

Creative State 2025

PLACING CREATIVITY AT THE HEART OF VICTORIA'S RECOVERY AND PROSPERITY



William Elm at *Blak Sounds* 2019,
VMDO First Peoples. Image: Jacinta Keefe



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Victoria and their ongoing connection to this land and water. We pay our respects to their culture and their Elders – past, present and future.

We acknowledge that First Peoples self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Building on this, and guided by the 11 principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination, we will develop strong and enduring partnerships with First Peoples and we will work together to achieve economic, social and cultural equity and prosperity in the creative industries for communities across Victoria.

Throughout this document the term Victorian First Peoples is used to refer to Traditional Owners of Victoria and all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who reside in this state.

Katherine Niddrie in *WOWalk*:
a fashion show to save the
world at Way Out West, 2019.
Image: Raphael Recht,
courtesy of Arts Access Victoria



Contents

Minister's Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Vision	6
Objectives and actions	6
Background	8
Victoria's creative industries	8
COVID-19 impact	8
Our call to action	11
Actions	
A. More and better job opportunities and pathways	12
B. Innovative creative products and experiences	14
C. Industry stability and growth	16
D. Equitable access to the creative industries	18
E. New audiences and markets	20
Delivering on the Vision, 2021–2025	22
<i>Creative State 2025</i> implementation principles	22
1. First Peoples first	22
The 11 Guiding Principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination	23
2. For every Victorian	24
3. Whole of state	24
4. Health and wellbeing	25
5. Environmental impact	25
<i>Creative State 2025</i> enablers	26
Partnerships	26
Agency collaboration and expertise	26
Infrastructure pipeline	26
Leadership and advocacy	26
Acknowledgments	29

Minister's Foreword



Creative State 2025 places creativity at the heart of Victoria's recovery and prosperity.

At a time when the global creative community continues to face uncertainty and challenge, this strategy aims to engender stability, create opportunity and stimulate growth for Victoria's creative workers, businesses and industries.

It focuses on growing jobs and skills and on securing Victoria's reputation as a global cultural destination and bold creative leader.

Creative State 2025 positions Victoria's creative industries as a catalyst for the state's future economic prosperity and social wellbeing.

Creative State 2025 builds on the achievements of the Victorian Government's landmark *Creative State* strategy (2016–2020), while tackling the issues that have emerged from, or been exacerbated by, the COVID-19 pandemic.

The original *Creative State* strategy has delivered groundbreaking initiatives and programs, supported ambitious creative endeavour and new events, developed a pipeline of cultural infrastructure projects and increased international engagement.

These achievements have shown that a clear and visible strategy – backed by government funding – can galvanise the industry and community, leverage further support, attract investment and talent, and create career pathways and opportunities.

While our challenges cannot be underestimated, we embark on this next four-year strategy with new resolve.

Creative State 2025 charts a collaborative path ahead. Through 25 funded actions, we seek to back the sector's future success and secure Victoria's global reputation as a truly creative state – as a vibrant place to live, an attractive place to work and pursue a creative career, and an exciting destination to visit.

The strategy is underpinned by a set of principles to guide future program design, investment and decision-making. These principles emerged from the 2019 and 2020 sector engagement process and reflect a creative community with a strong sense of shared responsibility and civic duty.

I'd like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the members of the First Peoples Directions Circle for their invaluable guidance and important contribution to this strategy.

Established in December 2019, this group embeds – for the first time – First Peoples self-determination in Victoria's creative industries policy and program development. The First Peoples Directions Circle will play a key role in co-designing *Creative State 2025* actions and in the roll-out of this strategy.

A diverse and dynamic, 20-member Creative Industries Advisory Group provided vital insights into industry needs and challenges at critical stages in the development of this strategy.

I thank the members for their expertise and for the integrity they brought to the process – and I thank the many Victorians who contributed their views and ideas as part of our consultation process.

All Victorians stand to benefit from a strong creative economy and rich cultural life and that's why our government invests in, and champions, our creative industries.

I look forward to working with you to deliver the ambitious and exciting vision laid out in this strategy and to securing the future of our creative state together.

The Hon Danny Pearson MP
Minister for Creative Industries

Executive Summary

Overview

Now, more than ever, Victoria's creative industries need certainty and clear leadership to overcome adversity and to be the driving force at the centre of Victoria's future prosperity.

Creative State 2025 is an integrated strategy to address longstanding and new challenges facing our creative industries and to grow their contribution to our society, economy and culture. Supported by a four-year budget of \$288 million, it is a strategy designed to enrich the lives of all Victorians.

Victoria already enjoys major strengths across the creative industries. We boast some of the finest venues and events in the world: from Melbourne's east-end theatre district and our iconic cultural institutions; to our state-wide network of art galleries and performing arts facilities; to our busy calendar of event and festivals, which drew big and enthusiastic audiences – and will again.

Victoria's music sector is recognised globally and Melbourne has earned its reputation as the live music capital of the world with more live music venues per capita than any other city, showcasing local and international contemporary music talent.

Among our many cultural and creative strengths, Victoria's greatest advantage is our deep and dynamic, collaborative network of independent creatives who drive innovation and create outstanding content.

These strengths have been reinforced by sustained investment, over decades, in almost every form of cultural and creative endeavour. This has, in turn, fuelled our economy, created jobs, attracted tourism and investment, and nurtured a thriving, diverse and exciting cultural life.

Despite these strengths, Victoria's creative industries – and the people at the heart of them – face significant and urgent challenges. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic exposed and exacerbated longstanding vulnerabilities within and across the creative industries, and there is a further need to stabilise the sector and position it for recovery and growth.

New approaches and investments are required to ensure a timely recovery, to retain and develop our creative talent, to reactivate and reinforce our creative industries, and to reconnect and re-energise our communities.

Creative State 2025 will put Victoria's First Peoples art, culture and history at the heart of what we do, ensure everybody is able to access and benefit from Victoria's rich creative opportunities, deliver fair pay and safe and secure work, and find new ways to lessen the environmental impact of the sector.

It will position the creative industries for recovery and growth, as part of Victoria's overall recovery by building the jobs of the future, skilling up and diversifying the workforce, and placing creativity and innovation at the heart of Victoria's future resilience and prosperity.

This strategy will also safeguard and leverage significant investments already made in transformative cultural infrastructure projects, in addition to the Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan. These projects are highly dependent on the skilled labour and services of creative practitioners and businesses to provide the programming and content to activate these buildings, and the cultural tourism products and services to meet the expectations of audiences from around the world.

As our creative industries – and our state – continue to recover from the deep impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, a bold, state-wide, sector-informed, government-backed strategy is more vital than ever.

Vision

A state where creative people, ideas and enterprises thrive, and where everyone has equitable access to and benefits from a rich creative culture.

Objectives and actions

Creative State 2025 builds on Victoria's strengths, tackles pressing and systemic challenges facing our creative industries and identifies areas for future collaboration and investment.

The strategy sets out 25 actions to deliver on our vision and five interconnected objectives over the next four years.

This includes investment in new and established high-impact programs and initiatives to secure creative jobs; improve equitable access to creative experiences and careers; and enhance the benefits of creative endeavour and engagement.



Objectives	Highlight Actions
<p>A More and better job opportunities and pathways</p> <p>More jobs for more people, clearer career paths, and a more representative workforce in the creative economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A suite of initiatives to develop and promote First Peoples leadership and practice in the creative industries (Action 1) - Regional training hubs and accredited training programs for theatre technicians through Arts Centre Melbourne's Tech Connect program (Action 4)
<p>B Innovative creative products and experiences</p> <p>Work that defines and represents Victoria's capability and cultural identity, breaks new ground and expands the sector's economic and public value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated First Peoples funding streams across all Creative Victoria grants programs (Action 6) - Investment in research, innovation and experimentation through the Creators Fund (Action 8) - A two-year creative programming fund targeting micro-to-small creative enterprises, organisations and collectives (Action 10)
<p>C Industry stability and growth</p> <p>Stronger organisations, businesses and enterprises, employing more people, operating sustainably and producing creative products and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new four-year investment framework supporting the leadership, organisational infrastructure and creative capacity of Victorian non-government organisations (NGOs) (Action 11) - <i>VICSCREEN</i>, a four-year Victorian screen industry strategy and backed with new investment (Action 12) - Investment in Victoria's creative neighbourhoods through support for secure and accessible workspaces and vibrant creative hubs (Action 13) - Extension of the Music Works program to support the recovery and growth of Victoria's contemporary music sector (Action 14)
<p>D Equitable access to the creative industries</p> <p>Victorians have access to high-quality and diverse creative and cultural experiences, wherever they live; our world-class cultural attractions welcome all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional and outer-metropolitan touring to ensure continued access to high-quality creative experiences across Victoria (Action 17) - Major regional cultural infrastructure projects (Action 19) - The Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation project (Action 20)
<p>E New audiences and markets</p> <p>Victoria's creative practitioners, organisations and businesses find a wider audience, new markets for their products and services, and increased revenue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A biennial First Peoples Art and Design Fair in Victoria (Action 21) - Platform trade events to increase access to international markets for Victorian products and talent (Action 24)

Left: Theatre Works Glasshouse, featuring artists from *Bent* by Variation Three and *Very Nice Pot Plants to Purify the Air and Enrich Your Life* by Karla Livingstone-Pardy and Zachary Sheridan. Image: Andrew Bott

Background

Victoria's creative industries

Victoria's creative industries are an evolving mix of sectors spanning arts, culture, screen, music, design and architecture, games development, fashion, publishing and more.

They operate on a global stage and contribute to local communities at a grassroots level. They are informed and enriched by the unique, enduring culture of the First Peoples of Victoria and by the dynamism and distinctive creative practice of the world's oldest, continuous living culture.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Victoria's creative industries and their impact were fast growing. In 2019–20 they contributed \$31.6 billion in gross value added to the Victorian economy – up \$5.7 billion in four years. By 2019–20, 292,000 Victorians were employed in the creative industries, 8.6 per cent of the total state workforce.

COVID-19 impact

From March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the creative industries – globally and locally.

Creative industries sectors were among the first and hardest hit by the pandemic and among the last to fully return. While impacts vary by sector, the public health crisis and associated restrictions on public gatherings and business activities caused unprecedented and wide-reaching challenges, including significant mental health impacts.

As a result of the pandemic one in four workers in Victoria's arts and recreation sector lost their job, with young and female workers disproportionately affected.

Despite Victoria's swift and comprehensive COVID-19 funding support for creative organisations, business and workers, including \$220 million in the State Budget 2020/21, and the state's successful efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19, the road to industry recovery remains challenging.

The reliance of the creative industries on large audiences and crowds, as well as international travel and touring, means serious impacts will be felt for years to come.

The pandemic also shone a light on longstanding structural vulnerabilities in Victoria's creative industries that demand attention and action.

Creative enterprises and workers have long struggled to establish sustainable business models or practices. Volatile revenue sources, high investment risks and inadequate capacity and capabilities prevent many from operating sustainably, growing financially, up-skilling or investing in business development and planning. In addition, the sector is populated by workers who are under-employed or in insecure work, with many being sole traders, working from project to project and supplementing their income via casualised industries such as hospitality.

The development of this strategy has been informed by extensive sector consultation, both prior to and in the wake of COVID-19.

In mapping a path beyond COVID-19, *Creative State 2025* recognises the immense social, cultural and economic value of Victoria's creative industries and their vital role in positioning Victoria for strong and sustainable recovery and future growth.

Issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic for Victoria's creative industries

Jobs and career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· High casualisation and gig workers· Widespread loss of employment and income – risk of permanent workforce attrition· Employment uncertainty
Creative work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Limited ability to collaborate· High upfront development costs· Reduced access to live and paying audiences· Technology adaptation for both content and business
Industry stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increased risks in business environment· Declining investment appetite· Business solvency and sustainability risks
Equitable access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Disproportionate impacts for culturally and linguistically diverse people, women and young people· Reduced and uneven opportunities for engagement
Audiences and markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Concerns with public safety and return to crowds· Change to export and touring landscape· Disruption to travel and lack of international tourism





Yanmeeyarr by artist
Vicki Couzens at ACMI.
Image: Shannon McGrath

Our call to action

Acknowledging the unprecedented local and global circumstances we face, our call to action could not be any clearer or more urgent.

Now is the time to safeguard jobs, develop employment pathways and invest in the next generation of creative leaders.

Now is the time to innovate and create boundary-pushing creative product and experiences that strengthen Victoria's position at the leading edge of the creative industries.

Now is the time to implement reforms that will stabilise the creative sector and provide a strong and secure foundation for future growth.

Now is the time to prioritise First Peoples arts, cultural and creative leadership, driven by self-determination.

Now is the time to address issues of diversity and equity in the creative industries.

Now is the time to leverage Victorian Government investment in cultural infrastructure to provide more equitable access to creative jobs, opportunities and experiences across the state.

Backed with new investment of \$288 million, *Creative State 2025* will build the pathway to industry recovery, while enhancing the state's social and cultural vibrancy and economic prosperity for the future.

It delivers both immediate and longer-term support through 25 targeted actions that will collectively secure Victoria's position as the creative state, a place where creative people, ideas and enterprises thrive, and where everyone has equitable access to, and benefits from, a rich creative culture.

A

More and better job opportunities and pathways



More jobs for more people, clearer career paths, and a more representative workforce in the creative economy.

The creative industries offer career opportunities that are thrilling and rewarding, and attract people who are talented, hardworking, dedicated and brimming with ideas. Increasingly, creative jobs in the 21st-century reward highly-skilled practitioners and require multi-disciplinary skills that are safe from the risk of automation, global in their application, and attractive, especially to young people.

Victoria's education and training system will continue to play a crucial role in equipping our young people with the right skills to embark on their creative careers.

Businesses, too, are looking for employees to apply creative solutions across a broad range of industries. However, pursuing and maintaining a creative career can be challenging on many levels, particularly for marginalised groups.

Over the next four years, we will support new and continuing actions that build skills, open up new opportunities for under-represented groups, and establish the conditions for practitioners to produce their best work.

Through actions that support career development, employment pathways and training, and by strengthening First Peoples leadership and practice in line with the principles of self-determination, we will help to develop a more sustainable, equitable and culturally-safe sector and add to Victoria's cultural and creative vibrancy.

Actions

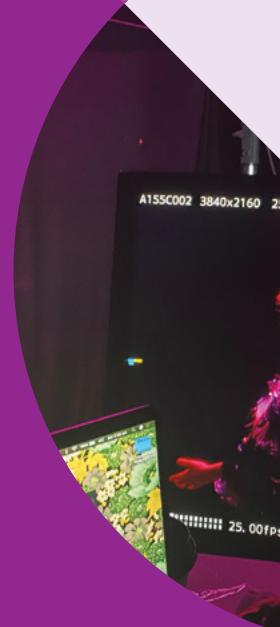
- 1. Develop and promote First Peoples leadership and practice** via:
 - A new, annual First Peoples Creative Industries Forum
 - A feasibility study into the establishment of a First Peoples Cultural Hub to increase the profile of, and access to, First Peoples creative content and products
 - Continued support for the Yalingwa initiative, in partnership with TarraWarra Museum of Art and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
 - Continued investment in key First Peoples platforms including the Koorie Art Show, Yirramboi First Nations Festival, Birrarangga Film Festival, and Blak and Bright First Nations Literary Festival.
- 2. Build Victoria's future creative workforce** through:
 - Traineeships and internships at Victoria's cultural institutions
 - Development opportunities for young leaders that drive more inclusive and representative creative industries boards.
- 3. Improve access to employment opportunities for creatives who are Deaf and creatives with disabilities** by:
 - Incorporating lived experience in the design of Creative Victoria programs
 - Offering dedicated funding streams that allow for access requirements, assessed by peers with lived experience
 - Working with Arts Access Victoria to pilot alternative models of support.
- 4. Increase access to training hubs and accredited training programs** through Arts Centre Melbourne's Tech Connect program, building technical capacity, safety and capability in Victoria's regional performing arts centres.
- 5. Ensure the strength and recovery of Victoria's state-owned cultural agencies**, their continued employment of a 3000-strong workforce, and the delivery of paid opportunities for the wider sector.

B

Innovative creative products and experiences



Shamita Siva and Gerard Pigg
of SIZE KWEENS, *Rhythm Nation*,
Melbourne Fringe 2019.
Image: Duncan Jacob



Work that defines and represents Victoria's creative capability and cultural identity, breaks new ground and expands the sector's economic and public value.

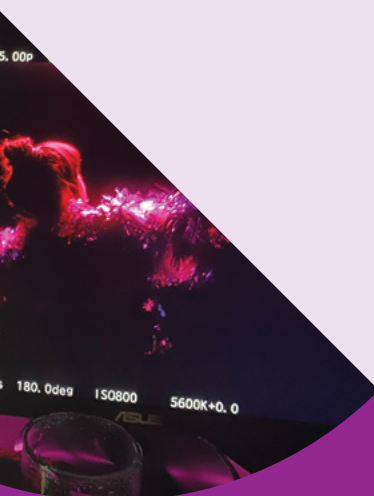
Creative practitioners are in the business of ideas – of daring to imagine what doesn't yet exist and fashioning it into reality. Every awe-inspiring work of art, each beloved song, must-watch TV series, compelling digital game, fashion collection or design innovation is derived from an idea. But bringing a new idea to life – researching, experimenting, prototyping and testing – is a laborious, risk-laden and costly process. Victoria's reputation as a creative state hinges on the quality of the creative and artistic work that is developed here, and on the opportunities for our creatives to reap the benefits of their intellectual property and take their ideas to market.

Innovative creative work and practices deliver broader public value – from stronger economic outcomes (new jobs or increased trade) to cultural benefits (more vibrant experiences and communities) and social dividends (improved mental health or creative solutions to social challenges). For this we need new types of support that continually improve how government backs creative development.

Over the next four years we will build creative capabilities and support the experimentation, risk and innovation that results in new products, fresh ways of working and contemporary service delivery.

Actions

- 6. Enhance the development of Victorian First Peoples creative product and experiences** through dedicated funding streams across all Creative Victoria grants programs.
- 7. Provide creatives working across the creative industries with access to flexible and responsive grants** by building on the streamlined application process of the Sustaining Creative Workers initiative and replacing VicArts Grants.
- 8. Enable creatives to take a major career step** by investing in research, innovation and experimentation through the continuation of the successful Creators Fund.
- 9. Position Victoria as a design leader and promote the use of design** by extending support for design capability, and building both public awareness and engagement with design.
- 10. Invest in innovative creative content and programming** across all creative sectors by offering up to two years' financial support for micro-to-small enterprises, organisations and collectives.



Left: Composer and singer Phia Exiner performs during a film clip recording for Melbourne Indie Voices.
Image: Sarah-Jane Woulahan

C

Industry stability and growth



Stronger organisations, businesses and enterprises, employing more people, operating sustainably and producing creative products and services.

Victoria's creative industries landscape is complex, multi-layered and interconnected. It is made up of a wide variety of organisations, businesses and other enterprises that employ people, generate new ideas and produce creative products and services. There are organisations of all types, from large institutions to sole traders and creative collectives, from start-ups to established global players.

We will fortify and strengthen Victoria's creative industries by reforming the way we invest in creative organisations and enterprises, to help reduce risk, leverage other investment – privately and across government – and by increasing industry access to secure and affordable creative spaces. Working with Invest Victoria, we will continue to make Victoria a compelling investment location to drive local employment and skills.

COVID-19 put a dramatic stop to so much creative activity in 2020, especially related to live audiences and performances. The live music sector was particularly affected and the support of the Victorian Government has contributed significantly to its resilience. Maintaining investment in this sector to continue its recovery is crucial.

We will also capitalise on the insatiable global demand for screen content – heightened during COVID-19 – to build an innovative, world-class screen sector in an industry whose future success relies on highly-skilled and well-paid jobs. A transformative, four-year screen strategy – *VICSCREEN* – will ensure Victoria's screen industry emerges from the pandemic stronger than ever.

Over the next four years these actions will stabilise our creative industries and position them to create new jobs and capitalise on growth opportunities.

Actions

- 11. Sustain a high level of creative achievement, growth and state-wide employment opportunities** through:
 - A new four-year investment framework supporting the leadership, organisational infrastructure and creative capacity of Victorian non-government organisations (NGOs)
 - Investment in ten major performing arts organisations, through the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework.
- 12. Position Victoria as a global powerhouse for screen** through the delivery of *VICSCREEN*, a four-year screen industry strategy with new investment for:
 - A Victorian investment fund to support Victorian companies and creatives to produce high-quality, diverse and engaging screen content for local and international audiences
 - An expanded Victorian Screen Incentive to attract new screen productions to Melbourne and regional Victoria
- Expanded skills development programs to fast-track the development of key creatives and deliver on-the-job training for emerging practitioners
- The Victorian Creators Lab, a new 'hot house' program to assist local creators across all screen mediums to turn good ideas into great content
- A revitalised Melbourne International Film Festival, propelling the festival into a new era.
- 13. Support and strengthen Victoria's creative neighbourhoods** with secure and accessible workspaces and facilities for creatives, strategic policy reform to unlock creative spaces and by fostering vibrant creative hubs.
- 14. Invest in the recovery and growth of Victoria's contemporary music sector** by extending the Music Works program which supports the industry at all levels.
- 15. Enhance the capability of Victoria's major institutions to collect, store and preserve art and cultural items** with new investment in necessary facilities and services.

Above: Behind the scenes of *Mustangs FC* Season 3

Left: *Trapper* by Arena Theatre Company, performed at Arts Centre Melbourne, featuring artist Rachel Perks. Image: John Fish

D

Equitable access to the creative industries



Victorians have access to high-quality and diverse creative and cultural experiences, wherever they live; our world-class cultural attractions welcome all.

A creative state is one that buzzes with creative activity and opportunity and in which every member of the community can participate in a diverse array of creative experiences.

The Government has a strong record of investing in the creative industries, not just to generate the economic benefits for our state but to increase a sense of connection and community across Victoria. Creative participation, particularly in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and in regional Victoria is a priority because it breaks down barriers between differences of divide or culture. Creating helps us to embrace new ideas and perspectives, and it supports the jobs Victorians need in diverse and regional communities.

For individuals and communities facing uncertainty and change – or challenges such as bushfires, drought, economic transition or post-pandemic realities – creative participation can play an important role in bringing people together, fostering cohesion, regeneration and recovery.

Over the next four years we will provide more opportunities for creative participation across the state by investing in new experiences, services and infrastructure. Importantly, these experiences will be created to ensure equitable, affordable and inclusive access for all Victorians.

We will support our schools, students and teachers across the state to be engaged in meaningful and stimulating creative experiences. We will invest in creative opportunities, content and partnerships, ensuring that our regions and outer-metropolitan growth areas are not left behind and can play a leadership role in defining the issues and outcomes most important to them. And we are transforming Melbourne Arts Precinct into one of the great creative and cultural destinations in the world for both Victorians and visitors to enjoy.

Actions

- 16. Ensure continued access to high-quality creative experiences across Victoria** through regional and outer-metropolitan touring.
- 17. Provide Victorian students and teachers with access to a diverse range of creative learning programs and opportunities** by partnering with the Department of Education and Training to support artist-residency programs in schools, arts curriculum awards, summits, and education and touring programs across galleries, museums and performing arts organisations.
- 18. Enhance regional Victoria's creative infrastructure** by delivering projects including a new exhibition space in Kyneton, upgrades to Benalla Art Gallery and further investment in the Castlemaine Goods Shed, Geelong Arts Centre, Shepparton Art Museum, and Latrobe Creative Precinct.
- 19. Create major new exhibitions and museum experiences**, including the new Triceratops Gallery and Gondwana Garden at Melbourne Museum, and developing a business case for the re-imagining of Scienceworks.
- 20. Elevate Melbourne's 'cultural capital' status** through the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, Australia's largest ever cultural infrastructure project, including, in phase one:
 - An 18,000 square metre immersive public garden
 - The new NGV Contemporary gallery
 - Upgrades to Arts Centre Melbourne's Theatres building
 - New connections and improved access into and through the precinct.

Far left: *Reverie Revelry: Fashion through photography* exhibition at 2017 Ballarat International Foto Biennale.
Image: Bec Walton

Left: NGV 2020 Kids Summer Festival.
Image: Tim Carrafa

E

New audiences and markets



Victoria's creative practitioners, organisations and businesses find a wider audience, new markets for their products and services, and increased revenue.

Following a time of major disruption, our artists, creative practitioners and organisations face new challenges to engage with their audiences and markets. While international touring and travel to festivals, fairs and other marketplace events has been limited and continues to recover, we have seen new and technology-enabled alternatives come to the fore. These will continue to provide opportunities in the long term, finding a valuable place alongside a return to traditional forms of trade and engagement.

In the meantime, the Victorian events landscape is recovering quickly and, more than ever, there is demand and opportunity for local content to feature. Audiences are increasingly returning to the cultural experiences they love.

We are building from a strong base, with the nation's premier theatres and galleries, live music venues and a stellar calendar of state-wide festivals, each looking for and presenting our best contemporary creative talent. We will continue to invest in events that draw international attention and business opportunities, drive cultural tourism and highlight Victoria's creative strengths.

We have an abundance of creative talent, ideas, products and services, and the best venues and facilities in the nation. Over the next four years we will leverage these strengths to re-connect with audiences, and sharpen Victoria's competitive edge on the national and global stage.

Actions

- 21. Promote and build the market for Victorian First Peoples cultural products** by establishing a biennial Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair as the centrepiece of a program to promote and sell Victorian First Peoples cultural product in Australia and overseas.
- 22. Assist creatives to build demand, audiences and markets** through the Building Audiences Program, supporting innovative marketing projects and resources.
- 23. Promote more investment and trade** in Victorian creative products and services through digital and face-to-face market engagement opportunities and extending cultural exchange programs.
- 24. Increase access to international markets** by continuing to grow Victoria's platform trade events, such as the Australian Performing Arts Market, Asia TOPA and Melbourne International Games Week.
- 25. Support networking and collaboration between Victoria's four UNESCO Creative Cities** – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Melbourne – to consolidate the role of the creative industries in sustainable development, promote Victoria's cultural strengths, and create international opportunities for Victorian creative companies and practitioners.

Top left: Melbourne Fashion Week installation by Moth Design and stylist Kate Gaskin featuring sculpture by Troy Emery. Image: Albert Comper

Bottom left: *The Summer Sessions* 2021, Geelong Arts Centre Big Top at Ripplside Park. Image: Peter Foster

Delivering on the Vision 2021–2025

Creative State 2025 implementation principles

Guiding the *Creative State 2025* strategy are five principles that will be central to how we design and deliver support for the creative industries, and plan for the future.

Creative Victoria will apply these principles across all our programs by:

- Establishing tangible baselines, where possible, against each principle for both Creative Victoria and our funding recipients
- Integrating principles into program design and guidelines
- Assisting state-owned and funded organisations to apply and report on their application of the principles
- Taking a leadership role and demonstrating good practice
- Committing to sector and community partnerships, collaboration and co-design.

1. First Peoples first

First Peoples knowledge, practice, protocols and cultural authority will be at the heart of the creative industries, forging stronger and enduring partnerships with First Peoples creative communities. Led by the Creative Victoria First Peoples Directions Circle, we will work to ensure that opportunities are maximised for First Peoples and to increase First Peoples representation and employment in Victoria's creative industries across the state.

We will apply this principle by:

- Taking direction from Creative Victoria's First Peoples Directions Circle in program design and implementation
- Prioritising time and resources to ensure meaningful First Peoples engagement and self-determination
- Ensuring all Creative Victoria staff undertake First Peoples cultural awareness and safety training
- Effectively promoting all programs and opportunities to First Peoples communities
- Employing more First Peoples at Creative Victoria.



The 11 Guiding Principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination

The Victorian Government is fully committed to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the 11 guiding principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination as identified in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–23.

1. Human Rights

Self-determination initiatives honour the norms set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

2. Cultural Integrity

As First Nations peoples, the rich, thriving cultures, knowledge and diverse experiences of Aboriginal people, including where they fit with family, community and society, will be recognised, valued, heard and celebrated.

3. Commitment

Aboriginal Self-Determination will be advanced and embedded through planned action that is endorsed by, and accountable to, all parties.

4. Aboriginal Expertise

Government and agencies will seek out, value and embed Aboriginal culture, knowledge, expertise and diverse perspectives in policies and practice.

5. Partnership

Partnerships will advance Aboriginal autonomy through equitable participation, shared authority and decision-making, and will be underpinned by cultural integrity.

6. Decision-Making

Decision-makers will respect the right to free, prior and informed consent and individual choice and will prioritise the transfer of decision-making power to Aboriginal people in areas that impact their communities.

7. Empowerment

Aboriginal people will have autonomy and participation in the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies and programs that impact their communities.

8. Cultural Safety

Programs and services accessed by Aboriginal people will be inclusive, respectful, responsive and relevant, and informed by culturally safe practice frameworks.

9. Investment

Investment to support self-determination will be sustainable, flexible and appropriate to strengthen Aboriginal peoples' aspirations and participation, including around economic participation, economic independence and building wealth.

10. Equity

Systemic and structural racism, discrimination and unconscious bias and other barriers to Aboriginal Self-Determination will be actively identified and eliminated.

11. Accountability

All parties responsible for delivering outcomes involving Aboriginal people will be held accountable and subject to Aboriginal-led, independent and transparent oversight.



Left: *Capturing the City* participant, 2019. Image courtesy of Signal, the City of Melbourne and Arts Access Victoria

Bottom right: Joost Bakker's sustainable *futurefoodsystem* installation at Federation Square. Image: Liam Neal

2. For every Victorian

True cultural equity explicitly values the unique and collective cultures of diverse communities and supports their existence in physical spaces, public policies and investment, and in civic life. We will work to ensure that every Victorian – regardless of cultural background, age, gender identity, location, income or ability – can take up their right to participate in the cultural and creative life of the state and creative careers.

We will apply this principle by:

- Reviewing accessibility and inclusiveness across Creative Victoria's business processes, including communications, grant application and assessment, events and recruitment
- Developing diversity and inclusion targets and standards for Creative Victoria programs and a measurement framework to monitor progress
- Encouraging and promoting cultural equity across funded creative industries organisations
- Developing and applying universal design guidelines for use by creative facilities and for all future state cultural infrastructure developments
- Championing diverse content and creative practitioners.

3. Whole of state

We will work to ensure that people in remote, regional and outer-metropolitan areas have improved and more equitable access to cultural experiences, creative expression and rewarding and sustainable careers.

We will apply this principle by:

- Prioritising locally-led initiatives in regional and outer-metropolitan areas
- Hosting more Creative Victoria events in regional and outer-metropolitan locations, and ensuring policies and programs are grounded in local intelligence
- Considering ways to increase funding applications and success rates for regional and outer-metropolitan practitioners and organisations
- Co-designing actions and programs with regional people and communities.

4. Health and wellbeing

The nature of work – and workplaces – in the creative industries have unique issues that impact the mental health and wellbeing of the people who work in them. For many, especially independent practitioners, employment can be insecure, poorly paid, isolating and emotionally demanding. Work structures in some creative sectors leave people vulnerable, for example, to sexual harassment and bullying. We will work to address these concerns and to foster healthy, safe and respectful working environments.

We will apply this principle by:

- Facilitating a cross-sector Respectful Workplaces Working Group to promote and foster safe, respectful and healthy creative industries workplaces
- Promoting a tailored respectful workplaces framework to guide creative industries organisations
- Hosting Creative Exchange events focused on mental health, wellbeing and respectful workplaces
- Promoting resources and services that support positive mental health and wellbeing.

5. Environmental impact

Climate change affects all of us and acting on it is fundamental to our future as a thriving, resilient and creative state. Our creative industries can help meet this challenge. As individuals, organisations, businesses, institutions and government, we need to rethink the way we make, share, present, tour and consume creative product; how we can reduce our environmental impact; and how we can champion change more broadly.

We will apply this principle by:

- Adopting the guiding principles of the *Climate Change Act 2017* including the target for net zero emissions by 2050
- Working with Victoria's state-owned cultural institutions to increase, and promote, their ambitious efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions
- Promoting environmental funding programs relevant to the creative industries
- Developing Environmentally Sustainable Development guidelines for Victorian Government creative infrastructure projects and facilities
- Requiring funding recipients to consider the environmental impact of their funded activity.



Creative State 2025 enablers

With an ambitious vision, state-wide scope and 25 actions, the success of *Creative State 2025* will be underpinned by the following approach to implementation.

Partnerships

The success of this strategy relies on the strength of partnerships with industry, community, the private sector and other portfolios and tiers of government.

The Creative Victoria First Peoples Directions Circle will lead the development and implementation of all the actions with a First Peoples focus, and guide the delivery of our First Peoples first commitments.

Partnerships between Creative Victoria and Visit Victoria will help to build and deliver outstanding events and experiences, drawing talent, audiences and investment to our state, while adding immeasurably to Victoria's global creative reputation and prosperity.

Our longstanding partnership with the Department of Education and Training will continue to support creative engagement with Victorian students and teachers.

Creative Victoria will also partner with Global Victoria, the State Government's trade agency, to help creatives maintain and grow their international businesses, build the skills, knowledge and profile of Victorian creative businesses, and promote the state's world-class industry capabilities.

Agency collaboration and expertise

Victoria's state-owned creative industries agencies will play a leading role in the sector and make a vital contribution to the industry and broader, post-COVID state recovery.

Creative State 2025 encourages agency collaboration, and the shared use of resources. It will promote initiatives to reach new and wider audiences, leverage agency expertise, achieve broader social outcomes, and create and sustain public sector employment.

Infrastructure pipeline

Victoria's creative industries are enabled by a state-wide ecosystem of state-owned, local government-owned and privately held facilities. *Creative State 2025* will leverage the investment in these cultural spaces by supporting the people and programs within them.

In addition, Creative Victoria will develop a pipeline of state-wide infrastructure investment opportunities and, with partners across departments and agencies, embed creative industries spaces, programs and opportunities across major new civic and transport projects.

Leadership and advocacy

As part of the original *Creative State* strategy, Creative Victoria developed an evaluation framework to measure the economic, social and cultural impacts of the creative industries in Victoria, including data from our state-owned cultural institutions and funded non-government sector. Using this framework, we will continue to track the overall performance and vitality of the sector and report regularly on progress.

We will continue our research program to ensure government has the data required for effective, targeted and strategic investment in Victoria's creative industries, and we will make this research available to industry.

We will continue to work effectively at a national level on behalf of Victoria's creative industries to advocate for our creative industries and talent, be a leader on national issues, and realise the vision of this strategy.



Above: Flying Fruit Fly Circus,
Borderville Festival 2019.
Image: Ian Sutherland



TAKEBACK! 2021, behind the scenes video shoot, featuring artists (L-R) Taga Barrio, Jessica D'cruz, Ashleyrose Gilham, Ashleingh Black, Joshinder Chaggar, Nel Mama Boho, Loz Sorono, Muma Doesa, Gracieuse Amah, Demi Sorono and Chichi Nwokocho. Image: Deshani Berhardt

Acknowledgements

Creative State 2025 was developed in consultation with Victoria's creative community over the course of 2019 and 2020.


Creative Victoria would like to thank everyone who contributed by making submissions, participating in forums, contributing online or completing a survey. In total more than 2,000 individuals and organisations helped shape this four-year strategy.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the members of the First Peoples Directions Circle and Creative Industries Advisory Group.

We also thank Victoria's creative industries peak bodies for their sector leadership and contributions.

For details on the consultation process and summary reports, visit creative.vic.gov.au/creativestate25





Authorised and published by
Creative Victoria
Level 31, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000

Designed by
Studio Brave, Melbourne

Unless indicated otherwise, this work
is made available under the terms of
the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0
Australia licence. To view a copy of this
licence, visit [creativecommons.org/
licenses/by/3.0/au/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/)

It is a condition of this Creative
Commons Attribution 3.0 Licence that
you must give credit to the original
author who is the State of Victoria.

If you would like to receive this
publication in an accessible
format, contact us on:
T: 03 8683 3100
E: creativevic@ecodev.vic.gov.au

ISBN 978-1-76090-459-3

creative.vic.gov.au

Cover: POOKIE performing
as part of *SorBaes* presented
by Soju Gang, Live at the Bowl,
Arts Centre Melbourne 2021.
Image: James Henry