



**Intelligent communities  
supporting creative industries**

Rural Councils Victoria



Stakeholder engagement & issues

Crisis management

Government relations

Relationship measurement



## About me

- 18 years in public relations specialising in government relations and stakeholder engagement
- Formerly Deputy Executive Director, Australian Retailers Association
- Currently Board member Australian Sporting Goods Association along with Nike, Adidas, Rebel Sport CEOs.
- Now working extensively in Local Government - manages Gippsland Local Govt Network and developed the Rural Retail Handbook
- Wrote the Gippsland Broadband Engagement Plan in 2012

## About the project

Rural Councils Victoria - 'Networked Rural Councils'  
*Intelligent Communities Supporting Creative Industries*

Recognises the broadband economy, in supporting innovation, skills and business growth, productivity and competitive advantage in creative industries in rural communities

The project has three parts.

- Economic analysis
- Opportunities paper
- A pilot project plan

# Creative industries in rural Victoria

## KEY FINDINGS FROM ESSENTIAL ECONOMICS

- Creative industries are transportable / flexible, create wealth and are not resource reliant
- 5,500 creative businesses (7% of all rural businesses)
- 11,030 rural residents are employed in the creative sector (3.5% of all rural workers)
- Only 6,860 creative sector jobs are provided in rural areas
- 12,360 rural workers are occupied in creative activities (3.9% of all workers)
- Only 8,470 of these creative people undertake their work in rural locations.
- \$710 million pa in Gross Value Add is generated by the rural Creative Sector (3.7% of total state GVA for the sector)

## Creative industries in rural Victoria

Compared to non-creative rural workers, rural creative workers:

- Have higher patterns of relocation (migration) from metropolitan Melbourne, interstate or overseas.
- Enter the labour force at an older age, but continue working longer in life.
- Have higher levels of education, spread widely across a range of disciplines.
- Have higher levels of full-time employment, work longer weekly hours.
- Have a higher propensity of business ownership and self-employment.
- Earn considerably higher incomes.
- Have significantly higher levels of volunteerism.

# Creative industries opportunities

## OPPORTUNITIES PAPER - FOUR KEY IDEAS

- Teleworking
- Creative hubs / co-working spaces
- Creative champions
- Capability building (in a digital landscape)

## Teleworking

- One in four employed Australians could be working from home by 2050
- More rural residents will work from their home town
- Rural areas will be more appealing to people considering relocating.
- 10% increase in the number of Australians who telework half their working hours would add up to \$1.9 billion a year to the economy and cut traffic congestion costs by about \$470 million.
- In 2006 only about 6% of workers in Australia had teleworking arrangements with their employer (US 11%)

## Teleworking

### Benefits of teleworking in rural / regional areas

- New employment and economic stimulation
- Increased demand for ICT services, retail
- Greater work life balance
- Reduced fuel costs and peak demand on public transport & roads
- Greater workforce participation - people with disabilities, parents

### Challenges

- Isolation
- Organisational culture and change
- Team based projects





## Creative hubs / co-working spaces

- Creative hubs, co-working spaces, digital hot houses, incubators
- Informal community meeting places where like-minded people can get share ideas and collaborate.
- Office facilities equipped with digital connectivity, ICT, meeting room facilities, kitchens.
- Access to public transport, parking and great coffee.
- Resolve some of the limitations of working from home (social isolation, lack of dedicated office facilities) while achieving the benefits of teleworking (working 'out of office').  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=le0dfcG\\_jVw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=le0dfcG_jVw)

## Creative hubs

### EXAMPLES:

- Six Degrees Co-working space trial (Coffs Harbour)
- The Hub (Melbourne)
- Digital work hubs (Sunshine Coast)
- Work Club (Gold Coast)
- Fishburners (Sydney)

## Creative champions

### OPPORTUNITY

- Baby boomers strongly represented in the creative industries of rural communities
- Rural councils can harness:
  - The capacity and willingness of these people to volunteer to help bolster their creative sectors.
  - Boomers' skills and experience in a program to identify, recruit and support creative industries workers through mentoring
- Link the *Creative Champions* to *Creative Hubs* and *Capability Building*

## Creative champions

### EXAMPLES:

- **Mentors** - DBCDE's Broadband Champions program, Digital Brisbane Strategy
- **Capability builders** - Accredited training or less formal sessions
- **Collaborators** - Jellies or creative hubs
- **Advocates** - Presentations and other opportunities with stakeholders and government

## Capability building

### OPPORTUNITY

- Small businesses that fully embrace the digital economy achieve \*
  - 20% increase in annual revenue
  - More diverse revenue sources
  - Stronger growth prospects
  - A larger customer base.
- Digital economy strategies are particularly important for rural creative businesses because it enables them to significantly expand their opportunity and reach, overcoming 'tyranny of distance' issues to connect with their market wherever it is in the world.

*\*Deloitte Connected Small Business 2013*

# Capability building

## EXAMPLES

- Laneway Learning in Melbourne
- Small Business Victoria workshops & Mobile Business Centres
- Broadband Today Alliance
- Get up to speed - Creative Collective

# Capability building

## PILOT PROJECT

- Supporting co-working spaces
- Call for EOIs
- Trial across several sites



# Questions

Jennifer Cromarty, Director  
Socom

- [www.socom.com.au](http://www.socom.com.au)
- Twitter: @jencromarty
- [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)