

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



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CREATIVE STATE FUTURE TO BE BOLDER AND BRIGHTER

Victoria's multi-billion-dollar creative economy will be reinvigorated thanks to an unprecedented \$288 million investment by the Andrews Labor Government in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*.

Acting Premier James Merlino and Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson today visited the Geelong Arts Centre to announce the Creative State funding package alongside artists and organisations from the region.

Designed to secure jobs and reassert Victoria's position as the creative state, a \$167.3 million Creative State funding package will support the sector as it bounces back after a challenging year – putting creativity at the heart of Victoria's recovery and supercharging the sector.

As well as cementing our reputation as the nation's creative capital, this investment is expected to underpin the creation of more than 20,000 new jobs with the commissioning of new works and collaborations across the state.

Geelong Arts Centre will continue its ambitious redevelopment, with \$6.3 million allocated in the Budget to keep the centre's programming active and support local jobs while this project serves to revitalise central Geelong and bolster the city's creative offering.

This funding will provide safe, suitable accommodation for Geelong Arts Centre staff and keep the centre open as work continues on the Little Malop Street redevelopment, which is expected to finish up in 2023 and create more than 600 construction jobs - with a focus on local job creation.

In addition to the Creative State funding package, the Budget will confirm the funding required to get on with this \$140 million project set to significantly expand the capacity of the Centre with multiple new performance venues, an upgraded box office and refurbished back-of-house and administration facilities.

A new approach to multi-year investment will help Victoria's creative sector to grow with an extra \$23.9 million to support a diverse selection of creative enterprises, venues, and festivals – both big and small. From artist run spaces to regional theatre companies, this will give Victoria's creative organisations greater security, allowing them to grow their audiences and create new jobs.

A \$79 million creative industries support and recovery package will secure thousands of jobs in the industry, providing a timely boost to the recovery of Victoria's iconic state-owned cultural institutions like the Geelong Arts Centre and others – giving Victorians and visitors more opportunities to experience world-class events and programs.

Victoria is proudly the live music capital of Australia. The Budget reinforces the important role Music Victoria and the Victorian Music Development Office play in supporting homegrown musicians – from promoting work on a global scale to supporting up and coming artists.

Victoria's landmark Music Works industry development initiative will be extended with \$10.8 million to help our hard-hit music industry reactivate, with specific support to nurture young emerging talent and help tours get back on the road.

Funding of \$4.5 million will deliver our new Creative Neighbourhoods program, providing creative workers and businesses with greater access to affordable workspaces and fostering creative hubs, including the Emporium Creative Hub Bendigo and the Brunswick Design District.

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Families can look forward to new immersive exhibitions with \$33.5 million for Museums Victoria to deliver a new Gondwana Garden palaeontological adventure and a Triceratops gallery – which will house a 67 million year old Triceratops, the world’s most complete and best-preserved fossil – and the safeguarding of our museum collections and more.

There will also be a strong focus on leadership and opportunities for First Peoples with the creation of a new annual First Peoples Creative Industries forum and a First Peoples Art and Design Fair.

The Government is also doing more to support talent that reflects the rich diversity of Victoria, with \$4 million in dedicated funding for First Peoples, young people and those from diverse backgrounds. This includes support for First Nation festivals and platforms such as Yirramboj, Blak & Bright Literature Festival and the Koorie Art Show.

The Budget backs ground-breaking festivals to showcase Victoria’s strengths to the world. Asia TOPA, Melbourne Fringe and Melbourne International Games Week will be supported, as well as Victoria’s UNESCO Creative Cities designation, which recognises Geelong as a City of Design and Ballarat as a City of Craft and Folk Art.

The Creative State funding package is in addition to the \$191.5 million screen industry package and the 40,000 jobs set to be created through *VICSCREEN*, announced yesterday, and builds on the record \$220 million delivered in last year’s Budget.

This funding takes our total investment in Victoria’s creative life and recovery to a record \$508 million since the start of the pandemic.

In last year’s Budget, the Labor Government committed to an ambitious \$1.46 billion transformation of Melbourne’s Art Precinct – Australia’s biggest ever cultural infrastructure project, including NGV Contemporary which will be the country’s largest gallery for contemporary art and design.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

“Victoria is the cultural capital of our nation and this unprecedented investment will secure the immediate future of the industry, and make sure our creative offering is world class for decades to come.”

“Geelong Arts Centre is known for its high-quality creative offering and vision, so it is great to make this announcement in a place where a new creative project is coming to life.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson

“So much of what we love about our state comes back to our creative identity – to our music, our galleries, our festivals, our comedy and so much more.”

“It’s why this Budget backs the recovery of our creative sector, while also investing in its future – driving the creation of thousands of new Victorian jobs.”

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

“Geelong Arts Centre is a local institution that is embedded into the cultural and creative life of our city. Not only does it showcase homegrown talent, it attracts creatives from across Victoria and indeed the nation.”