



## OVERVIEW OF CREATIVE GEELONG SOCIAL IMPACT SURVEY FINDINGS

Creative Geelong's Makers Hub at Centrepont Arcade and Renew Geelong's Concept Space on Moorabool Street are two initiatives that have been undertaken to activate underutilised spaces in Geelong's CBD and support grassroots makers and creators. In order to better understand the social impact that these initiatives are having, Creative Geelong and Renew Geelong collaborated to conduct a survey that was open to the public between 25 February 2019 and 29 April 2019. The survey included 18 questions, comprising a mix of rating-scale and open-ended questions. The questions covered perceptions of safety in and around the emerging creative spaces, how these spaces are used, levels of engagement with the spaces and information about the role that these spaces are playing in the city centre and in the lives of survey respondents. A total of 74 responses were received. A full report on the survey findings for both projects has been prepared, however the following information provides a snapshot of the key findings that specifically relate to Creative Geelong's Makers Hub in the Centrepont Arcade.

### **Data from the quantitative rating-scale questions indicates that since the Makers Hub opened in Centrepont Arcade there has been:**

- A 460% increase in people agreeing or strongly agreeing that they visit the arcade regularly
- A greater than ten-fold increase in respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they enjoyed their time in arcade
- A significant increase in perceptions of safety in the space, demonstrated by a 537% increase in respondents stating they either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe walking through the arcade
- A nine-fold increase in the number of people agreeing or strongly agreeing that the arcade offered services that are of interest to them
- A greater than ten-fold increase in the number of people confirming that they have met people with similar interests in the arcade following the opening of the Makers Hub
- A 770% increase in people recommending visiting the arcade to family and friends
- A ten-fold increase in respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are satisfied with what the arcade offers to the Geelong community

### **Data from the qualitative open-ended questions indicates that:**

- Since the opening of the Makers Hub, people cited the following reasons for visiting the arcade:
  - To be part of a network of like-minded people
  - Because they feel safe and welcomed in the space
  - To collaborate with others
  - To see new exhibitions and view the window galleries
  - To attend workshops
  - To socialise

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- The vast majority of respondents feel safe in the Centrepoint Arcade since the Makers Hub has opened. They attributed this to the following:
  - The inviting, bright and welcoming feel of the space
  - The presence and activity of tenant groups in the Makers Hub
  - The display of artworks and items in the windows of shopfronts
  - The physical characteristics of the space including the light-filled atrium and protected internal courtyard
  - Having a sense of ownership of the space
- Some respondents contrasted their view of Centrepoint Arcade as safe, with poor perceptions of safety in the adjoining Mall area, specifically identifying the following issues:
  - Witnessing anti-social behaviour
  - The presence of police responding to incidents
  - The presence of people affected by drugs and alcohol
  - Poor urban design
- A vast majority of respondents reported general satisfaction with Centrepoint Arcade. This satisfaction was attributed to:
  - The atmosphere or 'vibe' of the space
  - The people involved in the Makers Hub
  - The flexibility of the space to allow different ways of interacting including sitting, relaxing, studying, meeting others and collaborating
  - Window activations
  - The feeling of industry created by creative activity in the Makers Hub

Respondents generally contrasted the desolate or abandoned feeling of the arcade prior to the Makers Hub with the level of vibrancy created by groups and interactions now occurring in the space.

### **Interpreting the data**

- Creative Geelong's Makers Project Hub has been successful in the following ways:
  - Activating a challenging, disused space in Central Geelong
  - Improving perceptions of space
  - Fostering a sense of community
  - Creating a "third place" – a space for communal and social activity without the need for people to spend money in order to spend time
  - Making aesthetic improvements
  - Providing educational opportunities
  - Democratising creativity by providing a range of opportunities for engagement and participation
  - Supporting new creative businesses to establish and grow
  - Supporting the City's Clever and Creative vision
  - Creating networking, collaboration and partnership opportunities for creatives, businesses and social services and enterprises
- A sentiment of goodwill towards Creative Geelong was broadly expressed in the survey and it is evident that the community believes that it should be supported and maintained into the future.

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## Recommendations

- Continue to promote and establish window galleries, murals and other creative interventions to activate building frontages.
- Continue to nurture the creative communities emerging in the Creative Geelong Makers Hub and provide support for grassroots creative events.
- Work with key stakeholders, City of Greater Geelong and building owners to explore tactical design improvements to the entrances to Centrepoin Arcade.
- Involve Creative Geelong's creative community in any deliberations around future urban design approaches in Little Malop Street Mall.
- Provide financial support to Creative Geelong for its organic 'outreach' activities in the Makers Hub and develop further opportunities to involve groups such as students, retirees and those seeking to develop skills in activities at the Makers Hub.
- Undertake further research to capture the stories and learnings of the participants and users of both projects.