

PARKO FESTA

40 Years Young

Interactive Timeline





“The project provided an opportunity to develop leadership ability and practically apply learnings from the LSI self-development guide. In an inclusive and non-threatening group, I was able to pinpoint my own strengths as well as stumbling blocks to my effectiveness.

Seeing my fellow teammates in full flight with how they work, their creative sides, has been an inspiring learning curve.”

Project Team Member

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"It's been said before that Geelong is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to staging major events, but the weekend just gone surely seals the deal."

Geelong Advertiser, 2nd March 2015
Geelong City of Events Editorial

Executive Summary

Pako Festa, established in 1983, has been the heart of Geelong's cultural identity for almost 40 years but has been threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last 2 years.

The grass roots nature of Pako Festa creates an atmosphere like no other local event. The sounds and costumes and most importantly the aromas of the food along the 1 kilometre precinct is the perfect way to immerse yourself in the local cultural diversity.

As a committed group of leaders, inspired and assisted by the Pako Festa director, the project team collated, digitised and archived an extensive selection of hundreds of images and articles, to create an interactive timeline which will be accessible to the world through the official Pako Festa Website.

The interactive timeline was developed to capture images, stories and media that reflect community participation. It captures the event's impact on each of the 40 diverse communities that have been involved in the festival over the past 39 years.

The interactive timeline has a broad range of future expansion possibilities. It was developed from the ground up with not only a comprehensive database of multimedia, but also with the potential to have educational and community benefits.

The interactive timeline will be expanded and used as a promotional tool to gather support and interest for the upcoming 40th anniversary. Through expanding the reach of Pako Festa, it will help grow the potential economic revenue generated by the event and instil Geelong as a destination of choice for cultural events.



Project Objectives

“Our vision is to celebrate, teach and preserve the migration history of Geelong through documenting the last 40 years of the Pako Festa Community Street Festival!”

Pako Festa is an important cultural community event for Geelong. It increases community engagement and inclusion, promotes Geelong, celebrates multiculturalism and brings significant revenue to the region.

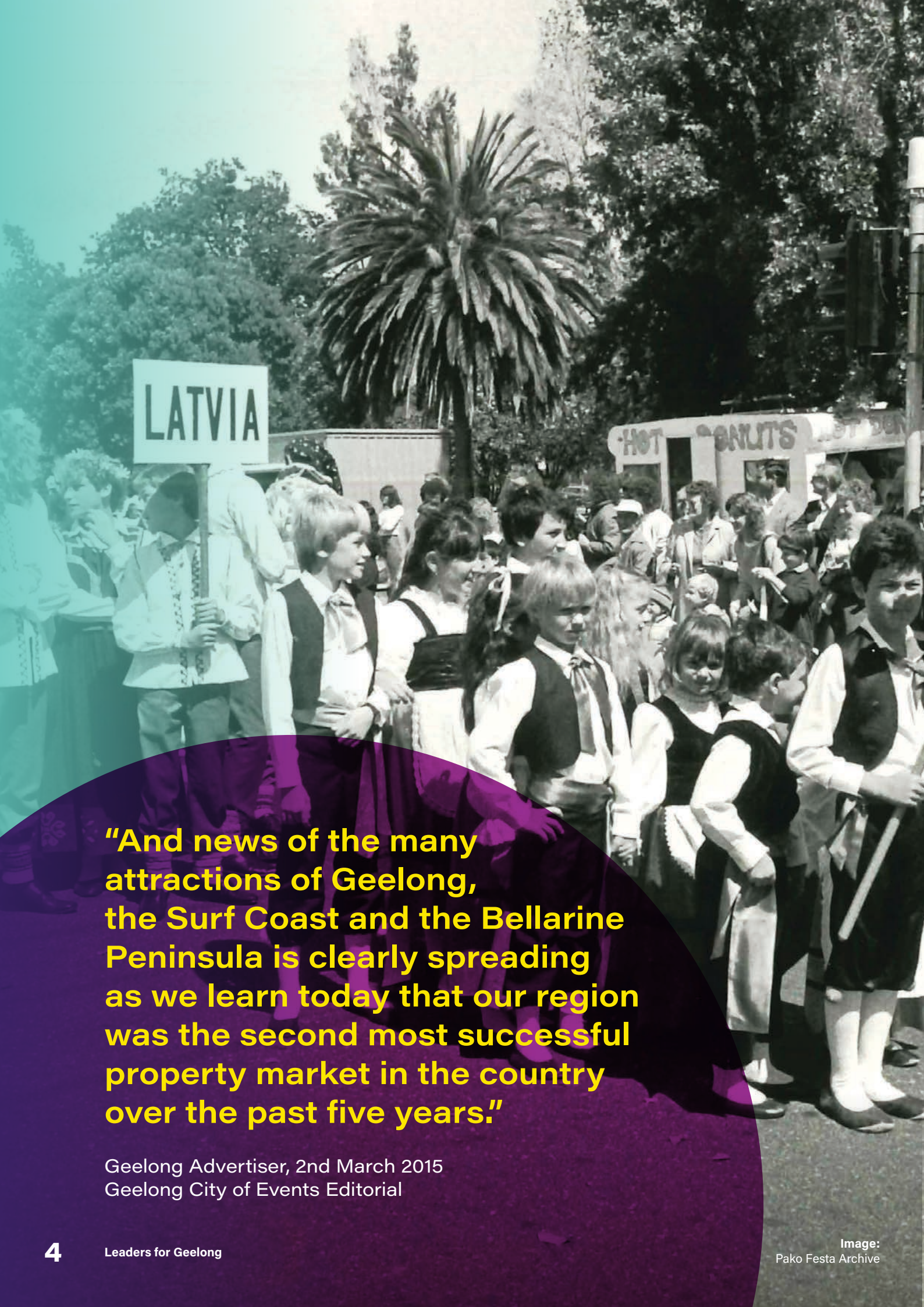
With COVID-19 preventing the Pako Festa from proceeding in its usual format in 2021 and the continuing threat of the pandemic looming over the event there was a need to develop a digital offering. Therefore, to preserve the legacy of the event, it was imperative to design and develop an interactive website documenting the parade between 1983–2021.

The key objectives of this project were to:

- Increase the total reach and engagement of the 40th anniversary Pako Festa event
- Inspire the younger generation about the history of Geelong
- Document the history of the community and reflect the migration story of Geelong
- Develop a resource that is accessible and understandable for all ages

The website that was developed captures images, stories and media that reflect on community participation. It captures the event’s impact on each of the 40 diverse communities that have been involved over the past 39 years.

The website will be demonstrated at the Leaders for Geelong Project Presentation Event on 15 September 2021 and then launched in late 2021 as part of the 40th anniversary event celebrations.



"And news of the many attractions of Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula is clearly spreading as we learn today that our region was the second most successful property market in the country over the past five years."

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Background

Pako Festa, is Geelong's much loved, award-winning, free, annual community street festival — the biggest of its kind in Australia. Managed by Diversitat and held annually on the last weekend of February in Pakington Street, Geelong West, "the multicultural heart of Geelong", it incorporates an extravagant street parade featuring around ninety floats and hundreds of performers representing forty-five affiliated ethnic communities and around sixty other community groups and organisations.

The street is lined with stalls selling traditional foods and arts and crafts, and six separate stages in the precinct offer performances of music and dance as well as interactive workshops and exhibitions.

Pako Festa is delivered by Diversitat and is supported by The Victorian State Government and the City of Greater Geelong. In addition, it could not be delivered without the support of many other local and non-local organisations and businesses.

Pako Festa offers a unique opportunity for those 100,000-plus participants to socialise and celebrate in an arena of ethnic diversity and harmony, as well as gaining an appreciation of the great variety of artistic and cultural expression within Geelong's multicultural community. The grass roots nature of Pako Festa creates an atmosphere like no other local event. The sounds and costumes and most importantly the aromas of the food along the 1 kilometre precinct is the perfect way to immerse yourself in the local diversity.

A very important aspect of Pako Festa is in its provision for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to continue to affirm and honour their contributions to Pako Festa over its 40-year history. Since its inception, the event continues to be a major event on the community calendar.

In 2021, due to the COVID pandemic, the festival was modified to occur in a limited capacity with the street parade component completely cancelled and replaced with a night projection program. The Global Food element was delivered via 13 hubs across Geelong ensuring the local diverse communities still had an opportunity to fundraise.

During the development of the reimagined event in 2021, it was recognised that an online platform for capturing the events long and diverse history was needed to be established. This would also be a means of providing for an online presence and new framework for the festival in the event of future pandemics in this uncertain environment.



Geelong the city of events

IT'S been said before that Geelong is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to staging major events, but the weekend just gone surely seals the deal.

Events stretched from Lara to the Bellarine Peninsula, with Avalon's Airshow, Australia's biggest, free multicultural festival the Pako Festa, the Wallington Strawberry Fair and the Highland Gathering all attracting thousands of people to our beautiful region.

The pages of this paper today are testament to the colour and vibrancy the events lent to our region over 48 hours, and the economic opportunities created by the arrival of tens-of-thousands of visitors.

Over the course of the airshow, trade deals worth a billion dollars were done and \$20 million was injected into the local economy. Even the Wallington Primary School Strawberry Fair boasted patronage of more

than 5000 people.

But as the Pako Festa demonstrates — perhaps better than any other local event — there is something about festivals and major events that is priceless.

They lift our spirits, enrich our communities and make us smile. When we hear visitors at the same events talking in glowing terms about what they have seen and enjoyed, we swell with pride.

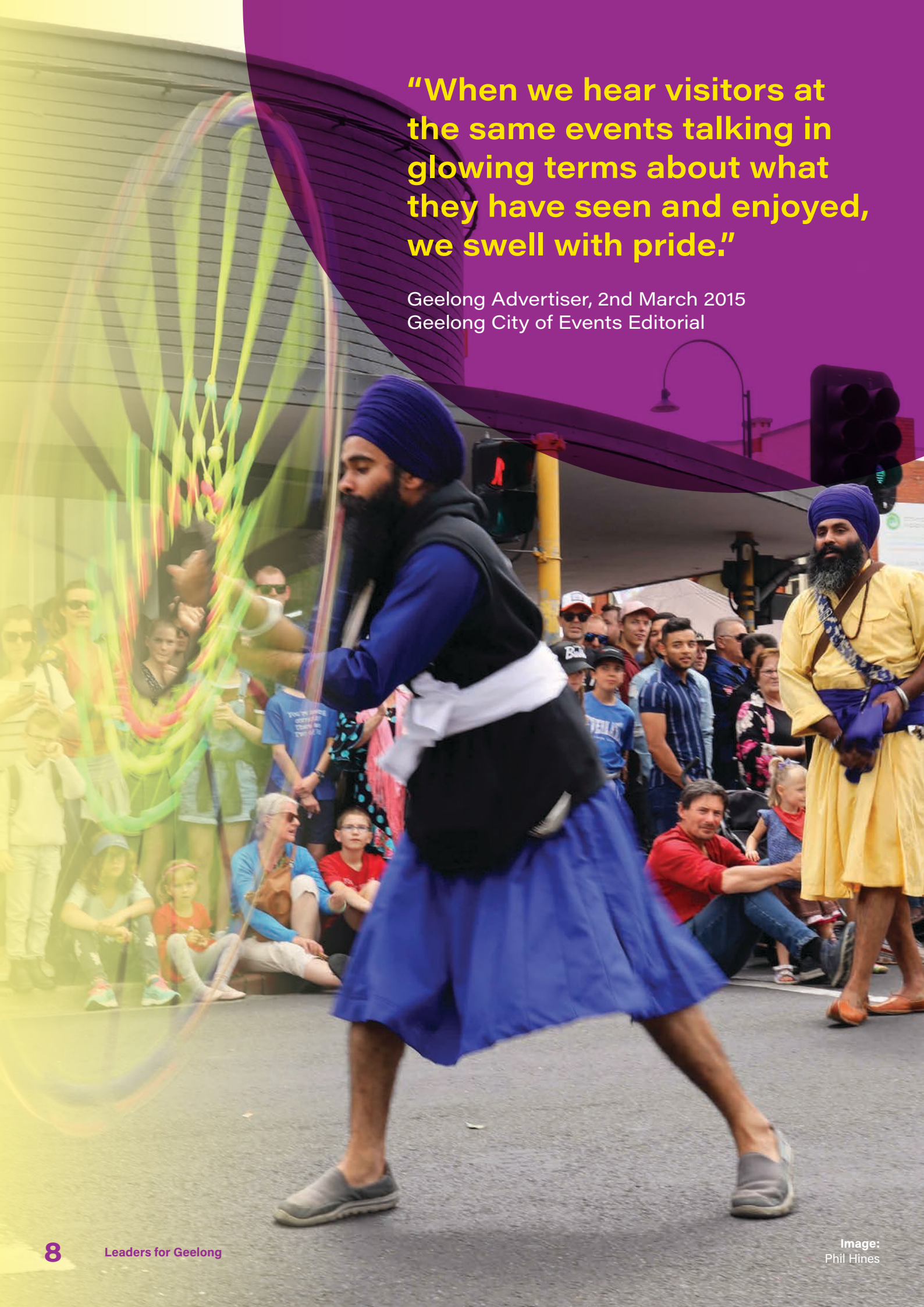
And news of the many attractions of Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula is clearly spreading as we learn today that our region was the second most successful property market in the country over the past five years. Only the Illawarra region in New South Wales fared better.

There's no denying our region faces tough times on the jobs front, but there's also a lot we're doing right.

And there's a lot to love.

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Approach

We used the Agile Project Management approach which utilised a continuous feedback loop from key stakeholders and potential users of the website. This approach enabled us to adapt as required and ensured that we delivered an end product that met the project objectives.

Key stages of our Approach included:

Stage 1 — Feasibility Analysis & Project Scope

- Develop the requirements of the project

Stage 2 — Planning & Design

- Establish regular meeting cadence to address roadblocks and keep tasks moving forward
- Confirm scope and develop Gantt chart
- Plan and design the website through a mindmap
- Allocate roles and responsibilities and set milestones

Stage 3 — Development

- Curate required content
- Website construction plan
- Engage website developer
- Agree on preliminary layout of the website (attachment 1)

Stage 4 — Testing

- Verify the website is user friendly and free from bugs
- Target audience testing

Stage 5 — Project Deployment

- Project Presentation
- Project Report
- Website goes live
- Handover maintenance of the website

"Pako Festa brings so many diverse groups together to celebrate in harmony. It reminds us that the things we have in common are much more important than the things that divide us."

Event Director, Luisa LaFornara 2010



Results

This project has resulted in a functional interactive timeline that starts to collate the large connection multimedia assets spanning 40 years of the Pako Festa. Whilst it only currently exists in a test environment, it is expected to be launched on the eve of the 40th anniversary festival.

The website is organised around the concept of an interactive timeline. Curated by year and containing a selection of retrospectives, print media articles, images and other media it enables the user to explore the key features and highlights of each individual year.

The website is built around a database of multimedia assets that can be scaled up and grown creating a living record of current and future festivals.

The website is designed for multiple platforms including web browsers, tablets and mobile phones and integrates with the current Pako Festa website (<https://www.pakofesta.com.au/>).

Given the scalability built into the design of the website, expanding the collection of multi-media assets will be easily achievable at a relatively low cost.

The launch of this website is expected to contribute to the festival by providing an accessible platform that can be utilised during COVID 19 and any future pandemic events. This could be achieved through diversifying the product offering by utilising this online platform to grow an online audience during periods where social distancing requirements and other directions from the Chief Health Officer may prevent certain aspects of the event taking place.

The website is expected to be used to publicise, celebrate and record, for posterity, the value of the festival particularly in community building, inclusion and cohesion as well as cultural awareness and tolerance.

It builds on the success of the 2021 festival which was also run in a reimagined event format. According to the 2020 survey, Pako Festa achieved some significant public outcomes, as shown in the extract from the evaluation undertaken for Diversitat by CultureCounts™.



Agree that they enjoyed the atmosphere



Agree that it gave them a greater respect for cultural diversity



Agree that it made them feel welcomed and included



84% of respondents have attended Pako Festa before



97% of respondents intend to return to Pako Festa next year



48% of respondents were aged between 30 and 49 years



95% rated their experience as good or excellent



Net Promoter Score

It is expected that the website will provide a future platform for

- Broadening existing community engagement and participation in the festival by creating future functionality within the website to enable participants to share their experiences of the festival
- Economic benefits through broader publicity and potentially drawing greater visitation by exposing a broader audience to the festival as well as a tool for leveraging funding
- Economic benefits through promotion of entities that support / sponsor event through cross branding and cross promotion
- Educational benefits by providing local schools with a resource that embeds cultural awareness and tolerance through the content provided in the website

Other potential future uses of the website include;

- Sharing of benchmark Reports
- Sharing of quotes from sponsors / businesses
- Delivering content for schools
- Detailed descriptions for every community
- Improving the website as an educational tool
- Acting as a subscription and registration portal to collect emails

Additional items that the website could also deliver include interviews capturing the impact of the festival on specific communities, a deeper collection of archive images, broader collection of newspaper articles from other publications. The website has been set up to enable this growth.

The Pako Festa Website Project has a myriad of future expansion possibilities. The inaugural website was developed from the ground up with not only a solid base for information regarding the Pako Festa Event, but also with possibilities to have far reaching educational and community benefits. Some of these include:

- Ability for teachers in the Greater Geelong Community to access an education portal, this may provide further educational benefits to local students and register schools for any updates that occur.
- The ability for participants and visitors from diverse communities to upload retrospective photos/media or comment on years they participated in.
- The potential for a Chat function that will allow diverse community groups to communicate.
- Allow for quotes and advertising from event sponsors
- Expansion of detailed descriptions for every community that has participated in Pako Festa throughout the last 40 years (and to add to that list as the event continues)
- Provide data and statistics back to event organisers and sponsors
- Registration portal to collect emails and generate an "interest" database
- Create an impact tool to seek further funding for future events
- These next steps will occur after the "Go Live" version of the site has officially commenced. Diversitat has a dedicated technical expert, with the capability to further enhance, adjust and expand the website as required and in real time.

Key Leadership Learnings

During the journey of this project, the team learnt the importance of understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses. From this, we were able to assign tasks according to those strengths and weaknesses and as such everyone has been generally happy and engaged in the roles they have played in the project.

Being able to openly and honestly communicate with the team was critical to meet our project objectives, this enabled the team to effectively work together and accomplish what we set out to do. We also established a good rapport and relationships early on in the piece enabling frank and open discussions as the project progressed. This enabled us to deal with any challenges.

We learnt how to effectively work in a group dynamic where there were competing priorities and limited time. We improved our ability to adapt to challenges, work with people who have different thinking and behavioural styles, and prioritise tasks to deliver great outcomes.

With the help of our mentor, we quickly realised in the early stages of the project that we were often getting 'stuck in the weeds.' We had a very short period of time and we needed to allocate roles and responsibilities and trust that all team members would play their part.

The project team collectively experienced personal leadership learnings as a result of completing the project, including:

- Creating relationships outside of their field and also testing leadership skills outside of their current roles.
- The importance of not getting sidetracked and sticking to the project framework.
- Being able to receive and provide good constructive feedback about some areas to work on when participating in a team-based environment.
- Development of networking skills and creating an environment where robust discussions could occur
- Giving and receiving feedback and sharing of ideas in a collaborative and constructive manner.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The project team is proud of the Pako Festa interactive timeline that has been developed which

- Increases the online presence of the Pako Festa and supplements the existing event offerings, when large gatherings are not possible due to the Covid 19 pandemic
- Documents the 40 years history of Pako Festa and educates the public about the events history and Geelong's migration story

The interactive timeline can be used as a promotional tool to gather support and interest for the upcoming 40th anniversary. Through expanding the reach of Pako Festa, it will help grow the potential economic revenue generated by the event and instil Geelong as a destination of choice for cultural events.

It is anticipated that the website can grow and develop with the event. Potential improvements which could be implemented are

- The ability for the public to submit photos of their experience at the event
- The group was limited by the amount of media that could be uploaded to ensure the website would be delivered on time. There are much more archived material that could be added to the website
- More interviews with the community groups could be added to the website
- More information regarding when different community groups migrated to Geelong

In addition, the website has the potential to become a valuable asset for sponsors and present promotional opportunities such as

- Recognition of past supporters and contributors to the event
- Capturing and engaging future sponsors



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www.pakofesta.com.au



Acknowledgements

This project could not have occurred without the ongoing support and encouragement of Luisa La Fornara, Pako Festa Event Director. The project team was privileged to have access to many years of historical material related to Pako Festa

A huge thank you to Mitchel Dye of Diversitat who provided his website development skills to the team to code the website and guide the graphic design of the multimedia assets that are utilised in the website

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