



building a state of creativity

## Midland Atelier - The Foundry Digital Media Hub

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### What's the Plan?

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FORM is working in partnership with the Midland Redevelopment Authority to develop a fully integrated Digital Media Hub as part of Midland Atelier, Western Australia's first design and creative industries centre in the historic Railway Workshops in Midland, Perth Western Australia.

The adaptation and fit-out of approximately 2,300 sqm within the currently un-renovated Foundry building will provide access to specialised equipment, co-working spaces, learning environments and other facilities as well as programming, specialised support services and events. This will sit alongside existing and planned design studios including furniture and objects, mixed media, Indigenous design, metals, and planned retail and hospitality.

The Hub will be a central part of the creative industries centre, housed in the distinctive, historical Railway Workshop setting at the heart of the growing Midland community as it renews its role as a vital regional gateway. It will provide an important platform for cross-fertilisation across the disciplines within the Atelier and into other industries, cultivating greater innovation.

The Foundry Digital Media Hub will be a core 'node' that will ultimately enable the connection and integration of digital media resources, facilities and practitioners across the State using a 'hub and spokes' model. The Hub is designed to be a connected blend of real-world and virtual environments where digital media practitioners from across WA can converge (both physically and virtually via on-line connectivity) with other industry sectors, other practitioners and the community to access resources, share knowledge and inspire outcomes.

Through its extended reach built upon connectivity and services, the Hub will not only provide benefits to Midland itself, but also across the Perth Metropolitan Area and regional Western Australia to enable all areas to engage with the digital media industry and to benefit from it; both from community and economic development perspectives.

The Foundry Digital Media Hub will nurture innovation, learning, entrepreneurship and creative expression for digital media practitioners including animation, graphic design, web-development, music, gaming, film and 3D development. As a resource for digital media practitioners across the State, the Hub will facilitate the growth of employment opportunities in this important industry as well as broader economic development and community outcomes associated with the application of digital media in other industries and the community.

The development of The Foundry Digital Media Hub represents Stage 4 of the development of Midland Atelier, WA's first design and creative industries centre. It will complement the other creative and trans-disciplinary design studios developed or in progress for Midland Atelier including the Pattern Shop centre for furniture and object design (Stages 1 and 2) and the Aboriginal Creative Development Studio, to be housed in the original Elements Shop (stage 3), providing an important platform for cross-fertilisation across the disciplines within the Atelier and into other industries.

Equally importantly, the virtual components of the Hub will include a globally connected knowledge, collaboration and services network that can 'connect WA with the Cloud' to provide WA's community of digital media practitioners from both urban and regional areas with world-class training, education, knowledge and other necessary foundations to facilitate growth.

The project is already partially funded; the principal partner is the State government's Midland Redevelopment Authority (MRA) that has committed \$20 million worth of physical infrastructure and other site preparations, with over \$40 million invested to date in the overall Railway Workshop site. Initial plans have been developed for The Foundry and the anticipated build time once funding is confirmed is estimated at 12 – 18 months.

### An Introduction to Digital Media

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Digital media is a globally connected and rapidly growing industry that forms an element of the ICT industry. It includes the production, integration and application of graphics, audio, text, video, and animation elements. Examples of Digital Media technologies and content include animation, graphic design, web-development, music, video, film, 3D development and gaming. In addition to being a



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growing industry in itself, digital media technologies are widely applied to many business activities including:

- Marketing and advertising
- Customer service and relationship management
- Decision support (e.g. modelling, visualisation and exploration)
- Product development (e.g. software programs or 3D design)
- Training and development (e.g. e-learning and simulated environments)
- Remote operations
- Entertainment

As a creative industry, digital media also facilitates cultural and social outcomes through creative expression. The connected nature of the industry enables distributed knowledge networks and global interaction. The growing pervasiveness and importance of digital media to both businesses and community make it critical that the State supports the digital media industry in Western Australia to encourage innovation, industry competitiveness, arts and culture and ultimately economic prosperity both locally and state-wide.

### **Why a Digital Media Hub?**

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Digital Media is an industry of rapidly increasing global importance, both in its own right as well as in its role as a key enabler for many other industry sectors. With predicted workforce challenges in WA, the Hub provides an opportunity for the State to increase productivity and participation in the workforce. In line with the Federal Government's investment in the National Broadband Network, the Hub will facilitate the development of applications and content to leverage and add value to this network, setting WA at the forefront of the global digital media industry.

Through its extended reach built upon connectivity and services, the Hub will not only provide benefits to Midland itself, but also across the Perth Metropolitan Area and regional Western Australia to enable all areas to engage with the digital media industry and to benefit from it; both from community and economic development perspectives. Based upon its 'hub-and-spokes' model of connectivity, the Hub will also enable WA to leverage other government investments such as the \$80 million Pawsey Centre which includes iVEC. iVEC supports researchers in Western Australia with supercomputing services, petabyte storage, online research collaboration tools, and visualisation expertise. The more localised government investments in Midland including the new Health Campus and GP Super Clinic as well as Landgate and the WA Police communications, forensics and traffic operations facilities also present significant opportunities for the Hub to provide digital media services to these organisations and their associated industries, or to encourage innovations across these industries.

The Foundry Digital Media Hub will provide a base for high level digital media companies and practitioners that demonstrate excellence (or show the potential for excellence) in their field of work. It will provide a range of services, linkages and support that will nurture innovation, creativity and growth. Developing this Hub will support the growth of a high-tech industry to create locally developed products, services and Intellectual Property in the digital media industry. The outputs from the hub will enhance innovation, leadership and growth potential in the State's key industries including the creative industries (including animation and gaming), mining and resources sectors, health, manufacturing and transport and storage.

The Hub offers an opportunity to develop the infrastructure to support creative talent and a centralised space to engage that talent and creativity in Western Australia, demonstrating that opportunities for career paths are available within the State. Simultaneously, it offers a virtual platform for engaging practitioners throughout the State with the Hub, and into international networks as they are established.

### **Why Midland?**

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Midland is a strategically important location in Western Australia, situated at the nexus of major transport links and forming a gateway to regional Western Australia. Just 17km from the Perth CBD, Midland forms



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part of the City of Swan and Perth's Eastern Region and is the regional gateway to Perth, the Swan Valley and Perth Hills tourism precincts and the Perth Airport.

Its strategic location has traditionally positioned Midland as a provider of services to both Perth's Eastern Region and Regional areas. With a number of significant investment projects either planned or underway and with the planned development and expansion of key industrial areas in the region, this role is set to continue. Midland is an area poised for growth. In particular investment projects across health, education, government, transport, defence and industrial development are setting Midland and the surrounding region apart as an exciting area of opportunity.

Positioned directly on the train line, the Railway Workshops provide a significant historic space that is available and accessible.

### **The Window of Opportunity**

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The Hub is a response to research published by FORM in 2008 (*Comparative Capitals*). This was undertaken in partnership with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and PricewaterhouseCoopers and examined Perth's migration and education trends; levels of investment and entrepreneurialism; connectivity; and talent attraction and retention in comparison to other Australian cities. A key finding of the research was that the state loses more creative talent across all creative professions than it attracts. This means innovation, patents and R&D are also at risk because of the lack of suitable human capital and limited opportunities for transferral and cross-pollination of skills across industries. This revealed a clear need to develop a facility such as Midland Atelier, which can assist in retaining and developing creative talent in Western Australia, as well as enhance commercial opportunities for creative practitioners and related industries.

With the growing global connectivity that is enabling significant economic change across most industries, the establishment of the Foundry Digital Media Hub provides an opportunity to encourage innovation, industry competitiveness and economic prosperity both locally and regionally in WA. Given the global nature of the digital media industry and the fact that many other global cities are already competing aggressively in this space, it is important for WA to act now. If not, WA will miss out on the opportunity to grow an industry that is already recognised as an economic opportunity in other countries such as the US, Ireland, UK, and Spain as well as our Asia-Pacific neighbours.

### **How can you assist?**

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This development is currently the subject of fund raising before it can move forward so to progress this project, we need your support - so please register your support or interest in being part of this exciting transformational project!

To discuss this opportunity further, please contact FORM:

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