

DRAFT ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

To test our research and issues raised through a number of Strategy engagements, a Key Issues Paper was drafted. We further engaged with our key stakeholders between March – November 2020. Our engagement required adjustment due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and all activities were transferred to an online format.

As a result, we set up an advisory panel, Geelong Covid Arts Recovery (G-CAR) aiming to address the immediate needs of our creative community and followed with online workshops and engagement through 'Have Your Say'.

Over 1,000 individuals have been engaged through this process.

HOW WE ENGAGED

Engagement consisted of workshops with staff, interviews with key stakeholders, setting up G-CAR (Geelong Covid Arts Recovery) Advisory Panel, focus groups, an online engagement, a peak body workshop and a council survey.



COUNCIL STAFF DATA FORMS AND COMMUNITY SURVEY



Further information was gathered through the distribution and exchange of data between key senior staff across Directorates with important questions.

A community survey was distributed widely through our networks and published on our 'Have Your Say' online portal. We received 174 responses to the survey.

WHO WE ENGAGED

DIGITAL WORKSHOPS

A series of workshops were held with different stakeholder groups to discuss key priorities and issues, opportunities and threats. These were attended by over 280 individuals across the following:



INTERNAL WORKSHOPS

- Key staff workshops
- Mayor and Councillors workshop
- Arts and Culture staff workshop
- Organisation wide staff workshop

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

- Covid G-CAR Advisory Panel
- Creative sector community members and groups visual arts, performing arts, music, screen and digital media.
- Peak Body arts industry groups, including Government
- G21 Arts and Culture Pillar presentations
- First Nations, Heritage, Museums, Libraries, Education, Tourism, Business, Youth, and Inclusive Communities

WHAT WE HEARD

The following is a summary of key priorities and themes from our engagement:

FOREGROUNDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

You strongly advocated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and cultural activity in the region to be supported as a distinctive and valued part of cultural life in Geelong, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to be meaningfully included and consulted throughout the life of a project.

PRIDE IN PLACE

You are deeply proud of your city region, and arts and culture developed is locally considered to be meaningful and important work for the community.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE

You expressed the need for engagement with different sub-sectors such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, diverse peoples, heritage groups with response to specific needs designed appropriately. Ongoing barriers to participation can include cultural, financial, physical and geographic elements.

A CHANGING CITY

Geelong is seeing a shift in its demographic. Over the last ten years Geelong has welcomed many young families to the region who are seeking aspirational lifestyle and affordable housing, and who bring an interest in arts and culture alongside lifestyle needs such as access to the beach, heritage and smaller more inclusive communities.

STORIES AND MEANING

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

NURTURING AND INVESTING IN OUR CREATIVES AND CULTURAL LEADERS

With many having suffered financial, career-related and mental health impacts as flow-on effects from Covid-19, artists' mental health and wellbeing, and artist retention, are key priorities for the industry. You requested focus be directed towards opportunities that foster career pathways, that seed funding for creative developments are available, and that artists are upskilled in areas of professional practise and business management.

SPACES AND PLACES

You emphasised affordable, accessible and satisfactorily equipped venues, studios, exhibition and rehearsal spaces as integral to fostering of creative activity in Geelong. You were enthusiastic for a precinct planning strategy to guide development and creative activity, including temporary creative and experimental contemporary interventions in addition to well-curated "iconic" public artworks to help define our creative identity. This activity should be relevant in its content and celebrate the history and diverse communities of Geelong.

CREATIVE PROCESS AND STRATEGY

You asked for flexibility and openness to clever, creative solutions from artists and increased risk appetite in implementing this Strategy. This could occur through presenting more experimental and innovative works, finding imaginative solutions for areas of resource scarcity, supporting ingenious use of our outdoor spaces, opening up atypical venues and restructuring grant systems where necessary in order to customise our offerings to your needs. An increased risk appetite increases the vibrancy, relevance and contemporaneity of our city's creative activity.

INCUBATING AND CONNECTING

You asked for us to better connect you with the spectrum of society, and with each other, as the arts industry in Geelong is missing out on opportunities for cross-pollination and collaboration between artforms, between industries and across the urban-regional divide.

COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

You want Council to listen, learn and act to address our community's arts and cultural aspirations, and to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and other crises on the arts, live performance and related sectors – with carefully crafted forward planning and realistic timeframes. City of Greater Geelong can increase and re-prioritise its strategic investment, led by consultation, and giving the creative sector the support to flourish long-term.

NEXT STEPS:

FEBRUARY - MARCH

Final documents to
Council for adoption

MARCH - APRIL

Public exhibition period
to gather feedback
and final comments

JUNE

Final Review
by Council

JULY

Begin implementing
the Arts and Cultural
Strategy and Action Plan

Stay in the Loop: To receive the latest updates, follow the project at yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/arts