



**A Creative Industries Strategy
for the G21 Region 2021-2026**

Making Change

Colour + line + shape
installation view, Geelong Gallery Learn Space, 2019
Photo credit: Andrew Curtis



This ambitious Strategy for the creative sector is a first for the region. It reflects a progressive and resilient community with a focus on the future.

VISION

Making Change

To foster a culture of collaboration and aspiration, to deliver a region of creative industries leadership and innovation connected to global networks

MISSION

To:

- Grow creative practice connected to place through formal training, peer networks and life-long learning
- Nurture participation and engagement
- Enable the development of bold and innovative products, experiences and services across the region

Core Principle 1

Sustainable Creative Industries for the G21 Region

Goals

1. Celebrate diversity and inclusion across communities, practice, culture, skills and demographics
2. Establish an accountable and influential governance framework
3. Invest in targeted industry development
4. Support innovative skills development
5. Increase digital access for the sector
6. Enhance liveability for the region

Core principle 2

Collaborative Creative Industries for the G21 Region

Goals

7. Alignment with government strategies and plans locally, state-wide and nationally
8. Partnerships with state cultural institutions
9. Development of cultural tourism
10. Partnerships with UNESCO Creative Cities network

INTRODUCTION —

Over the past decades the G21 region has adapted to dramatic changes in the world economy, initially driven by the transformation of manufacturing processes and the service economy and, more recently, the profound impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The G21 region has evolved and responded with impressive resilience, with a focus on identifying opportunities that draw on its unique strengths, including: a skilled and adaptable workforce, impressive education and training institutions, a network of respected cultural and creative institutions, innovative research and development linked to the tertiary education sector and industry, all within an environment recognised for its 'liveability'. If these unique characteristics can continue to be marshalled in a holistic and co-ordinated way, the G21 region will be increasingly recognised as a dynamic regional creative hub for Victoria.

There is a worldwide trend for governments and communities to identify the creative industries sector, founded on intellectual capital, first described as the 'knowledge economy' in *The Age of Discontinuity* by Paul Drucker. This is recognised as a key opportunity to achieve economic stability, community wellbeing and a creative ecology.

The most recent available data, provided in the 2020 *A New Approach* report, reveals the creative industries sector employed 8.1% of the Australian workforce, contributing 6.4% of GDP. For a significant period of the past decade, employment in the creative industries grew at three times the rate of the Australian workforce.

Since the 1990s Britain has led the world in creative industries policy development and support, generating impressive results. The UK Creative Industries Council reports that In 2018 (pre-pandemic) Britain's creative industries sector was growing more than five times faster than the national economy, up 7.4% on the previous year.

The G21 region has become home for a significant community of practicing creatives across diverse artforms, disciplines and industries. This growing population of creatives is giving the region a distinctive quality and reputation that is quickly becoming more visible and valued, both locally and more broadly across Victoria.

The Creative Industries Strategy for the G21 Region provides a framework for a strategic and coordinated approach between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors for the development of the region's creative industries.

The strategy will inform and guide government and industry priorities, investments and initiatives to achieve sector development, economic growth and employment and to contribute to the prosperity and liveability of the G21 region. In turn, its success will benefit individual creatives and communities. The Core Principles of the strategy are to be achieved over a five-year timeframe.

This document informs the accompanying Case for Support to enable the region's leadership to advocate for and secure the sector's growth.

The Strategy and Case for Support are complemented by a comprehensive report *Making Change: A Plan for the Creative Industries in the 21 Region* which is publicly available and includes 22 detailed recommendations, enabling wider sector participation in the development of priorities and actions over the next five years.

A coordinated response is necessary, to provide an overarching governance framework to embed the creative industries in a cross-sectoral way across the community, business, and government. This approach recognises that the creative industries sector spans grassroots community-based activity, individual practitioners through to large organisations and business.

This approach also recognises that creativity can have a measurable and economic benefit for business and community.

The Strategy will call for advocacy and representation to achieve local ownership *and* the support of government, the private sector, the education and skills sector and our public institutions to achieve its ambitions.

The implementation of the region's first Creative Industries Strategy will call for leadership to 'give voice' to the diverse dimensions of the sector and to engage with creative communities and key organisations. This is critical for success and recognises the unique dimensions of the creative community that are at the heart of the G21's five regional councils. It presents individuals and organisations across local government, industry and community with real opportunity to 'make change' for their respective communities.

This strategy was developed for a Project Steering Committee formed as a collaboration between the Committee for Geelong, G21 Geelong Region Alliance, the Geelong Regional Libraries Corporation, Geelong Art Gallery, Back to Back Theatre, Creative Geelong Inc, Geelong Arts Centre and Platform Arts. Regional Development Victoria via the Regional Development Australia Barwon South West committee also contributed funds to the Creative sector plan set to inform a post-COVID future - Committee for Geelong.

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES —

The working definition adopted by Creative Victoria has been referenced for this strategy:

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.

CONTEXT —

The development of this strategy complements a range of concurrent policy initiatives. These include the completion of the second iteration of the Victorian Government's creative industries plan, *Creative State Two*, the completion of the City of Greater Geelong's first arts and culture strategy in more than a decade, and the completion of new Council Plans across all of the region's local governments.

The strategy informs a range of priorities included in the Barwon Regional Partnership Roadmap, and supported in the Regional Recovery Plans via Regional Development Victoria.

Harnessing the benefits of creativity will require embedding it throughout the regional economy, including through schools, business and government policy decision-making processes.

Skill development is key – to capitalise on the rapid evolution in the 21st century through critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication and technical and media literacy. Skill development will be critical to a sustainable future for the creative industries. The impact of the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of business management and planning skills for creative practitioners, as their interaction with the wider community changes.

With the rise of the knowledge economy, many traditional jobs are being lost to automation and Australia's competitive advantage will arise from innovation. Uniquely human skills, such as creativity, will be key drivers of the Australian innovation economy.

A healthy and vibrant cultural economy also relies heavily on supporting inclusivity and diversity and should also draw on Australia's unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. Australia's First Nations cultural heritage 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.

Technology, such as virtual reality, augmented reality and digital content, are beginning to engage people further with the creative industries. The G21 region has the advantage of world leading research institutions spanning these disciplines at Deakin University, offering opportunity to establish a unique place in the industry landscape.

As Visit Victoria notes, compared with other industries, the creative industries have higher spill over effects into other industries in terms of total output, value-added and employment multipliers. This represents a significant opportunity to strengthen the cultural tourism offering of the region, as a complement to existing nature and lifestyle-based attractions.

The G21 region has demonstrated impressive adaptability and resilience as it has responded to changes to the nature of work, the diversity of its communities and the patterns of daily life across its cities and towns.

The COVID-19 pandemic marks another chapter in that cycle of change with an emerging new demographic across the region, significant changes to work practice and a focus on liveability. Each represents an opportunity to build on the region's identity as a creative 'hot-spot' with a leadership role in the creative industries sector across Victoria.

Purpose

To provide a framework and mechanisms to guide innovative and sustainable creative industries practice over a five-year period, to support individual artists, cultural institutions, the education sector, regional local governments and private industry to work together to sustain a unique creative identity for the G21 region.

Vision

Making Change

To foster a culture of collaboration and aspiration, to deliver a region of creative industries leadership and innovation connected to global networks

Mission

To:

- **Grow creative practice connected to place through formal training, peer networks and life-long learning**
- **Nurture participation and engagement**
- **Enable the development of bold and innovative products, experiences and services across the region**

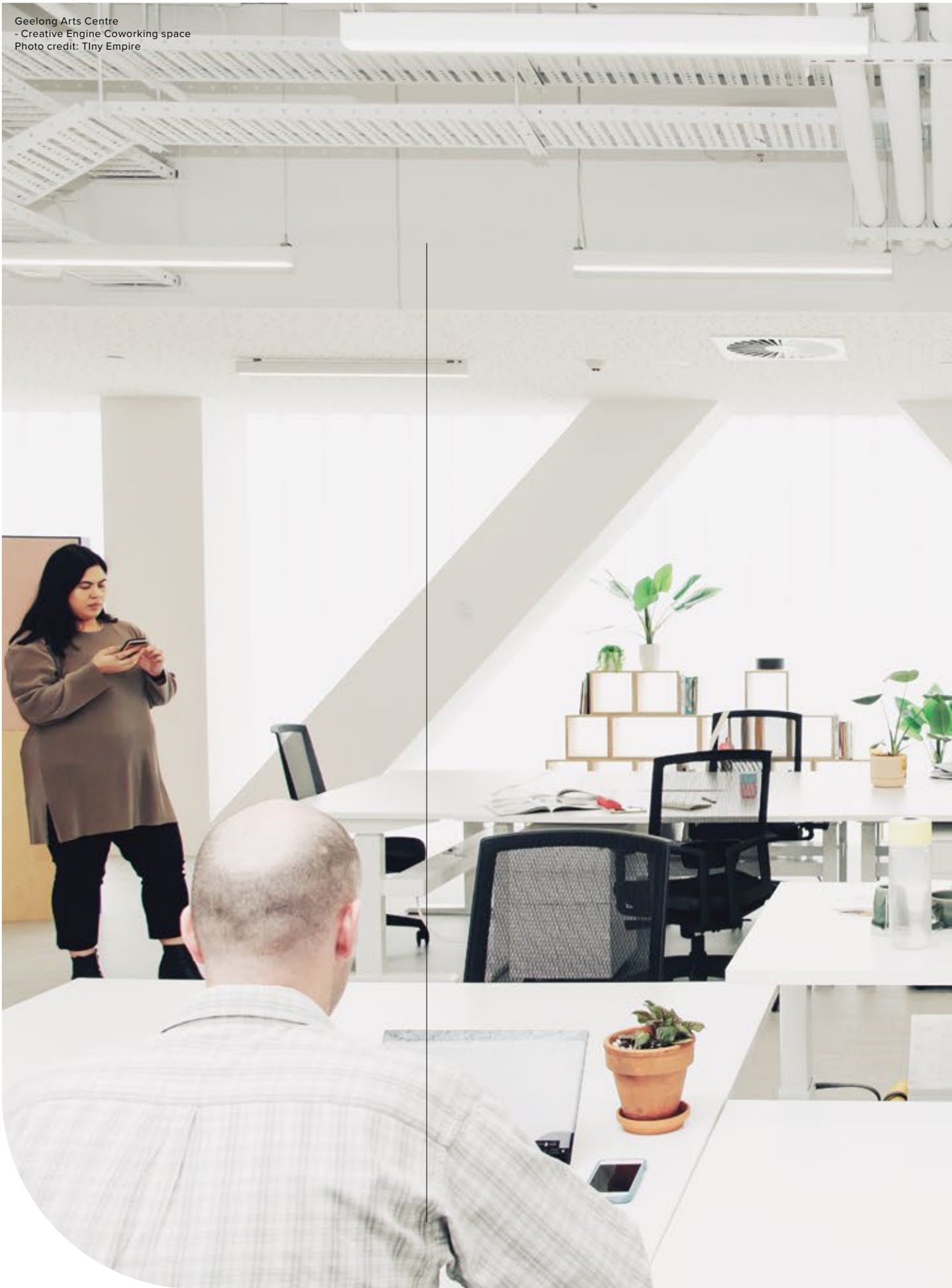
Structure

Collaboration and Sustainability are at the heart of this Strategy and are its two core principles.

The Strategy:

- Has 10 Goals and supporting Actions and an outline of potential 'Success'.
- Provides a holistic approach to support diversity which collectively creates the environment to drive opportunity.
- Is informed by a comprehensive Report of a review of the creative industries of the G21 region which has been undertaken concurrently.
- Is supported with a companion document – A Case for Support to encourage investment from government, the private sector and the community.

Geelong Arts Centre
- Creative Engine Coworking space
Photo credit: Tiny Empire





CORE PRINCIPAL 1 —

Sustainable Creative Industries for the G21 Region

CORE PRINCIPAL 1 —

The objective is to establish a robust environment that supports the development of the sector to sustain it with the people, skills and practices that enable creativity to flourish.

Championing and respecting diversity and inclusion in its many forms and contexts will be central to achieving this principle.

Success will depend on an implementation framework that focuses on increasing employment and participation across the creative industries. Alignment with broader government objectives and advocacy across local, state and national governments will allow for targeted, sector-specific initiatives to be delivered.

The focus on enhanced participation will be complemented by initiatives to enhance skills, both for those entering the workforce and those managing a sustainable creative practice.

The region's research and development capabilities are a powerful attractor and potential engine-room for growth across the sector.

GOALS —

- 1. Celebrate diversity and inclusion across communities, practice, culture, skills and demographics**
- 2. Establish an accountable and influential governance framework**
- 3. Invest in targeted industry development**
- 4. Support innovative skills development**
- 5. Increase digital access for the sector**
- 6. Enhance liveability for the region**

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS —

1. Establish an accountable and influential governance structure

- Form a Taskforce to oversee and lead the implementation, representation and advocacy of the recommendations and actions of the Report and Strategy and ensure diversity of voice is core to their implementation.

2. Celebrate diversity and inclusion across communities, practice, culture, skills and demographics

- Establish a partnership with the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar peoples to give voice to local heritage and cultural opportunity.
- Maintain an environmental scan of the region to ensure robust, relevant data can support appropriate investment in the sector.
- Establish a partnership with culturally diverse state and local based organisations to develop programs and utilise methodologies that work with and engage the diverse communities of the region.
- Support the development of research that expands the boundaries of creative industries practice through the use of new materials and technologies.

3. Invest in targeted industry development

- Identify signature strengths and lead implementation of strategies in areas requiring growth across the sector, with identified short, medium, and long-term ambitions.
- Target collaborative initiatives that align with the innovative research and development capabilities of the region.

4. Support innovative skills development

- Create skills development pathways to support the current and emerging requirements of the creative industries sector.
- Showcase and enhance support for the curatorial, directing, programming and research capabilities of the Geelong based creative institutions that expand their reach and 'go beyond the walls' to engage with new audiences and communities and collaborators.

5. Increase digital access for the sector

- Support the implementation of Regional Development Victoria's Barwon Digital Plan.
- Develop an innovative interactive centre, inspired by similar successful models in other countries and supported by a public-private partnership.

6. Enhance sustainability and liveability for the region

- Embed 'design excellence' across public and private sector activities spanning planning, procurement, project delivery and the environment.
- Leverage the Victorian Government's commitment to fund affordable housing to showcase 'design excellence', aligned to the UNESCO Creative Cities designation.
- Embed and include creative practitioners and creative thinking into early stages of the planning, spanning manufacturing, construction, agriculture, health and education.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE —

- First Nations working group established, led by Traditional Owners and cultural institutions with representatives from those living and working on both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Country.
- Funding allocated for an environmental scan of the creative industries for the duration of the strategy.
- A partnership with culturally diverse local and state-based organisations and funding allocated to initiate targeted pilot programs with local communities across the G21 region.
- The establishment of networks (and hubs) across the G21 region for local artists and individual creatives to meet and exchange information and ideas.
- The establishment of a Co-design Lab.
- The establishment of forums and networks to support emerging and career pathways for the sector involving individual practitioners, the education sector and industry groups.
- Ensure alignment with the Regional Skills Strategy (and with reference to the outcomes of the forums and networks as above) and create a targeted business skills program for the creative industries.
- Establishment and delivery of an annual calendar of creative experiences and learning across the region based on the capabilities of the Geelong based cultural institutions.
- Equity of digital access for the creative industries across the region enabled by the *Barwon Digital Plan*.
- Establish a partnership to establish a unique facility, with interactive experiences at its core, inspired by international models such as *teamLab Tokyo*, *Meow Wolf*, or *Two Bit Circus*.

Platform Arts Exhibition Opening
Photo credit: Leiko Manalang





CORE PRINCIPAL 2 —

Collaborative Creative Industries for the G21 Region

CORE PRINCIPAL 2 —

The objective is to create a framework of support for employment in the creative industries sector and to draw on the creative capabilities across the state and the region to deliver outcomes which are 'more than the sum of the parts.'

Success will depend on effective alignment with state and local governments, industry, employment and cultural development initiatives. This will call for advocacy and collaboration to uncover opportunities that can deliver meaningful outcomes for the G21 region.

The region's rich cultural infrastructure can be enhanced by the development of innovative content development partnerships with the state's cultural institutions and network of visual and performing arts organisations and the local creative community.

These initiatives provide the framework to build the region's cultural 'brand' and deliver a cultural tourism collaboration that transforms perceptions and further enhances the liveability of the region.

GOALS —

- 7. Alignment with government strategies and plans locally, state-wide and nationally**
- 8. Partnerships with state cultural institutions**
- 9. Development of cultural tourism**
- 10. Partnerships with UNESCO Creative Cities network**

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS —

7. Alignment with government strategies and plans locally, state-wide and nationally

- Identify and support projects that align with the City of Greater Geelong's Arts and Cultural Strategy and action plans and those of the G21 member regional councils.
- Actively monitor state policy agendas across jobs and growth, skills and training, regional development and tourism to maximise collaborative participation in aligned programs.
- Actively monitor the Australian Government's policy agenda across arts, heritage and the creative industries to maximise collaborative participation in aligned programs.

8. Partnerships with cultural institutions and individual creative practitioners

- Led by the Taskforce overseeing this strategy, develop bold and innovative cultural collaborations, led by the major Geelong based institutions, to model program planning and delivery that may be applied across other Victorian regional centres.
- Pursue business partnership opportunities linked to the inclusion of innovative cultural infrastructure in major developments, particularly those linked to the reactivation of underutilized spaces and buildings – as identified in this strategy's accompanying Case for Support.

9. Development of cultural tourism

- Partner with Traditional Owners, Visit Victoria, the Greater Geelong and Bellarine Tourism Strategic Plan and other relevant tourism bodies to deliver an integrated approach.
- Nurture the opportunity for creative use and activation of civic spaces.
- Support the Brand Geelong campaign through the identification of the region's unique creative activities and assets.

10. Partnerships with UNESCO Creative Cities network

- Collaborate with the City of Geelong to embed the Creative Cities status into programming, planning and profiling initiatives.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE —

- The model of collaboration developed for the G21 region is widely recognised and adopted by other regions in Victoria and other jurisdictions.
- The creation of a role (full time) to manage the monitoring of relevant local, state and national policy development and other partnership opportunities. The role would have a primary focus on identifying opportunities for collaboration and supporting the region in securing investment and partnerships. The role would report to the agreed Creative Industries Governance Framework to ensure a new approach to collaboration.
- Increased investment and participation through initiatives developed and aligned with local, state and national strategies.
- The development of a new partnership model to enable the delivery of innovative programs that showcase the creative process regionally and nationally.
- Development of a Regional Tourism Plan in partnership with Visit Victoria and the regional Tourism Boards. The plan would showcase the diversity of the Creative Industries and activity across the G21 region.
- Development and implementation of a Creative Industries Advocacy Strategy for the G21 region outlining the key statistics and characteristics to be utilised by all stakeholders.
- The development and integration of a longitudinal evaluation program (linked to the environmental scan) to demonstrate the changing perceptions of the region as one known for its thriving creative industries and as a City of Design.

RONE in Geelong Member's preview
Geelong Gallery 2021.
Photo credit: Timothy Marriage





RONE IN GEELONG

A Geelong Gallery exhibition

© 2016
(detail, digitally manipulated) 2016
Courtesy of the artist
#RONE



Above and front cover:
 Geelong Arts Centre Summer Session under the big top
 Photo credit: Peter Foster Photography

**TONY
 GRYBOWSKI**
 and Associates



PLATFORM



**Geelong
 Gallery**