



BRIEFING TO MINISTER

Prepared for:

**Hon. Nanaia Mahuta MP Hauraki-Waikato
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister of Local
Government**

OUTLINE:

Creative Waikato is the regional arts capability building organisation for the Waikato Region. Creative Waikato is an independent organisation working with arts, cultural and creative organisations and individuals in the Waikato community to ensure the region prospers with diverse and transformative creative activity. Creative Waikato is also part of the Regional Arts Network of Aotearoa (RANA) which is an independent network of regional arts organisations operating across Aotearoa.

Creative Waikato seeks to share developments on:

- The Waikato Arts Navigator - a regional arts strategy for the Waikato Region (shared with 10 local councils)
- to work with government on the development of a stronger regional arts, culture, and creative sector to support community wellbeing and resilience.
- to act as a source of information and advice on regional arts issues and connections to the Future for Local Government Review

Regional Work - The Waikato Arts Navigator

As a regional organisation we aim to be interwoven with our community, having first-hand knowledge of the needs of our region, and understanding the relationships between the key regional sector stakeholders, and the many and varied regional and local communities of arts practitioners and organisations. We are working with arts practitioners and organisations to consider the post-COVID opportunity to collectively re-imagine the systems that are currently in place to support the arts, culture and creative sector. One significant opportunity we identify is to benefit community wellbeing by empowering local people to tell local stories.

Part of this has been informed by our development of the Waikato Arts Navigator over the past 3 years.

We present [The Waikato Arts Navigator](#) as a shared framework, including a vision and strategy, for supporting and strengthening our arts and culture in the region. It can serve to guide planning and decision making. It can help provide the purpose and understanding of value and impact to the mahi that already takes place in our communities.

Our aspirational vision is to see our region become a place with a vibrant arts and cultural sector that thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity. This change has been emerging through the actions that already occur in our towns and communities, particularly through our passionate arts sector, but we also acknowledge that there is an opportunity to make some collective impact with a strategy that is forward in its intent but localised in its action.

The Waikato Arts Navigator has been shared with all Councils in the area, but also with funders, community organisations and other regional enablers to seek alignment and find ways that we can all track in the same direction with cross-regional efforts that will support, complement and strengthen one another, as well as bringing more potential for national funding opportunities. It is also an opportunity for artists and arts organisations to take ownership of this strategy to help shape the change through their own practice and active engagement with communities.

We know that arts, culture and creativity are powerful levers for positive social change. They show us that we make the world rather than simply inherit it. This is why the vision is for arts, culture and creativity to be embedded more broadly in future opportunities throughout the Waikato ecosystem. There is tremendous talent and value here and there is so much potential to have positive collective impact in this space.

The [Waikato Arts Navigator](#) is a community-led strategy, that is designed to be utilised, implemented and activated by all people who choose to identify as being part of the arts ecosystem. This means artists, arts organisations, advocates, audiences, and communities - alongside enablers like councils, government, funders and other interested parties who want to celebrate the role of arts, culture and creativity in the Waikato region.

Ultimately this is about having a shared language, a way to understand and communicate the value of what we do, and to find ways to work with one another to enhance the role of arts, culture and creativity in the region.

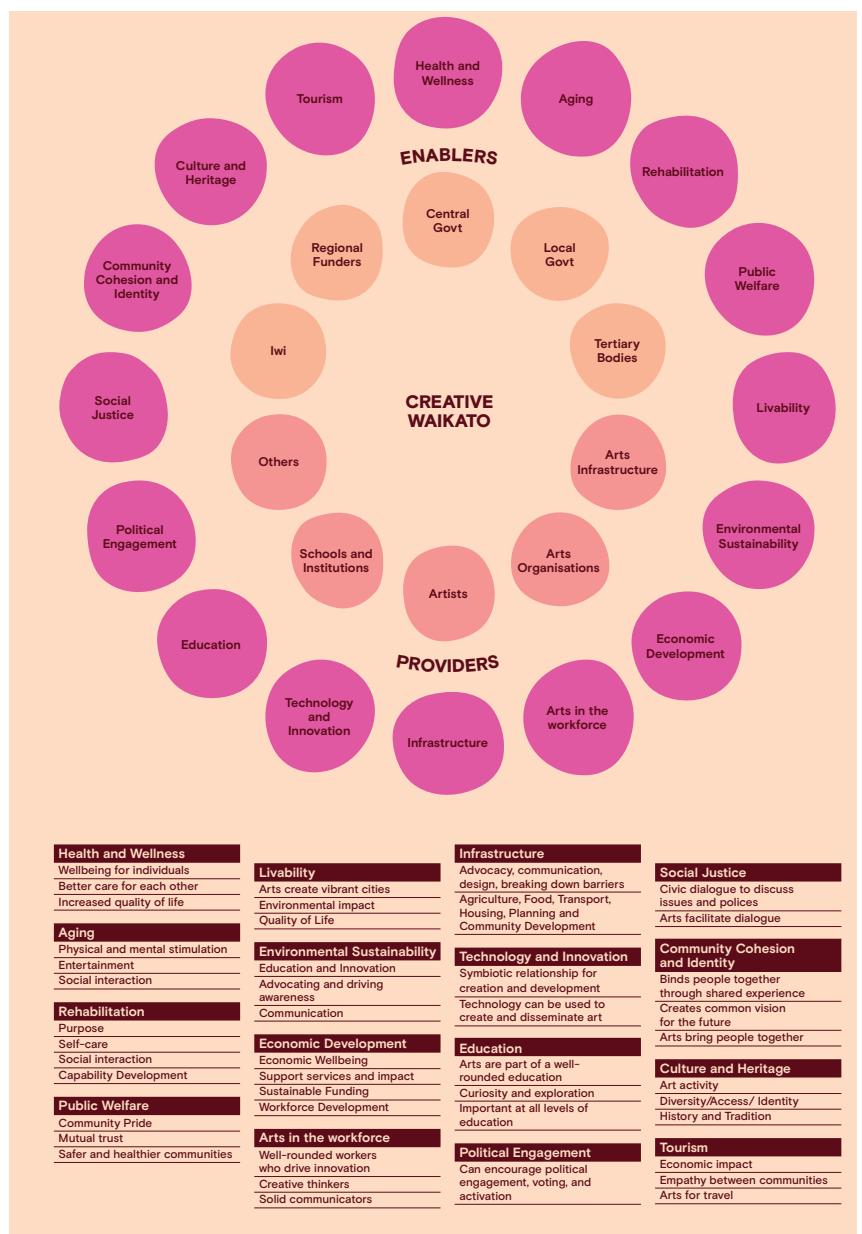
Arts in the social ecosystem

When thinking about local government and the role it plays through the four wellbeing's to be actively engaged with the cultural wellbeing of its communities, there is so much potential for strengthened support.

Ideally, arts, culture, and creativity should be recognised as vital to and embedded within all facets of our community.

They feed into a broader understanding of community, sense of place, and shared identity. When we collectively use arts-based approaches to express ourselves and solve social and civic problems, we move forward in an inclusive and engaging way. Our kaupapa is to be multidisciplinary and intergenerational while improving cultural diversity.

This diagram maps out an innovative, whole-of-system approach, which in turn would support the sustainability of the arts, culture, and creative sector, whilst also benefitting community well-being, and ensuring that our collective impact is more broad reaching and engaging.



Background:

What are Regional Arts Organisations?

Regional Arts Organisations (RAOs) are non-profit entities that operate regionally across Aotearoa to provide strategic direction and support for sustainable arts, culture and creative development.

The strategic focus of each RAO is tailored in response to the needs, aspirations and strategic priorities of each region's arts, culture and creative sectors and communities. RAOs provide arts sector support, development and leadership. We also provide strategic guidance acting as independent intermediaries between the regional arts communities and other relevant stakeholders including local and central government. This relationship works towards creating an embedded understanding of the role arts, culture and creativity plays in community wellbeing.

Key activities delivered by the RAOs include:

- engagement and consultation with the arts sector and wider arts communities
- regional needs analysis
- development of regional arts strategies and advocacy
- sector capacity and capability development
- initiation and delivery of programmes of work that respond to regional arts priorities.

The RAOs also operate as a connected network (the Regional Arts Network Aotearoa [RANA]) to support shared goals. This is a growing network that currently doesn't cover the whole of Aotearoa.

The regional arts organisations within RANA operate as a community of practice that supports regionally-focussed capability building within the arts and cultural sectors. Network members operate as strategic partners for regional engagement looking to enact positive sector impact as well as to proactively benefit community wellbeing throughout the arts and cultural ecosystem. To champion arts, culture and creativity as a public good, and to find new ways to support New Zealanders through the arts.

CREATIVE WAIKATO

Creative Waikato is the regional arts organisation for the Waikato region, which includes 10 local authorities. We provide creative capability development for artists and arts organisations, advocacy, research, and strategic direction for sustainable arts, culture and creativity in our region. We are the navigators working toward a Waikato that prospers with diverse and transformative creative activity.

For more information see: www.creativewaikato.co.nz