



Creative Industries

A guide to creative industries
in rural and regional Victoria

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About this toolkit

The publication of this toolkit is an initiative of Rural Councils Victoria, an organisation representing and working alongside Victoria's rural councils to support and promote sustainable, liveable and prosperous rural communities.

Rural councils continue to face tough challenges, including drought, floods, fires, a limited or dwindling rate base, an increased demand on services and ageing infrastructure and a limited ability to provide new amenities to attract and retain people in communities.

Local councils are often the first point of contact for community-members who are seeking more information on relocating to a rural area, establishing or growing a business and retaining and attracting quality staff.

They are also a vital cog for community groups and organisations wishing to seek government funding through grants. The toolkits feature case studies to inspire others and to show real-life examples of the ways in which rural councils and communities can apply innovation to what they do.

Rural Councils Victoria works closely with member councils to support economic development and increase the sustainability of rural communities, develop strategies and initiatives to improve the attraction and retention of residents and businesses to rural areas.

We thank all those who helped in developing the content, particularly the councils and organisations who were so willing to share their experiences and stories to assist others.

- *Rural Councils Victoria*

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Acknowledgements:

Information for this document was sourced from a number of organisations, which have a host of helpful information.

- **Creative Victoria:** This is a State Government body dedicated to championing, growing and supporting Victoria's creative industries, including arts, culture, screen and design.
- **Queensland University of Technology Creative Industries:** The Creative Industries Faculty generates ideas and talent for the creative arts, entertainment, media and design. It has completed several studies on the benefits of creative industries.

Thanks to those councils and organisations who provided information or these documents – your advice and knowledge will be extremely beneficial to others.

What are the creative industries?

Put simply, people who work in creative industries work in the fields of music and the performing arts, film, television and radio, advertising and marketing, software development and interactive content, writing, publishing and print media and architecture, design and visual arts. The creative industries include activities that are commercially driven, and community-based, experimental and export ready.

Spanning a range of sectors and growing at 4 per cent per year – twice the rate of other major sectors in Victoria – the creative industries is a powerhouse of

small organisations, micro businesses and sole practitioners. In Australia, the Queensland University of Technology has created the world's first creative industries faculty in response to Federal Government recognition that creative industries may be future employers and provide more pathway alternatives for young people. The university's research has shown the creative industries made a larger contribution to the Gross Domestic Product than traditional industries within Australia. Creative industries are innovation-led, knowledge-intensive and highly exportable, according to a report published by the University.

Quick facts

-  • Creative workers are highly valued, with higher than average incomes
-  • The creative industries represent 6.2 per cent of total Australian employment
-  • Collectively, Victoria's creative industries generate \$1.4 billion annually in exports for the state, contribute almost \$27 billion in annual gross value to the Victorian economy and represent 8 per cent of the total Victorian economy.
-  • The creative industries employ around 220,000 people in Victoria – accounting for almost one-third of employees in the sector in Australia.
-  • 55% of Victorians attend a live performance at least once a year
-  • 28% of Victorians attend an art gallery at least once a year
-  • There are 30 million library visits across Victoria annually
-  • 236,000 Victorians are employed in cultural activities as their main job
-  • 11,935 volunteers work in 133 organisations funded by Creative Victoria
-  • There are 122,564 registered creative businesses in Australia
-  • The creative economy contributes to cultural diversity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and technological advancement.

Source:
<https://www.qut.edu.au/creative-industries/research>
<https://creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state>

Case study

Go Goldfields-Short Flix Festival

What is the project?

The Short Flix festival was an intensive four-month creative film-making experience undertaken by 10 local people in the Central Goldfields Shire. The team worked under the expert guidance and mentorship of professional filmmakers to create their own short film. Nine of these films were presented at a gala red-carpet event showcased in the Shire. The films relied on the ability of young people to realise a vision and get local businesses, family and friends on board with the project. The supported cast supplied materials and costumes, transport, storage and all the behind the scenes support that was needed to create the film. The Short Flix festival was made possible by a government grant of \$70,000 from the Building Better Regions Fund and matched by equal shire funding.

Why is the project important to the community?

"The Short Flix festival benefits not only the creative community but the community as a whole. It provides creative

industry pathways, skills development, intergenerational connections, aspirational development, pride in creative outcomes and the development of emerging leaders within the community."

"The Short Flix grant application demonstrated a strong community investment activity that created jobs and was a driver for economic growth in the shire. It highlighted the strong partnerships with local businesses and the Go Goldfields collaboration."

What advice do you have for other councils?

"Be ambitious and involve partners within the vision – it is important to develop a strong business case for the proposal. Do your homework on the criteria for the application. Have a clear project plan with clear deliverables and measures and be realistic."



Case study

Sun Country Food and Wine Festival

What is the project?

The Sun Country Food and Wine Festival 2018 showcased local produce to visitors and locals alike over a ten-day period aligning with the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. Working with local businesses Moira Shire council promoted a collection of food and wine events across the 'Sun Country' in the Murray region and developed packages for consumers to enjoy the best of the region. From farm gate visits to tastings at boutique wineries, the best of the Northern Victorian food bowl was on show. A funding grant of \$10,000 under the Governments Building Better Regions Funding helped council with the development and sales of an operator prospectus, and print, digital and social media marketing for the event.

Why is the project important to the community?

"The creation of the festival as an event for locals and visitors highlighted the amazing produce from within the iconic food bowl. The economic impact of the event provided a financial boost for primary producers, restaurants and accommodation facilities within the shire. Moira Shire Council additionally used the opportunity as a way of marketing the region and destination with a high saturation of exposure."

Any advice to others?

"Initially try and start small when applying for grant funding and then build on the event year by year following on from the success of previous years. Moira Shire Council ran the event alongside the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival which helped to build confidence within the planning model. Council had two smaller events included in the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival and then in its third year ran the entire festival as an event."





Why the emphasis on creative industries?

Employment in the creative industries is growing 40 per cent faster than the Australian economy as a whole. Likewise, the Victorian Government recognises a creative economy contributes to cultural diversity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and technological advancement.

The creative industries are significant to Victoria's culture, economy and society and central to its future. Creative sectors and occupations account for \$23 billion in gross value added and make up about 8 per cent of the Victorian economy. They have wide-ranging impacts that resonate across our culture, society and economy.

Creative industries are an evolving mix of sectors spanning arts, culture, screen, design, publishing and advertising. They cover disciplines as diverse as game development and graphic design, fashion and filmmaking, performing arts and publishing, architecture and advertising, media and music, comedy and craft. They

include activities that are commercially-driven and community-based, experimental and export-intense.

Across all disciplines, Victoria's creative industries are driven by a powerhouse of small organisations, micro businesses and sole practitioners, comprising the majority of the sector. They operate within a creative ecosystem that extends from iconic cultural organisations and global businesses to educational institutions, government bodies and community groups.

The creative industries have a ripple effect on society – stimulating creativity in individuals, communities and the state. They have a positive impact on health care, education, social inclusion and beyond. For example, there is strong evidence in corrections that arts and creativity can be used to improve social outcomes for offenders – reducing crime rates and recidivism and improving rehabilitation outcomes.

Case study

Heartfelt, West Wimmera Shire

IMAGINE going for lunch and coming home with the gorgeous chair you sat on as an after-lunch purchase.

That is exactly what you can do at Heartfelt, a gorgeous café and vintage store where you can literally buy anything in the store after enjoying your latte.

Located in the quaint town of Kaniva in the West Wimmera Shire, Heartfelt has become a household name not only locally but with regular visitors who travel to the small town of 803 residents.

It was started by three local women, who initially wanted to find a creative space to engage in felting and workshops in the town.

"We wanted a workspace where we could recycle wool for projects and undertake felting," said Sharon Merrett.

"We couldn't find a building small enough so we tried to brainstorm about what we would do with larger premises."

Mrs Merrett and business partner Kay Bothe immediately thought of their friend Mandy Faulting who was volunteering in Africa, and two became three.

"Mandy had experience in hospitality and was interested in our model which then became a café and store," she said.

That was 2013, and the café and store is now the talking and meeting point of Kaniva.

"We asked people if they wanted to rent a space and sell their wares which they did, we had a florist who would sell flowers, artists who make things they sell, all handmade and ethically sourced," she said.

The café has a strong focus on healthy, whole foods with all food is prepared each day from fresh and local ingredients.

Daily options include vegetarian, gluten free and dairy free choices and free trade tea and coffee.

"We recycle everything, so all our furniture has been sourced from clearing sales," she said.

It is like a revolving door because people can actually buy the furniture in the store."

Mrs Merrett said Heartfelt had been extremely well supported by the local community.

"When we first started out it was mainly locals who would come, but now it is 50/50 locals and 50/50 tourists."

She said Heartfelt had a strong ethics base with an emphasis on Australian wool in particular.

"We have stumbled across a really useful business model for small towns and it is really working, we are very happy to chat to anyone about it."



Case study

Foundry, Bairnsdale

THERE are not many stores that can vouch that all their wares are homemade and sourced from within a stone's throw of their place of sale.

But the team from Foundry in Bairnsdale can rightfully attest to both those titles. This amazing artist collective in East Gippsland is one of the best examples of social enterprise done right within regional Victoria.

Headed up by three entrepreneurs - Clare River, Jes John and Jill Hermans - the quaint store just off the main street in Bairnsdale boasts an amazing range of art and craft filling every nook and cranny.

"We only stock wares that are made by people living in East Gippsland, everything has to be handmade, everything needs to be sustainable," said Jes, whose own handicrafts feature predominantly in store. *"Everything we sell has to have an environmental model that kind of benefits our ethos."*

The beautiful and one-of-a-kind wares include hand-formed sterling silver jewellery, paintings, prints and cards, vintage clothing that has been sourced from the local area and bespoke homewares.

There are also sustainable goods, beeswax wraps, bamboo crocheted washers and handmade children's toys.

Foundry is fast gaining the reputation as the go to store by both locals and visitors and has featured in The Age newspaper.

Jes recently attended one of The Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship ACRE and Rural Council of Victoria's two-day social enterprise workshops which gave her further insight into running Foundry and its future.

"It really made me think about what the goals are for the future and where I want to be placing my energies," she said.

"So, is it in scaling up? Do we want to grow? Do we want to keep that same model but just kind of push ourselves out there in the community a bit more, so they know what we are doing?"

She highly recommended the two-day course to other entrepreneurs within regional and rural Victoria.





What research shows us

Victoria's Creative State Strategy 2016-2020 undertook extensive research on why Victorian rural areas can benefit from creative industries.

This research showed that people working in the creative industries are more likely to migrate out of metropolitan areas and work in regional areas due to greater quality of life, financial freedom and work freedom.

It also showed:

- Creative industry workers are more likely to work beyond retirement age due to the nature of their work.
- In addition, the creative industries are attracting more people to change career path in their older years.
- In many of Victoria's heritage towns, creative industries assist by complementing tourism assets.
- The research also showed that people in the creative industries like to work together, which has seen creative hubs spring up around regional Victoria. These creative hubs provide an opportunity for likeminded people to get together and brainstorm, swap ideas and contacts.
- Digital link-ups enable people in regional areas to also engage with their metropolitan counterparts in information swapping. These hubs offer flexible working options, market connectivity, the expanding of microbusinesses and provide more flexible working options while still maintaining individuality.

Case study

Dimboola Human Powered Vehicle Event

What is the project?

The Dimboola Human Powered Vehicle (HPV) event was first held in 2017 as an exhibition event at the Dimboola Recreation Reserve. The exhibition attracted eight teams from Victoria and South Australia that included 17 vehicles and approximately 150 participants, riders and support crew. Hindmarsh Shire Council and Holy Trinity Lutheran School in Horsham joined forces to organise the 2017 event. The success of the 2017 event, encouraged council to again run the exhibition event in 2018 with the aim of increasing the numbers of teams as the long-term intention is for the event to become an annual HPV race rather than an exhibition. Council received a grant of \$10,000 through the Building Better Regions Fund to support the event.

Why is the project important to the community?

"The 2018 exhibition event attracted teams from Ballarat, St Arnaud, Hamilton, Horsham, Warracknabeal and South Australia. This is the only event of its type in the west of Victoria and attracted around 200 people consisting of participants, riders and support crew. The influx of spectators provided a huge economic boost for the town with many participants utilising accommodation facilities in the town. The Dimboola Town Committee ran a barbecue breakfast and lunch and reported it was the biggest event they had catered for in 10 years."

Any advice to others?

"Obtain the support and assistance of organising bodies in planning and running of events."



Case study

Camperdown Theatre Redevelopment

About the project:

The Camperdown Theatre Redevelopment project will redevelop and upgrade the existing theatre. State-of-the-art sound and lighting will allow the Theatre Royal to present higher quality events and attract more professional productions to Corangamite Shire. Government funding of \$108,000 as part of the Building Better Regions Fund will help bring the historical theatre into the 21st century. The funding will go towards a new PA system, sound desk, and sound absorption treatments for better acoustics. Other improvements included in the project are a new digital projection system, 40 new tables and 250 to 300 comfortable new seats. The updated theatre will be an ideal venue for comedy, opera, theatre, circus and film festivals. The project is being completed in a partnership approach between council, the Camperdown Community Planning Program, the Camperdown Theatre

Company, Mercy Regional College, St Patrick's Primary School and the State Government.

Why is the project important to the community?

"The upgraded theatre will prove an asset for population attraction and economic growth – a better class of theatre will make Camperdown more attractive to touring shows. The flow on effect will help inspire creativity at a local level exposing young people to the possibilities of working onstage or behind the scenes which will open up career opportunities."

"A local community music group is keen to return to the theatre after relocating their weekly practice some years ago due to the poor infrastructure available. Other groups may also consider relocating to the venue once the upgrade is complete including dance groups and the Camperdown Film Society. The upgrade will also offer better facilities to allow council to increase low-cost film screenings in the shire."





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