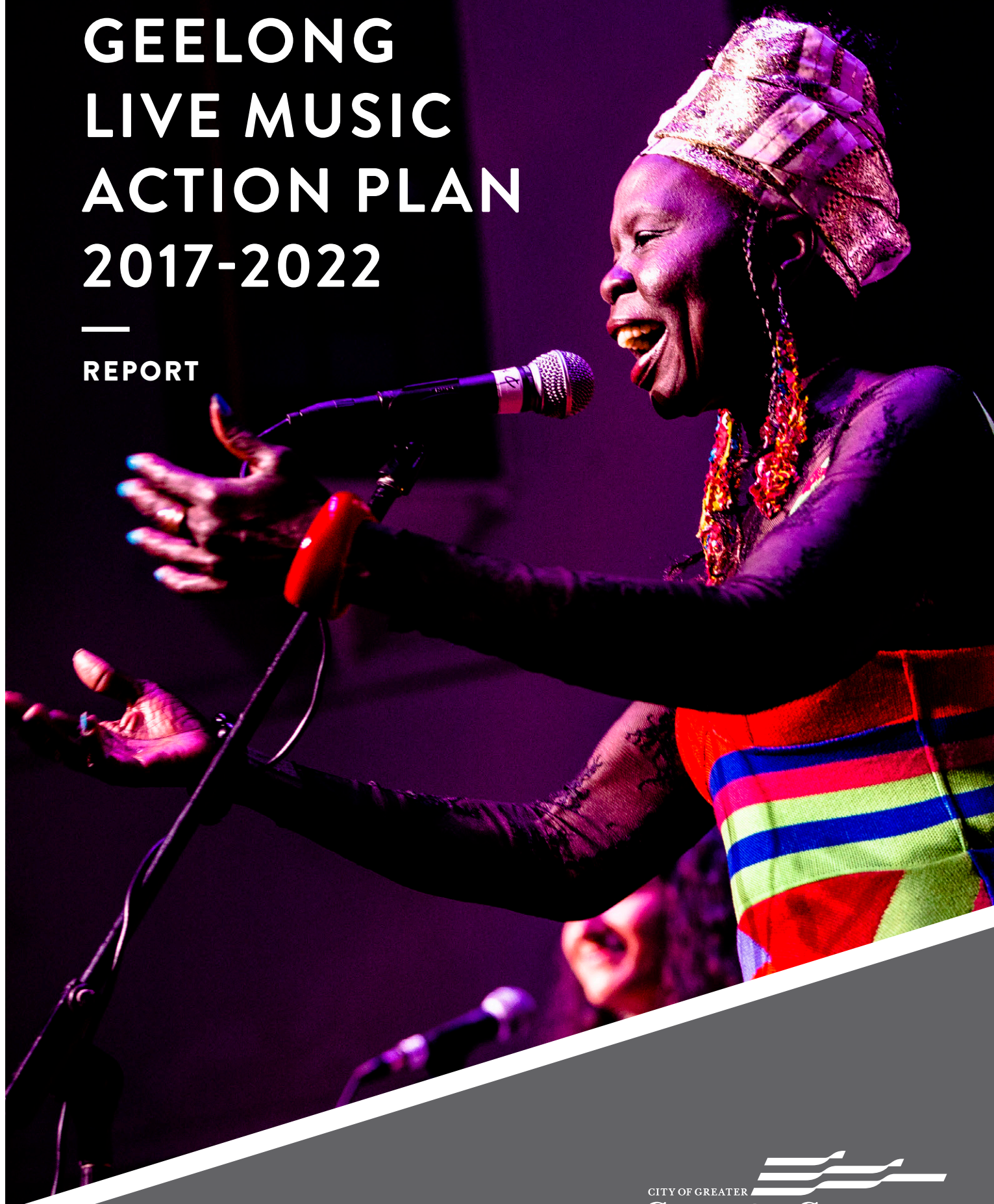


# CENTRAL GEE LONG LIVE MUSIC ACTION PLAN 2017-2022

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REPORT







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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

**Pictured on cover:** Music in Exile Ajak Kwai at Palais Geelong (photo credit: Lucinda Goodwin)

**Pictured left:** Jess Hitchcock performing at Billabong Songs in Johnstone Park as part of Surround Sounds Geelong and the Bellarine Music Festival, April 2022 (photo credit: Lucinda Goodwin)

**Pictured page 5 (Timeline):**

Top left: Lt Malop Street Activation (photo credit: Reg Ryan)

Middle left: Arts Industry Commission project, Unsettled at Portarlington Mill (photo credit: Mike Dugdale)

Top right: 2018 Connecting Song Mentors and Mentees with Cr Bruce Harwood (photo credit: Reg Ryan)

Middle right: Jamaican artist Flames Eye performing at Love Central Geelong Black Friday Christmas Night Markets, November 2022, Lt Malop Street Activation (photo credit: Reg Ryan)

# HIGHLIGHTS



## 1 Surround Sounds Geelong and the Bellarine Music Festival

Delivered inaugural Surround Sounds Geelong and the Bellarine Music Festival, 7 April to 8 May 2022, featuring 840 artists across 90 events in 35 different venues attracting an audience of over 14,200 people.



## 2 Folk Alliance International Exchange

US-based Folk Alliance International hosted its annual ExChange conference in Geelong, March 2020 featuring national and international artists and delegates, music showcases, professional development and networking opportunities for the local music sector.



## 3 It's Our Backyard: Outdoor Street Entertainment.

From April 2021 to April 2022, 591 live on street performances were delivered over eight locations, not exclusive to central Geelong. The locations included: Portarlington, Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads, Belmont, Highton. Pakington Street, (Geelong West and Chilwell), Lara and the Geelong Waterfront.



## 4 Connecting Song Mentorship

Six emerging artists mentored by six established artists to write, record, and film original songs.



## 5 Arts Grants – expanded our pandemic recovery investment in the local music industry

We invested over \$274k into our local music industry through grants between 2017-2022 and amended eligibility to provide access for local musicians and music-based businesses.



## 6 Geelong Livestreamed Concert

Curated a Greater Geelong program for the award-winning online music festival, Isol-Aid, featuring 10 Geelong-based artists, racking up over 18,000 global views.



2017

- ✦ The Central Geelong Live Music Action Plan 2017 is developed by a local steering committee and with input from 200+ stakeholders representing music, tourism, traders, planning, regulations and compliance, the local residential community, peak music industry bodies and state and federal government agencies.
- ✦ The plan is endorsed by Council on 20 September 2017.



- ✦ We provide support through funding and grants, as well as direct assistance to a range of music events and activities: increasing live music presence at Geelong After Dark; implementing local music mentorships as part of Mountain to Mouth; and developing a series of skills workshops, information sessions and industry connection and development events.



2018 – 2019

- ✦ The global pandemic impacts the live music community within our region, just as it does all music communities around the world.
- ✦ We focus our efforts on safe response and supported recovery through dedicated grants and development opportunities, such as COVID-19 Arts, Culture and Heritage Recovery Grants and the Arts Industry Commissions, changing the eligibility criteria to help more musicians and venues apply.



2020 – 2021

- ✦ We launch our *Arts and Culture Strategy 2021-2031*, which identifies that:
  - › “Geelong’s Creative Services sub-sector is a key growth area ... with a lively night-time music economy and a strong performing arts scene.”
  - › “Live Music will also continue to play a major role as a cultural and economic driver for the region with the Strategy providing a means to further influence Geelong’s Live Music Action Plan.”

- ✦ Live music activity is restored, but continues to need significant support from all levels of government. We continue to focus our efforts on recovery and building capability in the local music sector.
- ✦ We co-design and deliver the Surrounds Sounds major music festival across Greater Geelong in partnership with the local music community,
- ✦ We review the Central Geelong Live Music Plan to help us prepare for the next plan.

2022

# OVERVIEW

**As an organisation, we forged new ground in 2017 by developing a plan to support live music in conjunction with the local music community, as well as the broader music industry.**

The aim of the Central Geelong Live Music Action Plan 2017 was to align community, commercial and government efforts towards a more active, creative and sustainable live music culture in Geelong.

The initial focus was on optimising the night-time and music economy in Little Malop Street; however, by laying the foundations for a model at this scale, we hoped it could be expanded to other areas of Greater Geelong.

This report is intended to close out the plan and will capture what was delivered, while also reflecting on successes and areas for improvement.



# HOW THE PLAN WAS FORMED

Following a roundtable forum coordinated by Music Victoria in 2016, a working group was convened comprising Geelong business and tourism representatives, as well as local, state and national music industry and community representatives. To ensure alignment with broader council objectives and responsibilities, the group also included City representatives from our arts and culture, events, planning, tourism and compliance teams.

Following are some of the key findings made by the working group:

- Vibrant live music is an important aspect of local arts and culture, and makes a powerful and positive contribution to the economy and community.
- Live music spending in Australia results in a 3:1 benefit-to-cost ratio. The economic value of live music to the Greater Geelong community was therefore estimated to be at least \$150 million annually.
- Central Geelong has the fundamentals for an excellent live music scene, with Little Malop Street in particular emerging as a vibrant cluster for contemporary music and other entertainment that could engage music fans, casual attendees and tourists.

- The scale and consistency of audiences needed to sustain a good variety of live music experiences – both civic and commercial – was identified as a constraint.

The Council formally endorsed the plan in September 2017. It was expected that most identified actions could be supported within existing resources, although two high priority actions were identified as needing further funding.

Unfortunately, the global pandemic impacted our ability to implement the plan for about two years. Thankfully, the initial groundwork and relationships formed as a result of the plan helped us pivot quickly toward implementing various pandemic recovery programs to support the local live music sector.

As the plan developed and government efforts shifted due to the pandemic disruption, some of the action items were broadened to include the Greater Geelong area. Other actions were modified to better suit the often fast-changing circumstances.



Pictured: Parsnip at Arts Industry Commission project OK Motels Corio Bay Motel 2021 (photo credit: Patrick Callow)

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**This report is structured around the four key themes of the 2017 plan. The findings are sourced from two main channels of information – desktop review of a wide range of documentation and published information, as well as targeted stakeholder consultation.**

The goal is to articulate what was delivered and share anecdotal feedback on what worked well and what could be improved. The report is also an opportunity to share the outcomes with those who so generously contributed their time and feedback to the development and implementation of the plan.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we still managed to deliver actions within the four themes using a mix of direct delivery and support to the local music community.

- All feedback provided during consultation will be rolled over into the next phase of planning to help inform development of the next music plan. Broadly, consultation supported all four themes as being important for consideration in the next round of music planning.

## LIMITATIONS

Many of the people involved in developing or delivering the early stages of the plan are no longer available to provide feedback, having moved onto other roles, industries or locations. As such, some of the reflections gathered are broader than the original plan intended.

**“Since 2017, Geelong has become a vibrant hub of music for all ages and in such a short time, the programming and major events have brought opportunities for young musicians to perform at a variety of venues in and around the Geelong area. I believe the Live Music Action Plan has been successful and ongoing with the competitions, upcoming events and wonderful venues,” Gail Lambert, Soul Sister Swing**



Pictured: APRA AMCOS/Music Victoria forum Folk Alliance International Exchange 2020 (photo credit: David Harris)

**“Overall, [the Live Music Action Plan] is a great plan and really encouraging to see this taking shape and being supported,” Sandy Thompson, Manager Sweethearts Foundation Inc.**

# THEME 1 – BROADENING THE LIVE MUSIC PRESENCE WITHIN CENTRAL GEELONG



Pictured: Accordionist Lucy Riddett Lt Malop Street Activation (photo credit: Reg Ryan)

- Our 2021 Arts Industry Commissions supported the free all-ages Sweetfest in March 2022, as presented by the Sweethearts Foundation. The event, which was held in the Little Malop Street precinct and Johnstone Park Forecourt, celebrated national and local female musicians across four stages. It involved 120 female and female-led artists, attracting an audience of 1,200.
- Our Arts Industry Commissions supported OK Motels to develop and deliver a unique music event in North Geelong in April 2021.
- We delivered the inaugural Surround Sounds Geelong and the Bellarine Music Festival across four weeks – from Thursday 7 April to Sunday 8 May 2022. Co-designed with community, the event attracted over 14,200 attendees, engaging 840 artists in over 90 events across 35 venues and injected \$2.1m into the local economy.
- We provided ongoing sponsorship and funding support for Pistol Pete’s annual New Orleans-inspired music festival, Mardi Gras Street Music Festival in Little Malop Street, from 2018 to 2020.
- We supported the 2018, 2019 and 2021 Geelong’s Best Kid Busker Competition finals by providing a stage and sound equipment, and promoting the event as part of our Love Central Geelong Storyfest program.
- We supported the 2022 Geelong’s Best Busker Competition through the 2021 COVID-19 Arts, Culture and Heritage Recovery Grants. The event, held in December 2022, provided a platform for unsigned artists to showcase their talents to a previously untapped regional audience.
- We delivered Music in the City as part of the Place Management Program, creating cultural experiences for the community while also generating a new revenue stream for local musicians. We hosted 500 performances between June 2021 and June 2022, and 105 musicians performed in Little Malop Central between July and December 2022.
- We hosted 50+ laneway activations in the Piano Bar in Minns Place in 2020 and 2021.

# THEME 2 – DEVELOPING PLACES AND SPACES FOR LIVE MUSIC



- We continued engaging with traders and venues in the Little Malop Street precinct to explore live music opportunities and consider access issues.
- We continued engaging with the Victorian Government on a range of matters, including new planning policy and the development of the Geelong Arts Centre and Cultural Precinct.
- We endorsed the *City of Greater Geelong Arts and Cultural Strategy 2021–2031*, which stated that identifying live music precincts, using changes to planning provisions, was an opportunity to recognise the social, economic, and cultural benefits of live music.
- Our Business Concierge program continued to support small businesses, to navigate and coordinate the permits and approvals they needed to host events.
- Council considered potential sites for music event pre-approvals, including the Showgrounds, Sutcliffe Reserve and Eastern Gardens.

# THEME 3 – REDUCING BARRIERS TO AUDIENCE GROWTH



- We invited the Australian Music Vault to partner with us in curating and delivering the Geelong Music Bus Tours special event for Surround Sounds 2022, which was the first time the Melbourne music bus tour concept had been taken outside of Melbourne.
- We promoted local artists, by curating a Sounds of Geelong and Bellarine Program for the Isol-aid music streaming festival. The event, featuring 10 artists and 18,000+ global views, was a test case used to develop a business model of Isol-aid for other councils.
- We provided resources, such as the Music Toolkit and Arts Atlas, for local music businesses and musicians to help develop audiences and their business models.
- We advocated to featured local music in all local and state marketing campaigns.
- We successfully advocated for live music performances by local artists at both the Geelong Design Week and Geelong Small Business Festival opening events.

# THEME 4 – BACKING SUSTAINABLE MUSIC ENTERPRISES

Pictured: Juiceboxx at WavRiders, part of Surround Sounds Geelong and the Bellarine Music Festival 2022 (photo credit: David Harris)



- We hosted and coordinated a range of industry development activities including:
  - › directly supporting the process of developing ideas for funding applications (for venues, promoters and musicians)
  - › hosting information sessions by funding bodies such as Creative Victoria, Australia Council, APRA AMCOS, Regional Arts Victoria and Creative Partnerships
  - › grant writing workshops for live music venues, with approximately \$1 million coming back into the region in successful grants
  - › co-hosting Music Venues Day 2019 with Music Victoria, providing professional development and networking opportunities for venue owners and operators
  - › sharing regular updates about development opportunities shared with the local music industry.
- We partnered with Music Victoria and APRA AMCOS at the Folk Alliance International ExChange conference 2020 to deliver a publicity panel, networking event, and a 3-2-1 songwriting hub.
- We established six local music mentorships through the Connecting Song project.
- We designed, supported and facilitated First Nations music mentorships in partnership with Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation.
- We facilitated an event with Songlines, Strong Brother Strong Sister and Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre, to design and develop a First Nations music concert series. This facilitation included securing funding for representatives to attend the Barunga Festival, thus allowing them to conduct cultural exchange activities with the community.
- We organised free tickets for young First Nations musicians to attend major music festivals as a way of helping them further develop their understanding of potential opportunities, pathways and connections.
- We strengthened our partnership with The Push youth music organisation, bringing their regional tour to Geelong to conduct youth-focused music workshops.

Pictured: Singer-songwriter  
Riordan performing at  
Lt Malop Street Activation  
(photo credit: Reg Ryan)



- We established a partnership with Strong Brother Strong Sister to design and develop the Koori Youth Group Music Development Program. The aim was to support local First Nations young people to build their music confidence and capability.
- We worked in partnership with the FReeZA youth program to support delivery of Sniff-Fest at Drysdale Oval in 2021.
- We supported the Lost Lands Big Band and festival with rehearsal space and marketing support, thus creating an opportunity for local youth to be involved.
- Through the Geelong Major Events Committee (an official sub-committee of Council), we advocated for major tours to come to the region. The aim was to generate local economic benefit (with flow-on to the music community), enhance local community life and create opportunities to market our region outside of the municipality.
- We convened the Geelong Region Live Music Advisory Group in 2020 with 15 members and a focus on pandemic recovery activities.
- We were active participants in advocacy and policy forums, such as the Victorian Government Live Music Roundtable and music festival sub-committee, and the Music Victoria Regional Working Group.
- We continued to advocate for opportunities to promote live music events through the various channels and marketing campaigns conducted by Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine.
- We maintained a OneMusic license to ensure all recorded and live music featured within our programs and events is covered by the appropriate copyright and royalties license.
- We continued to advocate for local musicians to be included on our organisation's preferred supplier list, which now features over 18 musicians and 40 performers.
- We created a music category in our preferred supplier list for musicians to register their interest in being engaged by our organisation.

## PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

In addition to the activities listed under the key themes, we also provided a range of support for pandemic management and recovery, including:

- ongoing information updates on safety requirements as situations and associated rules changed
- business planning support to improve opportunity for successful funding applications
- support for local traders and musicians to establish parklets and alfresco areas as part of our pandemic recovery program
- offering two rounds of COVID-19 Arts, Culture and Heritage Recovery Grants.

# NEXT STEPS

We will commence community consultations in 2023 to develop a new music plan for our region.

## COMPILING THIS REPORT

As this plan was endorsed in 2017, many of the original stakeholders involved in developing the plan had moved into other roles or were not available.

Regardless, invitations were sent to a complete list of past and current stakeholders asking them to contribute. We also invited stakeholders who have more recently been involved in delivering aspects of live music activity in the Geelong region, and could therefore provide informed feedback.

An online survey was sent via email to stakeholders with an invitation to also participate in individual and group interviews in early November 2022.



Pictured: Central Geelong  
(photo credit: Pam Hutchinson)

## STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

- Music industry
  - › Booking agents
  - › Festival and event organisers
  - › Music industry
  - › Production
  - › Venues
  - › Arts
- Musicians and creatives
  - › Musicians, bands, groups
  - › Local music community
- Business community
  - › Business
  - › Property developers
- Community
  - › Youth
  - › Audiences (not included in this review)
- Government and non-government organisations
  - › Local – City of Greater Geelong
  - › State – Creative Victoria, Regional Development Victoria
  - › Federally funded – Live Music Office
  - › Peak bodies
  - › Funding bodies
- Media

## SOURCE INFORMATION FOR THE DESKTOP REVIEW

- *Central Geelong Live Music Action Plan 2017*
- Council briefings, minutes and reports (internal and external documents)
- Stakeholder surveys, forums and interviews
- Other local government live music plans and associated reports (publicly available)



Pictured: Fenn Wilson,  
showcase performance at Folk  
Alliance International Exchange  
Workers Club Geelong 2020  
(photo credit: David Harris)

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**CITY OF GREATER GEELONG**

WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY

PO Box 104

Geelong VIC 3220

**P:** 5272 5272

**E:** [contactus@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:contactus@geelongcity.vic.gov.au)

[www.geelongaustralia.com.au](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au)

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