

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY 2026

—

MAY 2026

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The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the land, waterways and skies on which this submission relates. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and acknowledge their ongoing connection to Country.

Executive Summary

The City of Greater Geelong welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Australia's next National Cultural Policy. The City strongly supports the achievements of *Revive*, including its repositioning of arts and culture as central to national identity, economic life and community wellbeing. This submission argues that the next phase of national policy should move beyond successful sector reform toward a more integrated, place-based cultural systems approach.

As Victoria's largest regional city and Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Design, this submission provides a regional government perspective on how national cultural policy is implemented in practice. In growing regional cities such as Geelong, arts, culture, design and creativity are not standalone activities. They function as interconnected infrastructure systems that shape place identity, economic transformation, social connection and urban development.

The submission argues that while *Revive* has established a strong national foundation, the next phase of cultural policy must shift from program delivery to integrated cultural systems operating across infrastructure, economic development, social policy and place-based planning.

The submission identifies six key implementation gaps in the current national framework: limited integration of cultural policy with broader city-making systems; underinvestment in creative ecosystem infrastructure; insufficient support for operational sustainability and workforce development; uneven access to touring, production and investment across regional Australia; inconsistent recognition of arts, culture, heritage and community cultural development as essential social infrastructure; and a significant cultural infrastructure gap in the provision, renewal and long-term maintenance of civic cultural facilities, collections and cultural assets.

In response, the City recommends a stronger national focus on integrated cultural system design, creative ecosystem infrastructure, design as a civic capability, lifecycle funding models, community arts and cultural development, First Nations cultural infrastructure and creative economy pathways, and regional cultural equity. The City also calls for a clearer national vision for heritage assets, both tangible and intangible, including civic collections, historic cultural facilities, stories, traditions and living cultural practices that contribute to Australia's identity and sense of place.

Importantly, the submission argues that national policy settings must better recognise regional cities as major sites of cultural participation, production and delivery. Investment frameworks should align with the scale, growth, demand and demonstrated capability of regional centres such as Greater Geelong, which are increasingly central to Australia's cultural, social and economic future.

Key Recommendations

- 1. Establish a National Cultural Systems Framework** to shift from program-based funding toward integrated, place-based cultural system design across cities and regions.
- 2. Create a Creative Ecosystem Infrastructure Program** to support the full cultural production environment, including studios, rehearsal spaces, venues, public art integration, fabrication facilities, adaptive re-use projects and digital creative infrastructure.
- 3. Embed Design as a Core Discipline in National Cultural Policy** by recognising design as a civic capability that connects cultural, economic, urban and social systems.
- 4. Develop a Regional Cultural Equity and Production Strategy** to address structural imbalances in touring, production, workforce development and cultural investment distribution across regional Australia.
- 5. Integrate Cultural Policy with Economic Development and Productivity Frameworks** to formally align cultural investment with innovation, workforce capability, regional economic development and productivity strategies.
- 6. Introduce Lifecycle Funding for Cultural Infrastructure** to extend investment beyond capital delivery to include programming, workforce development, revitalisation and long-term operational sustainability.
- 7. Recognise Arts, Culture, Heritage and Community Cultural Development as Social Infrastructure** by embedding cultural participation within national wellbeing, inclusion, mental health and social cohesion frameworks through sustained long-term investment.
- 8. Strengthen First Nations Cultural Infrastructure, Leadership and Creative Economy Pathways** through long-term, place-based investment in cultural infrastructure and self-determined creative economy pathways.
- 9. Establish a Clear National Vision for Heritage** embedding tangible and intangible heritage at the centre of national cultural policy through coordinated action, sustained investment and stronger integration across all levels of government.

Submission

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Greater Geelong welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy, building on the achievements of Revive: A Place for Every Story, a Story for Every Place.

Revive has successfully repositioned arts and culture as central to Australia's national identity, economy and wellbeing. The City strongly supports this direction and acknowledges the significant reforms already delivered.

As Victoria's largest regional city and Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Design, the greater Geelong region is experiencing rapid population growth, urban transformation and cultural expansion. This positions the City as a key environment where national cultural policy is both implemented and tested in real-world conditions.



Figure 1 Aerial view of Geelong waterfront and marina. *Image: City of Greater Geelong*

This submission provides a regional government perspective on:

- what is working under Revive
- what is changing in culture, creativity and place
- how culture, design and creativity function as integrated infrastructure systems
- and the priority directions required for the next stage of national policy.

B. WHAT IS WORKING UNDER REVIVE

The City of Greater Geelong recognises the strong foundations established through Revive and the progress

made in repositioning arts, culture and heritage within national policy and central to Australia's sustainable future.

Key improvements include strengthened recognition of artists and makers as workers and contributors to the national economy, improved coordination through Creative Australia and its specialist councils, and enhanced national attention to First Nations arts and cultural leadership.

Revive has strengthened and renewed support for regional touring, live music and community participation, contributing to a more visible and connected national cultural ecosystem beyond metropolitan centres.

Importantly, Revive includes explicit recognition of heritage, place-based interpretation, and collections, memory and storytelling as important cultural assets.

Overall, Revive has strengthened the framing of culture as essential to national identity, wellbeing and economic life, alongside ongoing evolution in funding and investment approaches. This has supported improved alignment between Commonwealth objectives and local government cultural planning, particularly in precinct activation and community-based cultural development.

C. WHAT IS CHANGING IN CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND PLACE

The cultural and creative sector is undergoing significant structural change that is reshaping how culture is produced, accessed, experienced and preserved.

Creative practice is increasingly hybrid, with artists, designers and creative workers operating across physical, digital and networked environments. While this expands reach and participation, it also increases pressure around income stability, rights management and sustainable career pathways.

Audience engagement is also changing. Cultural participation is now distributed across live, digital and hybrid formats, with increasing expectations for accessibility, localisation and participation. At the same time, discoverability has become a structural challenge for artists and organisations.

In regional cities such as Geelong, there is growing demand for locally embedded cultural experiences that reflect place identity, community connection and belonging. Cultural participation is increasingly understood not only as consumption but as civic participation in the life of place.

The heritage and collections sector is experiencing significant transformation as technological, economic and

social change reshapes how culture is created, preserved, shared and valued. For tangible heritage, institutions face rising costs of conservation, storage and climate adaptation, alongside increasing expectations for digitisation, access and contemporary relevance. Shifting development pressures and land-use priorities also continue to place historic places at risk. At the same time, collections and cultural institutions are increasingly expected to balance preservation with public access, relevance and engagement in evolving digital and physical contexts.

Intangible heritage faces parallel pressures, including the erosion of traditional knowledge and cultural practices, particularly where intergenerational transmission is disrupted, as well as the challenges of documenting, safeguarding and appropriately representing living cultural expressions in digital environments. Across both tangible and intangible heritage, organisations are navigating constrained funding, workforce capability gaps and evolving community expectations, requiring a careful balance between preservation, accessibility, inclusion and innovation within an increasingly complex cultural landscape.

These shifts are occurring alongside structural pressures, including rising costs for cultural organisations, institutions, and venues, limited access to affordable creative spaces, and increasing precarity in creative employment.

At the same time, cultural participation is playing a growing role in social cohesion and wellbeing, particularly in rapidly growing and changing communities where new residents are integrating into evolving urban environments.

Case Study: Cultural infrastructure in growth areas

Greater Geelong's rapid population growth, particularly in the Armstrong Creek growth area, highlights why cultural infrastructure must be planned and delivered alongside other essential community infrastructure from the outset.

As one of Victoria's largest designated growth areas, Armstrong Creek is accommodating substantial new residential development and population growth.

In this context, access to arts, culture and community-based creative activity is not an optional add-on; it is a practical part of building social connection, local identity and community participation in newly established neighbourhoods.

This case study demonstrates the need for national cultural policy to recognise community arts and cultural

development as essential social infrastructure in growth areas, and to support this through early, sustained investment that helps rapidly expanding regional cities foster cohesion, belonging and resilient communities.

D. CULTURE, DESIGN AND CREATIVITY AS INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

The City of Greater Geelong submits that arts, culture, design and creativity should be recognised as integrated national infrastructure systems that shape economic, social and urban outcomes. These systems operate across two interconnected domains.

The first is the cultural production system, comprising artists, designers, creative workers, organisations, institutions and infrastructure that enable cultural creation and expression.

The second is the cultural place system, comprising city centres, neighbourhoods, precincts and public spaces where cultural life is experienced, shared and embedded in everyday activity.

Design plays a critical role as the connective system between these domains. It operates as a civic capability that enables integration across cultural, urban, economic and social systems, particularly in the context of city shaping and infrastructure planning.

As Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Design, the City of Greater Geelong has been able to demonstrate how design can function as a practical mechanism for aligning cultural policy with broader government objectives, including urban renewal, economic development and social inclusion.



Figure 2 Geelong Arts Centre Photo: Peter Foster

Case Study: Design-led city transformation in Greater Geelong

Greater Geelong's designation as Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Design provides a practical model for embedding design within city governance and infrastructure planning.

Design is applied across urban development, public realm upgrades and precinct planning, including projects such as the Malop Street Green Spine, laneway revitalisation and the broader Arts and Culture Precinct.

These interventions form part of a coordinated approach to improving accessibility, liveability and economic activity within a growing regional city. The region is evolving as a centre for innovation across design, digital technologies and the creative industries, supported by a strong ecosystem of more than 5,200 businesses. The creative industries sector contributes approximately 5.5% of regional economic output and plays a significant role in shaping place identity, economic activity and innovation-led growth.

This demonstrates how design operates not only as a cultural discipline but as a civic capability that connects cultural production with economic development, innovation and place-based outcomes.

E. CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

While Revive recognises the economic contribution of arts, culture and heritage, there remains an opportunity to strengthen the integration between cultural policy and place-based economic development and productivity frameworks.

Across Greater Geelong, culture, design and creativity are not only cultural outcomes; they are enabling infrastructure for economic transformation, education and diversification.

Creative industries contribute directly to:

- city centre activation and precinct renewal
- tourism and visitor economy growth
- hospitality and night-time economy performance
- innovation capacity across multiple sectors
- talent attraction and workforce retention
- cross discipline skills development & workforce capability
- place identity and investment confidence

- enhancing cultural and creative engagement that supports collaboration, experimentation and innovation diffusion across sectors

Case Study: ROAM Geelong — cultural infrastructure, participation and city activation

ROAM Geelong demonstrates how integrated cultural programming can support cultural participation, city activation, tourism, creative production and place identity within a regional city context.

Presented by the City of Greater Geelong, ROAM transforms central Geelong's arts and cultural precinct into a large-scale, walkable cultural experience across public space, institutions, laneways and venues, combining performance, installation, digital art, music and storytelling.

Grounded in place-based cultural identity, ROAM centres local stories and creative voices, strengthening community connection and civic identity while enabling collaboration between local creatives, cultural institutions, Traditional Owners, community organisations and visiting artists.

The initiative demonstrates how cultural infrastructure extends beyond buildings to include programming, partnerships and public space activation. By connecting institutions including Geelong Arts Centre, Geelong Gallery and Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, ROAM strengthens visibility and participation across the precinct.

The inaugural one-day event attracted more than 18,000 attendees and generated an estimated \$2.3 million in economic impact, contributing to visitation, hospitality and city revitalisation.

ROAM illustrates how place-based cultural investment delivers interconnected social, cultural and economic outcomes within regional cities.



Figure 3 ROAM Geelong in Arts and Culture Precinct Photo: Peter Foster

Design-led and creative approaches also contribute to productivity improvements across sectors including health, education, construction, advanced manufacturing and digital industries through enhanced systems thinking, service design and innovation capacity. Research increasingly demonstrates that cultural and creative engagement strengthens workforce adaptability, critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving capability, while also supporting innovation diffusion across industries. In this context, creative industries contribute not only through the direct production of cultural content, products and services, but through broader economy-wide impacts that support workforce future-proofing, business innovation and productivity growth.

Cultural infrastructure, including design-integrated public realm improvements, public art, studios, venues, creative workplaces and cultural precincts, functions as economic infrastructure directly influencing small business growth, urban competitiveness, visitation, revitalisation and investment attraction. Public art and cultural projects also create opportunities for design innovation, experimentation with new materials and circular economy approaches, stimulating new creative practice, product development and cross-sector collaboration within the broader creative economy.

Case Study: Cultural infrastructure as economic catalyst in central Geelong

The transformation of central Geelong's Arts and Cultural precinct demonstrates the role of cultural infrastructure as a driver of economic activity and urban renewal.

Investment in the Geelong Arts Centre, alongside planned expansion of Geelong Gallery and delivery of the broader cultural precinct, is positioning the city centre as a major cultural and visitor destination.

These investments are linked to increased visitation and private sector investment, supporting a regional visitor economy that recorded 6.4 million visitors and \$1.83 billion in expenditure in 2023–24.

Cultural infrastructure development has also been identified as a catalyst for accommodation growth and broader CBD activation, demonstrating how arts investment and adaptive re-use of heritage assets can stimulate cross-sector economic outcomes in regional cities.

The City notes that current cultural policy settings do not yet fully integrate cultural investment with regional

economic development and productivity agendas at city scale. This represents a significant opportunity for the next phase of national policy.



Figure 4 JWA Architect concept design for Geelong Gallery expansion *Image: Courtesy Geelong Gallery*

F. COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) is a critical and increasingly essential component of Australia's cultural system.

Across Greater Geelong, community-led cultural practice plays a vital role in strengthening social connection, supporting inclusion and enabling participation across diverse and rapidly growing communities. These practices are often embedded in local settings and are highly responsive to community need, making them one of the most accessible and effective forms of cultural participation.

These practices:

- strengthen social cohesion and belonging
- support mental health and wellbeing
- reduce social isolation
- enable multicultural participation and understanding
- build civic engagement and community resilience

CACD operates as core social infrastructure, alongside libraries, parks, community centres and health services. It contributes directly to preventative wellbeing outcomes and supports how communities adapt, integrate and thrive through periods of rapid demographic and urban change.

Importantly, CACD is not a peripheral cultural program area but a foundational layer of social infrastructure, equivalent

in importance to libraries, schools, health and community services in enabling participation, cohesion and wellbeing in growing communities.

Greater Geelong also demonstrates that strong community cultural development ecosystems can evolve into internationally significant cultural leadership models while remaining grounded in local impact.

A key example is Back to Back Theatre, a Geelong-based company whose practice emerged from community cultural development and inclusive creative participation. Over time, it has developed into one of Australia's most internationally recognised theatre companies, presenting work on major global stages while maintaining a strong commitment to its local community, performers and inclusive creative practice.

This trajectory illustrates an important national point: when CACD is properly supported and sustained, it can generate outcomes that are simultaneously:

- locally grounded and socially impactful for participants and communities
- and internationally significant in artistic innovation, reputation and cultural diplomacy

It has received major international recognition, including the International Ibsen Award and the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale, placing it among the most significant contemporary theatre companies globally.

This trajectory demonstrates that regional cities are not secondary cultural markets but active production environments capable of generating internationally recognised creative work, export activity and cultural diplomacy outcomes when supported through long-term infrastructure and investment.

This dual impact reinforces that CACD is a core part of Australia's cultural ecosystem with the capacity to generate world-leading artistic outcomes.

In the context of rapid population growth and social change, this infrastructure is becoming increasingly important to how communities adapt, integrate and thrive.

The City therefore submits that Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) should be explicitly recognised in national cultural policy as essential social infrastructure, and supported through sustained, long-term investment models rather than short-term or project-based funding approaches.

G. KEY STRUCTURAL GAPS

From a regional city perspective, six key implementation gaps remain in the current national framework:

There is a place-based integration gap, where cultural policy is not yet consistently embedded in urban planning, housing, transport, economic development and broader city-making systems.

There is a creative ecosystem infrastructure and revitalisation gap, with insufficient investment in the production environments, creative revitalisation initiatives and cultural places that sustain ongoing cultural activity, including studios, rehearsal spaces, small venues, fabrication facilities, public art integration and digital production infrastructure.

There is an operational sustainability gap, where funding is often capital focused without sufficient support for ongoing programming, workforce development and the long-term viability of cultural organisations and places.

There is a regional equity gap, where access to touring, screen production opportunities, creative workforce pathways and investment remains uneven between

Case study: Regional cultural production with global impact

Back to Back Theatre also demonstrates the scale of cultural production and export that can be generated from a regional city through sustained, place-based investment.

The Geelong-based company has delivered more than 120 international seasons of its work and presented at leading global venues including the Edinburgh International Festival, the Barbican and the Kennedy Center.

metropolitan and regional locations despite growing demand and capability in regional cities.

There is a social infrastructure gap, where the contribution of arts, culture, heritage and community cultural development to wellbeing, inclusion, cohesion and civic participation is not yet consistently recognised or supported through sustained long-term investment within national infrastructure and policy settings.

There is a cultural infrastructure gap, where the provision, renewal and long-term maintenance of civic cultural facilities and collections including galleries, museums, libraries, performance venues, archives and digital collections, are not consistently supported through coordinated national investment, limiting the capacity of regional cities to meet growing community expectations, support revitalisation and safeguard cultural assets.

H. POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The next National Cultural Policy should build on Revive by addressing the key implementation gaps identified in this submission through a more integrated, place-based cultural systems approach.

This requires national policy settings that recognise arts, culture, heritage, design and creativity as interconnected infrastructure systems shaping cultural, social, economic and urban outcomes across cities and regions.

The policy should explicitly:

- embed design as a civic capability within national cultural policy and implementation frameworks
- strengthen investment in creative ecosystem infrastructure and revitalisation, including studios, rehearsal spaces, institutions, venues, public art integration, fabrication facilities, adaptive re-use projects and digital production environments
- integrate cultural policy with urban planning, economic development and broader place-based delivery systems
- introduce lifecycle funding approaches that support operational sustainability, programming and workforce development as well as capital investment
- recognise arts, culture, heritage and community cultural development as essential social infrastructure within wellbeing, inclusion and cohesion frameworks
- strengthen long-term, place-based First Nations cultural leadership through investment in cultural infrastructure,

creative practice and self-determined creative economy pathways

- advance regional equity by aligning cultural investment, touring, production and workforce pathways with the scale, demand and capability of regional cities
- support regional cities as co-designers and delivery environments for national cultural outcomes

These directions respond directly to the structural gaps identified in Section G, where current national settings remain fragmented across cultural, economic, infrastructure and social policy domains.

I. PRIORITY NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Greater Geelong recommends the Australian Government:

1. Establish a National Cultural Systems Framework

Shift from program-based cultural funding to integrated, place-based cultural systems design across cities and regions.

This recommendation responds directly to the implementation problem identified across sections D, E and G. While Revive has strengthened national cultural policy settings, the current framework still operates largely through discrete programs rather than through integrated city and regional systems. We know that the same cultural assets and activities contribute to precinct activation, participation, tourism, innovation and social connection. A national cultural systems framework would help government align these interconnected outcomes, reduce fragmentation between portfolios and support more coherent place-based delivery.

2. Create a Creative Ecosystem Infrastructure and Revitalisation Program

Support the full cultural production environment, including studios, rehearsal spaces, venues, fabrication spaces, public art integration, adaptive re-use projects and digital creative infrastructure.

This recommendation responds directly to the creative ecosystem infrastructure gap identified in Section G. While Revive has strengthened national cultural policy settings, investment remains concentrated in discrete projects or venue infrastructure rather than the broader production ecosystem that enables sustained cultural output, experimentation, revitalisation and innovation.

As outlined in Sections D and E, cultural production systems underpin economic activity, workforce capability, innovation and place-based outcomes. Public art, designed revitalisation and creative infrastructure projects also generate opportunities for experimentation with new materials, circular economy approaches and cross-sector collaboration.

Case studies including central Geelong and Back to Back Theatre demonstrate that long-term investment in production environments and revitalisation initiatives is essential to enabling regional creative capacity, economic diversification and globally relevant cultural production.

3. Embed Design as a Core Discipline in National Cultural Policy

Recognise design as a civic infrastructure capability connecting culture, economy, urban development and social systems.

As outlined in section D, design is not simply a sub-category of cultural production. It is a practical civic capability that connects cultural ambition with implementation in the built environment, public services, precincts and inclusive participation. Geelong's UNESCO Creative City of Design designation reflects the City's role in demonstrating how design can support urban renewal, service innovation, place identity and social inclusion. Explicitly recognising design within national cultural policy would better reflect the way contemporary cities integrate creativity with broader economic, social and spatial outcomes.

4. Develop a Regional Cultural Equity and Production Strategy

Address structural imbalances in touring, screen production, creative workforce development and cultural investment distribution so regional cities are supported in line with their scale, demand and delivery role.

This recommendation responds to the regional equity gap identified in sections C and G. Regional cities are experiencing growing demand for locally embedded cultural participation, yet access to production infrastructure, touring circuits, screen opportunities and sustainable career pathways remains uneven. Regional cities are not secondary markets, but active cultural production and delivery environments. A dedicated strategy would help align national investment more fairly

with where creative activity, audiences and growth are already occurring.

5. Integrate Cultural Policy with Economic Development and Productivity Frameworks

Formally align cultural investment with regional economic development strategies, recognising culture as enabling infrastructure for innovation, productivity and city competitiveness.

This recommendation responds to the integration gap identified in Sections E and G. While Revive recognises the economic contribution of arts and culture, current policy settings do not yet fully integrate cultural investment with broader economic development and productivity frameworks at a city and regional scale. As demonstrated in Geelong, culture, design and creative industries contribute directly to city centre activation, tourism, workforce attraction and cross-sector innovation, indicating that cultural policy must be embedded within economic policy to maximise national and regional productivity outcomes.

6. Introduce Lifecycle Funding for Cultural Infrastructure

Extend funding beyond capital investment to include operational sustainability, programming and workforce support.

This recommendation responds to the operational sustainability gap identified in Section G. Current funding approaches remain heavily focused on capital delivery, without sufficient support for the ongoing programming, workforce development and organisational stability required to sustain cultural activity over time. As outlined in Sections E and F, and demonstrated through case studies including cultural infrastructure investment in central Geelong and the sustained success of organisations such as Back to Back Theatre, long-term operational support is critical to ensuring that infrastructure investments translate into sustained participation, production and economic outcomes.

7. Recognise Arts, Culture and Community Cultural Development as Social Infrastructure

Embed cultural participation within national wellbeing, health and social cohesion frameworks, with explicit recognition of Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) as essential infrastructure.

This recommendation responds to the social infrastructure gap identified in Sections F and G. While cultural policy has increasingly acknowledged the social value of arts, culture and heritage, this recognition is not yet consistently matched by sustained, long-term investment frameworks. As demonstrated across Greater Geelong, community arts and cultural development plays a critical role in strengthening social cohesion, supporting mental health and enabling participation in rapidly growing and changing communities.

8. Strengthen First Nations Cultural Infrastructure, Leadership and Creative Economy Pathways

Support long-term, place-based First Nations cultural leadership through investment in cultural infrastructure, creative practice and self-determined economy pathways.

This recommendation builds on Revive and acknowledges the important role of national mechanisms such as the First Nations Board within Creative Australia and the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program. It identifies a gap between national leadership and program delivery and the sustained, place-based infrastructure required to support First Nations cultural and creative practice in regional contexts.

First Nations culture is central to place, identity and creative innovation. It is also a significant driver of emerging creative economy activity, where cultural expression, design, storytelling and enterprise intersect.

A strengthened national approach must be grounded in self-determined principles and respect for Traditional Owner leadership, ensuring First Nations communities define priorities and pathways for creative and economic development. This includes supporting long-term capability building that connects cultural strength with participation in creative industries and enterprise development.

Strengthening First Nations cultural infrastructure in this way supports cultural continuity, expands creative and economic opportunity, and builds stronger foundations for First Nations participation in Australia's cultural economy.

9. Establish a Clear National Vision for Heritage

Embedding heritage at the centre of cultural policy, supported by coordinated action, sustained investment, and stronger integration across all levels of government.

This recommendation ensures that the cultural, social and economic value of tangible and intangible heritage is

properly recognised, resourced and integrated across policy settings, particularly in growing regional cities.

Heritage also functions as a driver of urban regeneration, identity formation and cultural tourism, particularly in rapidly growing regional cities where adaptive reuse and interpretation play a key role in place-making and economic development. This aligns with broader sector calls for stronger federal leadership, highlighting the current fragmentation and under-recognition of heritage within national cultural policy.

For cities such as Greater Geelong, where significant investment is being made in the adaptive re-use and redevelopment of the heritage infrastructure and the long-term care, storage and interpretation of collections, a national framework would provide the strategic alignment, funding continuity and policy coherence needed to support both capital investment and ongoing stewardship.

A clear national vision would enable place-based, culturally grounded decision-making, ensuring that heritage is embedded not as a secondary consideration but as a central pillar of cultural policy supported by coordinated action across governments.

J. CONCLUSION

The next National Cultural Policy presents an opportunity to move from successful sector reform to integrated cultural systems design at a national scale.

The City of Greater Geelong strongly supports the achievements of Revive and recognises its significant contribution to strengthening Australia's cultural landscape.

The next phase must focus on implementation through place-based systems that connect culture, design, economy and social infrastructure in a coherent national framework.

Regional cities such as Geelong are essential to the success of national cultural policy because they are major sites of growth, participation, production and place-based delivery.

By recognising arts, culture, design and creativity as integrated infrastructure systems, Australia can deliver stronger regional equity, support First Nations cultural leadership and creative economy participation, and build more connected, resilient and productive communities.

The City of Greater Geelong stands ready to partner with the Australian Government in shaping and demonstrating this next chapter of national cultural policy.

This next phase requires cultural policy to operate as an integrated system connecting culture with Australia's economic, social and urban future.

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