

JOYFUL STEPS TO COMMUNITY ADVOCACY



A practical handbook for
supporting the arts, culture
and creativity you love

**Creative
Waikato
Toi Waikato**

ADVOCACY IS STORYTELLING



It is communicating with decision makers to share the importance of a vision for our communities in the future.

Advocacy comes in different forms and operates at different scales, but when we sing together we create change through community and care.

This handbook is designed to offer some key ideas about advocacy, with some practical first steps you can take to support arts, culture and creativity in your community and beyond.



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1

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is about speaking and acting in support of something, to bring about positive change. Action is key to advocacy, and it can take many different forms.



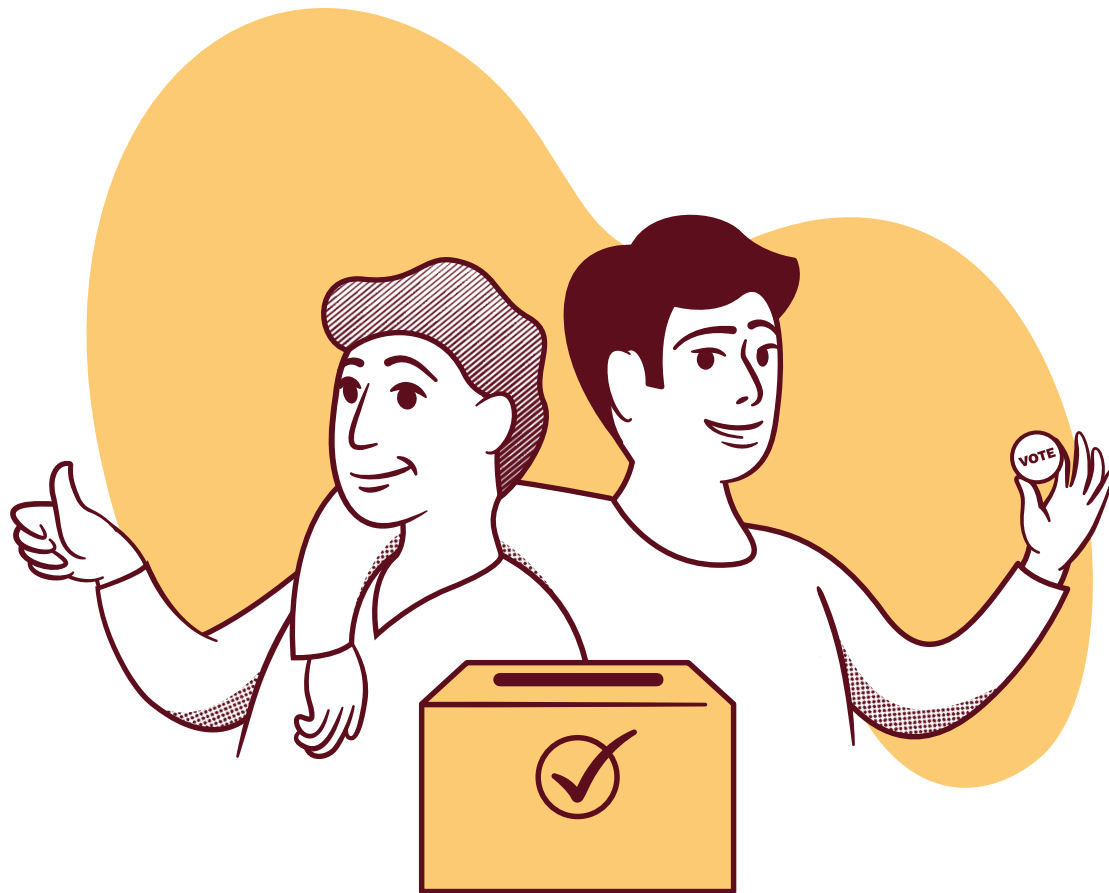
It can be loud or quiet, public or private, big or small. Every action counts, and there is a part for everybody to play. It can include things like gathering information or providing education. Talking to your neighbours and communities. Raising awareness and amplifying the voices of those people affected by decisions. Offering tautoko. Celebrating progress. Sharing your experience or views. Writing letters, signing petitions, attending marches and events.

Bringing people together around a kaupapa. Creating shared language and a plan of action. Advocacy is a powerful way that we can influence change. It is how we help people to recognise the value of arts, culture and creativity. This ensures that the people, places, and processes that enable arts, culture and creativity can be supported, and thrive. Coming together can help us to make sure that we present a clear story and a strong voice.

Your voice is important, and can contribute to a choir for change.

WHAT IS CITIZENRY?

Citizens are the people who live in a particular place, and elect a shared government. When we understand ourselves as citizens, we understand that we are part of a bigger picture.



All of us in Aotearoa are connected in a big ecosystem. We have common needs and dreams, and shared experiences. We have shared leadership, and are impacted by many of the same things.

There are decisions being made all the time that affect us. These decisions have impacts for us, and shape our neighbourhoods, towns and cities. They shape the things that make up our lives.

It is important to remember that we have a role to play in these decision-making processes. We can contribute to the shape of our future.

As citizens, we have a responsibility to think beyond our immediate experiences and beliefs, and to think about the communities around us. Our actions create ripples.

When we think about community, we think about the places and people that we belong to. We are reminded that we are not alone, and that our wellbeing is collective— that means that community care serves us all.

We need to remember that our most pressing challenges will be shared by us all, and that we all want many of the same things, even when we disagree about how we might get there.

Sometimes, it can feel like government and community leadership sits far away from our everyday lives. But we need to remember that our leaders are elected to represent and serve us, and it is only with our support that they can do this.

Often, our leaders look to public opinion to shape their decisions. We can show them that we will support them in making positive change. We have an important role to play.

We can contribute to the shape of our future.

CARE

Care is at the core of advocacy. We advocate for the things that are most important in our lives, the things that we are ready to invest time, energy and money in. We enter into a relationship of service with the causes we care about, and tend to.

The things we care most about can also be called our values.

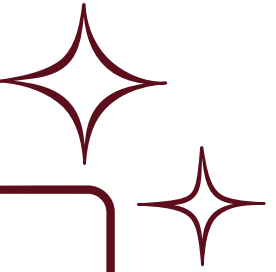
This is an interesting word to think about, because we might be used to hearing about the monetary value of things, but actually, value is much deeper than that. It's about the worth we place on things, well beyond any dollar measure.

We get to decide what's worthwhile to us, and share about this value, even and especially when it is not counted in terms of monetary measures.



Exercise: What do you value?

Make a list of the things that matter most to you.
What are the things that make your life brighter?



It is important that we share about what we value.

Sometimes the things we care about are so central to our lives that they can seem like a 'given', or like everyone would, or should, understand that they are important.

But this is not the case. Especially where something might not clearly and immediately generate monetary value, it is our job to share the deeper value that it creates. This is really important with arts, culture and creativity.

We can think of advocacy as extending an invitation for people to understand, and to take action.

We can lead with joy and hope and provide a positive vision. We can offer useful signposts to new ways of thinking and doing.

This requires hard work, and it is important that this work centers community and wellbeing. It is important that we keep an eye on the 'why' behind our advocacy.

So, what does this have to do with arts, culture and creativity?

He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Māku e kī atu, he tangata,
he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in this world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

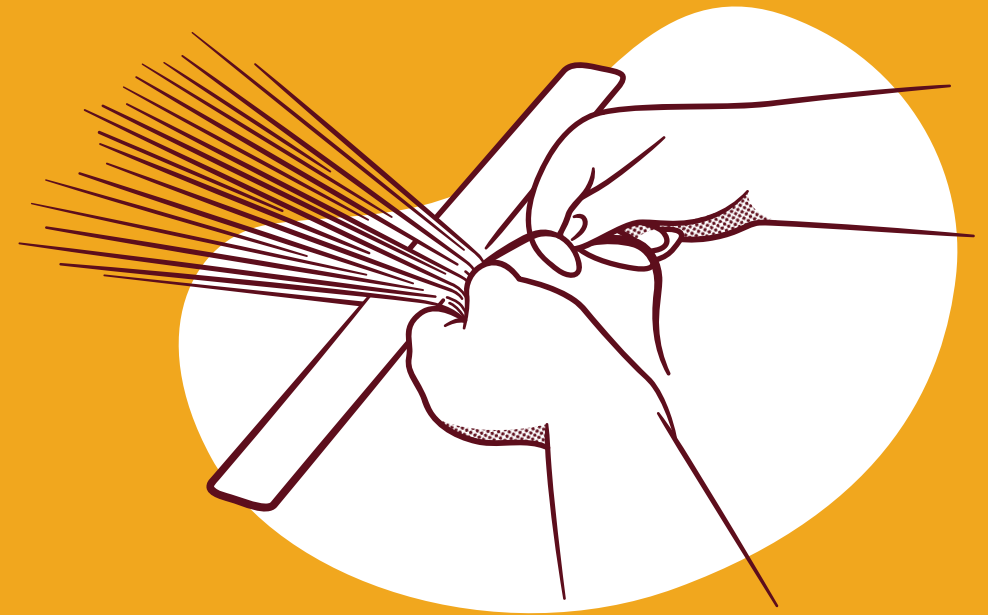


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THE VALUE OF ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Arts, culture and creativity has great value, both inside and outside of the arts sector. For those of us who create, participate in, or engage with arts, culture and creativity, we know that it makes a difference in our lives.

More widely, arts, culture and creativity is woven through everything.



If we imagine that our collective wellbeing is a cloth, then we can see the horizontal threads as arts and culture, and the vertical threads as everything else. When both work together, with arts and culture touching each strand of all other aspects of society, the interlocking strands become beautiful, strong and inspiring.

We know that arts, culture and creativity is a public good. Access to these things are part of the nature of our human rights. They form a fundamental and essential part of the infrastructure of a thriving modern society – both hard infrastructure in spaces and places, and soft infrastructure in people and groups.

Regular engagement in creative activity is key to our ability to imagine and innovate. It is in

the way we invent, in how we make meaning, and how we understand ourselves and the people around us. Arts, culture and creativity in all forms is essential, and helps us to remember the past and share knowledge. To connect with one another through our stories and cultures. It can activate public spaces, and bring us together. It enables us to imagine, to find new ways to solve problems and meet our biggest challenges.

It is our job to help to share this message about the value of arts, culture and creativity with those who may not know this yet, or who might know it deep down but do not have it top of mind.

It is our job to help to share this message.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THIS VALUE?

While our own experiences mean that we know the value of arts, culture and creativity, part of the process of advocacy is in strengthening our sharing with story and evidence.

This means that our experience forms an important part, and that can sit alongside research, facts, and other supporting details. For any community advocacy, please know that sharing your experience and the things that matter to you is important, and this is enough.

But if you want to include other supporting evidence, we have included an easy-use fact-sheet at the end of this handbook for you to draw on.



For example we know...

63%

of New Zealanders say that “the arts are good for my mental health and wellbeing”.¹

61%

of New Zealanders agree that “the arts make an important contribution to community resilience and wellbeing”.²

¹ Creative New Zealand, ‘New Zealanders and the Arts: Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi: Survey findings for adult New Zealanders 2023’, <https://creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports>, p. 9.

² Creative New Zealand, ‘New Zealanders and the arts Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi 2023’, p. 22.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ADVOCACY?

Community advocacy is when we add our voices to a choir for change. It is an approach to advocacy which looks beyond what we currently have on our individual plate, and instead looks to grow a bigger pie.

As humans, there are some ways that our brains tend to work. Some of these are not so helpful.

When we find ourselves faced with a lack of resources, or a sense of scarcity, we can move into a competitive mindset, rather than a collaborative mindset. This can leave us fighting over scraps, rather than challenging the systems that are leaving us with little.

When we feel threatened, we tend to create a sense of 'in groups' to draw close to, and 'out groups' to distance ourselves from. We lose focus on the fact that there is more that we share than divides us. This gives us a false sense of control, and can cause real harm.

We have a tendency to think that the way things are now is fixed, or that they have always been this way, or that they will definitely remain this way.

Add to that the way online spaces thrive on division, and amplify negative stuff, and we have some real challenges!

These things close our horizons, and stop us from seeing all that is possible. They keep us from one another.

And yet, there are other things that are more central to our humanity: Joy, hope, imagination, creativity, community & care.

The arts are a powerful expression of this humanity. Arts, culture and creativity has the power to bring us together, and to change minds and move hearts. Community advocacy is how we gather folks and resources together under a shared umbrella, to make a strong case for change. We can use shared language, and hold a common vision, and be more compelling to those who we are working to convince.

Community advocacy requires work. It requires us to think as part of a bigger whole, and be willing to work collaboratively. It requires practice, trial and error, and patience.

But together, we can share the load, and achieve more. For more on this, check out the regional arts strategy, The Waikato Arts Navigator. You can find this on the Creative Waikato website.

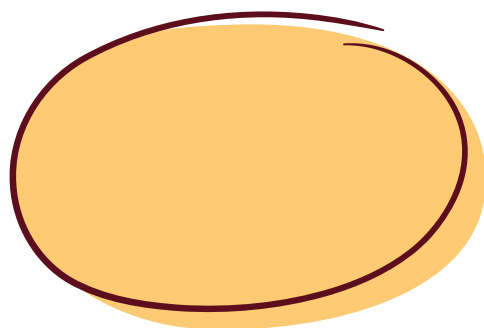


Mā whero, mā pango ka oti ai te mahi
Many hands make light work

Exercise: Map your ecosystem

Pop your name (or the name of the arts groups you are a part of) in the shape in the middle of this page. Around it, brainstorm all the people who connect with your creative activity or

creative life. Who can you support, and draw support from? Who can you sing alongside? Consider family, friends, spaces, collaborators, and how you access information...



ORGANISATIONAL ADVOCACY

For arts organisations – particularly if you receive government or philanthropic funding – you are already engaged in some form of advocacy. In completing your funding applications and impact reports, you are sharing stories of the importance and value of arts, culture and creativity.

With that in mind, we can all make decisions to use shared, strengths-based language to build momentum in our collective advocacy. We can also use shared language in promotion and storytelling, naming the value that events and works offer to our communities. If we each use those opportunities to champion the value and impact of this work, the understanding will grow. (Check out the glossary at the end of this handbook for some key language you can pepper through your work – and for a deeper dive, check out the Waikato Arts Navigator, on the Creative Waikato website.)

Organisations may have more capacity than individuals to engage in advocacy (both formally and informally) that can be of benefit

to the wider ecosystem. Remember that even as organisational advocates, we are still citizens who can act to contribute to collective benefit.

Advocacy can also include inviting decision-makers to be part of your events, or to experience those transformative creative activities first hand. We know the power you can feel from being in a room where a performance is unfolding, or meeting the real-life people who create beauty and connection in our communities.

Minds are changed often by having lived experiences. We can help to enable opportunities to feel the impacts of this positive mahi first-hand, and to see the flow on effects of that work with the communities we serve.

3

ADVOCACY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

All change happens as the result of many many moments. Every voice and small action contributes to big change. Our everyday actions can help to till the soil, and plant seeds for change.

It is worth remembering that our political leaders come and go. What is more important is shifting wider understandings, and helping the broader community to understand the value of arts, culture and creativity. Public opinion is powerful.



You can share about the value of arts, culture and creativity to you. Your message can be very simple:

The arts helps to bring people together

The arts are good for community wellbeing

Art is for everyone

Arts, culture, and creativity are integral to who we are

When arts and creativity are strong and visible, communities are strong and visible

Creativity helps to build resilient and diverse communities, and improves our quality of life

Great art and culture inspires learning

Great art and culture boosts our economy

Having access to thriving arts and culture makes for an exciting city/town/region

Helping people to find their own connection to the arts, culture and creativity around them will have a widespread positive impact. When people are more highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity, they tend to have higher wellbeing, and when people have a practical lived experience with these kinds of activities, they are more likely to support them in the future.

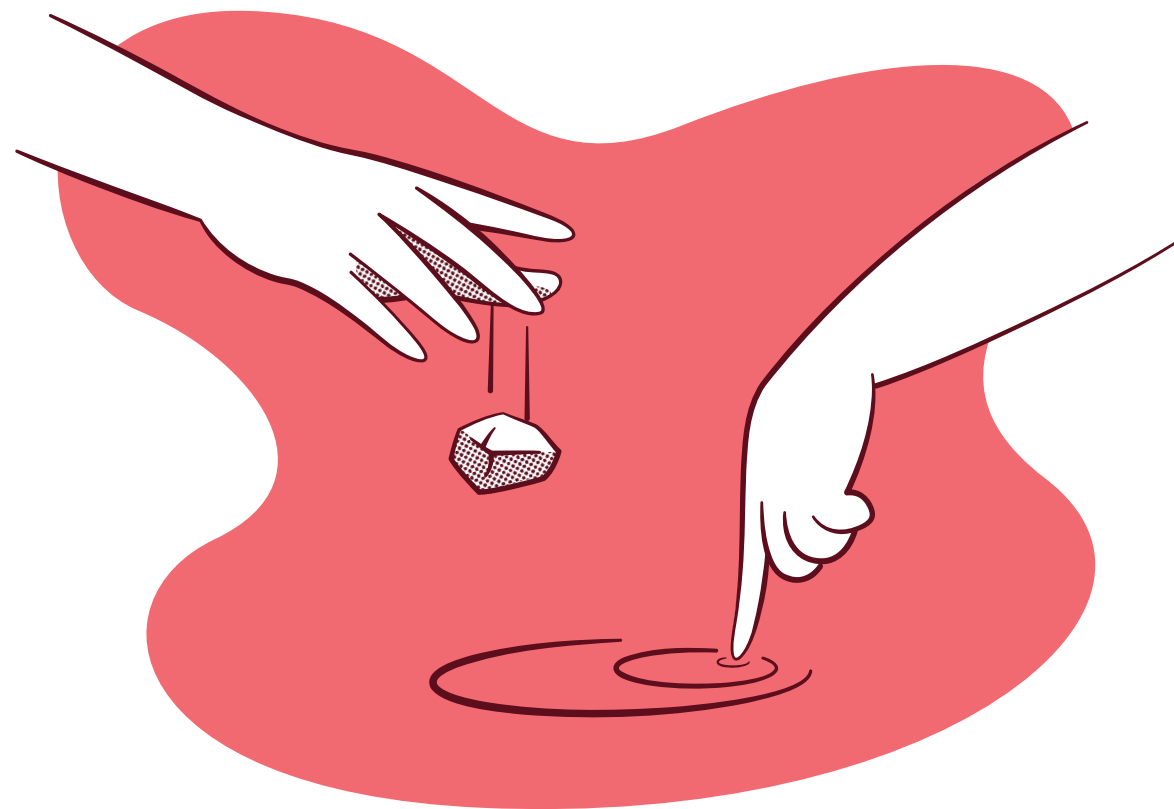
Many people value arts, culture and creativity, but they don't necessarily understand the broader systems around how our ecosystem works. Because of that, they may not

understand what kind of support or investment is needed to help our communities thrive. So, our advocacy can help us to pull back the curtain and show the ways we work together to share stories, create futures and connect communities.

Have a think about who your audience is, and remember to lead with a vision for positive change. Research shows that leading with a strong vision for the future is much more compelling than starting with the current challenges.

For more on this, and how to build powerful explanations, see CNZ's advocacy guide: [Changing the story on arts, culture, and creativity in Aotearoa https://creativenz.govt.nz/advocating-for-the-arts/advocacy-tools-and-research/a-guide-for-arts-advocates](https://creativenz.govt.nz/advocating-for-the-arts/advocacy-tools-and-research/a-guide-for-arts-advocates)

Remember, every action creates ripples, and there are many different effective ways to advocate.



Advocacy can move like light – bending and shifting, creating shape and colour. It can be a loud boisterous sound or a gentle whisper. It can be a multi-story steel sculpture or a poetry reading in the backyard. Our advocacy becomes stories to share and inspire, and in those stories we craft a flourishing future.

Here are some ways you could advocate in your daily life, and in your community:

Make space for creativity in your life. You could aim for 30 minutes a day, and protect this time in your scheduling. You could also share about this with people in your life, and tell them why you create, and what good it brings to your life.

Join a group. Are there any groups advocating for the causes you are passionate about? How can you add to this, and help to build momentum?

Connect with other creatives. What strengths do you hold collectively? What challenges do you face? How might you come together?

Make a joyful noise. It is important to celebrate the things that are working really well. You could give feedback to a venue, group or organiser who makes your life better. Bonus points if there is a way to share your message of support with others too.

Do your creative practice in public or with others. Joy is contagious!

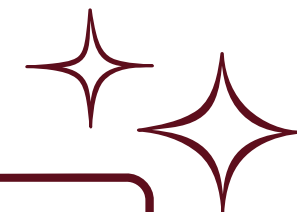
Connect some of your media consumption with folks working in these spaces and throw your voices behind them when an opportunity comes. It will come.

Consider volunteering for an arts organisation or group. Share about it.

Consider where you have platforms, opportunities and resources. How might you share these, or use them to advocate? How might you bring people with you?

Creativity and imagination are key to building a better world, and hope and community are the wells we draw on to keep this imagination flowing. Check out Section 5, on community care and self-care, for some ideas around how to nurture and sustain connection and hope.

Exercise: Think about what you can do with what you have.



What small things could you practise, to help share about the value of arts, culture and creativity? What is one first step?

Remember: Your creativity can be a powerful tool in this space!

4

GOVERNMENT: CENTRAL AND LOCAL

As citizens, we are part of a bigger system, and there are ways that we can participate in the decision-making processes that affect us. We elect local and national leaders, who serve and represent us.

Two main spaces where this happens are: central government and local government. When you engage with local and central government, it is important to hold on to what you value, and a vision for the kind of world that you want.

We can share that arts, culture and creativity is a public good. It is an enabler and indicator of a thriving society. Arts, culture and creativity is best understood not as discrete or siloed activity, but as something which is essential and intrinsic to all aspects of public life.

There is a lot happening all the time, so it can be helpful to connect with people and spaces that can help you to keep informed about all things connected with the arts. You can sign up for newsletters, follow social media accounts, and regularly check websites to stay up to date. Check out Creative New Zealand, Arts Action Now, The Big Idea, The Spinoff, (and of course, Creative Waikato!)



Many of our politicians and government officials receive a lot of negative feedback. This can happen for a number of reasons, but if most of their engagement is about things that might be going wrong, they might be focussed on a small issue that seems much bigger because of the noise about it. But, we can also choose to highlight the things we like about our communities and the support received from the government for them—shining a light on those important things that add value to our lives. So, if you want to engage with the people who are elected to represent us, you can talk to them about the awesome things about creative activities, spaces, groups and events in your community and help to share those positive outcomes!

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Central Government (sometimes called the national government), is centred in Wellington, and includes our prime minister, and other members of parliament (MPs) who are elected from across the motu. They make decisions about things that affect the country as a whole.

We can help the government to understand the ways that supporting arts, culture and creativity supports communities. When arts, culture and creativity are supported, communities are supported.

Here are some ways to engage with central government:

MPs are elected to represent you. It is important that they hear from the people they serve, and it can really help them to know what you think. You can contact them to share your point of view, anytime. You can find a list of current MPs on the New Zealand Government website, and when you click on their names, you will see their contact details.

You can call their office to make a time to chat *kanohi ki te kanohi*, or send an email. You can write a physical letter and post it. This can be powerful, as it will definitely be opened and read by someone in that minister's office. And, when you write to parliament in Aotearoa, postage is free!

Explore the 'Engaging with Members of Parliament' guide from Creative New Zealand for more information around how to connect and engage.

Remember, there is no one way to do this. Just share your values—what matters to you. You can keep your message short and simple. Feel free to speak and write from your personal experience.

The more that elected members (and their offices) hear from us about the things that matter, the more likely they are to engage in it. You can say things that you like, and then explain how the government could help to make it better.

Vote! When you are deciding who to vote for, see if parties have released arts policies, and what they are proposing.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Our local governments are made up of teams who work in our local councils, led by the councillors we elect.

Each council works slightly differently, and has slightly different roles and areas of focus, but their main commitment is to local wellbeing. The language around local government can be confusing, and is different depending on where in the country you are based. Here are some starting points:

Local Government is made up of two types of organisations – Regional Councils and Territorial Authorities (city and district councils)

Regional Councils look at: regional wellbeing, resource use and environmental sustainability (water, land, air), managing rivers, public transport, and civil defence

Territorial Authorities look at: district wellbeing, local infrastructure (roads, water), environmental safety and health, and land use

District councils and city councils have the same power and purpose. City Councils serve a predominantly urban area with a population of 50,000 people or more

Local councils often work together through different forums. In Waikato these are things like Waikato Mayoral Forum, Waikato CE Forum, Co-Lab, and FutureProof Waikato

Here are some ways to engage with local government:

Check out your local council's website, for ways to have a say. Look out for a calendar of upcoming meetings, public calls for submissions, community feedback portals, and public consultations (these are often shared on social media)

You can also reach out to your elected councillors via email, or social media

Organise a meeting with other people who hold similar values as you, and workshop ideas for shared and collaborative advocacy

If you are organising an event, invite elected members to take part and see first-hand what you are doing

Organise a letter-writing session and invite friends and family along to add their voices

Vote! Turnout at local elections is generally very low, so every vote counts. Take the time to read about the values that potential Councillors hold, and share what you find with those in your ecosystem



General tips for engaging with both local and central government:

Do not be afraid to email a councillor or MP who does not yet share your views – it can be very easy for our leaders to focus on the same voices they are used to hearing

If it helps you to feel comfortable in those spaces, go with a friend or a small group and share the things that you care about. This is about informing and sharing

Remember, we are in the process of teaching our leaders that arts, culture and creativity is woven through everything. This is a new understanding for many. When you approach central and local government, think about arts broadly, and be especially clear on how it connects to other things. Look outside of the sector, and think about how other things affect the arts too. For more on this, check out the advocacy pages on the Creative Waikato website

Do not be afraid to contact those who are not already on-board, or who think differently to you. Echo chambers happen!

Often, those serving in central and local government juggle multiple roles, and can face significant negativity. Think about how you might be able to lead with a positive vision. This does not mean ignoring the tough stuff, but instead sharing your vision for how you would like to see the world change. This will be memorable, and cut through the noise

Strength-based messaging matters. Lead with what is important and what is positive in your community, then explain how it could be better with additional support. People want to be engaged in positive impactful stories. See Creative New Zealand's 'A guide for arts advocates' for more useful tips

Think about how you can use creativity and community to activate your words. For example, you could include a song or waiata, to strengthen and distill your message, and leave an impression. How can you use your creativity?

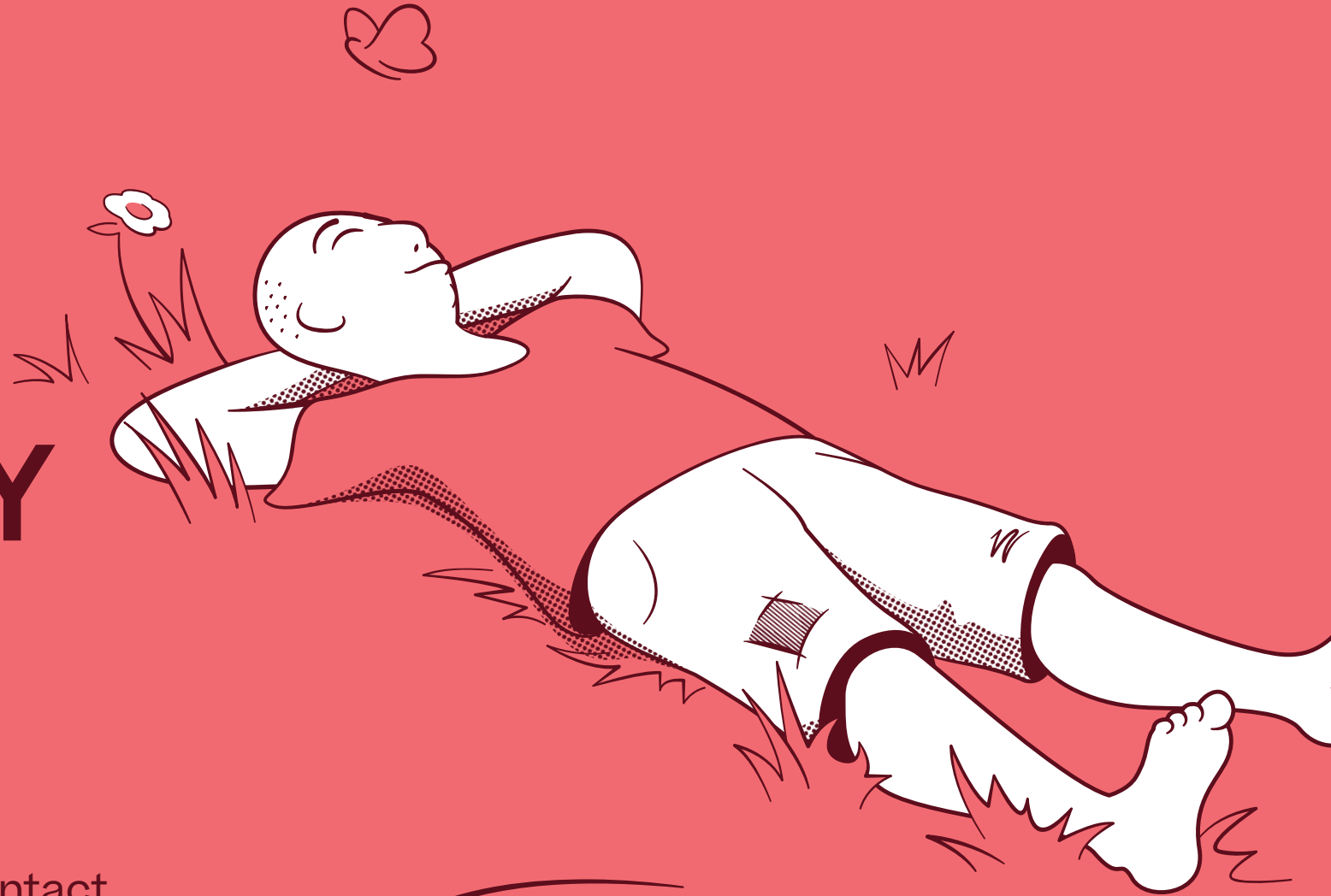


5

Your energy and wellbeing is important, and it is key to remind yourself that you are not alone.

COMMUNITY CARE AND SELF-CARE

Advocacy brings us into close contact with those things that we care the most about. It is essential and meaningful work, and it is not always easy.



Rest is vital.
Community is vital.
Joy is vital.

Some ideas for self-care and community care

Te amorangi ki mua, te hapai o ki muri. Share the load, and value everyone's contribution. Everyone brings their own strengths and expertise, so make sure to acknowledge this. We should treat our cleaners as we treat our CEO's. We need leaders, and we need kaimahi.

Remember you are a whole person with hauora needs.

Know that this is a marathon and not a sprint. It is okay to take time to consider, and to take moments to step out. If we come together, there are enough of us to take turns.

You do not need to shoulder the burden of changing the whole system. We can do our part to make positive shifts without feeling the pressure of fixing it all.

Get into nature.

Remember that your part is essential, and one part of a bigger picture. If we all come together, then there is space for us to step back and step back in.

Turn back to your creativity. Maintain some creative practice that is just for you and your wellbeing.

Engage in creative play – without expectations around its outcome.

Make space for joy.

At times, you may be called on to share about your advocacy in professional spaces. This may include things like conferences or workshops. Your time, expertise and energy can, and should, be remunerated. Keep an eye out for our young people in these spaces. This goes too for cultural advisors and advocates, including kaumātua or migrant communities. We can all help to make sure that cultural knowledge is included and actively valued.

Make sure that you do not reach out to mana whenua or kaumātua only when you need something. It is important to turn up early and often, in support of mana whenua, and without any expectations or 'asks'.

Exercise: What enables your creativity and wellbeing? And how can you pass on the aroha?



Poipoia te kākano
kia puawai

Nurture the seed
and it will blossom

GLOSSARY FOR ARTS ADVOCACY

It can be useful to think about some key terms that you might want to use in your advocacy. Here is some language that you can add to your kete.

Art

The outcomes of intentional practice. One way that ideas are shared with the world.

Arts, Culture and Creativity

An overarching term to describe the broad range of engagement for the ecosystem we are part of. This includes visual art, painting, music, theatre, dance, poetry, circus, craft, media, ngā toi Māori, Pasifika arts, cultural arts and practices, fashion, film, design, crafts and more.

Artists

A person who creates art (of any kind) with a combination of skill and creative imagination. (Other words that people might use are: painter, musician, composer, actor, director, choreographer, poet, sculptor, writer, etc.)

Arts Organisations

A group, entity, organisation, trust or society who work with a core purpose in the arts, culture and creative ecosystem. This may be for-purpose or for-profit.

Community

A group of people who have things in common. Communities can be connected by place, beliefs, interests, identity and history.

Community Groups

Non-profit entities with a purpose to serve the community. This may include some elements of arts, culture and creativity—but may also have broader purpose. Community groups are often made up of volunteers.

Creatives

Like an artist, this is a person who is creative. Arguably, all human beings are creative—but some people more identify as having creative tendencies and feel empowered to engage in them on a regular basis. This also applies to people who organise and deliver creative opportunities for their community.

There are so many other terms connected to this work. They can include: dabbler, hobbyist, student, imagineer, practitioner, artisan, maker, activist, tutu, craftsperson.

Whatever you call yourself, if you are doing creative things, there is something here for you.

Creativity

Creativity is something which all of us hold within us, and it is innately human. Creativity is the ability to imagine, to play, and to connect.

Culture

Culture includes a rich array of different things, including our shared stories, traditions, identities, beliefs and ideas. It includes our ability to access and understand the stories we inherit—we sit, watch and listen. Our cultures include the ways we express ourselves through things such as music, art forms, spaces, and clothing. We can also be welcomed into the spaces of other cultures as guests or manuhiri.

Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a network or interconnected system. It is a way to describe the connections, relationships and interactions between all the different individuals, groups, organisations, spaces, places, and enablers that contribute to arts, culture and creativity in our region and beyond. It includes our whole selves, including how we connect to each other through whakapapa and whakawhanaungatanga. When we understand ourselves as part of an ecosystem, we understand ourselves as part of something bigger.

Enablers

People and organisations who provide support for making things happen in our communities. This includes funders, investors and contributors.

Liveability

Includes the things that make our places great places to work and live and play. It includes hard infrastructure like buildings and parks, retail, healthcare and education, as well as the activation of these spaces through soft infrastructure: people, groups and programmes.

Ngaa toi Maaori

Ngaa toi Maaori encapsulates everything in life. It includes arts, culture and creativity and more. It includes everything traditional and contemporary, and the many different tikanga and the reasons behind why we do things.

Placemaking

Making the most of community spaces and assets, in order to enliven public spaces and support community wellbeing.

Social Cohesion

Happens when diversity is respected and celebrated, and we can come together, thrive and belong.

Supporters

People who regularly attend and engage in creative activities. Also those who volunteer and support creative organisations in other ways. This includes those involved with ticketing, ushering, cleaning, maintaining buildings, supporting governance, fundraising... the list goes on!

Wellbeing

Wellbeing affects us at a personal level, and a community level too. It includes all aspects of our experience. We can look to te whare tapa whā model developed by Sir Mason Durie, which emphasises the importance of our taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing, taha hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing, taha tinana/physical wellbeing and taha whānau/family and social wellbeing. Our connection with the whenua/land forms the foundation.³

FACT SHEET

This list of information is provided as a quick reference for some key facts around the value of arts, culture and creativity in Waikato and Aotearoa.

It is a starting point, and to find more key facts, check out the Creative New Zealand fact finder: <https://creativenz.govt.nz/advocating-for-the-arts/fact-finder>

Active participation in arts, culture and creativity positively impacts wellbeing.

Huber Social, *Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato* (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022).

For all Waikato residents, engagement with arts, culture and creativity has a positive relationship with overall wellbeing. The more often they attend, create or participate in artistic and cultural events, the higher their wellbeing is likely to be.

The Waikato community values arts, culture and creativity. This holds true across all levels of engagement with arts, culture and creativity or the creative sector in general.

Access to the arts is important to everyone. Waikato residents who believe they have greater access to arts, culture and creativity are also more likely to have higher overall wellbeing.

On average, Waikato residents who self-report having a high level of engagement with arts, culture and creativity have higher wellbeing than those who have little or no engagement.

Huber Social, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022).

Engagement with arts, culture and creativity strengthens connection to community and place. Waikato residents who are highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity scored higher on average across factors related to connection to community and place, including sense of belonging, opportunities to connect with both like-minded and diverse people, and feeling connected to land and nature.

All [Waikato] residents, even those who consider themselves to have little or no engagement, are interacting with arts, culture and creativity on a regular and frequent basis.

Being highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity means that residents are also more likely to have stronger connections to community and to land and to place.

People who are highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity are more likely to have higher wellbeing. Waikato residents who rate themselves as highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity had 5% higher wellbeing on average than those who rate themselves with low engagement.

Waikato residents who have jobs that require creative thinking or problem solving are more likely to have a higher level of satisfaction with their work.

Creative self-expression is positively associated with better mental wellness outcomes.

Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts – Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi 2020

The majority of New Zealanders believe the arts help develop and foster creativity; (80% agree, with over half strongly agreeing).

The majority of New Zealanders support arts in education (66%).

Three out of five New Zealanders (61%) agree that the arts make an important contribution to community resilience and wellbeing.

Arts and culture have a vital role to play in the future of where I live (62% agree).

My community would be poorer without the arts (53% agree).

The arts are an important way of connecting with my culture (54% agree).

I learn about different cultures through the arts (68% agree).

The arts help define who we are as New Zealanders (63% agree).

I feel proud when New Zealand artists succeed overseas (77% agree).

Overall, 78% of New Zealanders have engaged with (attended or participated in) the arts in the last 12 months, in at least one of the six artforms surveyed: craft/ object art, literary arts, ngā toi Māori, Pacific arts, performing arts, and visual arts.

PICK-N-MIX

Templates and phrases to support you in consultation.

Councils, government, funders and other enablers often engage in community consultation around their annual plans, intentions and proposed outcomes for funding, investment and support. Within that context, they want to hear from community about the things that are important to them and the types of issues that people want these entities to address.

Often there will be guidance or consultation documents that outline the key elements, focus areas, and targeted changes, and there will be space to specifically respond to those. If that is the case, it can be useful to write a clear statement that best aligns with your values.

Outside of this, you will also have the opportunity to share any other thoughts about the things that are important to you in your community.

This is an opportunity to tell decision makers what is really important to you. It can be as simple as that.

With that in mind, we have created some example statements that you can copy and paste and edit to be included in any submission you make.

This is an opportunity to tell decision makers what is really important to you.



Things to note:

It is good if the submission is in your words and isn't just a straight copy and paste of a complete template – these sometimes get summarised into a singular response.

If you use a template, alter some things, or include some specific examples about the things that are most important to you.

The submission doesn't have to be long.

It doesn't have to have lots of supporting information or data.

It can be an expression of the things that are important to you and some examples of why that matters.



Example phrases that might be useful to work with:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit in response to the *(insert consultation name here)* with regards to the impact on my community. I am a part of the arts, culture and creative community and I support investment from the council into these areas because *(insert a reason or example of why this is important to you)*.

Having access to creative spaces in my local community is important to me because it helps me find connections with other people in my community. It is important that these spaces continue to have support so they can remain accessible. Some of my favourite spaces include _____. I see potential for _____.

It is important that we continue to support public events and public art because these things create vibrant communities where people can feel excited to be. I love to go with my family and friends to experience these things and to see the talent of my local community on display. My favourite creative event is _____.

Having public expressions of cultural significance in my community is important to me. I appreciate being able to see and understand the stories of my community shared through public art and cultural installations. It is awesome to see mana whenua stories woven into the identity of my local community. One of my favourite pieces is _____. I fully support you working with local artists to create these things.

I am part of a group that has been part of creative activity in our community for a number of years. With the support of our funders we are able to provide valued activity that inspires people, creates community, and celebrates the talents who are based here. Community creative activity has benefits for mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and social cohesion, so we really value the support we get that helps us to _____.

When arts and culture are strong and visible, communities are strong and visible, so I fully support your investment in the arts and cultural sector of my community. Thriving communities are about more than economy and roads and infrastructure. It is also about people, and stories, and connection. Having leaders that value and invest in these things truly demonstrates to me that you have the community's wellbeing in mind. Please prioritise these things as being essential in the future development of our city/town/community.

ADVOCACY IN AOTEAROA

We can look to the work of others in the arts sector and beyond, to see who we can be inspired by, amplify, refer to, reach out to, and support in their advocacy mahi.

Here's a starting point for an advocacy ecosystem map. We invite you to add other people and groups to this too!

Creative New Zealand
Community Waikato
Sport Waikato
Go Eco
Rainbow Hub
Waikato Wellbeing Project
Seed Waikato
Momentum Waikato
Te Taumata Toi-A-Iwi
Regional Arts Network Aotearoa
Arts Access Aotearoa

Te Ora Auaha
Arts Action Now!
ArtMakers Aotearoa
D.A.M.N
Te Rōpū Mana Toi
The Arts Foundation
Equal Voices Arts
Actors Equity
Unions Aotearoa
Creative Legal Services
Citizens Advice Bureau

Kia ora, my name is _____ and I am part of the _____ community. I am writing to share with you about the value that arts, culture and creativity has in my life. It is valuable to me because _____. I want you to know that these things contribute to the liveability of our town/city/ place, and I encourage your support of these things.

I am writing to share why supporting the arts is valuable to my community. Engaging with creative activities at _____ is part of my regular life. In being able to be part of activities in this space I can build relationships and feel connected to my community.

I want to tautoko your support of _____. Your support of arts, culture and creativity enhances community wellbeing, and contributes positively to our lives now, and in the future. Thank you.

Placemaking is key to community ownership and preservation of key assets. Some of my favourite things about this place are _____. Arts, culture and creativity help to enliven this place, and make it a place I want to work and live. I especially love the work of _____. I suggest more _____.

FURTHER READING/ MORE RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Creative Waikato

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/>

**The Commons: social change library,
Theories of Change**

[https://commonslibrary.org/
topic/theories-of-change/](https://commonslibrary.org/topic/theories-of-change/)

Creative New Zealand, Fact finder for arts advocates

[https://creativenz.govt.nz/
advocating-for-the-arts/fact-finder](https://creativenz.govt.nz/advocating-for-the-arts/fact-finder)

**Creative New Zealand, Engaging with Members
of Parliament (MPs)**

[https://creativenz.govt.nz/
-/media/files/how_to_engage_mps.pdf](https://creativenz.govt.nz/-/media/files/how_to_engage_mps.pdf)

Arts Action Now, Tips for engaging MPs

[https://www.artsactionnow.co.nz/
tips-for-engaging-mps](https://www.artsactionnow.co.nz/tips-for-engaging-mps)

RANA

<https://www.rana.org.nz/>

Creative New Zealand, A guide for arts advocates

[https://creativenz.govt.nz/
advocating-for-the-arts/advocacy-tools-and-research/
a-guide-for-arts-advocates](https://creativenz.govt.nz/advocating-for-the-arts/advocacy-tools-and-research/a-guide-for-arts-advocates)

Art Makers Aotearoa

<https://artsmakersaotearoa.nz/>
