



Creative Waikato
Toi Waikato



ANNUAL REPORT
2021

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Kia ora e te whanau,

It is with pleasure we report on another unusual but impactful year at Creative Waikato. This was our 9th year of activity, and it was a year of growth, reflection, change, and at our core – creativity. We continue to solidify our position as a high profile, cohesive, passionate, professional and effective organisation.

This year with enthusiasm and a feeling of a new sense of normalcy, but with a continued alertness to the possibilities for change and the need to be proactive in our support and advocacy for the needs of our community. We have continued to implement our vision for the importance of arts, culture and creativity as a mechanism for wellbeing within our communities in the Waikato and beyond. There are important discussions taking place at local, regional and national levels around how arts, culture and creativity become more fundamental components of our lives and our communities, and it is exciting for Creative Waikato to be taking a leading role in these discussions.

The Creative Waikato team has grown over the year from 8 to 16 with some additional projects supported by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and the Ministry of Social Development. These projects have been structured so they are in line with our core strategy and vision and provide pathways for expanding our impact within the region, rather than diverting our focus. This means that the core strategic vision of the Creative Waikato team has been progressed forward despite all the interruptions of COVID and having to work remotely rather than *kanohi ki te kanohi* in the community.

We have continued to deliver our core business of serving the communities of the Waikato Region to elevate the role and understanding of creativity within our region and support opportunities for culture wellbeing. A substantial part of the connection between our core work, our strategic vision and our connection with the community is through the Waikato Arts Navigator.

This regional arts strategy has been presented to all councils within the wider Waikato region as part of the LTP process. This has seen engagement with all 10 councils in the region, exploring the concept of the WAN alongside using art as a recovery tool in a post-COVID environment. This collaborative approach to strategy is unlike other regions of Aotearoa, and so through the implementation of this we have a chance to again set a precedent for the role and value of arts, culture and creativity in the region, as well as to be able to advocate nationally for increased investment in support of a broadly collaborative strategy. This strategy has also been presented to Local Government NZ, Creative NZ and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

At our September AGM, our previous Chair Amanda Hema stepped down after 7 years on the board. The past few years had been filled with change with new CEO, increased national advocacy, COVID pandemic, and growth through additional national funding. It was great to have someone like Amanda in this important role, guiding the organisation through with care and consideration. We are very pleased to have had Sam Cunnane stepping into the role of Chair throughout the second half of this year.

Our expanded delivery this year has included a pilot Creative Careers support programme we have called “ELEVATE” that has been designed to support creative practitioners to develop resilient and sustainable creative careers that look at diverse opportunities to support development in the sector. It has also included a short-term targeted delivery in the South Waikato with a specialist cultural activator based in that district until October 2022.

Outside of this we have been able to further expand our delivery in three specific target areas – Toi Māori support, Audience Development and Creative Education. These new fixed term roles have joined the team in November and are working over the next year to conduct research, resource development and community support. This is an exciting opportunity to test new ideas, expand our impact and support, and to grow our team with more creative specialists working to enhance the mana of our communities through encouraging the telling of local stories. Humans are storytellers. This is how we understand and express ourselves and connect to one another – this transcends boundaries and structures.

We know that the last two years have caused a lot of people to reflect, and to identify that we should find more balance in life. Find time to connect with other people, to find and making meaning, and to understand one another. Arts, culture and creativity create space for that to happen. If we can support the people of the Waikato Region to find their own connections with their stories, and find their own diverse ways to express themselves, we can collectively be a part of positively transforming our region and the communities within it.

Through this mahi we can collectively move forward and make a positive impact on our world. We can make the world a more interesting place. We can reimagine the future. We need to do this mahi to set things in motion that will create a positive, inclusive, open, creative and flourishing world for our children and their children.

We need to do this together. To work collaboratively with each person doing what they can to contribute to making this change. Creative Waikato serves as a navigator in this space. Working with artists, practitioners and organisations who are doing this mahi already, and helping them strategically to expand their impact with the communities we serve. We know that change is good. It certainly may be scary, but change is largely positive, particularly when paired with a strong vision. It helps us to grow. It is what continues to expand how humans think, live and understand one another. We have an opportunity now to have a long-term vision for the future, to be good ancestors, and to work through the processes for change.

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.

We can see that nationally there are expansion opportunities at present provided by the increased government funding into the sector in response to COVID. But with this increased funding, we are also mindful of the fact that this increase in funding is unusual, with it being the biggest increase in arts funding from the government in the last generation. This increased in funding has been well received, there is a need for this to be a new baseline. A part of a systematic redesign that seeks to address gaps - particularly in community focused activity. This is a continued advocacy focus for our work with other regional organisations and a national network of arts organisations working with Creative NZ and Ministry of Culture and Heritage to reshape our understanding and value of arts, culture and creativity in our society. With this in mind we have worked to make sure that the additional projects we have been able to fund have been designed to ensure that this expanded mahi aligns with our core vision, has the community at front of mind, and directly responds to the goals and core threads of the Waikato Arts Navigator framework.

And as always, we continue working both at flax roots and at national advocacy levels to ensure creative community voices are heard. We are working to continue the growth of recognition and profile around Waikato artists. We are excited to continue to pursue our strategic vision into this next period of mahi.

Of course, all of this would have never been possible if it was not for the visionary support of our core funders and supporters. As always, we cannot thank you enough for your continued belief and support.

Ngaa manaakitanga

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DR. JEREMY MAYALL



CHAIR
SAM CUNNANE



Karakia for Creative Waikato | Toi Waikato

Tēnei au tēnei au te reo kawē e tau nei
This is me, this is me who is conveying these words

E karanga ana i te mauri tū
Calling forth the stance
te mauri ohooho
the essence of vitality
te mauri ora
the essence of wellbeing

Whakataua te ihi te wehi, kia tipu te mahi toi tangata
To acknowledge the growth of our Arts, our strengths and challenges

Hāpai te mahi toi
To elevate our arts

Taunaki te mahi tangata
To advocate for our people

Whakarahi te mahi toi
To amplify our arts

Tūhono te mahi tangata
To connect our people

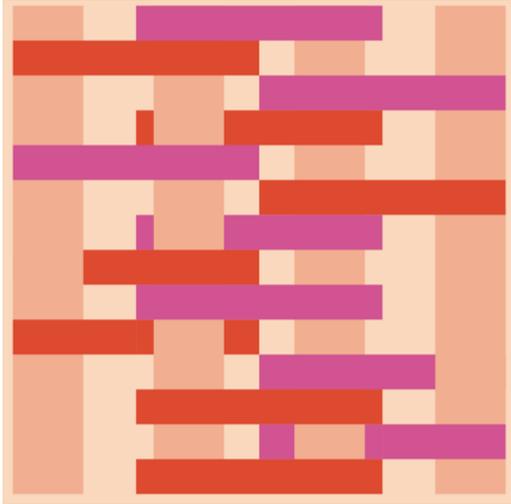
Huakina te ngākau māhaki kia manaaki
With a kind heart to open up the generosity
kia tautoko
the support
kia rangatira ai
to be leaders

Kōkiri nei te tū tangata mo ngā iwi katoa
To strengthen a unified stance for all people in our communities

Haumie
Hui e
Tāiki e!!!
Together we stand unified in this stance!!!

(Composed by Horomona Horo
in consultation with the Creative Waikato Team and Board)





Our Vision

The Waikato prospers with diverse and transformative creative activity.

Our Purpose

We are navigators who lead the elevation of creativity in our region and collaborate to provide opportunities for cultural wellbeing.

WELLBEING OF COMMUNITIES

Creativity is essential to a thriving humanity. It is how we understand who we are and how we connect to one another. It is interwoven through all facets of our wellbeing. To use a creative metaphor, we can understand wellbeing as an intricately woven cloth. This cloth is our collective experience. In it, 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. This fabric represents our capacity to live healthy and fulfilling lives, by allowing us to identify who we are, how we engage with each other, and how we think and feel. This is our wellbeing.

Wellbeing looks different within many different cultures, and needs to be addressed as such. It is a living and holistic thing that is intrinsically connected with who we are. This is connected to the many diverse communities in this region. Because we are based in Aotearoa, at the core of this work we must acknowledge the wellbeing of tangata whenua, and understand wellbeing from a Te Ao Māori perspective as integral to wellbeing in Aotearoa.

Our vision for the future of this sector, and the impacts that it can have on the people of the Waikato, works from a wellbeing framework. We know there is potential for us to ask bold questions, to advocate for change, and to reimagine what the ecosystem would be like if sustainability was assumed. How can we collectively move from a 'scarcity' mindset, to an abundance mindset that enables the ecosystem to be resilient and purposeful and should interconnect with wider activities to support and generate activity, as well as being part of driving diverse and transformative outcomes for all people.



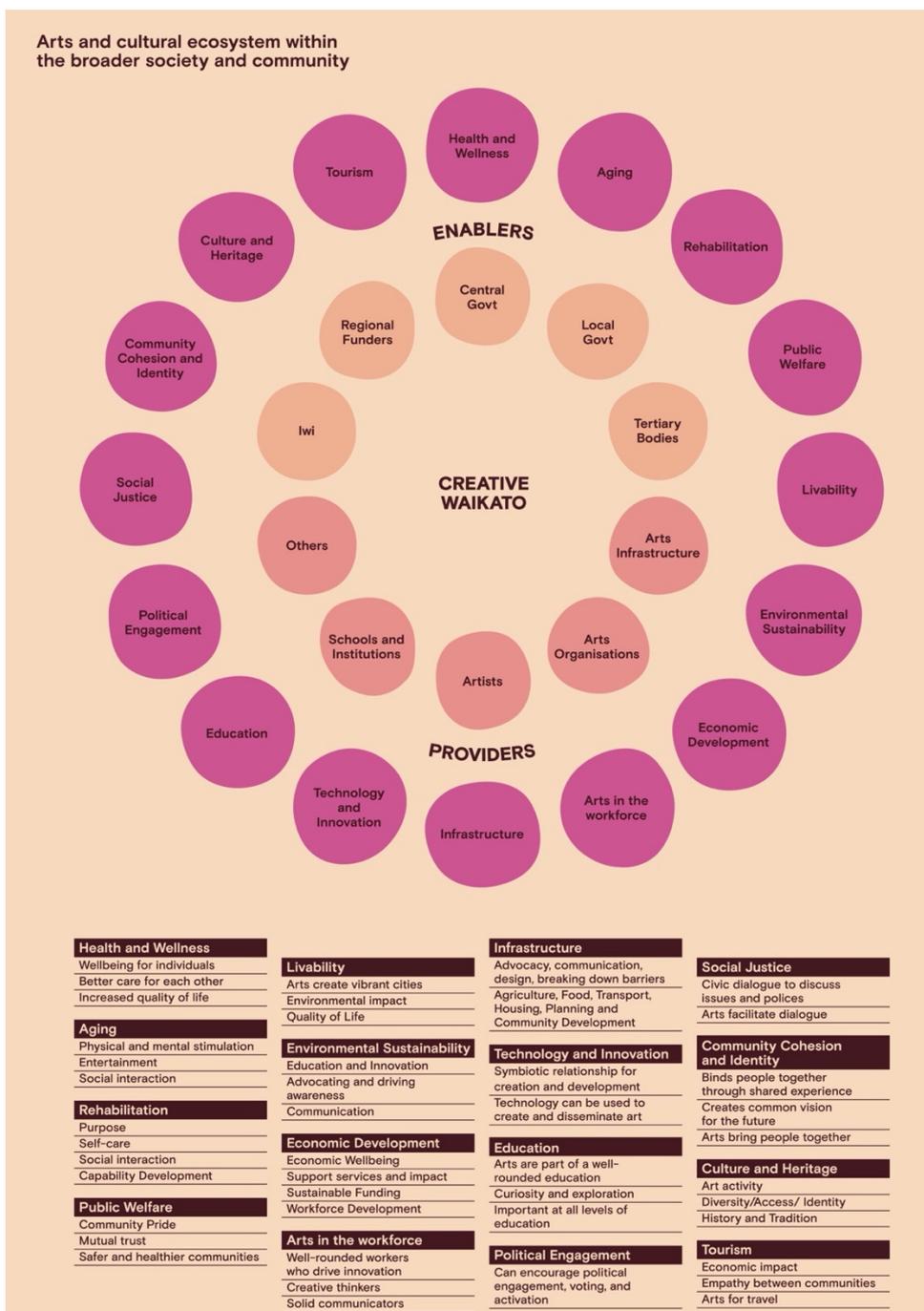
(Te Ruru Light Festival - Hinemoa Park - artwork by Aaron Chesham and Jeremy Mayall)

THE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM

For Creative Waikato we operate with the understanding and vision that the arts can be, and should be, embedded in all facets of our community. They feed into a broader understanding of the ecosystem of our community and place. When we collectively use arts-based approaches we move forward in an inclusive and engaging way.

It is important for local government, industry and sector leaders to see artists as a more embedded component within the rest of society. This encourages a collaborative space where the value of artists in society can be better recognised and utilised. As part of this, it would include a diverse but interconnected ecosystem of arts infrastructure (both hard and soft) that would provide clear pathways for artists and community members at any stage of the journey.

It is important to examine the whole system and look at the potential levers of change. To understand the system at a macro level, but enable activation at a local community level. Empower activity, provide access, and encourage creativity.



STRATEGIC VISION

Our vision was created with the community and strives for a Waikato Region that thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity. We see this as an active vision. One that should empower change, should address the conditions that will enable that change, and should help to frame priorities for different parties.

We know that the way this is implemented will have to look at the way the sector is funded and valued. It has a vision for public good, access, participation and community wellbeing. It should **acknowledge the role that creative practice and arts and cultural activity can have, and should have, in the lives of all New Zealanders.**

The activation of this strategy must include **impact within the education system.** Acknowledging how vital creativity and curiosity will be for future generations. Acknowledging the research-informed role that creative practice will play in the resilience and wellbeing of people. This would also become a vital driver of change towards a cultural shift in understanding and value for the sector, general individual and collective wellbeing, as well as the overall sustainability of the sector.

We also know that is important to have **transparent communication around government strategies, priorities and outcomes,** and how the different enablers will contribute to that. As part of that our advocacy work for the Waikato region includes targeted engagement with national arts organisations, government bodies and ministries. We know that it is vital for us to understand the system, and advocate for how all people in our region should be able to access arts, culture and creativity in their lives.

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 achieve greater outcomes. There are a range of ways this can be done, but having a clarity of communication, and thinking about how this vision can inspired change is vital. These things are top of mind for our communities, looking at how we can collectively thrive with diverse and transformative creative activity.

CREATIVE WELLBEING	CREATIVE PROSPERITY	CREATIVE EXPERIENCES	CREATIVE EDUCATION	CREATIVE INNOVATION
Mental, physical & spiritual wellbeing	Creative economies	People experience local, national, international arts	Participatory art projects	Business partnerships
Positive collective & individual identities	Attract & retain residents	Community & cultural expression	Upskilling creative professionals	Informing local government decision making
Create, grow & strengthen communities	Tourism opportunities	Recreation & interaction	Community art classes & projects	Local problem solving
Inspired responses to challenges such as Covid-19	Positive national perceptions	Community engagement & connection	Youth development	Distinct local expression
Strengthened connection to place	Increased investment from regional & national funders	Local pride	Audience development	Creative export opportunities

2021-22 - Annual Report

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Core Focus Areas

ELEVATE - HĀPAI

“We help you to succeed through advice, training and support”

This focus area is on working with artists and arts organisations to upskill the creative ecosystem to better thrive in our communities.

Key numbers

Creative Development Services - one on one capability coaching and workshops – 600+

Hamilton Creative Community Scheme Funding allocation - \$141,518

Formal national funding support letters – 33

Increase in Regional Arts funding from National Funding programmes:

- CNZ - \$665,326
- MCH - \$1,468,248 (Events and Creative Spaces)

Our stories

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT



We focused this year on refining our support services, programmes and workshops into the **ELEVATE Creative Careers programme**. This programme was launched in early 2021 with the support of Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

This programme has been designed to help individuals get to the next level, remove the blocks and create sustainable and impact careers from their creative practice. Through workshops, personal development plans, and expert support from the people who get it, **ELEVATE** develops business skills, knowledge and resources to help artists carve a realistic pathway toward their creative career goals. It is about developing flourishing communities of practice within our local ecosystem to support one another through the process of working as a creative.

Participants in the programme are a diverse group of artists from throughout the Waikato Region. Artforms include: Music, Visual Art, Filmmaking, Drag, Performing Arts, Costume, Fashion, Woodworking, textiles, sculpting, nga toi Māori, Photography and Design. Participants are largely Pakeha but with growing numbers of Māori and Pacific participants as well as members from migrant communities including, Pakistani, Brazillian, Japanese, Singaporean, Moroccan, South African, Indian.

In this past year our team have:

- Written 25 new workshops
- Worked with 60 new artists
- Delivered 80 workshops in a mixture of in person and online



One of our success stories is Kyla Greening.

Kyla is a Cambridge-based singer-songwriter (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Raakaipaaka) who describes her music as a fusion between R&B, soul and pop.

Talking about Elevate: *"This programme covers the most nitty, gritty parts of owning a creative business, it helped me be more confident approaching music as a business and realising that I could make my craft my career."*

She recently released her new single "Rich Girl" produced by renowned producer Nic Manders.

FUNDING THE ARTS IN THE WAIKATO

2021 has seen an increase in arts sector funding in the Waikato. Alongside the Creative Communities Scheme funding (Creative NZ through local government), HCC has introduced their Creative Partnerships Fund (with one successful applicant being THE PLACE – a new community-led performing arts development space).

There have also been increased successful applications through the Creative NZ Arts grants funding rounds for both individual artists and arts organisations. There have been wellbeing focused arts activities (like those in the Creative Spaces Fund – see below), exhibition projects like 'Toi is Rongoa' led by local artist Margaret Aull (with exhibitions at Waikato University, supporting rangahau, and additional funding for a show at Waikato Museum with a supporting education programme). Creative Waikato has served the community to offer funding advice, support through the application process, and letters of support as the regional arts organisation.

Outside of this there has been additional funding made available through the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Covid Response funding. There were a number of successful applications in the various funds, with some substantial support for new initiatives coming into the region including:

- Capability Fund (for extended specialist programmes through Creative Waikato) - \$375,000
- Creative Spaces Fund (Arts for Health- Hamilton; Toi Ako Artspace – Te Kauwhata; Te Whare Toi o Ngaaruawaahia - Twin Rivers Community Art Centre Inc; Artists in the Making Coromandel) - \$1,367,357
- Cultural Installations and Events fund (\$100,891)
- Cultural Activator pilot in South Waikato (\$180,000)

There are additional rounds for the Cultural Installations and Events fund (early 2022) and the Capability Fund (2022). There is also the Waikato round of the Cultural Innovation Fund which ran in November 2021 and will have funding results in Feb 2022. A number of strong Waikato projects were submitted. As part of our ongoing support and activation in this area we have provided guidance, support and letters of recommendations for successful applicants throughout the Waikato Region.



One example success story: EQUAL VOICES ARTS

Equal Voices Arts is a deaf-led theatre company based in the Waikato. This internationally acclaimed theatre and arts company are passionate about inclusive and accessible work. Their most recent production is 'Where Our Shadows Meet' – An intergenerational story about love, loss and language, told with physical storytelling, live instrumental music, New Zealand Sign Language, and spoken English. This piece is performed by a Deaf and hearing cast and designed to be accessible for d/Deaf and hearing audiences. This project was recently successful in securing Creative NZ funding for a tour of this show. This includes a week of performances in Wellington at Circa Theatre, as well as a Hamilton staging at the Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival.

(Where Our Shadows Meet – promo image)

CONNECT - TŪHONO

We connect you with people and places for stronger creative outcomes.

This focus area is on encouraging collaboration, joining the dots in our community, and looking for ways that creativity can thrive in different spaces.

Key info

Contributing to regional initiatives like The Waikato Plan and Waikato Wellbeing Project
Connected to Regional Arts Networks for understanding broader opportunities
Facilitating connections between business and creative communities through collaborative projects
Serving as a conduit for community art commissions and projects



(Te Ruru Light Festival - Hinemoa Park)

Our stories

TATOU VĀ - CULTURAL ACTIVATOR IN SOUTH WAIKATO

As part of the Cultural Activators Pilot programme from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Creative Waikato was selected as a host organisation for South Waikato. As such, we have employed Leafa Wilson in the role and she will be based in South Waikato for the next year working with the community, helping to share information, make connections, and spark more creativity within the people in South Waikato. This will be achieved through a range of activities including programmes at Poohara Marae, activations in the community, and through a short-term community arts hub called Tatou Vā - Our Space. It opened in January 2022 and will our base in Tokoroa as a welcoming spot where the South Waikato community can connect with and find support with all things arts, culture and creativity.



KOTAHITANGA: UNITED THROUGH CREATIVITY

This project continues to evolve and grow and reach into the community. It has been recognized as a powerful example of a methodology for connecting arts and cultural practice with social issues and community conversation. It has recently been used as a potential model for other projects around climate change, Matariki, and public health.

In the last year we have had two phases of the Kotahitanga Project. The first half of the year was focused on the school's kit. This is a beautiful resource pack that has been going out to classrooms across the Waikato. Teachers have been saying how much the tamariki have enjoyed supporting their inner artists and that the kits have been generating a lot of powerful discussion and thoughtful responses from the students. There has also been some interest from Corrections about their ability to use elements of the kit and project with rehabilitation of inmates.

FEEDBACK:

"We love this activity for its demonstration of the power words hold. It is a great way to show the emotive nature of words, the weight they hold behind them and what message they send to an audience"



OTHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS

The Kotahitanga schools kit also serves as a strong introduction for a new initiative that we have been working on in the later part of 2021 with the introduction of our new Creative Education specialist. This short-term role is in developing a new programme for schools around creativity in education. We recognize the importance of meaningful arts and cultural experiences as a fundamental part of education. There is a need to enhance the ability of educators to have meaningful arts engagement with students as a tool to build cultural literacy with a view for broader sector development, opportunities for artists, and to connect with the development of broader arts engagement for communities.

This need is emerging from an awareness of research from groups like Te Rito Toi, but also building upon our current (and previous) work in projects like the Waikato Youth Collective, and Ngahau e Wha, to look at the role artists play in arts education in our schools. Research suggests that high-quality arts experiences at school ages can have a powerful impact on peoples ongoing arts engagement as adults. It is vital then, from an audience development perspective, to ensure that schools are choosing to engage in a more meaningful way with local artists and arts organisations as a long term contributor to a more sustainable sector.

NEW EXHIBITION WITH NEW WORKS



(Honohono - Hollie Tawhiao)

The third phase of the Kotahitanga project launched in September. 11 new artworks with a range of different artforms. Artists from a range of different cultural backgrounds have contributed works to the updated online gallery, a collectable run of postcards, documentary films with korero about the works, and a physical exhibition at the Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts that also includes works from the first phase and some student works.

For more information:

<https://kotahitangagallery.nz/>



(Shared Life Lines - Mila Renault)

One of the new works is a collection of 12 sketches by artist Mila Renault originally from Brazil. Her works are pairs of sketches featuring migrant families from around the Waikato. Each pair of images captures some elements of the lives of people in our communities and tells an element of their stories.

Mila balances the use of line movement and watercolour to portray emotion, capture scenes and tell stories.

"Everyone has a story and is a valuable member of society. We are all heroes inhabiting the same land."

AMPLIFY - WHAKARAHĪ

We share stories far and wide and drive engagement with creative activity.

This focus area is on celebrating the arts, culture and creative activity that takes place in our region, and helping to share those stories with our communities.

Key numbers

Creative Waikato newsletters – 26 e-news plus a range of targeted event emails

Livestream events – 6 events with discussions around the arts, and various tips and tricks

Video stories – 28 video stories about local artists, and tips for your own creative practice

Media Coverage – 16 additional news articles with our support.

Articles and Thought Leadership – 17 articles, think pieces, and sharing our stories.

Our stories

SHARING LOCAL VOICES



We were able to create space to share the stories of local creatives and to encourage engagement with a range of different art forms. Projects like the *'Beyond Boundaries'* multicultural musical concert by Moksha Base; Nancy Howie Masterclass; *'Assassins'* by Bold Theatre; *'Beards Beards Beards'* at The Meteor; Whiti and Matariki Ki Waikato; and many more. It was also a pleasure to work with local advocates like Maurice Flynn, Access Coordinator at CCS Disability Action Waikato, who shared his thoughts around universal design, art for placemaking and the benefits of a project like Innovating Streets from a visibility, accessibility and safety perspective.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

This intertwines with our advocacy work, but shares new ways of reframing arts, culture and creativity as pathways for connection, understanding and growth. They are extremely useful in times of change, and to find space to understand yourself. Sometimes it is in something as simple as play... "As we grow up, play can often drift away. It can feel silly, unproductive and time consuming. We can get caught up in the busy and the stress. But that silly, unproductive play is exactly what we need... an opportunity to reset the mind and allow the imagination to direct itself without needing to achieve anything. Getting into a creative flow state and just seeing what happens. In this, we could learn a lot from kids. They are great at doing this."

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/dr-jeremy-mayall-take-time-be-silly>

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/cw-kindness>



CREATIVE COACHING

Throughout the ongoing COVID situation this year, Creative Waikato have been advocating for the importance of the role that arts, culture and creativity play in community wellbeing. Telling the stories to support people into their own creative practice – particularly during the various lockdowns. As part of this we have implemented some new focus on creative coaching (building upon the Flow programme that was developed in 2020) and seeing how that can be implemented in community through individual support and online resources. See more here:

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/create-motivation>

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/stay-grounded-times-change>

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/get-creative-again>

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/magical-creative-zone>

ADVOCATE - TAUNAKI

We stand up for the arts as they are essential to the wellbeing of our region.

This focus area is on championing the role of arts, culture and creativity in our society as being an essential part of the wellbeing of our community.

Key numbers

National conference presentations – 3

LTP Submissions – 10 councils

Formal local government submissions - 18

National advocacy submissions - 6

Our stories

WAIKATO ARTS NAVIGATOR



As an extension of our previous regional community consultation, research and development we have been continuing to focus on the implementation and activation of the **Waikato Arts Navigator (WAN)**.

The WAN is a framework that has been utilized to guide a Regional Arts Strategy that has developed by Creative Waikato and has been formally submitted to all Councils in the wider Waikato region through the LTP process. Its goal is to build a collective vision for arts and creative outcomes for all our communities.

We are working with councils and local arts organisations to utilize and enhance the strengths that have been identified through the research and development of this work. We will be strategically working to help design activity to work with the specific needs of each part of the region. By leading the project with aligned arts objectives for the whole region, this will allow for a more practical approach, resulting in a living and perpetual resource, rather than a strategy, which can be at the mercy of a 3-year political cycle. This should also look towards advocating for increased national investment.

For more information about this:

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

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/sites/default/files/Waikato%20Arts%20Navigator%20-%20Regional%20Strategy.pdf>

RESEARCH PROJECTS

We worked with Creative NZ on the New Zealanders and the Arts research - looking for more useful information to support our advocacy in the region. Some of interesting information here are things like:

- Overall participation in the arts has increased from 47% to 50% since 2017
- The view that 'arts are a part of my everyday life' has increased from 32% to 38% since 2017
- The view that 'arts help improve NZ society' has increased from 52% to 56% since 2017

Quotes

It is a part of who I am. I can express myself with confidence when dealing with the arts. It helps me break out of the confinement of life.

Woman, 18-29, NZ European, Waikato

Our art and tikanga is part of my identity, I live and breathe it, I teach it. It's how we tell our stories. I'm attracted to all indigenous art which also gives me an appreciation for any art, whether I like it or not. Creativity and the chance to be creative is food for the soul.

Woman, 40-49, NZ European, Māori, Waikato

It enables me to reflect, relax, contemplate, and learn.

Man, 60-69, NZ European, Māori, Waikato

The release of this research also corresponded with the Morris Hargreaves Macintyre "Audience Atlas". Again, there was a targeted report that we had requested. This survey is largely around audience behavior but there were some interesting insights around arts and wellbeing. The key thing being that for

those who have found their connections to the arts, the benefit for wellbeing is profound. But for those who choose not to engage, they don't experience benefit - because the connection to the artform is lacking. In this instance, it showcases how vital it is to have a depth and breadth of diverse artistic and cultural activities made accessible to people so that they have the opportunity to find the artform that resonates with them. The journey is important.

We also collaborated with the RANA network (Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi and Arts Wellington) and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage on the 'State of the Arts' Research - a quarterly snapshot survey looking at the sustainability and resilience of the creative sector over the next year. There are some real concerns with regards to the impact of COVID, but there is some clarity around the types of mahi and advocacy the sector is looking for in early 2022. The key things are: "Recognition of the role arts, culture, and creativity plays in a COVID environment"; "Strengthening community arts activity"; and "Mental health and wellbeing support". There is a real desire to see a stronger connection made between arts and improving mental health and well-being.

"The arts are not recognised enough as a vital part of our culture, sense of community and its positive impact on mental health. More national promotional material around these points would help artists to be valued and paid properly." - survey respondent

GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

Creative Waikato continues to expand our growing national reputation. This is recognized through additional consultation on national strategic and funding discussions, as well as through our innovative programmes and creative initiatives. These things are supported by our ability to engage in continued development and research, so that we have been able to clearly demonstrate our understanding of the impact of arts, culture and creativity within the wellbeing context. As part of this we have seen a range of opportunities emerge to support the development of arts, culture and creativity nationally - with a vision for how that flows back into our region.

This has included profiling the [Waikato Arts Navigator](#) at the local government conference; Jeremy being invited to join the [CNZ Advocacy advisory group Te Rōpū Mana Toi](#); and contributing to a number of discussions and strategic workshops around implementation of arts funding across the country. It has been important to be in these spaces as so often the regional voice is missing, as well as representation from people who understand the broader ecosystem and how it flows from community initiatives through clear pathways to professional careers, and how we should more meaningfully embed arts, culture and creativity throughout all facets of modern society.

Some of this engagement has included:

[https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-](https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/shaping-future-arts-culture-and-creativity-aotearoa)

[news/shaping-future-arts-culture-and-creativity-aotearoa](https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/shaping-future-arts-culture-and-creativity-aotearoa)

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/letter-sector>

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/experience/art-news/humans-are-creative-beings>

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



The Creative Waikato Team

TEAM 2021



Our team has grown throughout 2021. We started the year with a team of 8. We ended the year with a team of 16. With some additional short term government project funding we have been able to bring on more local passionate creative individuals to expand our impact and to grow our whanau of caring humans. This has included additional creative developers, a new Toi Māori team, Education specialist, Audience Development specialist and our Cultural Activator in South Waikato. It has been an exciting time of growth with the additional impact and reach that we can have with our mahi. This is in place for 2022 with a vision for sustained activity in the future.

At the end of 2021 we had three of our team leave the organisation to take on new adventures, and we are in the progress of finalizing recruitment of some new local creatives to join our whanau for 2022.

The Creative Waikato Board

Our board has changed slightly this year.

Our previous Chair Amanda Hema ended her tenure on the board. Sam Cunnane has now taken on the role of chair.

We have had some additional people join our board, recruited through our new appointments panel process.

Our board have also been working through some cultural guidance and growth with the support of Horomona Horo – a well-respected locally based taonga puoro specialist and storyteller.

BOARD 2021



2022-24

KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Given the recent period of change and growth for the organisation, our current strategy holds strong for the next three years. There are initiatives in place that still have proven useful to the creative community. There are research projects planned that will expand our advocacy and our broader understand of wellbeing and collective creative impact. There are pilot programmes in place with the additional central government funding that have been designed to align with our vision, to expand upon the strategic framework articulated through the Waikato Arts Navigator, and will provide useful resource and information, alongside positive change even if additional sustained funding for those programmes is not secured post 2023.

This is the third year for the organisation with new leadership, and the sense of growth, as well as the breadth of focus within the framework of the Navigator has created a great range of possibilities and future impact within this mahi. It is with that understanding that we feel confident in continuing to explore this course of activity and to truly realise the potential within these new programmes and activities.

WAIKATO ARTS NAVIGATOR

Continued implementation of the Waikato Arts Navigator is a core part of our future work. This is a strategic plan to assist all local government authorities and the broader community ecosystem to align arts decision making for regional impact. We are working with councils and local arts organisations to utilize and enhance the strengths that have been identified through the research and development of this work. We will be strategically working to help design activity to work with the specific needs of each part of the region. By leading the project with aligned arts objectives for the whole region, this will allow for a more practical approach, resulting in a living and perpetual resource, rather than a strategy, which can be at the mercy of a 3-year political cycle. This should also look towards advocating for increased national investment.

ARTS AND WELLBEING

Throughout the extended COVID situation this year, we continue to advocate for the importance of the role that arts, culture and creativity play in community wellbeing. This situation has strengthened our focus in this area, knowing that there is an important opportunity to develop the understanding around wellbeing and how it can be measured and enhanced. We know that the arts are a vital aspect of the lives of individuals and their communities. Arts and culture can help us to define and express ourselves, as well as engage with each other in our communities. They are powerful levers for promoting positive social change. We are in the process of working through a research project with Huber Social, and guidance from the Cultural Development Network – with interest from Creative NZ. This will include the development of a community arts toolkit that can be utilized by all arts organisations to understand and measure their own impact on wellbeing.

We are also interested in exploring more of the potential around the connections between arts and mental health, programmes for support, and pathways for artists to connect more broadly with their communities with accessibility as a core target.

CREATIVE CAPABILITY BUILDING

This will continue to be a core part of our work. This area has been a focus of the new Ministry of Culture and Heritage funding and there will be a growth in possibilities for creative capability development in the future. As part of this expanded offering, we have created a Creative Education specialist and Audience Development specialist to do some focused work in these vital areas of community impact. We have also been able to grow our Toi Māori team.

TOI MĀORI IMPLEMENTATION

This is being driven by our newly expanded Toi Māori team. This is also supported through collaborative discussions with Waikato Tainui around their Toi Strategy and how that can be implemented through our shared agendas. We will continue to provide Toi development services, and some targeted workshop delivery. There is also some increased activation in South Waikato through our Cultural activator – with a particular focus at present at Poohara Marae with a painting group and discussions around curatorial support.

PERFORMING ARTS STRATEGY

We are currently undertaking a strategic project for the local performing arts ecosystem. This is looking at the role of the new theatre within the context of other local performing arts spaces. This looks at the collaborative potential, the pathways for practitioners, support and funding models, audience development and accessibility, and education and support services for the sector. Much like the Waikato Arts Navigator this strategy is being developed through community consultation and engagement. Drawing from a core working group of local professionals, but also ensure that all the potential different community groups who might utilize these spaces are a part of the discussion. This means making sure that all different arts and cultural forms are represented, as well as making sure that broader community organisations and cultural groups are part of the discussion to make sure that these spaces are accessible and thriving for the region.

EXPANDED DELIVERY AND ENGAGEMENT

We are proactively targeting the diverse range of creatives in our region to ensure that they are finding the support they need for their mahi in their communities. This is through the activation of our programmes and resources, through additional regional engagement, and through collaborating with other organisations and initiatives. The scope for how we can deliver and broader connections with communities of practice are quite expansive if looking at arts, culture and creativity being a part of the everyday lives of all people. From that perspective we need to be strategic as an organisation to identify key partners in the community, to tell our stories clearly, and to ensure that our mahi remains as accessible as possible. By ensuring diverse communities are aware of the support we can offer, we can work with our different organisations to supplement their own community knowledge with our specialist sector knowledge. In some ways, this has been supported through online delivery in some respects, but also limited by the physical distancing requirements.

We are looking to support a vision for the sector where inclusivity and accessibility is key, and that flax-roots community initiatives can find the support they need to be active in their communities. Part of this work has been taking place through our advocacy work for increased community arts funding at local and national levels. Making formal submissions to funding organisations like Creative NZ and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage around the importance of funding allocations for regional activity, and targeted funding initiatives to support community arts activity from communities who have been traditionally neglected by arts funding bodies, including Nga toi Māori, Pacific, Asian, migrant, disabled and LGBTQI communities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

We are looking at challenges in our sector as opportunities to be addressed as we embrace our role as advocates and champions for the arts in the Waikato Region.

BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY AS A PUBLIC GOOD

This is a national challenge that has been targeted by a number of different advocacy organisations. There has been an increased spotlight on the sector with COVID impacts, people turning to creativity through lockdowns, and additional funding. The vision from here is to solidify the role that arts, culture and creativity play in our lives and to work towards a comparable structure and support that sports enjoys in Aotearoa. The benefits for individuals and communities are comparable but the infrastructure is not as nationally robust. We are fortunate in the Waikato to have the support and vision of Trust Waikato in your contribution to a regional arts organisation like Creative Waikato, but this is not the case elsewhere. Part of this mahi is ideally supported by the arts communities telling their own stories of impact in a more aligned way, and this is part of our own work through capability building in the next few years. It is also supported by continued audience development and cultural literacy through education and activity.

ONGOING GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

Creative Waikato has a growing national reputation, and through our ability to engage in continued development and research, we will be able to have an in-depth exploration of the impact of arts, culture and creativity within the wellbeing context. There are some substantial emerging opportunities for engagement with Ministry for Culture and Heritage around their new arts funding, MSD, DHB, and other

government bodies where arts can be engaged with as a solution provider. There has been substantial growth throughout 2021 in this area, but the potential for sustained impact will be supported by research-informed storytelling and continued advocacy and impact.

It is also important for the sector to have a shared language when engaging with government so that there is a consistency of messaging and storytelling that is values-based and impact informed. As part of our capability building programme we are developing the impact toolkit with Huber Social to support arts organisations in articulating their impact within narratives for change as informed by the broader regional strategic framework.

FUNDING OF KEY ORGANISATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Part of the story around the increased government arts funding is that while it is well received and is enabling new possibilities, it is perhaps not as specific in filling systemic gaps. We know that there has historically been a lack of national funding delivered to this region, and while this has been somewhat addressed by this new COVID arts funding, there is risk around the sustainability of this. Also, there are arts groups who are struggling to redefine themselves as sustainable organisations and finding new ways to connect with their communities. There is certainly a growth in reputation from this region which has been developing through the work done by Creative Waikato alongside various other community arts organisations, but there is more work to be done here. We are actively engaged in ongoing discussions around sustainability in the arts and we are playing a key role in the continued facilitation of these discussions, emphasizing a regional and long-term sustainability approach. This is a key part of the Waikato Arts Navigator.

WAIKATO REGIONAL THEATRE

As was indicated last year, there is progress on the theatre – perhaps more in the last few months than we have seen in a while. There are plans in place for developments through the new performing arts strategy and further collaborative conversations, but the risk still exists around implementation and activation once the venue is built – particularly with its delayed progress. We have seen that there seems to be an increase in community engagement around the potential of the new theatre, as well as a continued growth in the development and presentation of locally made works which are utilizing all the various conventional and non-conventional performance locations that we currently have available. Community organisations have stepped up through creating engaging local content over the past few years, and with community led initiatives like the work at The Meteor and The Place there are some solid rehearsal and development spaces to support the growth of local practitioners. It will be interesting to see how this develops over the next couple of years.

HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL

Whilst we are a regional arts organisation, there is also the awareness of Hamilton as being a pathway for artists in the wider Waikato Region as part of their continued journey towards national and international arts excellence. There seems to be a growing openness towards community consultation in the context of the arts, as well as an increased understanding of the role that Creative Waikato plays as an advocate around the development of an arts strategy, and broader arts engagement from the council. We have seen the introduction of the Creative Partnerships fund, but we see that there is still more to do around the role that arts, culture and creativity can play in the actions of our local council.

PLACE MAKING

Placemaking is going to be an important part of the development of local communities. It inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share.

Humans are storytellers. We share through story. We understand through story. We inspire and make change through story. Urban spaces have the potential to be the canvas for those stories – through painting and murals, to sculpture and light, to music and dance and words and more. Our cities are a space for us to share local stories and to inspire conversations, and reflections. Also, by creating beautiful, vibrant, colourful spaces, we can allow space for moments of awe – which is vital for our mental health and wellbeing. This is an important role for the connection between local government and our artists and creatives. Bring them into the process early and embed an arts-informed understanding into the initial discussions and designs. This creative advisory can strengthen the understanding of place, and build that process into the core of the work – rather than being an afterthought.

Arts-informed placemaking can do powerful things to break down industrial silos, and demonstrate the broad value of moving beyond the narrow focus of any single profession, discipline, or agenda. It is about community connection, and grassroots involvement, and social procurement that engages with the local creative community, the results can be powerful and transformative. If we can support systems where collaborative processes can acknowledge the local expertise and engage with communities we can enhance the cultural literacy and creative activity of all of Aotearoa and support sustainable artistic careers alongside powerful and measurable wellbeing impact for broader societal benefit.

Ultimately the activation, and strategic implementation of the arts, culture and creative ecosystem within the future of local government will have a profound and transformative impact on our people. This is a vision for activity that:

- Is inclusive, accessible and participatory
- helps people grow aroha, social cohesion, connection and identity
- forges strong kaupapa, belonging and meaning.
- Shares local stories, values local knowledge and supports wellbeing
- Is embedded throughout the societal ecosystem and looks at systemic change
- It uplifts the mana of communities, making them stronger and healthier: environmentally, culturally, socially and economically.

Concluding Thoughts:

Art is magical. The creative act combines texture and colours, sounds and shapes into a unique arrangement that tells stories, communicates ideas, and engages emotion. When you experience a display of creativity in any format it actively engages a range of things in our bodies – including the motor cortex, the thing that controls our movements. What this means is that when we look at art, we don't just see it, or hear it, or sense it, but we feel it with our entire being. That is literal magic. Every fibre of our being – senses, intellect, emotions, muscles, nerve endings – responds to works of art.

No matter the challenges we are facing, exploring our lives through art, culture and creativity allows us to find new possibilities and to more clearly understand the realities of the world, of other people and of ourselves. It can reduce stress, encourage new thought and conversation, and contribute to happiness. I'm sure we all have memories of a time where an artwork made us happy – a favourite song, a painting, a film, a story. This is the magic of creativity at work.

As we face difficult times, we turn to art, culture and creativity to make sense of things. Artists serve as guides to look at the world in different ways. To find different connections between people and places. To encourage us to be kind. To celebrate the things that make us unique and to move beyond our own limitations into new possibilities.

At the core, creative experiences are an act of kindness. They help us to find space, to find connection, and to experience some much-needed magic. Kindness from the artist to themselves in expressing their ideas and stories. Kindness to our communities through sharing inspiration and insight. And of course, kindness to one another as we draw from our creative experience and bring that into our daily life.

Art and culture are things that we can experience individually to remind us that we are together. We are connected. There are many different types of people and there are many different types of art. Part of the trick with finding the magic is in finding the art that connects with you as a person.

Creative Waikato looks forward to continuing to serve the Waikato Region.

We acknowledge all the important mahi that our artists, cultural groups and arts organisations are doing in our region, and your ongoing commitment and mahi to make our region a great place to be.

Together we celebrate the joy of creativity.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support, vision and kindness.

Creative Waikato is the regional arts organisation for the Waikato region, which includes 10 local authorities— Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Waikato, Waipa, Hamilton, Waitomo, Otorohanga, South Waikato and Ruapehu. Our region also spans four Iwi—Waikato, Hauraki, Raukawa and Maniapoto.

We provide creative capability development for artists and arts organisations, strategic direction and support for sustainable arts, culture and creativity in our region. We operate strategically throughout the Waikato region to ensure that the impact of arts, culture and creativity on all people in our region is supported, accessible and valued.

Arts and creativity are integral to who we are as a dynamic, inclusive, and transformative region. When arts and creativity is strong and visible, communities are strong and visible. Our core work is intrinsically connected to wellbeing as a holistic concept. For Creative Waikato we build everything from an understanding that creativity is essential to a thriving humanity. It is how we understand who we are and how we connect to one another. Creativity must be interwoven through all facets of our wellbeing. This creates an intricately woven cloth which represents our collective experience. In it, we 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.

Our organisational strategy is developed alongside the Waikato Arts Navigator as a regional strategic framework. This framework has the vision for a Waikato Region that *“prosper with diverse and transformative creative activity”*. This is at the core of what we do.

Within that we position our four pou as our guiding approach to contributing to the regional vision. Those pou are:

ELEVATE | HĀPAI - We help you to succeed through advice, training and support.

CONNECT | TŪHONO - We connect you with people and places for stronger creative outcomes.

AMPLIFY | WHAKARAHĪ - We share stories far and wide and drive engagement with creative activity.

ADVOCATE | TAUNAKI - We stand up for the arts as they are essential to the wellbeing of our region.

What does this mean

The arts are valued and celebrated in our communities.

Our region has robust and flourishing pathways for participation and audience engagement and our creative and artistic professionals.

Ongoing sustainable development of a range of artistic and cultural activities throughout the region.

The arts, artists, cultural organisations and creative activity is seen as a being a vital part of the Waikato region and the wellbeing of its people.

Our Vision: The Waikato prospers with diverse and transformative creative activity.

Our Purpose: We are navigators who lead the elevation of creativity in our region and collaborate to provide opportunities for cultural well-being.

ELEVATE HĀPAI	CONNECT TŪHONO	AMPLIFY WHAKARAHĪ	ADVOCATE TAUNAKI
We help you to succeed through advice, training and support	We connect you with people and places for stronger creative outcomes	We share stories far and wide and drive engagement with creative activity	We stand up for the arts as they are essential to the well-being of our region
Build Skills	Facilitate	Promote Activity	Leadership
ArtReach delivery and development	Wellbeing projects	CW e-news and website	Waikato Arts Navigator
Creative development services	Ethnic and migrant arts support	What's On Guide	Regional Festival Support
**Ministry Programme Delivery	**Artists in community opportunities	Arts publication /Thought Leadership	Value and Impact of Creativity
Support toi Māori	Utilise our Space	Grow Audience's	Advocacy
Creative Career support	Self-employed Creatives	**Audience Development Programme	Waikato Regional Theatre Support
**Toi development services	Workshops	Social Media campaigns	Local government
Toi research and collaboration	Communities of practice	Everyday Creativity	Central government / CNZ / Ministries
	Networking Events	Introduction to the Arts	Funders/Regional Organisations
Effective Funding	Connect our Region	Celebrate Excellence	Sustained Organisation
Hamilton Creative Communities fund	Regional cross-sector initiatives	Waikato Arts champions	Measuring impact research
Support regional CCS funds	Waikato art hub support	Connections to local and national media	CRM system
Support national funding applicants	**Creative Education activity	Waikato Creativity Yearbook	Regional Arts Network Aotearoa

** - indicates projects that have received additional targeted funding from Central Government Ministry initiatives.

Project	Description	Outcomes	2021 Updates
ArtReach	8 capability building training modules designed for artists and groups	90%+ participants rate as Useful or Very Useful	Ongoing and National interest in this programme through Regional Arts Network. Exploring new subject areas for expanding these modules. Core delivery is targeted towards community groups in 2022.
Creative development services	Creative Development team dedicated to working with artists to support development	400+ clients per annum	Ongoing with growing success and outreach into the region. Embedded into ArtReach and ELEVATE programmes. Added creative coaching to support services 2021-22.
**Ministry Programme Delivery	Development of ELEVATE Creative Careers Programme	Successful programme delivery for 240 participants over 2 years	Content developed and numbers growing. Offering online cohort for increased regional accessibility. Good diversity in participants and artforms.
Pakihī Toi	Training program for Māori artists wanting to develop an arts business model	Growing participants and workshop development	Continues to be utilized, but also built into part of ELEVATE programme delivery.
**Toi Development Services	Toi Māori Creative Development team dedicated to working with artists to support development	Continued activity and collaboration with Regional Māori organisations	New staff developing new networks. Strengthening partnerships in discussion with Waikato Tainui. Targeted support at Pohara Marae in pilot programme.
Toi research and collaboration	Research and evaluation of how to support Māori artists in the Waikato in hubs and online	New outcomes determined and support offered for Māori organisations in development	Being developed with new Toi Māori staff, and in connection with Waikato Tainui Arts Strategy. Exploring concepts of a hub model and other forms of support.
Creative Communities fund	Distribution of HCC CCS fund in two rounds	High quality applications received representing creative growth	Continued growth in quality applications and funding availability. Delivered full funding allocation this year. Still potential for more investment from local government into these funding structures.
Support regional CCS funds	Regional CCS funds supported by CW through mentoring and networking	Quality and number of applications to other Waikato funds increase	Mentoring from CW team to other assessment bodies in the region. Developing a best practice guide for this funding for other regional assessors
Support National Funding Applicants	Offer support and guidance for Waikato applicants for national funding opportunities	Quality and number of applications to national funds increase	We have provided an increased support of applicants for national funds in the last 12 months due to increased funding availability. Growing funding success rate from Waikato applicants.
Well-being Research	Research and development of methodologies, measurement and discussion around well-being from an arts perspective.	Arts organisations understand how to articulate their impact in this area. Potential for collaborative work in health and social sector.	In progress with Huber Social and support from Cultural Development Network. To be finalized in 2022.
Ethnic and migrant arts support	Supporting the development and understanding of support needs and aspirations of arts for these communities	Working with other organisations to provide pathways for support.	This is a growth area, but again will be best suited through partnership and collaboration so it can be led by the community. Some support delivered through CCS support, creative development services and the ELEVATE Programme. Also connected to the three phases of the Kotahitanga project.
**Artists in Community	Supporting the development for opportunities to have artists in the community in the Waikato	Exploring through regional connection and other opportunities	An example pilot programme is in place through MCH Cultural Activator Pilot (started October 2021). This is based in South Waikato with a pilot arts hub in Tokoroa, and outreach programmes in the community.

Self-employed in the arts	A monthly group which connects self-employed artists in the region together to share insights	4 events/year and regional representation	This progressed until the pilot group no longer needed the structure of this group. It is now reforming through communities of practice in the ELEVATE programme.
Workshops	Offering one off workshops and masterclasses for the arts community	4 events per year	This is a new initiative for 2022 to expand from Creative Development work into more initial creative opportunities for all people.
Communities of Practice	Supporting new networks of creatives in the local communities	Support through meeting hosting, strategic direction or initial connection of groups.	Different areas are being identified and connections for collaboration are being established. Working group for Waikato Performing Arts Strategy is a current example of this. Other support is offered for groups of collaborative artists looking for space and other activation.
Networking Events	Hosting events as a way of connecting artists and encouraging collaboration	Event successfully delivered with broad participation from artists	This was stalled in 2021 due to COVID. Exploring possibility for networking events in the community. Not wanting to duplicate other activities. Ideas are that this could include the creation of an arts-based conference.
Online Content Delivery	Moving into more online resources to ensure accessibility throughout the region.	Video work, podcast, resource development and panel discussions.	This has become a newer priority due to COVID. We implemented this effectively throughout 2020 and 2021, and will continue to explore this in 2022. This takes the form of video, articles and podcasts.
Regional cross-sector initiatives	Collaborating in the region for cross-sector impact	Engagement in projects like the Waikato Wellbeing Project, and Waikato Plan	Collaborative discussions are in progress and new initiatives are being explored. Progress is slow.
Waikato art hub	Feasibility study for developing an arts hub (artists working/exhibition space)	Plan in place to initiate programme in 2022/2023	Still being developed. Largely reliant on availability of space.
**Creative Education Activity	Development of Creative Education programme of activity to support creative delivery in schools	Development and implementation of resources in Waikato Schools	Initial stages through the Kotahitanga Schools Kit. Further exploration in this area through MCH Capability Fund Support. New specialist staff member on board since October 2021. Currently developing programmes for implementation in 2022.
CW e-news and website	Ongoing digital arts news service	26 publications per annum	This happens on a fortnightly basis and is currently under review to ensure it remains relevant. New website and design is in progress for launch in 2022.
Whats On	Ongoing events focused news services	12 publications per annum	These are also ongoing and looking at ways to best serve the audience for this. Linked with new design to launch in 2022.
Thought Leadership	Articles about important issues in the arts, as well as discussions around the value and impact of the arts are published	10 publications per annum. Growing regional and national recognition.	This has been a growth area for 2021 and there is a lot of potential to utilize our strength as an independent organization to really share clear thoughts around the role of arts culture and creativity in the region. Largely occurring through online publications.
**Audience Development	Exploring new approaches to Audience Development and building upon The Portal pilot programme	Development of new resources, working with local organisations, and exploring new approaches to engagement.	Supported by MCH Capability Fund with a new fixed term role focused on this programme of work. Started in October 2021 and programmes are being designed for implementation and testing in 2022.

Social Media campaigns	Ongoing management of facebook, Instagram and twitter	15% growth in followers per annum	This has been regularly growing. New social media strategy is in place. Growth area is in video content.
Everyday Creativity	Supporting the development of creativity in the lives of people in the Waikato through fun activity and arts engagement	Online content delivery and an increase in creative activity as seen in national survey response.	This is a new initiative for 2022.
Introduction to the Arts	Informative but fun articles on website and social media as a way of introducing different art forms – including interviews with professional artists.	5 publications per annum	This is a new development for 2022
Waikato Arts Champions / Arts publication	New arts event celebrating and profile contributions to the creative sector. Could also explore a 'yearbook' as part of this.	Supported and funded and a sustainable model is developed.	Still to be developed in 2022. Need to determine feasibility and purpose of this activity.
Connections to local and national media	More coverage of arts news, stories, and creative activity from the Waikato.	Consistent increase in positive arts stories	There has been more arts writing in the past 12 months, but there is still scope for consistency and a more robust critical engagement. It would be great to see more profiling of the exciting arts and cultural activity that takes place in the region.
Waikato Arts Navigator	Framework for LGAs to value and invest in their local arts sector	LGAs increase arts investment and adapt robust arts planning processes	This programme has become a regional arts strategy and has been consulted with all councils in the LTP process in 2021. Continued engagement and implementation will be through 2022/2023
Regional Festival Support	Offering support to key regional arts festivals to support continued development	Support for Boon Festival, HGAF, Matariki ki Waikato, Te Ruru Light Festival etc.	CW will continue to support these festivals and the ongoing work they are doing. Needs in this space is to be determined but may be through some comms support as well as advocacy or funding access support.
Value and Impact of Creativity	Research and publication of formal writing in regard to impact and value from Regional understanding for national advocacy	5 articles published per annum	This is connected to thought leadership and national advocacy discussions with CNZ and MCH. Contributing to work through national forums.
Waikato Regional Theatre	CW supports the progress of the WRT	WRT is well informed by local & regional community and user input	WRT developments are still underway. CW will continue to be involved in discussions around operation. Currently undertaking the development of a performing arts strategy that looks at the broader performing arts ecosystem and how it connects and collaborates in the future.
Local Government	CW provides strategic support and guidance through the Waikato Arts Navigator	Support for council led initiatives and strategic advice	In response to LTP engagement, councils of focus will be South Waikato, Matamata-Piako, Ruapehu, and HCC. There is more advocacy to be undertaken around the support of arts, culture and creativity in our communities, and this work is also an area of focus with the CNZ Advocacy team.
Advocacy Govt/CNZ/funders	Working with key stakeholders to help them understand arts impact	Arts are valued and investment increased	This has been ongoing. Induction presentations at some local councils, ongoing connection with CNZ. Formal submissions to the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Long-Term Insights briefing, Creative NZ Arts Council, and the Future of Local Government review panel. Development discussions around future funding focus and scope with MCH.

Measuring impact project	Identifying how to measure impact of organisation	Metrics identified and put in place	This is being developed, and research is being connected through CNZ and the CDN. Connected with Huber Social research and the connected toolkit development. Materials are in place for implementation in 2022.
CRM system	Database that effectively manages all of our contacts and relationship data	System purchased and in place	System has been activated and is being implemented and updated for ease of use.
RANA	Connection with the network of regional arts organisations	Exploring shared networks and formalized advocacy	Development of new web presence with collaborative engagement with CNZ and MCH. This includes submissions to MCH around a more formal establishment and support of Regional Arts Organisations in a similar level of support as the RST model.

Outside of these core projects and areas of focus, we remain flexible and adaptable for other opportunities and collaborative cross-sector work.

Potential connections here are: CNZ (Te Ropu Mana Toi); The Meteor Theatre (Boil Up mentoring programme); National co-operation of Regional Arts Development Organisations through CNZ; Waikato DHB; Wintec Research Office; Hamilton City Council (Arts Policy); Department of Corrections; Momentum Foundation; Creative Thinking Project; Waikato Well-being Project; Waikato River Festival; etc.