

February 2016

## **Geelong's metamorphosis as an engaging cultural hub**

The regional city of Geelong, which has a strong manufacturing history, is turning over a new leaf and emerging as a cultural tourism destination. The new \$45 million nine-story architecturally designed library recently opened its doors, there is an emergence of new galleries and the city will play host to two world-class exhibitions and three vibrant arts and culture focused events over the coming months.

Everything in the cultural hub located around the library and gallery is within easy walking distance and visitors will be amazed at how much cultural interaction can be achieved in just one day. There is a cultural buzz in Geelong which makes it well worth a visit in more ways than one.

### **Exhibitions**

Geelong's National Wool Museum will be the first venue in Australia to host the [Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015](#) exhibition. This spectacular exhibition from the Natural History Museum, London runs from January 29 to May 15. The exhibition showcases wildlife images from all over the world and features the best of the best images. See wrestling komodo dragons, egrets, thirsty squirrels and eerie octopus. Open daily, entry to the exhibition is included in entry to the National Wool Museum (\$8.25 for adults, \$4.50 for children). *26 Moorabool Street, Geelong*

One of Australia's best known and most influential landscape painters, Sir Arthur Streeton, is the focus of an exhibition at the Geelong Gallery, on display from 27 February to 13 June. [Land of the Golden Fleece – Arthur Streeton in the Western District](#) brings together works by this much-loved artist. This highly anticipated exhibition will focus on his landscape paintings of Victoria's Western District where he was born, and associated coastal vistas, from 1920 to 1932 and following the artist's return from an extended period in Europe. Entry to the exhibition is \$10 for Geelong Gallery members, \$13 for adults and \$5 for children. *55 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

### **Events**

The long established [Pako Festa](#) returns to Geelong's cosmopolitan Pakington Street on Saturday 27 February. This much loved, free, annual community arts festival incorporates an extravagant street parade featuring around ninety floats and hundreds of performers representing ethnic communities and other community groups and organisations. Six separate stages in the precinct will offer performances of music and dance as well as interactive workshops and exhibitions.

In May Geelong will host two events designed to celebrate the city's vibrant arts scene. [Geelong After Dark](#) is central Geelong's award winning, free pop up night of arts. Taking place on Friday 6

May, this annual event takes over the CBD's streets and laneways after dark, with a jam-packed program of exciting, unique and surprising art installations and pop up performances.

Taking place over the same weekend (6-7 May), [Mountain to Mouth](#) (M~M2016) is an 80km Extreme Arts Walk. The event is a two day journey of discovery that will see participants walk from the You Yangs mountain range, crossing Geelong's industrial heartland at nightfall and arriving into the city centre to collide with Geelong After Dark. The next day, walkers will follow the Bellarine Rail Trail to Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale before following the sea to the river mouth at Barwon Heads at sunset. Walkers have the choice of walking the full distance, or choosing the distance and challenge of sections of the 80km course. The route is punctuated with edgy artworks commissioned especially for M~M.

### **Cultural offerings**

The new [Geelong Library and Heritage Centre](#) which opened in November is a spectacular addition to the city's cultural landscape. The magnificent nine-storey dome structure features state-of-the-art facilities, an event space, children's tactile area, archive collection, café and of course a library. In keeping with the magnificent dome structures of libraries and museums around the world, Geelong's newest building takes on a modern edge. Free tours run daily at 11am and 3pm. *51 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

The [Geelong Performing Arts Centre](#) (GPAC) is located opposite the library and Geelong Gallery. It hosts a huge number of shows, including theatre, opera, dance, comedy and live music. GPAC punches well above its weight in terms of performing arts and events offering big name acts, emerging artists and blockbuster shows. *50 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

Just out of town is [Narana Creations](#), an Aboriginal Cultural Centre that offers free visitor programs and an annual arts and music festival. Here visitors will find a gallery, native garden, retail space, café and performing arts area. *410 Torquay Rd, Grovedale*

### **Geelong Galleries**

[Geelong Gallery](#), first established in 1896, is located in the heart of Geelong's cultural precinct. As well as hosting the upcoming Arthur Streeton exhibition, the Gallery is home to an impressive collection of 19th and 20th century Australian and European paintings and decorative arts. The Gallery has a particular focus on early images of the Geelong region and hosts a rotating roster of exhibitions. Open daily, entry is free (*note: Arthur Streeton exhibition is a paid exhibition*). *55 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

[Metropolis Gallery](#), a stone's throw from Geelong's cultural hub, is a contemporary art gallery with an impressive range of Australian paintings, limited edition prints, art glass and jewellery by local and national artists. The Gallery has an exciting calendar of exhibitions, starting the year with their annual *Summer Salon Show* which includes works by many artists represented at the gallery. Open from Monday to Saturday, entry is free. *64 Ryrie Street, Geelong*

[Boom Gallery](#), located just off Pakington Street near the Barwon River in Newtown, is a vibrant contemporary art and design gallery housed in an historic woollen mill. The work of emerging and established artists is presented here and they also have a large stockroom and an education and

workshop space. Boom also has an onsite café and events space and is one of the city's most dynamic galleries. Open from Monday to Saturday, entry is free. *11 Rutland St, Newtown*

### **Little Mallop Street**

Once visitors have satisfied their cultural fix, hunger cravings can be fulfilled in the Little Mallop Street precinct, which is an extension of Geelong's cultural hub and home to colourful street art.

[Craft Space](#) is a brand new café and creative studio serving delicious fare and offering creative craft classes and workshops for adults and children. Guests can enjoy Industry Beans coffee, specialty teas, organic treats and daily food specials as they discover their creative side. *87 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

The [Hot Chicken Project](#), by highly acclaimed local chef Aaron Turner, is a delightful white-walled space with a huge copper-topped bar and black metal stools. The food focus is almost entirely on chicken prepared Nashville-style, supplemented by tasty sides, straw chips and deliciously fresh oysters. *84A Little Malop Street, Geelong*

[Pistol Pete's Food n Blues](#) is a Southern American, Louisiana and blues music restaurant run by Geelong chef and blues lover, Pete Raimondo. Those who love gumbo, burgers, southern fried chicken, jambalaya, pulled pork, waffles or po'boys, will love this place. This cool venue also plays host to live music three nights a week. *93A Little Malop Street, Geelong*

[Armageddon Cake](#) is a quirky evening cake and dessert bar that is a temple to hot chocolate, coffee and decadent cakes. Skinny, gluten free, dairy free, vegan and soy friendly are all catered for by the bakers dozen. Open Tuesday to Saturday 7pm-11pm. *7 McLarty Place (off Little Malop Street), Geelong*

[Coffee Cartel](#) is a cool industrial style fit out that offers an amazing range coffee and organic tea. Coffee Cartel roast all coffees on site, guaranteeing the freshest mix of single origins and house blends are ready to please your palette. With their adjoining teahouse serving over 150 specialty teas, Cartel is the place to visit for all hot beverage needs. *Shop 1, 80 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

[The Workers Club Geelong](#) is run by two Geelong lads and is one of the city's newest and coolest live music venues. Even the food menu, designed to be shared, oozes cool with selections such as beef brisket, pulled pork and hot wings. *90-92 Little Malop Street, Geelong*

### **Extend your stay**

Geelong is located an easy one hour's drive from central Melbourne or can be accessed by train with hourly daily V/Line services running from Melbourne's Southern Cross Station.

For those wishing to make a weekend of it, a wide range of accommodation can be found in Geelong, including big name hotels, luxury apartments and boutique B&Bs. Options include the [Mercure Geelong](#) and [Novotel Geelong](#), both offer four star hotel accommodation in the heart of town, or [Vue Apartments](#), which offer a range of studio, one and two bedroom apartments with views over Eastern Beach. Boutique accommodation can be found at [Lawsons Cottage](#), a self-contained Bed & Breakfast in a beautifully renovated 1920s home located in South Geelong.

For further information go to [www.visitgeelongbellarine.com.au](http://www.visitgeelongbellarine.com.au)

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