



2022 - 2025
STRATEGIC PLAN

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE, ABORIGINAL LAND

Creative Geelong acknowledges Wadawurrung Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which we live and create. We pay respect to Wadawurrung Elders past and present, to emerging cultural leaders and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We acknowledge the crucial role that creativity has played across Australia for thousands of years.

We are privileged to work alongside First Nations creatives who are continuing and evolving creative practices of the oldest surviving culture in the world.

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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Creativity and culture play a vital role in the lives of Victorians and Creative Geelong takes immense pride in supporting and nurturing those at the beginning of their creative careers and arts practice journeys. For many people, Creative Geelong is a first step in exploring the role of creativity in their lives – an accessible place to co-operatively gain and share skills, forge new networks, gain confidence to upskill and showcase their work, often for the first time. Creatives of all kinds come to re-engage with art, creativity and design and to try out ideas, experiment and take the kind of artistic risks they would not otherwise be able to do in more formal cultural settings.

Continuing my career-long commitment to creativity and design, I was honoured to be appointed Chairperson of the Creative Geelong Board in April 2022. My working life in the higher education sector is strongly aligned to the core values of Creative Geelong. I'm passionate about ensuring that everyone in our region can access opportunities to create, share and explore their creativity and engage with the many cultural offerings in Geelong, including its important designation as Australia's only UNESCO City of Design.

Creative Geelong receives some local government funding and our income is derived from program fees, studio rentals, members and fundraising events. This new strategy reflects our organisation's strengths and looks to the future to how best position ourselves in Geelong's exciting cultural landscape. It provides a clear direction with a strong focus on creatives and measurable positive outcomes.

The Board extends its thanks to those who contributed their voice and views to making this strategy a robust reflection of the opportunities and challenges we face. We will continue to provide activities that improve outcomes for creatives in our region and strengthen the role we play with our many community and cultural partners in Geelong and beyond.

All members of the Board look forward to continuing our work in supporting individuals to engage with creative practice, believe in themselves, and explore where their creative journeys might take them.

Tonya Meyrick

Creative Geelong Chair

WHO WE ARE

We build and support creative communities

Creative Geelong Inc. is a not-for-profit Djilang/Geelong-based arts organisation. We work with and support creatives at every stage of their creative journeys.

Established in 2015, we are part of a rich local arts and creative industries ecosystem and collaborate with individual creatives, local communities, all levels of government and the public, private and voluntary sectors. Part of this work means that we also seek to influence others to increase opportunity and maximise the impact our resources can offer.

We support creatives by providing accessible space, tenancies and residencies in Geelong's city centre, programs for emerging and under-represented artists and through showcasing national and international artists at our Third Space Digital+ Gallery. We create the conditions for experimentation and risk taking through a strong collaborative model, based on sharing knowledge, practice and resources.

We are committed to developing creativity in all its forms, to connecting people to each other and to new ideas, championing the new and the never before.

As a team passionate about creativity, we aim to set-up practitioners with the essential skills and the conversations needed for lifelong cultural practice and/or participation.

The development of this strategy marks a new chapter for Creative Geelong. Post-pandemic, the organisation is positioning itself for future growth with sustainability and engagement (audience, creatives and new ideas) as key strategic drivers. Our remit to provide quality creative development opportunities to those who may not otherwise have access to them is central to our work, but the means by which we achieve this is changing.

Outlined below is our new direction. We look forward to collaborating with you as we open the doors on a new journey of equitable creative expression...

VISION

To be a leading, accessible arts organisation where creatives and communities bring ideas to life and share space, resources, knowledge and opportunities.

PURPOSE

To provide support, spaces and a platform for artists, designers and creatives.

We provide tenancies, residencies, skills training and advocacy so that our communities can collaborate, connect, experiment and take artistic risks.

VALUES

We lead with the belief that a sustained focus on exploration, creativity and creative communities brings about positive societal change

Equity and inclusion fuels everything we do

Collaboration is central to our work

WHAT DO MEAN BY CREATIVES?

At Creative Geelong, we understand that the term 'creatives' is a loaded one. When we talk about creatives we think about people whose job, prospective job or area of professional interest involves creative work. We also think of creatives as people who choose to spend their time on creative endeavours – people who apply their creative skill and imagination to make things like objects, paintings, words, films, photos, installations, music, dance, design innovations and social or participatory works.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

In 2022, Geelong's creative and cultural industries are slowly recovering from the effects of the Covid pandemic. There are pleasing signs which show an ongoing commitment to creative practice and to wider support for the cultural sector.

Throughout the last seven years since our inception, our organisation has reflected and adapted to changing economic, cultural and social growth in our region by building communities, networks and projects that ensure there is a place for emerging and under-represented creative ideas and people.

Today, we work alongside larger community and cultural organisations to ensure that the voices of creatives are valued and amplified and to provide a pipeline of skilled and adaptive people who can confidently proceed to forge meaningful careers and interactions with the creative industries.

Recent highlights include:

Creative Hub

Our creative hub in Centrepoint Arcade in Geelong's Little Malop Street houses accessible co-working, exhibition and studio spaces.

Our space is designed to help creatives connect with each other and to progress creative ideas. With low fee short and long-term studio rentals, the creative exchange also houses resident artists and is where we hold the majority of our skills development programs.

Our exchange has provided space for First Nations artists, theatre companies, design and tech start-ups, pop-up shops and a range of makers exploring their practice. The location and nature of the exchange space in what is a contested mall area of central Geelong, raises important questions about the accessibility and context of art- where and how art can happen and who it is for.

Third Space Gallery + Digital:

A response to gentrification of space and the changing face of Geelong, Third Space Gallery + Digital is a program of Creative Geelong and offers local, national and international experimental artists and designers exhibition space in neglected shop windows in Geelong's Centrepoint Arcade.

Opened in 2018, Third Space continues to interrogate the connection between disused and unrentable commercial spaces, the public and creative space via an exciting rolling exhibition schedule.

Led by an experienced curator, Third Space has highlighted the ground-breaking work of experimental artists from Melbourne, Tasmania and Berlin, and has offered curatorial mentorship for local practitioners from the Greater Geelong region.

May'd Festival:

Our annual showcase of resident artists and local makers is a highlight on Geelong's cultural calendar.

The inaugural event in 2021, 11 creatives took part in displaying and selling work ranging from textiles, weaving, jewellery, mixed media and zines. The success of the May'd Festival resulted in a Creative Geelong May'D Shop (for 12 months) in Centrepoint Arcade where customers can browse a selection of work created by May'd creatives. Funded by COGG Arts Grant Program.

The 2022 event engaged with 37 creatives and 170 visitors. Funded by COGG Quick Response Grant Program.

The 2023 event engaged with over 50 creatives and musicians and was delivered over two days attracting over 2000 visitors and delivered in partnership with Love Central Geelong and funded by COGG Events Grant Program.

Object Monologues - Geelong:

A partnership with Barking Spider Visual Theatre, the Object Monologues is a geolocated audio experience where the personality, idiosyncrasies, passions, loves and losses of landmarks and significant public objects in Geelong are brought to life.

Created site-specifically, the character of each landmark object is crafted from historical research and blended with a whimsical twist.

Funded by COGG Arts Industry Commission Program 2020

ACCESSIBLE:

PLACE

EXPERIMENTATION

CREATIVITY

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE:

- More people from all parts of society accessing, participating in and valuing a range of artistic and creative activities
- People who are starting or re-engaging with their creative journeys are supported to make work of quality and ambition that enriches life for everyone
- Art, design and creativity are supported and recognised as playing a key role in the reinvigoration of Geelong

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Breaking down entry barriers to creative arts for creatives and audiences
- Using our skills, knowledge, and expertise to offer unique opportunities and experiences that stem from engaging with the communities we serve
- Embracing digital opportunities to connect our creatives globally
- Advocating for the cultural industries by promoting policy and practice to enhance the sector's growth and sustainability
- Embracing and utilising design as an agent of change
- Ensuring that the funding we receive delivers the widest possible public benefit.

WE WILL PRIORTISE:

- **SUSTAIN:** Make our organisation sustainable through good governance, planning and mixed models of best business practice
- **EXPERIMENT:** Supporting a diverse range of creative people to create, participate and engage with each other and with new ideas, technologies and forms
- **EXCHANGE:** Developing innovative and sustainable ways of strengthening collaboration and promoting artistic and cultural exchange locally, nationally and internationally.

HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THERE

PRIORITY 1

- **SUSTAIN**

Make our organisation sustainable through good governance, planning and mixed models of best business practice

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Further develop the organisation's online presence with a key focus on website, social and e-commerce functionality
- Develop a five-year business plan which focuses on diversity, resilience and entrepreneurship and which identifies key initiatives to improve financial resilience of organisation, increase organisation's IP and cultural assets
- Continue to evolve long-term organisational planning initiatives beyond the life of this strategy
- Develop strategies for alternate earned revenues including membership
- Pursue a range of revenue generating mechanisms including philanthropy and fundraising
- Continue to strengthen our strong governance and operational practices including reviewing and continuously improving the competencies and mix of our skills-based board who are responsible for developing policy frameworks, meeting all financial, risk and legal obligations and forging high level stakeholder relationships
- Develop a programmatic and organisational marketing approach and strategy

Develop a commercial roadmap which ensures that all profit is invested in the tenants and creatives we support

PRIORITY 2

- **EXPERIMENT**

Support a diverse range of creative people to create, participate and engage with each other and with new ideas, technologies and forms.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Encourage creatives outside the mainstream of creative production to be innovative and bold in their creative journey
- Support and nurture creatives in their experimentation with materials, technologies and techniques

- Make sure every conversation we have develops distinct dialogue around creative practice
- Ensure our spaces are accessible and culturally-safe and that there is appropriate representation of emerging and under-represented creatives in every area of our work
- Develop an organisational model beyond traditional structures that is informed by the communities we serve.

PRIORITY 3

- **EXCHANGE**

Develop innovative and sustainable ways of strengthening collaboration and promoting artistic and cultural exchange which fill a gap in the sector.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Continue to build on signature programs and spaces which increase critical dialogue and creative exchange
- Advocate for emerging creatives and emerging creative ideas/forms to other cultural organisations, government and communities
- Engage with creatives and communities globally to increase the diversity of who receives and benefits from our support
- Respond to local Geelong contexts, particularly in the burgeoning area of design and architecture and its relationship to other mediums and artforms
- Introduce satellite projects which extend the reach of Creative Geelong into communities of interest
- Continue to meaningfully partner at all levels, in order to deliver our plans for growth.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES?

Creative Geelong has a strong commitment to monitoring and evaluating its success against its key 2022-2024 strategic priorities.

To do this, a detailed two-year action plan has been developed. This outlines the full scope of our work between 2022 - 2024 and describes how we will assess our impact against common cultural, civic, social and environmental measures.

The action plan will be reviewed annually, and Creative Geelong will report on its progress via its Annual Report and via other ad hoc reporting throughout the calendar year.

We will ensure that our work remains aligned with the Geelong context, to our available resources and to other trends or circumstances which may impact on us.