



**LOVE FILM.  
LOVE GEELONG.**

# **GEELONG WATERFRONT FILM**

Membership Recruitment and  
Retention Strategy 2022-25



# **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Geelong Waterfront Film project team acknowledges the Wadawurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands, waters, seas and skies on which we operate.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations people.

# Contents

Acknowledgements .....	4
Our Project Team .....	6
Why we chose this project .....	7
About Geelong Waterfront Film .....	8
Message from Geelong Waterfront Film.....	9
Executive Summary .....	10
The Bigger Picture .....	12
About the Project .....	14
Project Timeline .....	15
Project Approach.....	16
Key Insights.....	20
Membership Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2022-25 .....	21
Recommended Membership Structure.....	28
Opportunities .....	30
Challenges .....	31
Limitations .....	32
Recommendation .....	33
Conclusion .....	34
Appendices .....	36



## Acknowledgements

The Geelong Waterfront Film project team would like to acknowledge the following individuals, organisations and community groups that have contributed to this project:

- Geelong Waterfront Film Board
- Belinda Lyle (Project Sponsor)
- Scott McKenzie (Project Mentor)
- Committee for Geelong
- Jennifer Cromarty, CEO Committee for Geelong
- Karen MacAdie, Committee for Geelong
- Tayyaba Saad, Committee for Geelong
- City of Greater Geelong
- Cr Peter Murrhly, Mayor of Geelong and Actor in Crow Valley
- Geelong Chamber of Commerce
- Ben Flynn, CEO Geelong Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine
- Brett Ince, Executive Director Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine
- Regional Development Victoria
- Stephen Ryan, Principal Regional Coordinator Regional Development Victoria
- Chris Bryan, Moo Media.

## Special Acknowledgement

The project team would also like to make a special acknowledgement and thank you to our Leaders for Geelong, Leadership Portfolio Facilitator, Catherine Bell. Your teachings, directions and guidance have been pivotal in not only the development of this report, but to our development as leaders within our respective organisations, as well as the broader Greater Geelong region.

## The Leaders for Geelong Program is made possible through the support of our generous Program Partners and Scholarship Providers

Government Partner



Major Partners



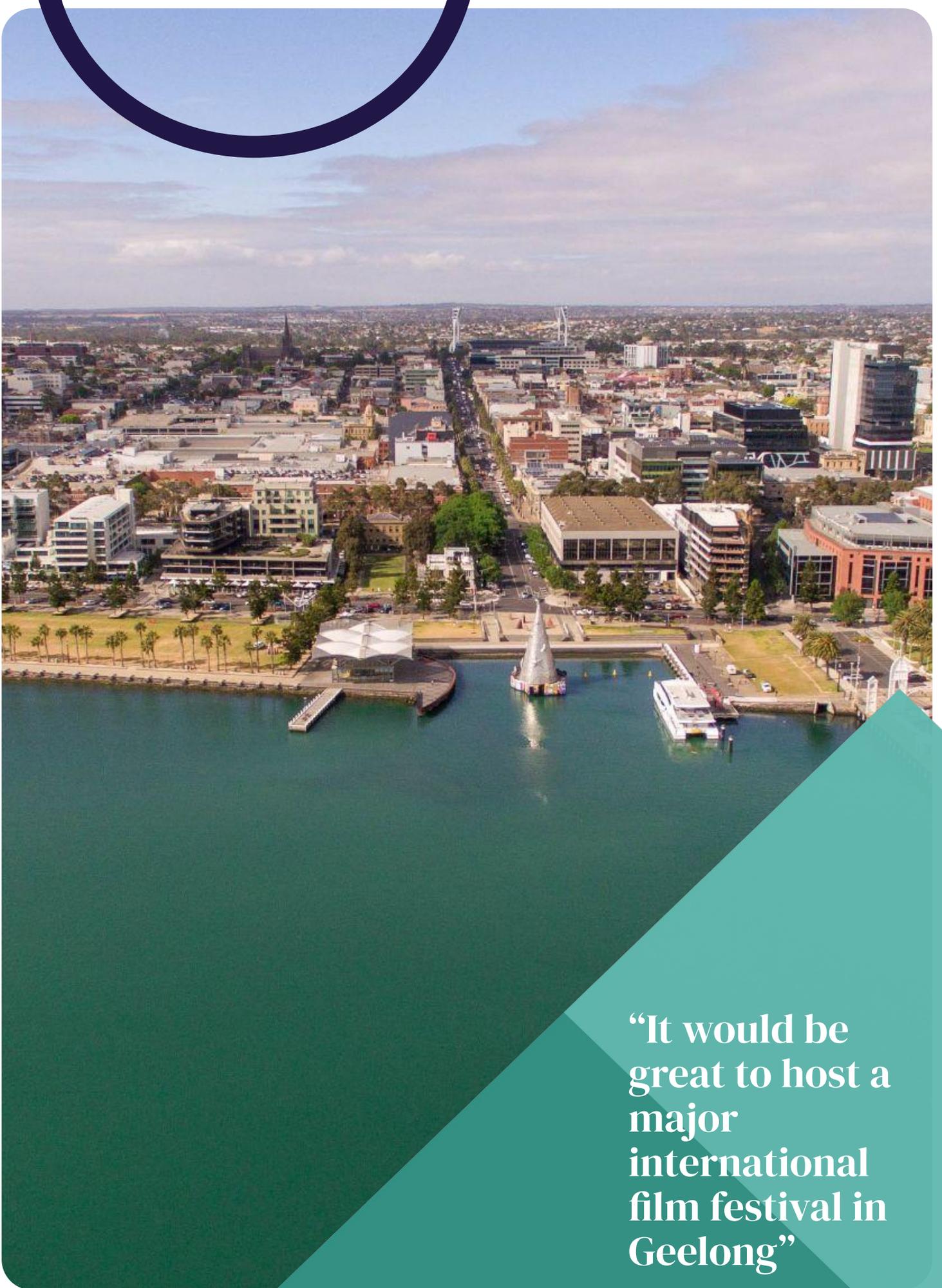
Partners



Scholarships & Grants



The  
Hugh Williamson  
Foundation



“It would be  
great to host a  
major  
international  
film festival in  
Geelong”

# The Geelong Waterfront Film Project Team



**Michael Roberts**, Technology Support Coordinator, Barwon Water

**Movie idea:** I would love to see a remake of Point Break that is actually filmed here on the Surf Coast, so we can showcase all of the amazing things our coastline has to offer!

**Fav movie:** Top Gun, followed very closely by Top Gun: Maverick!

**Fav movie snack:** Peanut M&M's!



**Genevieve Hargrave**, Communications & Engagement Manager, Rural and Regional Victoria

**Movie idea:** Thriller/Mystery set on the Ironbark Basin Walk, Bells Beach to Point Addis, a girl goes running and never returns home. It would have to have a complicated and intertwined plot of course.

**Fav movie:** Gone Girl 2014, with an absolute killer plot it kept me on the edge of my sofa and I was unable to pick the twist in the plot and predict what was coming next.

**Fav movie snack:** Red wine and chocolate.



**Stephanie Skinner**, Language Officer, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

**Movie idea:** Somewhere in the bush, there's a mysterious occurrence happening where those who camp during the night disappear and never return... the rumor spreads to a young group of curious travelers who go out to investigate the disappearances.

**Fav movie:** Cabin in the Woods, best plot twist in a horror movie and really solidified my passion in film, especially the comedy/horror genre!

**Fav movie snack:** Caramel popcorn with choc-top ice cream.





### Giovanni Siano, Owner and Director, Home Instead Geelong

**Movie idea:** Biography movie on Frank Costa – the man who saved AFL club Geelong, and how through his leadership and vision helped Costa Group to become the largest service wholesaler of fruit and vegetables in Australia.

**Fav movie:** I am sucker for inspirational movies, so anything from “Rocky” to “La vita e’ bella” is a great watch for me.

**Fav movie snack:** Iced coffee protein shake whilst watching “Pumping Iron” – good as gold!



### Cameron Murnane, Membership Experience Manager, Geelong Chamber of Commerce

**Movie Idea:** I would love to see a sports based movie filmed here in Geelong! Something that rivals the Rocky movies or Coach Carter..... Sylvester Stallone running up the steps of City Hall!!!

**Fav movie:** is anything with Denzel Washington in it!

**Fav movie snack:** There is no better way to watch a Denzel flick than to sit with a giant popcorn, coke and a choc top at one of our region’s great cinemas!

## Why we chose this project?

While the project team had limited exposure and experience within the film industry, it became clear from the beginning that the team was aligned on their interest in the film and the creative arts sectors and passionate about the Greater Geelong region becoming one of the great destinations for people to live, visit and invest.

One of the challenges associated with the Leaders for Geelong program was moving beyond the comfort zone to tackle challenges and tasks that were uncommon in the team’s usual roles and responsibilities. The project team saw this project as an opportunity to do this, while at the same time giving back to a community organisation that has the opportunity to play a major role in the diversity, innovation and creativity of Geelong’s future.

The project team casted their minds forward to 2025, where they meet for a bite to eat and something to drink on the opening night of the region’s first Major Film Festival. Something that the team will be proud to have played a small role in creating, for the city and region they love.



# Project Introduction



## Geelong Waterfront Film

### About Geelong Waterfront Film

Geelong is becoming a vibrant arts hub and Geelong Waterfront Film is encouraging filmmakers to the region as well as supporting local talent to kick start a local filmmaking industry.

The region has a plethora of content creators, yet no comprehensive way to highlight the talent pool. When directors come to Geelong to film, they are not collaborating easily with local talent, service providers and potential partners.

Geelong Waterfront Film's purpose is to facilitate connections with talented film industry professionals located in Geelong, as well as providing opportunities for local businesses and industries in the region.

Geelong Waterfront Film is governed by a voluntary, passionate and dedicated Board of Directors.

#### **Vision**

To foster Geelong's filmmaking industry by encouraging and supporting filming in the region.

For Geelong Waterfront Film to be of sufficient size to be able to contribute to content creation in the region and effect positive, long-term change to Geelong's film industry.

#### **Role**

Geelong Waterfront Film provides a network for film buffs and those interested in supporting Geelong's film hub, by encouraging them to join as a Friend of Geelong Waterfront Film. Content creators, filmmakers, talent, crew, post-production and anyone who is part of the industry, are invited to join.

Geelong Waterfront Film fosters networking and strengthening relationships through its industry database.

Eligible applicants are also encouraged to apply for grant opportunities through the Geelong Waterfront Film Foundation.

Funding is offered by way of grants and investment through the Foundation. The Foundation intends to support and nurture a diverse range projects that will benefit not only local creative industries but also the wider community, including those projects anticipated for presentation to national and international audiences alike.

# Message from Geelong Waterfront Film

The Geelong Waterfront Film Board is a team of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who have a passion for film and all things associated. They devote their time to progress a venture that hopefully, will emerge to become a titanic enterprise that will be recognised as a dominant stepping stone force in the film industry and hopefully, encompassing a wider scope of Victoria.

In particular, the most dedicated and enthusiastic member of the Board is Belinda Lyle who has tirelessly, amidst running her own business, devoted unlimited hours and effort in keeping the administration of the Board ongoing.

It became clear that we needed more assistance in creating a membership structure that incorporated several categories to allow more people to play a part in Geelong Waterfront Film. When an opportunity arose to work with the Committee for Geelong, 'Leaders for Geelong' program, we did not hesitate to put up a project proposal.

On behalf of the Geelong Waterfront Film Board, I thank the 'Leaders for Geelong' for choosing to work with us with the aim of creating a strategy to establish a comprehensive membership database. The 'Leaders of Geelong' have brought their own expertise, demonstrated their collaboration and teamwork skills and impressed us with their commitment and passion, consistent across the whole project.

The project team is focused on the overall objective of creating a sustainable film industry by encouraging filmmakers to our region and supporting local talent.

This membership database structure needed to:

- Be affordable for emerging content creators and offer valuable benefits to assist them in their professional journey
- Assist in identifying content creators and those servicing the film industry residing in the region in order to create a comprehensive industry database
- Offer community involvement; and
- Enable participation from local businesses.

Without financial support, Geelong Waterfront Film would become obsolete. In addition to establishing a membership base, Geelong Waterfront Film Foundation also seeks tax-deductible donations. Donations made to the Foundation by local businesses and individuals enables financial assistance by way of a grant for content creators filming or residing in the region.

With a master plan in mind, the ideas and recommendations from the Leaders will be of immense value to Geelong Waterfront Film as we seek to reach more businesses in the region and gain their support. We look forward to further communicating the benefits and offerings of being involved in Geelong Waterfront Film.

Geelong Waterfront Film has ignited Geelong's passion for film and there's lots of enthusiasm out there. When people think of Geelong, we want them to *'think film Geelong!'*.

We invite you to join the journey and play your part in the big picture.



Dr Martin Ching,  
Board Chair





# Executive Summary

The Geelong region offers a diverse and impressive natural landscape from the ocean to the bush, which lends itself perfectly to being a fantastic location for film production.

Geelong Waterfront Film was founded to grow the film industry in Geelong, with a specific purpose of facilitating connections with talented local film industry professionals, as well as providing opportunities for local businesses and industries around the region.

In order for Geelong Waterfront Film to fulfil its vision, the project needed to develop a membership recruitment and retention strategy to increase member numbers, attract sponsors and develop partnerships across the Geelong region.

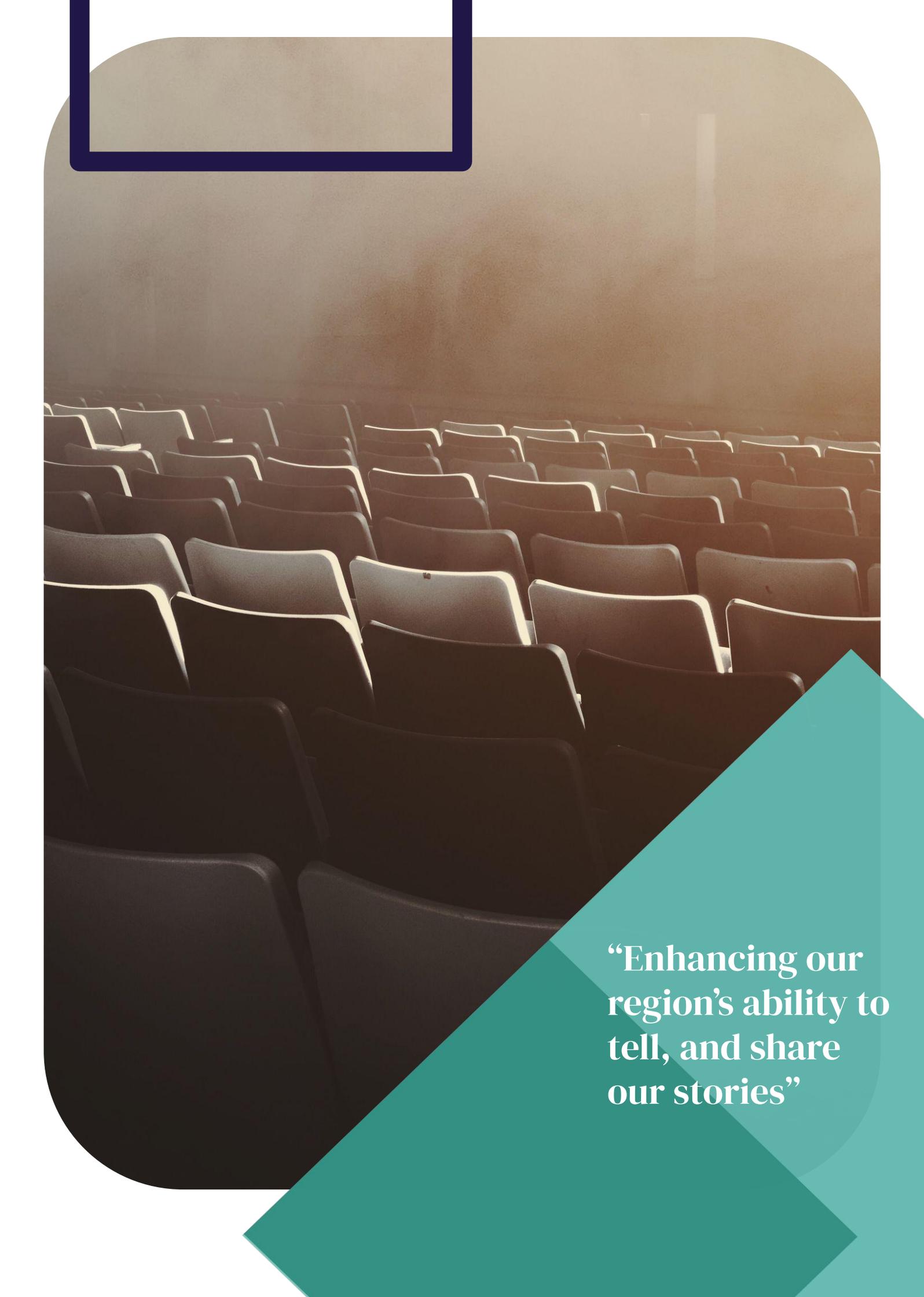
To understand membership offerings, the team undertook desktop research on existing membership-based organisations within the Greater Geelong region and beyond, conducted stakeholder interviews with film and non-film industry participants, and tested the findings with the Geelong Waterfront Film Board to ensure that the strategy was not only based on best practice, but was practical and achievable.

Another key piece of data collected was in the form of a community survey that was promoted through various channels. The survey was aimed at understanding the communities appetite to support a strong film presence within the region, as well as their wants, needs and expectations as prospective members of Geelong Waterfront Film. Data is been included as part of the appendices.

The key findings of the project research have been used to inform the Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2022-25, as well as the recommended membership categories and offerings outlined towards the end of this report.

To ensure the long term success, it is important that the findings and recommendations presented in this report are considered.

Our hope is that this project will allow Geelong Waterfront Film to grow and achieve its vision of a strong and successful film industry in Geelong.



**“Enhancing our  
region’s ability to  
tell, and share  
our stories”**

## Project Purpose



# The Bigger Picture

## A clever and creative Geelong

With a population of nearly 270,000 people, the Greater Geelong story is out!

Geelong is a destination to live, work and play, connected by a diverse array of natural environments and the best lifestyle on offer.

The location advantage, natural assets and design-thinking are driving major investments and economic growth, and Geelong's designation as a UNESCO City of Design has meant that the Creative Industries sector is right at the heart of that growth.

During the engagement for the community's 30-year clever and creative vision, the Geelong community said they value the following:

- the contribution of the arts to community vibrancy, diversity, and inclusiveness
- spaces that support and celebrate local artists through public exhibitions and performances; and
- involvement with local art, music, heritage, contemporary culture and Wadawurrung culture.

When asked to explore how the community might achieve the success of their long-term vision, the following actions were identified:

- Investment in a diverse range of local community festivals and events.
- Development of creative industries and a culture of thinking outside-the-square.
- Attracting creatively oriented and artistic industries to the region.
- Creative re-use of heritage assets.

A strong and vibrant film industry in the Greater Geelong region has the potential to contribute significantly to the community's long-term vision.

## **Impact on local film industry**

The Greater Geelong region has the capacity, natural assets and appetite to encourage and support the production of big-budget films within the region, as well as providing the infrastructure, networks and support to independent filmmakers.

For this reason, a strong and active membership based organisation focused primarily on connecting film industry participants, as well as providing them with opportunities, advocacy and grant support, will not only provide a strong boost for the film industry itself in Geelong, but will ensure that local talent and supply chain providers are front of mind and easily accessible.

Other benefits to the local film industry include:

- Increased networking opportunities resulting in stronger connection between local film industry participants, supporters and supply chain providers.
- Increased advocacy and awareness of the strong film industry that we have in Geelong and the potential opportunities to capitalise on this.
- The attraction of more filmmakers, talent, training and opportunity to the region.
- Pathway to employment for people in the film industry.
- Increased support for local content creators through grant opportunities.

## **Broader regional benefits**

A strong and vibrant film industry has the potential to introduce broad regional benefits across a number of sectors, whether that be through local job creation, use of local suppliers (eg. locations, etc.) visitation to Geelong and the surrounding regions or place promotion in general.

Key benefits include:

- Facilitating networks and stronger connections in the film industry.
- Raising awareness and recognition of a strong film industry in Geelong.
- Attracting more filmmakers to Geelong.
- Increase in revenue for local businesses (hotels, restaurants, tourism operators, trades etc).
- Pathway to employment/jobs for people in the film industry.
- Promotion of our region through film and media content.
- Increased support for local content creators.

# About the Project

## The problem to solve

Geelong is becoming a vibrant arts hub and Geelong Waterfront Film is encouraging filmmakers to our region as well as supporting local talent to kick start a local filmmaking industry. The region has a plethora of content creators, yet no comprehensive way to highlight the talent pool. When directors come to Geelong to film, they are not collaborating easily with local talent, service providers and potential partners.

Geelong Waterfront Film's purpose is to facilitate connections with talented film industry professionals located in Geelong, as well as providing opportunities for local businesses and industries around the region.

## Project scope

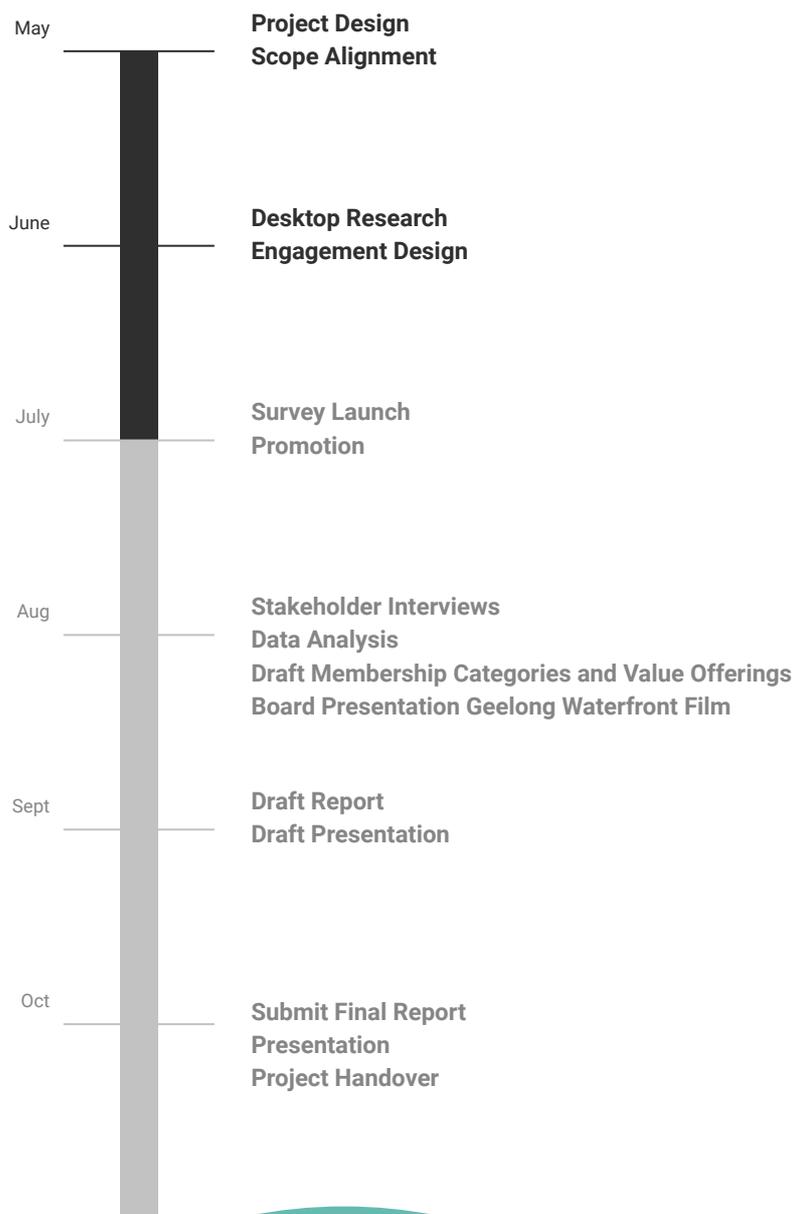
The purpose of this project is to develop and provide Geelong Waterfront Film with a membership recruitment and retention strategy, with the vision of establishing a broad network of participants and supporters within the film industry.

In addition to providing value and support to local members through content creation, grant opportunities and networking opportunities, this network of members will act as a local Geelong contact listing for both the internal and external film industry, and provide a clear and accessible path to collaboration and opportunity creation.

We aim to accomplish this by:

1. Developing an effective and sustainable membership strategy that will include recommended membership categories and offerings.
2. Identification of industry leading pathways for recruitment of new members.
3. Provide a list of prospective members who have registered their interest in becoming a Geelong Waterfront Film member (project target is for Geelong Waterfront Film to convert these leads into 50 new members).

# Project timeline





# Project approach

## Understanding the need

In order to develop a tangible and deliverable strategy, the project team conducted research on the current offerings of not only for Geelong Waterfront Film, but other membership-based organisations within the region and beyond. In addition to the discussions with Geelong Waterfront Film and the initial desktop research, engagement with key stakeholders was carried out to help understand the opportunities and challenges associated with running a membership-based organisation, establishing and running film festivals and the current view point of industry participants in the region.

In addition to reviewing key documents such as the GWF Annual Report, website and key documents, the project team met with the project sponsor as well as a number of members of the board (through various formal and informal discussions) to identify what Geelong Waterfront Film was trying to achieve over the next 2-3 years, and what steps might be required during that time in order to help achieve that goal.

## Our research

### **Research Questions**

Understanding ‘the need’ presented an opportunity to define appropriate research questions for the project. The research questions were brought about by a knowledge deficit within the project scope, they identify where the project team’s uncertainties lie. The questions have guided the design of the three phases of research: desktop research, community survey and stakeholder interviews.

1. What options exist for membership models and value offerings for organisations with membership structures?
2. What strategies could be used to attract and retain new members?
3. What strategies (other than membership models) exist for generating revenue?
4. What does the film industry mean to Geelong? What are the perceived benefits in the growth of this industry?
5. What factors should be considered in striving towards a future film festival?

### **Phase 1: Desktop Research**

A desktop review of existing membership and subscriber models was undertaken to determine the types of structures and strategies used by other membership based organisations and bodies, across film and non-film industries. Evidence of any recruitment or retention strategies were also recorded, however limited findings are available due to the internal nature of marketing strategies.

The following organisations were reviewed:

1. 13th Beach Boardriders - Chix Surf 13th
2. Australian Academy Cinema Television Arts
3. Active Geelong
4. AusFilm
5. Geelong Arts Centre - The Green Room Club Membership
6. Geelong Chamber of Commerce
7. Screen Australia
8. VicScreen
9. Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

### **Phase 2: Community Survey**

A community survey was developed to gain insights from current friends of Geelong Waterfront Film and the wider Geelong community about the film industry in Geelong, and on the benefits that Geelong Waterfront Film could offer members and partners, such as:

1. Inclusion in a comprehensive directory of film professionals and related parties.
2. Funding through Geelong Waterfront Film.
3. Promotional opportunities.
4. Access to Industry events and film screenings.
5. Invites to Film Awards and festivals.

Survey respondents were advised that their feedback will allow Geelong Waterfront Film to continue to grow and support the Film industry in our region.

The survey was in the market for three weeks, from 9 to 31 August 2022, with 136 responses received. A broad range of communications strategies were used to promote the survey to the local community, including;

- **Direct email promotion** - via GWF existing database, other key stakeholders were also emailed requesting support to share the survey with their networks either by email or social media including Geelong Arts Centre, Committee for Geelong, Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine, the City of Greater Geelong and Film Victoria.
- **Social media promotion** - GWF channels (Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram), project team member promotion on personal social media accounts. Further promotion to the following facebook groups was also included, Film in Geelong, Australian Short Film Network, Indigenous Australian Film and Television.
- **Local champion support** - Photo opportunity with the Mayor of Geelong including social media share on both the Mayor's and City of Greater Geelong's channels.
- **Promotion of the survey** - Internally with project team member organisations, Regional Development Victoria - Barwon South West, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation, Home Instead, Surf Coast Shire.
- **Encouraging participation** - Complete the survey for a chance to win 2 x Gold Class Movie tickets.



**Above:** Mayor, Peter Murrhiy meets with project team members Genevieve Hargrave and Michael Roberts, along with GWF Director Laura Bentley to promote the survey and support the project.



**Left:** Leaders for Geelong project team draws the winner of the 2 x Gold Glass tickets, at the Geelong Waterfront - September 2022.

### Phase 3: Stakeholder Interviews

Four key Geelong stakeholders were selected for an in-depth discussion on their experience leading a membership based organisation, establishing a successful film festival, and big picture thinking for Geelong's film industry including lived acting experience.

Our objectives were as follows:

- The method/s used to attract new members.
- How members are retained.
- Learn about best practices in relation to membership strategies.
- Discuss the sponsorship aspect of Geelong Waterfront Film.
- What it's like to set up a film festival in Geelong.
- How to generate revenue through sponsorship and grants.
- What it's like to be an actor in Geelong.
- Broad benefits for the region in growing the film industry in Geelong.
- Discuss better support for actors, and attracting more film makers to the region.
- Views on value add for GWF members.

Interviews were held in-person or online, with handwritten notes to record insights from the discussions.

### Analysis and interpretation

Data collected from the three phases of research was discussed in detail by the project team, including the identification of key themes and insights to be included in the membership offerings. The learnings were applied to a first version of the membership categories, as follows.

## Geelong Waterfront Film Membership Categories

DRAFT 1 for Feedback 23 August with GWF Board Members

<b>Objectives</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build an understanding of key stakeholders and create segments</li> <li>• Design value offering for each stakeholder segment</li> <li>• Provide options for Geelong Waterfront Film and the Waterfront Film foundation to further increase funding and membership.</li> </ul>			
<b>Categories</b> 	<b>Friend</b> 	<b>Member</b> 	<b>Partner</b> 	<b>Supporter</b> 
	Supporter style membership \$20 per annum	Full member style \$100 per annum	Organisations who support the film industry \$500 per annum	Donation based Any financial value, in-kind considered
<b>Benefits</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome email upon signing up</li> <li>• Newsletter subscription (frequency TBD)</li> <li>• Listing on the GWF Database (if suitable)</li> <li>• Annual automatic renewal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the benefits of 'Friends' plus</li> <li>• 2 x tickets to GWF events</li> <li>• Option to bring +1 to 1 x GWF event</li> <li>• Access to member only discounts</li> <li>• Access to the GWF member only Facebook Group</li> <li>• 1 x VIP event for young members</li> <li>• 1 x ticket to the end of year GWF function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logo displayed on GWF website</li> <li>• Events sponsorship, including branding and/or speaking opportunities to members</li> <li>• Opportunity to supply content in the GWF newsletter</li> <li>• Other promotion opportunities on the GWF podcast, website and social media channels</li> <li>• 2 x tickets to every GWF event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Geelong film industry (financial or in-kind)</li> <li>• Fund grants to local film industry members, including actors, producers and others</li> <li>• Support GWF with operations or events</li> </ul>
<b>Value offering</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to opportunities, funding approvals, industry news, etc.</li> <li>• Be easily found by filmmakers or find film locations</li> <li>• Opportunity to apply or receive funding from GWF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking with film industry professionals</li> <li>• Events may include networking, movie screening or film industry event, meet the crew style events, online panel webinars, training or masterclasses.</li> <li>• Unlock special member opportunities, discover new grants, seminars, and industry support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand visibility</li> <li>• Location visibility (building, coastal, land)</li> <li>• Expand your networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the film industry</li> <li>• Fully tax deductible donation</li> </ul>
<b>Questions for the board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should the addition to the database sit at this level or the 'Member' level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any member only discounts that could be offered?</li> <li>• Is the cost suitable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the cost suitable?</li> <li>• Is this a suitable category for adding value to GWF?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the legalities/ constitutional restrictions that we need to consider in this membership offering?</li> <li>• Can the supporter receive anything in return?</li> </ul>

### Geelong Waterfront Film Board Presentation

On 23 August 2022, the project team presented the project approach and key insights to the Geelong Waterfront Film board members at an online session.

The draft membership offerings (above) were provided as pre-reading, and the team took the opportunity to test out the initial prototype with board members.

Feedback was integrated post-session by the team following discussion, resulting in the final version of membership offerings.

## Key Insights

**Through collection and analysis of the data from the three research methods, eight key insights were identified:**

**Networking.** Feedback from the community survey indicated that improving networking opportunities would be important for building confidence, opening the door to opportunities, career support, mentoring, establishing contacts in the industry, raising profiles and building communities.

**Inclusiveness.** An outcome of the interviews with key stakeholders was a recommendation to use tiered membership structures at different price points and value offerings, to allow members to select an option based on affordability and their capacity to participate.

It was also identified that running inclusive events in-person and online may boost participation. Cultural acknowledgement is important for inclusiveness and reconciliation. Some member segments may require targeted support or activities, i.e., specific opportunities for young people or those in their early stages of their career.

**Brand.** Key stakeholders advised the importance of clarifying the vision and getting to know the members. Working with potential sponsors or donors who are strongly aligned with this vision was also highly recommended.

**Deliberate communications.** Regular and deliberate communications can strengthen the message. Ensure new members are welcomed upon sign up and know what to expect. Ensure that all members are updated. Tap into the power of social media to expand reach, and review web materials ensuring that the 'Sign Up' call to action is front and centre. Know your industry and be open and honest with the people in the same field – e.g., awareness and planning around other film events.

**Clarify value.** Be clear about what members will gain from joining, and what the growth of the industry means for Geelong. Emphasise and clarify the value that members stand to gain in joining the community.

**Appetite for membership.** Strong interest from survey respondents on becoming members of Geelong Waterfront Film, with 47% (64) providing their contact details for follow up. Tap into this interest as it is assumed to be much broader than the small survey sample.

**Revenue generation.** Auto-renewal of memberships can make things easy for both the member and organisation. Ensure the business community can participate by offering corporate membership or sponsorship options. Offer members value for money. Our big Geelong based stakeholders need the opportunity to support the industry, catalog film locations and provide funding – we need everyone on-board to pitch the big ideas.

**The region.** Showcase and grow the film industry and the Geelong region. Identify opportunities to promote the region as the number 1 film destination in Australia and create a strong connection to the Geelong Waterfront as a key element of Geelong Waterfront Film.



# Geelong Waterfront Film: Membership Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2022–25

## Strategy Overview

This three-year strategy sets the medium-term strategic goals to help Geelong Waterfront Film realise their vision of Geelong becoming a vibrant Film Hub.

Specifically, it aims to:

- Establish long-term sustainability through the recruitment and retention of members for Geelong Waterfront Film.
- Increase the profile of the Geelong region as the Greater Australian location to shoot feature films.
- Attract and connect film industry participants through membership, communications and networking opportunities.

The key goals we are committed to achieving are shown in the table below, and each goal has been assigned a series of targets we're aiming to achieve by 2025.

**Goal 1:** Become a financially sustainable membership-based organisation.

**Goal 2:** Create an industry leading value proposition for our members, partners and supporters.

**Goal 3:** Encourage the broader community to embrace Geelong as a vibrant film hub.

The above short and medium term strategic goals will allow Geelong Waterfront Film to work towards its ultimate 2025 goal of a major international Geelong Film Festival.

Geelong Waterfront Film will report on the progress of these goals and associated actions through their annual report.

Planning and reporting in this way will help them keep pace with the increased opportunities within the film industry for both members and the broader Geelong region.

“A new and vibrant industry that will bring with it so many other opportunities”

# GOAL 1: BECOME A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE MEMBERSHIP-BASED ORGANISATION

Financial sustainability will be a key element to Geelong Waterfront Film achieving its long term goals. Introducing a member-based model in lieu of the one-off payment model will ensure that there is a more recurrent and ongoing revenue source moving forward that compliments more adhoc sources of funding such as sponsorship, event and grant type income.

This will allow Geelong Waterfront Film to plan confidently into the future, and ensure that it can continue to provide membership benefits and offerings for its existing members and supporters.

As offerings continue to increase in volume and value, there becomes the opportunity to increase pricing accordingly.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DIRECTIONS FOR 2022-25

	Principles	Directions
1.1	Test Leaders for Geelong product (membership offerings) to ensure it is relevant and ready for real world implementation.	<p>Board meeting discussion and agree on any changes to membership offerings following LFG handover.</p> <p>Test with a selected group of existing GWF members “friends” to check value, and appetite for signing up to ‘member’ category. Or capture any thoughts on the sponsor category.</p> <p>Finalise membership categories.</p>
1.2	Move from primarily a donation based organisation to a member-based organisation as the key source of ongoing income.	<p>Adopt the recommended membership categories, pricing and benefits (page 28).</p> <p>Actively convert existing “friends of GWFF” to full members (where relevant) by demonstrating the value offerings available under the new membership category.</p> <p>Website update, and creation of a suite of communications assets to announce changes and advertise membership benefits. This step should include emailing the list of survey respondents who expressed interest in becoming a GWF member.</p> <p>Host an end of 2022 function to launch the new membership categories, celebrate the success of Geelong Waterfront Film in 2022 and set their future direction.</p>



	Principles	Directions
		<p>Actively promote the proposed ongoing membership categories as the preferred source of support (suggest development of an annual marketing and comms plan for GWF).</p> <p>Establish an automatic renewal system to ensure that the retention of membership is made as easy as possible for both the member and Geelong Waterfront Film.</p>
1.3	Actively source incoming support funding.	<p>Source incoming state and federal grant opportunities.</p> <p>Engage with key departments such as City of Greater Geelong Arts &amp; Culture Department, Community Grants, etc. to explore potential grant and partnership opportunities with the City.</p> <p>Explore local community group funding opportunities.</p> <p>Identify organisations with alignment to the industry to consider an annual sponsorship agreement.</p>
1.4	Increase resourcing and skill sets to focus on specific areas.	<p>Establish a membership sub-committee to ensure that there is a specific focus and skill set aligned to the recruitment and retention of new and existing members (e.g relationship management, industry networks, etc.).</p>

## Targets

1. **Membership Target** - Increase memberships annually over the next three years.
2. **Sponsorship Target** - Sign a minimum of one sponsor each year over the next three years.
3. **Grant Target** - Source one grant opportunity each year over the next three years.



# GOAL 2: BECOME A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE MEMBERSHIP-BASED ORGANISATION

Our research findings indicated that the most valuable offerings were related to ‘connection’ and ‘opportunity’. Where could industry participants come together to meet, collaborate and learn from each other, and where could they find the latest information on future film opportunities, as well as internal and external grant funding opportunities to further their local projects.

It also became clear that there is a significant opportunity to connect film participants both within Geelong and outside of the region with the local supply chain. Whether that be actors and producers or more logistical opportunities such as technical suppliers, venues and accommodation.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DIRECTIONS FOR 2022–25

	Principles	Directions
2.1	Provide industry participants a platform to engage with networks and opportunities.	<p>Hold networking events aimed at bringing members together to meet and collaborate.</p> <p>Establish a newsletter that provides information around available training, grant opportunities, film screenings and job opportunities. GWF to determine frequency of send based on capacity.</p> <p>Continue to promote the social media channels and encourage high volume following. Even if not converted to members, followers act as a valuable selling point for members in regards to advertising and brand promotion.</p>
2.2	Provide opportunities for members who form part of the supply chain (accommodation, venues, etc.) to promote their services to the broader networks.	<p>Ensure newsletter has a section dedicated to supply chain providers.</p> <p>Allow promotion of supply chain members during networking events in the forms of expo tables (at a cost) or one-off event promotion.</p> <p>Consider a ‘supplier of the week/month’ on social media that allows a member to send in a 30 second video promoting their business to the audience.</p>



	Principles	Directions
2.3	Provide value for major sponsors as part of everyday activities.	<p>Hold one exclusive sponsor only event.</p> <p>Recognise key sponsors at networking events, website and social media through brand promotion.</p> <p>Provide sponsors free or discount ticketing to major Geelong Waterfront Film events.</p>

### Targets

1. **Networking events** - Hold 6 networking events per year.
2. **Communication** - Distribution of a quarterly newsletter.
3. **Grants** - Provide 2 grants per year supporting the local industry.



## GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE THE BROADER COMMUNITY TO EMBRACE GEELONG AS A VIBRANT FILM HUB

A major international Film Festival in Geelong will have significant economic impact on the region for many years to come. It is important that this long-term goal remain Geelong Waterfront Film's north star over the next 2-3 years as it seeks to increase its ability to deliver on this outcome.

This will require a long-term plan that considers a range of variables over the coming years, whether that be the region's continued recovery from COVID or the opportunities that will be afforded to the region through the commonwealth games, but also a clear vision as to the goals and outcomes being sort from an event like this.

Greater Geelong is a busy place with many voices, and priorities will continue to develop and shift over the next few years. It is important GWF puts a long term plan in place to garner widespread community support to ensure that a major international Film Festival in Geelong stays as a relevant feature on that list.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DIRECTIONS FOR 2022–25

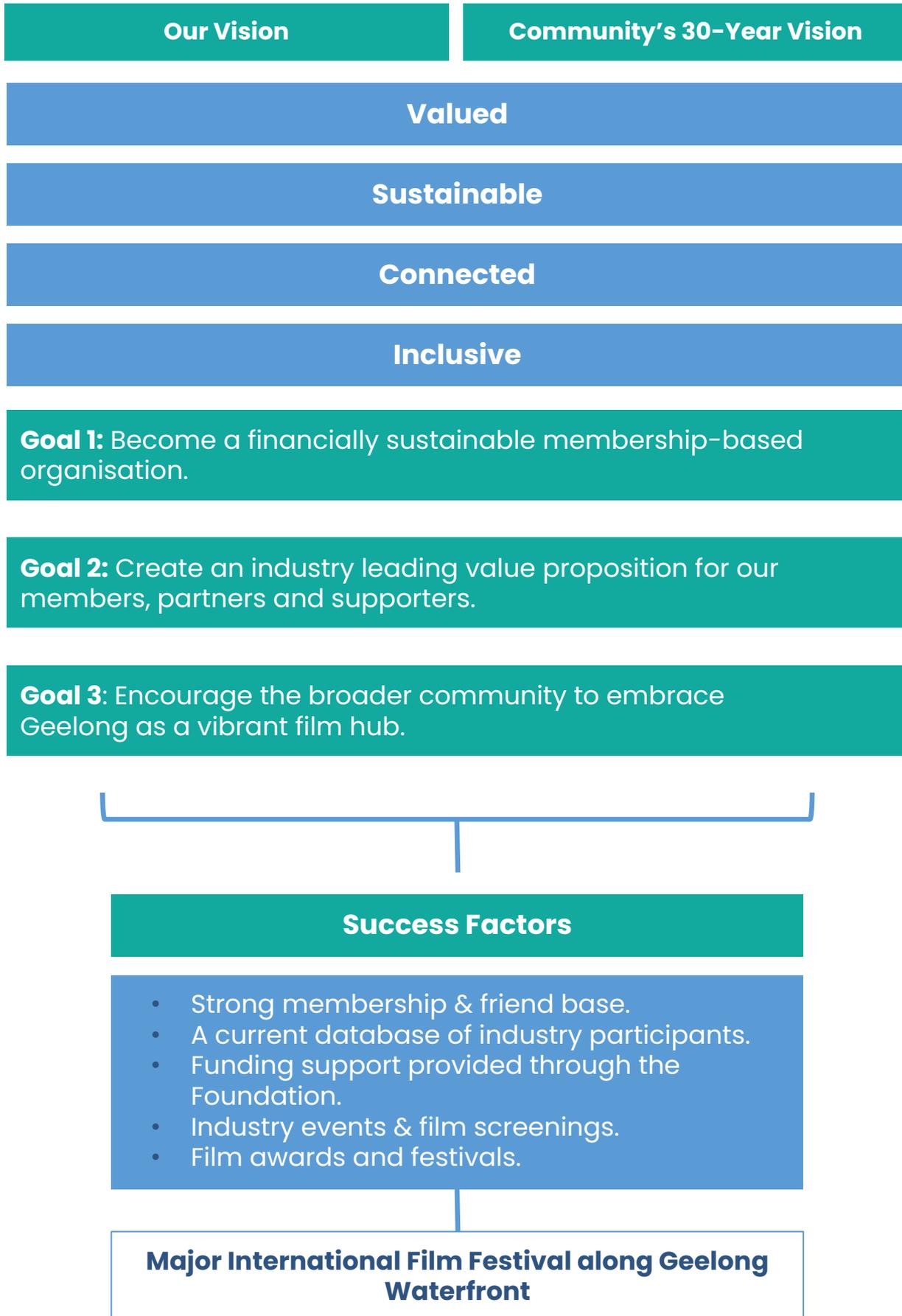
	Principles	Directions
3.1	Foster opportunities to connect community with film.	Promote and celebrate the emergence of film in Geelong outside of the region to encourage more activity within it.  Collaborate with 'like-minded' and industry aligned organisations.
3.2	Promote the regional benefits of a strong film industry in Geelong.	Use engagement platforms (socials, newsletters, etc.) to celebrate the success of both members (priority) and non members throughout the region.  Engage with the City of Greater Geelong to measure/identify and promote the economic impact that increased film activity is having in the region.
3.3	Continue to plan and advocate for a major Film Festival in Geelong by 2025.	Develop a long-term plan around holding a major Film Festival in Geelong which includes a clear vision, aims and audience.  Consider timing around the development of venues and accommodation in line with the 2026 Commonwealth Games. As well as considering the timing of small events to ensure no overlap.

### Targets

1. **Promotion** – Annual increase of followers on social media.
2. **Event** – Hold a major international Film Festival on the Geelong Waterfront in 2025.



# Geelong Waterfront Film: Membership Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2022-25



# Recommended Membership Structure

## Geelong Waterfront Film Membership Categories

FINAL

<b>Objectives</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build an understanding of key stakeholders and create segments</li> <li>Design value offering for each stakeholder segment</li> <li>Provide options for Geelong Waterfront Film and the Waterfront Film foundation to further increase funding and membership.</li> </ul>			
<b>Categories</b> 	<b>Friend</b>  Supporter style membership \$20 per annum	<b>Member</b>  Full member style \$150 per annum	<b>Partner</b>  Organisations who support the film industry \$1,000 per annum min (Consider tiered Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum), in-kind considered	<b>Supporter</b>  Donation based Any financial value, in-kind considered
<b>Benefits</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome email upon signing up</li> <li>Newsletter subscription (frequency TBD)</li> <li>Early access to purchase tickets to GWF events, or discount</li> <li>Annual automatic renewal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the benefits of 'Friends' plus</li> <li>Listing on the GWF Database (if suitable)</li> <li>2 x tickets to GWF events</li> <li>Option to bring +1 to 1 x GWF event</li> <li>Access to member only discounts</li> <li>Access to the GWF member only Facebook Group</li> <li>1 x VIP event for young members</li> <li>1 x ticket to the end of year GWF function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logo displayed on GWF website</li> <li>Listing on the GWF Database (if suitable)</li> <li>Events sponsorship, including branding and/or speaking opportunities to members</li> <li>Opportunity to supply content in the GWF newsletter</li> <li>Other promotion opportunities on the GWF podcast, website and social media channels</li> <li>2 x tickets to every GWF event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the Geelong film industry (financial or in-kind)</li> <li>Fund grants to local film industry members, including actors, producers and others</li> <li>Support GWF with operations or events</li> </ul>
<b>Value offering</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to opportunities, funding approvals, industry news, etc.</li> <li>Opportunity to apply or receive funding from GWF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking with film industry professionals</li> <li>Events may include networking, movie screening or film industry event, meet the crew style events, online panel webinars, training or masterclasses.</li> <li>Unlock special member opportunities, discover new grants, seminars, and industry support.</li> <li>Be easily found by filmmakers or find film locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand visibility</li> <li>Location visibility (building, coastal, land)</li> <li>Expand your networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the film industry</li> <li>Fully tax deductible donation</li> </ul>





**“We need something where filmmakers can come together to mingle, relax, and talk shop - a central hub that promotes local production”**

# Opportunities

The development of a membership recruitment and retention strategy provides a number of opportunities for both Geelong Waterfront Film and the greater Geelong Region.

<p><b>Growth of GWF Membership Base</b></p>	<p>The membership retention and recruitment strategy provides Geelong Waterfront Film with a framework to further develop and increase their membership base.</p> <p>This opportunity will providing greater access for member to networks, film industry professionals and employment opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Regional Prosperity</b></p>	<p>The growth of Geelong Waterfront Film will provide a great opportunity for the promotion of Geelong and the wider region.</p> <p>By attracting film makers to the Geelong region, the local area will be showcased and promoted through film and media content. This could have a direct positive impact on tourism, employment and the economy of our city.</p>
<p><b>Funding Opportunities</b></p>	<p>There is an opportunity for Geelong Waterfront Film to build strong sponsorship relationships with business and organisations around Geelong to increase the amount of funding available to film industry participants and members.</p> <p>The expected increase in film screenings and fundraising events also present an opportunity for Geelong Waterfront Film to increase charitable donations.</p>

# Challenges

Throughout the project, the team were faced with several challenges, the key challenges are outlined below. These challenges presented opportunities, and whether it be stronger engagement with Geelong Waterfront Film, the community or each other, the team overcame these challenges, often resulting in a greater outcome for the project .

<p><b>Limited lived experience and networks in the film industry among project team</b></p>	<p>Overall the project team had little experience in the film industry.</p> <p>This resulted in the data being collected and engagement efforts being undertaken with the region more broadly, rather than targeted at film industry participants.</p> <p>The group mitigated this challenge through consulting with the project sponsor before undertaking the various engagement activities to ensure we were capturing the right audience.</p> <p>The group also leaned heavily on participating organisations to help promote the survey and ensure it had significant exposure. This resulted in nearly 140 survey responses which was considered a strong data sample.</p>
<p><b>Data interpretation and analysis</b></p>	<p>The project team had little experience in data interpretation and analysis. This was identified by the team and mitigated through applying a thematic analysis approach, team discussion and agreement on key themes.</p> <p>The team built in an additional step of testing the proposed membership categories with the GWF board at the 23 August 2022 meeting. This enabled the results to be tested with the leadership group and ensure the application of data was relevant to a real world scenario.</p>
<p><b>Existing 'Friend' model</b></p>	<p>While it has been important for the project team to undertake a robust process to determine the right strategy for Geelong Waterfront Film moving forward. It has been equally important for Geelong Waterfront Film to continue to build momentum following their launch, and sign up as many 'friends' and supporters as they can during this time.</p> <p>Although this increases the database and followers of Geelong Waterfront Film, it may result in missed opportunities for potential members or sponsors who may have signed up under the new membership categories.</p>

# Limitations

The deliverables outlined in the strategy have been reached after taking a ‘best practice’ approach to the project. The project team understood that every organisation is different when it comes to access to support and resources. Below are the three current main limitations to the success of this project.

<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p>The strategy developed, and the research undertaken has been based on both ‘what the community want’ and ‘what is best practice within other membership-based organisations’.</p> <p>A number of these organisations are operating with existing memberships, strategic partnerships and both financial and staff resources.</p> <p>Geelong Waterfront Film is currently in its infancy in regards to its membership base, and does not have staff to undertake key roles and tasks associated with running a successful membership-based organisation.</p>
<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p>Due to the short term nature of our project, it is difficult to deliver something tangible to Geelong Waterfront Film (i.e a commitment to deliver extra members).</p> <p>The project team committed to delivering a membership and recruitment strategy that will guide Geelong Waterfront Film through a process to recruit new members, increase sponsorship and hopefully result in achievements of the long term goal of hosting a major international film festival in Geelong.</p>
<p><b>Constitution</b></p>	<p>In May 2020, Geelong Waterfront Film was added by the Minister for Arts to the Register of Cultural Organisations allowing receipt of tax-deductible gifts into the foundation.</p> <p>When we were developing the membership categories and value offerings, we needed to ensure we were following the requirements of Geelong Waterfront Film constitution, specifically relating to tax deductible donations and benefits for those providing sponsorship or charitable donations.</p>



# Recommendation

The recommendation of the project team is that Geelong Waterfront Film adopt the three goals outlined in the Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2022–25, which include:

**Goal One:** Become a financially sustainable membership-based organisation.

**Goal Two:** Create an industry leading value proposition for our members, partners and supporters.

**Goal Three:** Encourage the broader community to embrace Geelong as a vibrant film hub.

It is understood by the project team that the resourcing and capacity of Geelong Waterfront Film may not allow all guiding principles and directions associated with these goals to be implemented straight away. However, we hope that the research data, strategy and recommended membership categories provided can act as a blueprint for future activities.

The project team recommends that the final proposed membership categories be tested further with the board of Geelong Waterfront Film as a next step in this process, and that once finalised, a targeted campaign is designed and delivered to attract new members and convert existing friends under the new membership structure.

It is recommended that resource capacity is expanded through the inclusion of sub-committees that have specialised skills, expertise and contacts in their particular area of focus, whether that be grant writing, strategic and community partnerships, event management or membership recruitment.

Finally, we recommend that the proposed targets (or a variation of) be adopted to ensure that the goals that are set by Geelong Waterfront Film, and the activities undertaken to achieve them are both achievable and measurable.

# Conclusion

## **Group Reflection**

Overall, the group has been humbled and extremely grateful with the level of support we have received throughout this project in the form of:

- Strong support and an open-minded approach from Geelong Waterfront Film Board - including a very insightful and enthusiastic project sponsor.
- Support from key stakeholders within the region who showed a strong interest in not only this community project, but the leadership journey of the project team.
- Excellent response to the community survey from a wide range of respondents.

One of the most pleasing aspects of this project has not only been the contribution that we have hopefully been able to make to an organisation and industry that we may not have otherwise had the opportunity to impact, but the growth that we have noticed in each other as the project has progressed.

Over the past 5 months as a collective the team has laughed, eaten, learnt, panicked and succeeded - we have formed trusted relationships with each other that will last and provide value beyond the completion of this project.

We want to thank the Committee for Geelong and Geelong Waterfront Film for the opportunity to undertake this very rewarding project.

## **Project Conclusion**

In summary, based on the research data and discussions with key stakeholders, the team believes there is significant regional wide support for an organisation such as Geelong Waterfront Film to start connecting industry and non-industry participants with each other, and with opportunities both locally, and external to the region.

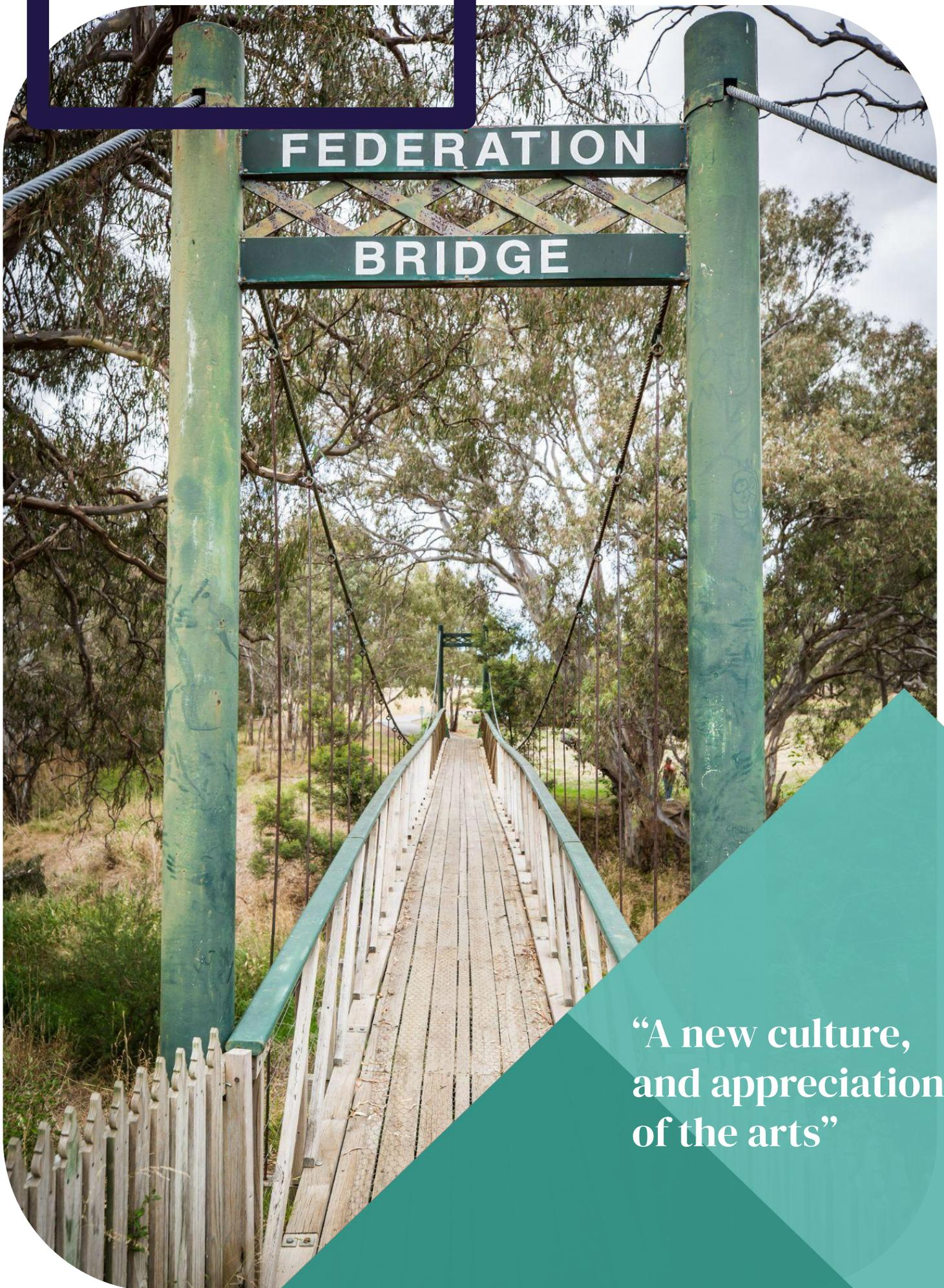
The work of Geelong Waterfront Film aligns strongly with the long-term vision of this region, a vision that was developed by over 16,000 community members.

In a region that has not long been designated a UNESCO City of Design, the creative industry is being recognised more and more as a key driver of both our economic and cultural future.

Geelong Waterfront Film's long-term goal of holding a major Film Festival on the Geelong waterfront by 2025 is a very real and exciting possibility. What we have learned through this project work is that to achieve an outcome such as this, we need to start to bring like-minded people together and start connecting them with opportunity.

Geelong Waterfront Film has already taken the first steps on this journey through the set-up of not only its Board, but the digital channels (website, social media, et,) to start to share their vision with the community.

The Membership Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2022-25 is the first step towards establishing a strong base of support and resource, structured in a way that will allow Geelong Waterfront Film to sustainably provide value and support to its individual members, whilst also allowing it to harness the power of a collective to advocate for major outcomes for the film industry in this region.

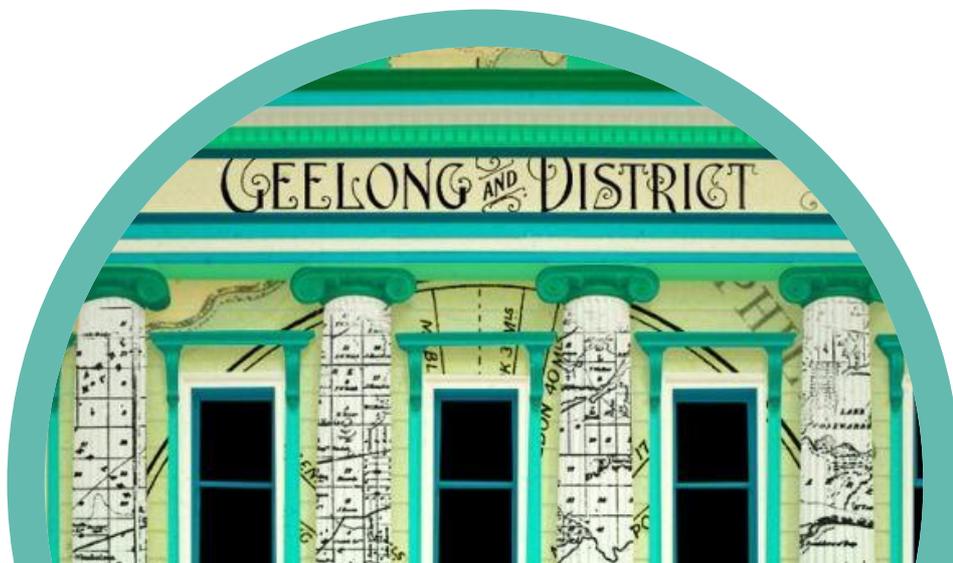


“A new culture,  
and appreciation  
of the arts”

# Data Collection

## Appendix 1: Desktop Research Results

9 Organisations Reviewed	Summary of Findings
<b>13th Beach Boardriders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memberships range from \$10 (social) to \$200 (family)</li> <li>Competition and non-competition memberships</li> </ul>
<b>AACTA (Australian Academy Cinema Television Arts)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memberships from \$25 (youth) to \$140 (Professional)</li> <li>Access to Awards, networking events and development opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Active Geelong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member categories for 'Makers', 'Partners', 'Supporters' &amp; 'Endorsers'</li> </ul>
<b>AusFilm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate and Platinum memberships</li> <li>Access to exclusive networking and promotional events</li> </ul>
<b>Geelong Arts Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor and Major memberships available</li> <li>\$4,500 - 4 tickets per event and access to networking events</li> <li>\$2,500 - 2 tickets per event plus networking</li> </ul>
<b>Geelong Chamber of Commerce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Membership categories based on no. of employees</li> <li>Ranging from Cat 1 (\$250) to Executive (\$3,880)</li> <li>Listing on Member Directory, access to events, education</li> </ul>
<b>Screen Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No membership categories identified</li> <li>Newsletter subscription for access to industry news, funding opportunities etc</li> </ul>
<b>Vic Screen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No membership categories identified</li> <li>Access to Industry directory provides access to film makers and locations</li> </ul>
<b>Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Membership categories based on business type</li> <li>Ranging from Individual (\$96) to employer (\$1,188)</li> <li>Listing on Member Directory, access to events, education</li> </ul>



# Data Collection

## Appendix 2 - Key Stakeholder Interview Summary

### **Membership Strategy**

- Use auto-renewals for memberships
- Emphasis on what value members will gain – Strong value offering
- Simple model that clearly defines the offerings. Sell the value to the region.
- Online events well received, in the current climate, offers easy access
- Mix of traditional and online channels to recruit new members
- Consider the timing of events – maximise visibility and attendance
- Consider the establishment of membership sub-committee (industry participants).
- Initial focus/offerings for members should be around connection and networking
- If a business was to sponsor GWF: offerings could include:
  - attendance at functions and events,
  - opportunity to reach members,
  - branding at events/film festival (if relevant) and
  - tickets to networking events.

### **Film Festival Perspective**

- Vision must be clear, what are the aims, know your audience, what is the goal?
- Key challenge is establishing contacts in the industry – for screening films.
- Work with sponsors who are aligned specifically to your aims and audience market.
- Communication is key – open and honest with the people in the same field as you (i.e. film events and anything specific to your audience). Don't schedule over the top of another related event.
- Consider quality of films – Australian films can be low quality, unfortunately the overall experience for the audience might not be great.
- For a film festival event, start small. Ensure you have the right technical people on hand to ensure films screen as intended.
- Key challenge is getting content and exclusivity in the market.

### **Actor & Supporter**

#### **Actor thoughts**

- Getting into acting classes is difficult. It can be really hard to take that first step and walk through the door.
- Networking is key to building confidence and opening up opportunities.
- GWF could become a base, a place for connections, referrals and picking up work.
- The \$20 joining fee could be much more – if there was an elevated membership level it could include more networking, acting upskilling, a focus on a stronger connection to the waterfront element of the organisation, and even a future film festival.

#### **Big picture thoughts**

- Our big Geelong based stakeholders need to support the industry, catalogue film locations, provide funds, we need everyone on-board to pitch the big ideas.
- Accommodation in Geelong not ready for big film crews, it'll be there in 2-3 years time.
- Wild idea – can we get a screen on the waterfront for films and sporting events?

# Data Collection

## Appendix 3 - Community Survey Results

### Reach and Demographics

- 136 Responses
- 87% non-members
  - 54 people want more info on GWF membership options
- Majority aged 40-60 years (52.6%)
- Majority reached via social media (70%)
- 96% would recommend Geelong Waterfront Film

### Interests

#### **Why are you interested in GWF?**

1. I am a Local resident (74.3%)
2. Interested in attending a future event (42.6%)
3. Film buff (41.2%)
4. Industry professional (31.6%)
5. Local business owner (14%)

#### **What are you interested in?**

- movie screening or film industry event (87%)
- networking events (50%)
- receiving information via a newsletter (46%)
- Talent Pool\Production Hire (35%)
- Funding or grant opportunities (33%)
- Education\Training workshops (44%)

### Future Membership Offerings

(Feedback on importance - highest ranked)

- Access to industry events and film screenings (105)
- Promotional opportunities including website, blog and social media (87)
- Funding through the GWF (85)
- Inclusion in a directory of film professionals or business supporting the industry (81)

#### *Other Ideas*

- Target young people, offer something specific
- Must be cost effective
- Profile building and advocacy
- Mentoring
- Inclusion
- Marketing of self or business
- More communication
- VIP events that only cater for specific members

