

GEELONG DESIGN WEEK



2026 GEELONG DESIGN WEEK EVENT BRIEF

Geelong Design Week is a biennial event that celebrates Geelong's UNESCO City of Design status by offering a vibrant array of workshops, exhibitions, and talks that highlight cutting-edge innovation, sustainable practices, and creative problem-solving across multiple design disciplines. This event brings the community together and connects Geelong with the world, showcasing its creativity and design excellence.

This year's event will be held from **Thursday 1 October - Sunday 11 October 2026** featuring the inaugural Victorian Regional Design Fair from 1-4 October at the newly opened Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) will be open from **Wednesday 25 February – Sunday 29 March 2026** for any individuals, groups, collectives, networks, organisations or businesses to submit their interest in sharing their design projects/business or hosting their design event as part of the program.

BE PART OF GEELONG UNESCO CITY OF DESIGN

Geelong is Australia's first UNESCO City of Design, recognised for creativity, innovation, and using design to shape sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant communities. It is home to a rich history of design and creativity, and driving better outcomes for our community across architecture, industry, public spaces and culture.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Geelong Design Week is your chance to showcase your ideas, connect with industry leaders, and engage a city-wide audience in Victoria's largest regional design celebration. Whether you're an emerging designer, creative business, or community group, this is an opportunity to grow your network, gain exposure, and be part of a program that celebrates innovation, creativity, and the power of design.

GEELONG DESIGN WEEK GOALS

As a proud UNESCO City of Design, Geelong is committed to showcasing the power of design to shape a sustainable, creative and connected future.

The following goals guide the development of the 2026 Geelong Design Week program and will help shape the selection of events, projects and partnerships. We encourage EOI submissions that align with one or more of these ambitions:

1. Elevate the Value of Design

Increase public awareness and appreciation of the impact of design across everyday life, industry, culture and community.

2. Champion Creativity and Innovation

Showcase bold ideas, creative experimentation and innovative practice across diverse design disciplines.

3. Strengthen Community Connection

Create opportunities for collaboration and exchange between designers, creatives, industry, entrepreneurs, students and the wider community.

4. Celebrate Local Talent

Highlight and promote the work of designers, artists and innovators from Greater Geelong and the region, supporting visibility and professional growth.

5. Educate and Inspire

Offer accessible learning experiences that introduce audiences of all ages to design thinking, creative processes and emerging practices.

6. Support Economic and Industry Growth

Position Greater Geelong as a thriving centre for design excellence, attracting investment, talent and new opportunities to the region.

7. Foster International Exchange

Encourage global collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, strengthening partnerships and expanding Geelong's international reach.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Geelong Design Week promotes the value of design and creativity to a diverse range of audiences, including creative professionals, industry stakeholders, local communities, visitors, government, and media, connecting them through programs that showcase and celebrate design excellence.

The target audiences for Geelong Design Week typically includes:

Design Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architects • Graphic designers • Industrial designers • Urban planners
Creative Industry Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists • Designers • Curators and gallery owners • Craftspeople and makers
Business and Industry Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs and startups in the creative sector • Corporate leaders interested in design innovation • Developers, investors and venture capitalists
Local Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents of Geelong and surrounding areas • Local businesses and community groups • Families and individuals interested in design and creativity
Tourists and Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic and international tourists with an interest in design and culture • Travel and lifestyle enthusiasts
Government and Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government officials • Policy makers focused on urban development and cultural affairs
Media and Press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists and bloggers covering design, architecture, and cultural events • Influencers and social media personalities

OPEN PROGRAM (City-wide, independent events)

From 1–11 October 2026, Geelong Design Week’s Open Program invites businesses, creatives, students, and the community to showcase design projects and ideas across Greater Geelong. Events can be held anywhere from studios, schools, galleries, public spaces, or online and are fully hosted and managed by the organisers, who take care of planning, venue management, marketing, accessibility, risk management, permits (if required) and staffing. Events may be delivered at any time between 1 and 11 October 2026.

Events may include exhibitions, workshops, talks, tours, collaborations, cultural events, interactive experiences, projections, pop-up activations or forums, presented either in-person, online or as hybrid formats.

In curating the Open Program, priority will be given to events that align with Geelong’s four Areas of Focus as a UNESCO City of Design:

- Built and Natural Environment
- Arts, Design and Creativity
- Education, Research and Knowledge
- Sustainability and Circularity

The Open Program is designed to be inclusive, diverse and city-wide enabling the design community and broader public to actively contribute to and shape Geelong Design Week.

These focus areas help shape the program by highlighting best-practice projects, research and initiatives throughout Geelong Design Week, showcasing excellence and innovation across each domain.

The examples below illustrate examples of the types of design projects we encourage, offering guidance and inspiration for potential event submissions.

- Designing for the Future: Innovation and Sustainability
- Community-Centric Urban Development
- Heritage and Modernity: Blending Old and New
- Designing Smart and Connected Cities
- Ecological Design and Green Urbanism
- Art, Culture, and Public Spaces
- Resilient Design in the Face of Climate Change
- Collaborative Design Practices and Partnerships
- Innovative Education Models in Design
- Bridging Academia and Industry in Design Research
- Community-Driven Knowledge Sharing
- Design as a Catalyst for Research and Innovation
- Digital Platforms for Knowledge Dissemination
- Exploring the Future of Design Education
- Interdisciplinary Research in Design and Technology
- Empowering Communities through Design Knowledge
- Sustainable Design Practices for Urban Living
- Innovations in Circular Economy and Design
- Designing Zero-Waste Communities
- Eco-Friendly Materials and Sustainable Production
- Circular Design Thinking in Industry
- Green Technology and Smart City Solutions
- Community-Led Sustainability Initiatives
- Design for Climate Action and Resilience
- Designing for Human Health and Wellbeing
- Socially Inclusive and Equitable Design Practices
- Economic Opportunities in Sustainable Design
- Ecological Urbanism and Green Infrastructure
- Community-Driven Sustainability Projects
- Designing Resilient and Adaptable Cities
- Cross-Sector Collaboration for Sustainable Development
- Emerging Trends in Art and Design
- Integrating Creativity in Urban Development
- Design for Social Impact and Inclusion
- Art and Technology: The Future of Creativity
- Sustainable and Ethical Design Practices
- Celebrating Local Talent and Global Inspirations
- Interactive Workshops and Hands-On Design Challenges
- Creative Collaborations and Partnerships
- Exploring New Mediums and Techniques in Art
- Fostering Innovation through Design Thinking

Open Program Participation

Program	Benefits	Inclusions	Fees
Open program	Managed by the individual / business/group including venue selection and event design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion• Venue selection support if required• Ticketing support• Geelong Design Week banners• Event coordination support if required	At individual / business expense

VICTORIAN REGIONAL DESIGN FAIR (central hub, curated opportunities)

As Victoria's largest regional city and a UNESCO City of Design, Geelong is proud to provide a platform for regional designers from across the state to showcase their talent, connect with new audiences, and explore commercial opportunities. The inaugural Victorian Regional Design Fair, hosted at the newly opened Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre from 1-4 October 2026, will officially launch Geelong Design Week and act as a central hub for design excellence, networking, and industry engagement.

The Fair will increase visibility for Victorian regional designers through a range of initiatives:

- **Geelong Design Trade Showcase** – an exclusive expo of Greater Geelong-based brands, makers, universities, manufacturers, architects, interior, landscape, graphic, fashion, and digital designers, furniture makers, and other design practitioners, including buyer and supplier matchmaking.
- **Victorian Regional Design Exhibition** – featuring a curated selection of objects and works by independent and emerging designers from regional Victoria across multiple design disciplines. (*Invitation only*)
- **Design Pop-up Shop** – a curated retail space where visitors can purchase distinctive design products while supporting local and regional creative talent.
- **Talks & Panels** – live discussions and thought leadership events as part of the GDW program, connecting designers with industry insights.

This Fair positions Geelong as a statewide design hub, offering meaningful opportunities for regional designers to showcase their work, grow their networks, and engage with both the industry and the wider community.

GEELONG DESIGN TRADE SHOWCASE

The Geelong Design Trade Showcase is an exclusive expo within the Exhibition Halls of the newly opened Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre, providing a central platform for Greater Geelong-based brands, makers, universities, manufacturers, architects, interior, landscape, graphic, fashion, and digital designers, furniture makers, and other design practitioners.

This curated trade environment connects designers directly with buyers, suppliers, and industry professionals through networking and matchmaking opportunities, helping to foster new commercial relationships and business growth. Participants can choose from 3 x 3 m booth spaces or larger, with options for enhanced positioning and display infrastructure to suit their needs.

The Trade Showcase provides a professional, high-profile setting for presenting products, prototypes, and projects, and includes:

- Curated exhibition space tailored to your design discipline
- Enhanced marketing and promotion across Geelong Design Week channels
- Setup and infrastructure support, including furniture, lighting, and power
- Access to buyer and supplier matchmaking to explore commercial opportunities
- Inclusion in the official program and event listings

This platform is designed to showcase the best and breadth of Geelong design, increase visibility for local practitioners, and connect your work to a broader professional and public audience.

VICTORIAN REGIONAL DESIGN EXHIBITION

The Victorian Regional Design Exhibition is a curated showcase of objects and works by independent and emerging designers from Greater Geelong and across regional Victoria, presented within the Exhibition Halls of the newly opened Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre.

This year's exhibition has been carefully curated by our Guest Curator Ren Inei, who has handpicked design objects spanning multiple disciplines, highlighting innovation, creativity, and excellence from the region. Selected works may be available for sale, offering visitors the opportunity to support local and regional designers while engaging with cutting-edge design.

The exhibition provides a high-profile platform to celebrate emerging talent, connect designers with audiences, and position their work alongside the best of regional Victorian design.
(Participation in this exhibition is by invitation only)

DESIGN POP-UP SHOP

The Design Pop-up Shop offers designers a unique opportunity to showcase and sell their products while gaining exposure to a wide audience of design enthusiasts, industry professionals, and visitors. This curated retail space highlights high-quality, well-designed products and design books that are developed or designed in Greater Geelong or regional Victoria.

We are seeking items that are professionally manufactured in multiples—handmade items in polymer clay or similar low-volume crafts are not eligible. The Pop-up Shop provides:

- Curated retail space within the Victorian Regional Design Fair
- Products sold on your behalf, with a 10% commission applied
- Basic infrastructure support, including display and signage assistance

All applications are subject to a selection process, ensuring a cohesive, high-quality retail experience that reflects the innovation and design excellence of the region.

TALKS & PANELS

Geelong Design Week provides a platform for live discussions and panel sessions that connect designers, industry professionals, and audiences, offering opportunities to share insights, showcase thought leadership, and explore current topics and challenges in design.

Sessions are free to nominate, allowing individuals or organisations to propose speakers, discussion topics, or industry issues for consideration. Talks and panels can be delivered as part of the Victorian Regional Design Fair at the new Nyaal Banyul Convention and Event Centre (1–4 October) or as part of the city-wide Open Program (1–11 October).

Selected talks and panels receive:

- Promotion through Geelong Design Week channels, reaching local, regional, and national audiences
- Access to engaged audiences and networking opportunities
- Support for session planning and delivery (*speaker fees available where applicable*)

This program enables participants to contribute to meaningful conversations in design, foster knowledge exchange, and strengthen connections across the creative and professional community.

PARTICIPATE IN THE VICTORIAN REGIONAL DESIGN FAIR

The Fair provides increased visibility and opportunities for Victorian regional designers through a range of curated initiatives:

Opportunity	Benefits	Inclusions	Fees
Geelong Design Trade Showcase (Exhibitor)	Extend your network, potential sales, audience growth, being part of the UNESCO City of Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 sqm space • Priority positioning • Enhanced marketing and promotion • Curatorial support • Setup assistance • Basic furniture, lighting, and power 	\$1,500 + GST
Victorian Regional Design Exhibition (Emerging Designers)	Extend network, potential sales, audience growth, being part of the UNESCO City of Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 sqm curated space • Marketing and promotion • Inclusion in invitation-only exhibition 	Invitation only
Design Pop-up Shop	Sales potential, exposure, support for local/regional creative talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curated retail space • Selected products sold on your behalf (10% commission) • Basic infrastructure support provided • Live discussion or panel session 	Selection process; commission applied
Talks & Panels	Connect with industry, gain insights, showcase thought leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion through GDW channels • Access to audience and networking opportunities 	Speaker fees available

VICTORIAN REGIONAL DESIGN FAIR IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Dates:** Thursday 1 to Sunday 4 October 2026
- **Location:** Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre (80 Western Beach Rd, Geelong VIC 3220)
- **Bump In:** Wednesday 30 September 2026 (from 9am)
- **Bump Out:** Sunday 4 October 2026 (from 5pm)

MARKETING AND PROMOTION SUPPORT

As part of the Geelong Design Week program, the GDW team will actively promote participating events and Fair inclusions to help maximise reach and audience engagement. Support includes:

- Feature placement on the official GDW website and program listings, showcasing events to local, regional, and national audiences.
- Digital marketing campaigns including social media promotion across key platforms, targeted eDMs to subscriber lists, and regular program highlights in event communications.
- Local media and PR support to amplify event activity in community press, cultural outlets, and design networks.
- Shared assets and guidelines such as use of the official GDW logo, marketing templates, and co-branded materials to support event hosts' own outreach efforts.

This coordinated promotional approach helps build visibility for your project, attract diverse audiences, and connect your work to the broader momentum of Geelong's UNESCO City of Design celebration.

SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

As part of Geelong's identity as a UNESCO City of Design, sustainability is a core focus of Geelong Design Week. Events and projects that embrace environmentally responsible practices are encouraged and supported. Initiatives may include:

- Use of sustainable materials and low-impact production in exhibitions, workshops, and installations.
- Design practices that advocate circular economy principles, waste reduction, and resource efficiency. Community sustainability talks and panels during GDW frequently feature themes like ecological design, green urbanism, and sustainability in fashion and textiles.

- Encouraging event hosts to adopt environmentally considerate strategies in planning and delivery—such as minimising single-use plastics, prioritising recycling, and reducing energy usage—aligned with GDW’s broader commitment to design for sustainability.

Highlighting these practices helps position your event within Geelong Design Week’s vision of thoughtful, innovative design that contributes to social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

MEASURING IMPACT

Geelong Design Week is committed to delivering meaningful cultural, educational and economic outcomes. As part of our evaluation process, we measure:

- Audience attendance and engagement
- Educational participation and professional development outcomes
- Economic and tourism impact
- Media coverage and digital reach
- Participant, partner and audience feedback

This evaluation helps us continually strengthen the event and ensure it delivers long-term value for the Greater Geelong community and creative sector.

HOW WE SELECT AND CURATE THE PROGRAM

Geelong Design Week is carefully curated through the Expressions of Interest received to ensure a dynamic, high-quality and inclusive program that reflects Geelong’s designation as a UNESCO City of Design.

When assessing EOIs, a selection panel look for proposals that contribute to a diverse and engaging program. This includes exhibitions, workshops, talks, installations, interactive experiences and industry events that appeal to a broad range of audiences from design professionals and students to families, businesses and the wider community.

We prioritise submissions that:

- Showcase local and regional talent
- Demonstrate strong design thinking, innovation and creative excellence
- Highlight sustainable and environmentally responsible design practices
- Encourage community participation and meaningful engagement
- Foster collaboration across sectors, including partnerships with local businesses, schools, cultural organisations and industry
- Contribute to Geelong’s national and international design profile

We also consider how each proposal supports accessibility and inclusion, ensuring the program is welcoming to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

QUESTIONS OR IDEAS? LET'S CHAT

The Geelong Design Week team are happy to discuss your project ideas to support the completion of your EOI. Ideas do not need to be fully resolved or confirmed, the EOI is simply an expression of interest.

Assessment of EOIs will take place on **Monday 30 March 2026**, with notifications sent by **Friday 10 April 2026**. For any queries or to discuss your idea, please contact the team at info@geelongdesignweek.com.au.

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