



OPEN A DOOR TO
CREATIVE EXPERIENCE



Artwork Credit:
Wash your dishes on my culture, Kait James,
photographed by John Gollings

Cover Image Credit:
Geelong Arts Centre Facade (Peter Foster)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Geelong Arts Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, to Elders present and to emerging leaders, recognising their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community.

We also acknowledge First Peoples who live, work, and play on Wadawurrung Country and First Peoples visiting from surrounding Countries.

Art and culture manifests as a multitude of experiences, all part of a continuous tradition on this Country stretching back through millennia. As such, we are benefiting from Australia's first artists, today. And we continue their legacy by welcoming, elevating, and celebrating First Nations culture.

The relationship with local community has been developed through many individuals and community, and is a critical part of our past and future. Geelong Arts Centre Trust and Executive Leadership Team seek and value the advice and leadership of local community, particularly First Nations members of the Djilaga Circle.

This reference group represents diverse lived experiences, knowledges and perspectives, however shares a collective vision. They inform our direction and priorities; and cultural lens across our organisation. We embrace Wadawurrung people and culture, building awareness, understanding and respect.

A MESSAGE FROM DJILAGA CIRCLE

In Wadawurrung language, Djilaga means 'spark'.

Djilaga Circle is an Aboriginal-led collaboration with the Geelong Arts Centre.

The purpose of Djilaga Circle is to energise connection and engagement with the arts for local community and for First Peoples visiting from across the country.

The leaders who inform Djilaga Circle are representatives of Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, Elders, Creative Professionals, Entrepreneurs, Curators, Collaborators and Community Engagement Program Leads who guide our shared objectives and have agency within Geelong Arts Centre.

Djilaga Circle recognises that First Nations Peoples have shared knowledge, history and storytelling through creative practice for millennia. Djilaga Circle will endeavour to continue to elevate creative practices to inspire and celebrate.



Image Credits:

(L) Jessica Mauboy at the Opening Ceremony, (Peter Foster)
(M) Geelong Wonder Children's Festival (Peter Foster)
(R) The Songs of Elton John and George Michael, starring
Anthony Callea and Tim Campbell, Costa Hall, (Peter Foster)



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We have always focused on opening a door to creative experience for every person who enters our outstanding venues or participates in our diverse art and cultural events.

Geelong Arts Centre is not one, but four, distinct venues, with myriad spaces and opportunities. Look around. Notice them. Their design and presence create drama, excitement and expectation. There is potential on every stage and in every studio.

Our fifth venue, The Church, opens soon and will fill an important gap in Geelong as a lively testing ground, a performance space, reimagined for contemporary culture. A place for emerging artists to hone their craft and, on occasions, for more established artists to rediscover their roots and connection to audiences.

Our recently opened main Arts Centre building is cementing its place as a must-see and must-visit Australian cultural landmark.

Make it your own.

Geelong Arts Centre is not one, but many, diverse creative experiences, united by our purpose to be an open door to creativity.

Every year delivers a packed program of acts, events and culinary experiences. From comedy, theatre and dance to music and cultural conversations, feel the energy in our foyers and theatre of incredible touring acts. Join the crowd spilling into the forecourts and streets at festival time.

Be there.

Geelong Arts Centre is many, diverse people united by a drive to create, perform and participate.

Meet an increasingly diverse local community and talented local network of artists and makers. Learn from Wadawurrung Traditional Custodians and other First Nations voices represented on stage, in the fabric of the buildings, and the work of employees. Tap into a continuous creative source, stretching from the present back thousands of years.

Geelong Arts Centre is home to that first transformative experience of art, and a destination to which many people return, throughout a rich and varied life, always confident they have a welcoming place to engage in art and culture. A home for creative expression.

Read this plan. Help us bring it to life. Join us in realising the full potential of our people, our creativity, communities, buildings, and the region.



**We need to position Geelong
not just as a place to live and
work, but a place to engage
creatively and culturally.**

– Tourism stakeholder

GET READY FOR NEW CREATIVE EXPERIENCES.

It is with great excitement we share our strategic plan, which will guide us for the next four years.

Our last strategic plan was focused on building the new Arts Centre on Little Malop Street, a striking architectural landmark and a place bursting with potential.

It has been a huge transformation – a period of growth and adaptation. That period delivered new physical infrastructure and a range of new spaces, extending the cultural conversation beyond the performance itself. It also saw inspiring new people join our organisation and their creativity and ambition can be felt in this new strategic plan. As we enter this new cycle, we feel we are very much just getting started.

This strategic plan responds to huge shifts in our relationship to arts, culture and work, as society responds to new challenges and opportunities including those presented by AI.

We are focused on making all our venues the seat of unforgettable experiences and heartwarming moments. Moments recalled and revisited over the lifetime of every person who enters our doors.

We have been asked by our stakeholders across all sectors to lead, and we will. Through bold new presentation partnerships, innovative hospitality experiences, regional tourism activation, knowledge and skills sharing in our sector, and artist and community participation.

With the movement of audiences and artists away from major cities, we have an opportunity to re-shape the primacy of arts centres in little cities. The creation of art and related commercial innovation can be led by regional areas. Not simply by curating and presenting outstanding touring productions created in major cities, but by showcasing the best in venue, partnership, asset and production management.

When people hear the name 'Geelong', we want them to picture our venues and theatres – to see our golden door as a gateway to experience. We want our buildings and the culture connecting within them to be recalled with pride by local residents when they talk about where they live.

We want who we are and what we represent to be an inspiration for any person tentatively stepping into the creative universe, practicing art, or building other arts organisations. We want our presence and energy to transform perceptions of Geelong as a place to visit, learn, live and work.

Attracting the highest quality productions to Geelong has an impact on pride of place. When we promote and present First Nations work, we positively impact local community pride. We have a responsibility to represent the diversity of our region. We must talk to, inspire and respond to new and diverse audiences.

The stage is not the only place for creativity. It starts with every one of our people and how they see themselves and their role in our organisation. How they solve problems big and small, and how they engage with our many stakeholders.

We should be bold and take risks, including using commercial models of presenting and producing work. We have a responsibility to use our resources to fund community impact, and our best source of sustainable revenues is what happens on our stages. Acknowledging the many social and economic forces affecting Australians, it is critical we innovate, test and refine our audience outreach and programming to keep pace with changing markets and audience expectations.

An immediate focus of this new planning cycle is responding to our diverse audiences, participants, producers and presenters: understanding what they need and want, what motivates them and how we can arrange our resources, capabilities and unique spaces to support them. Because Geelong Arts Centre is for everyone who seeks creative experience, we also need to understand which people are not coming through our doors and why.

Critical to our success over the next four years will be building operational depth. Strengthening core competencies, building robust systems and procedures, fostering deeper relationships, and building depth of experience across our workforce and operations.

We will develop a stronger sense of self-awareness, and a commitment to continuous learning and development. This will help us manage uncertainty and adapt to increasingly rapid change. We have a unique opportunity to bring many different types of artists, audiences and cultural experiences together. The strongest program, initiative or idea is the one with the biggest and widest community impact. We must use the opportunity of professional artists touring works to our venues to bring them together with emerging artists to enrich our creative development programs. We must have music lovers joining us to see their favourite band, also exposed and encouraged to explore other art forms and experiences. This applies to our membership program, donor program and use of facilities.

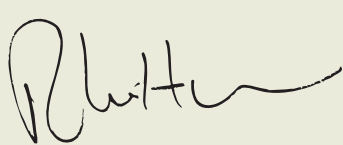
Finally, we must live the philosophy that creativity and culture is for all.

In practice, this means everyone, throughout their lives, should have access to regular, affordable and high-quality arts and cultural experiences. Beyond the immediate sense of joy, the arts are fundamental to physical and mental health, and social and community cohesion.

We have created a local attraction, showpiece buildings, and now we have a responsibility to fill it. To give the community a place to celebrate creativity and culture in all its forms. A ticket to our venues represents access to a rich and reliable experience of art and culture: festivals, food, free and always-on programming.

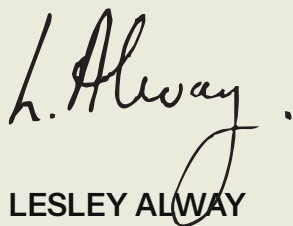
Walk through our open door to creative experience, expression, and community connection. An expression of place and culture, ancient and contemporary.

See you there,



RHYS HOLDEN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
& CREATIVE DIRECTOR
GEELONG PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE TRUST



LESLEY ALWAY

CHAIRPERSON
GEELONG PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE TRUST



Lesley Alway and Rhys Holden (Milk Video)

INTRODUCTION

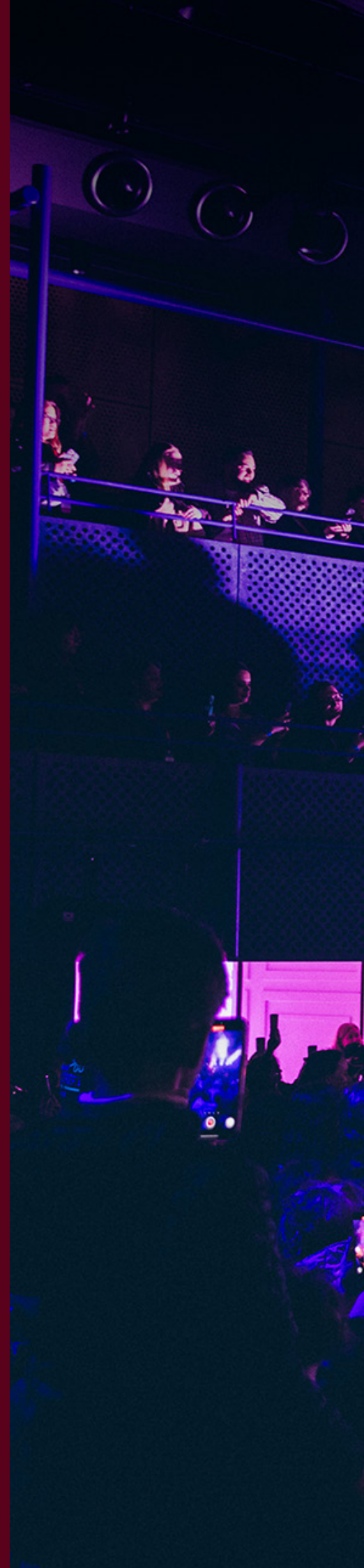
The 2026–2029 Geelong Arts Centre Strategic Plan sets out our vision, purpose, and goals, and the key activities we will undertake to achieve them over the next four years.

During the previous strategic planning cycle, we completed and opened our transformed Little Malop Street venues. This transformation was not just physical, it also brought with it significantly expanded operations and workforce to support the Centre's new opportunities.

In drafting this plan, we have been bold, ambitious and prudent. We have addressed the current and anticipated environmental forces, our strategic context, and the fundamental requirements of running a large and complex arts organisation – supporting our people and partners with systems, training and resources – to create a strong platform for practicing creativity.

Within each area, our different departments have defined a range of activities, assigning responsibility to managers and teams to deliver them. Each activity has related outcomes we will use to measure progress, reporting to the Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust and to the community through Creative Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government.

A strategic plan is not a static document. There are many complex internal and external forces affecting our organisation, and creating uncertainty. To address this uncertainty, we have in place regular reviews and decision-making frameworks to comprehensively work through changes in the environment as they arise. We also have a robust and well-resourced risk management framework, regularly reviewed as part of our overall governance frameworks. Any decision we make is informed by our values and aligned to our purpose.





Geelong Arts Centre is already seen nationally as a leader, now it's time to lead regionally too, not just inside your walls.

– Tourism & events stakeholder



Geelong Arts Centre curates, supports and presents a diverse range of music, theatre, comedy and dance performances, as well as important cultural and arts practice dialogue, workshops, developments, community experiences and free public activations. Our work seeks to welcome every person in our community to engage, learn and express their creativity, making art a universal experience.

Geelong Arts Centre is the cultural heartbeat of Victoria's second-largest city.

Established in 1981 as a Victorian Government statutory agency, we have evolved into Australia's largest dedicated regional performing arts complex. A landmark \$180 million redevelopment, completed in August 2023, quadrupled public space, installed world-class staging, lighting and acoustic systems, and created fully accessible foyers that link the historic Ryrie Street building with a striking new Little Malop Street façade designed in consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

The campus now comprises four distinct performance venues supported by rehearsal studios, exhibition foyers and meeting and event spaces.

- **The Play House** (867 seats) remains the Centre's largest proscenium theatre.
- **The Story House** (550 seats) is a new, flexible venue opened for contemporary works, touring productions and standing gigs.
- **The Open House** (250 seats) is an intimate industrial-style studio suited to cabaret, fringe theatre and live music, with folding doors to an outdoor plaza for markets and other events.
- **Costa Hall** (1,421 seats) at Deakin University's Geelong Waterfront Campus hosts orchestral concerts, major bands and university graduations.

Additional creative spaces include purpose-built rehearsal rooms, creative workspaces, and a range of hospitality areas including **Tutti**, our in-house café and restaurant which serves both the general public enjoying the precinct and our audiences pre-show.

Geelong Arts Centre curates a year-round season that pairs national and international touring productions with locally produced work. The Centre also commissions and co-produces work with producers from across the country. Core strands span mainstage theatre, contemporary dance, classical and popular music, children's and family programming, First Nations storytelling and multidisciplinary festivals. A large number of community events perform annually including schools and community ensembles alongside commercial promoters and touring artists.

Geelong Arts Centre is supported by a strong and growing philanthropic and corporate community who champion our work for and by the community.

Community engagement and lifelong learning are embedded in our **Creative Learning** program which partners with educators from kindergarten to Year 12, offering curriculum-aligned performances, artist workshops and teacher resources. **Creative Engine**, the Centre's industry-development hub, allocates seed funding, rehearsal space, mentoring and networking to emerging artists, sustaining a vibrant regional talent pipeline. Access programs including Auslan-interpreted shows, relaxed performances, sensory-friendly matinees and ticket subsidies ensure that people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds feel welcome.



PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The direction and contents of this strategic plan reflect a process which included mapping external forces, seeking input from our stakeholder groups, and reviewing our operations to identify goals that reflect our vision and ambitions and those of many people, groups and industries to which our future is tied. We are very conscious that our success supports the success of others and we've aimed to produce a plan that is inclusive and considers the different points of view of our audiences and stakeholders.

To gather the information and advice to sharpen our focus, and steer our decisions, we undertook the following activities:

- 1** Strategic workshop and discussions with Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust members.
- 2** A deep dive into the first 18 months in our new building including current operations, identifying a range of opportunities and risks.
- 3** A thorough analysis of the external forces affecting our organisation, and the people we exist to serve and support.
- 4** Consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and Djilaga Circle.
- 5** Analysis of community and audience feedback.
- 6** Interviews and consultation with our government stakeholders – federal, state and local.
- 7** Staff workshops.
- 8** Workshops and interviews with other stakeholders from diverse industries and sectors including local communities, arts and entertainment, academia and education, tourism, events and hospitality.

The outcomes of this investigative process have informed the development of this plan.



VISION STORY

We imagine a world where creative experiences shape how we think, feel, connect and grow together.

By 2029, we will be a home for this transformation: a place truly open to all, where First Nations voices resonate from stages to staff rooms, and where artists and audiences of all cultures, generations and identities see themselves reflected in the stories we share. Rooted in a legacy stretching across millennia, we will ignite sparks in young minds and support artists to soar. We will unite our community commitment with an embedded commercial and sustainable focus to deliver creative experiences for all.

Visitors from far beyond the region will seek powerful cultural experiences and locals will anticipate their next great night out. Behind the scenes, our people are motivated by our purpose to do our best work.

In this future, Geelong Arts Centre is not only a place of culture – it is an engine to enrich generations to come.

PURPOSE

OPEN A DOOR TO CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Geelong Arts Centre is an open door to creative experience, expression, and community connection. A place of culture both ancient and contemporary.

VALUES

BOLD

We embrace the freedom to challenge the boundaries of our work.

WELCOMING

Our smile celebrates inclusiveness and a shared passion for creativity.

CONNECTED

We are proactive in connecting to and engaging with the arts and wider communities, reaching out and facilitating an exchange of ideas.

ENSEMBLE

Our team seeks to work 'as one', respecting and valuing the role and contribution of all.

GOALS

1. FIRST PEOPLES

Embed First Nations perspectives, understandings and relationships across all our activities.

2. AUDIENCES & STAKEHOLDERS

Know and grow our diverse audiences and stakeholders.

3. EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

Support lifelong creative participation.

THEME:
CHAMPION ARTS, CULTURE AND
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

THEME:
LEAD AND GROW ARTISTS & INDUSTRY

6. ARTISTS

Support artists to grow, make and present.

7. LEADERSHIP

Step into our leadership role.

4. CURATION

Adapt and invent through strategic curation, programming and place activation.

5. COMMERCIAL

Build innovative commercial models and partnerships.

THEME:
BOLD, INNOVATIVE, CREATIVE EXPERIENCES

THEME:
HIGH PERFORMING PEOPLE, VENUES & OPERATIONS

8. PEOPLE

Be a place people want to work, with a safe, supported, motivated and inclusive workforce.

9. OPERATIONS

High-performing, integrated and sustainable operations.

10. VENUES

Realise the potential of our incredible venues and spaces.



WHAT WE HEARD

GOVERNMENT

As a leading Australian arts organisation, Geelong Arts Centre contributes to the development and implementation of federal, state and local government strategies and initiatives. These include:

- **Creative State**, the Victorian Government's four-year creative industry strategy (led by Creative Victoria).
- **Revive: a place for every story and a story for every place**, the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy.
- **G21 Creative Industries Strategy**, driving art, creative industries and regional development in the Geelong Region.
- **City of Greater Geelong's Arts & Cultural Strategy 2021-2031** which guides and supports arts and cultural activity in Geelong and surrounding areas.

When developing this strategic plan, alignment with these strategies was identified, and relevant representatives were invited to share their priorities and activities in roundtable discussions.

MACRO FORCES

Stakeholders identified many different factors influencing Geelong Arts Centre and the communities it serves, representing both risks and opportunities. These include:

PROXIMITY TO MELBOURNE

Geelong's location near Melbourne, affordable housing, diverse job opportunities, and lifestyle factors are contributing to its population growth. This underlines Geelong Arts Centre's potential as a must-see destination within and beyond the region, and a need to keep responding to the needs of an evolving local population.

NET MIGRATION

The largest contributor to population growth in the past year was net overseas migration, followed by net internal migration and natural increase. Geelong Arts Centre's audience is becoming more diverse with new cultural opportunities.

FIRST NATIONS FIRST

The prominent Voice, Treaty and Truth processes, with further emphasis following the Voice Referendum, is focusing government and communities on the need for deeper understanding, self-determination and participation.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The City of Greater Geelong and G21 initiative are producing regional strategies which place arts, culture and creative industries in a range of contexts, including economic development, placemaking and livability.

INCREASING POLARISATION

In the digital age, strong stakeholder opinion spreads quickly on social media and responses can be equally swift, thereby harming organisations that are unprepared. Increasingly complicated are the artistic values of arts and cultural institutions intersecting with public and stakeholder responsibilities.

CHALLENGING FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

Federal, state and local governments are all managing a difficult fiscal context and all sectors are facing competition for grant funding, or non-indexed recurrent funding, including artists, and arts and culture sector organisations.

COST OF LIVING

The cost of groceries, petrol and utility bills continues to rise, placing pressure on families' discretionary spending, disproportionately impacting new migrant communities and low-income earners, with impacting Geelong Arts Centre audience visits, ticket prices and food and beverage spend.

RISING OPERATIONAL COSTS

Cost of suppliers, and procuring production is increasing significantly. With escalating international 'trade wars' it is likely the cost of a range of materials will rise, impacting the cost and availability of services.

SKILLS SHORTAGES

The arts, and particularly Geelong, has a limited talent pool to fill technical and professional roles, as well as casual hospitality roles.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Data reveals young audiences are the most active consumers of art and culture of any age group, with 88 percent of people under 25 attending in-person cultural activities. However, cost of participation is a significant barrier for young people who are also spending more time online than older generations.

RISE OF AI

The changing face of work and art creation through the use of AI.



**What a fabulous opportunity
for our kids to experience
working in a professional
theatre. So well run.**

– Community stakeholder





**We have to lift the perception
that the arts are only for
certain people.”**

– Tourism, events & hospitality stakeholder



Image Credits:

(L) *Daddy REWIRE* Event (Peter Foster)

(M) Staff Member engages with attendees at the Geelong
Wonder Children's Festival (Peter Foster)

(R) Geelong Wonder Children's Festival (Peter Foster)

STAKEHOLDERS

FIRST NATIONS

Consultation and collaboration with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Djilaga Circle provided valuable leadership and direction, including these insights:

- First Peoples should be considered and prioritised when addressing all strategic priorities.
- Our vision looks beyond 2029 and instead, to the lives and experiences of future generations. The legacy we leave them is through our actions in the present day.
- The present is a continuation of the past. We should consider how we build on the past and ensure the connection to Culture is felt and expressed.
- Geelong Arts Centre should prioritise employing First Nations People to lead and self-determine First Nations outcomes.
- Local community should feel welcome to be active audience members and participants in our programs.
- Connections and relationships with local community are important to building lasting partnerships.
- We can enable First Nations work to be presented in community spaces by providing resources at events and activities.
- Work experience designed with and for First Nations people can contribute to employment pathways.

WORKFORCE

Workshops with our staff provided significant insight into their hopes, dreams and aspirations. When asked what they wanted as team members working for Geelong Arts Centre, our people identified the following:

- Career growth opportunities, training, engagement and recognition.
- Capable new people to join us and become colleagues who want to dig-in, and stay.
- The right mix of resources – from vacuum cleaners to kitchen equipment and high-tech stage gear – so they can deliver on our promise every day and night.
- To get behind the new venues and spaces, and bring local people and energy to our foyers, stages, bars and restaurant.

COMMUNITY & EDUCATION

Consultation with local community and educational stakeholders revealed key priorities including delivering:

- Opportunities for young people to experience making live performance in a professional, supported context.
- Opportunities to present works for different cultures and subcultures.
- Events and activities for families which bring communities together.
- Somewhere to go out at night, a beating heart for Geelong's city centre.

TOURISM, EVENTS, HOSPITALITY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRIES

Engagement with our stakeholders in tourism, events and hospitality indicated they are looking for us to:

- Take on a visible leadership role in sector sustainability, positioning Geelong Arts Centre not just as a premier venue but as a regional catalyst for resilience and innovation.
- Emphasise Geelong Arts Centre as a regional economic and cultural driver.
- Integrate Geelong Arts Centre programming and public positioning with Geelong's broader brand as a growing, cosmopolitan city, balancing sports, tourism and culture.
- Strategically integrate with tourism, business events, and regional marketing priorities.
- Support precinct-wide collaboration to lift Geelong's cultural profile nationally.
- Deliver leadership on economic and environmental sustainability.

“Tourists are looking for more than sport; culture is the next frontier for Geelong.”

“We should align programming across the precinct – imagine library events, gallery exhibitions, and Geelong Arts Centre shows working together.”

“It’s about lifting the whole ecosystem.”

ARTS INDUSTRY

Interviews with local artists and other arts industry stakeholders, including presenters and promoters, helped us gather the following feedback about what they want:

- Affordable creative spaces and career development pathways.
- Casual, non-outcome-driven access to rehearsal and collaboration spaces.
- Community-building through the arts as a social and wellbeing approach.

“Artists need mentors, not just money. Someone who can say, ‘here’s what to expect at the next stage.’”

Arts industry stakeholders want:

- Advocacy for differentiated fee structures and long-term booking security.
- Deeper, co-designed partnerships focused on capacity building in multicultural and community sectors.
- Strategies to address workforce shortages across technical, creative, and management roles.

Presenters and promoters want:

- Competitive venue pricing, stronger marketing partnerships, and agile booking models.
- Support for innovation through new presentation and event formats.

VISION STORY

We imagine a world where creative experiences shape how we think, feel, connect and grow together.

By 2029, we will be a home for this transformation: a place truly open to all, where First Nations voices resonate from stages to staff rooms, and where artists and audiences of all cultures, generations and identities see themselves reflected in the stories we share. Rooted in a legacy stretching across millennia, we will ignite sparks in young minds and support artists to soar. We will unite our community commitment with an embedded commercial and sustainable focus to deliver creative experiences for all.

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PURPOSE

OPEN A DOOR TO CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Geelong Arts Centre is an open door to creative experience, expression, and community connection. A place of culture both traditional and contemporary.

All people are creative. They begin their creative journeys via exposure and access to education, performances, entertainment and conversations. We create the spaces, foster the connections, carefully curate programs, and support artists to make and grow.

Through our doors, people are alive to the depth and breadth of their community's creative potential, and art as the only language that truly connects and permeates all cultures.

They understand the wisdom and strength inherent in continuous First Nations cultures as well as the chaotic joy of contemporary multicultural diversity.

In art, all people are free to express themselves, their place and culture. Through chance encounters in our foyers, main stage performances, or day-long festivals, we open the door to creative experience.



To meet the needs of artists, communities and other stakeholders – within a continuously changing environment – we need to be aware, innovative, and commercially minded. This will ensure we deliver outstanding programming and have the financial and other resources we need to invest in our people and assets, to achieve our vision and purpose.

Geelong Arts Centre has 10 intersecting goals grouped within four reinforcing themes.

To address each goal, a set of key activity areas has been defined. Each of these is owned by a different team, which has developed related activities for implementation during the three-year strategic planning cycle.

THEME

CHAMPIONING ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

GOALS

1. FIRST PEOPLES

Embed First Nations perspectives, understandings and relationships across all our activities.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

- 1A. Support self-determined First Nations voices and stories throughout the Centre and region, and through them build community connection to Country and culture.
- 1B. Engage First Nations audiences in experiences at the Centre and by showing up in community.
- 1C. Enable every employee to have an individual and collective understanding of First Nations histories and cultures through connection with Elders, artists and community members and also empowering self-directed learning.
- 1D. Create a culturally safe place to work and visit where First Peoples lead and self-determine outcomes.
- 1E. Create employment opportunities for First Nations people.

2. AUDIENCES & STAKEHOLDER

Know and grow our diverse audiences and stakeholders.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

- 2A. Understand our current and future audiences and stakeholders.
- 2B. Define and activate the Geelong Arts Centre experience across all venues, communications and offerings: from front to back of house, and online.
- 2C. Engage and develop new partnerships with First Nations, multicultural and youth groups.

THEME

BOLD, INNOVATIVE, CREATIVE EXPERIENCES

GOALS

3. EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Support lifelong
creative participation.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

- 3A. Support people on a journey from first arts experience to lifelong creative expression and participation.
- 3B. Deepen engagement with different community groups to drive inclusion and participation across the lifespan.
- 3C. Focus on engagement with a representation of under-served and/or under-represented artists.

4. CURATION

Adaptation and invention through strategic curation, programming and place activation.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

- 4A. Develop a bold, innovative and connected curatorial approach by researching and trialling alternative models and formats, and taking informed risks.
- 4B. Deepen and enrich relationships with presenters, producers, creatives and artists.
- 4C. Activate our spaces in welcoming and inspiring ways, at different times of day and night, to establish an 'always-on' sensibility, driving return visitation.

5. COMMERCIAL

Build innovative commercial models and partnerships.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS

- 5A. Establish a commercial mindset, systemised and central to all departmental decision-making.
- 5B. Build venue hirer activity and loyalty through innovative commercially-focused partnerships
- 5C. Proactively engage venue hirers (promoters, producers) to stage high demand acts that are on-brand, and leverage their presence with complementary activities.
- 5D. Provide meaningful opportunities for people who are passionate about supporting and strengthening the arts to contribute as members, advocates, donors and investors.
- 5E. Leverage our prominence and creative leadership to be a regional catalyst for cross sector innovation.

LEAD AND GROW ARTISTS AND INDUSTRY

GOALS

6. ARTISTS

Support artists to make, present and grow.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS	
6A.	Expand our artist professional development programs.
6B.	Provide local, state and national artists with supported presenting opportunities across all levels of experience.
6C.	Foster a strong and productive local arts community, including building a new live music program across our venues.

7. LEADERSHIP

Step into our leadership role.

KEY ACTIVITY AREAS	
7A.	Explore our leadership role, not just in the curation and staging of work, but in the operations, sustainability, functions, design and potential of a second city arts centre.
7B.	Share knowledge with smaller centres or those in metro who do not have our same mix of programming, asset management, production, and community connection.
7C.	Lead collaborations with all levels of government and other local arts, cultural and creative organisations to make the cultural precinct, and Geelong, a must-see destination for locals and visitors.

HIGH-PERFORMING PEOPLE, OPERATIONS AND VENUES

GOALS

8. PEOPLE	9. OPERATIONS	10. VENUES
A place people want to work, with a safe, supported, motivated and inclusive workforce.	High-performing, integrated and sustainable operations.	Realising the potential of our incredible venues.
KEY ACTIVITY AREAS	KEY ACTIVITY AREAS	KEY ACTIVITY AREAS
8A. Invest in our people: build skills and capability, build organisational agility and capacity (including AI adoption), and acknowledge and reward performance.	9A. Unite all departments with shared goals and objectives, and clarity over their roles and how they relate to other teams, in pursuit of our purpose.	10A. Optimise venue purpose, utilisation, operations, infrastructure and resource use.
8B. Foster a diverse, positive, inclusive and values-led workplace culture that prioritises safety, development, wellbeing and engagement.	9B. Define and invest in systems strategy, establish clarity of process, select and implement ICT systems (including AI, CRM, OHS, and venue management), train staff to use them effectively and continue the implementation of core systems.	10B. Invest in, and maintain, physical infrastructure and assets to drive service quality and scalability.
8C. Proactively address the challenges presented by the limited local talent pool and casual staff retention/availability.	9C. Establish decision-making processes to effectively and expeditiously address issues when they arise, mitigating stakeholder or operational risk, while protecting Geelong Arts Centre's ability to meet its purpose.	10C. Carefully plan new venue development and launches to support financial viability, including The Church and Rooftop Bar.
	9D. Establish clear accountability and reporting to support whole of organisation (cross-departmental) progress visibility, and support collaboration, seamless service delivery, and marketing lead times and profitability.	
	9E. Improve sustainability and energy performance to reduce long-term operating costs and align with community values.	
	9F. Build strategic state, national and international relationships and alliances, share our experience as a leading arts sector institution in industry forums, and establish the Centre as a valued contributor to political and industry initiatives focused on arts participation.	

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Our Strategic Plan is informed by legislation; Victorian Government frameworks and strategies; federal and local government strategies and our own governance, reporting, enterprise, departmental, and functional strategies, frameworks and plans which are supported by policies, systems, processes and resources.

KEY GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES

- Victorian Public Sector Acts and Guidelines
- Asset and risk management frameworks
- *Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust Act 1980*
- Geelong Arts Centre Integrity Framework (such as conflict of interest, gifts and benefits etc)
- Geelong Arts Centre Policy Framework
- Geelong Arts Centre Annual Report

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- *Creative State 2025*
- City of Greater Geelong economic, tourism, events, arts & cultural Strategies.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

The key management plans include:

Four-Year
Corporate
Plan

Department
Plans

Strategic
Assessment
Management
Plan

Reconciliation
Action Plan

Gender Equality,
Diversity and
Inclusion (GEDI)
Action Plan

Health
and Safety
Action Plan

Emergency
Management
Plan and Business
Continuity Plan



SUPPORTERS

Geelong Arts Centre achieves remarkable impact each year thanks to the support of our committed funding and philanthropic partners. We look forward to continuing to open doors to creative experience together into the future.

Principal Government Partner



Major Artistic Partner



Foundation Partners



Anthony Costa
Foundation



Official Innovation Partner



Costa Asset
Management

Program Presenting Partner



Program Support Partners



For the most up-to-date information, including acknowledgment of individual donors, please visit our website:

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