Feedback on Manatū Taonga Long-Term Insights Briefing Discussion Document

Submitted by: Te Rōpū Mana Toi
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About Te Rōpū Mana Toi:
Te Rōpū Mana Toi is a group of artists and enablers who have come together from across the motu, because we care deeply about artists and how arts and culture can activate the creative potential and serve the wellbeing of all people in Aotearoa. The Rōpū was convened by Creative NZ to provide advice to their advocacy team, and we also act independently to advocate on issues of national significance to our community. *(See group membership and vision statement at the end of this document).*

Feedback on LTIB
In this submission, we have identified two key areas for feedback that we believe are critical for Manatū Taonga (MCH) to engage with at this point in the process of preparing the Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB): the design of the process of developing the briefing; and the conceptual framework underpinning the selection of the subject of the briefing, and therefore which trends, challenges and opportunities are identified as most relevant to the future of our cultural ecosystem. We open this submission with our vision of a transformational process that could be catalysed through the development of the LTIB. Following this, we provide our responses to the content and questions raised by MCH in the discussion document.

Our vision for a collaborative dreaming

Ko te pō nui
Ko te pō roa
Ko te pō uriuri
Ko te pō kerekere
Ko te pō tiwha
Ko te pō tangotango
Te pō kitea
Ki te whai ao
Ki te ao mārama e
Tīhei Mauri Ora!

With the wero laid down from the government for departments to lift their sights beyond the next election cycle and into the future, a portal opens for collective dreaming. After 18 months of riding the waves of COVID-19, Manatū Taonga and the arts community have gotten to know each other better - resources have poured into an historically starved sector, innovation has been ignited, and old ways of working have been shaken up. The sector holds on amidst a current crisis, but what comes next?

A new energy flows into the Ministry/sector relationship. The Va (the sacred space between us) is strengthening, how can we continue to deepen this connection with the dignity, respect and reciprocity to nurture the space and bind us? The hour is resonant with a yearning to grow trust, work closely together, and disrupt the structures that hold back our potential for impact.

As we weave a vision for the future of culture and creativity in Aotearoa, the kaupapa develops its own mauri - far more than a briefing document, it becomes a living, breathing resource, a seed for action that enables the growth of a sustainable cultural ecosystem.

Planted in the soil of this unique moment - a renaissance in Te Reo Māori and iwi self-determination (via the Treaty Settlement process) - a seed like this, with the arts embedded across all areas of our society, is capable of growing into a cultural flourishing for Aotearoa. The vision contained within the LTIB provides a guide for all the members of this cultural ecosystem - artists, companies, funders, iwi, educators, and government departments - to align their work in support of this flourishing.

As the seed shoots up to greet the springtime, so too does the mana of Manatū Taonga grow through this work — both in the eyes of the cultural sector, and in establishing MCH as a leader among government departments. In this first ever exercise of LTIB delivery, Manatū Taonga stands apart. Embodying the creativity and imagination of their constituents, it is an inspiration to other departments, setting a precedent for what public consultation and future planning can be.

From this seed, comes a blossoming of creativity across Aotearoa. Where the next generation of children is immersed in creativity at school and develops their own creative fluency, unlocking new ways of working and problem-solving in whatever career path they pursue. Where programmes that support creative wellbeing and artistic experiences are within walking distance of every New Zealander, leading to improved mental health outcomes, and reduced need for medical interventions. Where local storytelling connects people, celebrates diverse identities, and creates spaces for belonging. Where professional artists, companies and venues are well-resourced to do their best work, becoming national and global icons for the distinctive, innovative culture of Aotearoa that honours the place of tangata whenua at its core.

Suggestions for how to achieve this vision:

1. Conceptual framework:

We support the intentions behind the focus on 'cultural infrastructure' in the LTIB - to look at the critical resource flows and dynamics that feed and shape the sector's ability to deliver to its outcomes. However, the language and worldview that are chosen will play a vital role in shaping the nature of this enquiry and its ability to be transformational for our sector. We are concerned that terms like 'infrastructure', 'drivers' and 'components' and the categorical approach of subtopics limits the potential of the enquiry. **We encourage MCH to be explicit**

about the worldview, frameworks and concepts you are choosing to adopt for this work and how you arrive at these decisions.

While we understand the temptation to break the system down into 'components', which can then be studied and understood in more detail, if this isn't done within a holistic framework which understands the interdependencies and the many ways of working that exist within our ecosystem, then the approach risks further fragmentising our sector. We are pleased to see some recognition of systemic concepts within the discussion document and encourage you to deepen your thinking in this area and adopt language that is more reflective of an ecosystem framework.

Kaupapa Māori strategy offers many examples of holistic models that could form the basis of research into the cultural ecosystem as a new way of articulating 'cultural infrastructure'. **We recommend MCH works with Māori strategists and knowledge holders to develop the conceptual framework and process design for this work** - ensuring that the insights developed are relevant to future resilience in both the short and long term.

We recognise that MCH has been adopting these kinds of approaches that embrace a Māori worldview recently in other areas of their work, such as the development of pandemic funds like Te Urungi. We encourage you to keep progressing this journey through the LTIB process, to set an example to other ministries, and to more closely reflect the community this work will serve.

Finally, we caution against attempting too broad a review of future trends affecting our sector. A broad review risks the development of only superficial insights, where the potential of this work is to understand where some fundamental shifts can be made. Understanding the ecosystem: mapping its relationships and resource flows, and identifying where gaps exist, is a critical first step that will help identify where further work needs to be done.

Example of ecosystem mapping software 'Kumu' used to map NZ's government services

2. <u>Process:</u>

We encourage MCH to go beyond a standard consultation process in developing the LTIB and consider taking the actions outlined below. We believe a well-designed process of deep engagement with the sector will produce more reliable insights into the future of the cultural ecosystem.

- Invite sector representatives to wānanga with MCH staff, to design the process of developing the LTIB together. A group approach, rather than single advisors, is valuable. It's important that marginalised perspectives and multiple ways of knowing are privileged at this stage.

- Work with artists to develop arts-based methods of research, storytelling and facilitating consultation, to ensure that planning about our sector embodies and communicates its essence.

- Create an opportunity for the sector to gather to engage with and respond to this vision. Facilitate the gathering with the principle of reciprocity in mind - so that it becomes both a harvesting *and* a nurturing of the connectivity within our sector.

- Work with Māori facilitators so that each stage of the process reflects the conceptual framework underpinning the development of the work.

- Maintain an ongoing kōrero with the sector to ensure that this long term work is part of a living and visionary document. This should be developed to build and nurture the relationships that will emerge through this process.

- Develop a culture within the team of people doing this work at Manatū Taonga to support their resilience for robust sector engagement; a comfort in sitting in the unknown; and the bravery to do things creatively within a bureaucratic context.

Our offer:

We know that to work in this way can seem daunting, and that the fragmentation that exists within our sector can seem challenging to overcome. As a rōpū of artists and advocates, we have developed a deep trust with one another, and a comfort in working in this territory. We have strong relationships with our sector across the country, and experience working in political environments. We hold a collective vision for the potential of Aotearoa that is not limited by our personal or organisational agendas. **We are confident that we can support you in this work as navigators towards the vision we have shared with you.** Please contact one of our members if you would like to discuss this offer further.

Feedback on briefing content:

At the core of this work, should be the fundamental understanding of art, culture and creativity as a public good. In that vision, we understand the role of the arts and artists, and should also explore how arts, culture and creativity can be embedded in the work of a range of sectors. To truly shift the cultural ecosystem into a thriving future, the scope needs to look towards holistic integration and the interconnected nature of art, culture and creativity as an interwoven component of our society.

In order to meaningfully address this, accessibility to arts, culture and creativity for all is paramount: it must be a core focus area that addresses all communities within Aotearoa and works towards equity of access and inclusion in telling the stories of our people. This means a deeper understanding of the connections within community ecosystems. This also relates to conceptual frameworks underpinning our sector, the relationship with te ao Māori and Te Tiriti, and the models of funding that derive from these foundational ideas. With these things being valued and accessible in our communities we then can look at how arts education and development have a clear overlap with discussions on sector sustainability and accessibility - in that we see the former playing a critical role in bringing about those outcomes. We encourage your consideration of these factors in examining a future for the cultural sector infrastructure.

What do you think about the infrastructure components we have listed? Are any components missing? Should any be removed?

The components that have been identified in the table outline a general framework for the cultural ecosystem. These components and drivers make sense, but would benefit from being reexamined within the conceptual framework outlined above. It is imperative that future work is examining how these components are proactively enabled throughout the country (with some coordinated regional approaches). Elements like accessibility, connection, equity, investment, pathways and public support are intertwined throughout our discussion in this document. But, it is important to address that Māori in this context should be more than a singular component in the system. Te Ao Māori should be interwoven throughout the ecosystem and be approached holistically within the entire system.

Adaptation and Sustainability seems to be a current focus rather than a future focus. This does support the need for consistent capability-building offerings, with professional development opportunities supported through a pathway into the sector from regional networks, but the outcome for an adaptive and sustainable sector should result from any positive future change, rather than being the purpose of it. There is a need for an increased presence of Indigenous perspectives. This includes addressing equity and diversity throughout the sector. It is vital to be foregrounding the place of tangata whenua in the cultural development of Aotearoa.

Technology and Digitisation are important to be acknowledged as we look to the future. There are pros and cons within this area, and how it interacts with artists and the communities that they are connected to. In considering the role of digitisation and the impact of technology, we need to consider where it sits as a priority for artists and their artforms, and how it could be utilised in an 'and-and' scenario, rather than simply a pivot. There is clearly understood value in live experiences and wellbeing outcomes associated with time away from screens and sharing collective, social experiences, but we should look at how digitisation can work as a supplement or enhancement of these offerings. Digitisation and online offering does have some value, in art forms where this structure of delivery and content design works, but in order to make it financially viable for all artforms, it can take excessive extra work, understanding value propositions, and simplifying the struggle of being heard through the noise of online content.

The embrace of technology and the process of digitisation can be useful for accessibility in some contexts, and it can also be utilised to expand audiences, and explore new methods for collaboration. In acknowledging this, we also must balance this view with the understanding of arts, culture and creativity as a tool for social cohesion and wellbeing. Therefore, the ability to reframe the sector to support artforms that function in physical space needs to be understood alongside digital development. It is important to acknowledge the work that is already happening in this market so as to not oversaturate the focus. We need to consider the issue of accessibility in rural communities, in communities who have limited access to the internet, and with the elderly. Physical delivery of activity (in a safe and responsible format) is vital for cohesion and connection. In times of increased isolation, it seems that there is something missing in how this connects to wellbeing and mental health.

New Partnerships, New Ways of Work and fostering collaboration is certainly important. This is a complex ambition to truly enable in a meaningful way. Funding models often generate competition rather than collaboration. Organisations are often so stretched to deliver their important work that additional collaboration becomes difficult for an already-stretched sector. There is potential to address this through this work.

Also important to consider is how cross-Ministry partnerships could embed arts, culture and creativity as a core delivery methodology to support other initiatives. This not only strengthens the role of art-based activity in communities, but provides additional opportunities for creative employment, as well as working towards holistic wellbeing benefits. This should include areas like education, health and justice investing in embedding arts within each sector - or coordinating government policy and investment towards both community outcomes and sustainable artistic practice. There is an important role that the arts play in enabling recovery, wellbeing and placemaking.

Which components do you consider to be most fundamental in fostering a sustainable and impactful cultural sector in the next 10-20 years?

One of the core areas of need, with a great potential for change, is how the arts are activated and enabled in all communities in Aotearoa and how investment across the country

can enable positive change through regional infrastructure that understands and connects the sector from flax roots community initiatives to professional offerings. This regional activation supports a greater cultural ecosystem because it develops robust support networks and pathways throughout the country, but also looks to the role that arts, culture and creativity play with all the people of Aotearoa - not just addressing the arts sector. The impactful change needs to be looking beyond those who work within it - it needs to be exploring the impact it has on the communities connected to it.

We propose a model that is complementary to the Regional Sport Trust framework currently sitting under Manatū Taonga, which would ensure equitable access and participation in the arts across Aotearoa. Current government agencies that support our sector such as Creative NZ would continue to deliver to the development of professional practice, artistic excellence, export and touring, alongside a regionally connected model that supports a national arts infrastructure. Regional Arts Trusts would be responsible for backbone support - offering hubs of shared administration and communications resources, capability building and regional strategy, community project funding distribution, and professional and artistic development programmes. This model could be supported by a co-investment approach from Manatū Taonga that coordinates investment from local government and local philanthropic organisations alongside its own investment. The introduction of a new model like this would require a review of the current infrastructure and key delivery agencies - and how they could work strategically together alongside the new model.

This approach can look to: support more collaborative activity through backbone support; create stronger connections between community funders, councils and Ministry; address the equitable spread of funding to connect with community-based and emerging level practice, and for specific groups such as disabled and Pacific practitioners.

What do you think will act as significant drivers of change over time within the cultural sector?

Embedded understanding of the inherent value of arts, culture and creativity as a public good that is interwoven throughout society at all levels will be a significant driver of change. This will contribute to wellbeing, address issues of accessibility and diversity, and meaningfully contribute to the sustainability of artists. This means expanding the view of how arts, culture and creativity are utilised in alignment with the living standards framework, cross-cutting cultural wellbeing as a priority area.

This shift towards diverse and responsive regional activation through a coordinated and collaborative approach will be a driver for positive change.This is a vision for increased funding as an investment in audience wellbeing and to ensure accessibility for communities. Working through regionally-based organisations who have knowledge of the local communities they are part of is key to that.

In reshaping the level of investment in local arts, culture and creative activity we can address questions of access to experiencing local stories. This will also work towards increased audience development because work can be seen by more people, but also removes some of the pandemic risk for decreased audience sizes if the emphasis is not on the commercial

imperative of ticket sales, but more on the wellbeing imperative of experiencing local art and the social cohesion of local stories.

How do you think these drivers of change could affect some of the components you've discussed?

By proactively embedding regional activity through a robust support network (in a similar way that the Regional Sports Trusts support active lifestyles for all of Aotearoa) we can collectively support the broader benefits of arts, culture and creativity for all of Aotearoa. This will impact the sector, will provide pathways from education into employment, and will develop audiences through meaningful arts experiences.

When we examine the potential impacts through reframing arts investment, we also look towards achieving things like adaptability and sustainability, but with more holistic outcomes as well. The move towards sustainable activity that has a connection into the broader cultural ecosystem will also directly contribute to the sustainability of artistic careers.

One additional pathway to examine would be through examining an idea of social patronage. Essentially a creative income that recognises the broader cultural benefits of holistic creative practice and works to support the outcomes of that in alignment with societal wellbeing. This might draw from an understanding of the universal basic income through a pathway of an 'artist allowance' which encourages arts activity that supports our communities and enables the population to choose a creative pathway because there is the removal of some of the financial risk. This would support career pathways into the professional sector, alongside supporting the sustainable implementation of social and community focussed arts outcomes.

What are the key risks, opportunities, and challenges when considering cultural system infrastructure to 2040?

Much of this has been discussed above. There is a need for continued change to the systems that currently exist for support, funding and capability building in the arts, culture and creative sector of Aotearoa. This includes a more holistic understanding of the cultural ecosystem and the role that this plays in broader society rather than just within the existing frameworks of the sector. The interconnected nature of the human experience, should be able to draw from indigenous understanding of how arts, culture and creativity are embedded across our lived experiences, and the level of future thinking should be working from this perspective with the emphasis on being a good ancestor to establish the fundamental change that works towards arts, culture and creativity as being recognised as public good.

The risks of not adopting the perspectives and actions we have described above include volunteer burnout and risk aversion due to structural instability; mental health and wellbeing implications for an unsustainable sector and connected community; and increased social isolation due to decreased community-led creative activity throughout smaller communities.

Ultimately, we believe the greatest risk is that the cultural ecosystem may become stagnated in a system that was intrinsically flawed pre-Covid, with greater awareness of inequality, lack of access and increased risk aversion from creative practitioners, and eventually, a less vibrant, diverse and impactful sector because the potential of an interconnected thriving ecosystem wasn't supported to emerge. The risk is inherent in the nature of change. Change is complex. It requires refocusing and asking new questions. It requires work and a commitment to recognising different frames of knowledge and embracing hauora as a core value measure that exists beyond economic frameworks.

Thus the question is: how can the system embrace uncertainty and hold true to a cross-generational vision for change in response to a living framework for the role of artists and creative activity in the lives of all of the people of Aotearoa?

Te Rōpū Mana Toi membership:

Elise Sterback Trustee, Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi; PhD candidate, Centre for Arts and Social Transformation, University of Auckland

Gretchen La Roche CEO, Chamber Music New Zealand, CEO, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra (departed August), Trustee, Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival, Trustee, Dame Malvina Major Foundation

Jeremy Mayall CEO, Creative Waikato; composer

Karl Chitham (Nga Puhi, Te Uriroroi) Head of Arts & Culture, Hutt City Council; Director, The Dowse Art Museum; Co-chair CIRCUIT Aotearoa; Trustee Wairau Maori Art Gallery

Kim Morton Director, Ōtautahi Creative Spaces

Megan Peacock-Coyle Manager Arts & Culture, Hastings District Council; Co-Chair of PANNZ

Fonoti Pati Umaga Pacific Music Awards Trustee, Musician and disability advocate

Rosabel Tan Director, Satellites; Trustee, Silo Theatre; Secretary, The Pantograph Punch; Auckland Council Public Art Advisory Panel member; freelance writer, strategist and producer

Tānemahuta Gray Kahukura / CEO, Taki Rua Productions

Dolina Wehipeihana Kaiārahi Māori, PANNZ; General Manager, Kia Mau Festival; Chair, Atamira Dance Company, Co-Director Betsy & Mana Productions

Vision:

TRMT has four vision statements that summarise the transformation it advocates for:

- The arts are an essential service: artists are recognised as the architects to our future and integral to our resilience and recovery from disruptive events

- Access to and participation in art is understood as a fundamental human right and vital to our hauora/wellbeing

- The infrastructure and strategies underpinning our arts ecosystem set a world-leading example of a place-sourced approach grounded in te ao Māori

- There are well-supported pathways for developing creative practice and appreciation, which start at childhood, are passed on between generations, and lead to creative and engaged citizens

Please contact Elise Sterback elisesterback@gmail.com / 027 384 2834 about any enquiries relating to this submission.