Making Change

Fostering creative communities

Creative Industries Taskforce

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners and custodians on the land on which we live, work and play and on which this project was completed. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations people.

Contents

Cover Image:
Platform Arts
Two Gather by Gretal Sharp and Pattie Beerens
Photo by Leiko Lopez

Image:
Artist Studio
Lighthouse Arts Collective

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Acknowledgements

The Project Team would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their active sponsorship, support and engagement over the course of the project.

- Committee for Geelong and the Leaders for Geelong Team

- The Creative Industries Taskforce

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- Geelong Creative

- Geelong Illustrators

- Colac Woodcrafters

- Lighthouse Art Collective

- Inverleigh Sing Sesh

- Platform Arts

- Golden Plains Arts Inc

- Geelong Writers

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Scholarships & Grants

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA   COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG   CFA   The Hugh Williamson Foundation

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Image:
Trunks
Lisa G Hunter
GP Arts Inc

"Art is now for everybody, and everybody can be a part of making art"

- Tony Grybowski

Project Team

Cameron Peel
Manager – Procurement Strategy, Governance and Operations
WorkSafe

As a life-long resident of the G21 region and someone that doesn't have a 'creative' bone in his body, Cameron was drawn to this project to make a positive impact and understand the benefits that the creative sector provides to the G21 communities.

David Young
Manager Vehicle Safety, Innovation and Technology
TAC

David moved to Geelong in 2019 and is rapidly learning what makes Geelong tick. With connections to the creative industry, he chose this project as it presented an opportunity work with the local creative community and also support his family.

Elyse MacDonald
Operating Service Manager, Surgical Services
Barwon Health

As a health service manager there has been limited opportunities to foster Elyse's creative side. Having a strong connection to the arts & dancing as a child, this project was an opportunity to reignite that creative passion. While also providing a meaningful contribution to the growth of the G21 creative industry.

Emma Standen
Operations Manager, Cancer Services
Barwon Health

As a CPA working in the public health sector for 16 years, Emma saw this project as a challenge to tap into some creative thinking. After moving to Geelong in 2015, Emma also saw it as an opportunity to connect with locals and make a positive impact for the creative industries across the G21 region.

Hosanna Siv
Operations Team Leader
Home Instead

After moving to Geelong in 2021, Hosanna was fascinated by the vast potential that exists in the G21 region, specifically amongst the creative industry. Hosanna believed that this project would help Creatives find their tribe and continue to tell their stories for many years to come.

Image:
Looking out to Guichen Bay, Robe
Kate Wise
GP Arts Inc

Image:
Baby Velvet live @ Lighthouse Art Collective
Photo by Diana Sharipova

Foreword

We know that our region has an extraordinary community of creative industry practitioners and creative hubs that has been boosted during the last couple of years by a large influx of creatives from Melbourne and elsewhere. They work across a range of disciplines, to an incredibly high standard; their passion builds healthy and skilled communities and reduces social isolation through creative experiences that are central to the region's recovering economy. They design, collaborate, reimagine traditional practices and innovate in a digital world.

Making Change, the Creative Industries Strategy for the G21 Region recognises this essential contribution with a vision to foster a culture of collaboration and aspiration and to deliver a region of creative industries leadership and innovation connected to global networks.

The Leaders for Geelong Project Team focused on one aspect of this Strategy - fostering the development and marketing for community creative hubs so that they can thrive and grow across the G21 region. They set out to understand how an online digital directory of creative hubs might support the sector and they exceeded the brief with the development of a pilot directory.

This report also provides a timely insight, through engagement with creative hubs at a local level and illustrative case studies, into the need for a digital directory so that our existing and emerging creatives will continue to add socio-economic benefit to the G21 region.

Vanessa Schernickau

Member of the Making Change Creative Industries Strategy Taskforce

Executive Summary

In 2021, during the middle of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the G21 alliance, in collaboration with other organisations published a report entitled **'Making Change'**.

This report set out a Creative Industries Strategies which outlined a 5-year framework to enhance the creative practices in the region through training, collaborative networks, community engagement and digital accessibility. Subsequently, a Creative Industries Task Force was established to oversee and lead the implementation of this Strategy. This TaskForce contains a broad range of key stakeholders from across the G21 Creative Sector.
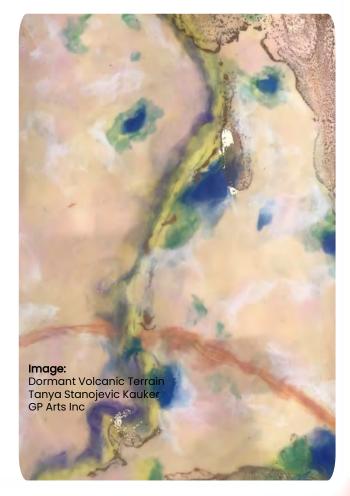
This report focuses on one aspect of the Strategy, the ability to foster the development, marketing and increase in growth for community creative hubs across the G21. It is suggested that this can be achieved via the development of an online digital directory. A directory would be a cost-effective way to connect, foster collaboration and market the G21 creative sector and the many varied creative hubs across the region.

Included within this report is a set of recommendations and opportunities for the Creative Industries Task Force to assist in the successful implementation of a directory. In developing these outcomes, the project team undertook a 3-stage approach of research and community engagement.

1. Understanding Best Practice for Directories – Desktop research was undertaken to review Australian and International directories to understand best practice in the development, design and management of online creative hub directories.

2. Identification and mapping of existing G21 creative hubs - Through discussions with stakeholders and desktop research a wide range of G21 creative hubs were identified and mapped.

3. Interviewing G21 Creative Hubs - a portion of Creative Hubs identified were interviewed. Hubs were able to provide feedback on the benefits of a directory as well as providing input on requirements and features of the directory.

While the G21 region has seen profound changes to its economy and social migration based on the industry-led changes and transformation of the area, the creative sector continues to expand and grow as both an economic and social pillar of the G21. Although the impact of COVID-19 on the sector cannot be underestimated, it is incumbent on us to continue to support the sector and ensure it continues to thrive. A digital creative hub directory would be one of many ways in which the sector can be supported, we hope that this report provides a clear road-map forward for the implementation and success of this directory.

Image:
Dormant Volcanic Terrain
Tanya Stanojevic Kauker
GP Arts Inc

Background

Geelong and the greater regions including Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast make up a regional alliance better known as G21. The G21 region has an extensive history in the creative sector, albeit in former decades this was primarily focused on the manufacturing industry and service economy. The G21 region has seen profound changes to its economy and social migration based on the industry-led changes and transformation of the area. What is impressive is the resilience of the G21 region withstanding monumental changes to its economy and main workforce drivers. This resilience has developed the region's ability to focus on carving out opportunities to prosper in challenging times and diversify its economy to not only survive but thrive. Some examples of success in this space are included but not limited to; world renowned education and training institutions, networks of respected cultural and creative institutions, future-focused and industry leading research and development.

The impact from the global COVID-19 pandemic across G21 was substantial, it expedited a seismic shift in people migration to the region from metropolitan areas due to the region's affordability, liveability and opportunity to prosper in new business and creative sectors. A focal point of fostering and investing in creative communities facilitates socio economic growth, connectivity within the community, sector growth & employment opportunities. Recognising the significance of impact to our region as a result of COVID-19 affords us the opportunity to seize these unique characteristics and channel them in a coordinated way. By doing so, the G21 region will be increasingly recognised as a dynamic regional creative hub for Victoria.

On Dusk

Lining pink clouds

gold peers through slats on a giant wheel

turning as slow as day draws evening

seats swing in the breeze off Corio Bay

while squeals of delight drift out on a wave

thoughts rest on warm beams of colour in a mute sky

bygone day of long evenings and low soft sounds

break open forgotten memories of moments wrapped in gauze

they bleed softly in this dim light

dark spreads the night while he walks out of the frame

by Sandra Ann Jobling

Geelong Writers

Background

In acknowledging the transformation of the region and initial impacts from the Global Pandemic the G21 alliance and a group of other organisations commissioned the development of a Creative Industries Report in November 2020. The intent was to identify & secure sustainable and critical strategies to the creative industry across the region for ongoing investment. The Creative Industries Strategy, a 5 year framework entitled "Making Change" with a mission to enhance the creative practices in the region through training, collaborative networks, community engagement and digital accessibility was finalised in 2021 and subsequently the Creative Industries Taskforce was established to oversee and lead the implementation of the strategy.

The strategy uses the Creative Victoria definition of Creative Industries which include the arts, culture, screen, design, publishing and advertising sectors. Disciplines within these sectors include

- game development and graphic design,
- fashion and filmmaking,
- performing arts and publishing,
- architecture and advertising,
- media and music,
- comedy and craft.

These sectors and disciplines include activities that are "commercially driven and community based, experimental and export-intense".

The Making Change Report included 22 recommendations which, if fully implemented, would ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the G21 creative sector. Included within the recommendations was the concept of establishing "Creative Hubs" across the region to promote ideas exchange, experimentation and new forms of collaboration. This project looks to progress this recommendation.

"Creative industries, so important to our health and happiness, are flourishing across Geelong and the surrounding region (G21). Opportunities to participate in creative activities, to develop skills, and to forge social connections abound.

But there is potential for creative industries to achieve more. There is potential to bring communities closer together. By investigating and interpreting stories in a variety of media and forms, and sharing discoveries, we can learn more about how other people see the world.

Community investment in creative industries, bringing people together through arts activity, will reap powerful results."

– Geelong Writers

Image:
May'd
Geelong Creative

Image:
The Good Shop
Lighthouse Arts Collective

"You cannot use up creativity. The more you use it, the more you have"

— Maya Angelou

Project Purpose

To date there has not been a concerted effort to identify, understand and document existing Creative Hubs across the entire G21 region. Therefore, this project aims to close this gap by identifying, researching and engaging with existing creative hubs and key stakeholders across the G21 region. The project also aimed to understand the desire for a creative hub digital directory across the G21 creative sector and outline the key social and economic benefits that a directory would provide. Through this process a pilot directory was also developed to act as proof of concept.

Success of this project would see ongoing, sustainable investment in the G21 creative sector to facilitate the implementation of a full directory, thus allowing the benefits of such a directory to be realised.

The following were the key project objectives which, once achieved, will ensure the project's success:

- **Build Community Awareness** – Assist in highlighting, and raising awareness, of the G21 creative sector to the wider community to build knowledge, foster networking, marketing, economic and social growth.

- **Engage Stakeholders and build buy-in** - Engage with creative sector stakeholders to discuss the making change strategy, understand the value of a directory and create buy-in by giving stakeholders a real voice.

- **Understand Best Practice** - Identify and research examples of directories within Australia or Internationally. Ensure that the proposed directory considers and learns from global best practice and evidence.

- **Provide a clear future plan** - Deliver an outcome which demonstrates how a directory could be structured and a pathway to its development.

Image:
Shut Up & Write
Geelong Writers
Photo by Quinlivan

Approach

In developing the approach for the project, a clear scope was developed in conjunction with the Creative Industries Taskforce and their project sponsor. The approach consisted of 5 key activities:

1. Desktop Research of existing directories
2. Review of existing G21 Creative Hubs
3. Interviews and engagement with Creative Hubs
4. Development of a pilot sample directory
5. Development of key recommendations

Desktop Research of existing directories

- We researched a number of existing directories, nationally and internationally. These existing directories proved to have varying levels of success.
- Global review of 14 hub networks, with 1 Victorian Hub selected for Case Study
- Case Study of "Creative Spaces" (City of Melbourne), including comprehensive review of the network, it's limitations, opportunities and future direction (refer to Appendix 1)

Image:
Red Echidna Studios
GP Arts Inc

Review of existing G21 Creative Hubs

- The next step in our project was to start a list of all the creative hubs in the G21 region. We separated this list by local council:
  - o City of Greater Geelong
  - o Golden Plains Shire
  - o Colac Otway Shire
  - o Surfcoast Shire
  - o Borough of Queenscliffe

- Researching and identifying the hubs involved initially liaising with creative directors and stakeholders in the five shire councils. This did not yield an exhaustive list of hubs and we quickly identified that there was very little available in terms of a list of hubs in each region.

- We proceeded to investigate by finding hubs online, those that had an established website were easy to find. Some hubs we found through other social media channels like Facebook or Instagram. Others we knew about from existing connections with Creative Industries Taskforce or the project teams own personal and professional connections.

- After a few weeks of research, we had developed a comprehensive list of hubs within each region. We made the decision to focus our project on the community, not-for-profit hubs. The hubs identified were from a broad range of creative sectors, commercial, non-commercial, government funded, and membership only funded. We determined that by focusing on the community not for profit groups we could capture a group that may not have had the resources to advertise, promote and engage members and funding . It also ensured we kept within our scope - trying to focus on every type of hub would mean we were stretched beyond our resources and time commitment to complete the project.

Approach

Interviewing & Engaging with Creative Hubs

- We identified a shortlist of hubs using this criteria. We then contacted a total of 12 hub located across the G21 region requesting their involvement and availability for an interview.

- Communication and engagement with the hubs did take some time. Most of the hubs we were connecting with were not-profit, run by a small but dedicated committee that consisted of volunteer members. Of the 12 hubs we initially contacted we were able to complete interviews with 8 of the hubs either virtually or in person.

- Conducting the interviews involved setting up meetings, booking rooms and liaising with a key contact at each hub. Each interview consisted of one or two committee members from the hub and two members of the project team. We felt it was important to have one project team member ask the questions and one to take notes capturing required information.

- The hub interviews conducted gave us great insight into the current challenges and opportunities for each of the hubs, and what they saw as the benefit of an online directory to their group and the creative industry.

Development of a Pilot Directory

- With the exhaustive list of creative hubs in the G21 region we started creating an example of what an online directory could look like.

- Utilising the feedback received from the hub interviews the example pilot directory created needed to be interactive, easy to use and have a visual element.

- Compiling a list of all the hubs identified in the region we developed a concept for what a pilot directory could include.

- Using google maps we started with a map of the region and were able to add each hub, it's creative sector and other details include website, contact details and images.

- This created an interactive map where the user can zoom in and out, clicking on links to find out more information.

May, 2022

Development of Project Scope

Early June, 2022

Existing Directories Desktop Research

Late June, 2022

Identification of G21 Creative Hubs

July & August, 2022

Creative Hub Interviews & Engagement

September, 2022

Finalisation of Recommendations and Project Report

Deliverables

From the outset of the project there was a clear understanding that the development of a hub network/directory would be important in supporting creatives across the G21 region.

However, for the purpose of the project a series of digestible activities and deliverables needed to be identified. The below table summarises the key deliverables that were identified and actioned:

Deliverables	
Pilot hub directory	Discussed on page 22 and 23 of this report, the pilot hub directory is an example illustration of a potential approach to developing a directory for creatives across the region. The directory contains the details of over 50 G21 creative hubs.
Summary of best practice hub directories	Desktop research was undertaken to identify domestic and international examples of other creative hubs to understand best practice. A summary of this research is outlined on page 17 and 18.
Stakeholder engagement via a series of interviews with creative hubs	To ensure the best outcome for G21 creatives it was imperative that we understood their requirements. A series of interviews were undertaken with creative hubs across the G21 to understand their requirements and obtain input into the proposed directory. These interviews are summarised in Appendix 2.
Report and project presentation	A final report and presentation was developed to summarise the project.
Clear and actionable recommendations and opportunities	Based on the work undertaken during this project 6 clear and actionable recommendations were developed. Furthermore, 3 areas of opportunity for further research and work were also identified. These recommendations and opportunities provide clear guidance on how to progress any directory.

Image:
Cradled in nature dreaming of what tomorrow may bring
Glynis Bryden
GP Arts Inc

"Creativity is the power to connect the seemingly unconnected"

Key Insights

A review of global hub network examples

One of the early stages in the project was to understand what the global experience had been with hub networks or directories, and how this could inform any future activity or investment across the G21.

The global review covered a total of 14 hub networks or directories. This included local and international examples, which covered areas ranging from small regional communities to entire continents. This diversity enabled a holistic understanding of the types of networks that exist and the success or benefits of each of these. From this the potential for a network or directory which supports creatives who reside and operate in the G21 region could be inferred.

As a part of this stage of the project, and in addition to the high-level review, a detailed case study was developed for one of the hub networks, Creative Spaces. The findings from the case study are summarised below with a detailed summary of the case study attached in Appendix 1.

Themes from the Review

The review of hub networks or directories spanned a diverse set of applications. These included small scale regional hub networks from Western Australia all the way up to hub directories that covered most of Europe. From this review a number of themes were identified which may assist in guiding the development of a hub network which supports creatives across G21.

These are summarised by the table below:

Theme	Finding
Networks can be small or large	Directories and networks have been set-up for creative industries ranging in size from 10 to over 1,000 hubs.
Creative sectors are inconsistently defined	The majority of networks or directories do not use standard definitions or classifications of creative hubs focus areas, but these do exist (e.g. 'Australia's Creative Economy: Definitions of the Segments and Sectors' available at: https://www.design.org.au/documents/item/420
Networks have diverse objectives that correspond to local context	The objectives of each of the websites/organisations reviewed were understandably diverse. However, despite this, some consistent themes existed across this population. Generally speaking, this included themes such as: • A community focus • Establishing a network that could support the creative community • A focus on businesses and economic activity or benefits associated with the creative sector • A recognition that the creative industries are extremely diverse but there is a need to provide them with a forum to connect or communicate.

Key Insights

A review of global hub network examples

Theme	Finding
Funding is critical to the success of the network but a range of options exist	Of those hub networks/directories reviewed the majority were funded via a membership model (5). Of the remainder most were supported by public funding (4) with a minority supported by private funding (2). It was also noted that one of the directories' funding came via a sponsorship model.
Online applications for creatives make sense	The vast majority of directories can be applied to via an online form. In these cases, hubs apply to be listed and may need to pay a membership fee or meet specific criteria to be eligible to be listed. This enables creatives to include information critical to them and gives them the ability to keep this up to date. In some cases, the directory or network has been set-up via a one-off process and in these cases, it is not clear if the hubs themselves have been engaged in the information gathering exercise. This is more common in the case where the directory is a part of an academic/research exercise and where there is less commercial intent in the publication of the network.
To remain current databases need to be regularly maintained (centrally) and details updated (by hubs	The majority of networks are updated on an ad hoc basis, and this is reflected by the observation that the majority of networks/directories require an application - whether they be funded through membership, publicly funded or privately funded. In the case of one-off research projects which have established a directory it is not clear if any subsequent updates were undertaken or planned into the future, and this affects the currency and relevance of information collected in the long term.

Key Insights

Creative Spaces (City of Melbourne) Case Study

The Creative Spaces project is an initiative that was established by the City of Melbourne, along with other Creative industry partners , in 2012.

The stated aim of the program is as follows:

Creative Spaces connects artists and creative practitioners with spaces, promotes artists and their work, and provides an index of live and virtual events. Directory for creative spaces across Australia where listing the space is free.

More specifically, the initiative was set-up primarily to address the issue of increasing rental costs for creatives who look to work or operate within the City of Melbourne. To deliver on this goal the City of Melbourne set-up a program which includes:

- a national website (https://www.creativespaces.net.au/) where creatives can find spaces.

- a team that supports this website by taking leases out on properties to licence/sublease to the creative sector affordably.

The website was upgraded recently to have a 'look and feel' like airbnb. This was done with a focus on creating connections to artist activities and websites. It is noted that this aspect of the website is not being used heavily however and the team who manage the website is currently analysing why this is the case.

As a result of the long history of the website the team that administers the Creative Spaces project have built significant knowledge on the benefits and pitfalls of delivering a hub network. Through one on one interview with the project's manager some of the key successes and pitfalls were highlighted and these should be considered in the delivery of any local network. These are summarised below.

Successes to learn from

- The main success of the program is that it focuses on a particular, and singular, need for creatives in the City of Melbourne that was not otherwise being addressed. That is the cost and availability of space.

- Things (e.g. the information/directory) are valuable when they're kept up to date.

- The program has financial sustainability both due to ongoing commitment from council and income associated with subleasing spaces.

Pitfalls to consider

- It's one thing to set-up the website but it's another to keep things going. e.g. a secretariat role, and it's important to work out early who this role would sit with.

- The artist/hubs aspects of the tool might not have had enough marketing focusing on the connection purpose to sustain this component of the website.

Key Insights

A review of global hub network examples

Conclusions for the G21 network

The review of global hub networks and directories identified a number of important lessons that should be considered when setting up a network for the G21 region.

Some of the most notable findings focused on:

• Clearly defining the need for the directory and working with creatives to define this.

• That the burden of currency of information published by the directory or network requires a strong funding and support base.

• Funding and the ongoing support role needs to be delivered by a champion sponsor or organisation, such as a local council in the case of the City of Melbourne's Creative Spaces initiative.

What Hubs from the G21 want

As a part of the project a review of creative hubs in the G21 region was undertaken. During this review a number of focused interviews were undertaken with a select group of these hubs.

These interviews were aimed at gaining a deeper insight into the needs of the creative hubs within the region and to understand how a creative directory might serve these needs. In all, representatives from 8 hubs from across the G21 region were interviewed. These hubs spanned a variety of creative sectors and a range of scales. It is notable that all hubs engaged were community hubs, or groups that operate as not for profits. No commercial hubs were interviewed at this stage however this could be a focus of any future expansion of the directory beyond this pilot study.

A summary of the key points coming from the discussions with each of the 8 interviewed hubs is included in Appendix 2.

Conclusions for the G21 network

Understanding of local needs and ensuring the directory keeps these as its central objective was shown to be a key component of the success of the City of Melbourne's Creative Spaces program and will therefore be critical locally also. Interviews and engagement with local creatives across the G21 was able to identify the local needs of creatives and how a network or directory could serve these groups.

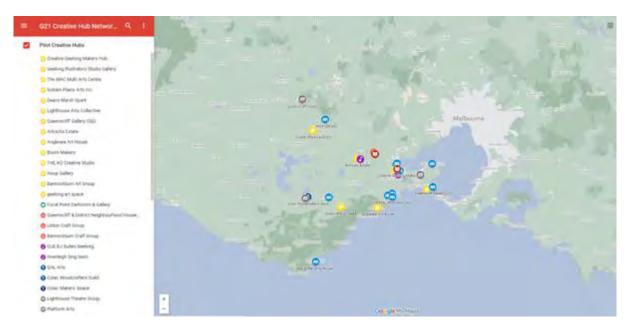The key themes that emerged from these interviews include:

• There is a need for the network or directory to have an ongoing support model including funding and administration support.

• The network needs to be simple, visually engaging and could potentially have multiple levels or interfaces based on the specific needs of an individual, hub or organisation.

• There are three key advantages that hubs identified to the network:

  o Providing a connection to audience (i.e. marketing)

  o Providing a connection to other hubs – particularly allowing for coordination of activities and events such as though an events noticeboard

• Providing a centralised first touch point for new creatives for creatives who have just moved to the region. This is particularly true for smaller hubs with limited resourcing and only social media presence.

Image:
May'd
Geelong Creative

"A directory could help to break down the 'silo's' that can occur in the region"

The Pilot Directory Map

The pilot directory and map illustrates a potential minimum viable product (MVP) which could be used in the early stages of trialing a network directory for the creative hubs of G21. The map is not complete as only a select group of hubs was able to be included given the time constraints of the project. Despite this limitation the map can be used to support the next phase of development of the network including facilitating ongoing discussions with creatives, investors or other key stakeholders by allowing them to see an example of the types of information and functionality a map directory could have.

For the purpose of creating an MVP we translated publicly available information on 44 creative hubs and presented this using google maps. Examples of the map are shown in the figures below including: An overall summary map, including list of hubs; and a view showing how the map appears when a user has selected a chosen hub.
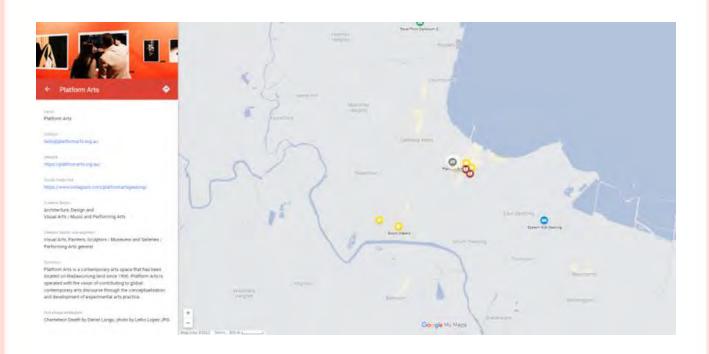
The Pilot Directory Map

For the purpose of the pilot a reduced set of key attributes were entered for each hub. These are shown in the image below and include:

- Name of the hub;

- Hub contact (email or weblink);

- Main website;

- Main social media weblink;

- Creative sector and subsector to which the hub belongs; and

- A brief summary of the hub.

This reduced set of attributes was deemed as the critical information based on the eight interviews with local hub representatives. The set of attributes included are generally focused on allowing people using the map to quickly and easily filter through the hubs presented to identify and hub they would like to contact and then following that give those same users all the key contact details for each hub.

Limitations

The review undertaken provides a holistic view of the opportunity a creative hub directory or network might present for the region. However, it is important to recognise the limitations of the study and understand how these may need to be addressed as a part of any future investment in this space.

The most notable limitations are as follows:

- **Engagement with hubs**: While the project group was able to engage with a number of representatives of the creative sectors across the G21 area this engagement was limited by project timing and availability of hub representatives. It will be important for any future work to consider the additional representatives that should be engaged to test the conclusions of this study.

- **Data availability**: The data presented within this report, particularly that which relates to the hubs presented in the pilot directory, needed to be collected manually. The data will therefore need to be subject to review. Notably the team is aware of other data sources available which could unfortunately not be used as a part of this study which would add significantly to any future expansion. For example, mapping of creative hubs undertaken for City of Greater Geelong .

Image:
Kate Wise
GP Arts Inc

Image:
Platform Arts
Exhibition Opening
Photo by Leiko Lopez

"There is a clear need, and want, for a Creative Hubs directory in the G21 region"

Recommendations and Opportunities

Recommendations

Through the process of investigating various creative hub networks both locally and globally, a series of recommendations were developed. These recommendations are encouraged to be considered when developing a creative hub directory:

- **There is a clear need, and want, for a creative hub directory in the G21 region** – through discussions with Creative Hubs across the G21 region it is clear that these Hubs see a real benefit in the implementation of a directory as it has the opportunity to widen the reach of the Creative Hubs, but also build community across the Creative sector.

- **The ownership and ongoing management responsibilities of any directory needs to be clearly defined** – A key finding from the review of other Australian and International directories was that the ongoing management of the directory was an issue. For a successful directory, it is recommended that this initiative has ongoing management, through a secretariat, that drives this directory and continues to build upon these recommendations.

- **Affordability and sustainability for both creatives and people managing the creative hub directory** - For a successful directory, financial backing and support from stakeholders is critical to the health and sustainability of this directory. Likewise, as creative hubs are largely volunteer based, it is recommended that memberships to the proposed creative hub directory should also be affordable, allowing these hubs to continue to sustain and grow their membership basis.

- **A clear process is required to ensure that data in the directory is maintained and updated** – For a directory to be an ongoing success the data contained within the directory needs to be maintained and updated to ensure data is timely and beneficial to those utilising the directory.

- **Creative sector stakeholders should be engaged via a co-design process when designing and implementing the directory** – buy-in from the creative sector is required to ensure the success of the directory. Any directory should utilise the relationship created through this project, as well as broader sector engagement, to undertake a co-design process to design any directory.

- **The directory should be user friendly but also be visually pleasing and build on the G21 regional marketing strategies** – The importance of having a user friendly and visually pleasing directory cannot be understated. Making the directory challenging for general users to use will inhibit the ongoing success of any directory. The directory must also be integrated with any broader G21 regional marketing strategies.

Recommendations and Opportunities

Opportunities

The creative hub directory has been identified as playing a pivotal role within the Creative Industries to increase the trajectory of growth within the G21 region. Some further opportunities for this directory have been identified.

- **Scope to expand the directory to fulfil other functions** - Through our discussions with creative hubs, it was identified that this directory is an opportunity for hubs to leverage the marketing and advertising benefits that it would possess. This could be for events, community gatherings or cross collaborations within the sector. It would be suggested that further stakeholder input would be required for this to be successful.

- **Engagement with private sector creatives** - As our investigations were solely focused on community hubs, engagement with Creatives in the private sector is an opportunity to broaden the directories scope and further provide more understanding of the benefits that this part of the sector can provide.

- **Engagement with other networks to enable visibility** - The G21 Region is overwhelmed with creative hubs and individuals and is a continually growing space. A successful directory could enable visibility of the creative vibrancy in the G21 region not only within the region, but also to a national and global scale and in turn would enhance the designation as UNESCO City of Design

Image:
Flying Kingfisher
Lyn Steele
GP Arts Inc

Group Reflection

The Leaders for Geelong community project has challenged our thinking and provided greater understanding of the positive impact leadership can have on the broader community. Engaging with community not-for-profit groups has given us the opportunity to think outside our corporate and business environments and interact with the grass roots level of the creative community.

The project has also provided us with the opportunity to extend our leadership skills including teamwork, communication, problem solving, flexibility and decisiveness. The completion of this project has been dependent on working cohesively as a team within the group and with the Project Sponsors. The team developed a clear sense of group and individual strengths throughout the project timeline, team members naturally gravitated towards their strengths but also took opportunities to extend themselves with their unrealised strengths; but also learning from each other and our mentor as the project came to fruition.

Effective communication was an essential component of the successful delivery of the project. The team utilised a variety of platforms to bring this project to life: Google Docs, Microsoft Office Suite, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. While meeting in person was important in building the team and developing working relationships, virtual meetings have enabled us to communicate effectively outside of face to face meetings, meet the project deadlines and remain on track for successful completion. It also enabled us to connect with community hubs and networks locally and internationally that we otherwise wouldn't have been able to connect with.

We value the opportunity provided to us by the Committee for Geelong and the Creative Industries Taskforce. We would also like to thank our mentors, professional and personal - without your support this project may not have been a success. We would also like to thank and acknowledge our families who have been understanding and offering unwavering support for our commitment to the project. Our hope is that our contribution through this project will result in benefits to the community well beyond the life of the project.

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about"

– Margaret J Wheatley

Appendices

Appendix 1: Creative Spaces Case Study

High Level Details	
Name	Creative Spaces
Weblink	https://www.creativespaces.net.au/
Type	Directory
Area covered	National
Location (country, region, city etc)	Melbourne, Victoria
Size (number of hubs)	1672 Hubs
Creative industry classification	Not defined
Creative sectors included	• Gallery Spaces • Outdoor Public spaces • Textiles • Dance • Music • Design
Stated objective	Creative Spaces connects artists and creative practitioners with spaces, promotes artists and their work, and provides an index of live and virtual events. Directory for creative spaces across Australia where listing the space is free.
Funding method	Is an initiative supported by the City of Melbourne which has also used funding from Creative Victoria and Victorian State Government.
Method of application for creatives	Online Application
Cycle for database updates	Ongoing
Contact details	03 9658 9154, https://www.creativespaces.net.au/contact

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Interview Insights	
The history of Creative Space	The initiative is 10 years old and was set-up to address increased property prices pushing creatives out of the municipality (City of Melbourne). The program includes a national website to find space but it also has operations which take leases out on properties to licence/sublease to the creative sector affordably. The group is now expanding this leasing/subleasing operation to fill empty office space now that leases of the space in the city are decreasing. As a part of this there is also a goal to increase involvement from the real estate sector (e.g. brokers). In time the website may also adapt to a space where artists can post needs. The website was upgraded a few years back to have a 'look and feel' like airbnb. This was done with a focus on creating connections - Artist websites. This area is not being used heavily. The team who manage the website is currently analysing why this is the case.
How is information managed for the hubs?	Information is kept up to date by creatives, spaces, hubs etc. CoM may keep an eye on things that haven't been touched in a while and prompt those groups but this activity is very light touch (one hour a week dedicated to this activity).
What is some of the notable feedback you've received from the creative community?	The Creative Spaces team feel that the artist/hubs aspects of the tool might not have had enough marketing focusing on the connection purpose to sustain this component of the website.
How is Creative Spaces supported and funded?	Funding has historically come from four sources: • Council* • Members/creatives who rent spaces* • State Government - Specific project funding • Creative Victoria - Specific Project funding *It was noted that around two thirds of the operating budget form council is recouped through rental incomes.

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Interview Insights Continued

What is an unexpected benefit that has been uncovered in developing and maintaining the directory?	The main themes that came through were: • Things (e.g. the information/directory) are valuable when they're kept up to date. • No one is funding the spaces that creatives need to use and this has been the largest driver behind the program • Property needs to be taken out of the market and given to the creative industry to manage affordably. CoM doesn't have much property but the City of Sydney does and this may be a model to look into.
What's the biggest pitfall that has been uncovered in developing and maintaining the directory?	It's one thing to set-up the website but it's another to keep things going. e.g. a secretariat role, and it's important to work out early who this role would sit with.

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Appendix 2: Summary of Creative Hub Interviews

Inverleigh Sign Sesh

Creative sector(s): Music and Performing Arts

Membership: Approximately 30

Funding Model: Membership - minor charge ($5 per session) to cover basic administration and facility hire otherwise most operations are based on in kind commitments.

General themes from the interview:

- A lot of creative sector activity is focused in Geelong however this is a long distance from people who are located in the outer areas of the G21.

- Small scale local community groups, including those in the creative sector, provide social connection in communities as much as anything else.

- The support model/funding of support for any activity to support creatives is important. There may be an opportunity to channel this through local council arts officers.

- Having spaces to meet and perform is a particular challenge for smaller groups with low funding and this often needs to be provided in-kind or at reduced rates.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- There is value in a directory that promotes creative community groups.

- The network could be useful when hubs need to refer creatives on to other providers/hubs (e.g. piano player/teacher).

- Smaller and informal groups may be less likely to want to connect or meet-up with similar creatives as the value may be more around local social connection than serving a particular creative sector or community events.

- The categories used for each creative group need to be prescribed as this would make it easier to find a particular hub based on the creative sector they support.

Platform Arts

Creative sector(s): Music and Performing Arts / Architecture, Design and Visual Arts

Membership: >500 with 500 program participants working with the organisation each year as a part of their programs (e.g. the lab program).

Funding Model: The space operates as a not for profit and receives funding through multi-year organisational investment from Creative Victoria and City of Greater Geelong, as well as project-based funding and income generated through their creative program.

General themes from the interview:

- Platform Arts has a big focus on facilitating connections for people and other groups (including hubs) in the creative arts with around 40% of the participants in their programs being from the local area.

- Platform Arts biggest challenge is connecting to the audience, not too creatives themselves.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- The network / directory would be very useful if it could bring more people, including creatives and audiences, in to see the programs being delivered at hubs.

- It could provide a link for artists to their community, particularly if they are new to the creative sector or to the region.

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- The centre of Geelong does not currently have an issue with spaces for creatives. Instead, the focus of a directory could be on filling those spaces that exist.

- If the directory was able to also have elements that looked externally, and therefore provide a link to audiences, that would also be positive.

Golden Plains Arts Inc

Creative sector(s): Architecture, Design and Visual Arts / Publishing

Membership: Approximately 70-80 members

Funding Model: Funding comes from membership. The group has two tiers of membership ($10 and $20 annually) and many members sign up to be covered by insurance or to be able to be involved in the annual events run by the group (e.g. Arts trail or Smythesdale Fiesta).

General themes from the interview:

- The group covers a very diverse range of creatives with one of the main attractions being the link the group provides to local events where creatives can market their materials.

- This group acts as an umbrella hub that covers a number of local creative groups such as Golden Pens. This role emerged organically from the Art Trail activity with GP Arts Inc evolved from.

- The success of the group is largely because of their ability to connect artists with a paying audience.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- The network could provide a connection between hubs/groups. Current connections with other hubs are ad hoc and not coordinated however there is an opportunity particularly for complementary hubs (e.g. connecting Geelong Writers with artists to design covers for their publications).

- Maintenance of the information on the network/directory is very important and this needs to be coupled with an ongoing commitment to the tool.

- The network needs to complement creative's activity on social media as this is an important tool for them and the network cannot be a competitor to this.

Geelong Illustrators

Creative sector(s): Architecture, Design and Visual Arts

Membership: Approximately 50 members

Funding Model: Membership model with two tiers of membership. Community ($40 per annum) and Basic ($80 per annum). The group also takes a commission for sales through their shopfront located in the centre of Geelong (20%).

The group occasionally receives funding for one off activities through local council grants.

General themes from the interview:

- The hub currently attracts membership given it is an opportunity to meet, collaborate and share knowledge. The group also has a shopfront which allows members to sell their work.

- The support required to run the hub is largely given in kind and this can be challenging.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- There is an opportunity for the hub to provide a connection to audiences as currently this is a challenge due to a lack of funds to support marketing activities.

- The directory could be a good opportunity for others to locate creative hubs in the region but a clear definition of what a creative hub is would be needed from the outset.

- The directory needs support from the local councils, which could include funding of its ongoing maintenance.

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Colac Woodcrafters Guild

Creative sector(s): Architecture, Design and Visual Arts

Membership: Approximately 50 members

Funding Model: Funding primarily comes from memberships. Annual membership fee is $120 ($10/month), with an additional contribution of $2 each time members visit the workshop.

The initial set-up of the shed was supported by a local council grant. The group also occasionally receives additional funding for the one-off purchase of equipment.

General themes from the interview:

- The group is an off-shoot of the 'Men's Shed' initiative but with a broader and more diverse membership, which is seen as a strong positive.

- The group provides space to members but also provides support for members to attend local events (markets and displays) where they can sell their woodwork. The group also runs a number of training courses including french polishing, picture framing, drum making and Scroll Saw, These events also attract people from outside the region.

- Major challenge is understanding how to attract new members to the group and boosting membership.

- Good communication systems in place with existing members including monthly newsletter, Facebook, emails and quarterly members forum.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- The network would be useful to the group if it links to prospective members.

- There may be an opportunity for the network to link with other similar hubs so they can share information/experience.

- The network could provide a marketing opportunity as it would be a forum to publish the activities they support.

Lighthouse Arts Collective

Creative sector(s): Music and Performing Arts / Architecture, Design and Visual Arts

Membership: 1,000 to 3,000 but membership is not financial.

Funding Model: Funding comes from revenues from shows/events with facilities that support the collective activity being provided in kind by Uniting Queenscliffe. Expansion of activities and facilities was supported by a Victorian Government Grant

General themes from the interview:

- With an established reputation the collective finds that a lot of creatives will approach them with ideas.

- The way events are delivered and the response they get from the community has changed in recent years. Previously response rates occurred earlier whereas now a lot of tickets are sold at the last minute.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- There is a need to ensure the directory is actively managed and attractive (includes being visually attractive/stylised) to ensure it's ongoing success.

- It could be a good forum to enable coordination across the region.

- There is also an opportunity for the network to be an externally focused marketing tool / noticeboard.

- The network may assist in breaking some 'siloing' that occurs and would enable creative groups to share the investment required into the resources required to operate a creative hub.

- The network could provide a connection to a wider community including volunteers/interns.

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Creative Geelong

Creative sector: Architecture, Design and Visual Arts

Membership: Approximately 6,000 but membership is not financial.

Funding Model: Government grants are the main source of funding however the space runs as a not for profit.

General themes from the interview:

- The hub has wide reaching involvement in the creative sector however many of its activities are limited by the funding required to support the hub's operations.

- Many of the connections that the group makes with other hubs are done informally with this activity led by the volunteer board members.

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- A directory could present an opportunity to develop activities such as networking, community touring opportunities and coordination of activities with other hubs.

- The network could be utilised to connect tertiary design students with hubs. This may be beneficial for students as they come to the end of their formal education.

- Once fully developed the network could be useful as a tool to market to overseas artists or even a mechanism to support applications to overseas grant/funding programs.

Geelong Writers

Creative sector: Publishing

Membership: 140 paid members. Up to 900 members in total when unpaid groups other supporters are also considered (e.g. Facebook followers and newsletter subscribers)

Funding Model: Funding is mainly derived from annual financial memberships ($40, concession $30 and student $10). Some additional funding comes through one-off local council grants and/or philanthropic sources as well as surplus funds from entry fees for writing competitions.

General themes from the interview:

- The hub has significant engagement with its core group of members aimed at developing their writing skills and more broadly, engagement with the community through schools, community centres and specific project activities. Geelong Writers actively promote Geelong to the nation's arts community through its annual Djillong Short Story competition. The hub produces many regular print publications, on-line publications as well as multi-media publications via a YouTube channel. Geelong Writers celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2023..

- The hub has comprehensive knowledge of, and relationships with, many local hubs which are also active in the areas of writing and the creative arts.

- Geelong Writers receives in-kind support from a small number of local businesses

Feedback to be considered when establishing the directory:

- Geelong Writers see the network as a medium for hubs to tap into mutually beneficial commercial opportunities. For example, marketing of workshops and publications. It may also provide an opportunity to connect with the corporate sector.

- The network could also be useful to create awareness for prospective members but this is not an immediate need for the group.

- The directory needs to be visually appealing and layered (e.g. first level being less detailed but captivating and the second level being more detailed).