

**Submission
No 6**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Toolo Ltd

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Toolo Ltd the Blue Mountains Tool Library is a not for profit Creative Industries Enterprise established in 2016 to provide equipment, resources and space for the wider community in the Blue Mountains. The library generates income through membership fees, to date has over 130 members who pay an annual fee, and through other fundraising efforts. The Library has a board of directors with a keen interest in seeing the Creative Industries supported and prosper in our region.

The Blue Mountains creative industries community has long been suffering with issues of studio and making space availability, affordability, distance and cost of travelling to major centres where these facilities are located. This creative industries project offers low-cost, accessible resource sharing, co-creation and space-saving alternatives for creative industries professionals providing a sustainable long term co-creative makerspace solution by making new studios available across a the existing tool library and a new venue, the Kiosk, provided by the Blue Mountains City Council.

There is a critical shortage of affordable spaces and access to new technologies in our region.

Toolo aims to provide creative industries professionals access to equipment limited in their direct environment, to enable them to thrive and be economically viable and sustainable. The term Creative Industries is defined by ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries & Innovation as comprising a set of interlocking sectors of the economy focused on extending and exploiting symbolic cultural products to the public such as arts, films, interactive games, or providing business to business symbolic or information services in areas such as architecture, advertising and marketing, design as well as web, multimedia and software development (Higgs, Cunningham and Pagan 4). The Blue Mountains, lies in the outer-western region of Sydney, some distance from resources and spaces to create. The aim to increase accessibility and provide up to the minute information on space and equipment availability helps reduce the time spent travelling and researching for members.

A secondary aim is to aid creative industries practitioners with affordable access to much needed studio and making spaces. The Blue Mountains is a hotspot for creative industries practitioners with 8.9% of the population identified as working the creative industries sector (Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise 12). One of the challenges faced by the creative industries professionals is the affordability and availability of studios and working space. In a survey of creative industries practitioners, undertaken the the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise in 2013, 77% indicated that they work from home (Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise 6).

A third aim is to promote the increased accessibility and economic sustainability of shared working spaces and equipment to the creative industries sector of the Blue Mountains.

Our primary goal is to identify the needs of creative industries professionals and match the relevant resources to aid their professional practice. We want our members to find what they need and book items through a web platform and member portal login. Existing resources in the mountains, such as hardware stores, hire companies, the city council public rooms and spaces have no means of online reservation and many barriers to entry for booking, such as large deposits and paper application forms with long processing times. Other facilities, outside of the immediate vicinity offering studio spaces to create are located in Sydney which are prohibitive due to large travel times to attend these places.

We need creative hubs in areas outside of Sydney with subsidised rents where we don't have to travel over an hour to get to them.

We need local council's to be proactive in this space rather than reactive. Many times council will not even respond to our ideas for trying to access infrastructure funding to build community resources in our area.

There is so much done for sporting and other recreational pursuits, where these activities are given large areas with clubhouses. Why is it not the same for creative industries. Surely they could be built in and around sporting areas, to create cultural hubs.

Lastly, thanks for taking the time to read the submission.