

Martin Foley MP  
Minister for Creative Industries  
Parliament House  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Foley

**Submission to the Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024**

The Committee welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Government's *Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024* (Creative Industries Strategy).

Committee for Melbourne, (the Committee), is an apolitical, not-for-profit organisation that represents 150 members comprising Greater Melbourne's business, academic, arts, and community sectors in advocating for the future of Greater Melbourne. The Committee has a passion for ensuring the liveability and economic and social sustainability of Melbourne as a leading global city in the world's fastest-growing region.

The Committee has a strong interest in the arts and culture sector and the strength and viability of creative industries in Greater Melbourne and across Victoria. The Committee has established an Arts and Culture Taskforce which works to create an integrated vision for Melbourne as a vibrant, global destination for arts, culture, and design.

The Taskforce brings together leaders and individuals from Melbourne's diverse membership including business, academia, arts, not-for-profit, local councils and government to collaborate across issues facing the industry. As such, the Taskforce is well-placed to provide expertise and ideas for the future of the creative industries in Victoria.

We attach our submission and look forward to keeping in touch on this key initiative for Melbourne, Victoria and Australia's future creative industries. Please contact me or Committee for Melbourne Director of Policy, Leanne Edwards, at [ledwards@melbourne.org.au](mailto:ledwards@melbourne.org.au) or +61 412 280 203, should you require further information.

Yours sincerely



Martine Letts  
CEO

CC: Creative Industries Advisory Group

# Submission to the Victorian Government's Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024

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## Background

Committee for Melbourne, (the Committee), is an apolitical, not-for-profit organisation that represents its 150 members comprising Greater Melbourne's business, academic, arts, and community sectors in advocating for the future of Greater Melbourne. The Committee has a passion for ensuring the liveability and economic and social sustainability of Melbourne as a leading global city in the world's fastest-growing region.

The Committee welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Government's *Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024* (Creative Industries Strategy). The review requests input and ideas relating to the *"issues, challenges and opportunities ahead for Victoria's creative industries"*.

The Committee has a strong interest in the arts and culture sector and the strength and viability of creative industries in Greater Melbourne and across Victoria. The Committee has established an Arts and Culture Taskforce which works to create an integrated vision for Melbourne as a vibrant, global destination for arts, culture, and design.

Membership based organisations, such as Committee for Melbourne, are already well-established networks in Greater Melbourne. Creative Victoria and any governance frameworks that are established to facilitate the arts and culture sector, should continue to liaise with these organisations to further collaborate within creative industries and facilitate the sustainability of the sector.

**In this submission, the Committee provides:**

- **overarching recommendations in respect of governance arrangements that might be employed to further creative industries, and**
- **comments and recommendations in relation to some of the specific themes that the Creative Industries Strategy is considering.**

These comments and 18 recommendations draw on the collective ideas contributed by our membership. So, while they were discussed by the Committee's membership, they are not formal "Committee policy", as such.

## General Observations

The Committee emphasises that the key to a vibrant and successful creative Victoria is to create an ecosystem which will support, sustain and strengthen Victoria's creative economy and all those who contribute to it as an essential platform for Victoria's success as a liveable, prosperous, global city.

This is not simply a matter of funding, although we note that Victorian funding for the creative sector is not indexed, so that from a funding perspective the sector is going backwards.

Melbourne needs to develop a cultural tourism policy and associated brand campaign which includes all artists and cultural institutions and which presents Melbourne as a base from which to reach other areas of cultural activity in the regions. Better data driven research which links visitor behaviour across cultural, sporting and other tourist pursuits will be an essential underpinning of such a strategy or campaign.

Closer collaboration - perhaps even the development of a joint strategy or campaign between Visit Victoria and Creative Victoria - would be a good place to start. We note in that respect that Chief Executive of Creative Victoria is also Deputy Secretary, Creative, Sport and Visitor Economy in the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, with the responsibility for the creative industries, sport, racing, tourism and major events portfolios.

The recent appointment of Janet Whiting as the new Chair of Visit Victoria is also propitious. As President of the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, Janet is a strong and high-profile supporter of the arts in Melbourne. This provides an excellent governance platform for closer collaboration between the Victorian cultural and tourism economy.

A healthy and vibrant cultural economy also relies heavily on supporting inclusivity and diversity and should also draw on Australia's unique Indigenous cultural heritage. Australia's First Nations cultural heritage offers something that cannot be found elsewhere in the world. It is the longest continuous living culture in the world with a unique cultural iconography. Culture is intrinsic to the identity of our First Peoples. We do not draw nearly enough on First Nations' culture in informing our cultural and creative ecosystem.

The Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation provides a very good test case for how to build a successful creative ecosystem. While planning is well underway, little is known or understood about the direction that the transformation is taking, for example in terms of:

- the governance structure for the precinct;
- what affordable, fit for purpose creative spaces will be available and usable by the creative communities;
- the impact digital technologies will have on the way in which the precinct will function and,
- how to harness digital technology to reach new audiences, within Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and beyond.

The transformation, properly managed and marketed has the potential to make this precinct a global leader in a successful and contemporary cultural ecosystem which expands the sizes of participants, audiences and visitors exponentially.

## Governance

The Committee provides two overarching recommendations in respect of governance for the Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024, being:

- the establishment of a 'Creativity Commission'; and
- a framework for greater collaboration between Creative Victoria and Visit Victoria.

With the rise of the Fourth Industrial revolution, many traditional jobs will be lost to automation and Australia's competitive advantage will arise from innovation. Therefore, uniquely human skills, such as creativity, will be further propelled as drivers of the Australian innovation economy. In July 2019, the Committee held a symposium with PwC headlined by Russel Howcroft, regarding the creative deficit in Greater Melbourne, which concluded that the establishment of a Creativity Commission would greatly support the further development of creative industries.

Russell Howcroft has highlighted that creativity is an important driver of Australia's future prosperity<sup>1</sup>:

*"Creativity can, and should, be one of our most significant drivers of future growth and competitiveness.....the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that the creative sector contributes an astonishing \$86.7 billion to our GDP. The role of creativity is to build value, and we need to start taking it seriously, as seriously as P&L, dividends and working capital.*

*Creativity matters socially – for our education, well-being and the cohesion of our community – and it matters culturally, to help define who we are and how we share our story with the world."*

<sup>1</sup> Russel Howcroft, 'Why Australia needs a creativity commission', Ad News, 14 January 2019  
<http://www.adnews.com.au/opinion/why-australia-needs-a-creativity-commission>

Harnessing the benefits of creativity will require embedding it throughout the economy, including through schools, business and government policy decision-making processes. This requires a framework or institution to develop this.

Other jurisdictions have recognised the importance of creativity and the need to invest in frameworks that will foster creativity throughout the economy and community. For example, the UK has created an innovation foundation in 1998 called National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) with an endowment from the UK National Lottery, which recognises that creativity is a significant driver of innovation. In 2012 NESTA became an independent charity. It develops and aids innovation in areas like creative economy and culture, education, government and health.

A Creativity Commission in Australia (on which Victoria could take the lead) is an important requirement for Australia's economic and social future. It should therefore be given significant status and decision-making power with representation from across the community including academia, business, arts and government. Russell Howcroft states that:

*"The new body would help remove barriers and empower businesses across sectors to collaborate and engage in creative thinking. Critically, it would fund start-ups, kickstart new ventures and help realise the IP that emerges from its work – empowering ideas through action."*

In order to achieve a truly thriving and sustainable arts and culture industry, a co-ordinated response is required, that is able to provide an overarching governance and strategy framework to embed arts and culture in a cross-sectoral way across the community, business and government. This approach recognises that creativity can have a measurable and economic benefit for business and community.

**Recommendation 1:** Government to establish a Creativity Commission.

Whilst Greater Melbourne has many great events and festivals throughout the year, a unifying brand proposition and marketing strategy for arts and tourism presents an opportunity for growing audiences and markets. For example, there is a string of festivals and events in Greater Melbourne over winter, such as the NGV Winter masterpieces, the Queen Victoria Market's night market, White Night and the Melbourne International Film Festival. White night is now also undertaken during winter at Sovereign Hill. However, a lack of overarching brand to create a key value proposition, for locals and tourists alike, means that the breadth of engagement for each event may not be fully realised. To take just one example, an overarching brand for Melbourne in winter utilising the already strong line up of events could create an improved value proposition. This concept could also be extended to other areas of Melbourne's extensive creative and cultural offerings.

**Recommendation 2:** A framework for greater collaboration-and possibly a joint strategy or campaign between Creative Victoria and Visit Victoria.

## Key themes and recommendations

### 1. Equality of access

One of the key barriers to the sustainability of creative industries is the need to embed the arts and culture sector into the everyday lives and operations of the community, to ensure that:

- the public is able to experience the benefit that a vibrant arts and culture sector can deliver, and
- the sector is supported and attracts the engagement and investment it needs.

Greater Melbourne covers an extensive area, with the Melbourne CBD and surrounds containing vibrant arts precincts, which require consideration and ongoing investment to ensure their sustainability. It is vital for those arts areas to become embedded within their communities for them to achieve the ongoing recognition and investment that they need. But, access is not just about physical infrastructure, it's also about community knowing what is on and instilling creativity into civic identity.

Barriers to arts and culture institutions from being embedded within communities include:

- a) little understanding or knowledge by **the public** about the arts sector, and the opportunities available to the public to participate in, and engage with, the arts and culture sector
- b) a lack of expertise, resources and capability for **artists and arts institutions** to market themselves, monetise their offerings and embed themselves in the community
- c) a lack of strategic approach for the **state government to assist and utilise existing assets**, to help both the public and artistic sector to connect and engage with each other

#### a) **The public**

Embedding creative industries into communities' cultural fabric and psyche requires ensuring that the public can be engaged with the creative process and also able to access the product of the creative process. Traditionally the focus of creative programs in communities has been focused on sharing creative output by establishing venues to offer a chance for the community to engage. Another option to engage the community, perhaps more deeply, is to engage the community directly with the creative process. This can be achieved through models such as artist residencies or meet the artist events. When the public is able to visit artists in residence, they develop a stronger emotional connection to the work and this can support artists and ensure greater sustainability. The Taskforce has identified a number of barriers to the public being able to access artists in residency. For example, there are disparate websites that have information about artistic residencies. This fragmentation makes it difficult for the public to know how to find artists in residence.

**Recommendation 3:** Government to consolidate information about artists residencies and create a public portal to enable the community to have greater access to the artistic community.

**b) Artists and arts institutions**

Local creative organisations, including council run ventures, could be assisted to help better promote their offerings to the community, for example by providing greater assistance for them to leverage electronic means of communication and technological innovation.

A report commissioned by Creative Victoria on community attitudes to creative industries found that electronic engagement with the arts is quite low generally and the availability of arts and appeal of the arts is significantly lower in outer metropolitan areas<sup>2</sup>. This suggests there is an opportunity for artists and artistic institutions to better utilise technology to engage with the community about their creative offerings. Engagement should be measured in a meaningful and continuous way so resources can be targeted in an appropriate manner. Sport and recreational organisations offer a strong example of how this could be achieved<sup>3</sup>.

According to Australia Council research, *Making art work*, the average income of an artist in 2015 was \$48,400 and salaries, adjusted for inflation, have dropped 4% since 2009.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, financial considerations may be a barrier to access for artists to attend certain events. Some organisations have tried to overcome this barrier to access by introducing concessions for practising artists such as the national association for the visual arts<sup>5</sup> and international association of arts<sup>6</sup>. There could be an opportunity for Victoria to lead the way in reducing barriers to access for artists by working with galleries and other organisations to create a discount for artists.

**Recommendation 4:** Government to provide greater assistance and support for artists and artistic institutions to take advantage of electronic and technological innovation.

**Recommendation 5:** Government to consider ways of reducing barriers for artists to visit top tier arts institutions, attend events and gain educational opportunities, perhaps through discounts.

<sup>2</sup> [https://creative.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/70215/Arts\\_in\\_Daily\\_Life\\_Victoria-1.pdf](https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/70215/Arts_in_Daily_Life_Victoria-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sportandrecreationspatial.com.au/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/making-art-work/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://visualarts.net.au/discounts-members/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iaa-europe.eu/index.php/iaa-card>

### c) State government assets

Many municipalities in Greater Melbourne already have creative infrastructure in their communities. However, there is opportunity to promote these assets more.

The Committee's Free Tram Zone Extension (FTZ) proposal aims to build on its successful introduction by the government in 2015 to include some of Melbourne's most important cultural and sporting institutions in the city's FTZ. The FTZ already delivers positive branding to the city. The original concept developed by the Committee in 2009 saw the FTZ also helping make arts and culture more easily accessible and therefore embedded in the Melbourne community. The FTZ currently fails to include some of our more significant arts and culture areas that have developed significantly since its introduction in 2015.

The Committee's proposal is to extend the FTZ to include the Arts Precinct, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Melbourne Museum, and Melbourne & Olympic Parks will significantly improve our city's reputation as a national and international destination, and benefit the visitor economy from Victoria and beyond.

**Recommendation 6:** Government to extend the Melbourne Free Tram Zone to include five "iconic" stops, the Arts Precinct, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Melbourne Museum and Melbourne & Olympic Parks.

## 2. Diversity at all levels

See comments under General Observations.

## 3. Building sustainability

### a) Rising living and operational costs

Rising living costs, including housing and rental artistic and creative spaces, are placing pressure on the sustainability of the creative community. Creative precincts with co-located artists and creative institutions facilitate productive collaboration, engagement in community and artistic output. However, the rise in Greater Melbourne's population and resulting increases in pressure on housing and amenities, is causing costs of living for artists and rents for creative organisations to become prohibitive.

Whilst Melbourne is regarded as the 'cultural capital' of Greater Melbourne<sup>7</sup> due to a combination of well-recognised creative institutions (such as the NGV, ACMI, The Arts Centre, Melbourne Recital Centre, East End Theatre district, Federation Square), there

<sup>7</sup> [https://creative.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/115764/BCG-Melbourne-as-a-Global-Cultural-Destination-Summary-for-CV-website.pdf](https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/115764/BCG-Melbourne-as-a-Global-Cultural-Destination-Summary-for-CV-website.pdf)



are many creative arts hubs throughout Greater Melbourne. These include the arts and culture institutions in Fisherman's Bend, the Brunswick Design District and Latrobe, which are discussed further in section 7 on precincts. As a result, Victoria has the highest number of people employed in creativity, using ANZSIC, compared to any other state<sup>8</sup>.

However, as Victoria is experiencing the highest population growth in the country, it is also experiencing significant cost increases in key areas such as housing expenses, studio and organisational rents and decreasing creative spaces relative to other developments, all which place pressure on creatives living or working in Greater Melbourne. There is a danger that these negative influences will surpass the benefits provided by major cultural institutions, with Melbourne becoming a less desirable location in which to practice. Additionally, while 'creative' tourism may be on the rise, the economic benefits do not necessarily flow to creatives or those in creative industries. If this continues, Melbourne risks losing creatives which could negatively impact the authenticity of Melbourne's creative capital status, both social and economic. The Committee notes that whilst cultural tourism may be on rise, more support needs to be given to cultural institutions to support creatives to ensure a vibrant and desirable ecosystem.

The following mechanisms could be employed to overcome these barriers, such as:

- inclusionary zoning for affordable housing that includes artists;
- taxation and other financial incentives directed at artistic businesses in certain precincts;
- ensuring that improved data is collected to measure underutilisation of housing and rental spaces;
- incentives for developers to add studio and artistic spaces; and
- governments considering how to utilise vacant public space for creative purposes

In respect of the utilisation of vacant public land, Creative Spaces, a program of City of Melbourne may be able to provide insights for the state government to further support the interface's development. There are also examples of vacant space which has been repurposed, such as Activespaces in Darebin, which could provide a blueprint for the Creative Industries Strategy to work with.

There are individuals in the community who would like to participate in and assist with the arts and culture sector, but have little access to that sector. In September 2019, the Committee, Asialink and ResArtis held a symposium about resident artists and the barriers that they face in maintaining their residencies. Access to housing is a major impediment to those residencies. The symposium identified that there are many individuals, such as retirees in the community, who would be willing to offer their homes for artist residencies, but are prevented from doing so due to the absence of co-ordination or structure which could facilitate this.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.003Feb%202019?OpenDocument>

**Recommendation 6:** Government considers mechanisms to support creative industries to remain in location, including but not limited to, inclusionary zoning and taxation and other financial incentives for developers.

**Recommendation 7:** Development of a program that connects available homes for artistic residencies.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensuring that improved data is collected to measure underutilisation of housing and rental spaces which could be made available for artists.

**Recommendation 9:** Government should consider how to utilise vacant public space for creative purposes.

### b) Funding and grants for artists

Many of our members have described the current grant process as laborious, time intensive, and require commitment to specific KPIs. This puts a huge administrative burden on grant seekers, particularly as many creative organisations are either individuals or small teams. Whilst the Committee recognises the virtue of a rigorous process to allocate taxpayer funds for projects, there is an opportunity to reduce the amount of work required for the grant process, at least in the first round. For example, the process could be divided into two stages. The first stage would involve a short expression of interest, with only short-listed candidates required to submit a full submission. Consideration may also be given to reducing the specificity of the KPIs required to be articulated through the funding mechanism.

Current funding models also appear to result in competitive tendering whereby individuals or individual organisations are competing for a limited pool of available funding. It may be worth considering how the process could be used to promote collaboration further within creative industries. For example, greater weight could be assigned to projects which include multiple applicants, or a special pool could be set aside for collaborative projects. This would potentially promote collaboration and agglomeration which would augment the value of funds assigned to creative industries. Demonstration of collaboration as a key criterion for other types of funding is also worth greater consideration.

**Recommendation 10:** Consider mechanisms to reduce the burden of grant applications, such as staged documentation requirements and streamlined KPI specifications.

**Recommendation 11:** Consider mechanisms to encourage funding for collaborative processes, to reduce the competitive tendering and siloed outcomes that are currently experienced.

### c) Collaboration

Collaboration will be the key to creating a more sustainable creative ecosystem in Greater Melbourne. The Committee and its members know of many areas where the creative sector already collaborates with the private sector. Many of the Committee's private sector members are strong patrons of the creative sector. These organisations regularly acquire art, sponsor events and consistently look for creative approaches generally within their business to improve productivity. There is an opportunity for the creative sector to continue growing ties into the private sector for mutual benefit. Mechanisms for fostering greater collaboration with the private sector might include the establishment of a Creativity Commission (discussed above) and/or development of precincts or clusters (discussed in section 7).

Agglomeration, or clustering, creative industries on a local level has been observed to provide benefits for networking and creating an area image.<sup>9</sup> There are good international examples of this such as 22@barcelona, Miami design district and Strijp-S. Sustainability of the creative industries will require further agglomeration, which can be achieved through physical methods, such as place making, and policy methods, such as supporting collaboration in funding. This concept will be revisited under section 7.

## 4. Technology and its impact

The benefits of embracing technology for the arts and culture sector, are highlighted throughout this submission. Establishing portals that can connect resident artists with accommodation providers or the public with artistic venues, are important considerations.

Technology, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and digital content, can engage people further with the creative industries. This should be further explored. There are already examples of Melbourne using AR and VR to further engage audiences such as '64 ways of being', however this is still a largely untapped potential. There are a few examples of more traditional art forms using VR and AR such as opera<sup>10</sup> and ballet.<sup>11</sup> Digital content is already being used by many creative organisations to attract people into their organisation or artform.

Greater Melbourne is a destination of experiences, where 75% of surveyed tourists would recommend Melbourne as a creative city after visiting, compared to 51% before.<sup>12</sup> AR and VR give a unique way for potential creative tourists to experience Melbourne, enticing them to travel here. As such, the creative strategy should look at ways to embrace technology to grow interest in Melbourne's creative industries, both

<sup>9</sup> Coll-Martínez, E., Moreno-Monroy, A.-I., and Arauzo-Carod, J.-M. (2019) Agglomeration of creative industries: An intra-metropolitan analysis for Barcelona. *Papers in Regional Science*, 98: 409– 431. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pirs.12330>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.roh.org.uk/news/interactive-join-the-royal-opera-chorus-in-360-degrees>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.operaballet.nl/en/ballet/nieuws/dutch-national-ballet-presents-first-virtual-reality-ballet-world>

<sup>12</sup> [https://creative.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/115764/BCG-Melbourne-as-a-Global-Cultural-Destination-Summary-for-CV-website.pdf](https://creative.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/115764/BCG-Melbourne-as-a-Global-Cultural-Destination-Summary-for-CV-website.pdf)

for tourists and locals. One of the roles of a ‘Creativity Commission’ could be to help foster technology, innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector – as well as collaboration cross-sectorally to innovate and adopt technologies, as well as train young creatives.

## 5. Engaging globally

### **Inbound international residencies**

Greater Melbourne’s reputation as an international creative capital continues to strengthen, however there remains a surprising lack of suitable spaces for residencies for visiting international artists. There is an opportunity to reposition Greater Melbourne as a globally competitive destination for international residencies, grounded in thoughtful hosting that embeds visiting artists within Melbourne’s creative ecology, and fosters a sense of community. As outlined previously, the Committee is working with Asialink Arts and ResArtis to look at the barriers for local resident artists as well as inbound international residencies. Many of the recommendations provided previously would also assist with inbound international residencies.

## 6. Growing audiences and markets

### **a) Integrated ticketing systems and data sharing**

Currently the ability for some institutions to augment others’ organisations is quite limited. There is limited data sharing across arts organisations which perhaps means opportunities to share information with audiences are being missed. For example, someone interested in seeing the symphony may also be interested in seeing the theatre, opera or ballet. If there was a way to ensure traffic is directed, either through an integrated CRM, at the time of ticketing or other process, there may be an opportunity for creative organisations to share the most benefit from audiences.

Additionally, cultural visitors stay 25% longer than the average visitor<sup>13</sup>. This could therefore be an opportunity to capitalise on spending by those visitors by making it easier for them to purchase a broader variety of tickets. It also creates a more holistic cultural offering for tourists. This highlights the importance of a framework for greater collaboration between Creative Victoria and Visit Victoria.

Finally, the lack of integration and coordination can be difficult for consumers to manage, particularly when they need to amend or change tickets and find it difficult to access online systems. The Arts Centre is already doing a lot of work in this respect. We encourage the Government to support that work, but also consider taking this approach across the entire ecosystem of arts venues.

**Recommendation 12:** Creative Victoria to consider an integrated ticketing system to enhance ticket sales and grow audiences.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

## b) Consideration of major artistic works to embed community and grow audiences

The Committee believes that there is an opportunity for Greater Melbourne to consider how major public sculpture and art can activate precincts and embedded a sense of place in space. Examples around the world include the Angel of the North, Chicago Cloud, Statue of Liberty, Fearless Girl – New York, East Side Gallery – Berlin, Kinetic Head of Franz Kafka, Christ the Redeemer – Rio De Janeiro. These examples demonstrate how major pieces of public art can create a sense of place and identity. A similar thing could be explored for Greater Melbourne, particularly in growing precincts like Fisherman’s Bend-and other precincts.

**Recommendation 13:** Plan for major artistic works to be developed that can be used to create a sense of identity and grow audiences.

## 7. Creative spaces and its precincts

Cultural and artistic spaces and precincts in Greater Melbourne are vital to fostering and developing the creative sector. However, their sustainability may be jeopardised by the many challenges that are being faced in the economy and community. These challenges are outlined below.

### a) Balance between cultural and artistic spaces and commercial outcomes

There are some cultural and artistic spaces, that must operate commercially in order to be sustainable. There are several examples of this such as Federation Square and Her Majesty’s Theatre. Whilst these organisations are well equipped to deliver a variety of cultural and civic events, they also must remain financially viable. Operational and capital expenditure requirements often create a strain on the balance sheet which may place their existence in jeopardy.

Two key areas play a vital role in the sustainability of these spaces: a) on the revenue side, adequate programming ensures audiences are attracted to the spaces and b) general costs associated with running the venues can be prohibitively high.

**Recommendation 14:** Government to consider planning for adequate programming delivery and compensation shortfalls for funding gaps for program delivery for specific artistic and cultural spaces and organisations.

**Recommendation 15:** Government to consider whether funding mechanisms can be created to fill funding gaps where important creative outcomes are delivered but cost recovery is not possible.

### b) Recognition of certain arts providers specifically in the strategy

There are various arts providers throughout Greater Melbourne, such as theatre precincts that should be recognised through the Creative Industries Strategy. They provide a vital and vibrant addition to fostering creativity, economic success and add to the tourism and visitor economy in those areas. To-date, some of these providers

have been overlooked as requiring support through the Creative State Strategy. This is so despite the fact that many of these providers meet and collaborate frequently with many of the State assets and independent theatre-makers in the sector. Some ways of providing such support, could, for example include creating “incubators” for specific artistic purposes within recognised arts areas.

**Recommendation 16:** Recognition and support for certain arts providers in the Creative Industries Strategy.

A specific example of the opportunity for Victoria and Greater Melbourne is provided below in the Case Study 1.

### Case Study 1: East End Theatre District

Whilst the East End Theatre District (EETD) has not been formerly recognised in the Creative State Strategy 2016-2020, the Creative Industries Strategy 2020-2024 provides outstanding opportunities for collaboration between Creative Victoria and the wider Victorian Government, with the EETD institutions and operators, to deliver significant outcomes which will enhance Victoria’s cultural pre-eminence. The EETD considers that some of the areas that could be included within the Creative Industries Strategy include:

- **Recognition of event productions** (e.g., musical theatre productions and major theatrical presentations) as a significant aspect of Victoria’s creative industry,
- Support and collaboration with the **EETD infrastructure** to provide a holistic view of the creative spaces in Melbourne,
- Broadening the Creative Victoria remit to include musical theatre as an artistic genre worthy of **development and funding**, with a view towards creating mainstage productions,
- Improving the **availability of creative spaces** available for rehearsals, and development and workshopping of new musical theatre and event productions, and
- Expanding the roll-out of an **educational and access program** to ensure school students across the state can attend a professional live performance in Melbourne.

Finally, The EETD hosts major festivals including the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and the Melbourne International Film Festival; regularly hosts performances from state and national opera companies; and has co-presented productions with the state theatre companies and venues. If the EETD were recognised within the strategy then this would present an opportunity to consider such productions as **‘event productions’**, with no implied bias towards the financial sensibilities of the production, but with a positive consideration of the number of patrons they may attract.

The recognition of the EETD presents a further opportunity for Victoria more widely, and Melbourne more specifically, to be the developmental incubator for new major event productions. For example, studios for the rehearsal of major musicals and theatrical presentations are at a premium in the city and surrounding suburbs; many productions struggle to find sufficient space. Many of the state-supported companies have exclusive access to spaces that are not available (or regularly available) to independent producers. Funding and grant programs might be expanded for the development of new major event productions.

### c) Recognition of creative spaces and precincts beyond the Arts Precinct

There are many precincts which are being developed or which have been developed that provide a vital and vibrant creative addition to the community, economy and surrounding businesses – such as Fisherman’s Bend, Bundoora University Future Vision and the Brunswick Design District (BDD)<sup>14</sup> amongst many others. There are emerging precincts where the arts and culture contribution needs to be planned, such as in the North-West and South-East where there are emerging growth corridors, where the Suburban Rail Loop will be planned and where City Deals are being considered.

These precincts contribute innovation and creativity to the community and should therefore be recognised in the Creative Industries Strategy.

**Recommendation 17:** Recognition of certain creative spaces and precincts in the Creative Industries Strategy.

**Recommendation 18:** Embedding creativity in growing precincts with creatives directly involved in this process (this could be a task overseen by the Creativity Commission).

Some specific case study examples are highlighted below:

#### Case Study 1: Federation Square

The connection to community is what makes Federation Square such a special place and an increased focus from the creative and arts industries may foster more attendance from the community to come together to express creativity as well as to embrace and nurture various cultures. As was demonstrated when Federation Square was first conceived over 17 years ago, vibrant creative spaces rely on strong intent from the government, detailed planning, and support and backing from the community at large. Furthermore, creative precincts such as Federation Square can only effectively service the community and creative industries when required investment is delivered, either from government or corporate sources, and when organisations within the sector collaborate to utilise creative spaces to enhance the industry as a whole.

#### Case Study 2: Fishermans Bend and growing precincts

Another precinct that could be specifically acknowledged in the Creative Industries Strategy is Fishermans Bend. The area is approximately 480 hectares within close proximity to the CBD, making it the largest urban renewal area in Australia.

##### *Docklands lesson*

The Docklands in Melbourne has been criticised as dull and soulless, despite there being many public artworks in the area<sup>15</sup>. Without commenting on the veracity of this

<sup>14</sup> BDD currently has an MOU signed by Creative Victoria, City of Moreland and RMIT University focusing on the design and creative industries.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/docklands-waterways-strategy-2009-18.pdf>, Planning Melbourne DOI: 10.1071/9780643104730.

charge, major urban renewal projects, such as Fishermans Bend, should reflect on this lesson of the Docklands. Often sense of place in spaces is not just created by merely placing things in a certain locality but by a complex interconnection of social, cultural and physical elements coexisting harmoniously.

#### *Involving creatives in precinct design*

If we consider the lesson of the Docklands, and the intersection between many factors to create a sense of place, it would be advisable to ensure creative industry practitioners, such as artists, are involved in the urban design process. This could be achieved by permanently placing one or two creatives on the Fishermans Bend Taskforce. Furthermore, involving creatives in the urban design process more generally should be a goal of the creative state strategy.

#### *Existing creatives and building their capacity*

There are already a lot of creatives operating in Fishermans Bend, including quite a substantial film and cinematography presences. When developing this precinct, the issues of development on these industries should be considered, such as the increased rents and other factors. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to further enhance these industries in Fishermans Bend by ensuring more creatives are able to move into the precinct.

## **8. The next generation**

The Committee notes that fostering creativity for the next generation, includes fostering creativity throughout the community including in business, government and the public more generally. Many of the recommendations in this submission should attract more young Victorians to the arts and in particular frameworks such as a Creativity Commission could foster and improve creativity through the community and the education system. Creativity has traditionally been undervalued in the education system, with a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) in priority to “soft” skills and creativity. Russell Howcroft highlights that<sup>16</sup>:

*“We need to expand our focus from STEM to STEAM. We need to elevate the Arts to supercharge our children’s learning and train our kids in creativity.”*

<sup>16</sup> Russel Howcroft, ‘Why Australia needs a creativity commission’, Ad News, 14 January 2019 <http://www.adnews.com.au/opinion/why-australia-needs-a-creativity-commission>