

## Community Summary Long Term Plan Waitomo 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.

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 the council and with 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.

This can be as simple as writing an email or letter to council about the things that you care about.

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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>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

[Here is a link](#) to the council's resources for the Long Term Plan feedback process. It is important to know that 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 submission link here:

<https://www.waitomo.govt.nz/council/ltp2024-2034/>

### **Consultation Closes on the 17th of May**

The council, in its online submission form, is asking for feedback specifically on these issues:

- Targeted or differential rate on the District Roding Rate,
- Te Kūiti flooding remedies
- **Funding and future of our Rural Halls**
- **Elder persons housing**
- Update the Te Kūiti Stormwater Rating Area
- Simplifying the rates structure
- Impact of retaining 3 Waters

If you want to find out more, you can read more in the consultation document. But you do not have to comment on each of these sections, and can share your thoughts on those parts which are of most interest and relevance to you.

You can definitely share about the value of arts, culture and creativity in these two sections:

### **What do you think about our plans for projects and activities?**

### **Do you have any other feedback on our Draft Long Term Plan 2024-2034? (for example our landfill and sludge disposal)**

**Note: this submission form requires something in each of these sections marked with an asterisk\*.** You could simply write 'no comment' in these fields.

Or, you can submit via email to: [haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz). Just make sure that your email is clearly labelled: Submission to the 2024 Long Term Plan. If you choose this, make sure to include your contact details in this email too- and note that any submission you make can be made public.

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.

Council has adopted a new vision statement and updated community outcomes and priorities for the new LTP.

The vision statement is: **Te Hanga tahi o tatou Takiwa | Shaping Our District together**

Council identifies four key community outcomes:

- A district for all people: Our district is a great place to live because it is accessible, safe, affordable, and inclusive. We promote health, **wellbeing**, and participation.
- A prosperous district: We enable a thriving and sustainable economy to create **greater benefits for everyone**.
- A district that cares for its environment: We ensure the wise use and management of all land and resources **now and for future generations**.
- A district that values culture: **We value the whakapapa of our district, and we promote cultural, creative, and recreational activities where traditions, heritage, and arts are celebrated.**

You could use some of this language in the section of the online form titled: **Do you have any other feedback on our Draft Long Term Plan 2024-2034? (for example our landfill and sludge disposal)** or the section titled: **What do you think about our plans for projects and activities?**

- You might want to let council know that you commend them on the creation of community facilities such as the Gallagher Recreation Centre, and upgrades to the Piopio Memorial Hall.
- You might let council know that you appreciate their support for bringing the community together with events such as the Christmas parade, Matariki, and the Great NZ Muster.
- You might let council know that you really support Māori representation in council decision-making, and encourage them to continue to build close relationships and meaningful partnership with community, iwi, and mana whenua.
- You might share about how you think council could work with community to support the whakapapa of Waitomo district, and promote cultural, creative, and recreational activities where traditions, heritage, and arts are celebrated.
- You might let council know that you support them in funding groups, spaces and events that support the cultural and social wellbeing of your community- including libraries, museums and more.
- You might want to share about some of your favourite local events, spaces, and people add to your pride in the district/or your sense of this place.
- You might let council know that you support preparing for the future, and you see arts, culture and creativity playing a key role in this.
- You could share some ways that you think arts and culture could be used to support community, cultural and social wellbeing.

- You might think that creatives can be of service to help communities be resilient in the face of climate change, and point to some key community events which help you to connect with your community.

Responding to climate change is a major theme of this Long Term Plan, and in the Infrastructure Plan that feeds into this Long Term Plan too.

- You might want to share with council about how creatives and artists can help to educate public about reducing waste, and conserving water, and so improve the wellbeing of our district and build resilience for the future.
- You might share about how arts and culture can contribute to social, cultural and economic wellbeing.
- You might have some ideas of how arts and culture can be used to promote walking and cycling, and activate this improved access to existing attractions and focal points.
- You might share about how arts and culture can be used to support community connection to prepare for and respond to climate change and emergency.

### **Funding and future of our Rural Halls**

Council are considering the future of the eight rural halls that they currently own and operate. (You can read more about this on p. 17 of the consultation document)

- You might want to encourage council to consult thoroughly with local community around the value of the eight halls that they currently fund, including a needs assessment, and identifying current barriers to use.
- You might share about what it means to you to have these community spaces available to you and your whaanau
- You might encourage them to consider the possibility of supporting promotion of these spaces
- You might encourage them to invest in supporting data collection around the usage of these spaces
- You might share about how community spaces are key to support social cohesion and connection in times of need such as weather events and disasters.

### **Elder persons housing**

- You might let council know if you support them in maintaining ownership and operation of elder housing, or what you would like them to take into account if this service is moved to be owned and operated by a Community Housing Provider, or owned by council and leased to a Community Housing Provider. (You can read more about this on p. 21 of the consultation document)

- You might share that you think it is important to care for the wellbeing of our elders. Because employment in the arts and creative sectors is mostly cyclical and/or inconsistent, it is difficult for people working in those sectors to maintain a regular wage, and if they do, it is lower than average. This affects the ability of those who work in the creative sector to save money for retirement.

Creative Waikato are submitting to the long term plan too, and advocating for support for arts, culture and creativity in the Waitomo district. If you want to read some of what we will be sharing, you can check out these documents:

<https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/standing-up-for-the-arts>