

WHAT IT MEANS: A CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY FOR SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

2020-24

REGIONAL
ARTS
VICTORIA



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This Strategy will impact upon lands and waters over which a number of First Nations' Traditional Owner and language groups hold custodianship. Registered Aboriginal Parties and Native Title Holders in the region include the Barengi Gadjin; Eastern Maar; Gunditj Mirring; and Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation.

Traditional Owners and language groups in the South West include people who identify as Bunganditj, Djabwurung, Djargurdwurung, Gunditjmarra, Jardwadjali, Kirrae Whurrung, Kuurn Kopan Noot Maar, Peek Whurrong, Tjap Wurrung, Yarro waetch (Tooram Tribe), Wadawurrung, and Wotjobaluk.

Each has individual and interconnected stories, sites, practices and ambitions for their communities stretching back millennia.

We acknowledge the land on which we live and work, and pay our respect to the First Peoples on all of these lands and those that surround them.

THANK YOU

The development and delivery of this Strategy is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and Aboriginal Victoria; City of Warrnambool; Corangamite Shire; Glenelg Shire; Moyne Shire; Southern Grampians Shire; and the Great Ocean Road Tourism Board. Regional Arts Victoria acknowledges (and is extraordinarily grateful for) the expert advice provided by these supporters through the Project Control Group. Regional Arts Victoria's ongoing involvement in South West Victoria is supported by the Federal Government's Regional Arts Fund.

Future Tense led the process of reviewing the local creative ecology; Cultural Development Network supported the writing of the Strategy; and a number of organisations co-delivered consultation sessions or otherwise supported this work, including the Public Galleries Association of Victoria; Screenworks; Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria); Writers Victoria; Regional Arts Australia; Multicultural Arts Victoria; Express Media; The Push; Australian Theatre for Young People; Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres; National Association for the Visual Arts; Design Institute of Australia; Australian Fashion Council; Music Victoria; Arts Access Victoria; Circus Oz; and Arena Theatre Company.

The artists and communities living in the South West who provided submissions or attended sessions in the development of this Strategy made it possible. Thank you.

It's common for a few things to shift and change from the time you begin drafting a Strategy like this, to the moment you launch it into the world.

Some people might move on to new roles. Events may change dates. New players could emerge. Small, manageable things that require a little tweak here and there to the final document.

But it's hard to describe any of the changes we've witness unfold since we began this process in mid-2019 as 'common'.

A version of this Strategy was prepared for release March 2020, immediately before the full impacts of COVID-19 became evident. These impacts have been particularly acute for the arts and creative industries. In response, we reviewed the proposal to ensure we could adequately reflect the changed starting point we find ourselves in – even if we feel the end goals remain the same.

We present this draft Strategy now acknowledging that much of the focus in each Objective must be viewed through a lens of community, cultural and economic recovery in the immediate term.

This may mean that some Activities can be delivered before current movement restrictions can be lifted, whilst others can't.

The order, focus and timeline for the Objectives will not be even, but their importance over the four-year life of the Strategy remains unchanged. Where relevant, we've made these notes against each Objective.

The creative industries can play a central role in our wider community rebuilding. We look forward to using this Strategy as one tool towards this aim.

INTRODUCTION

Regional Arts Victoria presents *What it Means: A Creative Industries Strategy for South West Victoria*.

From the moment this project was formed through the Victorian Government’s Regional Assemblies program, one question has followed us around: *what will this mean for me?*

We grappled with this question throughout the entire process. What does creativity mean for, and to, South West Victoria?

This Strategy is our response.

The arts and creative industries impact us all, collectively and individually, in myriad ways. *What it Means* is a four-year plan to support the creative industries that support us. It has been developed, and will be delivered, in partnership with local community, government, and the creative sector.

The Strategy invests in the conditions needed for creative endeavours to thrive in South West Victoria, so that the multiple benefits of a healthy sector can be realised. It is a stage; a canvas; a page; an invitation to you to share with us: *What it Means*.

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Making it Happen

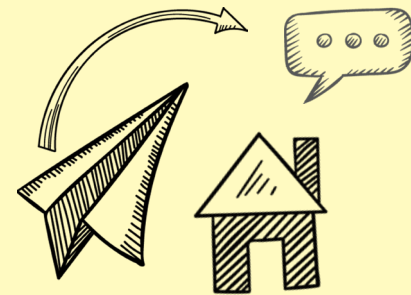
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WHAT WE DID



72
individual or group
consultations

14
industry-expert led
community events
attended by **178 people**



124
existing policy or strategy
documents reviewed



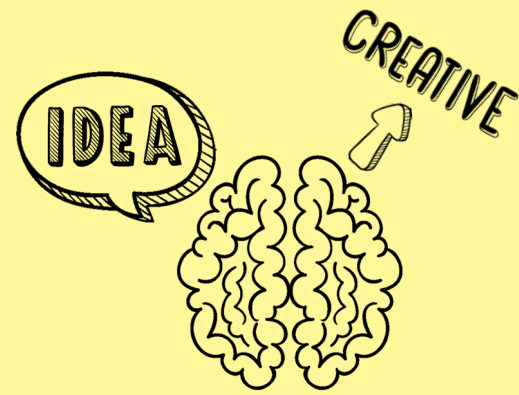
1 open survey
completed by **139** people

4 month
open online consultation
period through
strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast



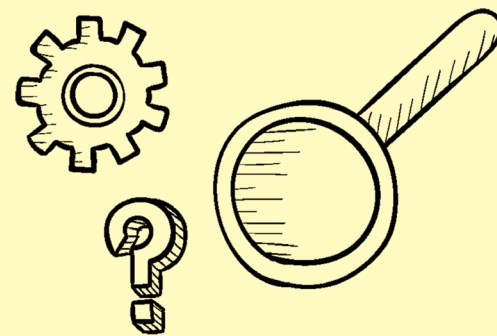
You can read more about
our findings at [strategy.rav.
net.au/south-coast](http://strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast)

WHAT WE HEARD



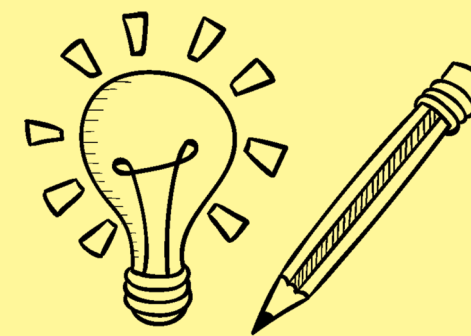
Current strengths

- First People's culture and sites
- Strong music community
- Some strong festivals
- Strong community arts hubs
- Key flagship institution
- Active community of artists
- Interested and open local audiences
- Councils open to strengthening the sector
- Visual arts well established



Current challenges

- Limited data available on creative industries
- Lack of suitable spaces to develop work
- Limited venues to perform and present
- Limited opportunities for mid-career artists
- Technical expertise limited
- Few advanced education offerings
- Much activity relies on individual energy
- Lack of coordination across region
- Limited options for young people to participate and develop career pathways



Future opportunities

- Spotlight First Nations creative work, culture and community
- Utilise abundant available spaces
- Leverage music community
- Grow regional touring circuits
- Connect sector to council and state government strategies
- Create dedicated funding programs
- Build technical workforce
- Encourage experimentation
- Better supported flagship institutions
- Better links with tourism



Future threats

- Energies of sector not harnessed
- Support structures not put in place
- Declining membership of community organisations
- Individuals lose motivation
- Lack of effective promotional platforms
- Council strategies not connected

WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

READING THIS SECTION: OUR APPROACH

To help understand how we've got to this point, a brief summary of our approach and findings may be useful.

- It is clear from the consultation findings that there **exists a strong belief and confidence** in the existing creative institutions and people in the region;
- **What is missing** is the support for these existing people and organisations to meet current needs (let alone deliver to additional demand);
- Therefore, this Strategy focuses on investing in this **'behind the scenes'** support.

At a broad level, what we are seeking to do is make more support available to **anyone**, so that the Strategy has the best chance of benefiting **everyone**.

This document is presented as a **partnership** between government, the sector, and the community. All should be considered equally active and invested participants, rather than serving, or being serviced by, the Strategy.




WHAT COULD BE: AMBITIONS FOR SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

How do we want the creative industries in the South West to look by 2040? And what do we do next to get there?




This region already has great strengths: a First People's storytelling culture and tradition dating back thousands of years, accessible through a number of culturally significant sites; the natural environment; successful local institutions and festivals; government and philanthropic investment; and individual leaders in the sector, to list just a few. The distance of the region from a major capital city is a strength, though it also presents some challenges. There is no shortage of local energy and creativity amongst residents, but the behind-the-scenes hard and soft infrastructure support needed for a thriving creative sector is lacking.

By 2040, the South West region will have the local support and skills available to drive the creative industries. We must focus on this now, so that by 2040 the sector will be connected within and beyond the South West, with opportunities and resources that support current residents and attract new ones. In turn, experimentation will be encouraged, audiences treated to a diversity of offerings, and the creative industries celebrated across the region for the benefits they bring.

STRATEGY SUMMARY

 GOAL (this is what we want):	Beneficial and sustainable creative industries in South West Victoria		
 OUTCOMES (because creative industries can lead to):	Cultural: participants benefit from new knowledge, ideas and insights; appreciate a diversity of cultural expression; and stimulate their creativity.	Social: participants benefit from improved physical and or mental wellbeing; increased sense of safety and security; enhanced social connectedness; and feeling valued.	Economic: participants’ professional and/or practice capability increases; employment-enhancing skill development can be supported; individual economic wellbeing is increased; and local economy is supported.
 OBJECTIVES (to get there, we need):	ACTIVITIES (so we will do the following things):		
	CONFIRMED (what we can do right now):	UNCONFIRMED (what we would like to do):	ABOUT THE UNCONFIRMED ACTIVITIES (what we need first before we do these activities):
1. First Nations: increased recognition of First Nations' culture and heritage in the region	1.1 Match existing regional priorities of First Nations’ groups to the resources needed to deliver them	1.2 Support local emerging practitioners with mentoring from Elders and/or other First Nations' artform leaders 1.3 Showcase projects featuring established and emerging artists	The Activities that are not confirmed or this Objective require Activity 1.1 to be completed first, and may require additional resources to be delivered.
2. The South West Story: greater understanding of South West creative industries	2.1 Pilot a storyteller-in-residence program to creatively profile the region through existing platforms	2.3 Review outcomes of pilot project	The Activity that is not confirmed requires Activity 2.1 to be completed first.
	2.2 Support local government areas in the region to develop and review local-level strategies and plans	2.4 Launch local government strategies 2.5 Support local governments to incorporate creative industry goals into Council Plans	The Activities that are not confirmed require Activity 2.2 to be completed first.
3. Data collection: valuable regional cultural and economic data is collected and used	3.1 Pilot data collection for impact with selected institutions across region	3.2 Establish sample baseline data for South West Victoria 3.3 Review sample data and data points 3.4 Create an ‘open access’ portal for local organisations to access measurement tools 3.5 Publish aggregate data for region 3.6 Review and revise data portal as required	The Activities that are not confirmed or this Objective require Activity 3.1 to be completed first. Data collection activities may be delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.
4. Testing Ground: greater recognition of South West Victoria as an innovative creative industry region	4.1 Seek resources for a regional-level program that allows for two-entry points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Test It’: support for new initiatives or projects• ‘Follow-Up’: to extend opportunities for existing projects and initiatives	4.2 Deliver the regional-level program 4.3 Showcase projects progressed through ‘Follow-up’ stage	The Activities that are not confirmed require Activity 4.1 to be completed first, and will require additional resources to be delivered.

STRATEGY SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

 GOAL (this is what we want):	Beneficial and sustainable creative industries in South West Victoria		
	 OUTCOMES (because creative industries can lead to):	Cultural: participants benefit from new knowledge, ideas and insights; appreciate a diversity of cultural expression; and stimulate their creativity.	Social: participants benefit from improved physical and or mental wellbeing; increased sense of safety and security; enhanced social connectedness; and feeling valued.
 OBJECTIVES (to get there, we need):	ACTIVITIES (so we will do the following things):		
	CONFIRMED (what we can do right now):	UNCONFIRMED (what we would like to do):	ABOUT THE UNCONFIRMED ACTIVITIES (what we need first before we do these activities):
5. Creative Hubs: centres connected with infrastructure, industry and each other	5.1 Design a regional hub program to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build capacity for existing spaces and facilitators• Identify opportunities for other suitable spaces• Examine the potential for ‘pop-up’ networking opportunities	5.3 Match hubs with relevant state or national industry bodies 5.4 Develop MOUs with hub spaces formalising community access protocols 5.5 Create ‘Hub Exchange’ residency program across hubs to support short-term intensives between regions 5.6 Review hub program and membership and revise program accordingly	The Activities that are not confirmed requires Activity 5.1 to be completed first, and will require additional resources to be delivered. Hub activities may be delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.
	5.2 Consolidate creative infrastructure requirements at a regional level	5.7 Review financing models and pipeline for infrastructure upgrades 5.8 Implement recommendations from review of infrastructure financing models and needs	The Activities that are not confirmed require Activity 5.2 to be completed first, and may require additional resources to be delivered.
6. Professional and enterprise development: increased capacity to grow the creative industries	6.1 Launch annual professional development program for residencies and information sharing from within and outside the region	6.3 Review, revise and deliver professional development program	The Activity that is not confirmed requires Activity 6.1 to be completed first.
	6.2 Develop an enterprise support program for advancing business skills and marketing opportunities for creative professionals	6.4 Review and revise program for enterprise support	The Activity that is not confirmed requires Activity 6.2 to be completed first. Activity 6.2 may also require additional resources as the program develops.
7. Youth programs: greater mentoring, education, career pathways opportunities	7.1 Build connections between major institutions and young people in region	7.3 Create skills-based placements across region	The Activity that is not confirmed requires Activity 7.1 to be completed first, and will require additional resources to be delivered.
	7.2 Pilot a ‘creative captains’ program to mentor young creative leaders to devise and deliver creative programs	7.4 Support delivery of projects or initiatives identified by creative captains	The Activity that is not confirmed requires Activity 7.2 to be completed first, and will require additional resources to be delivered.

SOME ADDITIONAL DETAIL

WHAT ARE THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES?

As part of the development of ‘Creative State’, Victoria’s first Creative Industries strategy, Creative Victoria stated:

Creative industries are an evolving mix of sectors spanning arts, culture, screen, design, publishing and advertising. They cover disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy and craft. They include activities that are commercially-driven and community based, experimental and export-intense.¹

The South West strategy development takes a similarly broad approach in considering the diverse fields that contribute to cultural, economic and social life in the south west of the state.

¹ creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state/introduction/victorias-creative-industries

WHERE IS SOUTH WEST VICTORIA ?

South West Victoria, as it relates to this Strategy, refers to the region identified as the Great South Coast Regional Partnership by the Victorian Government, reaching from the Shipwreck Coast to the South Australian border.



The five municipalities that comprise the Partnership are the Corangamite Shire; Glenelg Shire; Moyne Shire; Southern Grampians Shire; and the City of Warrnambool.

You can read more about the region, and the Partnership, at the Regional Development Victoria website: rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-partnerships/great-south-coast

HOW WAS THIS STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

The need for a Strategy in the region was identified at the Great South Coast Regional Assembly. Once this brief was refined, a Project Control Group advised Regional Arts Victoria on the development of the Strategy, with representatives from:

- Aboriginal Victoria;
- City of Warrnambool;
- Corangamite Shire;
- Creative Victoria;
- Glenelg Shire;
- Great Ocean Road Tourism Board;
- Moyne Shire;
- Regional Development Victoria;
- The Great South Coast Regional Partnership; and,
- Southern Grampians Shire.

Expert policy development advice was provided by the Cultural Development Network, and Future Tense led a creative ecology mapping exercise to add significant analytic support to researching the Strategy.

Regional Arts Victoria also co-delivered a series of community consultation sessions with industry leaders through 2019, the summary of which can be found at strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast.

WHAT DOES 'CREATIVE ECOLOGY' MEAN?

Mapping a Creative Ecology is a process of looking at the artists and organisations that make up the creative sector, the relationships they have with the wider community, and the different types of impact they have on the region as a whole. This process was led by Future Tense.

Established and emerging artists, purely creative practitioners and creative professionals, formal institutions and informal sub-cultures, mainstream and underground activities – and the audiences they serve – were all surveyed as part of the investigation. The information was used to assess the development of South West Victoria's creative ecology in terms of:

- The level of connection and engagement amongst the participants;
- Whether there are opportunities for growth;
- How important local audiences are;
- The extent to which experimentation is encouraged and supported;
- The availability of resources;
- Whether the contribution of the arts is recognised by the wider community; and
- The depth of creative diversity.

You can read more at strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast.

EVALUATION

The simple goal guiding the Strategy is to build **beneficial and sustainable creative industries in South West Victoria**.

There are two key parts to it:

- *beneficial* creative industries, emphasising the economic, social and cultural benefits the sector can have on the region; and,
- *sustainable* creative industries, focusing on supporting the needs of creative industries themselves.

Drawing on support from the Cultural Development Network¹ to identify what measureable Outcomes might be, as well as consultation and research for the Strategy, the beneficial outcomes we will measure are **cultural, social and economic**, with 12 Outcomes identified for measurement (see opposite). Additionally, a number of **governance** outcomes will be monitored for some of the Objectives.

Activity 3.1 in the Strategy, ‘Pilot data collection for impact with selected institutions across region’, will allow us to set some baseline data for each of these measures that we can track over time to indicate our progress.

Cultural

1. Creativity is stimulated
2. Aesthetic enrichment is experienced
3. Knowledge, ideas and insight is gained
4. Diversity of cultural expression is appreciated

Social

5. Wellbeing (physical and/or mental) is improved
6. Sense of safety and security is increased
7. Social connectedness is enhanced
8. Feeling valued is experienced

Economic

9. Professional and/or practice capability is increased
10. Employment-enhancing skill development is facilitated
11. Individual economic wellbeing is increased
12. Local economy is supported

² See culturaldevelopment.net.au/measurable-outcomes-of-cultural-development-activity-within-the-six-domains

EVEN MORE DETAIL

This document is a summary of the work supporting the Strategy.

Significant additional information is available at strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast. This includes a detailed Strategy document with further information about Objectives, including:

1. **About this Objective** explains the Objective in more detail;
2. **Evidence supporting the Objective** summarises the work done to decide on why this Objective was included;
3. **Confirmed Activities** describes what must happen first to advance the Objectives;
4. **Unconfirmed Activities** describe Activities to follow the Confirmed Activities;
5. **Why this Activity?** explains how this Activity will help deliver on the Objective;
6. **Intended Outcomes** shows what the benefits of the Objective will be and links these to the Outcomes sought;
7. **And another thing...** includes pilot projects, resourcing plans, limitations, exclusions or other information relevant to the Objective.

Each Objective also includes a case study demonstrating how local organisations or individuals currently support the Objective.

In addition, evidence collected to support the Strategy, and a summary response for each, is available. This includes:

- Community consultation summaries;
- Creative ecology report; and,
- Cultural Development Network evidence report.

Regional Arts Victoria can also provide copies of all of these documents on request.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

NOW WHAT?

The Strategy delivery work begins in late 2020. We will start with Activities that are confirmed immediately, whilst others (where noted) require additional investigation or resourcing before we commence, or may require flexibility to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions.

As this is a regional-level Strategy, working across a large area and all artforms, it may be difficult to find something specific for you and your passion here. To help break this down, Regional Arts Victoria will release a series of *What it Means* Summary Sheets that help demonstrate the broad impact of this work. You can find these at strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast.

We hope you find something to support your work here. What all of this means, to Regional Arts Victoria, is finding more and better ways to support artists, audiences and participants in the South West to make and experience work that is relevant to you.

WHO WILL DO THIS WORK?

Regional Arts Victoria will coordinate the delivery of the Strategy, with the direct support of two newly formed advocacy and advice groups:

- A Governance group, consisting of representatives from State and Local government invested in the Strategy; and,
- An Advisory group, consisting of representatives from a range of sectors (including creative sectors) based in South West Victoria.

Both groups will meet twice-yearly to review and revise milestones and initiatives as they progress. Updates and reports on the Strategy will be released to the public following these meetings.

From time-to-time, additional organisations or individuals may also work with Regional Arts Victoria on particular projects or activities in the Strategy. Regional Arts Victoria will continue the placement of a Partnership Manager on the ground in South West Victoria.

To follow updates, opportunities, progress reports, or to get involved, head to strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast or www.facebook.com/RAVgreatsouthcoast.

