

## **Surf Coast Shire Submission Creative Industries Strategies Discussion Paper July 2015**

Surf Coast Shire response to the themes presented in the discussion paper:

### **Fostering creative excellence**

Surf Coast Shire has a significantly higher participation in the arts than the rest of Victoria and the wider Barwon South West Region. Seventy-four percent of residents surveyed in Surf Coast Shire, stated they had been involved in an arts activity over the last 12 months, compared to 67% for Victoria and 62% for the Barwon South West region. (Community Indicators Victoria)

Thought must be given about how the State Government can foster creative excellence across the State, not just the perceived elite arts and creative practitioners. Creative excellence exists in rural communities such as Surf Coast Shire as well as city neighbourhoods. The State Government will do well to consider how these practitioners can be supported.

Partnerships with local communities need to be strong to enable the State Government identify and foster creative excellence.

### **Building audiences and markets**

The discussion paper highlights Victoria is the creative capital offering more to audiences than other Australian states. One risk in such a vibrant creative sector is competition for audience of market share. The State Government can play a role in coordinating and integrating programming and promotion of significant arts and cultural offerings.

Arts Victoria's statistical overview of Arts and Culture in Victoria shows that between 2009 and 2011 reflective participation (audiences) in the visual arts witnessed an increase in Victoria (36% to 39%) and Australia (49% to 53%) and a smaller increase occurred in Victoria in relation to attendance at music events (up 1% to 57%) while in Australia attendances remained static at 57%. Music had a larger number of attendances at events (57%) than theatre and dance (40%) and visual arts events (39%).

In terms of creative participation; visual arts, specifically crafts, painting and drawing, attracted the most significant increase in creative participation in Victoria (up 12% from 19% to 31% participation). Creative participation in theatre and dance remained static at 8% in Victoria but experienced a 1% increase to 8% across Australia.

Given the large number of music event attendees and the static growth in these audiences, the State Government should consider investing resources to support and grow music audiences

### **Enhancing creative spaces and places**

The State Government currently does not have a dedicated funding program to provide new creative spaces and places. The discussion paper refers to Victoria's creative spaces as a competitive strength. A lack of funding programs and failure to invest in creative spaces will erode this strength.

Consideration should be given to how to renew Victoria's existing creative spaces balanced with the need to deliver new facilities where they are currently lacking. The State Government should remain focussed on equitable facility renewal and provision in metropolitan and regional areas. A dedicated facility funding program linked to the strategic directions of the Creative Industries strategy is fundamental to delivering and enhancing creative spaces and places.

Partnerships with local government are critical as evidenced by the State Government's long and successful funding programs for sport, recreation and regional development infrastructure. Local government provides the State Government with an intimate knowledge of local communities and their needs. Together, local and state government can deliver successful and vibrant spaces that deliver economic and social benefits for Victorian communities.

Investment in these spaces is critical in increasing the contribution of the creative and cultural industries in Victoria.

### **Cultivating skills, entrepreneurship and innovation**

According to ABS data, over 1,000 jobs can already be attributed to the arts and creative industry in Surf Coast Shire. Torquay experienced 78% growth in this sector in the five years prior to 2011. This data does not include the members of the creative industry who participate in that activity in a secondary professional, or non professional capacity (e.g. teachers who are also artists).

Surf Coast Shire's economy is fundamentally underpinned by creative and cultural industries and serves as an excellent example of the potential small, home based businesses can transform into through innovation and opportunity. Approximately 27% of all employment and over 28% of total income is either directly or indirectly linked to the surf industry in Surf Coast Shire. In terms of economic output almost \$500 million is generated annually. While Rip Curl and Quiksilver (founded in in Torquay) are globally recognised, there are numerous smaller businesses in graphic design, film, clothing, photography, shaping, media, swimwear all playing a significant part in growing Surf Coast Shire's economy. These businesses are highly innovative and often exporting services globally from their homes.

The potential of these small (often home based) industries is significant and the strategy should identify ways to foster these talents and support growth. This is particularly so for smaller communities where employment opportunities are often more limited than in metropolitan Melbourne. The Creative Industries Strategy can play a key role in enabling people to live and work in their own community/ township.

### **Advancing regional Victoria and outer metropolitan Melbourne**

Arts and culture is a key driver of liveability of communities and critical in ensuring rural communities remain an attractive place to live work and invest. Creative industries will play an important role in providing employment and economic prosperity to regional Victoria and outer metropolitan Melbourne.

Local government is universally acknowledged as having a critical role to play in fostering and building local culture and arts activity to support cultural and economic development.

Internationally, this is recognised and documented, particularly through the United Nations' *Agenda 21* for Culture. There are two key aspects to this significant movement:

- The cultural freedom of individuals and communities is an essential precondition for democracy

- Local government are worldwide agents of prime importance as defenders and promoters of the advance of human rights

The State Government should seek to partner with Local Government to advance regional Victoria and outer metropolitan Melbourne through creative industries and arts and culture.

It is well recognised that arts and cultural activities increase local participation and engagement and in doing so develop connected and vibrant communities. This builds social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

### **Increasing tourism**

Cultural events are a key driver of visitation. Within Surf Coast Shire, globally recognised events such as the Lorne Sculpture Biennale and the Lorne Performing Arts Festival attract thousands of visitors. Independent economic evaluations identify the impact of these events to be in the millions. Held in the off peak season (post Easter – pre December) events such as these have resulted in local traders extending retail and hospitality hours creating a more sustainable local economy. Events such as Love Winter in Aireys provide a point of connectivity for permanent residents and non-permanent residents as well as providing a critical economic boost for local traders.

The Creative Industries Strategy should focus on how culturally focussed events can play a role in sustaining economies which experience significant fluctuations in visitation (such as Surf Coast Shire), providing a needed boost in the typically quieter months.

Cultural tourism is intrinsically linked to places including the natural environment. Protecting and maintaining the natural environment therefore should remain a priority for the State Government. Strong evidence suggests that increasing activities for locals will attract support from residents, encourage tourism to regions and in turn lead to increased tourism for a particular location.

Culture is recognised as the main driver of tourism regionally. Cultural tourism strategies should focus on regional partnerships and regional strategies

‘Cultural Tourism’ should be included in the definition of the creative and cultural industries on page 5 of the discussion paper and resultant strategy.