

MEDIA RELEASE

9 Dec 2024



Find Your Voice Collective performance at Lighthouse Theatre, Warrnambool, Photo: Kirsty Renee Hill

Help shape the creative future of southwest Victoria

People across southwest Victoria can have their say on a new regional creative strategy via a public feedback survey launched today. This is the first glimpse at the draft South West Creative Industries Strategy 2025-2029, a regional approach to uplifting the sector over the next four years. The Strategy builds on 18 years of work in the region by Regional Arts Victoria with support from federal, state and local governments, traditional owners, industry bodies, philanthropic organisations and community.

The first strategy saw a four-year commitment from regional stakeholders including Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Southern Grampians Shire and Warrnambool City Council to support the sector, with commitment for another four-year term being sought in early 2025.

Jo Porter, CEO Regional Arts Victoria, said

“The creative energy in Victoria’s Southwest is palpable. From individual makers and creative organisations to multimillion-dollar local government and tertiary education projects, we see the creative, wellbeing and economic benefits of a region-wide approach by private sector philanthropy, local and state government and the Federal Government’s Regional Arts Fund.”

The evaluation of the 2020-2024 Strategy shows that the region has benefitted from approximately \$12 million in funding for creative venues and projects over this period.

In Corangamite Shire significant funding was secured to commission Keerray Wooroong artist, Dr Vicki Couzens, to design integrated artwork including forged tiles and mosaic artworks alongside light and sound works as part of the Port Campbell Town Centre Revitalisation Project. Katy McMahon, Manager Economy & Prosperity at Corangamite Shire Council, said that Council had relied on the Strategy to attain funding for projects that deliver not only on Council plans, but on regional priorities.

“We’ve funded infrastructure improvements, for example at business case and staging plans for Camperdown’s Theatre Royal, and have and tapped into opportunities, advice and networks through this regional partnership, including developing our first Artist in Residence program for Light Up Camperdown and engaging a First Nations artist to shape the Graze The Day event.”

Creative organisations who have successfully used the Strategy to advocate for funding include both One Day Studios and the Find Your Voice Collective (each based in Warrnambool). These organisations have diversified their income, tapping into the strategy and the advice of Regional Arts Victoria where appropriate, to deliver projects and fund positions focussed on long-term creative career sustainability.

RAV’s Southwest Regional Manager, Stacey Barnes urged individuals, organisations and businesses to provide comments on the new strategy.

“In five minutes, you can shape sector support over the next four years. Whatever your connection with arts, culture and creativity, we want to hear from you, from what you need to learn, to challenges you need help to overcome, or ideas you’d like to see brought to life.”

Creative industries include disciplines as diverse as visual and performing arts, digital games, fashion, film, literature and publishing, museums, galleries, architecture, design, advertising, comedy, craft and emerging creative technologies.

Visit rav.net.au/swcis or find RAV South West on Facebook to see the draft strategy and have your say before the public feedback survey closes on 27 January 2025.

Young creatives, First Peoples, and creatives who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or LGBTQIA+ are strongly encouraged to contribute.

About the South West Creative Industries Strategy:

Launched in 2020, the [South West Creative Industries Strategy](#) is a result of the partnership between Regional Arts Victoria and the Victorian Government, the Great South Coast Regional Partnership, Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Southern Grampians Shire, Warrnambool City Council, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism and community representatives designed to support creative industries in southwest Victoria. Regional Arts Victoria’s work in the southwest is supported by the Federal Government through the Regional Arts Fund.

The Strategy builds on long-term partnerships and provides a roadmap for supporting creative industry practitioners, organisations and supporters in the southwest of the state.

About Regional Arts Victoria:

Regional Arts Victoria backs artists and communities across regional Victoria to make, participate in, and experience creative work.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

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Media Contact: Kate Gerritsen | 0412 950 023 | kgerritsen@rav.net.au

