

Draft ERA statement-pdf

Smart Region: Establishing a Creative Industries Domain

One of the most difficult questions being asked by Australia's industry policy planners and economists is what happens when the heat goes out of the mining and resources boom? What happens if the nation's automotive industry hits the wall? What will fill the gap in defence manufacturing when the current cycle of orders has been constructed?

Australia has built an enormously skilled and profitable workforce in these traditional industry sectors, all of which are now threatened.

One answer is to put Australia's creative industries to work unlocking new potential from these traditional industries, reshaping and refocusing the abundant skills already present in its workforce.

South Australia, which has a long history of innovation and is well recognised as a centre of smart manufacturing – especially in the defence and electronics sectors, already has the core of a Creative Industries Domain that could lead this transformational process.

The Eastern Region Alliance (ERA), which has a combined population of nearly 300,000 people across six council jurisdictions and an operating budget of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars, is home to most of Adelaide's creative class that provides smart solutions to the South Australian economy whilst being globally connected.

ERA includes the Kent Town Digital Industries Domain, the Glenside Film and Television Cluster, the Creative Industries Centre at TAFE-Tea Tree Gully and a proposed arts Domain centred on the Magill campus of the University of South Australia – bringing together at least 35 per cent of Adelaide's arts and design activity. In addition, a cluster of education centres including colleges, schools, universities, specialised trade training centres (Charles Campbell) will combine with a potential creative industry research hub at Magill (UNISA).

The aim of the Creative Industries Domain will be to create new business and investment opportunities for this extraordinary concentration of creative industries in order to support South Australia's future competitive advantage in the industries of the future. These industry sectors include film and television, multimedia, publishing and print media, marketing, advertising and PR, industrial, fashion and furniture design, architecture and software developers.

It would be a natural development of ERA's Creative Industries Domain to act as a regional hub linked to the proposed national Creative Industries Centre, expected to be located in the eastern states.

Outcomes will include ERA's creative industries and its individual companies spinning off new products and services in high value industries; participation in new research and development projects; breaking into new national and international markets; while creating highly skilled, high wage and knowledge intensive jobs of the future.

New start-ups will be created across a range of creative industry activities operating at the heart of the new economy. These could include, for example, animation companies collaborating with software developers to create new data visualisation solutions for companies ranging from mining and engineering to health services.

The Creative Industries Domain would be expected to provide high value, knowledge intensive solutions to industries that include health and aged care, sport and recreation, building and construction, mining and engineering, finance, banking, business and property services, education and training, and telecommunications.

The goal will be to create a creative industries resource that will be transformative in its impact on mainstream, traditional industry across South Australia, and to create a regional model for transition into the new economy.

Despite the importance of this resource to the future of the South Australian economy, detailed capacity and capability cluster audits have yet to be undertaken.

This is a major priority because industry intelligence derived from such an audit can then be put to work to generate new investment, market, research and development and business opportunities for the cluster, in the process spinning off new knowledge intensive jobs in one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy.

Commonwealth assistance is required to undertake an economic study of the contribution the creative industries make to the ERA and to ascertain their competitive advantages.

Drawing on the results of such a study, an audit must then be undertaken of the region's creative industry capacity and capability, which will enable a roadmap to be developed for activating new business and collaboration opportunities.