Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis

Geelong and Surf Coast Victoria

QUT Digital Media Research Centre
Strategic summary

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 increase 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.

The Surf Coast Shire has high levels of specialist employment in Design. In 2016, 490 people earned their primary income in the Creative Industries, an average increase of 3.47% each year since 2011.

- The Surf Coast’s Creative Services sub-sector has the highest rates of specialists and embedded employment in comparison to those in Cultural Production in the region. The Cultural Production sector has the highest number of Visual Artists in this region, closely followed by Music and Performing Arts, while many embedded creatives are Writers/Publishers.
- The Surf Coast Shire is striving for art to be seen in economic development terms; art should not be seen as simply an add-on but crucial as a placemaking activity.
- Creatives in Torquay are embedded in the high-profile and economically dominant surfing industry.

The Geelong region has a vision to become clever and creative by encouraging an economic transformation that embraces Creative Industries to help it move away from heavy manufacturing to a more mature mixed economy.

- Geelong is positioning itself as one of the leading non-capital Australian cities, and the 2020 City Deal agreement commits $3 billion over 10 years to improve regional infrastructure and community projects, supported by federal, state and local governments.
- Geelong is pivoting away from the car industry, by uniting community groups such as Creative Geelong, businesses organisations such as G21, and the Council to deliver the city’s creative vision.
- Cultural tourism is a strength for the Surf Coast, with a seasonal population that almost doubles during the summer holidays and a string of year-round events and festivals that feed into the economy.
‘Zombie urbanism’, a globally homogenised way to develop creative cities, as pitched in a tourism video *Geelong Reinvented*, has been used to reframe Geelong’s post-industrial identity.

Co-working spaces, collective practices and entrepreneurial activities are evident throughout the region.

- Connections are enhanced through multiple co-working spaces – two fostered by Australia Post and National Australia Bank; creative hubs in locations such as Federal Mills Park, which has attracted digital innovation businesses; Deakin University, for advanced manufacturing; Little Malop and Makers Hub for creative arts, and Pakington Street, Newtown, for creative services.
- Renew Geelong is activating empty retail spaces in central Geelong.
- An activated cultural hub on Little Malop St and in Moorabool is the result of civic policy and an active property developer and it has been able to attract a diversity of thriving retail business.
- Surf Coast collaboration is occurring through co-worker spaces in Torquay, the Workers Hut and the old Quicksilver building, as well as Ashmore Arts, a commercial hub for artists.

Creative migrants are flowing from Melbourne into Geelong and the Surf Coast because G21 is big enough to accommodate global and aspirational businesses yet small enough for an interconnected ecosystems

- Geelong’s size, proximity to Melbourne, and ‘can-do attitude’ are its strengths.
- The Surf Coast is the original sea-change location, and with the successful delivery of the National Broadband Network (NBN), entrepreneurship and lifestyle choices can thrive.
- Geelong’s ‘big shiny’ cultural hotspots are identified as Queenscliff and the Surf Coast, especially Torquay, Rutland Street, Newtown, Pakington Street.

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The Victorian Government has a range of programs to support business, and programs and policies specifically to support Creative Industries, such as Creative State, a policy of Creative Victoria.

- The State Government has heavily invested in Geelong’s arts and cultural facilities, and this has allowed opportunities for creatives to generate intellectual property for future success.
- Creative Victoria has an astute understanding of the value of the Creative Industries for regional economies, and that may also be the case at the local government level.
- Geelong is a UNESCO creative city, an international city of design, focused on Creative Industries and encouraging networking across CI sectors.
- The Council has fostered sustainable design and architecture and has built major public infrastructure such as Green Spine.
- Geelong and the Surf Coast community have realised that creative growth is less about having an audience, and more about the cost of living and sharing artistic experiences within the community.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that wider Victoria understands that the digital infrastructure offered in Geelong is known to accelerate the ongoing diversification of the broader economy through the Creative Industries.
- Celebrate the cultural diversity in Geelong and the Surf Coast and amplify this through the Creative Industries.
- The City of Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast Shire need to create focused Creative Industries strategic plans to harness its economic development opportunities.
- Geelong’s CBD needs further redevelopment, as central Geelong has struggled for decades to have a vibrant retail street offering.
- Creative migration is occurring in both the Surf Coast Shire and Greater Geelong, and both Councils need to maintain their awareness of the importance of career development pathways for their communities.
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Acknowledgements

The research team gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people and organisations for providing the information and insights that made this report possible:

Geelong Participants
Hugo Armstrong - Bay City Events and Blues Train
Clint Agustsson - FE Technologies
Liam Banks - Tribal Callista
Deniel Bee - Music Workshop
Katherine Branch - Back to Back Theatre
Andrea Bruce - Renew Geelong
Brandon Burns - Runway Geelong
David Cairns - Geelong Advertiser
Sahn Cramer - The City of Greater Geelong
Jennifer Cromarty - Committee of Geelong
Corey Dodd - Elk Creative
Peter Dostis - Runway Geelong
Mitchell Dye - The Pulse Community Radio
Duncan Esler - The Greater City of Geelong
Alison Harvey - Back to Back Theatre
Luke Harris - Hanalei Studios
Nicholas Heath - PACE
Zoe Hollingsworth - Video Confidence Coach
Renato Inei - Boom Gallery
Kate Jacoby - Boom Gallery
Jennifer Kidd – Acetate Base
Padraic Lee Fisher - The Greater City of Geelong
Darren McGinn - StudioMade
Patti Manolis – Word for Word writers festival
Robert Menaul - Creative Geelong’s Makers Hub
Dominic Monea - Oxygen College
Ross Mueller - Writer
Stuart Murray – Pillowfort Creative
Dare Pekin - Creative Geelong’s Makers Hub
Ryan Perera - RMIT Graduate
Andy Pobjoy - Piano Bar Geelong
Andrew Powell - FE Technologies
Ian Priddle - Codeacious
Brad Rush - GPAC (Geelong Performing Arts Centre)
Ilana Russell - Courthouse Youth Arts
Leigh Ryan – Pillowfort Creative
Stephen Ryan - Regional Development Victoria

Geelong Participants
Mark Sanders - Third Ecology Architects
Jason Smith - Geelong Gallery
Rochelle Smith - Word for Word writers festival
Jarred Steenvoorden - FE Technologies
Harrison Tribe - TAFE Graduate
Catherine Ward - Ceramicists
Hilton Winiecki - Oxygen Music
Amy Wright - Multimedia Artist

Surf Coast Participants
Craig Baird - Australian National Surf Museum
Chris Burton - Falls Festival
Clifton Daniell - Fluid
Gary Dunne - Australian National Surf Museum
Harriet Gaffney - Surf Coast Shire Council
Stewart Guthrie - Ashmore Arts
Jacques Leemans - XGameDev
Melanie Leemans - XGameDev
Leon Walker - Lorne Sculptor Biennale
Peter Winkler - Peter Winkler Architects
Background and context

Djillong, meaning ‘tongue of land’, describes the region where the Wathaurong community lived before European settlement. That community is still there, but their country is now known as Geelong and the Surf Coast (Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation, 2020). The geography of the region is a unique blend of coast, mountain, farmland, rainforest and urban landscapes.

Geelong and the Surf Coast are treated here as one entity, although there are marked differences between them. Geelong serviced a wool industry on its western plains and, with a manufacturing and seaport past, it is now a post-industrial city. The Surf Coast has benefitted from the ‘sea change’ phenomenon. Both communities have fast-growing populations and have benefitted from their proximity to Melbourne. They are deeply integrated with this major urban centre.

The region is a crucial part of the G21 Geelong Regional Alliance, which comprises the City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, the borough of Queenscliff and the south-west portion of the Golden Plains Shire (Walker & Cromarty, 2018). Established in the 1830s, Geelong developed into one of the largest manufacturing regions in Victoria, with mills for wool, paper and rope. Geelong became a pivot point where cargo moved from rail to sea, and sea to rail, earning the nickname ‘The Pivot’.

Population

Outside of metropolitan Melbourne, the region’s population, at 324,067, is the fastest growing in Victoria, with a growth rate higher than the national average. The region is increasingly sought-after by people seeking a ‘sea-change’ or ‘tree-change’, and it is a popular tourist and holiday destination. Population increases over the past decade were due to growth in service and tourism industries, as the manufacturing sector has declined. On average, the region has an older population than the whole of Victoria; with 18.1% of residents over 65 years, compared to 15.6% for Victoria (G21, 2020, p. 36).

Figure 1   Demographic profile by place of residence, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast local government areas compared with greater Melbourne and regional Victoria, 2016

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016)

Geelong’s population is 263,280 and, in 2011, 65% of Greater Geelong residents lived in urban areas. The inner city has been redeveloped and inner suburbs gentrified. Many commute from Geelong to greater Melbourne for work, with ‘17,000’ workers commuting by train each day, while ‘6,500 come the other way’ (G21, 2020, p. 36).
The Surf Coast has a population of 33,381 with a 2.6% growth rate that is ‘focused in Torquay and neighbouring Jan Juc’ (Surf Coast Shire, 2017, p. 13). The coastal lifestyle is attractive to young families and retiring ‘baby boomers’, and during summer the population doubles as ‘holiday-home residents, seasonal visitors, event crowds and daytrippers’ visit (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 13).

**Economy**

The G21 Region, of which the City of Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast Shire are a part, has a diverse economy, with manufacturing, agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, tourism, education, research, health, and services. Manufacturing still dominates, with more than 50% of regional exports, ‘about $7.9 billion’, coming from the manufacturing sector (G21, 2020, p. 36). Traditionally heavy manufacturing had been the main employment sector, based around companies such as Ford, Viva Energy and Alcoa. The 2016 closure of Ford Australia’s Geelong engine plant and Broadmeadows assembly plant put 1,200 people out of work (Beer, 2018). In Geelong, the Ford closure, combined with Alcoa closure, meant 1,000 jobs were lost between 2014 and 2016 (Mills, 2020).

As the international economic climate impacted on large-scale manufacturers, leading to downsizing or closure, the region had been planning and diversifying its employment base. New investment opportunities were grasped and fostered, creating growth in new industries. Future growth areas are scientific research, advanced manufacturing (such as composite fibre), innovative agribusiness, specialist insurance and personal injury services, ICT, tourism and Creative Industries services and production (G21 2020).

G21 is the Strategic Planning Committee which provides advice to Regional Development Australia (RDA) and the State and Federal Governments on the region’s needs and priorities. G21 identified regional challenges as: very high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage in specific areas; low high school completion rates and lower levels of tertiary qualifications; higher levels of unemployment and more women working part-time; and lower household and individual mean incomes (Vaughan, 2014, p. 17). The City Deal agreement is aimed at addressing many of these challenges, through a combined government commitment of $3 billion over 10 years for ‘infrastructure and community projects across the region’ (G21, 2020, p. 5). The City Deal has secured a financial commitment of $370 million: $183.8 million from the Commonwealth, $172 million from the Victorian Government, and $14.2 million from the City of Greater Geelong (G21, 2020, p. 9).

**Figure 2 Economic activity by ANZSIC subdivision, Greater Geelong local government area Greater Geelong**

![Economic activity by ANZSIC subdivision, Greater Geelong local government area Greater Geelong](image)

Notes: Bubble size = business count. Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Australian Business Register (2019), iidcommunity (2019), REMPLAN (2019).

The Greater Geelong region is doing well, with growth in all key economic indicators. From 2011 to 2016 the regional population grew by 2.1%, and Gross Regional Product grew 4.6%, higher than the state average.
Table 1  Economic indicator summary, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast local government area, 2016

|                  | Population | Gross regional product ($m, 2017-18) | Total employed | Total businesses |
|------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Greater Geelong  | Measure    | 233,426                              | 12,340         | 95,058           | 56,982           |
|                  | Avg annual growth, 2011-2016                        | 2.1%            | 4.6%            | 3.7%             | 2.3%             |
|                  | % of state                                         | 3.9%            | 3.2%            | 3.9%             | 3.0%             |
| Surf Coast       | Measure    | 29,402                                | 1,512          | 8,694            | 10,320           |
|                  | Avg annual growth, 2011-2016                        | 2.6%            | 8.2%            | 4.0%             | 2.9%             |
|                  | % of state                                         | 0.5%            | 0.4%            | 0.3%             | 0.6%             |

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a), Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018b), .id (2019)

The economy of the Surf Coast Shire is unique, and distinctly different to that of Victoria, Geelong and surrounding regions, with the surfing industry representing almost 27% of all jobs and 26.5% ($217 million) of all ‘Value Add’ activity (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 31). Regional Product grew by 8.2% between 2011 and 2016. The Surf Coast Shire Council Plans for 2017-2021 report there are ‘3,000 businesses, which provide more than 7,000 local jobs’, worth more than ‘$1 billion annually’, with a 4% growth rate (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 32). Small business drives the economy and the top three employment sectors are accommodation and food, construction, and retail (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 32). The unemployment rate is very low; approximately half of that of the broader G21 region and Victoria itself. Shire residents are employed outside of the shire with ‘employment options including telecommuting, working part-time or working in the broader G21 area’ (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 32). Locally based employment opportunities will need to increase to retain current levels of employment between 2017 and 2021 (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 32). Tourism plays a vital role, with more than two million visitors in 2016, enjoying major surfing and musical events, generating ‘$105 million annually in expenditure’ and drawing ‘an annual viewer audience of over 32 million globally’ (Surf Coast Shire 2017, p. 35).

Figure 3  Economic activity by ANZSIC subdivision, Surf Coast local Government area.

Notes: Bubble size ~ business count
Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Australian Business Register (2019), .idcommunity (2019), REMPLAN (2019)
Geelong’s post-industrial identity

Geelong is a city searching for its ‘post-industrial identity’ (Gray, Garduno-Freeman, & Novacevski, 2017, p. 68). Academics from Deakin’s School of Architecture and Built Environment have explored the cultural re-invention of Geelong in a series of articles (Gray et al., 2017; Gray & Novacevski, 2017) and examined aggressive antisocial behavior in the CBD. The research examines the form, function and nature of Geelong’s Market Square Mall over the past 30 years (Gray & Novacevski, 2015), examines the consequences of the termination of heavy manufacturing, and seeks to explain how Geelong has repurposed industrial sites and embraced the city’s ‘maker spirit’ by connecting with innovation and fabrication (Gray et al., 2017, p. 61). The concept of ‘zombie urbanism’ (Gray & Novacevski, 2017, p. 328), where a certain globalised and homogenized effect is evident in urban planning particularly in regard to creative cities, as pitched in a tourism video Geelong Reinvented, has been used as a way to reframe Geelong’s post-industrial identity (Robot Army Productions, 2014). Geelong continues to pivot away from the car industry, even though its built environments and ‘spatial fabric remains dependent on the automobile’ (Gray & Novacevski, 2017, p. 328).

Creative economy

The role and impact of the Creative Industries at a global, national, state and regional level has been examined for the G21 region, finding that Creative Industries provides growing economic benefits. The G21 Arts, Heritage and Culture Pillar aims to foster artistic creativity, cultural leadership and involvement, and the recognition and use of heritage assets by: promoting culture for all by engaging the community; developing artists, ideas and knowledge; building creative industries; acknowledging, celebrating and creating places and spaces; and promoting cultural leadership (G21, 2019).

Geelong’s Creative Industries data from 2017, in the Creative Industries Environmental Scan 2018 (Walker & Cromarty, 2018), shows increased growth since 2015 for regional output (up by 0.9%), regional exports (up by 1%), total employment (up by 16.4%) and wages and salaries (Walker & Cromarty, 2018, p. 10). It draws on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) UNESCO definitions using 11 sectors: ‘advertising, architecture, books, gaming, movies, music, newspapers/magazines, performing arts, radio, television and visual arts’ (Walker & Cromarty, 2018, p. 18). In those CCI sectors the G21 region has 3,730 working individuals. It is male dominated, with 2,447 men to 1,283 women, and shows growth of 16.7% from 2011.

The report found workers from Engineering Design and Engineering Consulting Services, Computer System Design and Related Services, and Architectural Services, had the highest incomes, the highest levels of post-graduate qualifications and worked the longest hours, probably because ‘these people may quite likely be owner/operators’ (Walker & Cromarty, 2018, p. 49). Those working in Market Research and Statistical Services and Arts Education had the lowest incomes, probably due to the ‘part-time nature of some of this work’ (Walker & Cromarty, 2018, p. 49). Employment in Arts Education; Creative Artists, Musicians, Writers and Performers; and Advertising Services sectors, represented those working less than ‘15 hours per week ... these people may be freelancing or only interested in part-time work’ (Walker & Cromarty, 2018, p. 47).

Regional cultural festivals are ‘strongly connected to local communities through employment, volunteerism and participation’ (Gibson, Waitt, Walmsley, & Connell, 2010, p. 280). Geelong hosts 52 festivals, with two – the Pako Festa and Geelong Show – claiming audiences of 100,000 (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 285). These small-scale festivals produce big direct and indirect economic benefits for communities (Gibson et al., 2010).

Research into Australian car manufacturing and its employment of embedded creative workers found that 52% of embedded creative workers are performing the same tasks as specialist creatives (Rodgers, 2015). This research should be relevant for Geelong, because of its automobile manufacturing past, however, the de-identified case studies means it is impossible to locate these experiences as being specific to the G21 region. So, it is not clear whether any of these embedded creatives benefited from Federal Government programs to support redundant workers and supply chain businesses affected by the wider automotive manufacturing closures, such as the Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund, or the Ford company’s own program, Ford Workers In Transition Project (Australian Government, 2020). Regardless, Rodgers’ overall finding confirms that ‘embedded
creatives are critical to innovation in manufacturing, and thus they play a key role in the future of Australian manufacturing’ (Rodgers, 2015, p. 20).

High levels of employment in the Creative Services sub-sector, as described through the Creative Industries Environmental Scan 2018, (Walker & Cromarty, 2018) are visible when looking at employment by industry and occupation (see Figure 4). Greater Geelong’s Creative Services sub-sector has grown from 2011 to 2016, and there is an increasing dominance in employment in Creative Services for other industries. Cultural production sectors employ fewer people overall. The Surf Coast follows similar trends, but surprisingly the number of jobs in Creative Services in other industries fell between 2011 and 2016.

**Figure 4  Creative service and cultural production employment by industry and occupation, 2011 and 2016, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast local government areas**

![Heatmap Image]

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016)

Australian 2016 Census data for Geelong identifies 4,386 people who earned their primary income in the Creative Industries sector, with a creative employment intensity of 4.61% and an overall growth of 6.25% (See Appendix A.1). In particular, the Creative Services (CS) sub-sector are key growth areas for both creative specialists and embedded creatives: for Architecture and Design (8% growth), Advertising and Marketing (7.5%) and Software and Digital content, which includes software design, app development and games (6.3%). For the Cultural Production sub-sector (CP) there is a strong performing arts and music scene (9% growth), followed by Film, TV and Radio (7.2%), a supportive network of writers, and support for the sector known as the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) through the performing arts, theatres, and Geelong Library.

The Surf Coast Australian Census data for 2016 identifies 490 people earning a primary income in the Creative Industries, with a creative employment intensity of 5.58% and overall growth of 3.47% (See Appendix A.1). Creative Services has the highest level of employment of creative specialists in Architecture and Design, and strong employment levels for embedded creatives, that is those employed in other industries. For Cultural Production on the Surf Coast, the highest levels of specialist employment are in Visual Arts, closely followed by Music and Performing Arts, with other industries employing writers and those with publishing skills.

The heatmaps (Figure 5 and 6) show that concentration of CS and CP professionals, measured as a proportion of total employment, differs slightly across the region. Creative services professionals are concentrated in Geelong CBD, while there is also a mild concentration of creative services professionals in Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads, which could be due to lifestyle choices. For Cultural Production, there is a concentration again in Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads, and along the Surf Coast in Lorne and Anglesea.
Changes in Creative Industries employment, total earnings, mean income and business registrations can be tracked. The comet chart provides a comparison between 2011 and 2016 (See Figure 7), revealing for Geelong and the Surf Coast there has been some significant sector increases in the number of micro businesses (those
with no GST registration and turnover of less than $75,000), compared with larger businesses (those registered for GST). Examination by sector indicates significant growth in Architecture and Design, and Software and Digital Content, for both micro businesses and larger businesses, for employed persons and total earnings; self-employment is stronger than employment in larger GST-paying business.

Figure 7  Creative industry employment, total earnings and mean income by place of work compared with business registrations, 2011 and 2016, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast local government areas

There are several creative industries sectors in the Greater Geelong and Surf Coast local government areas where there is no growth, or negative growth, such as employment and earnings for Advertising and Marketing, Film, TV and Radio, and Publishing. Further, mean incomes earned by people working in Advertising and Marketing occupations fell between 2011 and 2016. Looking at the ABN and employment data together shows increases in employment in Architecture and Design and Software and Digital Content coinciding with increases in business registrations, particularly micro businesses. Similar but much smaller increases can also be seen in Visual and Performing Arts. Publishing shows a significant change in mean income, while the number of employed persons shows no change. Growth in the numbers of larger GST-paying businesses is subdued, except for Software and Digital Content, and Architecture and Design. Given the strong level of Victorian investment in facilities for the Cultural Production sub-sectors, it is disappointing to see no growth in earning and employment. However, it is likely that the growth is there, but not visible in this data as it draws on primary income Census data, and any secondary income, casual earnings or volunteerism is not visible. The Cultural Planner at City of Greater Geelong Council, Sahn Cramer, explains ‘a lot of people may not feel confident that they’d be able to support themselves in a creative career, and so they have another career that supports them … Most artists have another job until such time that they can be successful’ (Cramer iv, 18 June 2019). In this regard we note the economic contribution made through part-time work is invisible when drawing on Census data.

Local Government policy context

In 2018, Geelong Council delivered its ‘Council Plan 2018–22 – Putting Our Community First’, focused on improving ‘the City of Greater Geelong’s resources to deliver infrastructure, services and programs to the community in a sustainable way’ (City of Greater Geelong, 2018, p. 3). With 11 strategic priorities – four related to the Creative Industries – it is focused on incorporating arts and cultural initiatives into infrastructure development to enhance a sense of place, with a specific focus on a recognition of First Nations culture, sharing
heritage, improving public art, and the GLAM sector. The delivery of creative outcomes were framed through the UNESCO Creative City of Design, bestowed on Geelong in 2017 (Creative Cities Network, 2017) and include strengthening connections with the ‘National Wool Museum; the Geelong Gallery redevelopment; Mountain to Mouth; Geelong After Dark; [and] cultural trails’ (City of Greater Geelong, 2018, p. 11). Success measures are laid out for each of these priorities, leading to increased access to cultural collections and libraries, maintaining visitations to cultural facilities, improved online engagement and ‘increased employment in creative occupations’ (City of Greater Geelong, 2018, p. 11). The Council’s specific aims for 2018-2019 included the development of a cultural strategy, attracting more national art exhibitions, supporting music and performing arts programs, commencing Osborne House remediation and conservation plans for significant infrastructure (City of Greater Geelong, 2018, p. 11).

In terms of the development of Innovative Finances and Technology, the Council aims to achieve digital growth by attracting more technology-focused businesses, through enhancing smart technology and digital tools to improve service delivery such as increasing free Wi-Fi in public spaces (City of Greater Geelong, 2018, p. 15). The Council also has a Live Music Action Plan for central Geelong, helping to grow ‘networks and align community, commercial and government efforts towards a more active, creative and sustainable live music culture in Geelong’ (Greater City of Geelong, 2017). Renew Geelong is also operating in Geelong’s central shopping precinct through a matched funding partnership between Creative Victoria and Geelong Council (Renew Geelong, 2018).

The Surf Coast Shire’s Council Plan for 2017-2021 (Surf Coast Shire, 2017) identifies population growth as a major issue, with ‘the permanent population forecast to rise from 30,048 in 2017 to almost 44,000 by 2036’ (Surf Coast Shire, 2017, p. 13). Anticipated growth in its permanent and seasonal population means the sustainable management of infrastructure and environment is critical. The Council accepts that more could be done regarding affordable housing, housing density, traffic, parking, tourism, alternative inland routes for the Great Ocean Road, the attraction of major employers, and digital technology (Surf Coast Shire 2017).

The Surf Coast Shire Council recognised the challenges in a wide variety of employment opportunities, but indicated focus could be placed on promoting professional, non-seasonal, home-based and youth employment opportunities (Surf Coast Shire 2018, p. 18). Transport for those employed outside the region could be improved while the Shire’s major events were recognised as providing ‘immediate economic contributions’ to the community. The Council is also working to increase off-peak season events (Surf Coast Shire 2017, p. 32). While Surf Coast Shire Council has limited ability to directly impact the unemployment rate, it is able to support business development and attraction, create business networks and facilitate connections between education and business (Surf Coast Shire 2018, p. 30).

‘Creative Places 2019-2021 A New Vision’ presents the Shire’s development strategies which recognises ‘the vital role arts, culture and heritage plays in helping our communities and environment to thrive’ (Surf Coast Shire, 2019 p. 2). The Creative Places vision has four key themes that align with Council objectives: celebrating Aboriginal cultural heritage; placemaking; enhancing creative industries; and showcasing the best and brightest (Surf Coast Shire, 2019, p. 3). The aim is to align work in these areas with ‘the next Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy’ to be adopted in 2021 (Surf Coast Shire, 2019). Arts practitioners and arts workers are supported through the Surf Coast Arts Space, the Surf Coast Arts Trail, and Surf Coast Arts Calendar, alongside the conservation of local heritage (Surf Coast Shire, 2019). Arts Development Officer at Surf Coast Shire, Harriet Gaffney, wants to work with Council’s economic development team to ‘ensure that art is not seen as simply an add-on’ but to ‘recognise the crucial need for placemaking activity within the shire’ and that developer contributions are put toward placemaking (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019).

Creative Victoria, Launch Vic and Regional Development Victoria

Victoria has stolen the march on other Australian states in attracting Creative Industries. The Victorian Government has an advanced understanding of 21st century Creative Industries; how they are constituted and how they contribute to highly interlinked state and regional economies. Capitalising on this knowledge, the
Government gives agency to Creative Victoria, Launch Vic and Regional Development Victoria, who work across a dispersed network that creates an ecosystem to support the totality of regional Creative Industries.

Creative Victoria’s schemes have enabled a rich creative ecosystem to exist by offering programs that ‘stimulate high quality, diverse creative activity across the state’ (Creative Victoria, 2020). Their Creative Activation Fund, Innovation in Marketing Fund, Quick Response Grants, Unlocking Capacity Grants, and First People’s Creative Industries Traineeship program offer real creative opportunities (Creative Victoria, 2020).

Launch Vic is generating a globally connected start-up ecosystem. Since 2016, it has dispersed $6.5 million in funding to support 26 Victorian start-ups (Launch Vic, 2020) and has conducted mapping of the Victorian Start-up Ecosystem, Angel Networks, Sports Tech, Health Tech, Victorian Tech start-ups and digital marketplaces (Launch Vic, 2020).

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) supports industries and new investments that lead to jobs in the regions. Its industry specialists work directly with businesses, and its economic development teams work with non-business organisations such as councils, chambers of commerce and universities, ‘groups that work across multiple areas’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). RDV leads engagement through the government’s Regional Partnerships initiative which includes a committee of community representatives, the ‘community’s voice into government’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). RDV works closely with G21 in the pillars of economic development and education and training. The GROW (G21 Regional Opportunities for Work) Program was established in Geelong with stakeholders including G21, the Chamber of Commerce and the Committee for Geelong, as well as industry focused groups such as Geelong Manufacturing Council and Creative Geelong.

**Creative Geelong**

Creative Geelong Inc., an industry focus group supported by RDV, was founded in 2015 by Jen Cromarty, also the CEO of the Committee for Geelong, ‘to give Geelong a sense of identity as a creative centre’ (Menaul iv, 18 June 2019). Creative Geelong is involved in a range of projects and seeks support from Councils, the Victorian Government, non-government agencies, business and community to collaborate and partner with them. The board for Creative Geelong included members of the Civic Collective, the Committee for Geelong, Netgain, Geelong After Dark/Pako Festa, Auld Planning and Projects, Codeacious, Rogue Academy and BATForce. Creative Geelong strives to provide a forum for local creative collaboration, understand the work of the future, to tell stories of Geelong’s creativity and to solve problems in the community (Creative Geelong, 2019). Creative Geelong began as a social network on Facebook, and the not-for-profit continues to demonstrate the importance of the Creative Industries to the region’s transformation, through research, advocacy, filmmaking and crowdfunding. It has created connections that change lives: ‘People who weren’t in work, got work. People who had a business, have grown their business’ (Cromarty iv 17 June 2019).

Educational pathways for creative youth are also important, but not all creative development is linear. Padraic Lee Fisher, the National Wool Museum Director at Geelong Gallery, suggests that the ‘linear progression of career opportunity’ is ‘not how it’s happening’ and ‘not the only way it happens, particularly not in the 21st century’ (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019). Instead, ‘mid-career artists’ or ‘creatives’ are ‘finding themselves transitioning from one thing to another. They may be working as a seamstress someplace and that might be considered creative, but they are actually a performing artist who’s doing other things, doing installation art’ (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019). People may learn ‘employable trades’, such as automotive painting, and then transition those skills into creative industries (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019). Some transition at the end of their career or ‘as a secondary career’ (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019). ‘Very few are lucky enough to make their passion their career’ (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019).
Grant Funding – Local, State and Federal

Each level of government has strategies designed to fund the Creative Industries and, when examined holistically, it is possible to see the ecosystem at work. Regional Development Victoria and Creative Victoria contributed to Stage two of the Geelong Arts Centre (GAC) redevelopment, The Creative Engine, which opened late 2019. The $38.5 million redevelopment (Brereton, 2019) saw the redesign of the former Mechanics Institute and sandstone church on Ryrie Street become a ‘massive glass and steel cantilevered building’ providing ‘state-of-the-art dance studios’ and improved accessibility (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). Stephen Ryan, RDV Manager for Economic Development, says the GAC has ‘nurtured and developed a number of performing arts companies and other enterprises and businesses’ over the years in ‘an ad hoc way’ in ‘higgledy-piggledy’ old buildings, and this more recent redevelopment aims to provide ‘dedicated co-working spaces’ for creatives. RDV emphasises the benefits that will come from the co-location of artists with the GAC (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). Stage three of the Geelong Arts Centre redevelopment will be a $128 million theatre redevelopment, funded by Creative Victoria. Through ongoing Creative Victoria funding, The Creative Engine offers opportunities of cash and in-kind projects, between $5000 and $20,000, to support ideas where artists meet audiences (GAC, 2020).

Figure 8 Cultural grants by investment type, Geelong & Surf Coast

Figure 9 Federal, state and local cultural grant and infrastructure funding Geelong & Surf Coast

Geelong Council provides ongoing administrative support for the gallery, the library and the Courthouse youth arts centre. It provides $220,000 in small grants annually – including the Creative Community Grants (Geelong City Council, 2020) program in which $120,000 goes towards arts grants and $100,000 towards festivals to ‘support arts development and to impact community development through art works and art projects’ (Esler iv,
18 June 2019). Biennially and triennially, the Council offers opportunities for larger projects and festivals. In 2017-2018 the allocated budget was $184,300 with another round in 2019-2020 (Geelong City Council, 2019). The grant program is also ‘an interface with our community, and an opportunity for hearing more about their projects’ which can help local organisations in ‘touring and helping them get connected’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019). Surf Coast Shire offers an annual Arts Development Seed funding round.
Strategic theme 1
What are the interrelationships across the sub-sectors of the creative industries?

The makeup of the populations of Geelong and the Surf Coast means all occupations across the sub-sectors have an existence in the region and this breadth and depth, in terms of business longevity and/or highly skilled mature practitioners, is where the interconnections between the CI sub-sectors occur. With people working in large firms, micro businesses or as freelance creatives, there are high quality international services and products available in the G21 region.

The diverse nature of work within and between these sub-sectors includes occupations that would not normally be associated with creative work. Conversely, many local firms, such as real estate agencies, have marketing, website and social media teams. The most obvious interrelationships occur between the Creative Services sub-sectors, and examples demonstrate a highly mature and dynamic sector existing in this region.

CREATIVE SERVICES

Advertising and Marketing = Branding and Design

The global trend where there is a merging of Advertising and Marketing with the Digital Design sub-sectors is reflected in Geelong and the Surf Coast. These sub-sectors offer specialist creative services for other CI businesses as well as businesses in the wider economy where Geelong’s largest source of creative employment is in advertising and marketing. It accounts for the largest numbers of jobs by both industry and occupation and has the highest earnings by occupation, which has doubled from 2006 to 2016. However, marketers are more likely to be embedded in non-creative industries than employed in specialist marketing firms, whereas advertising and design creatives can work in very small or medium businesses which offer creative services in digital collateral creation through website design and social media management. Geelong and the Surf Coast have some leading agencies including Fluid, a branding agency located in Torquay and South Melbourne, and Pace, in Geelong, the oldest operating advertising agency in Australia.

Pace, established in 1964 (Pace, 2019), emerged from the advertising department of the Ford car dealership group (Heath iv 17 June 2019). Today, it employs 15 people and is a full-service agency, offering traditional advertising services, digital strategies and marketing services including websites, apps and digital production.

Pace owner Nicholas Heath said the company’s employment profile has changed in line with trends. In the 1960s there was an Art Department, with artists who would create newspaper advertisements, and they also employed writers and musicians. These employees would have been included as occupations within Cultural Production whereas today they employ ‘marketers’, ‘designers’ and ‘code developers’, who are part of the Creative Services. Digital marketing includes leveraging Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and social media, while digital production includes ‘writing blog content and EDM development to YouTube video production’ (Pace, 2019). The employee talent pool has changed dramatically. Today, Pace employs university graduates as designers and coders, and freelancers to make television commercials, and that relationship has been stable for 20 years (Heath iv 17 June 2019). Choc Chip, a digital marketing agency specialising in app development, was recently purchased by Pace, with the intention of maintaining it as a separate entity. Pace runs an internship with Deakin University which helps identify potential employees (Heath iv 17 June 2019).

Fluid, a branding agency recognised locally for producing very high-quality work, presented at the G21 Pivot Summit in 2019. The Executive Creative Director, Clifton Daniell, asserts that ‘authenticity is the currency of today’s branding’ (iv, 19 June 2019). Fluid has a large corporate client base in Melbourne, including Carlton United Beverages and BHP. Established in 2001, Fluid employs 15 people across two offices.

Elk Creative is a small design agency, with two full-time workers. Core business is designing and branding through websites for small to medium-sized local businesses; ‘bread and butter jobs’ are around $20,000 for trades
businesses (Dodd iv, 17 June 2019). Elk Creative designs everything in-house and specialises in brand consistency across all business assets: logos, brochures, business cards, vehicles and digital collateral. Owner Corey Dodd’s sales pitch is that a polished business website helps to build ‘trust’ with clients because it delivers an accurate reflection of what each business actually is (Dodd iv, 17 June 2019).

Geelong and Surf Coast have a number of smaller advertising and marketing firms such as Video Vault, Flip Switch Media, and The Tribe, as well as freelancers such as marketer Jo Smith, who does work for big retailers such as Myer and Energy Australia.

**Digital Content Visualisations as Animation, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)**

Specialist software and digital content businesses exist in Geelong and the Surf Coast, operating as IT specialists, games developers, AR and VR, and animation studios. Local businesses include Enterprise Monkey, Hanalei Studios, Codeacious, XGameDev and Pillowfort Creative and each appears to be a key example of the interconnections between cultural production and creative services.

**Pillowfort Creative** is a small animation studio whose services include ‘2D traditional, 2D digital, 3D, motion graphics, architectural visualization, AR and a bit of VR’ (Murray iv, 18 June 2019). Co-founded by duo Leigh Ryan and Stuart Murray, their animation services are unique to Geelong, and there is no local competition (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). Drawing on their 15-year freelance careers as ‘animators and illustrators’ for kids TV shows for broadcast, they provide ‘a crazy mixed bag’ of creative services (Murray iv, 18 June 2019). Local jobs include animations for the National Wool Museum, motion graphics for Deakin University, and a visualisation of products for designer Penny Scallon. Globally, they have worked on a web series for Zuru, and produced ‘nine episodic, two-minute shorts for kids, based on a toy franchiser in China’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). Located in the **Creative Geelong Makers Hub**, their aim is to ‘establish the animation industry in Geelong’ by pitching ideas for broadcasters to fund a series and employ locals (Murray iv, 18 June 2019).

**Enterprise Monkey** is co-located in Melbourne and North Geelong. They aim to solve complex business problems through simple digital solutions such as web applications, web design, and development solutions that are achieved through mobile applications.

**Hanalei Studios** is run by Luke Harris, a freelance game developer and XR developer. He works with Extend Reality Tech, including mixed reality, virtual reality and augmented reality. Clients include the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, German manufacturer Bosch Rexroth, and local start-ups such as Pillowfort.

**Codeacious**

Geelong’s Arts and Culture Trails app was designed by **Codeacious**, a creative software studio. Codeacious builds business apps and does ‘fun, interesting integration-type projects with other artists’ (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019), such as the augmented reality project based on a mural of the late singer **Chrissy Amphlett** in Little Malop Street, commissioned by the City of Greater Geelong. Their goal long-term is to be a ‘product business’, not necessarily a ‘services business’ (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019) and head of design Ian Priddle said they are working on a ticketing product that will allow event organisers to ‘create experiences for attendees’ (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019). Priddle said connection between local creatives is vital, and ‘a level of government policy’, local and state, is ‘contributing to those interconnections’ through small grants and broader economic development (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019).

Good internet has been vital. Priddle said Codeacious doesn’t use ‘the NBN, the product provided by the government’ (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019) because Geelong had HFC fibre installed by a private company, now operating as iiNet. This provides internet access speeds of ‘250 megabit down and 50 megabit up ... We couldn’t run our business without internet like that’ (Priddle iv, 17 June 2019).
XGameDev – Torquay

XGameDev has designed 18 games but their core work is engineering for others with a specialisation in ‘multi-player game development’ (Leemans, J. iv, 19 June 2019). Clients, including Pubbly, Aerobo and Creative Curriculum International, are worldwide including from the United States, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Egypt and South Africa. South African-born husband and wife Jacques and Melanie Leemans run the business from their Torquay home, a location they chose for their children’s schooling as much as for its gaming reputation and creative community. His experience as a software engineer and hers in Microsoft service and support combined to create their business, but it almost faltered at the start because of poor internet.

Arriving in 2015, Torquay did not have the NBN: ‘That was the last thing we even thought of, coming from Third World, going to First World. The internet speed was five download, one upload’ (Leemans, J. iv, 19 June 2019). Added to the shock that their assumption about connectivity in a supposed First World country was mistaken, the slow speeds soon affected their business, a business premised on reliable digital infrastructure. Within two months they had no clients left and Jacques had to find a job and was fortunate to be employed at Deakin University: ‘I worked there for two years and then midway through that the NBN came in’ (Leemans, J. iv, 19 June 2019). Now with fibre to the node they achieve 40 Mbps download, 10 Mbps upload; ‘not ideal, but it’s fine’ (Leemans, J. iv, 19 June 2019). Fast internet is essential because they act as developers and project managers for clients who generally provide the assets required – narration, animation, text and music files. Their suppliers are also international. Their audio editor works from South Africa and they outsource some graphic design, but it’s ‘in the cloud’ and freelancers can be anywhere in the world. Their long-term goal is to move away from a service provider business to make more of their own games (Leemans, J. iv, 19 June 2019). The challenge is paying the bills. While they have researched venture capital, ‘they want you to build a product where they can get a big return on investment in a year or two’ (Leemans, J. iv 19 June 2019). For them, seeking government grants requires time to ‘build a prototype’ or spend ‘a week on documents unbilled’ which they ‘just financially cannot’. ‘It’s the balance of having clients right now [and] trying to build your own thing on the sideline’ (Leemans, M. iv, 19 June 2019).

Architecture

Geelong typically has sole practitioners or very small firms of architects employing between two and five staff. There are a few that have between five and 10 employees, but most of the large firms are in Melbourne. The architecture sector employs two types of CI specialists, Architects, and Software and Digital Content specialists. Architecture also employs more support staff than other Creative Industry sub-sectors. Clients are dispersed throughout the broader economy, with commercial, retail, education and healthcare customers, as well as developers.

Melbourne firms win most of Geelong’s big architectural jobs, which have budgets of more than $2 million, and it’s common for Geelong architects to commute to Melbourne. Deakin University’s Geelong Campus has a thriving School of Architecture. Local firms, such as Select Architects, offer ‘end-to-end’ services for commercial, retail and town planning clients. Others, such as Cotter Reid, and James Deans & Associates, have been operating in Geelong for nearly 20 years. Practices such as Zohdy & Associate Architects, and 3D Architecture, operate in Geelong and the Surf Coast. It’s also become common for Melbourne firms to set up with a Geelong address, while never actually operating in Geelong (Sanders iv, 18 June 2019).

Third Ecology Architects is a solo architectural practice, but pre-GFC it employed 15 staff. Today, it specialises in design and project management of new homes, renovations and multi-residential projects for owner-occupiers, investors and developers across Geelong, the Surf Coast, Otways and the rural hinterland. Third Ecology has a good reputation and owner Mark Sanders said ‘word of mouth’ is the main way of attracting new clients (Sanders iv, 18 June 2019).
On the Surf Coast there are high quality residential architects, such as Peter Winkler Architects, established in 2005 (Winkler, 2019). The practice specialises in medium- to high-end residential dwellings, multi-residential and office fit-outs. In 2017, Winkler won the Timber Design Awards, Recycled Timber House of the Year (Winkler, 2019). Winkler, a Deakin University graduate, runs a three-person practice, implementing architectural solutions that realise both function and form, requiring a unique creative design response to each site. Operating from a home office on the Surf Coast, Winkler has calculated that with ‘one staff I can just survive. With two staff, I start to move ahead really well’ which means they can be profitable and efficient (Winkler, 19 June 2019). Their smallest projects are around $650,000, for a renovation, with the average project sitting at $1 million to $1.2 million. In 2019 Winkler was working on an Apollo Bay, ‘four-bedroom architectural-designed home priced around $2.1 million’ (Winkler, 19 June 2019).

CULTURAL PRODUCTION
Live Music and Retail

Considering its proximity to Melbourne, the music scene in Geelong is well serviced by performers, booking agents, retailers, suppliers, recording studios and venues. The Surf Coast has the very successful Falls Festival, while Geelong hosts music festivals such as the Queenscliff Music Festival, Meredith Music Festival, Offshore Festival, Poppykettle Festival, and National Celtic Festival. Notable musicians from Geelong include Chrissy Amphlett, Barry Crocker, Gyan Evans, Magic Dirt, Jeff Lang and Denis Walter. The City of Greater Geelong has a Live Music Action Plan which is important, as music shop owner Deniel Bee indicates, audiences are hard to come by: ‘People just aren’t going out during the week’; it’s more expensive, and they have the ‘distractions’ of streaming services such as Netflix and Stan (Bee, 17 June 2019).

The Live Music Action Plan focuses on ‘four elements’: venues, artists, audiences, and a ‘broader community that are in principle supportive of the arts, whether or not they attend the arts’ (Esler, 18 June 2019): City of Greater Geelong Coordinator of Arts and Cultural Development Duncan Esler asserts that ‘if you have a community that are complaining because there is too much loud music and too much noise, or they see the city festivals interfering with their day-to-day, it makes it more difficult to deliver’ (Esler, 18 June 2019). Geelong is in ‘a growth phase’ and will ‘hit a threshold’ where it can potentially ‘sustain programs and nightlife entertainment and live music’ (Cramer, 18 June 2019). Cultural Planner at City of Greater Geelong Council, Sahn Cramer, suggested ‘that’s what we will work towards, and it’s just a balancing game of trying to attract that population out of Melbourne at the same time build investment in arts and culture’ (Cramer, 18 June 2019). The Live Music Action Plan recognised that Geelong based musicians will need to leave Geelong to establish themselves with metropolitan audiences (Esler, 18 June 2019). The plan also seeks to encourage established artists to become mentors for other local musicians.

In terms of venues the Piano Bar Geelong is an interesting one. It employs local musicians who draw an over 35 crowd that is 80% female – ‘the three Gs – the grannies, the girlies and the gays’ (Pobjoy, 17 June 2019). Owner and jazz musician Andy Pobjoy employs two staff, 25 hours a week to handle social media and bookings which includes touring performers such as Rick Price and Dolly Diamond, tribute bands, local bands and drag shows, but ‘core business’ three nights a week is a piano man who takes requests. The Piano Bar guarantees local musicians ‘three-and-a-half, gigs a week’ (Pobjoy, 17 June 2019). Business growth hinges on ‘keeping overheads at a minimum’ which is possible in the regions (Pobjoy, 17 June 2019). The bar is decorated with paintings by local artist Jae Allen.

The recording studio, don’t Poke the BEAR, is located in Geelong West close to the heart of the city. Competing with Melbourne’s entrenched and historically successful recording studios, it offers production services with a
roster of freelance professional engineers and producers who cater to a diverse range of musical projects. These recording projects come from up-and-coming artists through to fully established music professionals as well as from other parts of the Cultural Production sector. For example, a number of radio plays have been recorded there which were completed in conjunction with the Greater Geelong Creative Inc, the City of Greater Geelong and Skin of Our Teeth Productions. One of these, ‘The Machine Stops’, was originally written by EM Forster and adapted by E. Watson, directed by R. O’Connor and produced by Someone New Theatre. It was engineered in the studio by the award-winning Travis Dom. The studio also has rehearsal suites and live sound equipment for hire. It is owned by three brothers who also own a private creative arts college. Oxygen – Creative Arts College is a private provider in Geelong offering vocational tertiary programs in music, photography, digital media, visual arts, film and design. It is supported through the Victorian Government’s Skills First program. Founded in 2006 by musician brothers Tony, Joe and Dominic Monea, it grew out of a music school they started in 1986 as a way ‘to supplement their performance income via regular teaching’ (Monea iv, 17 June 2019). The school continues, with private instrument tuition for 100 students. While most of their students stay local, there are people ‘doing international work’, such as musicians Xavier Rudd and Evangeline, and Aboriginal artist Yirrmal. Geelong businesses have been supportive in terms of offering internships and work experience to students. As Dominic Monea claims, ‘there’s no substitute for experience, and getting in and getting your hands dirty’, and Geelong Workers Club is a strong promoter of local original music (Monea iv, 17 June 2019). They’ve found dealing with local government ‘a lot of red tape’. They employ a digital content specialist and a blogger to help tell their story. The internet has been vital to their business, especially teaching photography and graphic design where applications such as Adobe are ‘in the cloud’, and they were fortunate that ‘the street was picked up by network cable’ nine years ago, prior to the NBN. These brothers also started the music retailer Oxygen Music. This retail outlet sources instruments through wholesalers in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, from manufacturers in China and Japan, with some from the United States and Europe (Winiecki iv, 18 June 2019). They have an in-house string instrument repairer and outsource bigger jobs (Winiecki iv, 18 June 2019). They have an online store, but most business is in-store, with promotion through social media and email (Winiecki iv, 18 June 2019). They partner with local schools in ‘battles of the bands’ and provide ‘sponsorship dollars’ in prizes. For 10 years, they ran Drumania, a festival featuring student drummers, teachers and touring professionals ‘from all over the world’, workshops, expos and a family sausage sizzle (Winiecki iv, 18 June 2019). Apart from some local TV coverage, ‘the council never came on board with any support’ (Winiecki iv, 18 June 2019) and it was discontinued.

Music Workshop Geelong is a retail, production and installation company servicing Geelong and the western district. Its ongoing existence indicates the strength and depth of the music scene in this regional centre. Predominantly guitar-based, it’s a 40-year-old family business that employs six full-time staff, four casuals, and seasonally up to 30 contractors; ‘once the sun’s out, it all happens’ (Bee iv, 17 June 2019). General manager Deniel Bee said the ‘wholesale model’ means it can be faster to get replacement ‘parts from New York than from Perth to Geelong’ because ‘retail in this country’s not big enough to demand the ability to purchase direct from the manufacturer’ (Bee iv, 17 June 2019). Customers are savvier than they used to be; ‘pre-internet, customers came in wanting to source a product based on your advice. It’s very much shifted now. There is such a massive amount of information available via blogs, and product research is so easily done now… [Customers] come in saying “this is the product that I want. This is the price I want to pay for it. If you can make that and supply it now, I’ll take it”’ (Bee iv, 17 June 2019). The hire business helps with sales, supplying venues, acts and festivals in the region such as Queenscliff Music Festival and Port Fairy Folk Festival (Bee iv, 17 June 2019). National and international touring acts might also use their gear. In terms of audiences, ‘people just aren’t going out Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday’ (ibid); it’s more expensive, and they have the ‘distractions’ (ibid) of streaming services such as Netflix and Stan.
Bay City Events

Bay City Events is a Geelong events company located on Little Malop St that has been in business for 40 years focused primarily around musical events. Having been previously involved with Queenscliff Music Festival, Echuca Winter Blues, Motor City Music Festival and the Royal Geelong Show, their focus is now on promoting the Queenscliff Blues Train dinner and show, and music programming for the Festival of Sails and venues such as the Flying Brick Cider House. Director Hugo Armstrong is proud to use all Geelong suppliers for staging and screens, security, fencing, marquees and toilets, and local creative services professionals for web design, graphic design and advertising (Armstrong iv, 20 June 2019). Musical performers are a ‘mix of local and Melbourne, a little bit of interstate’, and punters come from Melbourne with a ‘reasonable amount from Geelong, depending on the event’ and ‘strong numbers out of Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton and Waurn Ponds’ (Armstrong iv, 20 June 2019). Armstrong said promotion and coverage of events is an issue: ‘We can’t get any media coverage because we’re relying on Melbourne’ and big media players ‘don’t cover Geelong except for the AFL’ (Armstrong iv, 20 June 2019).

Back to Back Theatre

Back to Back is a unique theatre company employing an ensemble of six artists with intellectual disabilities. A mainstay of the international circuit, Back to Back creates extraordinary contemporary work in Geelong which is commissioned and co-funded by international theatre presenters, festivals and venues. The company exists ‘because of those artists, not for those artists’ (Harvey iv, 18 June 2019). Annual reports since 2012 lay out an impressive body of internationally recognised performances (Back to Back Theatre, 2020, p. Publications; Holden, 2016).

Figure 10 – Back to Back Theatre Income and Expenses 2014-2019

Established 30 years ago, they operate on the presenter model: ‘We don’t hold the ticket sale responsibility because we sell out our shows to presenters’ (Branch iv, 18 June 2019). Creating original work, Back to Back Theatre’s ‘selling point is ourselves, to the presenters of a festival ... that could be locally, nationally or internationally’ (Harvey iv, 18 June 2019). Employing the presenter model effectively shows the artistic directors of the company have a mature understanding of how to develop their intellectual property. The raising of private income and investment began in a concerted way in 2014, and the outcome was approximately $160,000 (Back to Back Theatre, 2014, p. 30). The largest source of income is performances (36%) followed by operational grants (31%). In terms of expenses, artists’ wages are highest (29%) followed by core employee wages (26%) and production costs (19%). Interviews revealed how the company has achieved these financial outcomes as well as continuing to grow their international performance reputation. Funded through all levels of government, the quality of their work and international reputation is due to the dedication of Executive Producer Alice Nash and Artistic Director Bruce Galdwin. This production team builds ‘those relationships and negotiates those performance fees. And the marketing team supports us by providing us with collateral that we can use to sell the
organisational and sell the shows. Our marketing point is between us and the presenters’ (Harvey iv, 18 June 2019). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Back to Back Theatre has ‘temporarily suspended all programming and activities, indefinitely’ (Back to Back Theatre, 2020).

**Court House Youth Arts**

Court House Youth Arts (CHYA) defines youth in two ways: ‘It can be youth in terms of age, or it can be in terms of practice. So, youth can also be people emerging in their practice’ (Russell iv, 18 June 2019). They began as The Creative Collective in 2015, working with a group of six young people who brought unique individual skills to the overall team. Voicebox was a multidisciplinary performance held on the waterfront precinct to showcase their talents. In 2016 and 2017 the collective took on four more members, focusing on writing, dance, visual arts and theatre (CHYA, 2019). The Council is a major funder of CHYA providing ‘$250,000 of core operational funding’ on a multi-year scheme (Russell iv, 18 June 2019). Other funders include Creative Victoria, through their Organisational Innovation Implement (OIP) scheme, which has a four-year funding cycle of $67,000 annually. Geelong Central Marketing and the Department of Human Services also provided project grants (Russell iv, 18 June 2019).

The Council acknowledges the challenges in providing career pathways in the performance sector, realising that ‘deeper engagement’ will lead to ‘development and through to emerging artists and career pathways’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019). CHYA has just completed its strategic three-year plan. Previously, they hired their venue and space to ‘corporate, community and creative bookings’ (ibid), behaving more as a service provider, but in 2019 they changed that practice, now offering creatively led programs.

**The Creative Engine – Geelong Arts Centre**

Geelong Arts Centre (GAC) was re-branded in 2019. (Formerly known as GPAC, the ‘performing’ adjective has now been dropped). The rebranding coincided with the redevelopment and opening of The Creative Engine, with ‘beautiful rehearsal, incubator, and flexible spaces’ that will help GAC fast-track the curation and development of new work (Rush iv, 17 June 2019). The Creative Engine aims to be a ‘home for all creative industries and a hub for young artists and creative businesses across a range of disciplines’ (Coldwell-Ross, 2019). GAC is moving away from being a ‘venue for hire’ offering performance spaces for touring, local and community performances, to focusing on developing new work that will generate intellectual property. The Creative Engine offers small grants as part of this push, which signifies a shift from Performing Arts into Creative Industries. Unfortunately, the opening and use of The Creative Engine has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions (GAC, 2020).

**Commercial and corporate screen businesses**

Most of the screen production businesses in Geelong are commercially focused, primarily because Geelong is part of Melbourne’s television licence area, so all commercial and community television is made and broadcast from the state’s capital. It is not surprising, then, that Melbourne employs 5,000 television workers and Geelong employs 50.

In Geelong, there are commercial and corporate screen production businesses who make commissioned work for clients from the corporate, not-for-profit and government sectors. Acetate Base, Love Letter Films and Crafty Fox Media are three commercial screen production businesses owned and operated by business partners Andy Marriott and Jennifer Kidd. Crafty Fox Media focuses on social media advertising, Love Letter Films offers bridal and wedding video packages, and Acetate Base offers video production and post-production services for TV and high-end corporate productions (Kidd iv, 20 June 2019). The businesses ‘cater for different audiences’ and separate agendas help attract the right sort of clients (Kidd iv 20 June 2019).

There are two types of local film production. Those who leverage Film Victoria’s Production Attraction and Regional Assistance Fund (Film Vic) typically shoot films in the region and do post-production in Melbourne or
Sydney, which Kidd finds disappointing ‘because there's a massive pool of world-class talent’ in Geelong (Kidd iv 20, June 2019). The second type, emerging local productions, include independently funded TV series (Boshier & Moore, 2017; Pobjie, 2019) and low-budget feature films (Groves, 2019)

A location for screen production

Geelong and the Surf Coast have attractive locations for feature and television serial productions. For example, the highly popular 1990s series Sea Change was filmed on location at Barwon Heads between 1998 and 2002 (Millar, 2007). Film attraction is beneficial for regional locations, as international or interstate productions might film for weeks at a time, providing economic benefits for the broader community, particularly in accommodation, catering and employment of local people. Geelong and the Surf Coast continue to feature in Australian productions; for example, The Dressmaker (2015) was filmed in the region.

Geelong radio

Radio is a mature Creative Industries sector, and regional radio contributes to a whole series of interrelationships both within Creative Industries itself and beyond. Geelong’s radio stations continue to compete with Melbourne radio, which can be received clearly in the region. Despite this, there are six local commercial, public and community stations broadcasting across a range of formats; rock and pop music (K-Rock), a community station (The Pulse) a Christian community station (Rhema FM), country music (Hot Country Radio), adult contemporary (Bay FM) and a radio reading service (3GPH).

As an example The Pulse is a community FM station (94.7 FM), which is underwritten by Geelong Ethnic Communities Council. The remit is broad, with programs in Dutch, Russian, South Sudanese, Afrikaans and Croatian. Announcer Mitchell Dye says, ‘we try to throw open the doors to as many people as possible because that’s our job as a community radio station’ (Dye iv, 18 June 2019). Analytics show their internet stream has listeners in ‘all parts of the world’ (Dye iv, 18 June 2019). Dye said, ‘community radio is a tough environment and we operate on a shoestring budget’, with only three paid staff and 100 volunteers (Dye iv, 18 June 2019). Although it has been ‘challenging’, presenters have adapted to making podcasts because ‘with the changing media landscape, people expect stuff to be available on demand’ (Dye iv, 18 June 2019). Dye himself presents a ‘Geelong-centric’ current affairs program. The station has programs dedicated to the arts, and outside broadcasts finished with a local artist ‘giving these people platforms that they otherwise wouldn’t get’ (Dye iv, 18 June 2019).

Geelong Advertiser and Surf Coast Times

As far as the Publishing sector goes in Geelong, the daily paper, the Geelong Advertiser (circulation in 2018 was 46,276), is produced by News Corp Australia (Gee, 2020). Established in 1840, it is the oldest newspaper title in Victoria and the second oldest in Australia. The free Geelong Independent and Geelong News are the city’s other major newspapers. The Geelong Advertiser is part of Rupert Murdoch’s international News Corp group and, as such, services such as IT are managed in-house through ‘vertical integrated’ systems. Advertisers use ‘two layers’ of engagement with the paper – nationally through national advertising agencies, and locally through local agencies, and the Geelong Advertiser has ‘ad reps on the ground’ (Cairns iv, 17 June 2019). The newspaper’s business editor David Cairns notes that businesses, particularly retail, have ‘all had to develop a digital footprint and some capacity to operate online’ (Cairns iv, 17 June 2019), and that this requires ‘a bigger investment for a local player than someone who is a national or international player’ (Cairns iv, 17 June 2019).

Regional newspapers have been impacted by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, 2020), but fortunately the printing of the Geelong Advertiser was unaffected by News Corp shake-ups in April and May (Doran, 2020). However, the Star News Group, which publishes the free weekly Geelong Independent, has reduced its print run by 70%. The Times News Group is still home-delivering
and bulk-dropping its weekly newspapers, the *Surf Coast Times* and the *Armstrong Creek Times*. Newspaper jobs in the region could be affected when the Federal JobKeeper program ends.

**Local Writers and Publishers**

Creative specialists such as writer Ross Mueller exploit all opportunities to earn an income, and that means working across all media and performing arts areas. Mueller’s income is generated from being a playwright, radio and television series writer, a grants writer and a journalist. Based in Geelong, Mueller has had eight plays published which have been performed at Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) and Sydney Theatre Company (STC). As a playwright, Mueller is employed by commission: ‘With MTC the commission is just the starting point. The payday is the royalties, which can be substantially bigger. So, I've had a show at STC, which did really well, and that was a big payday for me, which ended up half of it going [in tax] to John Howard’ (Mueller iv, 18 June 2019). In 2019, Mueller was working as a grants writer for Geelong Ethnic Communities Council, while writing a column for the *Geelong Advertiser*, freelancing for Crikey.com and ‘working on a series for ABC Radio. That pays too, which is good!’ (Mueller iv, 18 June 2019).

To help other writers in the region [Geelong Writers Inc](https://www.geelongwritersinc.org) was set up as ‘a non-profit community group formed to promote support for writers’ (Geelong Writers Inc, 2019). Their aim is to promote writing and literature in the Geelong and Surf Coast regions, for both emerging writers and seasoned professionals. Geelong Writers Inc have published collections of memoirs, poetry and short stories and ‘flash fiction’ pieces called *Touches of Resilience* (2018), edited by Justine Stella.

Other small owner-operated publishing businesses have emerged, distributing publications electronically through services such as Issuu. [Drop of a Hat Publishing](https://dropofahatpublishing.com) is run by Colin Mockett an ‘award-winning journalist, experienced at writing, editing (including illustrating) and creating attractive page layouts through to whole book design, proofreading and publishing’ (Mockett, 2019). There are a number of retail book shops operating in Geelong, with two Dymocks stores and the independently-owned [The Book Bird](https://thebookbird.com.au) founded in 2015 (The Book Bird, 2019). [QBD Books](https://qbdbooks.com) operate in the arts precinct in Malop St, and [Bookgrove](https://www.bookgrove.com.au) which opened in 2009, hosts author events using social media channels for promotion (Bookgrove, 2019).

**The Dome - Geelong Library and Heritage Centre**

The Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, known as [The Dome](https://www.geelong.vic.gov.au/), is the central library for a network of 17 libraries across four local government areas (Geelong Regional Libraries, 2019). The integration of the heritage centre and the library has made an historical catalogue of images, artefacts and records accessible internationally, increased visitor numbers 17-fold, and improved accessibility to the community. The building is also a tourist attraction for local, national and international visitors, and was shortlisted for the International Library of the Year award in 2016 (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). Patti Manolis, the CEO of Geelong Regional Library Corporation, explains the library is building a ‘digital repository’ that will connect the collection with historical societies making their information ‘accessible to anyone around the world’ (iv, 17 June 2019). Creative Services professionals are helping staff create the repository and develop a library app.

**Non-fiction literary festival**

The annual [Word for Word Festival](https://www.wordforwordfestival.com) is hosted at Geelong Library and Heritage Centre and is ‘the only exclusively non-fiction focused literary festival in the country’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). It started as a collaboration between the library, the City of Greater Geelong and Deakin University, and was hosted by the university for the first two years, moving to the library four years ago. Featuring in the order of 76 presenters and 45 sessions across three days, with masterclasses and panel discussions moderated by Deakin academics, it is a ‘significant literary festival that attracts a very high calibre of non-fiction authors’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). Past authors, across the genres of
memoir, biography, true crime, sport and politics, have included Geelong-based Helen Garner, Peter Carey (from Bacchus Marsh, who attended Geelong Grammar), Anthony Albanese, Chris Masters, Stan Grant, Gillian Triggs, Julian Burnside, Jelena Dokic and Kon Karapanagiotidis. Festival topics, such as asylum seekers, can be confronting. Controversy attracts local and national media interest and plays out on social media. Writers and audiences interact on Twitter, and Instagram now gives a national and an international reach. The library has partnered with Express Media (at Melbourne’s Wheeler Centre), Scribe Publishing, and the nib Awards, to provide prizes for young writers, and Victoria Writers assists with curating a program of workshops. Festival director Rochelle Smith said it was well regarded: 'We have a strong following of audiences and are very highly commended by the participants, the authors themselves as well’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). Manolis said the Word For Word festival is ‘the heart of what public libraries are all about creating a freedom of information and a safe space for encouraging debate’ (Manolis iv, 17 June 2019). Local writers are more likely to be promoted through the library’s usual program than the festival, which carries prestige (Smith iv, 17 June 2019).

Independent Artists – ceramicists, potters, painters and illustrators

There are several visual artists working full-time in the region who make an income selling locally from studios and on Instagram, and teaching their craft (Wright and McGinn, iv 20 June 2019). **Timothy White** is an Australian ceramicist with 25 years’ experience. **Lynne Tae** is an impressionist and paints semi-abstract landscapes that evoke a sense of atmosphere (Houzz, 2019). **Bahman Vahab** carves stone and has been involved in sculpture for 30 years. **Sisko Designs** is a creative studio that specialises in custom art pieces for interior and exterior. **Sandie Copland** is a freelance Illustrator focused on the beauty of natural forms who has exhibited widely across Australia and who consolidated her love of illustration by completing the Natural History Illustration degree at the University of Newcastle (Houzz, 2019).

**StudioMade** pottery studio, retail space and café was launched by artist Darren McGinn in 2018 as ‘a gallery collective with an emphasis on community engagement’ and ‘a way of sustaining [his] own craft and sculpture ambitions’ (McGinn iv, 20 June 2019). McGinn’s daughter runs the café attached to the studio as well as its Instagram page and his wife, a nurse, looks after the website and administration. McGinn prefers face-to-face client contact to online sales, which are ‘too much work for too little return’ but does use Instagram to promote his and his students’ work (McGinn iv, 20 June 2019). McGinn teaches in the studio with casual tutors and produces ceramics for high-end clients such as Aaron Turner’s Restaurant, Igni and Rakumba Lighting and others which gives them ‘extra income to help pay a huge mortgage’ (McGinn iv, 20 June 2019). He occasionally exhibits in Geelong galleries (McGinn iv, 20 June 2019). Instagram is the main way multimedia artist **Amy Wright** sells her work, including to international clients in the US and Berlin. Wright sells her works for between $300 and $5,500 and provides free shipping within Australia because ‘the cost of shipping would deter people’ (Wright iv, 20 June 2019).

**Geelong Gallery**

Established in 1896, **Geelong Gallery** is one of Australia’s oldest art galleries. It holds a collection of Australian and European paintings, sculptures, printmaking and decorative arts dating from the 18th century to today, notably Frederick McCubbin’s 1890 *A Bush Burial*, and Eugene von Guerard’s 1856 *View of Geelong*. In the year to June 2019, almost 160,000 people visited the gallery, a 36% increase on the previous year (Geelong Gallery, 2019). The gallery has space to display only 3% of its 6,000 works and is seeking to expand into the historic City Hall, with plans under the Cultural Precinct Master Plan of the broader Revitalising Central Geelong policy – a joint venture of the Victorian Government and the City of Greater Geelong, which owns the gallery building and is a ‘core funding partner’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). Geelong Gallery director Jason Smith said the gallery now has a ‘physical connection and shared exhibition space’ with Geelong Library and is ‘opening up the gallery’ to promote ‘inclusion’ (iv, 17 June 2019). Audience engagement is ‘a big deal’. More than 16,000 people took part in nearly
300 public programs in 2018, ‘everyone from bubs up through to people with dementia and all ages in between’, and 4,500 students took part in the schools’ program. A structured partnership with Deakin University helps art students, and an events space is activated by ‘Talking Art’ sessions, with artists such as Geelong industrial designer and Melbourne exhibitor Dale Hardiman, who spoke about his practice during Design Week. Funding from the City of Greater Geelong and the Victorian Government (under the Regional Partnerships Agreement) and the Geelong Gallery Foundation is boosted by the work of gallery fundraising groups Geelong Conservation and Geelong Contemporary, and by corporate and community donations and bequests.

The gallery’s business model also now includes one ticketed exhibition a year, which boosts revenue and, when it’s the Archibald, ‘is great for capacity building’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). More than 76,000 people visited the gallery during the 58 days of the 2018 Archibald Exhibition, the second year the gallery has shown the popular portraiture prize. Of the visitors to the Kylie on Stage exhibition from Art Centre Melbourne, which featured Kylie Minogue costumes, 30% ‘had never been to a gallery before’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019). The gallery has recently acquired the work of two local artists, while engagement with local artists is mainly through events. Jason Smith from Geelong Gallery indicates there is some concern locally that the gallery might not ‘reflect local content’ but maintains that ‘quality has to be there before it gets in the door’ (Smith iv, 17 June 2019).

HUBS AND CO-WORKING SPACES

Ashmore Arts - the sum is greater than the parts

Ashmore Arts is a notable and innovative commercial hub for Surf Coast artists of all genres. It houses 28 active artists and crafts businesses, who collectively employ 12 people in various capacities. Ashmore Arts offers studio spaces in sheds, shipping containers and small workshop spaces and affords artists a conducive environment to work, display and create pieces for private and commercial clients. Ashmore Arts began in 2006 and has an approximate turnover of $2,916,000, based on staff, truck movements and discussions with resident artists. Owned and run by artist Stewart Guthrie, Ashmore Arts has a collective attitude: ‘Being amongst like-minded people has an amazing effect on attitude and self-esteem’ (iv, 29 June 2020). There is a lot of direct financial collaboration, Guthrie explained, ‘where one artist will get a job for a timber sculptor and that sculptor collaborates with the blacksmith for the steel component. This happens a lot on all different levels, again part of being amongst like minded people’ (iv, 29 June 2020).

Guthrie described the success at Ashmore Arts as being based around choice, lifestyle, finances, community and environment: ‘These artists are “rock stars”, and with that comes personal business branding. The development of their social persona ... is something they are and should be very protective about. Online sales mean no shop front costs, no gallery fees and a far wider and more specific audience’ (Guthrie iv, 29 June 2020). The large range of expertise includes fine art, large art, illustration, animation, photography, graphic design, weaving, leather book binding, calligraphy, furniture making in wood and concrete, blacksmithing, sculpture in wood and stone, pottery, knife making, picture framing, home interior design, and music production. Studio spaces are sought-after, and artists are on a waiting list. Ashmore Arts has applied to Council to double its size, and ‘the neighbours have applied for a permit to build 10 new studios; they have seen the growth of Ashmore Arts and want to be a part of growing the industry in Torquay’ (Guthrie iv, 29 June 2020). Success stories include award-winning knife maker Metal Monkey Knives and stone tableware maker Takeawei Ceramics.

Anglesea Art House

Anglesea Art House, a former scout hall renovated by the Council, is now ‘a beautiful workspace with two glass kilns [and] two clay kilns’ that is used for classes, workshops and exhibitions. Its members put on the annual Anglesea Art Show (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). Surf Coast Shire Arts Development Officer, Harriet Gaffney, says
the Shire has two groups of artists: those working on ‘large scale works that they ship out of Torquay, so they don’t have any visible presence’ and the hobbyists, ‘an extraordinarily prolific and vocal group’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). However, as with other ‘little coastal towns hugging this extraordinary road’, the artists ‘become quite isolated; many don’t go outside to keep developing their skills. They hit a benchmark, they become technically very proficient, but it’s quite insular’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). Harriet Gaffney wants to ‘break down the barriers’ between ‘siloed’ groups of artists; painters, ceramicists, sculptors, glass artists, musicians, performers and writers: ‘That makes much more exciting and invigorated art’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019).

Surf Coast co-working spaces

Collaboration is occurring more broadly in the Creative Industries, with three co-worker spaces in Torquay alone: the Workers Hut in Baines Crescent; Happy Spaces in Gilbert Street, and the old Quiksilver building. The Quicksilver building is home to designers. There’s a ‘strong affiliation with Bali’ because surf brands used to manufacture there ‘so a lot of the designers that have come from there have contacts there already’. They are now ‘selling online and at the markets’, having ‘gone out on their own’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). The Shire has also attracted ‘young entrepreneurs’, ‘creative entrepreneurs’ who are ‘doing so much’. These are surfers who become ‘attached to this exquisite environment, but they have the freedom to go overseas for three months in the middle of the year, so they don’t have to get cold when they are surfing’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019).

Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative

The Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative has a commercial enterprise, Wathaurong Glass, making art glass, such as Deadly Awards plaques, and architectural glass, such as kitchen splashbacks, using traditional designs and motifs from traditional stories (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019).

Boom Gallery and co-working spaces

Boom Gallery is an eclectic art gallery with a cafe in Geelong’s progressive Rutland Street (Boom Gallery, 2019). Boom Gallery is run by former art teachers Ren Inei and Kate Jacoby. They started small, in 2011, so their fledgling business could fit in around their families. Leasing the building from a family who was ‘very supportive of the arts.’ This enabled them to establish financially as they also set about subleasing smaller spaces within. Now Boom Gallery and a second building, Factory 21, is ‘filled with creatives’; working artists on the lower floor and creative services such as web designers and media businesses upstairs (Jacoby iv, 18 June 2019). Art is sold on consignment and Boom takes a commission when it sells, in addition to asking artists for a $300 monthly fee, which gives them ‘buy-in’ (Jacoby iv, 18 June 2019). It took eight years to build up ‘profile and reputation’ for the commercial gallery (Jacoby iv, 18 June 2019) and for sales to be consistent. Achieving this means that Boom can now employ a gallery manager and bookkeeper, and outsourcing events management, marketing, design, website and social media. Local artists are the focus, as ‘there’s been a lot of resentment in the Geelong community from artists and also art lovers that the [Geelong] Gallery does not really represent regional artists very well’ (Inei iv, 18 June 2019). Success stories include textile artist Ingrid Daniell and painter Chelsea Gustafsson, who was picked up by Flinders Lane Gallery in Melbourne (Inei iv, 18 June 2019). Interstate artists are increasing, and their first international was a digital collage artist based in France that Jacoby contacted through Instagram.

Renew Geelong

There are more than 100 vacant ground-level shops in Geelong’s CBD, and Renew Geelong’s concept space popped up in one of those in 2018. Like all Renew projects, it has brought to life an empty commercial space. Thw work of Renew Geelong has been made possible through relationships with the City of Greater Geelong, Bluebird Foundation, Creative Victoria and two local private investors Batman Investments and David Hamilton Group. These investors are ‘really active supporters of enlivening the CBD’ (Bruce iv, 17 June 2019). Renew Geelong also
has connections with Creative Geelong, Central Geelong Marketing, Diversitat, Pako Festa and Gordon TAFE, and Geelong Illustrators group is an active participant (Bruce iv 17 June 2019).

Renew Geelong has a 12-person advisory committee with representatives from Tourism Geelong, Bellarine, Market Square shopping centre, City of Greater Geelong’s Economic Development Unit and their Arts and Culture Partner. Renew Geelong has been funded through Creative Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong, each contributing $75,000 for two years (Bruce iv, 17 June 2019). A part-time coordinator, Andrea Bruce, is charged with recruiting participants and Geelong landlords. Bruce has pursued un-leased premises that could be co-opted into the Renew model, in which no rent is charged for 30 day. At the time of the interview, Renew Geelong had secured 15 vacant retail or commercial spaces, engaged 24 participants and hosted more than 40 workshops. However, local real estate agents have not been willing to cooperate, and this may mean Renew cannot continue beyond its two-year funding (Bruce iv 17 June 2019).

Creative Geelong’s Makers Hub

The Makers Hub, part of Creative Geelong, was founded with funding through the City of Greater Geelong and Creative Victoria, in ‘a pretty fractured area’ of the CBD (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019). The Makers Hub began in 2017 and offers freelancers and small creative start-ups a co-working environment, with maker spaces, and multimedia, exhibition and workshop spaces (Creative Geelong, 2019). Housed in an abandoned 1980s shopping arcade, successful start-ups have flourished here, including animation studio Pillowfort Creative, game developer Hanalei Studios, and creative media services provider Video Confidence Coach. Makers Hub Co-ordinator Robert Menaul said they have also created a ‘social enterprise model … working with different organizations including GenU, The Barwon Adolescent TaskForce, Good Cycles, Department of Justice and other agencies to find ways to help people who may have fallen through the cracks, develop more internal life skills and coping skills in creative ways’ (Menaul iv, 18 June 2019). To combat slow NBN speeds at the Makers Hub, Creative Geelong installed ‘expensive routers’ to provide Wi-Fi throughout the arcade (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019).

Federation Mills – Pivot City Innovation District

David Hamilton Property Group (DHPG) purchased the derelict Federation Mills site in 2013. The reinvigoration of these historic buildings won a National Trust Heritage Restoration award in 2016. There are two more re-developments that will complete the Pivot City Innovation District, The Power Station and the Glass House with both still in the planning stages. The refurbished Federal Mills site is a growing innovation ecosystem in Geelong. Along with Runway Geelong, and global education techs Tribal and Civica, tenants including State Government offices, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative and Popcultcha, a retail and online outlet. ‘Fed Mills’ as it is known, has 37 tenants in total who have created 1,000 on-site jobs; the aim is to have 3,500 on-site jobs by 2021, fuelling Geelong’s tech and innovation sector. One of the attractors is Australia’s fastest available internet, 10 times faster than the NBN, with 1,000Mbps fibre to all tenants (Pivot City, 2020).

One international software company who has delayed their promised arrival is LiveTiles. The Victorian Government gave them $1.5 million because they were to create 500 jobs, but their arrival has been delayed by 18 months. LiveTiles intends to partner with ‘local universities, TAFEs and secondary schools … to develop new opportunities for recent technology graduates and researchers’ (LiveTiles, 2019).
Strategic theme 2: The relationship of cultural and creative activity to the wider economy

In Software and Digital Content, Pivot City Innovation Precinct is an exemplar for Geelong. This precinct has attracted global software companies working cross-sectorally in health and education because of its extremely fast and reliable internet and provides more than 1,000 local jobs in CI and other economic sectors. Asia Pacific Marketing Manager for Tribal educational software, Liam Banks, said the last two Geelong businesses he has worked for ‘had employed people that had moved from Melbourne to Geelong for work’ (Banks iv, 18 June 2019). Another example is Runway Geelong, also located at Pivot City. It has been funded through the state body Launch Vic, which is committed to investing in Victorian’s ‘start-up ecosystems’. Census and Australian Business Register data at SA2 level also identified clusters of Creative Industries operatives working as part of the wider economy, and interviews revealed operational details.

Supporting Regional Development in Geelong

While Regional Development Victoria does not target Creative Industries per se, it supports industries that are ‘creative in nature’ in a variety of ways (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). For example, a software or games developer may be looking for a regional Victorian location, and RDV could help them with relocation support (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). The government’s Regional Skills Fund may support a Creative Industries company looking to upskill its workers or fill a skills shortage ‘and they can partner with other companies or universities’ on a proposal that RDV could support with funding (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). A key role is referral, to ‘identify the needs of a business and speak to other agencies and refer them on to where they’ll receive the best support’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). This might be to Small Business Victoria or Economic Development Geelong (the Council’s economic agency) for workshops on developing business acumen, or to Creative Victoria for advice on funding programs, as RDV did for Creative Geelong.

RDV does not have specific events and festival funds but may support an event that is large enough to have ‘a significant economic impact’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). That support might be through funding infrastructure, such as that used by the Queenscliff Music Festival, or the redevelopment of the Safe Harbour Precinct, an investment that is ‘opening up public access but also supporting the Royal Geelong Yacht Club in terms of the significant sailing events that they attract’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019). Event organisers may be referred to Council’s Creative Communities Grant Program for small grants, or at the other end of the scale the government’s Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, set up to build stronger communities through ‘community capacity building and population attraction’ (Ryan iv, 18 June 2019).

Runway Geelong

Runway Geelong accelerates the start-up process by providing support for business ideas that are innovative and entrepreneurial (Dostis & Burns iv, 17 June 2019). While they realise physical incubators and accelerators are critical components of creative ecosystems, Runway also leverages the effect ‘quality mentoring, access to capital and access to networks made on the relative success of startups’ (Runway Geelong, 2019). Located at The Mills, it received $1.25 million in 2017 from Launch Vic to act as ‘a catalyst for innovation in the region, creating new businesses and jobs through the provision of mentoring, networks, training and access to venture capital’ (Launch Vic, 2020). Started by Nick Stanley and Peter Dostis, Runway is a not-for-profit and aims to customise each start-up idea by developing and delivering a specific entrepreneurial program through four stages: bootcamp, incubator, Runway virtual, and masterclass. Runway participants have access to co-working spaces, mentoring, networking between entrepreneurs and a range of discounted professional services. Runway’s Partners include Launch Vic, Harwood Andrews, Adroit, West Carr Harvey, Fluid, Strathouse, Geelong Angel Investor Group, PwC, and BTS (Global Victoria, 2019). Among 19 alumni, there does not appear to be specific industry focus, with a
range of organisations and businesses including health, wellbeing and Creative Industries such as fashion, apps development, marketing and events. Runway connects with a high school; their multi-media VET students ‘film an event, edit video, record a podcast and do graphic design for social media’ (Burns iv, 17 June 2019).

**Tribal – global education software**

Tribal is a global cloud-enabled educational software business with its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Geelong’s Pivot City Innovation Precinct at Federal Mills. Tribal offers software solutions for public, private and alternative education institutions. Tribal is Australia and New Zealand’s largest provider of student management software systems, servicing 35% of Australian schools, 30% of Australian universities, 100% of NSW TAFE, and a high percentage of New Zealand vocational institutions (Banks iv, 18 June 2019). Tribal employs more than 800 people globally; more than 100 in Geelong.

Tribal has grown through acquisition. It acquired three Australian companies; one from Melbourne, Human Edge Software, and two from Geelong, Sky Software, and Callista (Banks iv, 18 June 2019). Callista originated from Deakin University and many of Tribal’s employees have worked or studied at Deakin: ‘A lot of people that leave here, unfortunately, we hear they’re going back to Deakin’ to work on cutting edge projects such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and virtual assistant software (Banks iv, 18 June 2019).

**FE Technologies – Radio Frequency Identification labels**

Software and Digital Content specialists are in demand across the economy, and in 2016 were slightly more likely to be employed (embedded) in other industries than in sector-specialist firms. FE Technologies is a Geelong business that specialises in creating library management software and hardware. This business supports the GLAM sector, by employing embedded creatives in IT technology, software development and marketing and sales. CEO Andrew Powell said their library products are installed in more than 900 libraries in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Malaysia and China. With more than 200 international clients, products are available in 30 languages (Powell iv, 17 June 2019). FE Technologies creates the radio frequency identification tags (RFDI) used on every library book, CD and DVD. The technology is designed, manufactured, installed and serviced by FE Technologies and allows ‘libraries to speed up their processes of borrowing and returns’ (Powell iv, 17 June 2019). China-based parent company Invengo has other markets that cover anti-counterfeit measures. Invengo employs 30 people in Geelong (Powell iv, 17 June 2019).

**Carbon fibre industrial design**

Carbon Revolution supplies lightweight wheel technology to automotive manufacturers around the world. It has successfully moved from an industrial design prototyping phase through to innovation and commercialisation. It is ‘an example of the kind of world-leading high-tech firm that Innovation and Science Australia chairman Bill Ferris says Australia needs more of to prosper in the global market after the closure of local car assembly and the waning of the mining boom’ (Potter, 2018). Lightweight carbon fibre wheels are selling as an option on ‘Ford GT supercar in 2016 and as standard equipment on the Mustang Shelby GTR in 2015’ (Potter, 2018). Carbon Revolution has ‘incredible technology, incredible design, but at a very practical level’ (Menaul iv, 18 June 2019). The manufacturing plant is at Waurn Ponds. Revenue growth for 2020 ‘was very strong, with full-year revenue of $38.9 million ($23.8 million or 158% growth over FY19) (Carbon Revolution, 2020). This was a result of the company’s ability to ‘industrialise its manufacturing processes and reduces costs’ (Potter, 2018). The pandemic has affected the business, with a July 2020 announcement that ‘sales will be negatively impacted … pushing out the launch of a new program and lack of promotional activities … including the cancellation of a major motor show’ (Carbon Revolution, 2020). Sources of raw material have also been affected, increasing costs (Carbon Revolution, 2020).
Fortek Geelong

Ford automotive company sold its sites at Geelong and Broadmeadows in 2019 to Melbourne developer and builder Pelligra Group, which plans to develop high-end business and industrial parks that could generate thousands of jobs in manufacturing industries (Pelligra, 2019). The parks will be named Fortek Geelong and Assembly Broadmeadows. Under the deal, Ford will keep its existing research, design and engineering facilities in Geelong and Broadmeadows and its You Yangs proving ground at Lara as part of the redevelopment. Parts of the distinctive brick plant at Geelong are covered by heritage restrictions, and the structures will be restored and turned into innovation and research hubs tied to universities (Pelligra, 2019).

The Committee for Geelong

Jen Cromarty is the CEO for the Committee for Geelong, which is focused on Geelong’s economic transformation (Committee for Geelong, 2020). Cromarty believes the Creative Industries sector ‘needs to put the case for investment’ (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019); to set aside the ‘thinking that it is just about basket weavers’ and ‘struggling artists’ and to ‘tap into commercial money, because it’s out there’ (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019). For Cromarty, collaboration is key, and the ‘future of work’, a key theme of the Committee of Geelong’s work, demands it. Cromarty says ‘connecting and joining’ are more important than ‘hierarchical models and empire-building’ and that organisations, which are ‘organisms not machines’ must be responsive: ‘We have self-sabotaged our organisations [by] having policies and bureaucracy [that] absolutely smash creative-thinking innovation’ (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019). On her wish list for Geelong is ‘an edgy arts kind of creative industries festival’ such as Dark Mofo in Tasmania, and an experience that could ‘transform the CBD’ through ‘experimental activation of buildings through art and tech’ (Cromarty iv, 18 June 2019).

TAFE and Tertiary Education

Creative Industry courses are available at Deakin University and Gordon Institute of TAFE. ‘The Gordon’, as it is known, offers courses in graphic design, visual arts, interior design and decoration, introduction to Adobe photoshop, applied fashion design and merchandising, library and information services, and information technology (Gordon TAFE, 2019). Deakin’s waterfront campus at Corio Bay houses the School of Architecture and Built Environment. At the same location The School of Communication and Creative Arts offers a ‘diverse curriculum in the artistic and communicative fields, with courses in dance, drama, photography, visual arts, advertising, digital and social media, journalism and public relations, film, television, animation, and design (both visual and technological), literature and creative writing’ (Deakin University, 2019).

Deakin champions the idea that university research has commercial applications and that it benefits from industry partners. An example is Tribal-Callista. Innovation involves ‘creativity through research [and] creativity through application’ (Cairns iv, 17 June 2019). Through the University, Geelong is now home to Imagine Intelligent Materials, a company seeking to develop a commercial application for graphene. They were attracted to the region by Geelong’s can-do manufacturing attitude. ‘They’ve come to a community where they think that they can get workers and people who can help them solve their problems to create this product, which will become their global hub’ (Cairns iv, 17 June 2019).

Oxygen – Creative Arts College

Oxygen College is a private creative arts college in Geelong offering music, photography, digital media, visual arts, film and design vocational programs supported through the Victorian Government’s Skills First program. Founded in 2006 by musician brothers Tony, Joe and Dominic Monea, it grew out of a music school they started in 1986 as a way ‘to supplement their performance income via regular teaching’ (Monea iv, 17 June 2019). The school continues, with private instrument tuition for 100 students, and the brothers also have the retail outlet, Oxygen Music. Oxygen College has a focus on ‘contemporary music’ with ‘industry application’ and encourages original composition (Monea iv, 17 June 2019). It grew out of a need they identified in that ‘students who wanted to take
the next step and make music a vocation ... had to travel to Melbourne’. They talk to their students about developing ‘multiple income streams, because there’s a journey for them, it’s not an instant destination’ (Monea iv, 17 June 2019).

CULTURAL TOURISM

Tourism and cultural policy

The Surf Coast Shire is one of Australia’s top tourist destinations, with the Great Ocean Road and hinterland drawing more than two million visitors in 2016, ‘directly expending over $430 million’ (Surf Coast Shire, 2017, p. 31). The summer period accounts for more than 40% of annual visitation, and the volume of tourist traffic in this period is the reason the Surf Coast Shire prioritises tourism and economic development (Surf Coast Shire, 2017, p. 31).

The G21 City Deal suggested that visitor facilities and infrastructure upgrades will provide a $3.7 million boost to the potential tourism in Geelong, Bellarine and the Great Ocean Road (G21, 2020 p. 9).

Figure 11   Tourism activity, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast

|                           | Greater Geelong | Surf Coast |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Output ($m)               | 1,109.0        | 279.2      |
| % of region output        | 3.5            | 11.0       |
| Value add ($m)            | 545.1          | 123.6      |
| % of region value add     | 3.9            | 10.3       |
| Employment                | 5,970          | 1,503      |
| % of region emp.          | 5.9            | 16.2       |
| Businesses by number of employees |        |            |
| 1 to 4                    | 812            | 161        |
| 5 to 19                   | 128            | 26         |
| 20 or more                | 489            | 111        |
| Non-employed              | 1,111          | 198        |

Sources: REMPLAN (2019), Tourism Research Australia (2019)

The popularity of the Great Ocean Road and the volume of vehicular traffic it brings has led to a less-than-optimal visitor experience, and planned facility and infrastructure upgrades ‘will provide a safer, more enjoyable visitor experience while better protecting the environment and coastline’ (G21, 2020, p. 9). Another challenge for Bellarine tourism and the Council’s Queenscliff Economic Advisory Panel has been to ‘seamlessly integrate arts and culture into tourism and business’ (Armstrong iv, 20 June 2019). The Surf Coast hosts major events, bringing more than $105 million to the region and reaching global audiences of 32 million: including the Falls Festival, Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race, Amy’s Gran Fondo, Bells Beach Rip Curl Pro, Surf Coast Century and the Great Ocean & Otway Classic Ride (Surf Coast Shire 2017, p. 31). This calendar ‘attracts visitors from across the globe and plays a vital role in sustaining businesses throughout the off-peak periods’ (Surf Coast Shire 2017, p. 31).

Falls Festival on the Surf Coast

There are four Falls Festival events held each year from December 28 to January 6, in Lorne (Victoria), Marion Bay (Tasmania), Byron Bay (NSW) and Fremantle (WA). The traditional four-day camping festival at Lorne is the first in the calendar and attracts 16,500 visitors each year. About 500 tickets are set aside for locals; attendees travel
from NSW and SA and elsewhere in Victoria. The company announced in July that Tasmania’s event will not go ahead this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, similar announcements may follow for other sites. Bands play across the four locations and the focus is on ‘art-based’, ‘theatre’ and ‘carnival-type’ music, with the line-up ‘a great blend of local upcoming or old-school Aussie talent’, and ‘international flavour’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). Aside from a handful of salaried staff, festival marketing, ticketing, sponsorship, IT and production are outsourced to ‘90% local’ sub-contractors (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). The festival has permanent infrastructure installed onsite including stages, roads, fences and amenities; the production, PA and lighting comes from Melbourne and Geelong-Ballarat-region suppliers provide marquees, tents and bars: ‘Local trade is a very important aspect of my role’, explains Chris Burton, the Falls Festival site manager based in Lorne.

An army of local volunteers includes football clubs who work in return for financial support and a sizable group of Burmese refugees who have ‘become part of the furniture’, working in waste management, and many have gone on to find employment out of it. Burton says Falls works because of local ‘collaboration’; ‘the Falls Festival as a brand, as a company, has a fantastic working relationship with the Surf Coast Shire’ and ‘the relationships are second to none’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). Falls is ‘such a valued event on the coast’ that ‘everybody is so supportive of us’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). Victorian Government support was also demonstrated when Falls had to relocate at short notice a few years ago because of bushfires; ‘it certainly was evident that the powers that be from state level were behind us with that move’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). Burton says the NBN is critical to the event, as is ‘a good network of accountability as far as phone [and] the internet’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019). He said, ‘we put a lot of work and time and effort into having Telstra COWS [cells on wheels] and Vodafone and Optus on-site’ (Burton iv, 19 June 2019) to make sure festival goers have good connections, especially for social media.

**Mountain to Mouth Walk**

Two cultural events came about a decade ago when Geelong was undergoing ‘the greatest upheaval … that it’s seen in its history in terms of industries challenged, large-scale industry going out of business or offshore’ and ‘changing demographics and shifts in the built and urban landscape’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019). The **Mount to Mouth Arts Walk** was ‘a platform for community to explore, with support of artists through their artwork “what is Geelong? What is unique about Geelong?”’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019). The ‘walk across land in the tradition of Indigenous peoples, and songline, a journey from the mountain top at the You Yangs to the mouth of the Barwon River’ created ‘a connected pathway for exploration of local identity through art and culture’, delving into ‘culture in its art context and culture in its collective community meaning context’ (Esler iv, 18 June 18 2019). Although the first walk attracted a small number ‘there were hundreds and hundreds of community members involved, so the great strength of that artwork was actually largely invisible. It happened in the community developments, in the endorsement of artists and exploration of ideas on the ground’ which were then fed ‘back into civic processes’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019).

**Geelong After Dark Festival**

By contrast **Geelong After Dark** was about ‘discovering’ and ‘recovering the night scape of Central Geelong at a time when people had concerns about the safety of going into places, and about looking at Geelong through different eyes, and having the artists take over the city’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019). The 2020 festival has been cancelled in 2020 because of COVID-19 but the 2019 Geelong After Dark festival included 70 art-projects that transformed central Geelong through music, street performances, installations, exhibitions, dance and projections’ (Cartwright, 2019). All Geelong’s cultural venues welcomed a broad variety of performance, artistic and musical genres, attracting, ‘20,000 attendees … and contributing around $2.1 million’ to the local economy (ibid). The City of Greater Geelong survey on Geelong After Dark showed people ‘feel really strongly about [Council’s] investment in our local artists’ and ‘that growing sense of Geelong’s cultural identity’ (Cramer iv, 18 June 2019). After Dark offers a ‘familiar festival framework’ that the community and artists embrace (Esler iv, 18
June 2019). Broad community support is essential to a strong creative sector, and the City of Greater Geelong realises the community ‘are looking to see themselves in culture and arts around them’, with people ‘more inclined to want intimacy rather than spectacle’ (Esler iv, 18 June 2019).

**Australian National Surfing Museum**

The **Australian National Surfing Museum** – the legacy of pioneering Torquay surfers Peter Troy, Vic Tantau and Alan Reid – was formed in 1993 and is operated by Surf Coast Shire Council. The museum’s mission is ‘to take the stories of surfing and share them with as many people as possible’ (Baird iv, 19 June 2019). The museum attracts a diverse crowd and anecdotally half of visitors have never surfed; they are ‘just curious’ (Dunne iv, 19 June 2019). Through social media, particularly their Surfworld TV YouTube channel, the museum is ‘getting to share stories with hundreds of thousands of people’, something that would ‘take decades’ if they had to visit in person (Baird iv, 19 June 2019). Only 10% of the collection is on show, and the Museum has participated in external exhibitions at the National Sports Museum at the MCG and initiated an oral history program asking ‘significant surfers’ to ‘tell their stories’ (Baird iv 19 June 2019). The museum exhibits material from the creative industries in the form of evolving surfing magazines, iconic images of surfers taken by professional and innovative photographers, posters created by exceptional graphic designers, books written on surfing and films exhibited as a part of the revolution in film making, exhibition and distribution that the surfing community engaged in as it developed its early professional stance.

The museum’s co-ordinator, Craig Baird, sees his role as a ‘content specialist’ (Baird iv, 19 June 2019). Drawing on past lives as a surfer, manager of a surf shop, tee-shirt designer and surfboard painter, Baird can communicate to visitors ‘how evolution in technology and design’ has affected surfing history (Baird iv, 19 June 2019). Gary Dunne is the Project and Tourism Officer at the Australian National Surfing Museum. Space is at a premium, and Dunne says the Council is ‘looking at getting state and federal funding to help us with a bigger physical space’ and to maintain Museums Australia accreditation. ‘There is an onus on us to develop that cataloguing of material and tell more stories from the history of surfing’s development in Australia’ (Dunne iv, 19 June 2019). And with the museum operated as a not-for-profit currently, there’s ‘not a lot of availability of resource funding’ (Dunne iv, 19 June 2019).

Now part of surfing culture, surf retailers Rip Curl, Billabong, and Quiksilver originated on the Surf Coast, a region that relies on these businesses which represent significant local employment prospects. Almost 27% of all jobs and 26.5% ($217 million) of all ‘Value Add’ activity occur as a result of what the surfing industry does (Surf Coast Shire, 2017 p. 31). They employ fashion designers in-house, and rely on working photographers, advertising and marketing specialists, dedicated surfing writers, website designers and many other creative people to help promote not only their businesses but the core image of surfing itself. Given that many are no longer Australian-owned, local jobs have been lost. That iconic Australian surf brand Quiksilver, for example, has ‘shipped off all their creative people to France’ (Daniell, iv 19 June 2019).

**Surf Coast Arts Trail**

The **Surf Coast Arts Trail**, which has been running for eight years, involved 67 venues and 201 artists across the Shire and generated $77,000 worth of sales in 2018 (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). Surf Coast Shire Arts Development Officer Harriet Gaffney said it’s ‘the big event in the arts on the Surf Coast’ (Gaffney iv, 19 June 2019). The Surf Coast Shire has a shopfront in Anglesea called **Surf Coast Art Space**, where the community holds exhibitions. It is ‘booked solid’ by ‘hobbyists’ who run their own exhibitions, some making sales of $8,000 in two weeks.
Lorne Sculpture Biennale

Lorne Sculpture Biennale, Victoria’s premier sculpture festival, is a free three-week event held every two years or so in which the Lorne foreshore is transformed by large sculptural works. Run as a not-for-profit under the direction of Qdos Gallery owner Graeme Wilkie OAM, Lorne Sculpture Biennale relies on volunteers, memberships, sponsorships, donations, fundraisers and grants. In its seventh iteration, a decision was taken in December 2019 to postpone the festival scheduled for October-November 2020 for a year, so the next Lorne Sculpture Biennale will be held in October-November 2021. In July, the Federal Government announced $17,500 funding through the Festivals Australia program for the event. The part-time paid manager of Lorne Sculpture Biennale, Leon Walker, said the festival attracts locals and regional visitors, but at least half come from Melbourne (Walker iv, 19 June 2019). Sixteen ‘mostly Victorian’ artists will be invited to exhibit in the next festival; and artists are asked to make ‘something that’s dynamic’ as well as works for sale, on which the festival takes a commission. In order to increase ‘dwell time’, so people ‘hang around more’, the festival is held out of peak tourist season as an ‘immersion’ not just ‘a static display’, and to increase revenue and enhance the experience, they are planning to develop an app (Walker iv, 19 June 2019).

National Wool Museum

Established in 1988, the National Wool Museum presents the story of the Australian wool industry. Their collection consists of 7,500 objects, including 4,300 photographs, with permanent exhibitions on the region’s heritage, endangered birds, a designers’ showcase, and a maker-in-residence showcase. The Museum was closed temporarily because of COVID-19 restrictions (National Wool Museum, 2020).

Using virtual reality technology, the Little L dinosaur project was a partnership between the Wool Museum, and Deakin and Monash universities (Fisher iv, 18 June 2019). This project was shortlisted for both the Museums Australasia Multimedia and Publication Design Awards (MAPDA) and Museums and Galleries National Awards (MAGNA) (Geelong Independent, 2019 ). National Wool Museum Director Padraic Fisher explained: ‘We had a story to tell’ about a small polar dinosaur that lived in that area of Victoria. Working with the palaeontologist who discovered it and virtual reality technology, the scanned skeleton was ‘brought to virtual life’ in what was considered a world first, combining ‘virtual reality, 3D printing [of dinosaur ‘skin’] and paleontology’(Fisher iv, 18 June 2019) in an impressive interactive and creative project.

Strategic theme 3: Hotspot Comparisons

There is no doubt that Victoria has stolen a march on all other states in attracting the Creative Industries. Across all Victorian regions in the study, there was evidence gathered of ecological interdependence, where the regional Creative Industries are interconnected across sectors, and networked within and between each other, exhibiting complementary activity at all scales.

Geelong and Ballarat, as well as Ballarat-Bendigo-Wodonga, are connected through rail and road infrastructure that has developed over a long period of time, proving beneficial to each region as it has allowed Creative Industries workers to commute between regions and to Melbourne, a national hub of Creative Industries. The constraining and enabling effects of policy actions were also observed in all regions. Each exhibited a very deep connection between digitisation and the ability for regional players to operate competitively in both the local and the global environments. While it is worth noting that Wodonga has the poorest internet quality of the four Victorian sites, a variety of CI initiatives were supported in all hotspots by Regional Development Victoria, Launch Vic, and Creative Victoria.
The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) is strong in both Bendigo and Ballarat. A view is held that the City of Bendigo has been a leader in heritage and town planning, and there exists some rivalry between Ballarat and Bendigo in this regard. Greater Bendigo occupies a broad physical area with 15-17% of the population living in rural parts of Bendigo, whereas, Ballarat is virtually an urban area, ‘so if there is a lower proportion of people working in the Creative Industries in Bendigo it’s because of the rural areas, that actually drags down our percentage, while Geelong is the urban area plus the Bellarine Peninsula, which is a pretty wealthy creative area’ (Budge iv, 24 June 2019).

While generalisations between the creative capacity of regional Victorian towns can be made, looking at the specialties of each in this study highlights each region’s strengths many of which have developed over time. When examined systematically the complexities and networks that typify the Creative Industries tend to benefit not only each region but the Victorian state as a whole. In contrast to areas such as La Trobe, where ‘economies have been singly focused on their manufacturing’, Ballarat, Geelong and Bendigo, have developed economies that are ‘much broader and that has allowed for that broadening of infrastructure across a whole gamut of professions to emerge’ (White iv, 26 June 2019).

While it is a common theme that the liveability of regional cities makes up for lower wages, it also remains a fact that active agents, that is individuals who ‘get things done’, are vitally important as one of the drivers of the Creative Industries. In all these communities, Creative industries clusters have exhibited a patterned set of demographic movements, with sea changes and tree changers taking advantage of the regional lifestyle and real estate prices, commuters moving daily between Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat, and from surrounding regions to the Surf Coast at holiday times.

It is notable that the relationship between innovation and start-up culture within the Creative Industries, which is very strong in Ballarat and Geelong, has become more entrenched and interconnected, while there is an increasingly wide array of approaches to gaining an income, particularly in micro businesses where highly skilled creatives sell their services or products. Ballarat has Federation University, and with State Government investing over decades into tech parks here and in other regions, Software and Digital Content is a key area of growth for the broader economy. Geelong has a very large urban area including the Bellarine Peninsula, and there has been significant State Government investment in the Geelong Arts Centre the Library and the Gallery. Geelong also has Deakin University with a number of Creative Industries programs on offer, including architecture, which has massively increased capacity. In Bendigo, the Art Gallery works very closely with Bendigo Tourism and also has a developed relationship with La Trobe University’s Bendigo campus and the La Trobe Art Institute, a higher education partner with Bendigo Art Gallery.

Cultural tourism was strongly featured in the four sites, with an increasing importance placed on strengthening the connection between Creative Industries and cultural tourism. The economic injection from out-of-town visitations means these regional centres can prosper. Wodonga delivers a strong cultural program including events staged at The Cube Wodonga, the Bonegilla Migrant Experience, and Gateway Village creating a vibrant group of cultural organisations that attract visitors to Murray Arts, HotHouse Theatre and the Jazz Basement. Bendigo has the Bendigo Easter Festival, Bendigo Blues and Roots Music Festival and Bendigo Art Gallery, which are impressive visitor attractions for Bendigo’s economy. For Ballarat, there are museums and family experiences to be found at Sovereign Hill, Eureka Centre, and the Gold Museum, and the Archibald Prize has been hosted by the Art Gallery of Ballarat. Other visual and performing arts events are the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, The Royal South Street Eisteddfod held at Her Majesty’s Theatre, White Night and the Meredith Music Festival. In Geelong, there is the Mount to Mouth Arts Walk, Geelong After Dark and National Wool Museum, and the Surf Coast has Falls Festival, Lorne Sculpture Biennale, Surf Coast Arts Trail and The Australian National Surfing Museum.
Table 2 Victoria hotspot comparisons

|                        | Greater Geelong & Surf Coast LGAs | Ballarat LGA | Greater Bendigo LGA | Albury & Wodonga LGAs |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ASGS remoteness category | Inner regional Australia          | Inner regional Australia | Inner regional Australia | Inner regional Australia |
| RAI region type         | Regional city / Connected lifestyle region | Regional city | Regional city | Regional city / Industry & service hub |
| Resident population, 2016$^a$ | 262,828                          | 101,689      | 110,479             | 90,427               |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 2.1%                             | 1.7%         | 1.9%                | 1.6%                 |
| Employed persons, 2016$^b$   | 103,752                          | 45,794       | 45,051              | 43,915               |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 3.8%                             | 3.3%         | 3.5%                | 3.0%                 |
| Total creative employment, 2016$^b$ | 4,316                            | 2,137        | 1,367               | 1,113                |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 5.7%                             | 2.0%         | 2.9%                | 0.3%                 |
| Total earnings from creative employment, 2016$^b$ | $260.2m                          | $119.1m      | $77.0m              | $64.1m               |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 4.8%                             | 4.4%         | 4.7%                | 3.8%                 |
| Total businesses, 2016       | 66,897                           | 23,499       | 22,709              | 21,361               |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 2.3%                             | 2.9%         | 1.7%                | 1.0%                 |
| Total creative businesses, 2016 | 5,060                            | 1,668        | 1,444               | 1,125                |
| Average annual growth 2011-2016 | 4.7%                             | 4.1%         | 3.0%                | 2.9%                 |
| Proportion of all businesses registered for GST, 2016 | 49.4%                            | 52.0%        | 51.2%               | 51.4%                |
| Proportion of creative businesses registered for GST, 2016 | 38.0%                            | 40.5%        | 38.0%               | 39.9%                |
| Regional domestic product, 2017-18 | $13,852m                         | $5,632m      | $5,305m             | $5,192m              |
| Average annual growth        | 5.0%                             | 8.4%         | 0.8%                | 0.1%                 |
| Mean age$^a$                 | 40.1                             | 39.0         | 39.5                | 38.7                 |
| Unemployment rate$^a$         | 6.5%                             | 7.6%         | 6.8%                | 6.9%                 |
| Youth unemployment rate$^a$   | 13.2%                            | 15.0%        | 14.0%               | 13.3%                |
| Youth unemployment ratio$^a$  | 45.3%                            | 46.7%        | 44.8%               | 45.3%                |
| Indigenous$^a$                | 2.6%                             | 1.5%         | 1.7%                | 2.6%                 |
| Volunteer$^a$                 | 17.4%                            | 17.8%        | 18.7%               | 17.3%                |

Note a. These statistics are provided by place of residence, and b. are by place of work
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), ABR (2019), .idcommunity (2019), Regional Australia Institute (2014), REMPLAN (2019)

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Appendices

Data tables and heat maps are available via the following hyperlinks:

**Appendix A  Census data**

- Appendix A.1 Creative employment: counts, growth rates, intensities and heat maps
- Appendix A.2 Creative employment earnings: totals, growth rates, intensities and heat maps
- Appendix A.3 Creative employment incomes: mean incomes, growth rates, comparative ratios and heat maps
- Appendix A.4 Creative trident employment heat maps by sector
- Appendix A.5 Creative ANZSIC4 industry hotspot comparison by state
- Appendix A.6 Creative ANZSCO4 occupation hotspot comparison by state
- Appendix A.7 Employment and business comparison
- Appendix A.8 Cultural grant funding by government and type

**Appendix B  Australian Business Register data**

- Appendix B.1 Creative businesses: counts, growth rates, intensities and heat maps (forthcoming)