

## Submission to South-Waikato District Council Long Term Plan 2021

### Creative Waikato:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the SWDC 10 Year Plan.

### Key points – Creative Waikato

- Supports opportunities that enable communities to thrive, engage with the district and improve wellbeing.
- Seeks endorsement of the Waikato Arts Navigator strategy (strategy attached) and a commitment to work with Creative Waikato on developing an Arts Action Plan for the South Waikato district
- Seeks commitment of \$10,000 per annum (for the next 3 years) to develop an Arts Action Plan and ongoing engagement in the implementation of the Waikato Arts Navigator.

### Introduction

We commend Council in its vision, that the South Waikato District has 'healthy people thriving in a safe, vibrant and sustainable community' and support your community outcomes of 'resilience', 'growth' and 'relationships', which are strong foundations moving forward into the future.

More detailed responses on specific projects are outlined below.

### Integrated community hub – pool and library

Council has already signalled that a shift to integrated community hubs is the logical and most effective way of investing in and delivering robust community facilities and services. As Council has acknowledged, this is supported by a worldwide trend.

A community hub is one convenient place from which community services can be delivered, and social, educational, recreational and cultural activities can occur. The purpose and value extends to include:

- Enhancing coordination across services and improving access to them
- Placemaking, or using urban design and arts solutions to create a focal point – enhancing the physical quality and appearance of a public place that helps create an attractive environment for people to gather and interact
- Building community – enhancing connections and relationships in order to strengthen common values and promote collective goals; these goals may include safer neighbourhoods, support for isolated or disadvantaged people, healthier children and families, more local employment opportunities, greater cultural recognition
- Collaboration with community, government and non-government agencies, recreation and leisure providers and health services
- Enabling partnerships
- Providing better opportunities for individuals in the community to learn, participate and excel in a range of activities<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Integrated Hubs' Hutt City Council 30-year plan.

### Pool

The pool has been a key asset for the district since it was established. A place for the community to gather, connect and enjoy physical and mental health benefits. Additional upgrades will enable future-proofing of this facility. Integrating the pool with a library, youth park, skatepark and Council support services will ensure that Council can update and modernise its facilities more efficiently and at less cost, as well as broaden the range, and increase the standard, of services.

### Library

Often hubs are centred around libraries. Libraries are seen to be neutral and safe places that already attract high foot traffic and are often located in the centre of a suburb or community. They are a key vehicle through which Councils can support the social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing of their diverse communities.

We support Council's thinking in combining facilities into hubs.

We would encourage Council to consider:

- How to ensure these facilities include spaces that are accessible to artists and community-based arts groups, where they can make and show their work to audiences
- If there's opportunity to work with mana whenua to identify how libraries can grow the broader public's understanding of and engagement with local stories and histories, mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori
- How to work with local artists and practitioners to create a strong sense of cultural identity integrating history and Māori, Pasifika and other communities into the design.

The point of difference for the Tokoroa is it has always had a strong sense of community, bringing different cultures together and celebrating this. There is a great opportunity enhance community spirit in working with artists and creative practitioners to create something very special and unique that will have pride of place within the town.

Artists and creative practitioners are particularly skilled in designing and delivering innovative and strategic solutions, and we encourage Council to look at ways to involve the arts community.

### **Skatepark in Putaruru**

As the skatepark in Tokoroa has shown, there are many benefits to creating such a facility for the community, including -

- Providing a safe environment: – opportunities for youth to engage in a healthy pastime, is likely to encourage more social cohesion and connection and discourage antisocial behaviour.
- Physical and mental health benefits: - Skateparks are an engaging outdoor environment where youth can interact with one another and build vital social and interpersonal skills.<sup>2</sup>
- Enables social cohesion and connectedness – a professionally-designed and well maintained skatepark can bring new life into your community. When you take the time and effort to create a unique facility, there are economic spinoffs in that the skatepark and surrounding utilities become a destination.

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<sup>2</sup> Benefits to the community - <https://dsmskatepark.com/about/benefits-to-the-community/>

Similar to other assets such as the pool and library, involving artists and creative practitioners in the design of the skatepark, incorporating local history or other elements that represent your community, will provide an iconic, interactive and engaging experience for the residents and visitors.

### **Other planned infrastructure projects**

Creative Waikato also acknowledges other projects planned over the next ten years including -

- Tokoroa CBD stage upgrade – Stages are a focal point for community events and festivals. Community events and festivals have direct and indirect impacts on communities. They provide opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering and social, cultural, economic and environmental developments. Community events and festivals can attract tourists and visitors at regional, national and international level as well as support local people and suppliers in provision of services, food, beverages, and attractions, increasing the economic benefit to the district.
- Vaka village investigation – Tokoroa is home to a large Pacific and Māori population. Engaging with local Pacific Island communities is essential to plan for sustainable enhancement of language, arts economic development and other activities.<sup>3</sup>
- Town brand and entrance signs – these signs do more than tell vehicles and pedestrians ‘You are here’. They enhance a town’s brand by improving the navigation, understanding and accessibility of the environment, and serve to reinforce the history, architecture and landmarks that define it.
- District cultural trail plan – cultural trails deepen awareness and knowledge of local history and resources that can be enjoyed by locals and visitors.

It’s positive to see investment proposed for upgrades to the Putāruru Plaza and skatepark amenities. These are important venues for arts, culture and community connectedness. These investments will help to ensure they enhance the wellbeing of residents and visitors.

### **The benefits of investing in arts and culture – wellbeing outcomes**

The arts community are uniquely positioned to deliver outcomes across social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. Providing residents and visitors can benefit many aspects of their wellbeing.

#### Cultural

- Enabling diverse communities to express and celebrate their cultural identity
- Helping communities to understand and accept cultural differences
- Supporting the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori and Te Ao Māori
- Growing knowledge and value of the stories, values and places of importance to mana whenua
- Increasing understanding of Pasifika communities and Aotearoa’s place in the Pacific

#### Environmental

- Creating spaces and places that people value and want to care for
- Addressing and growing understanding of complex environmental issues
- Building communities’ connection to the whenua
- Creating a sense of place, belonging and civic pride

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<sup>3</sup> Tokoroa concept plan 2008 – p, 16

## Social

- Creating a sense of belonging, connectedness and greater understanding between communities
- Supporting good physical and mental health outcomes
- Enhancing a community's ability to deal with social challenges
- Growing people's knowledge and providing opportunities to learn

## Economic

- Creating jobs and opportunities for local businesses – artists and arts organisations, and the aligned sectors of hospitality, tourism, education and manufacturing – and providing valuable work skills
- Creating vibrant towns and cities people want to live, work and plan in
- Supporting a stronger sense of connection to place for both residents and visitors by providing and promoting distinctive stories and experiences unique to a rohe
- Supporting recovery from unexpected shocks or disasters through supporting social cohesion and opportunities for people to share experiences
- Making your town or city an attractive place for tourists.<sup>4</sup>

## **Impact investment funding**

The arts are a sector that can build the economy and revitalise communities.

With Council leading the way, there are real opportunities for other partners to use capital for creativity. Partners that value the arts, storytelling, creativity, art lovers, art collectors, and artists themselves are looking for opportunities to align their capital with their priorities.<sup>5</sup>

For businesses it is commercially beneficial; it can help reach new customers, enhance their brand and give them a competitive edge – but also provide a valuable source of creativity, inspiration and innovation.<sup>6</sup>

Pathways to support the arts through investments aren't always obvious. Yet the positive effects are profound. Investing in the creative economy isn't just about benefiting artists. A thriving arts scene often breathes life into communities by attracting new businesses, creating jobs, and drawing traffic. Creative Waikato encourages Council to build on this initiative and invest more - it's not only an investment in art, it's an investment in people.

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<sup>4</sup> Creative New Zealand 'Arts and culture, part of your communities future'

<sup>5</sup> UpStart Co-Lab – Creativity, investment, impact - <https://www.upstartco-lab.org/research/>

<sup>6</sup> 'Why invest in the arts' Creative Partnerships Australia - <https://creativepartnerships.gov.au/for-supporters-and-investors/why-invest-in-the-arts/>

**We seek Council endorsement of the following:**

### **Waikato Arts Navigator – Regional Arts Strategy**

#### **Background**

Creative Waikato knows that the work we do has an impact in our region and beyond. This knowledge has been developed through the past 8 years, and is informed by our stakeholders, and our engagement in the community.

Creative Waikato has established connections with the 10 territorial authorities in the Waikato Region. This is further strengthened through the establishment of the Waikato Arts Navigator – a regional arts strategy that is strength-based and provides an understanding of the service provision within the arts and creative sector throughout the region.

Since 2020, Creative Waikato has been talking to Councils about opportunities to utilise arts solutions for post-covid recovery.

### **Waikato Arts Navigator – Regional Arts Strategy**

The Waikato Arts Navigator (WAN) creates a shared framework, including a vision and strategy, for supporting and strengthening our arts and culture in the region. It guides planning and decision making.

In using WAN as our common strategy, we can all track in the same direction and cross-regional efforts will support, complement and strengthen one another.

#### **The vision**

*The Waikato prospers with diverse and transformative creativity activity*

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.

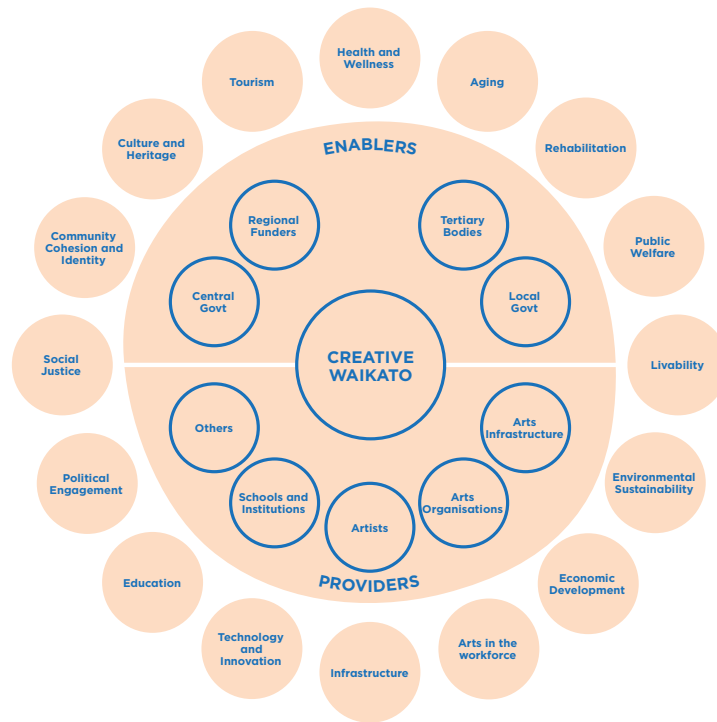
Five threads of the Waikato Arts Navigator

The ultimate objective of WAN is to have all Councils in the region making decisions with the following outcomes in mind. The effect of this would be transformational for the Waikato.

<b>CREATIVE WELLBEING</b>	<b>CREATIVE PROSPERITY</b>	<b>CREATIVE EXPERIENCES</b>	<b>CREATIVE EDUCATION</b>	<b>CREATIVE INNOVATION</b>
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

## Arts as part of our community ecosystem

The arts can be, and should be, embedded in all facets of our community. They feed into a broader understanding of the ecosystem in 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 the 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.

## Arts and culture – where are we now

By investing in the creative sector to deliver creative and cultural activities, local government can deliver long-term value to communities. We already know that the arts help improve New Zealand society, make us feel more confident and contribute positively to our economy.

As a region, we value the arts –

- 78% engaged with the arts by attending or participating in at least one art form in the past 12 months, similar to the national average of 80%
- 67% attended at least one arts event or location in the past 12 months, compared to 73% nationally
- 1 in 5 people have attended a Ngā toi Māori (Māori arts) even in the Waikato region in the past 12 months
- 56% agree the arts help create connection between different people in the community
- 47% agree the arts activities available in the Waikato give young people an opportunity to express themselves
- 38% agree that the arts and culture are very or extremely important to the region's identity.<sup>7</sup>

There is no doubt that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the arts and cultural sector. There was an increase in creative activity throughout the lockdown, but in-person participation (as audience, as performers, as members of groups, societies and classes) ceased, causing major challenges for arts organisations in the Waikato region.

Nationally, in the arts and creative sector, for the 12 month period to March 2021 –

- Sector employment is forecast to decline by 11.7% versus 9.8% across the New Zealand economy
- Sector GDP is forecast to decline by 16.4% versus 8% across the New Zealand economy. This decline is driven by decreased household incomes and tourism spending, and changes in audience behaviours
- About 1/3 of workers are self-employed and many work part-time. Two key sources of secondary employment for creatives – hospitality and construction – will be the hardest hit sectors.

## A 10-year outlook

WAN provides an aspirational vision to see our region become a place with a vibrant arts and cultural sector that thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity. This means that there is the ongoing sustainable development of a wide range of artistic and cultural activities. The arts are valued and celebrated in our communities with robust and flourishing pathways from participation and audience engagement, training and capability development through a range of practical activities culminating in having a sector of creative professionals whose careers are able to live and thrive.

*'The most defining aspect of the next age is that it is a creative age – the world will be shaped by creatively minded citizens developing creative processes and ideas'<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Momentum Waikato—Waikato Vital Signs 2020 'Culture and Arts' report (other ref Creative New Zealand, 'New Zealanders and the Arts 2017)

<sup>8</sup> Gardiner, R 'The Future of New Zealand is creative', <https://brownbread.co.nz/the-good-stuff/issue-1/rob-sue-gardiner>



A strategic framework with a long-term view point, recognises that transformational change takes time. There are many elements that must coincide to enable such transformation – hard and soft infrastructure, arts activity, regeneration, supporting artists and arts organisations, valuing creativity and creative thinking. Proactive collaboration and strong advocacy from Councils and other leadership organisations such as philanthropic funders, tertiary organisations, regional leadership organisations, Iwi and other regional networks will inevitably empower the broader community to work towards a common vision.

There is an opportunity to continue to make this change with a strategy that is forward in its intent but localised in its action.

### **Long-term focus areas**

#### Embedding arts and creativity

The extent to which our communities can see the arts in their places and spaces, in the activity around them and in the interactions with others, is a reflection of how embedded the arts and creativity is in their community.

The arts can have a transformative effect in how people see themselves and the world. It contributes hugely to overall wellbeing as well as creating employment. By embedding the arts in our soft infrastructure (people and services) and hard infrastructure (physical assets) we will really start to see transformation.

#### Ongoing sustainable investment

Investment in the arts is an investment in communities. Investment over an extended period of time allows for a more strategic consideration of how this can be used – to have broader visions for activity because there is more time to plan, opportunity to collaborate with both the arts and cultural sector and wider communities because there is more time and scope to create meaningful relationships.

#### Collaboration to foster and grow creative activity

To strengthen and grow creative activity, a collaborative approach recognises that all sectors make an important contribution to the cultural wellbeing of our region. These partners form part of an interconnected eco-system that can support a regeneration of ideas, cultivate new connections and realise transformative ideas.

#### Supporting artistic pathways through capability building

Supporting artists and arts organisations, with capability building, ensures the arts are valued and celebrated in our communities.

With robust and flourishing pathways - from participation and audience engagement, to training and capability development through to a range of practical activities, we will have a sector of creative professionals whose careers are able to thrive.

## **Recent initiatives**

### Elevate programme

Previously known as the PACE (Pathways to Arts and Cultural Employment) Scheme, Creative Waikato secured a two-year pilot programme, now known as 'Elevate', from the Ministry of Social Development. This programme is to support people in the creative arts sector to find or retain creative careers. Participants will be supported to develop business skills and knowledge that will help them to sustain a career in the creative sector. The initial target will be 120 participants (Waikato region) per year for two years.

### Huber Social

Creative Waikato is currently working with Huber Social, a social impact agency, to conduct a social impact investigation into the Impact of Arts, Culture and Creativity on our region's wellbeing. The project consists of two distinct parts -

- Regional measurement – a collective, data-driven approach to demonstrate the impact of the arts, providing evidence of impact of arts, culture and creativity on the wellbeing of Waikato people
- Community toolkit – production of an arts-focused community toolkit to build capability in the sector regionally, empowering and enabling community organisations to understand and articulate the impact of the work they do from a wellbeing perspective.

## **Engagement with South Waikato District Council**

In November 2020, Creative Waikato gave a presentation to Council which introduced the Waikato Arts Navigator framework. We also discussed how Council could provide 'arts solutions for post-covid recovery'.

Having now developed a vision and strategy to support that framework, we look forward to working with Council to develop a localised response in the form of an Arts Action Plan for the South Waikato District.

## **Working with Council – next steps**

### **WAN investment**

Creative Waikato requests commitment through the next LTP cycle of \$10,000 per annum investment for development of an Arts Action Plan and further engagement and connection with the SWDC Council and community with regards to the implementation of the Waikato Arts Navigator.

### **Arts Action Plan**

The purpose of developing an Arts Action Plan, is to help focus Councils' efforts, using the five threads in the WAN to create a common language and purpose that can be used across many areas to align direction and decision-making.

It will also be useful for communities to see themselves in the plan and how the outcomes will affect them.

The Action Plan will help prioritise goals and measurements for **how** the outcomes in the strategy will be achieved pertinent to what is deemed important within each community. Creative Waikato looks forward to working with South Waikato District Council to develop your own Arts Action Plan.