

## Community Summary Long Term Plan Thames-Coromandel District Council

Arts, culture and creativity contributes to thriving communities. When arts, culture and creativity is supported, strong and visible communities are strong and visible.

Arts, culture and creativity is woven through all aspects of life. It has a key role to play in creating thriving and liveable towns and cities. The creative activation of public spaces supports the preservation of council assets, and promotes social cohesion and community connection. Sustainable creative career opportunities attract and retain workers and innovative businesses.

Arts, culture and creativity supports community and individual wellbeing. In Waikato, those who report being highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity have 5% higher overall wellbeing as compared to those with little or no engagement.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that recreational arts can support mental wellbeing. 'Those who engaged in 100 or more hours/year of arts engagement (i.e. two or more hours/week) reported significantly better mental well-being than other levels of engagement.'<sup>2</sup>

Councils are currently seeking community feedback around their long term plans (LTPs). Long term plans outline Council's activities and how they are managed, delivered and funded<sup>3</sup>. Under the Local Government Act, Councils must consult with their communities on the LTP (or 10 year plan) every 3 years.<sup>4</sup> A common theme across these consultations is the need to be strategic around prioritising investment.

It is important that investment in community wellbeing is prioritised and protected. The core role of council, as outlined in the legislation, is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities. This is the required (or statutory) purpose of council.<sup>5</sup>

We have a role to play in supporting council in this work, by letting them know that we will support them to deliver these wellbeings. We can share with council and others in our community that we know and care about more than solely economic concerns. It is important that we share about the other things that we value in our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Huber Social, 'Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in Waikato' (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p.22, <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/researchandreports>.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Davies, Matthew Knuiman & Michael Rosenberg, 'The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population, BMC Public Health, vol.16, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2672-7>.

<sup>3</sup> Waikato District Council [https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20\(LTP,\(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases\)](https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20(LTP,(including%20proposed%20rate%20increases)).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> New Zealand Legislation, 'Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019', <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2019/0017/latest/LMS30972.html>.

This can be as simple as providing a short paragraph to council about the things that you care about.

Here is a [link](#) to the council's resources for the Long Term Plan feedback process. It is important to know that you do not need to answer every question, or go into great detail. You can speak from your own experience, and share about what you really value and care about. Anything you can do to add your voice to the chorus is powerful. You can find the consultation document [here](#):

We have pulled out some key moments where arts, culture, creativity and community are mentioned. You might want to mention some of these, and what you want to happen with regard to these. Feel very free to copy and paste from here, and make any edits or additions you would like.

Your rates support community services, venues, tourism and events, visitor destinations....arts, culture and creativity are in all of these.

### **Your say matters**

It will take a few minutes of your time to put in a submission on what you care about. Our communities contribute significantly to making our city a more diverse, vibrant and creative place to live - it's important that our voices are heard.

### **Consultation closes on 8 April 2024**

### **Thames-Coromandel DC want to hear about these decisions they have made:**

1. Managing rates spikes
2. Investing more in future planning
3. Investing in connected communities
4. Increasing fees and charges to keep rates manageable
5. The future of our central office, the Thames Council building

We've outlined a summary of decisions in which *arts, culture and creativity* can provide a big contribution. These are summarised below.

### **Decision 2: E whakangaongia and te mahere pae tawhiti: Investing more in future planning**

Council's vision is for the Coromandel to be the place to '*live, work and play*'. This means providing better opportunities for its communities to grow and change, and to ensure this is done in a well-managed way.

Council would like to develop a district-wide spatial planning project for areas outside of Thames. This is a plan that sets out how towns should grow and

develop over the next 30 years. Changes are also proposed for Council's district plans to support an 'enlivened town centre' and additional growth.

Let Council know your thoughts about this, particularly where you think arts, culture and creativity could support vibrant town centres and growth. **Scroll to Decision 2: Options which are on the feedback form [here](#)**

Potential responses to this could include:

- Increased investment in community organisations and activities that contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of local communities
- Supporting more placemaking initiatives to share local stories through public art
- Working with local events providers to increase support and engagement to encourage events that support local communities and drive external outcomes as well.
- *Use examples from your own practice, or things you particularly enjoyed experiencing - local examples are useful to help elected officials understand the context of what is important to us!*

### **Decision 3: E whakangaongia ana te pū me te pā harakeke: Investing in connected communities**

Covid, isolation after the storms and rising costs have had an impact on residents as well as visitor numbers. What can be done to ensure the community is connected and valued, is not just about buildings and infrastructure, but supporting more connected and inclusive community activity.

2020 research shows that in Waikato, 'Engagement with arts, culture and creativity strengthens connection to community and place'.<sup>6</sup> Council plays a crucial role in advocating for services that bring various agencies together to target local priorities and wants to continue this mahi.

Let Council know how the arts community can help support more 'connected and inclusive communities'. **Scroll to Decision 3: 'Options' which are on the feedback form [here](#)**

Relevant messages here can include:

- Access to creative activities is a driver of community connection and social cohesion

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<sup>6</sup> Huber Social, 'Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in Waikato' (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p.4, <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/researchandreports>.

- Having creative spaces is an important component of supporting accessibility and connecting communities. This can be in artist hubs, creative studios, rehearsals and development spaces, and community hubs.
- Investing in local people (soft infrastructure) is a great way to get positive local outcomes - a community artist-in-residence model is an interesting approach.

Creative Waikato is submitting to the long term plan too, and advocating for support for arts, culture and creativity in Thames-Coromandel. If you want to read some of what we will be sharing, you can check out these documents on our advocacy page: <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/standing-up-for-the-arts> - this will contain links to all our public submissions.