

Performing Arts Strategy

Highlights Edition



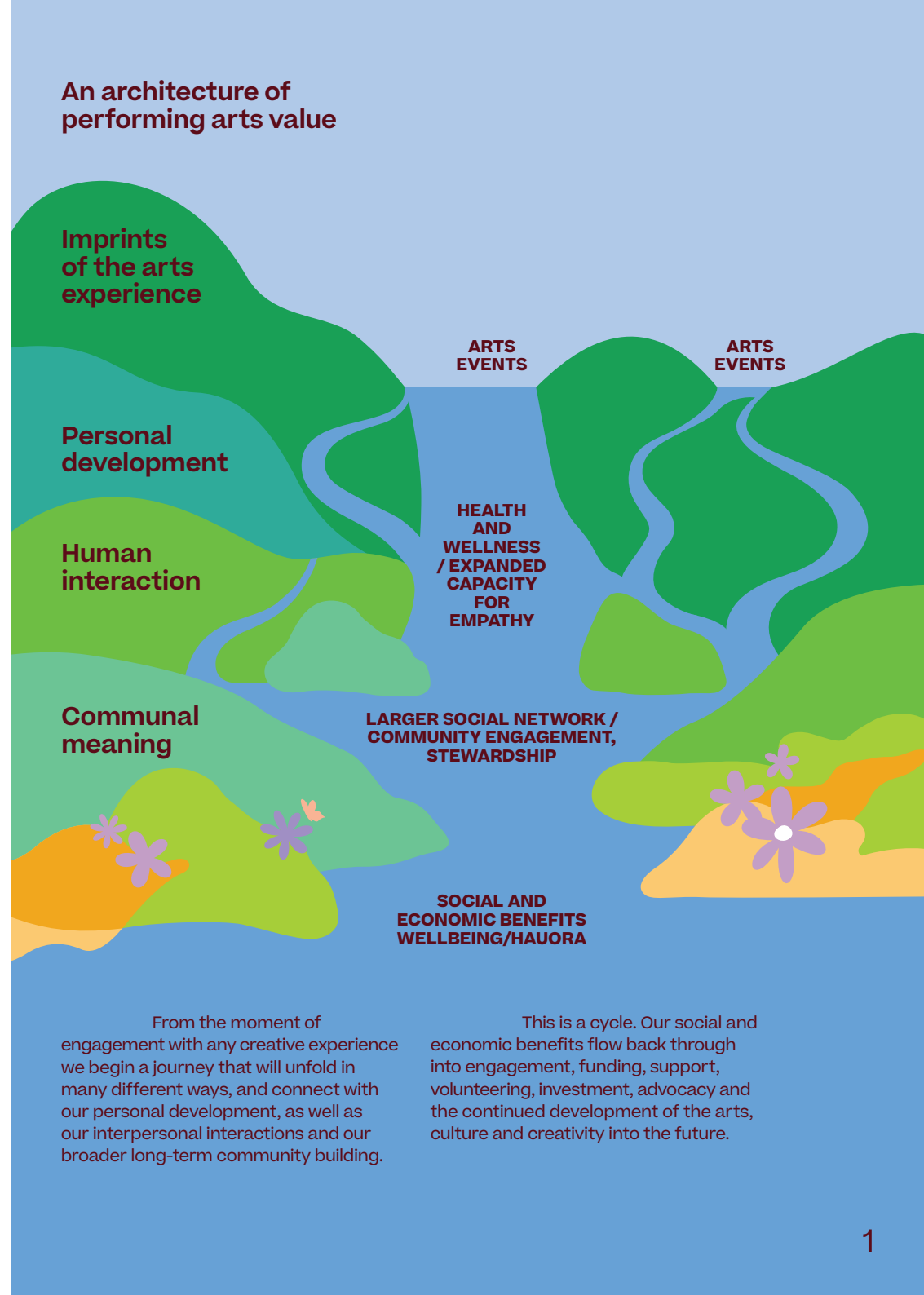
**Creative
Waikato
Toi Waikato**

What are performing arts?

Performing arts are often time-based live arts experiences that tell stories through movement, sound and light. The performing arts encompass many things and have been fundamental and essential components of the human experience throughout time.

The performing arts are arts such as music, dance, drama and cultural forms which are typically performed for an audience. This is an embodied form of expression that can be delivered individually, but more often involves a collaborative process that brings creatives, technicians, and support crew together to create a unique experience for an audience.

Theatre, music, dance and other kinds of performances are present in all human cultures. Performances can be in purpose-built venues, such as theatres, on outdoor stages at festivals, in site-specific locations, such as gardens, tents and libraries, and also on the street.



The vision

The performing arts in the Waikato has the potential in the next 30 years to build upon its rich and varied history to support sustainable growth in the sector, to engage new audiences, and to tell local stories and create opportunities for new practitioners to share their voice.



With this in mind, the vision for our collective strategy is that

The Waikato
Performing Arts
ecosystem thrives
through inspiring
communities and
enabling diverse
creative activity.

Te Tiriti and Partnership

When aligning the kaupapa throughout the world of performing arts and beyond, it is important to consider the cultural, environmental, social and economic aspects in connection to Te Ao Māori to ensure that the relevant interests are being considered.

There are some useful links and resources provided by Te Arawhiti which include:

Guidelines for engagement with Māori

www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/assets/Tools-and-Resources/Guidelines-for-engagement-with-Maori.pdf

Building closer partnerships with Māori

www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/assets/Tools-and-Resources/Building-closer-partnerships-with-Maori-Principles.pdf

Additional resources

www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/assets/Tools-and-Resources/Whainga-Amorangi/TA013.04-MCR-capability-OCC.pdf

These resources highlight 6 principles

1

Build the partnership before focusing on the work

2

Plan together from the start

3

Value each party's contribution and knowledge

4

Ensure outcomes are meaningful to all parties

5

Be open, be flexible and accept risk

6

Share decision making

These principles provide an important lens for ensuring that Te Ao Māori is woven through the range of activities taking place in our spaces and venues. With these in mind, we can grow sustainable relationships throughout the community where everyone can benefit and thrive together, while providing inclusive performance spaces that are accessible and welcoming to all parties.

From each organisation's perspective, it is important to look into organisational capability components to ensure that supports cultural change. Although cultural change can be difficult to achieve, it is an important part of a thriving performing arts ecosystem, and will require consistent and sustained effort, with open and continual communication to move in the right direction, but the results will be hugely rewarding for all.

Creative sector-led

This is a kaupapa drawn from conversations with the sector. It speaks to observations of both strengths and gaps seen by the people most active in enabling the types of activity that will embody this strategic framework.

It seeks to acknowledge their mahi and support them with a framework for growth, support and activation.

Thinking regionally

Creatives don't work within geographic boundaries. We move between spaces, sectors, barriers and beyond to create opportunities and connections.

From this perspective it was necessary to consider this strategy with a cross-regional view point—as is the case for the Waikato Arts Navigator. It understands that collective impact requires collective vision and scope.

Acting Locally

This activity is also connected to place. It expresses what it means to be here and now and how our stories relate to the spaces where we live, play and create.

We acknowledge that performing arts activity is very much about shared space, audiences and performers intertwined in space and time for shared positive impact. This is local activation of universal possibilities.



Values

Accessibility / Urunga
Waikato performing arts spaces are safe and welcoming for everyone.

Wellbeing / Hauora
Cohesion and holistic wellbeing is woven throughout our activity.

Collaboration / Mahi tahi
Community connections amplify creativity.

Innovation / Auahatanga
Imagine what is possible, embrace change and create the future.

Accountability / Kawenga Takohanga
Human-centric integrity and care for our communities is vital.

Long-term focus areas

Drawing from the insights shared by our diverse community, the pathway for supporting this vision in the next 30 years has emerged in four strands of focus.

Connection Tūhono

- Collaborative sharing of resource and activity
- Communities of practice
- Representation and inclusion

Community Hapori

- Empowering rangatahi
- Accessible experiences
- Education and development

Capital Pakihi

- Enhanced civic investment
- Diverse and active audiences
- Creative enablers

Creativity Auahatanga

- Innovative engagement
- Participatory pricing
- Programming and impact

Te Whare Tapa Whā

There is an alignment between the four focus areas and the Te Whare Tapa Whā model.* This was drawn from Te Manatū Hauora website.

Te Taha Hinengaro Mental

The capacity to communicate, to think and to feel mind and body are inseparable.

Thoughts, feelings and emotions are integral components of the body and soul.

This is about how we see ourselves in this universe, our interaction with that which is uniquely Māori and the perception that others have of us.

Representation and inclusion.

Taha Whānau Family

The capacity to belong, to care and to share where individuals are part of wider social systems.

Whānau provides us with the strength to be who we are. This is the link to our ancestors, our ties with the past, the present and the future.

Understanding the importance of whānau and how whānau (family) can contribute to illness and assist in curing illness is fundamental to understanding Māori health issues.

Taha Tinana Physical

The capacity for physical growth and development.

Good physical health is required for optimal development.

Our physical 'being' supports our essence and shelters us from the external environment. For Māori the physical dimension is just one aspect of health and wellbeing and cannot be separated from the aspect of mind, spirit and family.

Taha Wairua Spiritual

The capacity for faith and wider communication.

Health is related to unseen and unspoken energies.

The spiritual essence of a person is their life force. This determines us as individuals and as a collective, who and what we are, where we have come from and where we are going.

A traditional Māori analysis of physical manifestations of illness will focus on the wairua or spirit, to determine whether damage here could be a contributing factor.

* <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models/maori-health-models-te-whare-tapa-wha>

Connection Tūhono

To truly reflect a performing arts sector that is thriving, there must be connections and collaboration between the various artists, arts organisations, venues and other key enablers that can support it.



What does Connection look like?

- Sharing of resources, insights, content and support
- Pathways for practitioners between spaces and groups
- Draws upon community strength to build capability within each other

Current strengths

- Numerous cross-over points between groups and venues
- Strong volunteer activation
- Existing venue collaborations

Potential pitfalls

- Complexity of competitive funding
- Capacity for collaboration (requires allocation of time and resource)

Opportunities

- Stronger communities of practice with regular connection points
- Shared infrastructure for audience engagement
- Stronger engagement between education and the sector

Building connections with our communities is essential for the performing arts sector to thrive and evolve.

If we desire to have a sector that truly reflects who we are, we must support and enable participation in the creative process and tell our own stories.

This means that our connections with the community are driven by an authentic commitment to audience development—one that enables audiences to feel a meaningful connection to the spaces, activities and opportunities that are presented.



What does Community look like?

- Commitment to meaningful audience development
- Pathways for rangatahi
- Accessible experiences

Current strengths

- Increasing educational opportunities—both formal and community-based
- Strong localised community connections for soft infrastructure

Potential pitfalls

- Sustainable career opportunities
- Support for accessible content
- Challenges for communication with audiences

Opportunities

- Build upon creative development programmes to tell local stories
- Connect with new audiences to support sector sustainability
- Diversify activity to support creative careers

Capital Pakihi

Investing in the performing arts is an investment in social cohesion, sense of space and place, and a vibrancy of culture in our region.

The shared experiences contained within the various expressions of the performing arts are a vital antidote to loneliness and isolation, whilst also inspiring us to look both inward and outward to find our connections and understand our stories. But for these things to thrive, they need investment. This is an essential part of the public good of modern society. The return on this investment is in civic pride, social cohesion, and in inspiration, celebration and wellbeing.



What does Capital look like?

- Sustainable strategic investment
- More audiences attending more activities
- Investment in people as a core resource

Current strengths

- Community-activated models of activity
- Growing engagement with audiences

Potential pitfalls

- Lack of meaningful long-term investment
- Ability to maintain spaces over time
- Pathways for sustainable careers

Opportunities

- Collaborative strength-based high-trust funding models
- National advocacy with local activation
- Increased visibility as WRT is constructed

Change is constant and necessary. New ways of thinking, acting, engaging and connecting. We are moving into an age of experience—the activities and spaces for memory making become more vital as we move into a climate aware society.

We know that the impact of the pandemic was huge. It limited lots of performing arts activities, and changed how people engaged. However, it also provided an opportunity to think about how we can do things differently.

The people we spoke to wanted to participate in and connect more with the sector, as they saw the value for themselves and their communities. This is a huge opportunity for new methods for activation and activity.



What does Creativity look like?

- Artist-led and experience-based
- Participatory and connected
- Social and human-centric, not just tech-based

Current strengths

- Adaptability and learned resilience
- Building from pandemic experience

Potential pitfalls

- Short-term tests
- Confidence in potential failure

Opportunities

- Participatory pricing models
- Strategic cross-ecosystem programming
- Collaborative investment

The performing arts ecosystem is made up of facilities/venues (hard infrastructure) and artists/creatives/groups/technicians (soft infrastructure) each serving a purpose to facilitate pathways for the development of artistic outputs.

Our artists and groups are vital for the performing arts to thrive. This ecosystem only works with people. But we also need spaces and systems to support the people.

We see this ecosystem as a forest of infrastructure (ngahere) with connection to the performing birds (manu) and beyond. An ecosystem that supports the many, varied songs of birds as our creatives and community. The branches are interconnected and interwoven—

pathways for our venues, audiences, creatives. In order for the forest to flourish we need sustainable funding and wider community engagement, the sunlight, water and nutrients that help the forest to flourish.

Our ecosystem of venues, organisations, supporters and enablers must develop and collaborate to support pathways for sustainable growth and to champion the sharing of local stories with audiences in the Waikato and beyond.

Trees and plants
spaces and places
Birds and creatures
creatives/artists/
groups/technicians
Flowers and leaves
audiences
Sunlight, water, nutrients
funders and enablers

Performing arts ecosystem



