

Geelong's Creative Potential

A Manifesto



CREATIVE
GEELONG



“ We want a Geelong where everyone actively values and engages with creativity and innovation as a key part of our future social and economic well-being. We want a local creative industries community that is connected, collaborative and inspiring. ”

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Why a Manifesto?

Jennifer Cromarty

President Creative Geelong Inc

Geelong has undergone an economic transformation. One of the key motivations for the establishment of Creative Geelong, was to counter negative perceptions of the city when jobs were lost due to the downturn in heavy manufacturing.

Many people proclaimed the demise of Geelong, as announcements about Alcoa shutting down hit the news, and Ford ceased heavy manufacturing in the region. 'Poor Geelong' was the cry as our city made headlines across the country and negativity became the dominant narrative.

While I sat in meetings, listening to politicians, policy makers and leaders wanting support and assistance for those hardest hit, I could see Geelong in a different light - one with creative potential.

Professionally, I was researching the impact of digital technology and creative industries on economies around the world. What was clear, was that there was a new way of explaining the future of work with technology enabling creativity and collaboration through the freedom to choose when and where you worked.

Digital technology has also given us all a voice with social media allowing us to tell our story direct to our audience. So as our new, magnificent library grew into its fully-domed glory, I started taking pictures of its construction and of other beautiful, interesting things being made, built and created around the city. I wanted to share the story of Geelong's creative potential.

From small beginnings, the Creative Geelong Facebook page now has around 6,000 followers with thousands of others following our journey on Instagram and Twitter.

In 2015, there was a concerted effort from a group of locals to formalise these efforts and start a not for profit - Creative Geelong Inc. Since then, we have been able to share our ideas and collaborate with others through this structure.

In 2016, we raised over \$20,000 with the community via crowd-funding for a research project in partnership with Deakin University and the University of Melbourne. The funds were used to make three short films documenting industrial buildings in Newtown, Fyansford and North Geelong, that are now re-purposed for creative enterprises. The 'Hubcaps to Creative Hubs' series of short films premièred at the Geelong Regional Library in March 2018 to an audience of 300 people. Since then, thousands of people have viewed these films online.

In 2016, we launched our first economic data sets to benchmark the influence of creative industries in the region. In 2018, we have updated that Environmental Scan of the Creative Industries in the G21 Region with 2016 Census information in partnership with the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network and the City of Greater Geelong, to understand the creative industries' economic impact and jobs growth.

Creative Geelong also received two years of funding from the City of Greater Geelong in 2017 to pilot a Makers Hub in Centrepoint Arcade, Little Malop Street. The Makers Hub is an inclusive, affordable space for the community to access a makerspace, co-working desks, arts studio, sound recording studio and workshop programs to bring together Geelong's design, tech, art and science community as a collective. A key element of the Makers Hub project was to activate vacant premises near the Little Malop Street Mall to address community perceptions of safety in the area.

In 2018, the Victorian Government announced funding for the Makers Hub project via Creative Victoria, and Creative Geelong Inc signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Renew Australia to support a collaborative approach to revitalise vacant spaces with creative activity.

In 2017, the Geelong community also voted on a 'Clever and Creative' long term vision for the city, and the City of Greater Geelong was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Design – the only city of design in Australia. Demonstrating our strong partnership with the City of Greater Geelong, Creative Geelong has produced a series of podcasts to share the Clever and Creative stories in our region and also was invited to present a design showcase as part of the official launch of the UNESCO Creative City of Design.

Geelong has changed in the last four years, and the creative industries sector – the people, their work and their commitment to Geelong – are playing no small part.

This Manifesto aims to share the experiences of Creative Geelong and bring together the community to focus on supporting the creative industries sector through the lens of the following opportunities:

- **Telling Our Story**
- **Central Geelong**
- **Including Everyone**
- **Connections & Collaborations**
- **Measuring Impact**
- **Future of Work**

This Manifesto for Geelong's Creative Potential aims to help show how Geelong can support its creative sector and build a sustainable creative community. These are the first steps to share our stories of collaboration and encourage the community to embrace the social and economic impacts of a booming creative sector.

The time is right, and momentum is with us.

Jennifer Cromarty



What are the Creative Industries?

The Creative Industries generally include activities associated with software and interactive content, film, TV and radio, publishing, architecture, visual arts and design, advertising, public relations and marketing services, and music and the performing arts.

Creative Industries are enabled by digital technology and access to the internet. The digital economy is impacting on how we work, live, learn and communicate and the creative industries need to be recognised as a genuine economic cluster and gain support through local strategic planning.



Mural on Market Square Shopping Centre, Little Malop Street, Geelong

What We Believe In

Creative Geelong Inc is inclusive and diverse, grassroots yet strategic, and thrives on learning and testing through doing.

“ Creative Geelong is known for smart people and getting things done.”

Dr Kathy Alexander, former Chair of Administrators, City of Greater Geelong (at the official launch of the Makers Hub, 19 September 2017).

With a focus on how the creative industries in Geelong can support economic and social well-being, Creative Geelong Inc aims to provide a forum where local innovators and thinkers can collaborate for greater good in the region.

We are focussed on higher outcomes for the good of the creative community while listening and embracing ideas from everyone. Part of our culture has grown to be

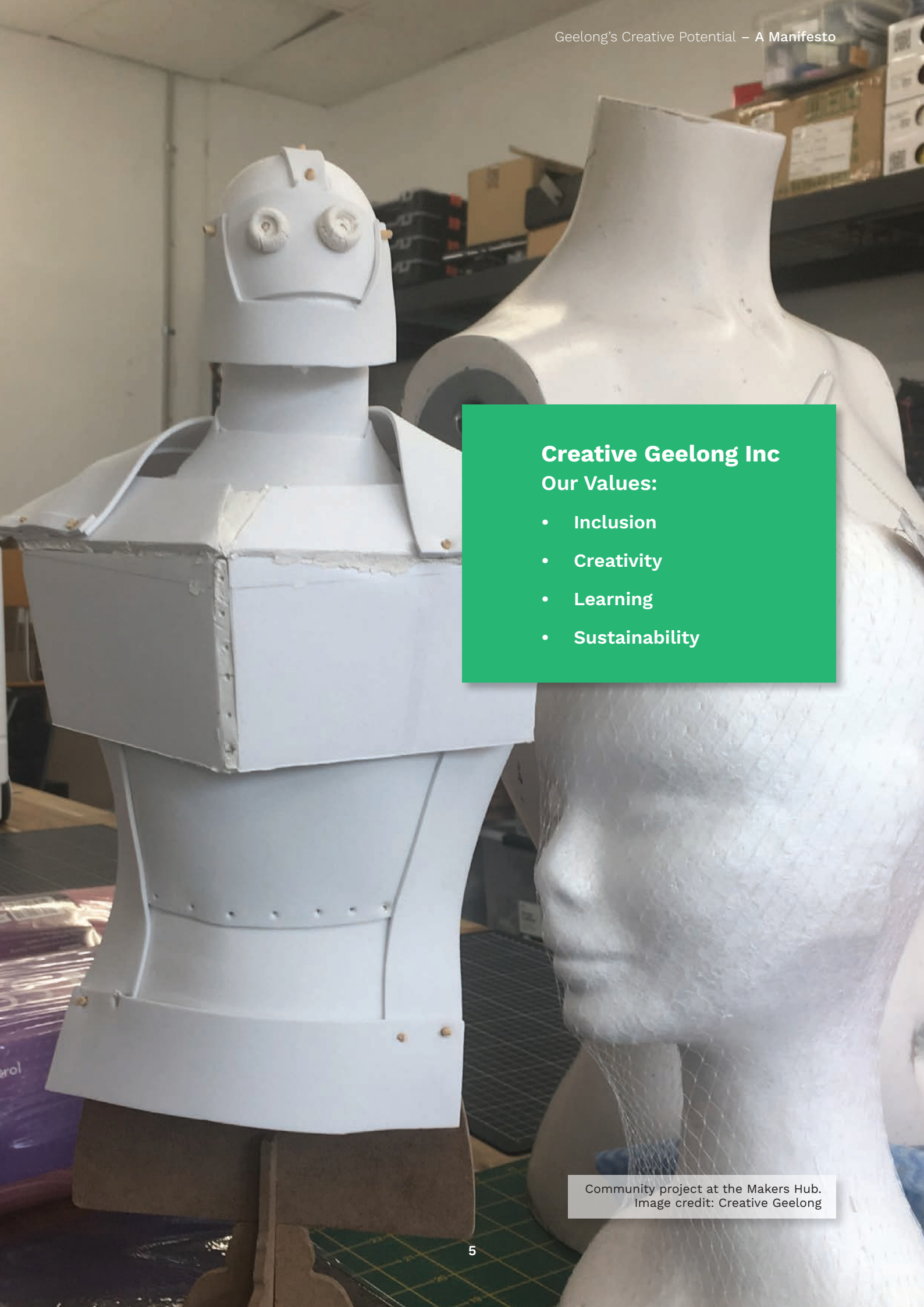
approachable, friendly and hard working. If you are at the table, we will listen to you. If you put up your hand to help, you will get a role. We do it together.

“ The Makers Hub has become a much - loved collaborative space for Geelong’s creative community – made up of a range of workshops, studios and creative spaces for artists and community groups.”

Victorian Government, Media Release, ‘A Creative Transformation for Geelong’, 22 March 2018



(From left to right): City of Greater Geelong Administrators Laurinda Gardner, Dr Kathy Alexander and Peter Dorling with Jennifer Cromarty (middle). Image credit: Creative Geelong



Creative Geelong Inc
Our Values:

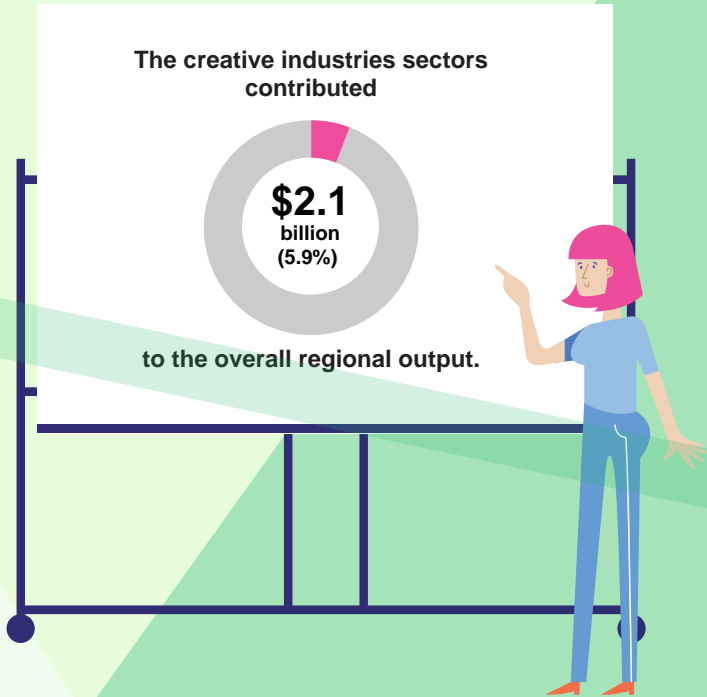
- Inclusion
- Creativity
- Learning
- Sustainability

Community project at the Makers Hub.
Image credit: Creative Geelong

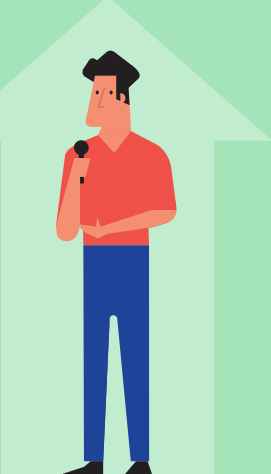
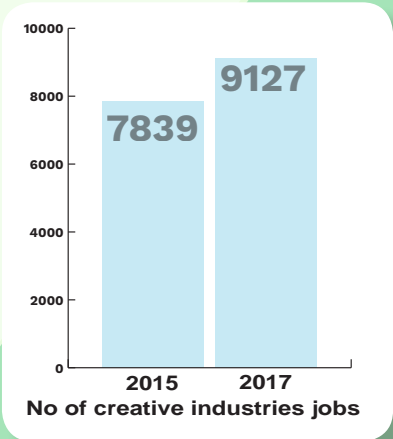
The Evidence-base

Back in 2015, Creative Geelong Inc, in partnership with Dr Jude Walker from the Geelong Region Local Learning Employment Network, wrote the Environmental Scan of the Creative Industries in the G21 region. In 2017, the City of Greater Geelong provided financial support for Dr Walker to complete an update of the scan using 2016 Census data.

1200+
jobs have been
created by creative
industries in the G21
region between
2015-2017



There are
5,252
creative industry
businesses in
the G21 Region
(2015)



There was a
rise of
16.4%
of creative
industries
jobs
in the G21
(2017)

Opportunity 1 | Telling Our Story

Moving on from negative perceptions about Geelong was a core focus for the establishment of Creative Geelong. Creative Geelong consistently shares stories of creativity, inventiveness, beauty and impact to ensure that Geelong is positioned as a wonderful place to live, work and play.

The work of the City of Greater Geelong in delivering the “Clever and Creative” vision coupled with the success of being designated as Australia’s only UNESCO City of Design has provided our community with a strong brand position to talk about Geelong’s creative future. At the launch of the UNESCO Creative City of Design event at City Hall in May 2018, the Mayor of the City of Greater Geelong Cr Bruce Harwood said that he believed Geelong had “at last found its brand”. Leveraging the clever and creative narrative and building on the UNESCO City of Design designation has given Geelong its new story to share with the world.

Creative Geelong also partnered with Deakin University and the University of Melbourne to raise funds to produce three short documentary films. The project team partnered with leading television documentary producer Nick Searle to tell the stories of Geelong’s industrial sites currently undergoing creative



transformations, pointing to a new creative and maker culture. The ‘Hubcaps to Creative Hubs’ crowd-funding campaign captured the imagination of the community with grants given from Geelong Connected Communities and City of Greater Geelong, and strong pledges from Truffleduck, TAC, Provenance Wines, Costa Property Group, David Hamilton Property Group, Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Fysho, G21, Gartland Property, UBU Gallery, tandemVox and Codeacious. Smaller pledges were made through the Pozible crowdfunding platform from others showing support across the wider community to reach the \$20,000 total.

The films included three of Geelong’s former industrial sites currently undergoing a creative transformation: Fyansford Paper Mills, R.S.S. Woollen and Worsted Mills in Newtown, and the Federal Woollen Mills in North Geelong.

The films were supported through the Victorian Government’s Culture Victoria website and have provided broadcast-quality marketing material to help promote and strengthen the local creative industries sector.

It’s now up to us as a community to support these stories and continue to collaborate and share our new ‘clever and creative’ vision to the world.



Hubcaps to Creative Hubs researcher, Dr Cristina Garduño Freeman with filmmaker Nicholas Searle
Image credit: Zebrafish Digital Media

Opportunity 2 | Central Geelong

Geelong is a large city within 70 kilometres of a major capital city. We have a glorious north-facing bay, a river and stunning beaches. With a new international airport, rail and road links and a port, Geelong is well-connected for work and play.

However, the heart of the Geelong CBD has struggled with negative perceptions. The key issue for the community has focused on the Little Malop Street Mall. There have been multiple consultations, forums and surveys about the Mall. Dr Fiona Gray, one of the founders of Creative Geelong Inc, has researched and written multiple papers about the history, perceptions and misconceptions surrounding the Mall. While media reports continue to focus on instances of anti-social behaviour, Creative Geelong has always taken the view that public space is for everyone and the experience needs to be safe and inclusive.

A key element in the Makers Hub project was that it needed to be located in the Little Malop Street Mall area. The Makers Hub could have been located anywhere, but it was important for the project to have economic impact while also creating social impact into the Mall.

The Makers Hub at Centrepunkt Arcade is located between Little Malop and Ryrle Streets and offers several linked spaces around an internal atrium with common seating areas in the public space.

This includes:

- MakerSpace & ArtSpace with 3D printers, laser etchers, small electronics, industrial sewing machines and other 'maker' equipment for access via workshops and paid subscription model.
- Co-WorkSpace for co-working desks for rent daily/monthly that targets professional services/creative industries tenants to support the rental needs of the premises and provide administration, strategic advice and coordination to the creative industries hub.
- StudioSpace – a former café has been re-invigorated as a sound recording, video and photography studio.
- WindowSpace – local creatives are being engaged to activate a range of shopfronts and arcade display windows in the Arcade. Our Windows program launched in May 2018 and provides affordable exhibition space for artists and creators.
- LearnSpace - areas for events and workshops/programs to be held.

By placing all of these elements together in one space, it is providing an energy and sustainability to the creative industries precinct and encouraging collaboration among industry, stakeholders, networks, government and

community. This project also creates a pipeline for new ideas and start-ups to further support the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Co-working and MakerSpaces are also part of the City of Greater Geelong's Digital Geelong strategy and Creative Victoria's Creative State Strategy, aimed at supporting and developing a vibrant and engaged 'Maker' and 'Creator' community.

The activation of Centrepunkt Arcade during 2017/2018 has already impacted on increased foot traffic and has brought this ageing retail arcade to life.

Since moving in during July 2017, the average increase in foot traffic through Centrepunkt Arcade has been between 40-114 percent each working day. During our activation of the Arcade for Geelong After Dark in May 2018 – the increase on average daily movements was 487 percent.

As part of this commitment to CBD activation, Creative Geelong Inc has signed an MOU with national not for profit Renew Australia. Renew Australia's Geelong project will connect privately owned and under-utilised spaces with local creative enterprises and initiatives, particularly focused on activating the ground floor spaces in Geelong's CBD with local entrepreneurs, start-ups and creatives providing free short-term rentals.

We need to keep talking and collaborating about our CBD and the Mall. As local stakeholders and government continue to work together, more sustainable opportunities and partnerships that improve access to shared spaces in CBD can be created.





Range of photos from the Makers Hub
Image credit: Creative Geelong

Opportunity 3 | Including Everyone

A core value of Creative Geelong Inc is 'inclusive'. These are not just words. We are committed to ensuring everyone is included and that our activities and actions have a clear purpose where no one is left behind.

We've been told that when people visit our Makers Hub project in Centrepunkt Arcade, there is a real sense of feeling welcomed and that it's a genuine community space. Most of our equipment and furniture has been donated or sourced second hand. Community members regularly bring in their own equipment and materials to work on both professional and personal projects. Often these items are then shared with others and become collaborative projects.

This sense of connection and belonging is a part of the ethos of the creative industries sector. Social impact and fairness for all - as well as a commercial focus - is core to many creative practitioners - which means the sector impacts economically, socially and culturally.

Officially opening in September 2017, the Makers Hub now has several like-minded organisations as co-tenants. These include:

- Youth services agency BATForce (Barwon Adolescent Taskforce)
- The Department of Justice's 'Suited for the Job' program - helping people dress and present professionally for work opportunities
- GenU Gamers - a program for people with anxiety, depression or autism where computer and board games are used for social interaction
- Social enterprise Good Cycles - training young people who are looking for work to repair and maintain bicycles to sell in the bike shop (set to open in late 2018).

These organisations and programs have all moved in to collaborate with Creative Geelong. The Makers Hub is now a genuine community, youth and creative hub with inclusive, prosocial range of activities and programs.

Creative Geelong has also worked with the Gordon's Skills and Jobs Centre and supported its 'Returnships' program. Five people have worked with Creative Geelong over 2017-18, who were returning from caring responsibilities and looking to re-engage with the workforce. A

key outcome for the Returnships program was to provide people with an opportunity to work on a range of projects with industry professionals and develop networks. The feedback we received was that participants gained the extra benefits of increased confidence and self-belief. We gained the benefit of having some great people help us out when we really needed it.

Creative Geelong has also signed the GROW Compact. The G21 Region Opportunities for Work (GROW) program is a long-term social impact project with a core focus on tackling the place-based disadvantage that stems from joblessness and improving the economic and social prosperity of the whole G21 region.

Creative Geelong plays a role to enable greater awareness of the GROW project and believes that the creative industries can provide a pathway for the future of work and wants to provide a forum for everyone to build the skills and capability necessary to participate in the economy.



(From left to right): Ryan Betson and Paris Conte from GenU GAMERS

Opportunity 4 | Conversations & Collaborations

Creative Geelong describes itself as a 'collaborative forum.' As an Incorporated Association, the only members are the committee of management (the Board).

We were quite purposeful in not setting up a traditional membership association.

The creative industries are by both nature and need, a very collaborative and sharing industry. To be creative, you need conversations. From conversations there are connections and collaborations – which can ultimately lead to creative ideas and

innovation. To be a traditional membership association, the focus would necessarily be on delivering benefits and outcomes for members. From the outset, Creative Geelong believes its focus should be on nurturing collaborations and creativity and providing an environment for the necessary conversations to occur. This is why we are a 'collaborative forum' and believe in co-working and providing a Makers Hub environment that is affordable and accessible.

Through this commitment to being collaborative, Creative Geelong has been fortunate enough to establish strong relationships with like-minded organisations and develop projects and programs to progress the purposes of the Association. Creative Geelong is already working with a range of organisations, has developed connections and projects, or received funding, goods and services by way of support.



Events are an important part of Creative Geelong's Makers Hub project
Image Credit: Creative Geelong

Collaborations

- Renew Australia / Renew Geelong
- Deakin University / University of Melbourne HubCaps to Creative Hubs film project
- City of Greater Geelong – Clever & Creative podcasts
- BATForce
- Geelong Region Local Learning Employment Network
- Pillowfort Creative
- GENU Gamer
- The Pop Culturists
- Geelong Region Opportunities for Work (GROW Project)

Pro-bono support

- WorkSafe
- Transport Accident Commission
- Fuse Advisory

Funding bodies

- City of Greater Geelong,
- Creative Victoria



Above Left: (From left to right): Nicola Wojcik and Nicholas Cupra from WorkSafe Victoria donating computers to Creative Geelong
Above Right: (From left to right): Jennifer Cromarty with Angela Simons, Renew Australia

Opportunity 5 | Measuring Impact

One of the first things Creative Geelong did when it was formed was to focus on developing an evidence base. The creative industries are not well-known in Australia and are not yet well understood. To have impact and drive outcomes for the community, we knew there was a need for data and evidence to highlight and support awareness of the sector.

Founder of Creative Geelong Inc Jennifer Cromarty has a background in policy and research. She had previously partnered with Essential Economics to write and research the potential impacts of creative industries in Victoria for Rural Councils Victoria in a project funded by Regional Development Victoria. As a result, the 'Rural Communities Supporting Creative Industries – Opportunities Paper' was published in 2012 alongside a detailed analysis of creative industries economic data 'Creative Industry in Rural Victoria.' Using

these data sets, Creative Geelong Inc has worked with Dr Jude Walker from the Geelong Region Local Learning Employment Network to populate data sets for the G21 region including the City of Greater Geelong local government area. The initial data was released in 2016 and updated in 2018 as the 'Environmental Scan of the Creative Industries.'

The Environmental Scan helps Creative Geelong talk to stakeholders and government about the importance of the creative industries sector on jobs and economic growth in the region. The aim is to have the creative industries recognised by key policy and government bodies as a sector of importance in the region. However, it is also important for us to collect data about our projects and experiences. This is why we also collect and record the impacts of our Makers Hub project and our collaboration with Renew Australia.

During 2017-19, Creative Geelong will be collecting a range of data sets to help measure our impacts. This includes foot traffic numbers in Centrepoin Arcade, following the journeys of people who are using the Makers Hub and collecting data on the events, workshops, programs and activities occurring in the Hub.

Part of tracking the journeys of the Makers Hub community includes collecting written case studies, recording podcasts and making various videos. This combination of sources will help us tell the story of the Makers Hub and the impacts of the space and community on the development of projects, businesses and people.

All of this data helps establish a starting point for monitoring outputs and achievements of Creative Geelong and help us understand and then explain the impacts of the sector as a whole.



(From left to right): Member for Geelong Christine Couzens with Jennifer Cromarty at the official opening of the Makers Hub multimedia studio

Opportunity 6 | Future of Work

A significant motivator for Creative Geelong is the need for our community to be prepared and aware of the future of work. We've all read the headlines about 'robots taking our jobs.' In fact, according to CEDA research in Australia's future workforce? report published in 2015:

"More than five million jobs, almost 40 per cent of Australian jobs that exist today, have a moderate to high likelihood of disappearing in the next 10 to 15 years due to technological advancements..."

Geelong was at the forefront of feeling the pain of a changing work environment with significant closures at Ford and Alcoa affecting our heavy manufacturing industry. While these announcements back in 2013 and 2014 were met with sadness and concern, they are not unique to Geelong.

When Creative Geelong was formed – understanding the future of work was paramount. Changing the perceptions of Geelong as a heavy manufacturing hub also meant we needed to talk about the new world of work and break free from our industrial past and embrace new technology.

Many people are fearful of large shifts in technology. While some jobs will go, it's harder to know what jobs will be in demand in the future. What we do know, is that there are skills shortages and gaps in capability in our region. These skills include a lack of technical skills in programming, software design and data science but also skills that require teamwork, systems and design thinking, collaboration and project management.

We need the skills that help us leverage technology as well as the skills to work with each other in both a face-to-face and online environment. These skills will continue to grow in demand and the work of the creative industries sector is at the heart.

Unfortunately, the way we educate our young people is not

preparing them adequately for the skills and jobs of the future. In schools, the teaching of maths and sciences are treated as separate from art and literature which does not support creative thinking. Keeping these disciplines separate will not help us find new ways of thinking how to tackle pressing issues. At the Creative Geelong Makers Hub there are daily interactions between people who are specialists in science and maths and those with a traditional arts background. This is the future of work.

And while we build these skills, we also need to embrace the need to be an attractive place to the people who have these skills and who can bring new jobs to our city. As the freelance market grows, and our start-up community matures, we need to be well-placed as a destination of choice for 'talent', as more people can, and will be choosing where they work purely because that's where they want to live.

Pockets of creative industries practitioners are now forming in our region as they are attracted to the beaches of the Surf Coast Shire and the heritage and culture of the Borough of Queenscliffe. Here in Geelong, the population is booming. Our laneways are bustling with an explosion of cafés and restaurants. Small studios are making and creating business. Co-working spaces have popped up throughout the city with freelancers, artists and tech people working side-by-side.

Photograph by Samuel Zeller

Geelong is well placed to support business growth with enviable lifestyle benefits. We can get around the city easily, have road, rail and ferries connecting us to Melbourne, and have the natural assets of a north-facing bay, the Barwon river and rolling country sides. With significant investment in our cultural precinct including GPAC, our visual and performing arts offering is gaining momentum. Our advanced manufacturing and tech sectors are also thriving with support from advanced manufacturing hub Manufactures at Deakin University in Waurin Ponds and the Pivot City innovation precinct in North Geelong, which are hosting multiple start-ups and new economy businesses.

Freelancing and being your own boss is growing as a career choice, enabled by the flexibility that digital technologies provide to choose when and where you work. As more skilled people choose to freelance, more organisations will start accessing this talent to fill skills gaps.

Geelong is well placed to tap into this market and be an attractive, affordable option for creative industries practitioners.



What Next?

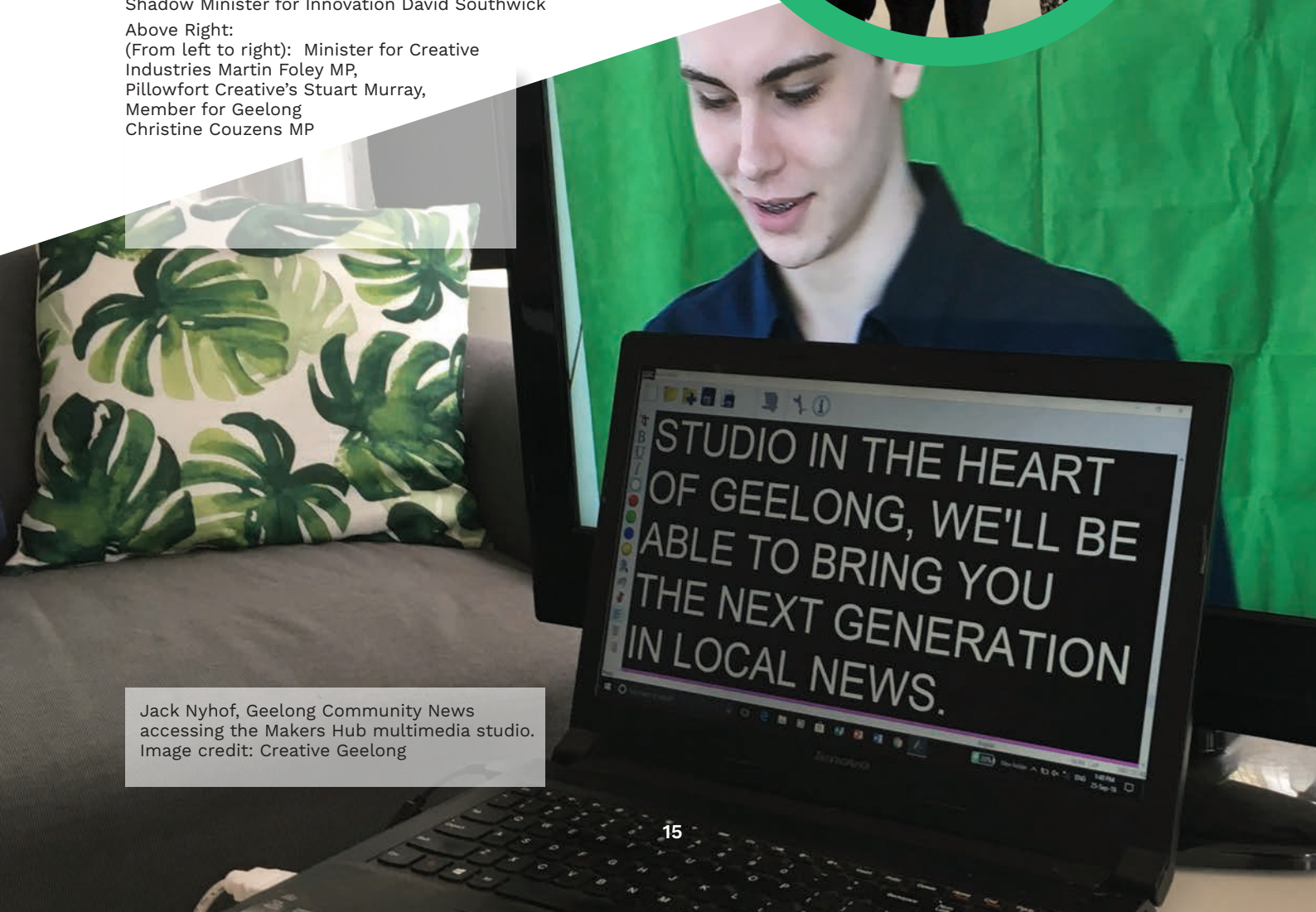
Creative Geelong is a young organisation. We have much to learn but we think we are on the right track. We'd love to hear from you if you believe in Geelong's creative future and are able to help. In the coming years, we want to look at making real impact in the Geelong CBD and develop our approach to prosocial activities and programs.



Above Left (From left to right):
Member for South Barwon Andrew Katos MP,
Shadow Minister for Innovation David Southwick



Above Right:
(From left to right): Minister for Creative
Industries Martin Foley MP,
Pillowfort Creative's Stuart Murray,
Member for Geelong
Christine Couzens MP



Jack Nyhof, Geelong Community News
accessing the Makers Hub multimedia studio.
Image credit: Creative Geelong



(From left to right): Wayne Elliott (Board Member), Sarah Auld (Board Member), Member for Geelong Christine Couzens MP, Simon Finch (Board Member), Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley MP, Adam Lloyd (Treasurer), Jennifer Cromarty (President).

Drop us a line at hello@creativegeelong.com.au, follow Creative Geelong on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram and subscribe to our newsletter.

Keep in touch and come to our events and workshops. Share your ideas.

Start a conversation. #CleverCreative #Digital #Inclusion #Community

**Creative Geelong Makers Hub, Centrepoin Arcade
132 Little Malop Street Geelong Victoria Australia**

www.creativegeelong.com.au

www.geelongmakers.com.au

www.hc2ch.com