



Geelong Connected Communities

*Social Impact Study
Project Report*





Acknowledgement of Country

The Geelong Connected Communities Project Team would like to acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies on which we live, play and work and on which this project was completed. We pay our deepest respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community.

The **Leaders for Geelong Program** is made possible through the support of our generous Program Partners and Scholarship Providers.

Leadership Portfolio Partners



KANE



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We would like to thank the following people who guided us throughout this project and supported our journey.

Geelong Connected Communities

Our **Project Sponsor Pat Murnane**, Founder of Geelong Connected Communities who shared his in-depth knowledge of Geelong Connected Communities and the Geelong social impact landscape, provided timely access to information and contacts to support the study, guided us in the right direction and embraced our ideas.

Geelong Connected Communities Board Directors (Paul Gray, Craig Herbert, Richard Bull, Cameron Loftus, John Fitzgerald, Justin Pilgrim, Kim McIntyre, Robyn Gaeth, Roger Grant, and Tracy Carter) who provided support and guidance throughout this project.

Geelong Connected Communities funders, grant recipients and volunteers who shared their valuable feedback and experiences with us by participating in surveys and interviews to inform the social impact report and recommendations.

Committee for Geelong

Lauren Carnegie, Community Leadership Facilitator and **Karen MacAdie**, Community Leadership Coordinator provided guidance and gave us the tools to be successful.

The **2024 Leaders for Geelong Governance Panel** including Michael Johnston - CEO, Committee for Geelong; Nicola Wojcik - Director, Research at WorkSafe Victoria; Kate Barlow - Chief of People and Culture, GMHBA and Trent Duffield - Partner, KPMG provided valuable guidance during the development of our project scope.

The **Committee for Geelong board, executive, members, and supporters** attended many of our training and presentation days to give us feedback and help improve the quality of our content.

Our **Project Mentor, William Rivera-Ramirez**, Project Manager, Department of Defence provided insights and encouragement to ensure a smooth project.

GMHBA partnered with the Committee for Geelong and provided a scholarship for one of our team members to participate in the Leaders for Geelong program.

Our Project Team

This project provided the project team with an amazing opportunity to quantify the social impact of a foundation rooted in the community, executing a philanthropic vision for Geelong where no one gets left behind.



Ursula Bailey

With over 20 years of experience, Ursula specialises in Commonwealth procurement, leadership of teams, and stakeholder engagement.



Nicole Litjens

A passionate change maker with over 20 years of experience in digital project delivery, portfolio governance, and capability uplift.



Tamara Maddrell

Passionate about equity, youth, connection, the not-for-profit sector and lifelong learning.



Amelia Murdoch

A young professional who has dedicated her career to public service, Amelia specialises in strategic policy, governance and executive services.



Greg Scarpa

With over 30 years of experience in asset construction and maintenance, Greg specialises in continual improvement, culture uplift and performance management.



Nikolas Petrovski

Passionate about the Geelong region and involved in the local community, Nikolas specialises in advising local businesses and individuals in navigating complex accounting and commercial matters.

Foreword

Geelong Connected Communities is a community organisation established in 2013 for the benefit of all residents, by generating and distributing community resources to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of communities in the Geelong region.

We achieve this outcome by funding community projects for small not for profit organisations in the region, who are predominately managed and run by volunteers.

Resourcing and empowering volunteerism in community is a hallmark of what we do.

A Social Impact Report allows us to display our value to current and future funders, securing our continued success into the future.

The Project Team's valuable research of all stakeholders within our business model has offered some exciting enhancements for our program.

The Social Impact Report delivered through this project clearly articulates our journey over past 10 years. It provides some valuable insights into the community organisations, volunteerism, and the communities themselves that we have supported.

Geelong Connected Communities would like to thank the members of the Project Team for the professional and dedicated way they have conducted this research and congratulate them on the very clear and powerful way in which they have conveyed their findings.



"The Social Impact Report speaks to the impact of the generous individuals and organisations in the Geelong region, through their willingness to contribute towards community connection. This is so important for the success of future generations. "

Pat Murnane
Executive Support
Geelong Connected Communities

Paul Gray
Chair

Pat Murnane
Executive Support

Executive Summary



Communities thrive on sharing and collaboration, making them desirable places to live. This concept is especially true in Geelong, where Geelong Connected Communities has been working since 2013 to build stronger communities and enhance the connection within the Geelong community.

Through the delivery of their 24/7 grants program, Geelong Connected Communities have continued to have a powerful impact on the recipients and their people.

Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, these local, community-minded individuals objectively review grant applications and allocate funding according to their priorities.

To highlight Geelong Connected Communities' unique funding model and affirm the ongoing positive impact of their grant program on communities in the Geelong region, our project team were asked to develop a well-researched, evidenced-based, and compelling Social Impact Report.

Our research included extensive data and financial analysis and surveys and interviews with grant recipients and funders. This process uncovered several themes, which informed the final deliverables we provided to Geelong Connected Communities in conjunction with the Social Impact Report. This included an Observations and Opportunities report, Program Logic and Evaluation Framework.

These deliverables and the Social Impact report will enable Geelong Connected Communities to continue to generate and distribute resources to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the Geelong region into the future.

About Geelong Connected Communities

The Geelong Connected Communities' mission is to generate and distribute community resources to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the Geelong community.

Geelong Connected Communities delivers an ongoing grant program ensuring that Geelong is a great place to be. These grants support community projects, activities and events focused on connection, pride, resilience and belonging.

Local businesses, partners, sponsors and supporters financially contribute ensuring that their commitment to the community is implemented and executed with maximum impact through Geelong Connected Communities.

Est. 2013








Since its inception, Geelong Connected Communities has distributed almost \$2.4 million to Geelong through 860 grants, supporting volunteer-driven not-for-profits throughout the Geelong region.

Project Overview

Our primary project objective was to develop a well-researched, evidenced-based, and compelling Social Impact Report highlighting Geelong Connected Communities' unique funding model and the positive impact of their grant program on communities in the Geelong region.

The Social Impact Report (**Appendix A**) will be a valuable resource for Geelong Connected Communities who will use the report to:

-  Better understand their impact and concentrate their efforts on those areas of the community where significant impact is being achieved.
-  Support retention of existing financial supporters and inform annual reporting of their social impact contributions to communities in the Geelong region.
-  Attract additional financial supporters to grow their capacity to assist a greater number of small NFP organisations in the Geelong region.
-  Establish new partnerships and foster collaboration and investment in future initiatives, supporting their continuity and long-term sustainability.
-  Share with grant recipient organisations and their volunteers to encourage their continued support of communities in the Geelong region.

Research Approach

Our research methodology was designed to align with best practices in social impact reporting. We collected quantitative and qualitative data to inform Geelong Connected Communities' first social impact report including an evaluation framework, program logic, observations and opportunities.

This methodology is designed to be replicated annually ensuring a thorough evaluation and evidence-based approach to evaluating the Geelong Connected Communities Grant Program moving forward.

Project Deliverables

In addition to the Social Impact Report, the project team completed additional activities and deliverables to achieve the overall project objective.

- 1.** Developed an evaluation framework with program logic, key evaluation questions, and an indicator matrix to guide the impact study.
- 2.** Built evaluation tools including online surveys and interview questions.
- 3.** Undertook data collection and analysis, including:
 - A quantitative review of all grants funded since inception in 2013.
 - A detailed review of all completed grant acquittals since 2022.
 - A survey of all grant recipients who have received funding since 2022.
 - 3 x interviews with current funders who contributed funds in the past year.
 - 19 x 30-minute interviews with grant recipients and volunteers.
 - 4 x case studies showcasing each social impact outcome.
 - A review of Geelong Connected Communities' operating costs.
- 4.** Created a Social Impact Report template for standardised reporting in future.
- 5.** Identified observations and opportunities to improve Geelong Connected Communities' business processes and practices. A 21 page report with our findings has been provided to Geelong Connected Communities.

Project Timeline



Project Initiation

April to May 2024

- Initial introduction meetings
- Draft project scope
- Present project scope for feedback
- Approval of final project scope



Evaluation Framework

May to June 2024

- Research and select a social impact framework
- Develop a Program Logic
- Develop evaluation framework and tools including surveys
- Approval of Evaluation Framework, survey and interview schedule



Data Collection and Analysis

June to August 2024

- Collect and review existing financial and grant acquittal data
- Undertake surveys and interviews with grant recipients and funders
- Analyse data and align to social impact outcomes
- Present draft social impact findings and observations to Geelong Connected Communities and Leaders for Geelong for feedback



Assess and Document Social Impact

August to September 2024

- Finalise data analysis and document findings
- Finalise observations and opportunities to improve practices
- Prepare final Social Impact Report, Leaders for Geelong Project Report and recommendations to Geelong Connected Communities



Present Final Reports

September to October 2024

- Present findings, recommendations and reports to Geelong Connected Communities and Leaders for Geelong
- Handover deliverables to Geelong Connected Communities

Evaluation Framework

The difference between a good and a great impact report is the ability to pull evidence to showcase that impact and to translate this evidence into a meaningful narrative for internal and external stakeholders.

Program Logic

A Program Logic is a structured framework that outlines how an organisation's activities lead to desired social outcomes. It maps out the relationships between resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes, providing a clear pathway from inputs to impact.

The Geelong Connected Communities Program Logic was developed with input from our Project Champion and the Geelong Connected Communities Directors and informed the project approach.

Key Evaluation Questions

The Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) guide the data collection and reporting. Some of the evaluation questions are more relevant for a process evaluation while others are tailored to measuring the impact of the Grant Program.

Indicator Matrix

The indicator matrix outlines the data sources Geelong Connected Communities can use to answer the key evaluation questions. This provides a roadmap for how to respond to the question of interest and ensures you have the data you need when it comes to reporting.

Stakeholder Engagement



From the outset, we understood the importance of having our stakeholders engaged throughout the development of the Geelong Connected Communities Social Impact Report.

Part of our scope was to set Geelong Connected Communities up for future success. To do this, we had to develop a clear understanding of their history and, importantly who has been with them along the journey.

We knew that including diverse views would enrich the Social Impact Report, making it a powerful tool for guiding Geelong Connected Communities' future endeavours and continuing its legacy of positive community impact.

Ensuring consistent engagement and seeking feedback at every stage was critical. Our stakeholder engagement approach allowed us to bring people along for the journey, fostering a shared vision and commitment to Geelong Connected Communities' future success.

Stakeholders Engaged

- Geelong Connected Communities Directors and Project Champion
- Geelong Connected Communities grant recipients
- Geelong Connected Communities' current funders and supporters

Engagement Activities

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Regular updates and feedback sessions
- Attending Board meetings, functions and supporter events

A list of grant recipients interviewed can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Observations and Opportunities

The Geelong Connected Communities Social Impact Study project scope included capturing observations and identifying opportunities to improve Geelong Connected Communities' business processes and practices.

We aligned the observations and opportunities to the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD, 2024) Not-for-Profit Governance Principles:

- Purpose, vision, and strategy
- Roles and responsibilities
- Board composition and effectiveness
- Risk management
- Performance and accountability
- Stakeholders
- Sustainability
- Organisational culture

The observations were prioritised by impact and effort required to implement. Each opportunity was rated High, Medium or Low.

A full list of observations and opportunities was provided to Geelong Connected Communities.



Challenges and Limitations

Like any project, there were a number of challenges we needed to work through.

Data availability

Geelong Connected Communities is a small, volunteer-led organisation. This means they do not have the luxury of a large team with the technology and capacity to gather and analyse data. To overcome this challenge it was important for us to quickly understand what data was available to us, what needed further development to meet our needs, and what we needed to do to gather additional data i.e. surveys and interviews.

Lack of framework

As we began shaping our project scope we identified the need for a Program Logic to inform our research. As a Geelong Connected Communities Program Logic was unavailable, we facilitated a session with our Project Sponsor. Then we sought feedback from the Geelong Connected Communities Board Directors to refine and finalise the Program Logic.

Timeframes

Timeframes required us to quickly come together as a newly formed team to develop an understanding of what we wanted to achieve. At times, we had to 'backsolve' to ensure we could bring together components of the project, and piece them together, constantly having our final product in mind. Weekly team meetings ensured we maintained momentum and kept on track of key milestones and activities.

Due to the fast-paced nature of the project, our research was less rigorous than in an academic setting.

Our survey response rate was 63%. To counter the small number of survey responses we completed detailed interviews with 19 grant recipients.

We developed a pragmatic and efficient data-gathering and research approach to overcome this, and to enable timely research findings.

Project Team Reflections

This project provided invaluable insights into the volunteer-led not-for-profit sector and the significant impact of Geelong Connected Communities on a diverse range of organisations and individuals across Geelong.

Our project team are from diverse backgrounds and workplaces, bringing various skills and views that enabled us to leverage our strengths, knowledge and existing networks.

Measuring Social Impact was something new for most of the project team, so we needed to come together and develop a program logic to guide what we needed to measure and how we would do this.

Engagement was key to delivering our project. We worked to build relationships with key Geelong Connected Communities stakeholders including the Board, funders, and grant recipients.

We each feel privileged to be warmly welcomed by all and have the opportunity to be immersed in the work of Geelong Connected Communities and the organisations they fund. Many organisations the project team met with were unknown to us before we started this project. Meeting with these organisations was eye-opening and provided a new perspective on the grass-roots work these organisations deliver to our community.

Undertaking this project has been incredibly rewarding. We are deeply thankful to Geelong Connected Communities and the Committee for Geelong for the opportunity, and all walk away from this project with a strong commitment to continuing to contribute to the Geelong community.



Conclusion



The Geelong Connected Communities Grant Program enables community connection by funding community projects, activities and events focused on pride, resilience and belonging.

Building and maintaining social connections requires time, effort and emotional labour. Social connections bring benefits like emotional support and a sense of belonging and positively impact health, resilience and community cohesion.



We look forward to following Geelong Connected Communities as they continue to enable pride, resilience, belonging and connection amongst the Geelong Community.

Appendix A: Geelong Connected Communities Social Impact Report



Geelong
Connected
Communities



**Social
Impact
Report**

2024

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Foreword

Geelong Connected Communities is a community organisation established in 2013 for the benefit of all residents, by generating and distributing community resources to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of communities in the Geelong region.

We achieve this outcome by funding community projects for small not for profit organisations in the region, who are predominately managed and run by volunteers.

Resourcing and empowering volunteerism in community is a hallmark of what we do.

This Social Impact Report clearly articulates our journey over past years and provides some valuable insights into the community organisations, volunteerism, and the communities themselves that we have supported.

An exciting and very pleasing discovery that the report reveals, is the depth of trust and connection that we have within communities in the Geelong region.

Importantly, the report also confirms that 87.3% of all monies raised from the financial supporters of Geelong Connected Communities since inception, has been used to fund community projects. This percentage is recognised as good industry practice.

The Leaders for Geelong Project team have spoken directly with many of our successful grant applicants over the past 2 years, to gain the necessary firsthand experience of the community projects funded through our 24/7 grants program. The Project Team's valuable research of all stakeholders within Geelong Connected Communities business model has offered some exciting enhancements for our program.

The report also speaks to the impact our programs are having on individuals wishing to express their sense of pride and belonging to their communities and their willingness to contribute towards the resilience of the community values that are so important for the success of future generations.

Geelong Connected Communities would like to thank the members of the Project Team for the professional and dedicated way they have conducted this research and congratulate them on the very clear and powerful way in which they have conveyed their findings.



Paul Gray
Chair



Pat Murnane
Executive Support

About *Us*

Since 2013, Geelong Connected Communities has been delivering an ongoing grant program focussed on enhancing connection in the Geelong community.

With over \$2.4 million distributed across since inception, our grants continue to invest and support the potential of not-for-profit organisations, volunteers, and projects.

These investments have enhanced connection, collaboration, resilience, and vibrancy across the Geelong community.

Contributions from local businesses, partners, sponsors and supporters are pooled, enabling us to direct funding with maximum impact to the community, across a wide range of sectors. This unique approach means that funders can be assured that their contributions are impacting the diverse Geelong community.

Our *Mission*

Our mission is to continue to generate and distribute community resources to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of communities in the Geelong region.

Our *Values*



Leadership



Engagement



Collaboration



Support



Care

Why *choose us?*

Geelong Connected Communities adopts a strategic investment approach that acknowledges the willingness of the Geelong region to collectively contribute to build a strong, more connected community.

With our dedicated stewardship, emphasising connectivity within the Geelong community, we empower local organisations and initiatives by swiftly disbursing smaller funding allocations, typically within 3-4 days.

We support projects and groups, regardless of their deductible gift status, enabling funders to make purposeful contributions.

This distinctive model assures funders that their contributions will yield impact across various sectors such as health and wellbeing, sports, arts, fundraising campaigns, community awards, and celebratory events.

Geelong Connected Communities appreciates the exceptional trust and dedication shown by our funders in enabling us to establish and strengthen connection throughout the Geelong region.



Pillars of *Impact*

We operate under three pillars of impact, collectively placing the connection at the heart of every grant decision. Connection is created by fostering pride, belonging and resilience.



Pride

Instilling a sense of empowerment and cohesion in the Greater Geelong community.



Belonging

Building a sense of purpose and connection among the Greater Geelong community by fostering inclusive, supportive networks.



Resilience

Supporting the Greater Geelong community in adapting and thriving in adversity.



How we measure *impact*

Social impact reporting is essential for assessing an organisation's socio-economic influence on the community. For Geelong Connected Communities, it's vital to provide our supporters with evidence that their contributions are making a real difference.

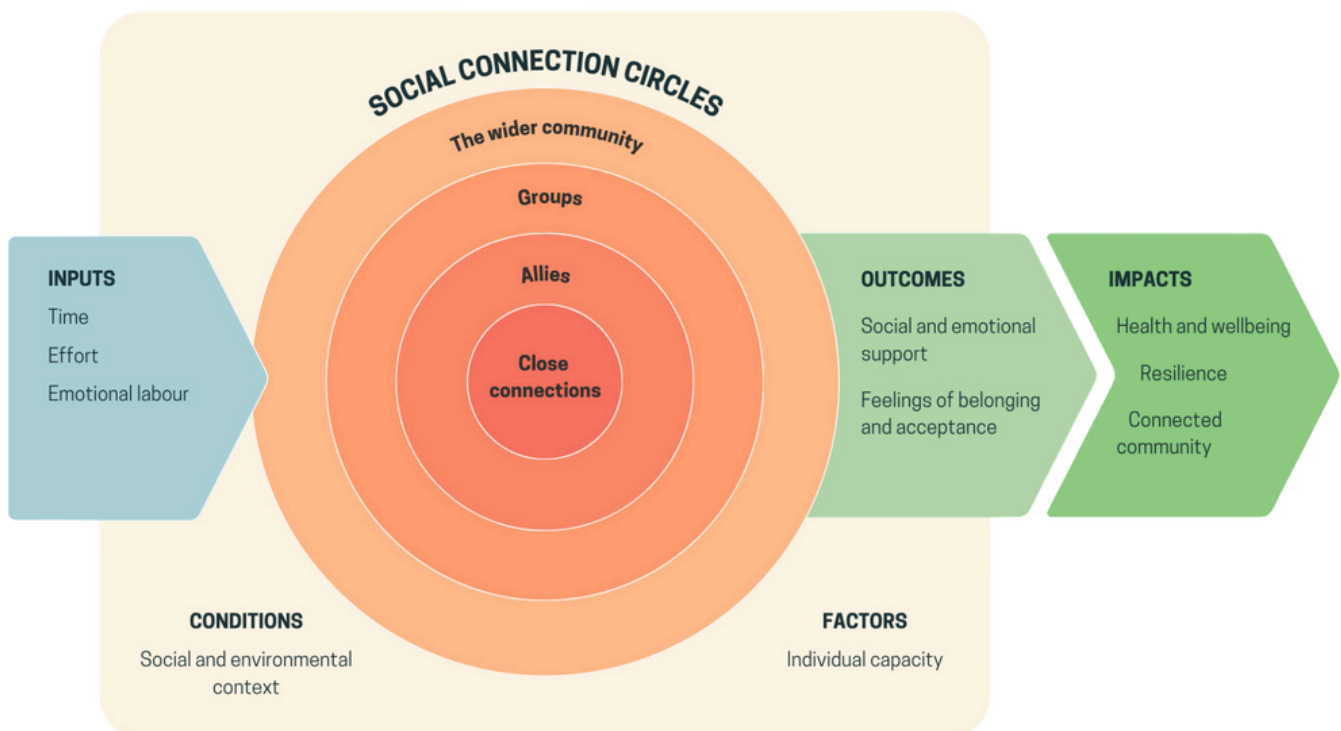
Effective Social Impact reporting utilises evidence to showcase the impact of activities, and translates this evidence into a meaningful narrative for internal and external stakeholders.

Improvements to quantitative data collection at key points in the grant application and acquittal processes have been supplemented with more detailed analysis and qualitative interviews to inform further evaluation processes and future impact reporting.

The Social Connection Model (**Figure 1**), created by the Swinburne University of Technology Social Connection Team, visualises the dynamics of social relationships. Connections offer benefits like emotional support and belonging, enhancing health, resilience, and community cohesion.

We used this model to guide development of our Program Logic (**Appendix A**) which sets out the intended outcomes and impacts of our Grants program and maps these outcomes to activities and outputs.

Figure 1: Swinburne University Social Connection Model



To enable future social impact reporting of our Grants program, we established the following definitions (Pillars of Impact) to measure the impact of our Grants program:

- **Community Connection:** How we cultivate belonging, pride, and resilience within the Geelong community.
- **Community Belonging:** How we create a sense of purpose and connection among Geelong residents by promoting inclusive and supportive networks.
- **Community Pride:** How we foster a sense of empowerment and cohesion within the Geelong community.
- **Community Resilience:** How we assist the Geelong community in adapting to and thriving amid challenges.

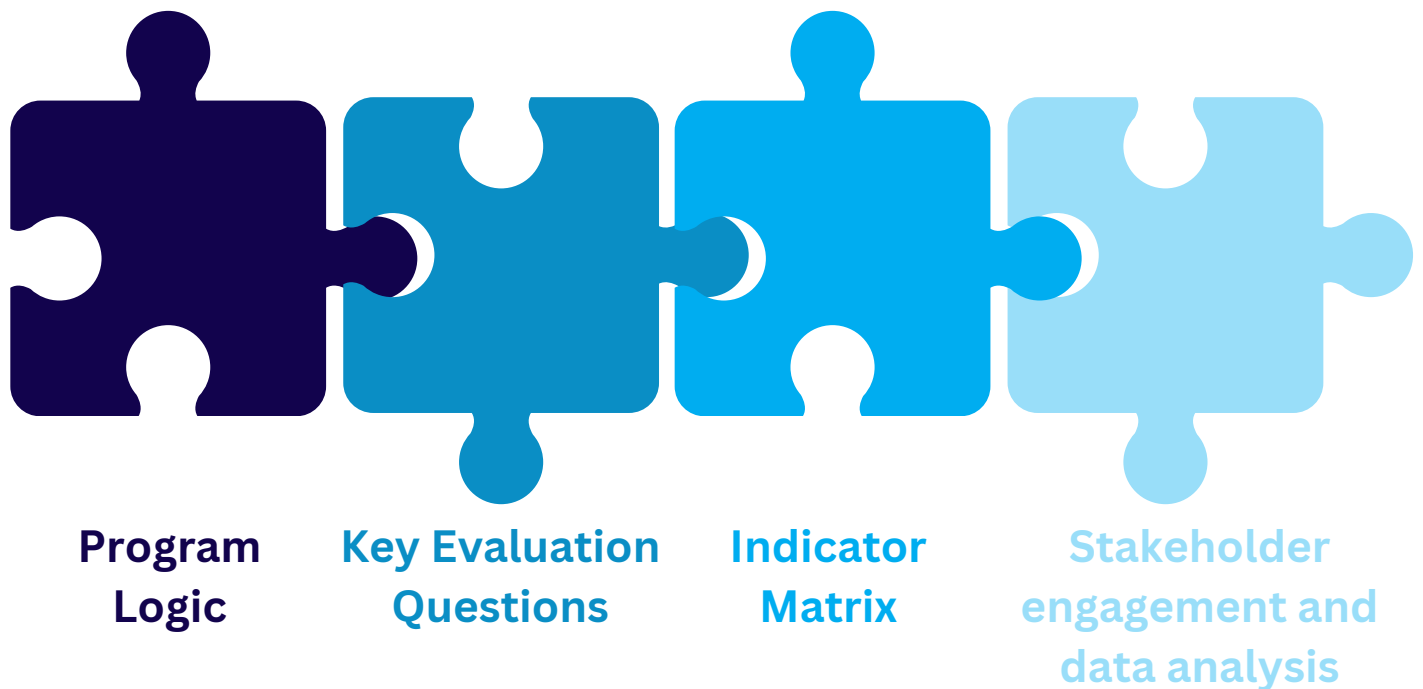
As we developed the Program Logic, we designed three additional elements to enhance the impact reporting processes at Geelong Connected Communities:

- Key evaluation questions
- Indicator matrix
- Stakeholder engagement and data analysis process (**Figure 2**).

The key evaluation questions and indicator matrix link our vision and mission directly to the unique and identified needs of the Geelong region.

This reporting framework will support a structured approach to evaluating the impact of our Grants program and important investment in the longstanding trust the Geelong community has invested.

Figure 2: Geelong Connected Communities Social Impact Reporting Framework



Impact: Pride



\$822,570

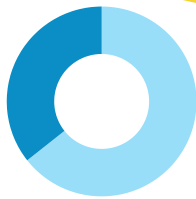
Total grants paid since inception

248

Grants funded

153

Organisations funded



Events: \$529,341

Community Projects: \$293,229



Our winning students are passionate about their future and complement their studies with either community service or charitable activities.

Maddi Beck
The Gordon

Example Projects	Funding	Details	Impact
Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Event	\$2,000 (FY23) \$2,000 (FY24)	Reconciliation in the Park in Djilang/Geelong, an annual local First Nations community-run event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free events are accessible to more people locally to provide, participate in, and engage in truth-telling and culture-sharing to further reconciliation and strengthen our community.
Geelong Cross Country Club	\$500 (FY23) \$500 (FY24)	Sponsored one of the season's 14 races and funded the finishing post.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300 members compete in a handicapped race over a season. The inclusive club has members from 16 years of age to 85 years of age. Highly regarded club across the state.
Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS)	\$2,000 (FY24)	Seed funding for 'Paws for Gaws' inaugural fundraiser - Dog Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a volunteer led local event to ensure the animal welfare organisation celebrates.
GenU	\$8,643 (FY23) \$2,500 (FY24)	National Carers Week Morning Tea Event .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 members attended the celebratory event without charge. Connecting and sharing experiences as carers.
Transition South Barwon	\$500 (FY24)	Funded the Grovedale Community Orchard's insurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling all community members to attend and learn about growing your own food.

Volunteering Geelong



Volunteering Geelong plays a crucial role in connecting individuals eager to give back with meaningful opportunities across the region. Through their comprehensive referral service, they link volunteers with organisations most in need, while also offering best practices and support to these groups.

For the past decade, Geelong Connected Communities has proudly supported Volunteering Geelong's annual 'Volunteer of the Year' award. This award, recognising exceptional service across diverse organisations, has become a cornerstone event in the community calendar. Thanks to Geelong Connected Communities' consistent funding totalling \$37,000 over ten years – this award has gained prominence and ensured volunteers' contributions remain in the spotlight, highlighting the vital role they play in enhancing community wellbeing.

The 'Volunteer of the Year' award recognises key volunteers who have gone above and beyond in supporting their organisations and the broader Geelong community.

Each year, over 30 nominations are received, showcasing the service, connection, pride, and resilience that define the spirit of Geelong.

Geelong Connected Communities' unwavering support comes at a time when funding for non-profits and volunteer organisations can fluctuate significantly.

Our backing of the 'Volunteer of the Year' award has been invaluable, earning the attention and endorsement of the local Mayor, further solidifying its status as a celebrated event in the region.

Volunteering Geelong ensures volunteers have positive and impactful experiences through their meticulous matching process, creating a supportive environment that amplifies the positive contributions of volunteers while minimising potential challenges. This approach has immeasurably enhanced the quality of life in Geelong.

Recognising the importance of celebrating the diversity of volunteer experiences, Geelong Connected Communities entrusted Volunteering Geelong with the responsibility to lead and shape this recognition. Through this enduring partnership, both organisations continue to foster a deep sense of community pride and belonging across Geelong, inspiring future generations of volunteers to contribute to the vibrancy of the region.



With over 140 local organisations, there are 300 different types of roles for 1000's of volunteers - any of them could apply to be the Volunteer of the Year - this award has such amazing reach and scope to celebrate

Helen Hunter
Volunteering Geelong



Impact: *Belonging*

\$838,262

Total grants paid since inception

395

Grants funded

234

Organisations funded



Sports: \$288,900
Arts & Culture: \$251,040
Youth: \$298,322

When I moved to Geelong, I didn't know anyone, so the theatre community was where I met all my friends and why I'm still here. It's just a random selection of humans wanting to make a difference.

Scott Graham, Medimime

Example Projects	Funding	Details	Impact
Geelong Hockey Masters	\$500 (FY23) \$750 (FY24)	Reduced the registration fees and increased the membership to a size that Geelong can now compete against other regional cities such as Ballarat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reintroduction of a local team after a 6-year hiatus. Engaging older hockey players back into regional competition.
Belmont Bowls Club	\$500 (FY23)	Accessibility aids to increase the capacity for the club to be inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community network that creates opportunities to play bowls, garden, socialise and build strong friendships.
Young Film Makers	\$2,000 (FY24)	48-Hour Film Frenzy - a shoot-out where Australian film makers create a 4-7 minute film in 48 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCC funds the screening, young film makers connect and ultimately kick-start their careers in the film industry. Promoting the Geelong region as a film making destination for established film makers which supports our community economically.
Cultura	\$2,000 (FY24)	Creation and translation of resources for The Voice referendum into multiple languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A time pressured project ensuring the right to vote was understood and valued by Geelong's growing new arrival communities.
Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club	\$500 (FY24)	Printer and Eftpos machine for contemporary infrastructure, streamlining processes for volunteers to run the club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers no longer use their own personal printers.



Moolap Tennis Club

Moolap Tennis Club's collaboration with Geelong Connected Communities is a testament to the significant impact that even modest funding can have on local community organisations.

Serving the residents of St. Albans Park, Whittington, East Geelong, and Thomson areas, Moolap Tennis Club provides a vital space for both social and competitive play, catering to a diverse demographic ranging from juniors to those over 65 years old. With a nearly equal gender split, the club offers opportunities for play on both weekdays and weekends.

The recent installation of lights has further increased community usage, transforming the club into a bustling centre for social interaction, particularly on weeknights, as many members prefer to keep their weekends free for other activities. Known affectionately as 'The Social Club' within the Geelong tennis community, Moolap Tennis Club takes great pride in being a place where people can connect, interact, and enjoy the game of tennis.

Despite facing challenges, such as aging infrastructure, the club's committee works tirelessly to keep the facilities available and affordable for all. When the net posts, which had served the club for 30 to 40 years, needed replacing, the club turned to Geelong Connected Communities for support.

Through an efficient and straightforward application process, Moolap Tennis Club secured a \$1,000 grant that was instrumental in replacing the essential net posts.

This success highlights the importance of Geelong Connected Communities' role in supporting local initiatives and ensuring that vital community spaces like Moolap Tennis Club continue to thrive.

By recognising and addressing the needs of local organisations, we play a crucial role in fostering a sense of unity and belonging, ultimately enhancing social cohesion throughout the region. The partnership with Moolap Tennis Club is a clear example of how targeted funding and support can create lasting benefits for the community, ensuring that these spaces remain vibrant and accessible for future generations.



In the scheme of things, this was a small project, but the impact was definitely seen, as the club was able to install the nets they were meant to have.

Mark Core, Treasurer
Moolap Tennis Club



Impact: Resilience

\$731,716

Total grants paid since inception

217

Grants funded

120

Organisations funded



Health: \$356,853
Wellbeing: \$374,863

In reality, the young person is the tip of the iceberg and the ecosystem is the bottom. Most of the funding models that are funded in Australia tend to focus on interventions directly to that young person. More often than not, it's the ecosystem that needs the support.

Leigh Bartlett
Barwon Adolescent Taskforce

Example Projects	Funding	Details	Impact
Barwon Adolescent Taskforce	\$3,000 (FY24)	Wellbeing Dashboard and resources for Parent Workshops identified through local schools and community organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This collaborative project with Gateways Parent support has ensured the resources are ongoing and utilised.
Geelong Food Relief	\$5,000 (FY23) \$20,000 (FY24)	Purchase of commercial refrigerators and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dignity experienced with a mini-mart space feels like a real supermarket. The environmental footprint is significantly reduced with the cessation of climate controlling the whole space 24/7.
Lazarus	\$10,000 (FY23) \$7,200 (FY24)	Construction of a new pergola.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A nature-inspired space.
Riding for the Disabled-Barwon	\$3,000 (FY24)	Donation for the program to allocate places to families who wouldn't otherwise afford to access equine therapy in our local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded inclusive opportunities for children to access the volunteer powered therapeutic program.
Road Safety Education Limited	\$3,000 (FY24)	Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA) road safety program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 248 local Geelong students increased their understanding of road safety issues. A significant impact towards better outcomes for young people in the community.



Tiny Dots

Tiny Dots, a registered charity, is making a significant impact on the Geelong community by providing essential support to children aged 0-2 and their families. Through screening, assessment, and short-term therapy, Tiny Dots ensures that babies receive the help they need at the most crucial time to address developmental delays.

In 2021, Tiny Dots was in the process of establishing itself and awaiting charity status when it received a game changing \$2,000 grant from Geelong Connected Communities.

This funding was instrumental in enabling Tiny Dots to purchase comprehensive assessment tools, allowing them to conduct thorough assessments and set templates for early intervention.

This timely grant allowed Tiny Dots to bypass months of savings accumulation, enabling them to immediately start helping children and providing essential early intervention. The impact of this early support is profound, not only benefiting the children but also positively affecting their families and the broader community.

With our early support, Tiny Dots has blossomed into a thriving registered charity, recognised by the Geelong Community Foundation. They continue to provide invaluable services that support the development and wellbeing of young children and their families.

Laura Alobaidy, Director and founder of Dot to Dot Early Intervention and Tiny Dots, expressed her gratitude and emphasised the long-lasting impact of early intervention, which goes beyond the immediate challenges for the child, positively impacting parent mental health, marriage relationships, and reducing community costs.

Tiny Dots is a shining example of how our strategic funding and support can foster community resilience, helping organisations adapt and thrive in adversity, thereby creating a lasting positive impact on the community.

Through our support of Tiny Dots and other initiatives, we have been part of creating a nurturing and resilient Geelong community, that can overcome challenges and flourish - ultimately creating a stronger and more supportive environment for all.



The timeliness and ease of getting the grant from Geelong Connected Communities was probably the highlight. We could start using the assessment tools straight away to get these kids into support.

Lauren Alobaidy
Director and Founder - Tiny Dots

Impact *Summary*

\$2.4 million

Total funds granted since inception

860

Grants funded

450

Organisations funded

87.5%

of funds contributed granted to organisations

\$2,782

average amount distributed

Pride



\$822,570

Events



156 grants
\$529,341

Community Projects



92 grants
\$293,229

Belonging



\$838,262

Sports



208 grants
\$288,900

Arts & Culture



98 grants
\$251,040

Youth



89 grants
\$298,322

Resilience



\$731,716

Health



81 grants
\$356,853

Wellbeing



136 grants
\$374,863

The Bellarine Community Support Register



The Bellarine Community Support Register, a registered charity supported by Geelong Connected Communities, plays a crucial role in enhancing the safety and wellbeing of mature residents in Geelong.

Since its formation, over 3,000 people have registered their personal and medical information on a secure database maintained by the Register, enabling rapid response and tailored care, especially in critical situations.

Serving the mature population of the Bellarine Peninsula, the Register is open to all local residents. A valued service is the provision of regular care calls by volunteers, offering friendly check-ins and peace of mind to registrants and their families. These calls foster a sense of security and belonging, ensuring registrants remain connected and supported.

Bob Jordan, Committee of Management Member and Treasurer, emphasises the importance of these calls in preventing isolation and loneliness, keeping registrants integrated within society. In some cases, these calls have been lifesaving, with volunteers detecting distress and prompting swift action by emergency services.

The Register's relationship with Victoria Police further enhances its impact. This partnership facilitates emergency responses and raises awareness of the Register's services.

Most recently, a significant challenge for the Register was producing and mailing its quarterly newsletter to around 600 registrants, many of whom prefer or need a hard copy due to limited email access. Decreased donations had made funding for the newsletter a concern, but a \$500 grant from Geelong Connected Communities has been crucial in sustaining this important communication tool.

We have been a steadfast supporter, providing essential funding that allows the Register to continue its mission. Our support empowers mature residents to live independently and alleviates pressure on the aged care system. Through our partnership with the Bellarine Community Support Register, we exemplify our commitment to fostering deep community connections, strengthening bonds, and creating a more caring Geelong.



The relationship with the police is actually a really good thing. When I started, I was surprised how much the police were involved. They often bring up the organisation when speaking to the community and say, 'Hey, did you know this existed and this is how we work together?'

Bob Jordan
Committee of Management Member
and Treasurer

Get *Connected*

Being a funder of Geelong Connected Communities is about more than just financial support; it's about becoming part of a network that actively contributes to the region. By supporting us, you amplify your investment's potential to create lasting change through fostering connection within the Geelong community.

For businesses looking to support grassroots organisations, we offer an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the community. Instead of sifting through numerous donation requests, businesses can direct these organisations to Geelong Connected Communities, ensuring that funding is distributed fairly, transparently, and with impact.

We ensure that each funder is amplified across the community, fostering goodwill and enhancing their local engagement.

Apply for a Grant

We actively support a wide range of organisations in the Geelong region that operate with the primary goal of benefiting the community. Our commitment to fostering local initiatives is unwavering, as we believe in the power of not-for-profit organisations to create positive change.

Any registered not-for-profit organisation located within the Geelong region is encouraged to apply for a grant from us. This includes charities, community groups, sporting clubs, and other entities.

We welcome applications from organisations that are innovative, passionate, and focused on addressing the needs and challenges faced by our community. By providing financial assistance, we aim to empower these organisations to implement their projects and initiatives effectively, making a significant impact on the Geelong region.

With Geelong Connected Communities, businesses can trust that their contributions are being managed transparently and directed to a diverse array of deserving groups.

By becoming a funder of Geelong Connected Communities, local businesses can be part of a community-driven movement that brings about tangible and meaningful change.



For our 55 local employees, it's fulfilling to see our company directly supporting local community projects. Many of our team members have children involved in sports or community groups, and with Geelong Connected Communities, they can apply for grants that directly benefit them. We're proud to support an organisation that truly makes a difference at the grassroots level.

Tony Spence
General Manager of Prestige Jayco

Grant applications are open 24/7 via our website:



Grant Recipients



Geelong Food Relief



Tiny Dots



Moolap Tennis Club



Geelong Animal Welfare Society



Volunteering Geelong

We'd like to thank all our funders for their *generous support*

Our Major Sponsor

Beyond Bank

A U S T R A L I A

Our Supporting Sponsors



R Y D G E S



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GARTLAND



Our Program Partners



Government and Industry Bodies



Appendix A: Program Logic

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term outcomes
What's needed to successfully implement the program?	What are the steps in implementing the program?	What will these activities deliver?	What changes will be achieved within 12 months?	What changes will be achieved within 1-3 years?	What changes will be achieved within 4+ years?
Operational Priorities: Be responsive to community needs Maximise outcomes from community investments Be a highly respected organisation					
Financial and in-kind support from individuals, businesses and institutions	Strategic Planning	Well governed organisation	Enabling inclusive, supportive social networks	Improved individual purpose and connection	Community Belonging
Financial grants from partnering foundations	Advocacy and collaboration	Existing supports retained	Celebrations of community diversity and achievements	Greater empowerment and cohesion in the community	Community Pride
Board of Directors (volunteer)	Stakeholder engagement and fundraising	New supports identified	Community access to essential resources and crisis support	Ability for individuals to adapt and thrive in adversity	Community Resilience
Professional service support (e.g. legal, accounting and marketing)	Grant program planning and administration	Partnerships with grant recipients	Support for all community organisations and needs	Assisting the community to achieve their potential	Community Connection
Community trust and recognition	Data management and reporting	Community organisations funded	Participant and volunteer engagement in community programs and events	Improved liveability and community cohesion	
Executive Board support (volunteer)	Promotion and communication	Qualitative data (story telling) recorded	Supported and empowered volunteers	Improved overall health and wellbeing for volunteers	
		Program evaluation and reporting			



Geelong Connected Communities



www.geelongconnectedcommunities.com.au

Appendix B: Recipients Interviewed

The following organisations were interviewed during the development of the Geelong Connected Communities Social Impact Study.

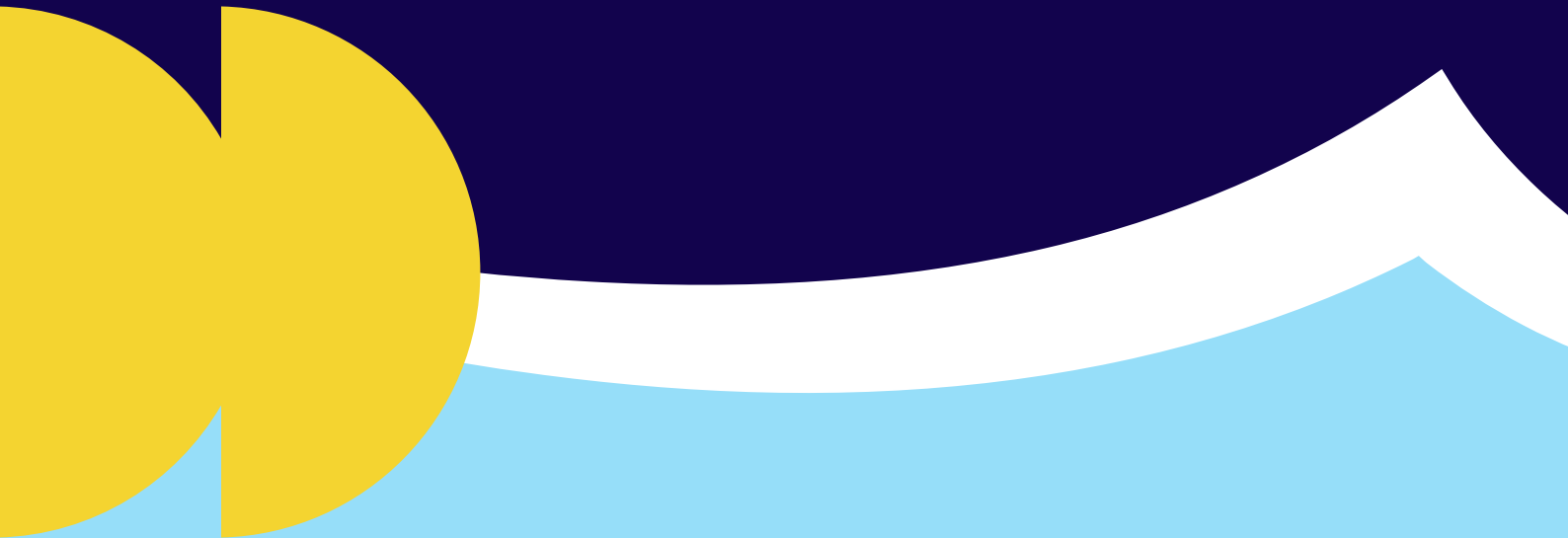
Grant Recipient	Grant Description	Category	Pillar
Barwon Adolescent TaskForce	Holiday Help & Need to Talk campaigns	Community Wellbeing	Resilience
Barwon Sports Academy	Annual BSA Fundraising Breakfast Coordination	Sport	Belonging
Bellarine Community Support Register	Laptop and office furniture	Community Projects	Connection
Belmont Bowls Club	Facility upgrades to support all abilities	Sport	Belonging
Cultura	Voice to Parliament Guide Translation	Community Projects	Pride
Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS)	Fundraising Walk	Events	Pride
Geelong Art Show	Geelong Art Show event	Events	Pride

Grant Recipient	Grant Description	Category	Pillar
Geelong Cross Country Club	Club activities and events	Events	Pride
Geelong One Fire Recognition Group	Reconciliation in the Park	Events	Pride
Leopold Lakers Basketball Club	Club activities and events	Sport	Belonging
Medimime Productions	Annual pantomime raising funds for Barwon Health	Arts & Culture	Belonging
Moolap Tennis Club	Court upgrades	Sport	Belonging
Read the Play	Volunteer and player wellbeing officer uniforms	Community Wellbeing	Resilience
Riding for the Disabled Victoria - Barwon	Enabling children to experience horse riding	Community Wellbeing	Resilience
The Gordon	Student Excellence Awards	Events	Pride
Tiny Dots	Early Intervention Disability Assessment Tool	Community Wellbeing	Resilience
Transition South Barwon	Grovedale Community Orchard	Community Project	Pride
Victorian Kyokushin Karate Association	Annual KKA Championship event sound system	Sport	Belonging
Volunteering Geelong	Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards	Events	Pride

Appendix C:

References

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www.committeeforgeelong.com.au
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