



Briefing Paper - Creative Geelong MakerSpace

INTRODUCTION - What is the Creative Geelong MakerSpace project?

After winning the Australian Futures Project '[My Geelong My Idea](#)' ideation competition, colleagues **Kathy Reid** (Independent Digital Consultant), **Jennifer Cromarty** (President, Creative Geelong Inc) and **Todd Hubers** (Founder, StartupCloud and Alivate) committed to collaborating together to bring a **Creative Geelong MakerSpace and Co-Working Space** to fruition.

This paper outlines the activities undertaken to date and planned actions.

BACKGROUND

What's a MakerSpace?

"A makerspace is a physical location where people gather to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network, and build. Makerspaces provide tools and space in a community environment—a library, community center, private organization, or campus. Expert advisors may be available some of the time, but often novices get help from other users. The makerspace—sometimes referred to as a hackerspace—is often associated with fields such as engineering, computer science, and graphic design. The concept emerges from the technology-driven "maker culture," associated with Make magazine and the Maker Faires it promotes. This idea of a collaborative studio space for creative endeavors has caught hold in education, where the informal combination of lab, shop, and conference room form a compelling argument for learning through hands-on exploration. On campus, the makerspace is being embraced by the **arts** as well as the **sciences**, and a new energy is building around multidisciplinary collaborative efforts" - [EDUCAUSE](#), 2013

What is a Co-Working Space?

The concept for a co-working space in Geelong isn't new. However, the social enterprise model proposed in this paper is to create a clear social impact and a focus on economic wellbeing. The core activities in the space would support emerging commercial businesses with a focus on professional and creative services and will cultivate a business ecosystem that promotes Geelong's future as a creative, 'smart' city needing support through enterprise skills capability building, training and collaboration with the whole community. Using a social enterprise structure will clearly demonstrate a commitment to investors and the community that any profits made from the activities in the space (through training, programs, projects and events) would be put back into the co-working initiative with the purpose of driving ongoing capability building and build the profile of Geelong as a 'creative city'.

This space would host or develop an environment for the following activities:

- Provide a focal point for creative industries and entrepreneurship in the G21 region for strategic thinking, planning and project development
- Activating building/s and space for entrepreneurs including artists, makers, producers and designers to meet, collaborate and exhibit works on a day to day basis
- Provide outreach to young people in the Geelong community interested in entrepreneurship and the creative industries as a career path
- Support community development and greater inclusion of CALD groups, older people, people with disabilities in the digital economy through short workshops (1-2 hours)



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This space is not about 'desks' – it's about a place where people who care about their community can come together to contribute. It's about people who want to make an impact to other people's lives. It's about bringing people together from different disciplines to encourage collaboration and new business building. Its long term sustainability will hinge on getting people who have shared values about Geelong's creative potential. People who access the space would participate, promote and develop the program of events and activities together. Placing all of these elements together in one space will provide an energy and sustainability to the creative industries precinct and encourage collaboration among, industry, stakeholders, networks, government and community.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: Why does Geelong need a Creative MakerSpace and Co-Working space?

Geelong is transitioning from a traditional manufacturing powerhouse to a digital, creative and knowledge - based economy. This project exhibits alignment with local initiatives and strategic objectives:

- **Digital Geelong** – Co-working and MakerSpaces are part of the City of Greater Geelong's [Digital Geelong strategy](#), aimed at supporting and developing a vibrant and engaged 'Maker' and 'Developer' community.
- **Digital skills acquisition and work integrated learning** – Reports from the Australian Computer Society, Deloitte and Slade Group predict a 'digital skills crisis' by 2020 as demand for digitally skilled workers significantly outstrips supply. A co-working and MakerSpace environment exposes people to the digital skills of the future – collaboration, networking, fabrication, 3D printing, electronics, robotics and coding – and nurtures emerging talent, complementing formal learning at secondary and tertiary level.
- **Fostering Creative Industries** – As part of their '[Creative State](#)' strategy, Creative Victoria has identified the activation of Co-Working and Creative Spaces as a key pillar of creative industries business development.
- **Social enterprise** – The Creative Geelong MakerSpace and Co-Working Space is formally auspiced by the not-for-profit incorporated association, [Creative Geelong Inc.](#) As such, Creative Geelong is able to foster and facilitate social enterprises as part of the space's broader activation, such as through a cafe and/or training facility, thus contributing to social capital in the region.
- **Youth engagement and employment** – Geelong's [youth unemployment rate](#) has been in steady decline for the past year or so. Continuing this success requires engagement of youth across a pipeline of opportunities and programs. A Creative Geelong MakerSpace complements other initiatives, such as Pivot Summit's Experience for Work collaboration with GRLEN, [GovHack](#) and [SPARK](#), providing a safe and welcoming place, space and base for creative and technical activities.
- **Cross-pollination** – a Creative Geelong MakerSpace facilitates cross-pollination between creative and technical 'makers', bringing two traditionally diverse pursuits together for new and innovative collaborations, for example in fashion technology, wearable electronics, electronic arts and computer based design.
- **Intergenerational collaboration** – as Geelong's population ages ([37% of which will be over 65 in twenty years' time](#)), measures will be needed to foster intergenerational collaboration. A co-working / MakerSpace is such an initiative, bringing together both younger and older cohorts.

As can be seen above, the Creative Geelong MakerSpace project complements, rather than competes with, existing initiatives that are in planning or underway.



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CURRENT STATUS AND NEXT ACTIONS - What's been done so far and what's planned?

The Creative Geelong Makerspace project has been encouraged to apply for second round funding from Launch Vic. We have support from a range of local stakeholders including the City of Greater Geelong, Herotown Geelong, Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (GRLEN) and the GROW project, with in-principle support from G21.

Further, initial discussions with a range of key stakeholders across Geelong, including Cotton On and Deakin University, have been positive and supportive. The board of Creative Geelong Inc was formally briefed on the project in August. Creative Geelong Inc voted to formally endorse a collaborative approach to join the MakerSpace and Creative Geelong Space co-working project as a shared initiative.

Additionally, a number of artefacts have been produced to accelerate the project's momentum, including a range of use cases and personas to align user needs with the services offered by the Creative Geelong MakerSpace, a business canvas model to better understand revenue and expense sources, and financial plan to demonstrate the project's long term sustainability.

The next actions of the project team are to continue to formally brief key stakeholders across the region, seeking tangible and in-kind support for the project, to identify and assess candidate locations, to raise the capital required and to begin project planning and execution.

RECOMMENDATIONS - What should my organisation do next?

Your organisation may wish to consider the following actions;

- A formal **letter of support** for a combined Creative Geelong MakerSpace and Co-Working Space
- **In-kind support** in the form of professional services, equipment, expertise etc
- **Financial support** in the form of donations or sponsorship
- An expression of interest in becoming a **tenant** of the Co-Working Space
- An expression of interest in becoming an **organisational Member** of the MakerSpace

CONTACT - Who should I contact with questions?

Contact Jennifer Cromarty, President, Creative Geelong on 0413 241 033 or Kathy Reid on 0418 130 636
Follow Creative Geelong [@CreativeGeelong](https://twitter.com/CreativeGeelong) on Twitter, and follow the MakerSpace at [@GeelongMakers](https://twitter.com/GeelongMakers)