

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing
Minister for Creative Industries



Tuesday, 1 April 2025

NEW VENUE TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO FORMER CHURCH

Geelong Arts Centre continues to strengthen its position as Australia's biggest regional performing arts centre with construction underway to transform a former church into a new and affordable live performance venue.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks today announced the Ryrie Street facility will become a dedicated space for live music, comedy, theatre, dance and performance.

After years of being concealed behind the former Band of Hope building, the heritage church facade dating back 1857 was restored and revealed as part of the two-staged \$180 million redevelopment of Geelong Arts Centre, backed by the Labor Government.

It will remain a defining feature of the unique venue, set to open next year.

Geelong Arts Centre recently appointed award-winning local builders, Plan Group, to deliver the interior redevelopment project alongside LIMINAL Architecture. Work will include significant structural renovations, acoustic enhancements, and upgrades to create a fit-for-purpose performance space.

The church redevelopment project has been enabled by the generosity of many donors through Geelong Arts Centre's The Church Giving Campaign.

In addition to the construction project, funds raised will support essential operational and audio equipment and ensure that Geelong Arts Centre can offer the new venue at affordable rates.

For further information and for updates on the redevelopment visit geelongartscentre.org.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

"We have been proud to invest in Geelong Arts Centre's transformation into the largest dedicated regional arts centre in Australia, and an extraordinary creative hub for the Geelong region."

"This transformation was always a partnership with the community, and I welcome the generous donors and supporters who have contributed to The Church Giving Campaign."

"It is wonderful that this historic venue will now help to shape the future of our talented artists and performers."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"This exciting redevelopment will preserve Geelong's heritage while creating a vibrant, accessible, and affordable performance space that strengthens our city's reputation as a thriving creative hub."

Quote attributable to Chair, Geelong Performing Arts Trust, Lesley Alway

"We are very grateful for the generosity of our philanthropic supporters who have made this milestone possible. Together we share a deep commitment to preserving The Church's rich history while celebrating its rebirth as a vibrant hub for Geelong's emerging musical artists."

Quote attributable to CEO and Creative Director, Geelong Arts Centre Rhys Holden

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“We’ve listened to our local musicians and artists, and we know that access to affordable performance spaces is key to fostering a thriving creative scene. This venue will serve as an incubator for live performance, ensuring emerging talent has the space and support needed to develop and showcase their work.”