

Submission to Waipā District Council
Long Term Plan 2021

Creative Waikato:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Waipā District 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 Waipā 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, 'Waipā: Home of Champions: Building Connected Communities' and support your community outcomes of 'socially resilient', 'cultural champions' 'environmental champions' and 'economically progressive', which are strong foundations moving forward into the future.

We also acknowledge your external strategy priorities and focus for the next three years –

- Creating vibrant communities
- Nurturing and respecting our unique culture and heritage
- Effectively planning and providing for growing communities
- Preparing for climate change
- Leading the recovery of Waipā

More detailed responses on specific projects are outlined below.

Pirongia - Ngā Roto - Te Awamutu cycling connection

We support Option 2: Off road alignment, via Macky Access. We agree that the wellbeing aspects of option two far outweigh options one and three. We also think it's important that cyclists can enjoy the environment and experience cultural and heritage sites.

Lake Te Koo Utu

We support Option 2: Full implementation of the Lake Te Koo Utu concept plan. We commend Council on partnering with mana whenua to acknowledge and share their connection to Lake Te Koo Utu. We also support improving the water quality of the lake and enhancing the biodiversity of the lake and its surrounds.

Memorial Park

We support Option 2: Full implementation of the Memorial Park concept plan, which would improve the overall experience for visitors to the park, enable heritage maintenance and vegetation management and acknowledge the significance of the park to mana whenua.

Parks and recreation spaces can –

- Be a gathering place for community events
- Celebrate and create connections with sites of significance
- Enable or support storytelling and interpretation of place and communities
- Engage civic dialogue
- Attract attention, and;
- Provide economic benefit.

We commend Council on its vision, in particular inclusion of cultural and heritage sites, acknowledging mana whenua and taking a strategic approach to your infrastructural and community projects for the years ahead.

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

Other planned infrastructure projects

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

- Playgrounds – arts can have an integral role in the design of these playgrounds. By incorporating local history or other elements that represent your community, they can become an asset that is truly unique. They can also enhance public appreciation of arts and connect artists with communities
- Community facilities - Libraries and Museums are integral assets for communities, they act as community catalysts. Both institutions promote continuing education and lifelong learning. Libraries and Museums can revitalise communities, act as a safe haven for community members, and also as a resource for individuals of all backgrounds and ethnicities.¹ We commend Council for spending funds to support construction of the Cambridge Museum, designating funds towards the design and build of Te Ara Wai and for streetscape improvements in the surrounding area. We also commend the recent move towards the Cambridge Town Hall as being activated and strengthened through a community trust, but also want to remind of the importance of continued investment in this space, and activities within it, as a contribution to the sustainability and success of this community asset.

It's positive to see investments in these areas. These are important amenities for arts, culture and community connectedness. These investments will also help to ensure they enhance the wellbeing of residents and visitors.

In planning for these community amenities we would encourage Council to consider -

- How to ensure these community facilities include spaces that are accessible to artists and community-based arts groups, and where they can make and show their work to audiences
- Continuing to work with mana whenua to identify how these facilities 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

¹ Rosales, R 'Museums and libraries work hand in hand' <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2017/02/museums-and-libraries-work-hand-in-hand/>

Te Ara Wai Museum

Although this project has been delayed a few years, we believe it will be a hugely significant asset for the district and region. Providing for -

- exhibition spaces and interactive zones that tell unique Waipā stories
- spaces to showcase your community's precious and unique collection of taonga
- stories which connect to actual sites of significance in your district
- more research services for the community, and;
- a hub for school and education programmes.²

We commend Council for appointing Mātauranga Maori experts to the governance panel of this project, who will provide crucial input into the planning stages. We also commend Council on the establishment of Te Ara Wai journeys, a beautiful and interactive way to tell stories of the district.

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

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

² Te Ara Wai - <https://www.waipadc.govt.nz/your-waipā/enjoy-waipā/te-ara-wai>

- 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.³

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.⁴

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.⁵

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.

³ Creative New Zealand 'Arts and culture, part of your communities future'

⁴ UpStart Co-Lab – Creativity, investment, impact - <https://www.upstartco-lab.org/research/>

⁵ '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.

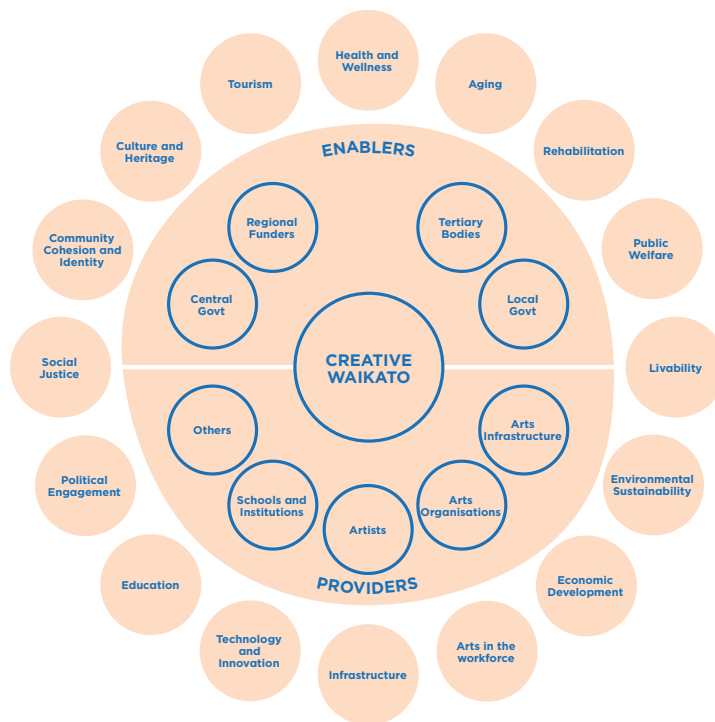
Five threads of the Waikato Arts Navigator

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.

| 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 |

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.⁶

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'⁷

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

⁶ Momentum Waikato—Waikato Vital Signs 2020 'Culture and Arts' report (other ref Creative New Zealand, 'New Zealanders and the Arts 2017)

⁷ Gardiner, R 'The Future of New Zealand is creative', <https://brownbread.co.nz/the-good-stuff/issue-1/rob-sue-gardiner>

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 Creative Waikato 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 to 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 Waipā District Council

In September 2020, Creative Waikato gave a presentation to Council (via Zoom) 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 Waipā 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 Waipā 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 Waipā District Council to develop your own Arts Action Plan.