

CENTRAL GEELONG

LIVE MUSIC ACTION PLAN

2017

CENTRAL GEELONG LIVE MUSIC ACTION PLAN (LiveMAP)

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.....	2
1.1	Purpose.....	2
1.2	Process	2
1.3	Context and Framework.....	2
1.4	Overview of Recommended Actions.....	3
2	LIVE MUSIC – CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORK.....	5
2.1	What is live music?.....	5
2.2	Why does live music matter?.....	5
2.3	Developing live music in a provincial city.....	6
3	ASSESSING LIVE MUSIC DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL GEELONG	8
3.1	Overview.....	8
3.2	Audiences	8
3.3	Venues, festivals and events.....	9
3.4	Interface with the broader environment	11
3.5	Musicians.....	12
4	CENTRAL GEELONG ACTIONS LIST	14

Developed by Sapere Research Group and
the City of Greater Geelong Arts & Culture Department.
© July 2017 City of Greater Geelong

1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1.1 Purpose

City of Greater Geelong is growing its profile as a dynamic and culturally rich city for our residents. In tandem with major capital projects such as the award winning Geelong Library & Heritage Centre, Mountain to Mouth Extreme Arts Walk and Geelong After Dark, the Arts & Culture Department is focusing on place-making: ensuring the City of Greater Geelong is known for projects, precincts, places and venues which creatively celebrate our identity.

Vibrant live music contributes positively to the economy and community. By one estimate, the economic value of live music to the Geelong community could be upwards of \$150 million annually. This Central Geelong Live Music Action Plan (LiveMAP) helps grow networks and align community, commercial and government efforts towards a more active, creative and sustainable live music culture in Geelong. While focussed on Central Geelong, the LiveMAP also creates a broader framework and rationale for the role of live music across Greater Geelong.

1.2 Process

The LiveMAP has been developed over the period November 2016 to March 2017. Guided by an active Steering Group of representatives from Council and persons with strong involvement in Central Geelong live music, the process has included:

- a review of live music strategies and plans for other locations;
- interviews with selected key music sector leaders (from November to December 2016); and
- a community consultation workshop (23 January 2017) promoted broadly to participants from across Geelong's live music community (250+ direct invitations and digital promotion)

Through this process, we have identified key issues arising from or influencing Geelong live music, and generated ideas and proposals in response to these issues forming actions in the LiveMAP.

1.3 Context and Framework

A strong live music scene is likely to exist where:

- venues/promoters are empowered and do not face unreasonable barriers in setting up and operating their enterprises or activities
- local audiences can and do access quality, affordable and enjoyable music experiences across a range of genres
- musicians have pathways to develop their practice, perform to audiences and become sustainable
- possibly, the community as a whole appreciates and values the contribution of live music

Central Geelong appears to have good fundamentals. Little Malop St in particular is emerging as a vibrant cluster for contemporary music and other entertainment for music fans, casual attendees and tourists, and a good example of Geelong as a smart, vibrant, thriving and liveable city that is 'open for business'. Key constraints include sufficient audience scale and consistency to sustain a good variety of live music experiences, both civic and commercial. Only with more people from Geelong and our region discovering (or re-discovering) live music, and experiencing it in Central Geelong more often, will we maximise the potential.

1.4 Overview of Recommended Actions

Theme	Action
Theme #1: Broadening live music's presence within Central Geelong	1.1– Design and implement a site-specific live contemporary music festival (working title: Geelong Extreme Music festival) focussed around Little Malop St, in partnership with Central Geelong music venues, with a strong local audience and industry development focus.
	1.2 – Encourage promoters to develop creative ideas for one-day music festivals (or similar) in appropriate locations within Central Geelong (pre-identified by Council), that could potentially become large-scale signature events of state significance (linked with Action 2.3). This could include an Expression of Interest process for targeted financial and/or facilitation support from Council. Such a festival or festivals could include free and/or ticketed components, and may or may not be connected to 1.1.
	1.3 – Continue and, where appropriate, develop further high profile and positive music-based activation of public and other spaces in Central Geelong and the Waterfront, like Geelong's Best Busker 2017 busking competition.
	1.4 – Continue Council support for professionally-based multi-arts projects with a live music component (e.g. Mountain to Mouth's Connecting Song and Song Cycle projects, Geelong After Dark), or community events with a live music component.
	1.5 – Develop opportunities to expand the scope and impact of youth music activities in Central Geelong, for example through piloting a safe under-18 event in existing (commercial) music venue/s, through Geelong FReeZA at Courthouse Youth Arts, and/or through linking secondary students with positive and inspiring live music experiences.
	1.6 – Engage with the new Australian Music Vault (Arts Centre Melbourne) to explore how local music culture heritage can be reflected in Central Geelong, including a possible pop-up exhibition presence on Little Malop St or in vacant shopfronts.
	1.7 – Consider mechanisms to incentivise regional touring to Geelong, particularly where this involves overcoming promoter misconceptions about Geelong as a viable market for live music (including but not limited to mid-week) or other perceived practical barriers.
	1.8 – Advocate for Geelong Major Events to include a strategic target that aims at increasing live music programming elements in major events, to encourage major events in Geelong to consider how music can contribute to their event.
Theme #2: Developing places and spaces for live music	2.1 – Ensure Central Geelong revitalisation projects (e.g. Little Malop St Laneway Project, James Street Masterplan, Arts and Culture Precinct Masterplan, Johnstone Park Masterplan, Malop Street Green Spine project, CBD car parking strategy, City Heart) have active consultation with live music stakeholders to maximise opportunity and avoid unintended consequences for live music.
	2.2 – Undertake a targeted review of statutory planning implementation/ administration with respect to small business (including aspects affecting live music venues like change of use in existing buildings) in Central Geelong, to consider whether there are any best practice processes not being fully applied in practice and to reduce any unnecessary impediments to small business development.
	2.3 – Work with the relevant Council Departments to develop streamlined event approvals processes for open air events at Council's pre-approved appropriate locations (refer 1.2) .

Theme	Action
	2.4 – Investigate the feasibility of other activities to support cost-effective ‘good music neighbour’ outcomes between Geelong music enterprises and the broader community, for example ways to increase access to technical measurement of sound levels and frequencies.
Theme #3: Reducing barriers to audience growth	<p>3.1 – Ensure the specific needs and preferences of contemporary music segments for information sharing and access (which differ from other types of arts) are taken into account in the forthcoming state-wide development and implementation of next generation Arts Atlas online platform. This would need to include engagement with live music stakeholders, including in Geelong.</p> <p>3.2 – Explore opportunities to highlight live music experiences within tourism and events promotion campaigns, consistent with the fresh and energetic, adventurous and courageous ‘Brand Geelong’ being encouraged.</p> <p>3.3 – Consider increasing the number of poster poles/bollards, wall poster frames or electronic alternatives on Council buildings or other sites in appropriate areas of Central Geelong that could be used for additional live music poster or other visual communication, including development of a process for proactive maintenance of sites to minimise undesirable visual clutter in public spaces.</p> <p>3.4 – Review weekend operating hours of the Civic Parking Centre with a view to extended night-time/overnight opening.</p> <p>3.5 – Advocate for better (state government) services affecting context for live music audiences in Central Geelong, such as increased late night public transport or targeted Victoria Police presence in live music precincts. This includes, but is not limited to, seeking to ensure promoters and public and private transport have identified the need for and prioritised extra transport services for major events, where relevant.</p>
Theme #4: Backing sustainable music enterprises	<p>4.1 – Encourage venues/promoters and musicians to access support for well-planned strategic activities for their professional and market development, including through the Victorian Government’s Music Works and other state and federal government programs.</p> <p>4.2 – Encourage venues/promoters and musicians to engage with industry associations and other relevant groups (e.g. Music Victoria, Central Geelong Marketing, Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Geelong including Small Business Festival) to access up-to-date information about training and professional development opportunities regarding live music specifically and running small businesses generally.</p> <p>4.3 – Encourage venues/promoters to link into existing tourism-based support and networks, as relevant, particularly through Tourism Greater Geelong & the Bellarine.</p> <p>4.4 – As a first step in an effort to ‘use Geelong music’, conduct a stocktake of the range of ways in which Council entities procure/purchase live music or recorded music or supporting services and the baseline proportion directed to local musicians or services, with a view to identifying appropriate targets or otherwise encouraging strategic use of procurement/purchasing to also benefit the local music industry, including the establishment of a preferred supplier panel for these services.</p>

2 LIVE MUSIC – CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORK

2.1 What is live music?

Live music is a catch-all term for a wide range of musical experiences. You might picture an intimate gig from a local indie singer-songwriter. Or a Geelong date for a major headliner in the midst of a national tour. Or a day-long festival with many musicians on the bill. Or a classical recital. Or music performed by local communities. Or a street busker. Or a music within a cross-arts activity. These are very different, but what joins them all is an enjoyable live experience shared by musicians and audiences.

2.2 Why does live music matter?

The City of Greater Geelong’s current vision is “building our community through enterprise, opportunity and innovation in a quality environment”. Central Geelong is a particular focus to “attract investment, deliver employment opportunities, and provide a lifestyle that makes people want to live in the city centre and visit often.”¹

In the context of this vision, arts and cultural activity is an important and identifiable economic driver for the region. In recognition of this fact, Council’s Arts & Culture Department is now positioned within Council’s Investment and Attraction Division. Vibrant live music is one aspect of this powerful and positive contribution to the economy and community.

At its core, many people obtain intrinsic benefit from listening to and being part of live music: “the value of live music is intuitively understood by the millions of Australians whose lives are enriched by time spent on sticky floors, in muddy fields and at concert halls.”² Access to live music makes a place more vibrant and liveable, and enhances the lifestyle of many people within it.

Recent economic research by the University of Tasmania found live music spending in Australia results in at least a 3:1 benefit-to-cost ratio. That is, for every dollar spent, the wider Australian community gains over three dollars in individual, commercial and civic benefit.³ By one estimate, the economic value of live music to the Geelong community could be upwards of \$150 million annually.⁴

Commercially, many venues use music to attract patrons, create ambiance consistent with their brand, and enhance their recognition. In a recent UK survey, 73 per cent of bars, pubs and clubs agreed that playing music increases their sales or results, and a recent Canadian survey indicates that the music played at a bar or restaurant is more likely to make patrons go.⁵

As Victoria’s largest provincial city, Geelong is well placed to be a vibrant centre for entertainment, culture and creative industries, and cultural tourism – with live music having strong potential as a key driver.

¹ City of Greater Geelong 2016, *City Plan 2013-17 2016-17 Update*

² National Live Music Office 2014, *The Economic and Cultural Value of Live Music in Australia*

³ National Live Music Office 2014, op cit

⁴ This draws from the economic value of \$15.1 billion nationally described in National Live Music Office 2014, and assumes the scale of value is proportionate to population. The City of Greater Geelong’s 2017 population of around 235,000 is just under 1 per cent of the Australia’s total population (i.e. ~1% x \$15.1b = ~\$150m)

⁵ APRA-AMCOS, *Music Brings Business To Life*

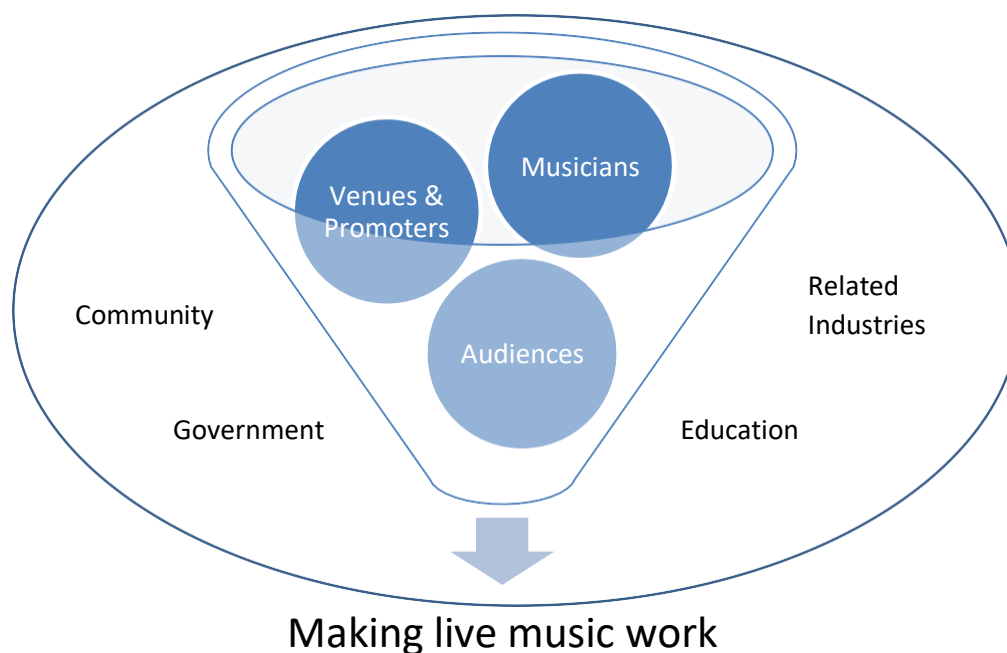
2.3 Developing live music in a provincial city

Live music results from the interplay of networks of artists, audiences and presenters of many kinds. Any live music scene continually evolves, shaped by the people within it and the forces outside it.

Anecdotally, Australia is in a cultural swing away from DJs/electronic music and back towards live music. Audience entertainment expectations involving music have changed, or at least diversified – most event-goers want a ‘total’ or multifaceted experience when they go out or attend events, including music, food, drink and a safe environment. This extends to an expectation that music will feature in some way even in the programmes of non-music based festivals and events.

Music and other entertainment venues provide a focus for live music – and this visible infrastructure is a bellwether of industry dynamics. Major concerts by headliner artists provide one entry point for audiences, particularly those who might only attend live music occasionally. Ongoing small live music venues are a more intimate kind of experience, and the lifeblood of a diverse, grassroots original music scene. Festivals as special events can emphasise particular genres of music or audience segments. A well-functioning live music scene also looks to the future through building live music culture and nurturing local entrepreneurs and talent.

Figure 1 – Stakeholders involved in the live music sector



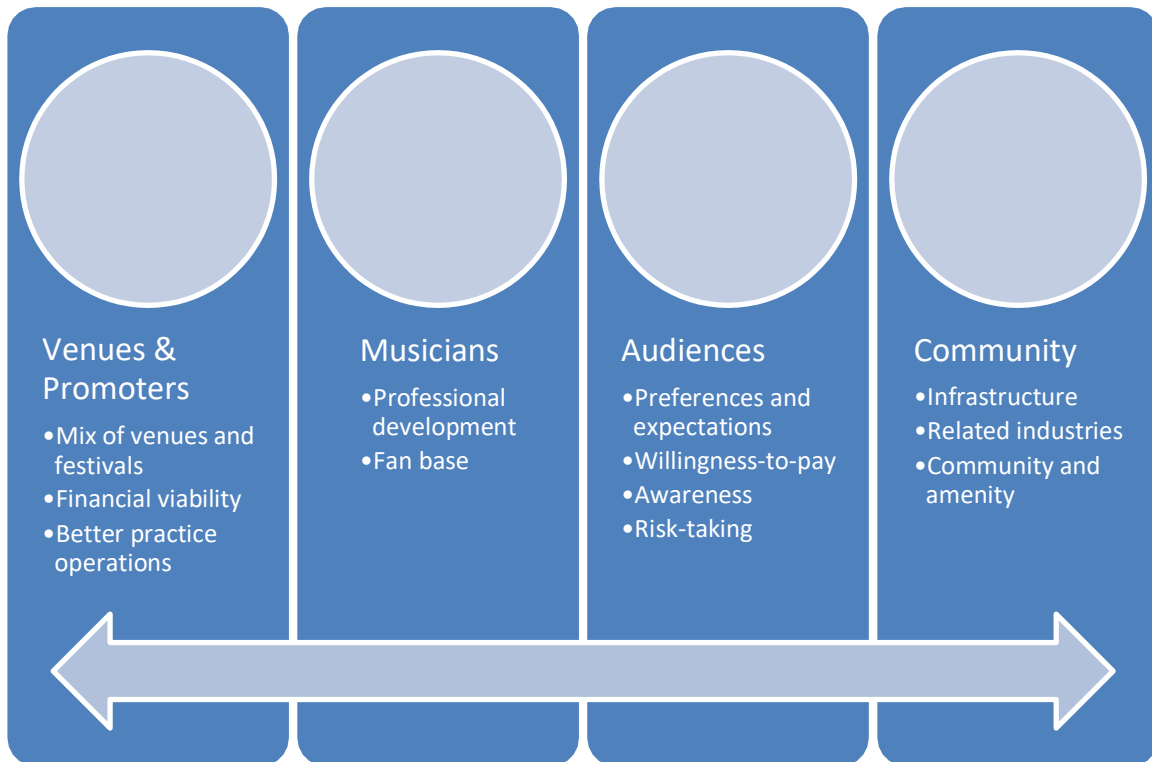
A strong live music scene is likely to exist where:

- promoters/venues and other music entrepreneurs are empowered and do not face unreasonable barriers in setting up and operating their enterprises/activities
 - including having the right skills, resources and networks, and complying with reasonable rules around noise, planning, liquor, safety, use of public places, etc.
- local audiences can and do access quality, affordable and enjoyable music experiences across a range of genres
 - noting that some kinds of experiences (e.g. free outdoor events in public places) are not viable without financial support

- musicians have pathways to develop their practice, perform to audiences and become sustainable
 - such as ways to develop a performance track record, practical industry knowledge and networks, and business and marketing skills
- possibly, the community as a whole appreciates and values the contribution of live music
 - which might incorporate ways that master planning and public infrastructure can be used to foster a supportive environment for live music culture.

Success begets success. The more a provincial city's (accurate) reputation as having a great live music culture grows – with venues, festivals and events that offer good experiences for artists and audiences, and where audience numbers consistently meet and exceed expectations – the more high quality live music will be available. Consequently, the positive flow-on impacts of live music across the community will grow.

Figure 2 – Elements of a well-functioning live music system



3 ASSESSING LIVE MUSIC DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL GEELONG

3.1 Overview

Central Geelong appears to have good fundamentals for a strong live music scene.

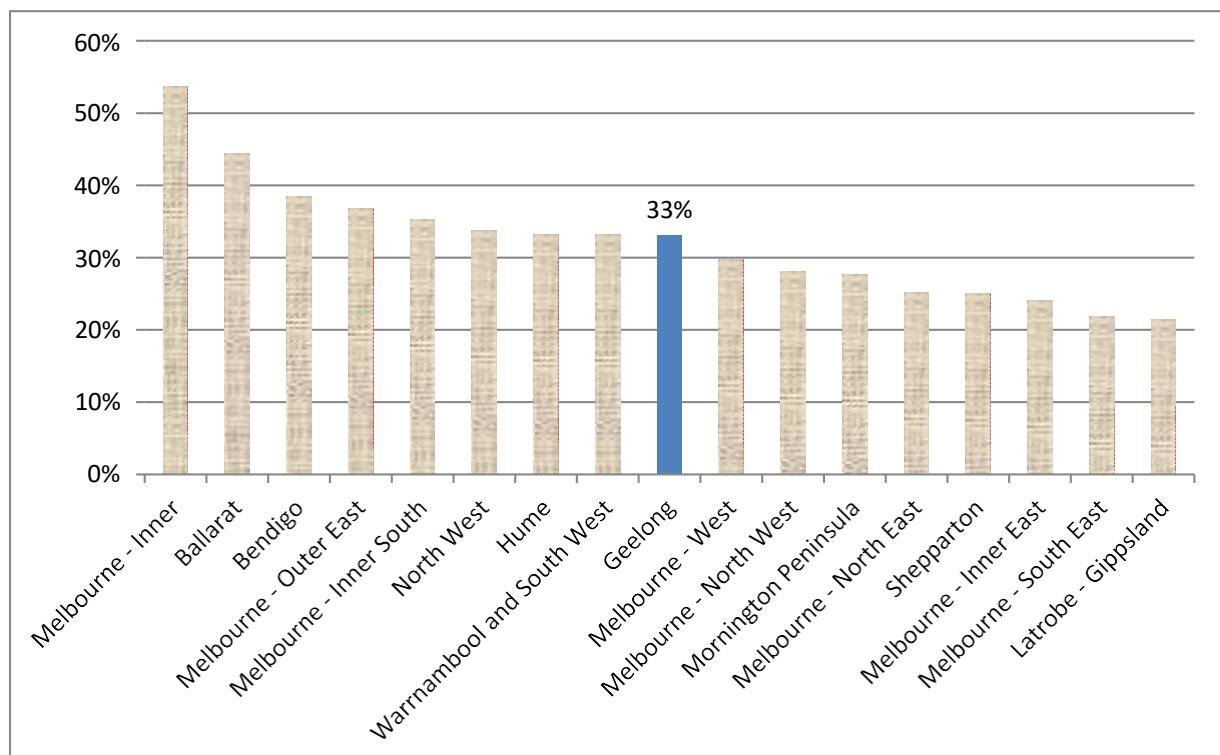
Central Geelong – particularly Little Malop St – is emerging as a vibrant cluster for contemporary music and other entertainment which is a destination for music fans, casual attendees and tourists. Council’s focus on building a lively city reinforces this, for example through Central Geelong Revitalisation capital works and ongoing Central Geelong activation programs. Local music entrepreneurs and musicians can benefit from opportunities and experiences within Geelong, while also drawing on networks, resources and markets across Victoria and the nation.

We do face challenges, some local and some resulting from national trends. Geelong is not as large a market as some other cities, which limits the feasibility of some live music events in Geelong and the development of a sizeable ‘music lovers culture’ that is open to different artists or experiences. Still, there are opportunities to build on our strengths and foster a robust ‘ecosystem’ of sustainable venues, festivals, musicians and audiences for live music.

3.2 Audiences

A broad and consistent audience to sustain a good variety of live music experiences continues to be an issue. Available statistics suggest less people from Geelong attend live popular/contemporary music than people from inner Melbourne, Ballarat or Bendigo, although our attendance rate (roughly 33 per cent) is about the same as Victoria as a whole (Figure 3). For classical music concerts, musicals & operas, Geelong attendance rates are similar to the Victorian average (roughly 22 per cent), which is higher than in Ballarat or Bendigo.

Figure 3 – Proportion of population attending popular music venue or event in the last year (not including classical music, musicals or opera)



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Attendance at Selected Cultural Activities and Events*, cat. no. 4114.0, reference period July 2013-June 2014. Location refers a person's usual place of residence, not necessarily the location of the music venue or event. This ABS source also includes figures for classical music/musicals/opera, as discussed above.

Internet/social media and independent promotional platforms such as Bandcamp make it easier for musicians or presenters to develop and create an ongoing connection with a fan base or reach those with casual interest. But, anecdotally, Geelong audiences can be small or at least inconsistent, particularly for local original artists and for mid-week events.

The reasons for challenges in audience size and consistency are likely various, and in many ways the music sector lacks nuanced evidence of what motivates or dissuades Geelong audiences beyond dedicated fans.

Ongoing development of the live music market in Geelong needs specific attention to the different types of experience – and related audience segments – from daytime entertainment, to an 'after 5' or dinner crowd where music is complementary to drinks or food, through to late night where live music can become the primary draw. Some identify mid-week performances as having significant audience growth potential, including leveraging artists performing in Melbourne on the weekend, challenging the prevailing culture of many only attending live music gigs on the weekend. Arguably, practices like headliners not starting until late at night can make it hard for many potential audience segments mid-week, like those working the next morning or using evening childcare. Yet starting earlier mid-week can crowd out profitable dinner trade for some venues, or have other knock-on effects. Individual circumstances will vary.

Practical matters like difficulty getting home (lack of or costly or inconvenient public transport and parking) can be a disincentive to going out. There are continued public perceptions of lack of safety at night in Central Geelong, whether or not this reflects reality. Many people – particularly those aged 18-25, a core audience for many types of live music – are price sensitive, and the costs of entry/drinks/transport can limit the frequency of attendance at gigs. Some might have limited awareness of events that might spark their interest. And some might just be unsatisfied with the sound, comfort, atmosphere, quality or other features of the live music they have attended in Geelong, particularly compared to entertainment options in Melbourne (which is now more accessible with public transport from Melbourne to Geelong later at night).

Lack of all-ages or under-age shows or other entry points like exposure to professional music performances in secondary schools⁶ means many under-18s do not become accustomed to attending live music. That being said, a number of stakeholders perceive a new (albeit small) wave of young people coming to live shows, in line with a national resurgence of live music.

3.3 Venues, festivals and events

The Central Geelong Activity Centre as part of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme includes objectives to strengthen and revitalise Central Geelong as the region's primary location for cultural and entertainment activities, amongst other uses.

Central Geelong's small to medium venues showcase touring artists from around Australia, sometimes also featuring local talent. Many lamented to the closure of the Nash (National Hotel) as

⁶ As an illustration, through a state-wide schools program that combines a performance by a touring artist/band with education about career opportunities within the music industry.

a nursery for local indie rock bands and audiences. But other venues have opened since, often bringing new people, ideas and experiences to the fore.

Little Malop St's current venues of different size and atmosphere featuring various types of music, from blues to indie to cabaret, alongside food and other entertainment include The Workers Club, Beav's Bar, Pistol Pete's Food n Blues, Piano Bar and Eureka Hotel. The Barwon Club in South Geelong continues to host local and indie bands, as does The Wool Exchange. Costa Hall and Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC), St Mary's Basilica and Christ Church often host concerts by classical, adult contemporary and heritage artists. There are also an increasing number of beer gardens, non-traditional venues such as car park parties, and markets such as Night Jar.

Public events on the Waterfront, on Little Malop St and other parts of Central Geelong, often include music components. For example, current music-based activation includes two hours per weekday of live entertainment in Little Malop Central and events like Geelong's Best Busker competition (recently held in February 2017).

There is opportunity to do even more in this space to foster different ways of engaging with live music and the enjoyment of live music in unexpected contexts. Through signature arts events like Geelong After Dark and Mountain to Mouth, Council can foster innovative and new platforms for music and cross-arts experiences. Special initiatives can also place attention on the role of music in recovery and resurgence of Indigenous cultural traditions.

Dedicated music festivals over full weekends or longer, often in 'out of the way' regional locations, have been typical across Australia over the last two decades. Arguably they have reached saturation. Shorter one-day ticketed festivals of a medium size (say up to 5,000 attendees) in inner city parks, streets or other outdoor venues are now increasing in prominence. For potential audiences, one-day festivals are more affordable and require less time and effort to attend. Central Geelong has hosted some recent one-day music festivals focus on specific genres or music cultures, but there is potential for more (and also to learn from past experience to improve future events).

50% of all events funded through Geelong Major Events in 2016/17 will feature a live music component. At the time of writing this report, there are currently 3 event organisers pursuing live music festivals for Geelong in 2017/18. The opportunity also exists to pursue Kardinia Park Stadium for live music events, a point of difference from other regional centres competitively priced in comparison to the same sized stadium in Melbourne.

Beyond Central Geelong, major Australian and international touring acts at The Arena or A Day at the Green at Mt Dundeed Estate are high-profile events for the whole city. For example, in February 2017 alone, The Arena hosted concerts by well-known performers Human Nature, The Amity Affliction, Suzi Quatro and RÜFÜS, each very different music genres. Geelong's suburbs host various organisations, venues and events with music programmes – including the National Celtic Festival, Portarlington Mussel Festival, Great Australian Beer Festival, Barwon Heads Festival of the Sea, Toast to the Coast, Geelong Revival Motoring Festival, Music at the Basilica, Geelong Symphony Orchestra, the Geelong Chorale, Pako Festa and Lara Food and Wine Festival – as does our broader region such as the Queenscliff Music Festival, the Falls Festival in Lorne, not to mention live music venues across the coast, just as examples.

The touring environment at the mid-to-smaller scale has some challenges. We have reasonable diversity of venues for tour gigs that artists can grow into over time. However, some (national) booking agents do not see the Geelong market as viable for some touring acts, and expected guarantees for some bigger artists can be unfeasibly high for the expected commercial return in Geelong venues. The touring scene around Geelong and the coast has also changed, reducing the ability for a Geelong date to be one of a number with some shared costs. While this is not a universal experience, it can be more financially viable for touring musicians to play extra shows in Melbourne instead of a Geelong date.

3.4 Interface with the broader environment

Operating a live music venue or event anywhere in Australia means dealing with a range of commercial, industry and compliance matters.

The urban character in many parts of Central Geelong is likely to move further towards mixed use with residential living alongside entertainment venues and other day-time and night-time businesses. This is a trend in inner cities across Australia. State and local policies and regulations, and their implementation, intended to manage issues like health and safety, noise and amenity are complex.

While some have good experiences, at least some music enterprises in Geelong perceive what they consider to be contradictions or inconsistencies between the practices and attitudes of different arms of Council and other regulators as it relates to the encouragement of live music. Some would like to see a more nuanced and transparent consideration of risk applied to compliance processes and decisions, to avoid unnecessary costs without a material public benefit – and which can affect the viability of new and innovative music activities. This relates particularly to any assumed links between live music, alcohol-based violence and neighbourhood impact, without sufficient regard to individual circumstances. There is a natural and appropriate tension between regulatory compliance functions and the aspirations of business. However, at least, there is opportunity for greater open discussion of what different parties desire and need and why, the assumptions being applied, the legislative or other constraints, and genuine opportunities for improvement on all sides.

Sound attenuation is a key issue.

Council's role is mainly proactive, to support music enterprises to be 'good neighbours' and, more broadly, to guide development within Central Geelong towards noise emissions management and residential acoustic attenuation in order to avoid foreseeable noise conflicts. Planning processes are the key mechanism for this.⁷ For example, with respect to noise, the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme now includes an 'agent of change' principle, introduced by the Victorian Government, to try to address noise issues upfront with respect to new residential developments near existing entertainment venues. Council also offers pre-planning meetings⁸ prior to permit applications to talk through expectations (as specified in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme) and clarify processes. Some music-based proponents have found this valuable, but not all have taken

⁷ This includes the state government's recent 'agent of change' reforms now part of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. Planning permissions may include reference to noise standards such as N-2.

⁸ See <http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/planning/article/item/8cda0abd4e68c5e.aspx>

advantage or found it helpful. Council welcomes feedback about how to improve such planning support for the benefit of all parties, or other ways to promote being good neighbours.

By contrast, Council's role in setting noise standards and investigating and, where justified, addressing specific noise complaints is limited. Other bodies have primary responsibility. Noise levels and operating times for outdoor events are mostly set and enforced by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) through SEPP N-2⁹. Indoor venues are also subject to enforcement of SEPP N-2. In addition, Victoria Police can direct a venue to abate entertainment noise after midnight.¹⁰ Council does have an additional, albeit narrow, power to remedy nuisances (including those from noise) which are, or are liable to be, dangerous to health or offensive.¹¹

In this context, Council looks for further opportunities to be proactive around noise and amenity. For example, Council is providing technical input to the EPA's current review of noise policies. It is also keen to ensure music enterprises and other development proponents understand the rules that apply to them and are empowered to pursue good outcomes for the community.

3.5 Musicians

Geelong has many emerging and established musicians and bands. Local successes with a strong connection to the Geelong music scene – like the prolific King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard (who in 2016 won an ARIA Award and three Music Victoria Awards), Magic Dirt, Yirrmal, Chrissy Amphlett or others before or after them – inspire a new generation of musicians, and audiences.

Like everywhere, artists need performance experience to hone their skills and develop a following.

Local initiatives like the M~M: Connecting Song song writing mentorship or the Australian Youth Classical Music Competition, or nation-wide opportunities like triple j Unearthed, can help emerging musicians take the next step. While professional-level training is not always available in our region, local musicians can also access development opportunities in Melbourne while still being based in Geelong.

While not specific to Central Geelong, some young musicians could also benefit from greater practical industry skills and insight into the realities of being a gigging musician (e.g. marketing/relationships with fan base, contractual and other relationships with venues and promoters), which is critical to success. As is the trend nationally, many venues look increasingly for musicians to bring their own audiences to an event.

⁹ State Environmental Protection Policy (SEPP) (Control of Music Noise from Public Premises) No. N-2

¹⁰ Under section 48AB of the *Environment Protection Act 1970*.

¹¹ Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*'s nuisance provisions

SUMMARY SWOT ANALYSIS OF LIVE MUSIC AND CENTRAL GEELONG

Strengths

- Many active and aspiring musicians and bands with a keen interest in live music
- Growing number of music-related entrepreneurs / small businesses who bring innovation (including those with experience in other places)
- Emerging cluster of 'night out' venues and businesses in Little Malop St with eateries, bars, and music targeting different market segments
- Council's recognition of arts and culture as an economic driver (evident in the positioning of the Arts & Culture Department within Council's Investment & Attraction Division).

Weaknesses

- Market size limitations, combined with audience conservatism, price sensitivity and culture of only going out on weekends
- Limited number and diversity of events of certain kinds (e.g. under-18s, free public events)
- Less playing opportunities in Geelong per musician (in aggregate) which can undermine sustainability for some, and limited music education opportunities
- Barriers to integration of issues and actions affecting live music across Council portfolios, or between other regulators/government bodies
- Limited use of Council strategic procurement to support local live music suppliers

Opportunities

- Cultural swing away from DJs/ electronic music and back towards live music
- More sophisticated and differentiated audience/customer expectations, where Internet/social media makes it easier to reach an audience faster and create a strong connection with a fan base
- Casual attendees and tourists could be attracted by a central 'entertainment precinct' with a mix of venues/experiences (not necessarily restricted to music) at different times of day
- Central Geelong revitalisation works (including GPAC redevelopment) are positive for creating a lively city culture
- Geelong Major Events Committee are dedicated to the development of locally produced major events, and have recognised arts and culture events as a strategic target.
- Potential in greater strategic use of Melbourne and regional music networks/resources (e.g. Music Victoria's Best Practice Guidelines for Live Music Venues) and 'glean' size of Melbourne market
- Live music as catalyst for a range of Council strategic objectives (e.g. adaptive re-use of existing buildings)
- Live music is a current focus for State Government creative funding

Threats

- Alternative entertainment options will continue to exist, in both Geelong and Melbourne
- Internet/social media can also spread individual negative experiences to a broader public
- Reputation of some music enterprises and the live music sector in general (not specific to Geelong) to skirt rules and regulations, or difficulties for music enterprises in proactively meeting regulatory requirements (e.g. due to cost, lack of information or skills, uncertainty)
- Disincentives to going out (e.g. difficulty getting home. perceptions of night-time public safety in Central Geelong including perceived sparse police presence in CBD at night)

4 CENTRAL GEELONG ACTIONS LIST

The table below outlines useful and practical actions to help realise the benefits of more vibrant Central Geelong live music across the community, drawing from stakeholder input and feedback.

These have been ordered by four themes:

- Theme #1: Broadening live music's presence within Central Geelong
- Theme #2: Developing places and spaces for live music in Central Geelong
- Theme #3: Reducing barriers to audience awareness and growth
- Theme #4: Backing sustainable music enterprises

Each action identifies the party with main responsibility for leading implementation (noting that many more parties would also be involved in an integrated effort), a broad description of resources expected to be required, expected timing, and relative priority (High / Medium / Low).

This Action Plan does not aim to cover every single issue affecting the vibrancy of live music in Central Geelong (or in Greater Geelong more broadly). It focuses on important matters within the power of Council or other institutions to progress, either as new initiatives or through refinements to existing practices.

Good and timely implementation is important to any action plan. Some of the actions below can be directly implemented. Others will require further planning and assessment of options and viability before settling on a specific approach, particularly when the action is complex, involves a wide range of parties or could have large resource implications.

Table 1 – Central Geelong Live Music Action Plan (LiveMAP)

Theme	Action	Lead	Resourcing Need	Timing	Priority
Theme #1: Broadening live music presence within Central Geelong	1.1– Design and implement a site-specific live contemporary music festival (working title: Geelong Extreme Music festival) focussed around Little Malop St, in partnership with Central Geelong music venues, with a strong local audience and industry development focus. For example, a grass roots festival could include self-programmed plus curated special events (including a professional development or networking).	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept (partnering with local venues)	Likely to require additional financial resources above \$50,000, combined with in-kind support and other contributions	Plan for event in Spring 2018, then annually	High
	1.2 – Encourage promoters to develop creative ideas for one-day music festivals (or similar) in appropriate locations within Central Geelong (pre-identified by Council), that could potentially become large-scale signature events of state significance (linked with Action 2.3). This could include an Expression of Interest process for targeted financial and/or facilitation support from Council. Such a festival or festivals could include free and/or ticketed components, and may or may not be connected to 1.1.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept, CoGG Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept	Existing resources for scoping. Any resultant event may need substantial state and local contributions beyond the scope of this Action Plan.	Scope and consider through 2017 and 2018	Low
	1.3 – Continue and, where appropriate, develop further high profile and positive music-based activation of public and other spaces in Central Geelong and the Waterfront, like Geelong’s Best Busker 2017 busking competition.	CoGG Central Geelong & Waterfront Dept	Existing resources	Ongoing, with regular program of activities	Medium
	1.4 – Continue Council support for professionally-based multi-arts projects with a live music component (e.g. Mountain to Mouth’s Connecting Song and Song Cycle projects, Geelong After Dark etc), or community events with a live music component.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	Ongoing, with regular program of activities	Medium
	1.5 – Develop opportunities to expand the scope and impact of youth music activities in Central Geelong, for example through piloting a safe under-18 event in existing (commercial) music venue/s, through Geelong FReeZA at Courthouse Youth Arts, and/or through linking secondary students with positive and inspiring live music experiences.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept, CoGG Community Development Dept	Likely to require additional financial resources above \$10,000	Ongoing	High

Theme	Action	Lead	Resourcing Need	Timing	Priority
	1.6 – Engage with the new Australian Music Vault (Arts Centre Melbourne) to explore how local music culture heritage can be reflected in Central Geelong, including a possible pop-up exhibition presence on Little Malop St or in vacant shopfronts.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	Engage through 2017 and 2018	Low
	1.7 – Consider mechanisms to incentivise regional touring to Geelong, particularly where this involves overcoming promoter misconceptions about Geelong as a viable market for live music (including but not limited to mid-week) or other perceived practical barriers (e.g. providing promoters with credible information about audience numbers in Geelong for music events of different kinds)	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Low
	1.8 – Advocate for Geelong Major Events to include a strategic target that aims at increasing live music programming elements in major events, to encourage major events in Geelong to consider how music can contribute to their event.	Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Medium
Theme #2: Developing places and spaces for live music	2.1 – Ensure Central Geelong revitalisation projects (e.g. Little Malop St Laneway Project , Arts and Culture Precinct Master Plan, James Street Masterplan, Johnstone Park Masterplan, Malop Street Green Spine project, CBD car parking strategy, City Heart) have active consultation with live music stakeholders to maximise opportunity and avoid unintended consequences for live music.	CoGG Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership	Existing resources	Ongoing	High
	2.2 – Undertake a targeted review of statutory planning implementation/administration with respect to small business (including aspects affecting live music venues like change of use in existing buildings) in Central Geelong, to consider whether there are any best practice processes not being fully applied in practice and to reduce any unnecessary impediments to small business development.	Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept, CoGG City Development Dept	Existing resources	From 2018	Medium

Theme	Action	Lead	Resourcing Need	Timing	Priority
	2.3 – With consideration for unique individual circumstances (refer p.10), work with the relevant Council Departments to develop streamlined event approvals processes for open air events at Council’s pre-approved appropriate locations (refer 1.2) involving setting specific and transparent minimum performance standards regarding events in that location which, if demonstrated will be met, would not raise approval concerns. This would allow promoters to more confidently plan and deliver efficiencies for promoters and Council.	CoGG Environmental Health & Local Laws Dept, CoGG Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Low
	2.4 – Investigate the feasibility of other activities to support cost-effective ‘good music neighbour’ outcomes between Geelong music enterprises and the broader community, for example ways to increase access to technical measurement of sound levels and frequencies.	CoGG Environmental Health & Local Laws Dept	Existing resources. Some resultant activities may require further contributions depending on their scope.	2017 or 2018	Low
Theme #3: Reducing barriers to audience growth	3.1 – Ensure the specific needs and preferences of contemporary music segments for information sharing and access (which differ from other types of arts) are taken into account in the forthcoming state-wide development and implementation of next generation Arts Atlas online platform. This would need to include engagement with live music stakeholders, including in Geelong.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Medium
	3.2 – Explore opportunities to highlight live music experiences within tourism and events promotion campaigns, consistent with the fresh and energetic, adventurous and courageous ‘Brand Geelong’ being encouraged. For example, develop short, high-quality video content for social media distribution and sharing featuring Geelong’s current live music venues and experiences, possibly featuring local big name champions and a local soundtrack.	CoGG Central Geelong & Waterfront Dept, CoGG Tourism Dept	Possibly require additional resources, depending on specific activities	Ongoing	Medium

Theme	Action	Lead	Resourcing Need	Timing	Priority
	3.3 – Consider increasing the number of poster poles/bollards and wall poster frames or electronic alternatives on Council buildings or other sites in appropriate areas of Central Geelong that could be used for additional live music postering or other visual communication, including development of a process for proactive maintenance of sites to minimise undesirable visual clutter in public spaces.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Low
	3.4 – Review weekend operating hours of the Civic Parking Centre with a view to extended night-time/overnight opening.	CoGG Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership	Existing resources	2017	High
	3.5 – Advocate for better (state government) services affecting context for live music audiences in Central Geelong, such as increased late night public transport or targeted Victoria Police presence in live music precincts. This includes, but is not limited to, seeking to ensure promoters and public and private transport have identified the need for and prioritised extra transport services for major events, where relevant.	Geelong Local Safety Committee	Existing resources	Ongoing	Medium
Theme #4: Backing sustainable	4.1 – Encourage venues/promoters and musicians to access support for well-planned strategic activities for their professional and market development, including through the Victorian Government’s Music Works and other state and federal government programs.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	Ongoing	High

Theme	Action	Lead	Resourcing Need	Timing	Priority
music enterprises	4.2 – Encourage venues/promoters and musicians to engage with industry associations and other relevant groups (e.g. Music Victoria, Central Geelong Marketing, Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Geelong including Small Business Festival) to access up-to-date information about training and professional development opportunities regarding live music specifically and running small businesses generally.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept, CoGG Central Geelong & Waterfront Dept, Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept	Existing resources	Ongoing	Medium
	4.3 – Encourage venues/promoters to link into existing tourism-based support and networks, as relevant, particularly through Tourism Greater Geelong & the Bellarine.	CoGG Arts & Culture Dept	Existing resources	Ongoing	Low
	4.4 – As a first step in an effort to ‘use Geelong music’, conduct a stocktake of the range of ways in which Council entities procure/purchase live music or recorded music or supporting services and the baseline proportion directed to local musicians or services, with a view to identifying appropriate targets or otherwise encouraging strategic use of procurement/purchasing to also benefit the local music industry, including the establishment of a preferred supplier panel for these services. (Without being prescriptive, examples might include simple procedures to identify local recorded music such as a Spotify list, or requiring quotes from at least one local supplier if quotes are already being sought).	CoGG Central Geelong & Waterfront Dept, Enterprise Geelong & Events Dept, Property & Procurement Dept	Existing resources	2017 or 2018	Low