing and cultural trends.

In measuring progress we will use established methods of beneficial outcomes which are cultural, social, civic, economic and environmental.

We will also set baseline data measures with cultural institutions that we can track over time to indicate progress. We will align our performance measures to support our community's clever and creative vision and Council Plan priorities.



Photo: Pam Hutchinson - Launch of LiveMAP (image features Codeacious Augmented Reality App featuring Chrissy Amphlett)

OPTIMISING INVESTMENT

Identifying and attracting high value investments and financing strategies are critical to achieving sustainability in our service delivery. We want to open doors to new opportunities, partnerships and business models to generate efficiencies, deliver community benefit, and create economic value.

We will seek funding partnerships, and the effective use of existing budgets towards arts and cultural outcomes building on our strengths and diversifying our revenue streams.

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THANK YOU

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the arts and heritage sectors, and the wider community, for their generous time given to interviews, workshops and written submissions.

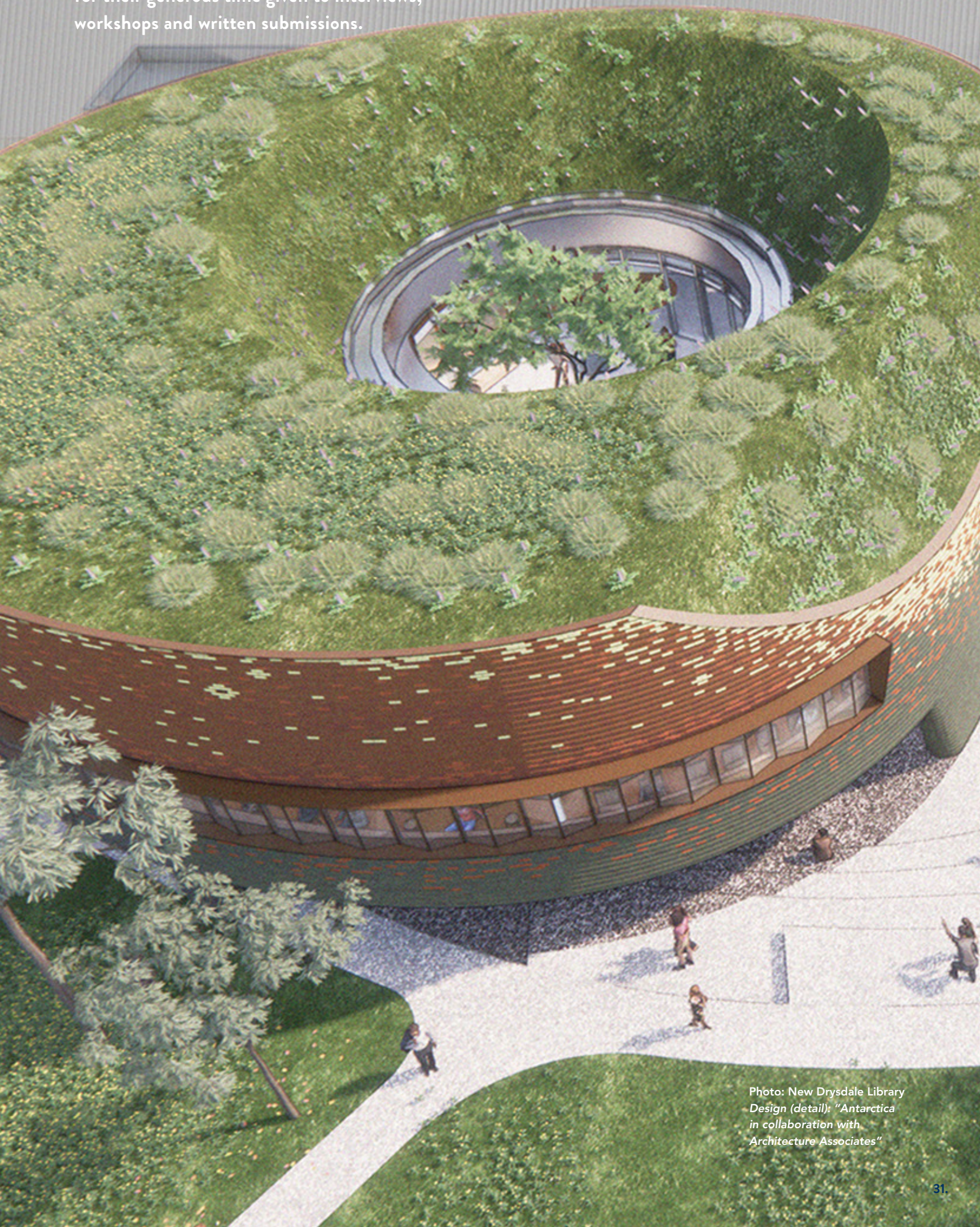


Photo: New Drysdale Library
Design (detail): "Antarctica
in collaboration with
Architecture Associates"

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