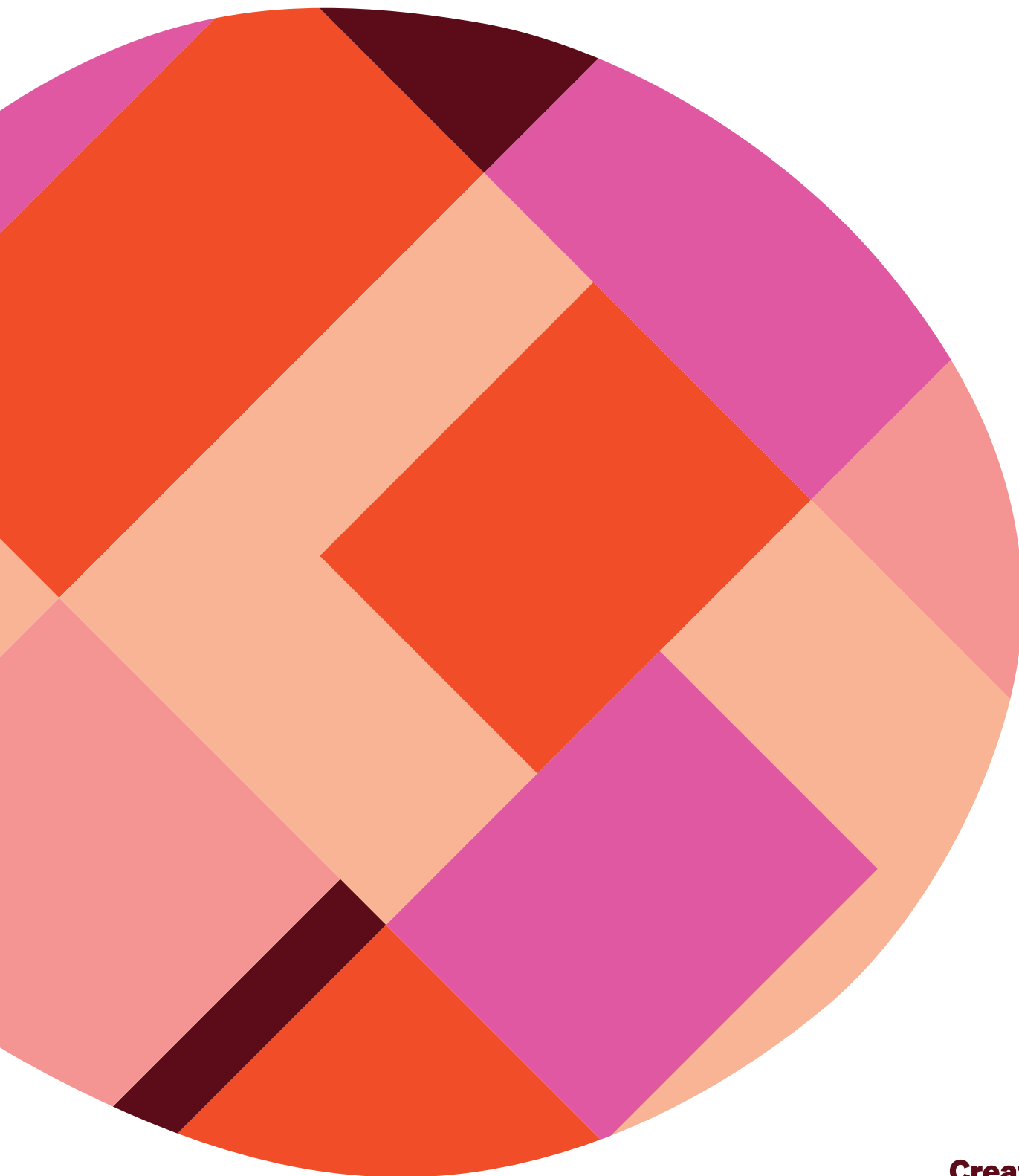


A Strategic Framework

for Arts, Culture and Creativity
in the Waikato Region



**Creative
Waikato
Toi Waikato**

Arts, culture and creativity
are integral to who we are
as a dynamic, inclusive,
and transformative region.

When arts and creativity
are strong and visible,
communities are strong
and visible.

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Introduction

Creative expression simply makes life better. It helps to build resilient and diverse communities and improve our quality of life. Great art and culture inspires learning, boosts our economy, enhances wellbeing, builds our region's reputation, and more.

The arts can also be used as ideal problem-solving tools to help us with major and ongoing challenges.

It is important that there is a long-term framework to support how creative people work. Having access to a thriving arts and cultural sector makes for an exciting and engaging city/town/region. There is great strategic impact from setting things in motion to make this sector sustainable and active, as it has a substantial contribution to the broader Waikato Region – not only through the lens of cultural wellbeing, but also social, environmental and economic wellbeing.

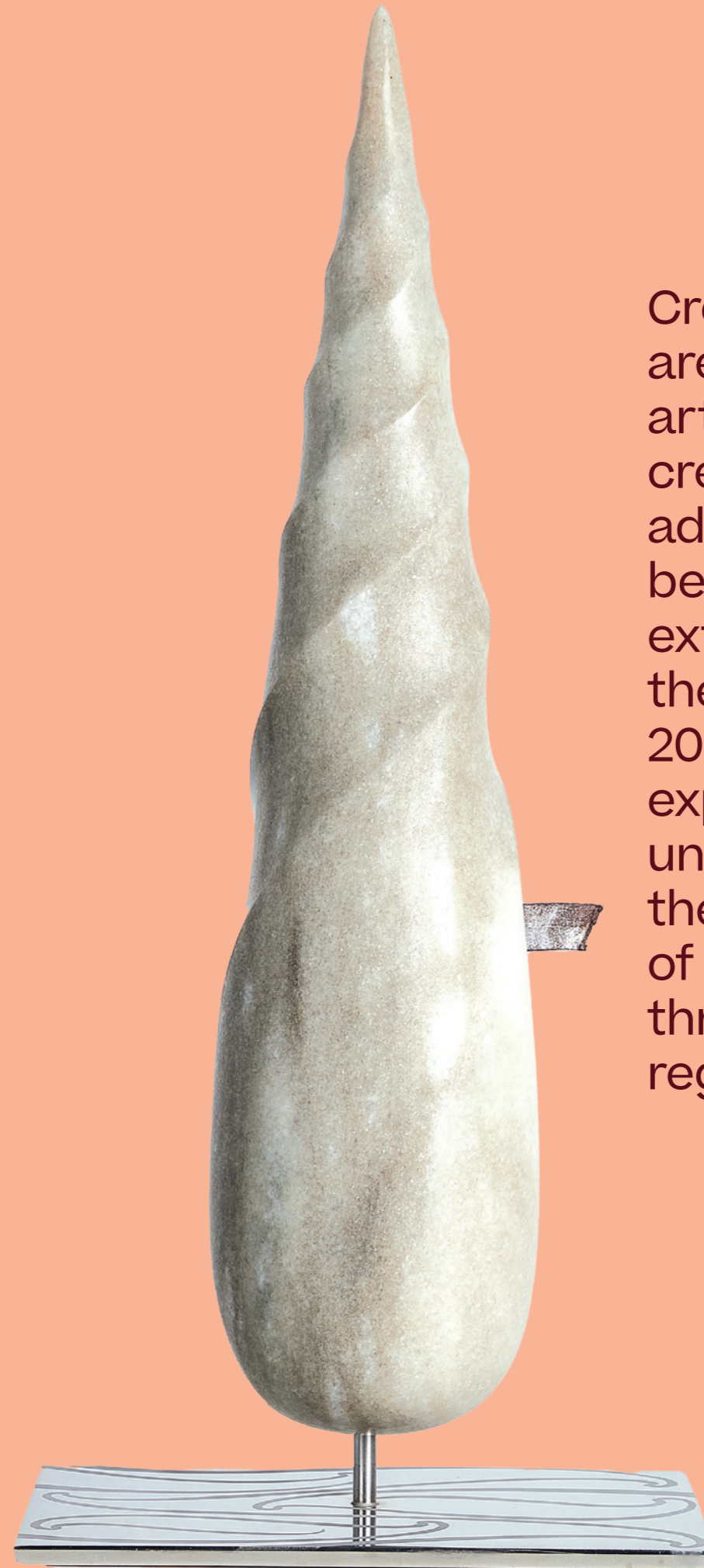
Blueprint for the Future

If all of our local authorities, in partnership with regional enablers, shared a single, simple blueprint for arts aspirations and planning, the impact for our communities would be significantly greater.



If all of our local arts organisations shared a common strategy and utilised shared language, the value of arts, culture and creativity would be better understood, and its impact could be maximised.

We all want the same things for our communities – wellbeing, prosperity, shared experiences and regional excellence. So let's align our actions to get there.



Creative Waikato are your local arts, culture and creativity strategic advisors. We have been working extensively across the Waikato since 2012 and have experience and understanding of the diverse array of artforms found throughout our region.

We are here to support your efforts.
We want to partner with you to realise
exciting and successful outcomes.

The core of so much of the
work of many funders and enablers,
as well as in both local and central
government, is based around
delivering outcomes for individual
and collective wellbeing. Woven
throughout these legislated
outcomes is the understanding of
cultural wellbeing as an important
component – but one that can be
misunderstood.

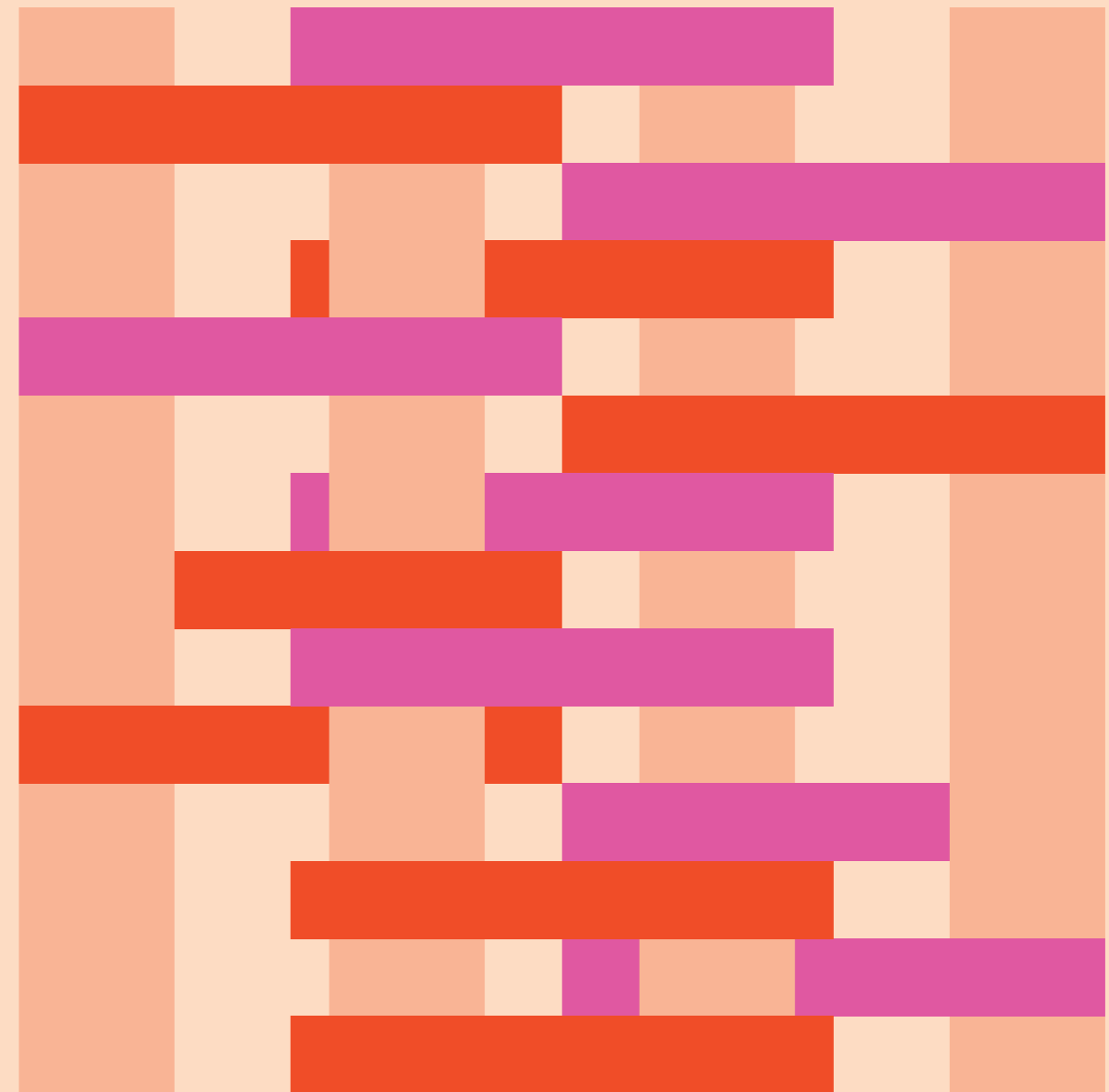


The Waikato Arts Navigator
provides a useful strategic framework
to help you prioritise, understand,
and invest in the cultural wellbeing
of your community.

Creativity and Wellbeing

Creativity is essential to a thriving humanity. It is how we understand who we are and how we connect to one another. It is interwoven through all facets of our wellbeing.

This intricately woven cloth is our collective experience. And in it, we can see the horizontal threads as arts, culture and creativity, and the vertical threads as everything else. When both work together, arts and culture touching each strand of all other aspects of society, the interlocking strands become beautiful, strong and inspiring.



This fabric represents our capacity to live healthy and fulfilling lives by allowing us to identify who we are, how we engage with each other, and how we think and feel. This is our wellbeing.

Wellbeing looks different within many different cultures, and needs to be addressed as such. It is a living and holistic

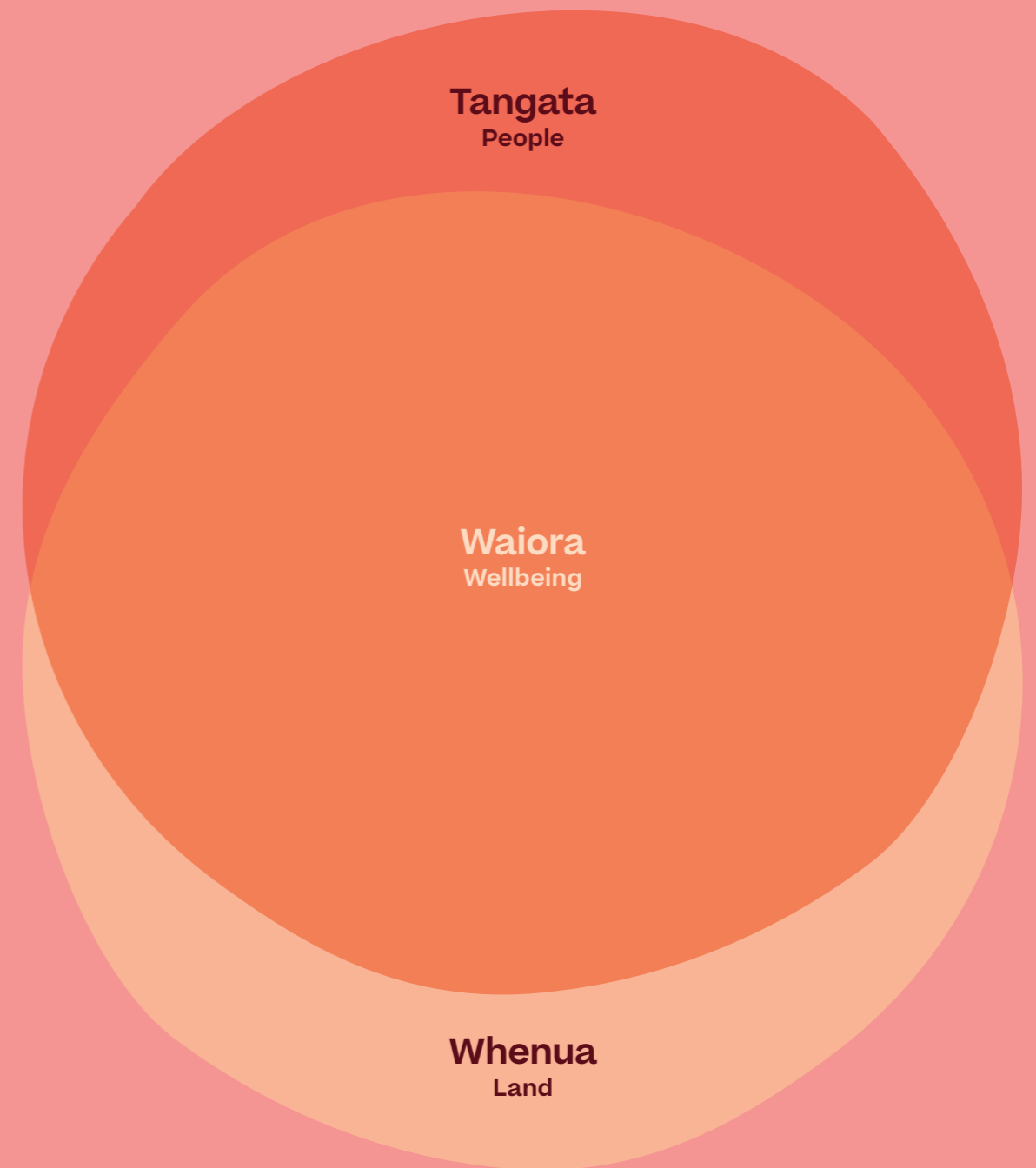
thing that is intrinsically connected with who we are. This is connected to the many diverse communities in this region, but also as we are based in Aotearoa, at the core of this work we must acknowledge the wellbeing of tangata whenua. Understanding wellbeing from a Te Ao Māori perspective is integral to wellbeing in Aotearoa.

Te Ao Māori Lens

It is vital that we embrace a Te Ao Māori lens in the way we operate and our collective vision for a shared future.

We must acknowledge the wellbeing of tangata whenua and understand things from a te ao Māori perspective as being central to our understanding of wellbeing in Aotearoa.

A Te Ao Māori (Māori world-view) lens provides a unique opportunity for us to think and act in a distinctive way. A way that sees the interwoven experience of things. A way that sees creativity as a core part of life and existence. A holistic wellbeing.



Māori values are informed through an indivisible relationship alongside and within the natural world. There are patterns, stories and connections between all living things, and these elements serve to provide clarity and understanding. There is a plurality of existence where all things are

connected. The concepts are inclusive and holistic. They let us share our experience, in order to value our human experience and to engage with one another in an empowering way. To give mana to each other and to acknowledge our individual and collective mauri.

Te Tiriti and Partnership

When aligning the kaupapa throughout regional strategic activation of arts, culture and creativity, 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/Whaingā-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 these principles to ensure that activity supports cultural change. Although cultural change can be difficult to achieve, it is an important part of a thriving arts ecosystem. It 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.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

There is an alignment between the four focus areas and the Te Whare Tapa Whā model.¹ This is developed by Sir Mason Durie, and quoted 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.

What is the Waikato Arts

Navigator?

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 strategic framework, we can all track in the same direction and cross-regional efforts will support, complement and strengthen one another.

Arts and creativity are integral to who we are as a dynamic, inclusive, and transformative region. When arts and creativity are strong and visible, communities are strong and visible.

The Vision

The Waikato thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity



Five Threads of the Waikato Arts Navigator

The ultimate objective of the 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.

These threads represent key areas of focus that connect across our broader societal ecosystem.

CREATIVE WELLBEING	CREATIVE PROSPERITY	CREATIVE EXPERIENCES	CREATIVE EDUCATION	CREATIVE INNOVATION
Hauora and wellbeing	Creative economies	People experience local, national, international arts	Participatory art projects	Business partnerships
Positive collective and individual identities	Attract and retain residents	Community and cultural expression	Upskilling creative professionals	Informing local government decision making
Create, grow and strengthen communities	Tourism opportunities	Recreation and interaction	Community art classes and projects	Local problem solving
Inspired responses to challenges	Positive national perceptions	Community engagement and connection	Youth development	Distinct local expression
Strengthened connection to place	Increased investment from funders	Local pride	Audience development	Creative export opportunities

CREATIVE WELLBEING

Creative Wellbeing is a lever for holistic wellbeing, which embraces Māori understandings of Hauora, as expressed in the Te Whare Tapa Whā model.²

This is an inclusive understanding that includes all components of wellbeing: taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing); taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing); taha tinana (physical wellbeing); and taha whānau (family and social wellbeing). Each of these aspects is rooted in our connection with the whenua (land).³

Creativity can open our minds, relax us, lift our wairua (spirit) and give us hope.⁴ Arts, culture and creativity provide connection to ourselves, our communities and our sense of place. They help define who we are and who we want to be.

The arts make a huge contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. They are a source of national pride, a chance to learn about different cultures and an opportunity to provide life-enhancing experiences. Creative expression and experiences have a big impact on our mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

An arts response for crisis recovery. This could be an ideal way to restore and protect the wellbeing of your local people.

Ensure that any arts festivals and programmes are actively inclusive of Māori—both for artists and audience.

Support your local arts organisations who are working for the health of local people. These could include youth programmes and other community development programmes.

Encourage diverse communities to share their cultural practices.

Create or enable opportunities for accessible participatory creative activity—this can include workshops, community days, and spaces to learn and play through creativity.

Support Creative Play activation through environmental design—use artistic installations to encourage local storytelling and creative/active play.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Remember that the people who are visible and vocal are not the only ones with wellbeing needs. Often those who aren't engaged and visible are of the highest need.

Try to minimise red tape or complications that might stand in the way of public programmes.

Understand that wellbeing is individual. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. People in our communities have a diverse array of needs and have different artistic, cultural and creative activities that might result in positive outcomes. Don't assume that one initiative will serve the wellbeing for all.

SOCIAL IMPACT OUTCOMES

Connection to Self: Opportunity for emotional development, Opportunity for self-expression.

Connection to Community: Community connection and belonging, Communication skills, Relationship skills, Access to a community, Opportunity for social development.

Physical Wellness: Opportunity for physical development.

Mental Wellness: Enjoyment.⁵

Social Wellbeing: (physical &/or mental) improved, Sense of safety and security increased, Social connectedness enhanced, Social differences bridged, Feeling valued experienced.⁶

CREATIVE PROSPERITY

The arts, culture and creative ecosystem has benefits that make positive contributions to the prosperity of the region. When creativity is woven into workplaces, employees are happier and more productive.

According to government figures from 2020, the creative sector contributes a massive \$11 billion a year to NZ's GDP and employs 90,000 people nationwide.⁷ Many people in the Waikato rely on the arts for some or all of their income. Many creatives in the region have portfolio careers made up of a range of different gigs and may work across a number of different sectors and areas of focus. The potential to grow the economic activity of this sector in the Waikato is huge.

As well as generating income for people working in the arts, the creative sector creates tourism opportunities, supports innovation and collaboration, and can promote towns and the region as creative and innovative places.

Arts, culture and creativity can help enhance liveability, attract new residents, retain youth, and create positive national perceptions.

'Placemaking' is a powerful government tool for engaging communities in the planning, design and management of their shared public goods. Given that arts and culture increase connection to community and place, the creative sector and their interests should be represented in placemaking discussions.⁸

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Target funding and development support to start-up creative businesses.

Invest in local arts events and organisations that will encourage tourism and local spending.

Look for opportunities to involve artists in innovative collaborations.

Engage artists and creatives in design of civic spaces and new developments, to contribute to a unique sense of place.

Ensure that when you work with artists and creatives, you recognise the value of their work and invest accordingly.

Support public festivals and creative activations of public spaces.

Support Creative Career programmes and providers.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Make sure artists are properly remunerated. Their sustainability and the success of your projects depends on you valuing what they do.

Make sure you consider all the benefits and values of investment into the creative ecosystem. The true value might not be understood solely through economic measures. Don't limit the understanding of value.

SOCIAL IMPACT OUTCOMES

Economic Wellbeing: Professional practice capability increased, Employment-enhancing skill development facilitated, Individual economic wellbeing increased, Local economy supported.⁹

Income and employment: Employment skills, Access to income.¹⁰

Cultural Wellbeing: Creativity stimulated, Knowledge, ideas and insight gained.¹¹

2 Sir Mason Durie, 'Te Whare Tapa Whā', Mental Health Foundation <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>.

3 Sir Mason Durie, 'Te Whare Tapa Whā'.

4 Moynahan, M (Chairman of the Arts Council of NZ), 'Using the arts and creativity to imagine wellbeing' <https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/blog/using-the-arts-and-creativity-to-reimagine-wellbeing>.

5 Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework', Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (2022) https://creativewaikato.co.nz/site/uploads/HS_Creative-Waikato_Wellbeing-and-Arts-Culture-and-Creativity-in-the-Waikato_FINAL.pdf. Nb. These outcomes were developed between Creative Waikato and Huber Social, with community consultation. They align with other subjective wellbeing frameworks in use, and connect to the New Zealand Treasury Living Standards Framework.

6 Dunphy, K & Smithies, J., 'Outcome schema for cultural engagement' (Melbourne, Cultural Development Network, 2018) <https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes/about-measurable-outcomes/>

7 Manatū Taonga: Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 'Covid-19 Cultural Recovery Programme Impacts Report', p. 18, https://mch.govt.nz/sites/default/files/CRP_Report_2021-22-2023-05-15.pdf.

8 Huber Social, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p. 28. Examples of how arts and culture have been incorporated into placemaking include the Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa and Regional Arts Network Aotearoa's submissions to the 'Review into the Future of Local Government' <https://rana.org.nz/future-of-local-government/>.

9 Dunphy, K & Smithies, J., 'Outcome schema for cultural engagement' (Melbourne, Cultural Development Network, 2018) <https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes/about-measurable-outcomes/>.

10 Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework'.

11 Dunphy, K & Smithies, J., 'Outcome schema for cultural engagement'.

CREATIVE EXPERIENCES

Creative experiences add to our quality of life. This is a measurable and valuable contribution to society and community.

Whether it's watching something at home, listening to the radio in the car, or getting out to a gallery, theatre, or music venue, experiencing and participating in the arts supports our understanding of ourselves and of others.

The arts allow us to intelligently reflect on our communities and the wider world. They provide moments of joy and recreation. Shared creative experiences can support social cohesion. Local arts and culture can build local pride in our people and places.

It is vital that modern societies ensure that all people can have access to arts, culture and creativity in their daily lives. This includes having creative spaces available in local communities, as well as encouraging accessibility approaches that address all barriers to engagement.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Ensure that local venues are accessible.

Support the promotion of local arts events to increase participation.

Distribute funding so that people have the opportunity to experience the arts without having to travel out of your area.

Invest in creative spaces in local communities—including accessible spaces to make, rehearse, develop and share.

Enable regular accessible activities that celebrate the stories and talents of local creatives and communities.

Increase investment into community art funding like CCS.

Embed creativity into the design of playable spaces in all communities—spaces that link to local stories to create unique environments for exploration and activation.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Work to ensure that there are a wide range of arts experiences available for the different cultures, ages and walks of life in your communities.

Strike a balance between supporting local creatives, and bringing in fresh new content and skills.

Ensure that local work becomes a pathway to new opportunities—seek out a wide range of fresh voices to work with, and actively share opportunities, explore new artforms, and hold space for new perspectives.

SOCIAL IMPACT OUTCOMES

Connection to community: Community connection and belonging, Communication skills, Relationship skills, Access to a community, Opportunity for social development.¹²

Connection to self: Self-acceptance, Purpose, Personal Development Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Vulnerability, Opportunity for emotional development, Opportunity for self-expression, Opportunity for self-respect.¹³

Cultural Wellbeing: 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 Wellbeing: Creating spaces and places that people value and want to care for. Addressing and growing understandings of complex environmental issues. Building communities' connection to the whenua. Creating a sense of place, belonging and civic pride.

Social Wellbeing: 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.¹⁴

CREATIVE EDUCATION

For any modern society, with people facing the requirement to deal with unknown future problems, the ability to think and act creatively is a vital skill set. Creative Education is a necessary area of focus. The Waikato is entering a new space. A space where fostering creativity is fundamentally necessary. Where creative working can and must be a seamlessly integrated way of learning and being. Creative activity is a space of learning. It regularly builds skills, explores novel ideas, and develops opportunities to collaborate, innovate and thrive.

Enabling people to grow their own artistic and cultural literacy through engagement with creative education, means that we can engage in a process of meaning-making that is reflective of this time and place. Finding meaning through creative activity enables us to find deeper connections to ourselves and the people around us.

Enabling audiences to engage or be co-creators of creative experiences, provides a sense of pride in who they are and their place in the world, as well as their connection with others.

As well as engagement with the arts, upskilling creative professionals and providing community art classes and projects is important. Artists and creatives provide unique ways of looking at the world and help to develop design-thinking, creativity and critical thinking—all skills important for our future workforce.¹⁵

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Value new ways of thinking and problem solving.

Encourage and support arts vocations as a feasible career pathway.

Provide access for all communities to connect with art.

Support mentoring and development programmes.

Invest in scholarships and programmes to support creative learning.

Embed creative practice in schools at all levels as a key driver for learning.

Utilise creative activity as a component of teaching in a cross-disciplinary approach.

Encourage creative thinking and arts-based approaches in different environments to explore new outcomes.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Make sure to recognise how the arts can facilitate critical thinking and problem solving.

Ensure creativity is viewed as an essential part of education, rather than as a distraction or filler activity.

SOCIAL IMPACT OUTCOMES

Connection to self: Personal Development Skills, Purpose, Opportunity for emotional development.¹⁶

Resilience: Self-belief, Determination, Coping, Adaptability, Problem Solving, Opportunity for cognitive development.¹⁷

Cultural Wellbeing: 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.¹⁸

Social Wellbeing: 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.¹⁹

¹² Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework'.

¹³ Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework'.

¹⁴ Creative New Zealand, Arts and Culture: part of your community's future: Ngā Taonga Toi: ngā taonga pāpori āke āke (2021) <https://creativenz.govt.nz/About-Creative-NZ/Corporate-documents/Arts-and-culture-part-of-your-communitys-future-Nga-Taonga-Toi-nga-taonga-papori-ake-ake>.

¹⁵ Australian Association for Research in Education, 'Arts-based teaching of literacies' EduResearch Matters (2018) <https://www.aare.edu.au/blog/?tag=arts-based-teaching-of-literacy>.

¹⁶ Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework'.

¹⁷ Huber Social, 'Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework'.

¹⁸ Creative New Zealand, Arts and Culture.

¹⁹ Creative New Zealand, Arts and Culture.

CREATIVE INNOVATION

The Waikato Region is a place for innovation and novel ideas. Creativity is woven throughout the way humans have always learned and experimented, so creativity can be understood as the central source for innovation. There are exciting possibilities to be explored through a greater linking between arts, culture and creativity and innovative outcomes.

Artists and creatives in the Waikato regularly make work that is on the leading edge for creative expression. There is rich potential to see their work as an inspirational source for other cross-sector development. This presents an engaging opportunity for the future of our region that is aware of a need for sustainability and wellbeing outcomes.

We need creativity as the source of inspiration and original thought and knowledge. The catalyst for new possibilities. Then, innovation is the ability to take the idea and create practical and viable solutions. As a region, if we regularly combine creativity with innovation, we can utilise cross-sector knowledge and concepts to explore powerful ways to disrupt and adapt. To embrace novel ideas in order to address future challenges and unknown potential.

This combination of perspectives, embodied understanding, experience and knowledge will be an increasingly important toolkit to navigate our ever-changing world. A diversity of stories and ideas woven together in this way serves to collectively create world-changing results and impactful outcomes for all.

Creative innovation considers ideas and processes and turns these into action. There are endless opportunities to use this to inform local government decision making, assess potential export options, foster business partnerships and encourage unique ways of local expression.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Provide environments in which opinions, new ideas and thoughts are valued and encouraged.

Embrace diverse experiences, different perspectives on difficult questions and adopt a willingness to embrace creativity to find new and better solutions.

Adequately fund local arts to help create innovative opportunities.

Involve artists in decision-making processes across different areas of work.

Support cross-department and cross-sector networking and collaboration.

Encourage and enable upstream changes that impact future systems.

Explore strength-based activities that engage cross-sector thinking to address key issues: mental health, social cohesion, civic safety, education, etc.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Make sure to recognise the skills and insight artists can provide across a variety of different areas.

Make sure you integrate creative critical problem solving solutions at the start of a project, when it has more impact. This means engaging with artists and creatives early in the development process. Do not leave input from artists as an after-thought.

Creative elements are essential parts of projects/activations and their removal limits innovation. Do not value-engineer to remove creative components from projects.

SOCIAL IMPACT OUTCOMES

Resilience: Self-belief, Determination, Coping, Adaptability, Problem Solving, Opportunity for cognitive development.²⁰

Income and employment: Employment skills, Access to income.²¹

Economic: Professional practice capability increased, Employment-enhancing skill development facilitated, Individual economic wellbeing increased, Local economy supported.²²

Cultural Wellbeing: Creativity stimulated, Aesthetic enrichment experienced, Knowledge, ideas and insight gained, Diversity of cultural expression appreciated, Sense of belonging to a shared cultural heritage deepened.²³

‘Te ohonga ake o tooku moemoeaa, te puaa-waitanga o te whakaaaro’

‘The awakening of my dreams, is the blossoming of my thoughts’

Naa Te Puea Herangi

²⁰ Huber Social, ‘Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework’, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (2022).

²¹ Huber Social, ‘Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework’, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (2022).

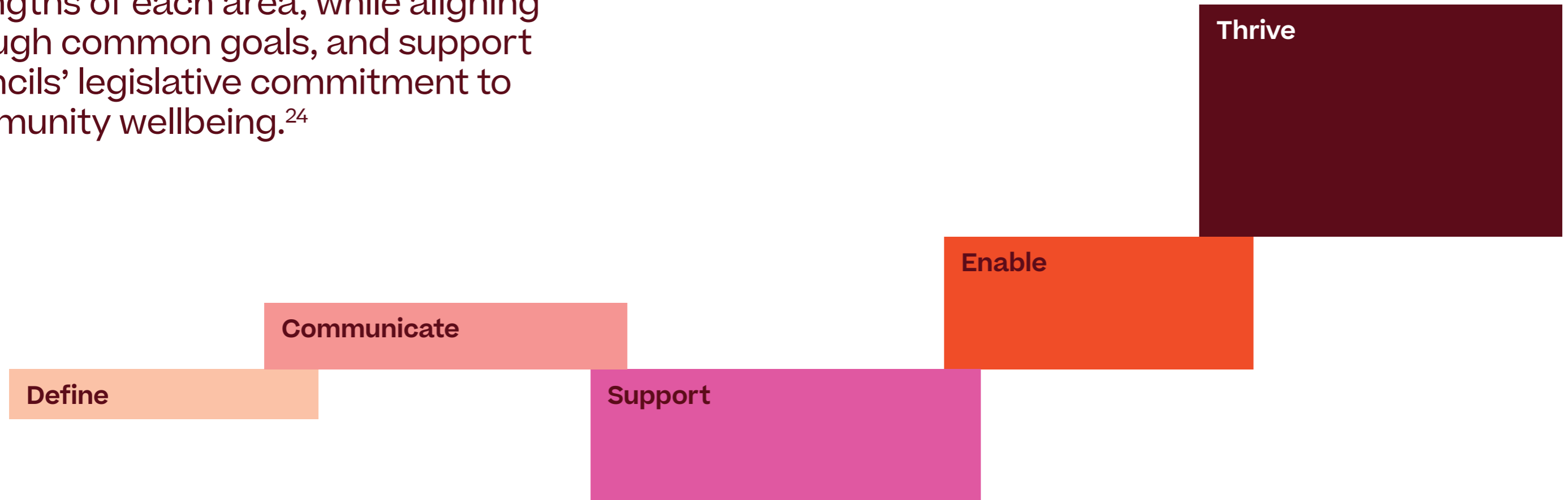
²² Dunphy, K & Smithies, J., ‘Outcome schema for cultural engagement’ (Melbourne, Cultural Development Network, 2018) <https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes/about-measurable-outcomes/>.

²³ Dunphy, K & Smithies, J., ‘Outcome schema for cultural engagement’ (Melbourne, Cultural Development Network, 2018) <https://culturaldevelopment.net.au/outcomes/about-measurable-outcomes/>.

How does the Waikato Arts Navigator

work?

Councils can utilise the WAN to develop simple and practical plans that support arts and culture in their community. The plans can be tailored to the unique strengths of each area, while aligning through common goals, and support Councils' legislative commitment to community wellbeing.²⁴



Creative communities can use the WAN to inform future planning, and support storytelling and advocacy around the value and impact of arts, culture and creativity. The WAN can serve to support the use of shared language, and so support creatives to articulate the value of arts, culture and creativity.

By aligning local actions within these key threads, the result for the Waikato will be regional synergy which will magnify collective efforts. Additionally, when we grow a common understanding of the benefits of culture and arts, we will be in a better position to support regional progress.

COUNCILS AND COMMUNITIES WILL BE ABLE TO

Clearly see their communities within the plan

Agree with the priorities and understand how they can benefit their communities

Identify elements within the plan that they can support or action, thus contributing to the realisation of the vision

Recognise the importance of relationship between stakeholders and other communities in order for the vision to be realised

Creative Waikato's goal is to support and enable our arts communities to thrive. We are here to provide a creative lens to guide and enable decision-making that leads to the best possible outcomes, not only for the arts sector, but for all communities.

The strategic framework serves as an overarching outline for

collective activity. From there, each entity (council, arts organisation, enabler) can develop their own action plan that addresses the threads.

If we all work towards the same outcomes, no one entity needs to deliver all the outcomes. We can build upon our strengths and work collectively to address gaps where needed for positive outcomes.

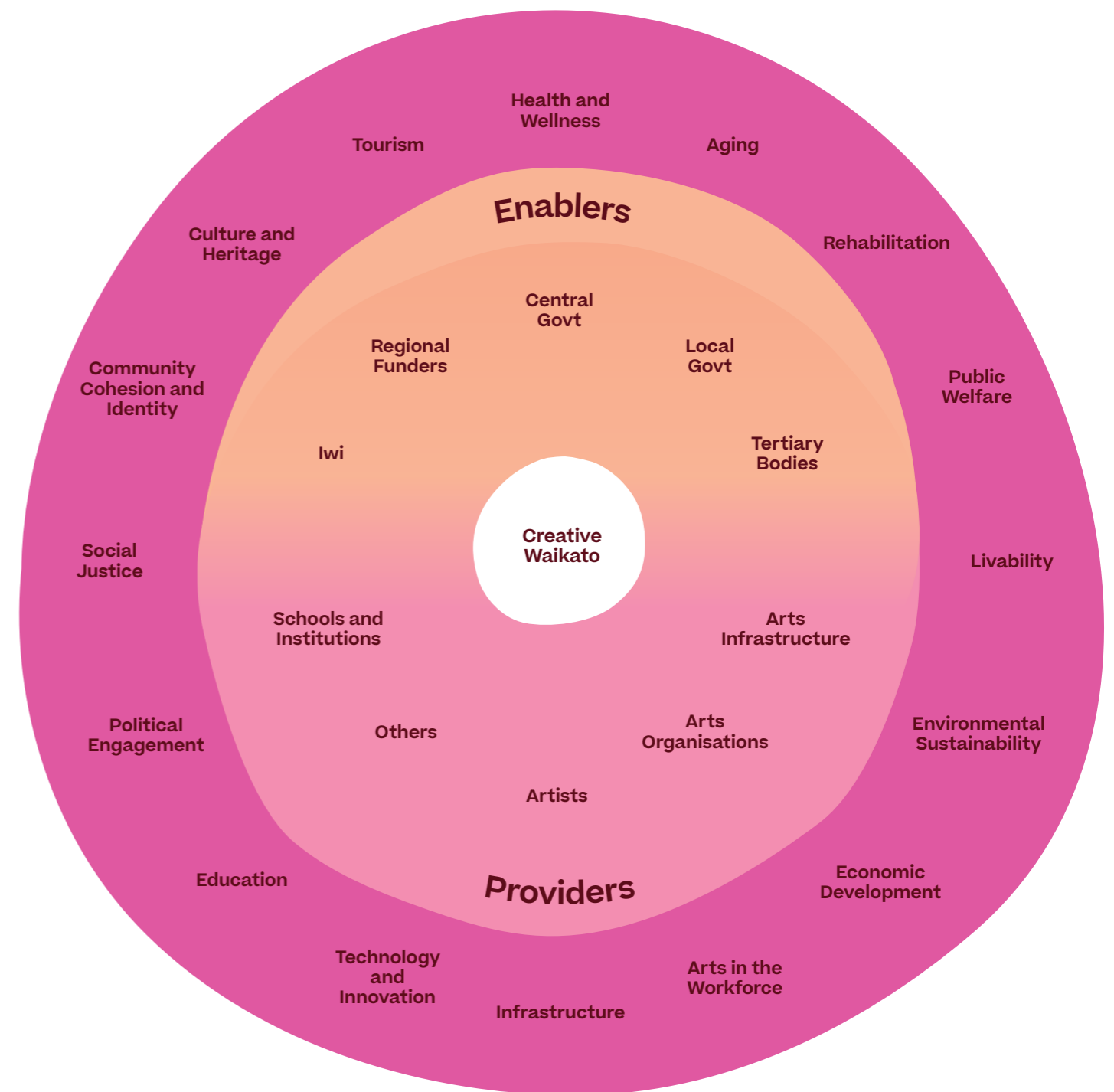
24 Kō Tatou Local Government New Zealand 'Reinstated well-beings endorse councils' community focus' (2019) <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/news-and-media/2019-media-releases/reinstated-well-beings-endorse-councils-community-focus/>.

Arts Ecosystem

The arts can be, and should be, embedded in all facets of our community. They feed into a broader understanding of the ecosystem of 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 artists in society can be better recognised and utilised. 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 as part of our community ecosystem



Health and Wellness
Wellbeing for individuals
Better care for each other
Increased quality of life

Aging
Physical and mental stimulation
Entertainment
Social interaction

Rehabilitation
Purpose
Self-care
Social interaction
Capability development

Public Welfare
Community pride
Mutual trust
Safer and healthier communities

Livability
Arts create vibrant cities
Environmental impact
Quality of life

Environmental Sustainability
Education and innovation
Advocating and driving awareness
Communication

Economic Development
Economic wellbeing
Support services and impact
Sustainable funding
Workforce development

Arts in the Workforce
Well-rounded workers who drive innovation
Creative thinkers
Effective communicators

Infrastructure
Advocacy, communication, design, breaking down barriers
Agriculture, food, transport, housing, planning and community development

Technology and Innovation
Symbiotic relationship for creation and development
Technology can be used to create and disseminate art

Education
Arts are part of a well-rounded education
Curiosity and exploration
Important at all levels of education

Political Engagement
Can encourage political engagement, voting, and activation

Social Justice
Civic dialogue to discuss issues and policies
Arts facilitate dialogue

Community Cohesion and Identity
Binds people together through shared experience
Creates common vision for the future
Arts bring people together

Culture and Heritage
Art activity
Diversity/access/identity
History and tradition

Tourism
Economic impact
Empathy between communities
Arts for travel

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.²⁵

We already know that the arts help improve New Zealand society, make us feel more confident and contribute positively to our economy.²⁶

Research shows that New Zealanders' attitudes towards the arts are more positive than ever.

27 Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 10.
28 Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 10.
29 Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 12.

40%

of New Zealanders surveyed say that the arts are important to their wellbeing.²⁷

26%

shared that the arts have become more important to their personal wellbeing since COVID-19 arrived in Aotearoa.²⁸

67%

of New Zealanders agree it's important that where they live is recognised as a place that supports excellence in the arts, and 66% believe that major arts facilities are important to create a vibrant place to live.²⁹

Research shows that New Zealanders' attitudes towards the arts are more positive than ever.

³⁰ Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 13.
³¹ Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 13.
³² Creative New Zealand, New Zealanders and the Arts, 2020, p. 14.

66%

agree that Arts and culture have a vital role to play in the future of where they live.³⁰

54%

agree that their community would be poorer without the arts.³¹

2/3

of New Zealanders share that they learn about different cultures through the arts.³²

As a region, we value the arts³³



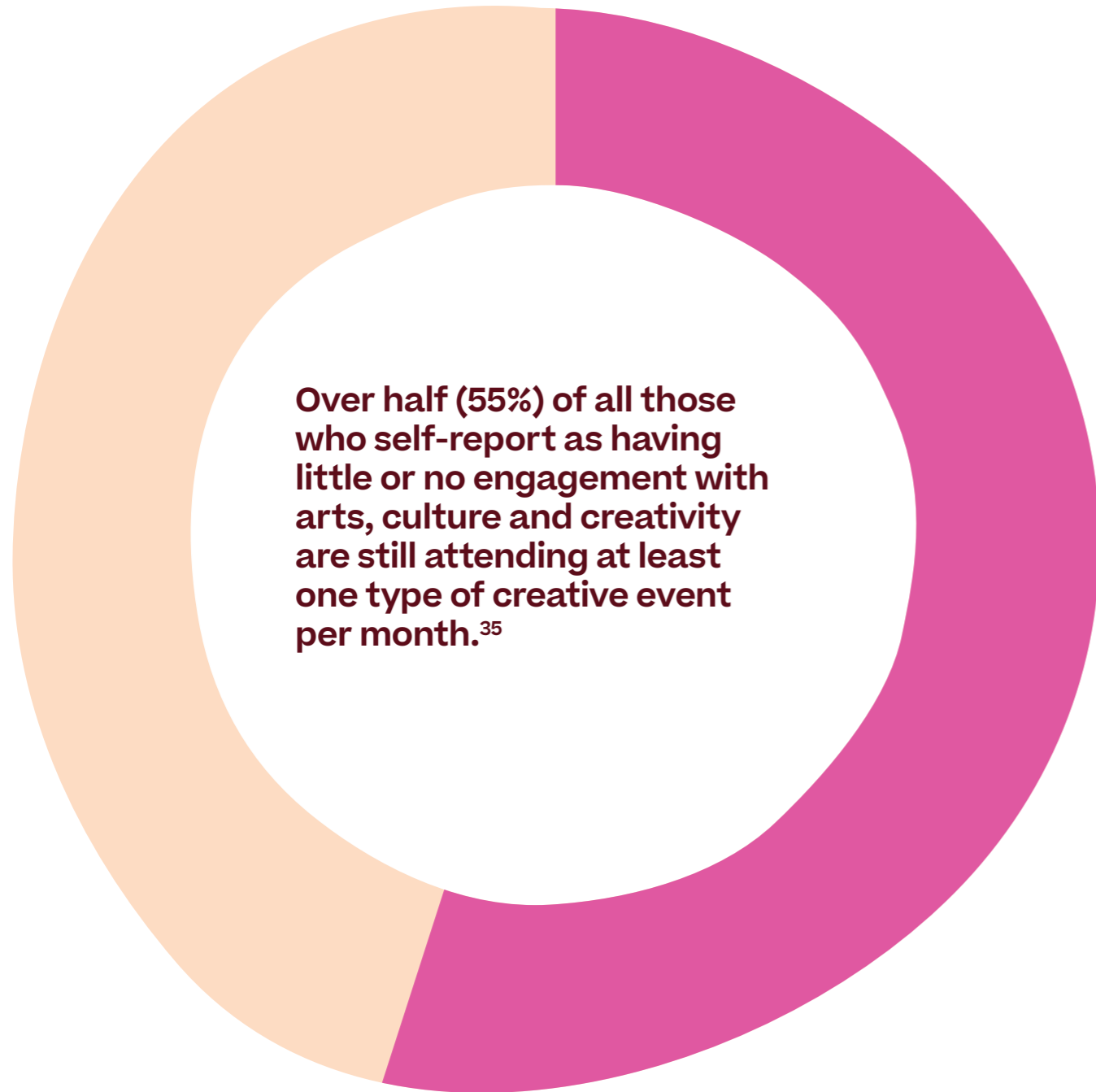
The Waikato community values arts, culture and creativity. Regardless of how passionate or involved someone is with arts, culture and creativity, all Waikato residents recognise the value that these things contribute to their everyday life, as well as that of their whānau and children.³⁴

³³ Huber Social, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022); Momentum Waikato, 'Culture and Arts' Waikato Vital Signs Report 2020 <https://momentumwaikato.nz/vital-signs>.

³⁴ Huber Social, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p. 4. <https://creativewaikato.co.nz/advocacy/researchandreports>.

As a region, we value the arts

All residents, even those who consider themselves to have little or no engagement, are interacting with arts, culture and creativity on a regular and frequent basis.



As a region, we value the arts



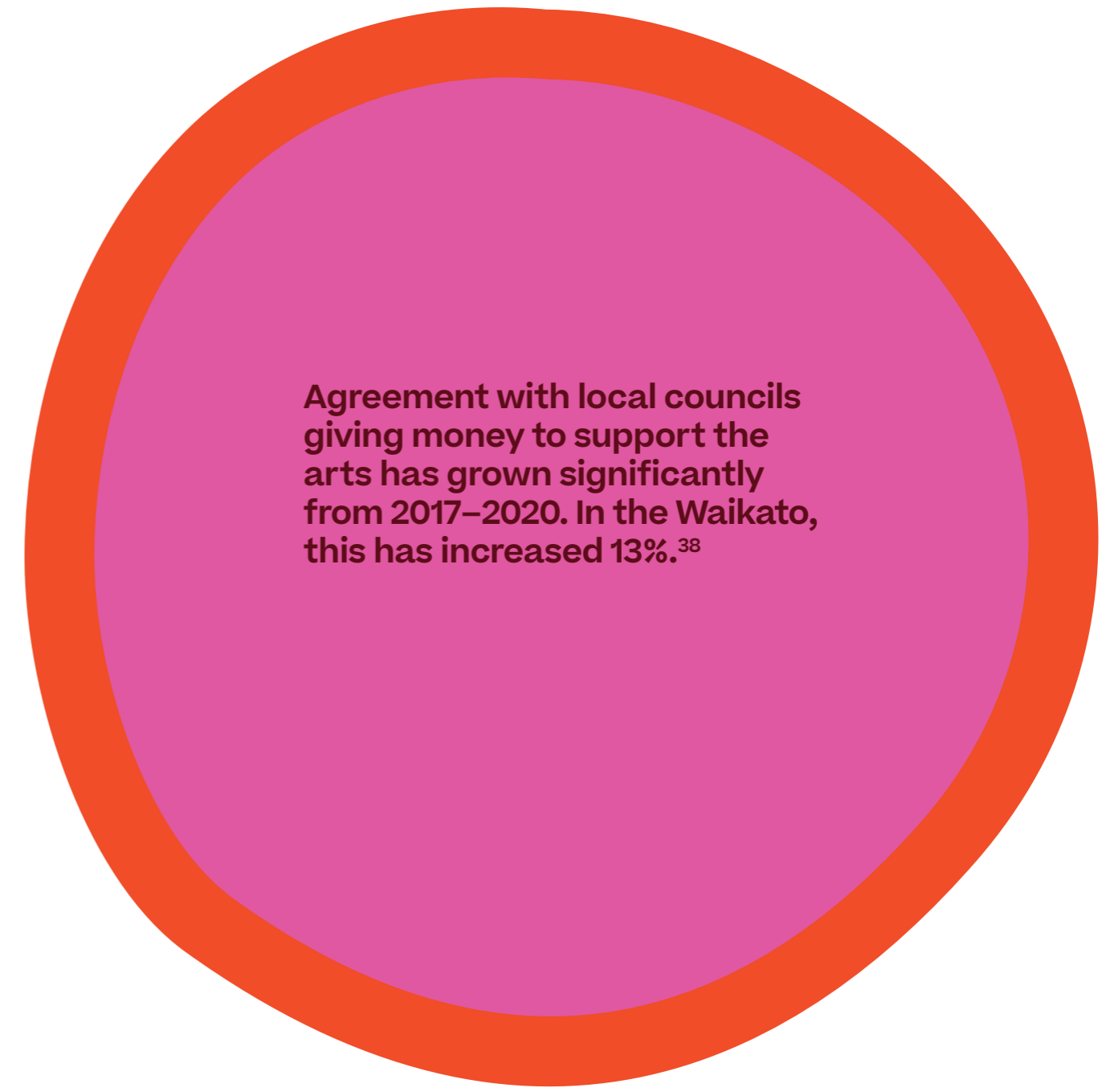
As a region, we value the arts

Being highly engaged with arts, culture and creativity means that residents are more likely to have stronger connections to community and to land and to place.³⁷



³⁷ Huber Social, Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (Sydney: Huber Social, 2022), p. 28.

As a region, we value the arts



³⁸ Creative New Zealand, *New Zealanders and the Arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi* (2020), p. 47.

As a region, we value the arts



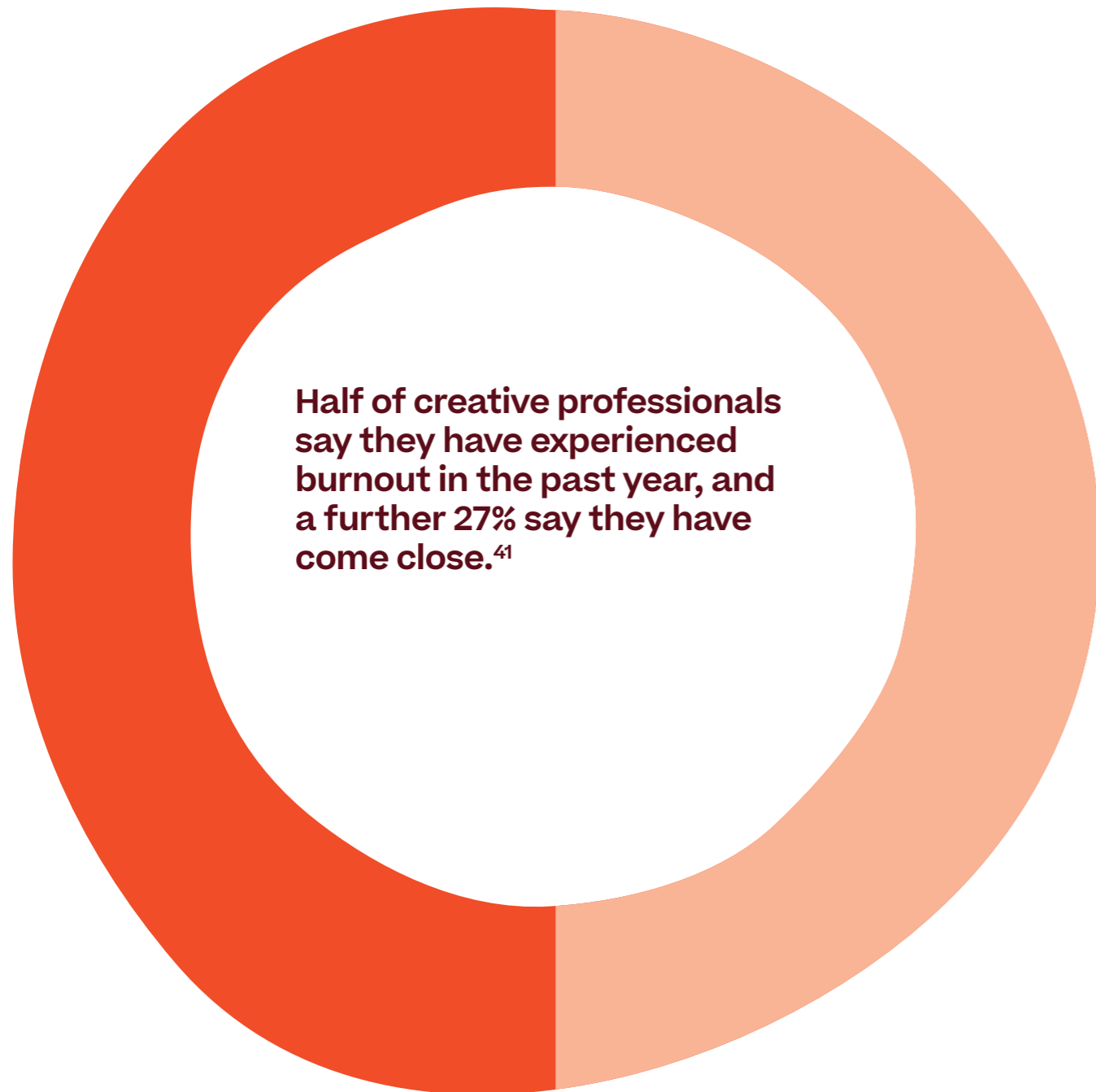
³⁹ Creative New Zealand, *New Zealanders and the Arts* (2020), p. 47.

Yet, while the social impact of arts, culture and creativity is more deeply understood in Aotearoa and the Waikato, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, growing inequity and the cost of living crisis continue to impact the wellbeing of those employed and volunteering in the arts, culture and creativity sector.

National data shows that creative professionals need additional support to thrive as they navigate systemic challenges.⁴⁰

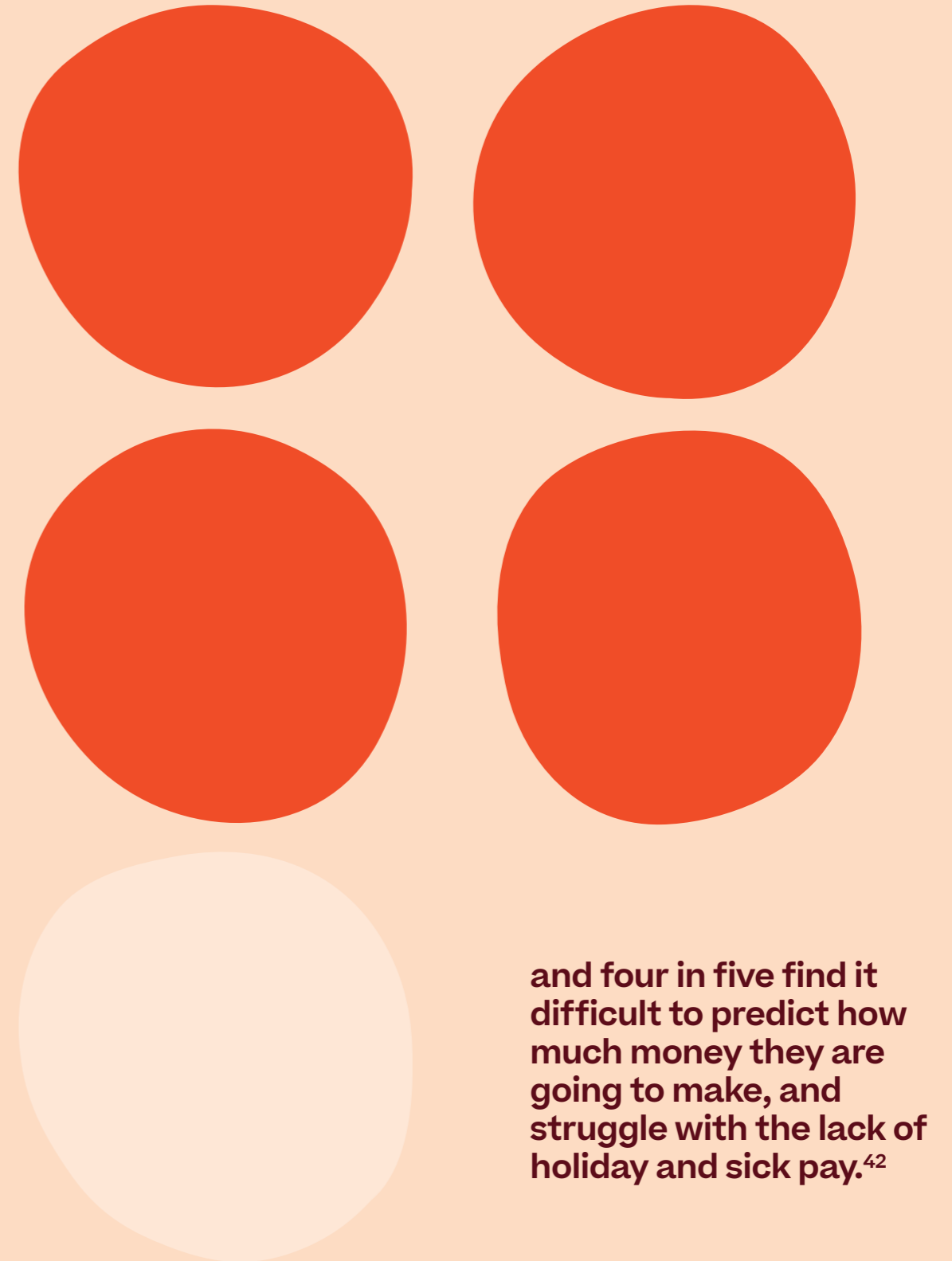
⁴⁰ Creative New Zealand, *A Profile of Creative Professionals* (2022) <https://creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports/a-profile-of-creative-professionals-2023>.

Some of the challenges faced by the sector are



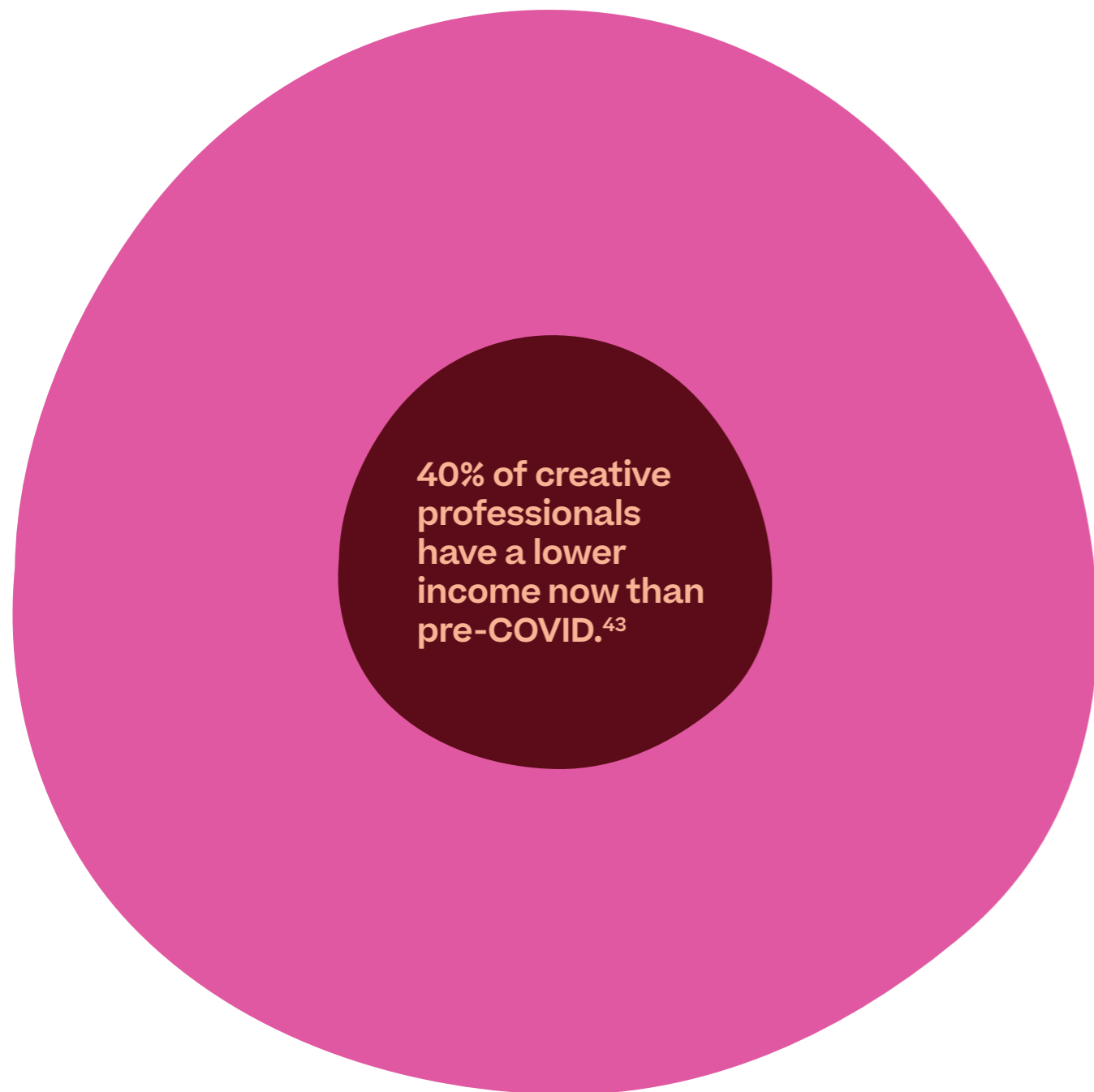
⁴¹ Kantar Public, Creative New Zealand, New Zealand on Air, A Profile of Creative Professionals (2022), p. 7, <https://creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports/a-profile-of-creative-professionals-2023>.

Almost all (94%) of creative professionals participating in the gig economy find it difficult to secure loans for things like mortgages



⁴² Kantar Public, Creative New Zealand, New Zealand on Air, A Profile of Creative Professionals (2022), p. 7.

Some of the challenges
faced by the sector are



When our creatives are supported,
our communities are supported.

By valuing, and investing in arts, culture and creativity and the work of creative professionals, we can enhance and add value to any work. Embedding creativity into any cross-sector activity adds value to outcomes and can create opportunities for artists and creative professionals to strengthen their portfolio of work.

This is a time
for vision.

A time for
collaboration.

A time for
creativity.

Challenges

and

Opportunities

Recovery and Resilience

These times are characterised by rapid change, complexity, and challenge.

We are faced with challenges including those posed by climate change, extreme weather events, global pandemics, technological advancements, social tensions and political polarisation, and growing inequity. These challenges are ones that the arts, culture and creativity sector actively engage with and rise to meet. Through regular accessible engagement with creative activity—both as individual practice, and community experience, we embrace the power of arts, culture and creativity as an act of radical hope. We hold a shared vision for a positive future that connects people together. These activities become more vital in times of complexity and crisis.

Arts and cultural activities serve as a coping mechanism for humanity. They help us to adjust to new conditions. They help us find clarity around who we are and how we connect. We know that community connection is a powerful protective factor for wellbeing, and an invaluable tool for resilience and social cohesion. Because of this, during COVID time and post lockdowns, we saw an increase in engagement and creative activity in many parts of our communities as well as at a global level. People are turning to creativity to make sense of the evolving and unfamiliar situation. An appetite for culture was shown around the world. Online concerts, virtual galleries and musical performances not only provided entertainment and cultural uplift, but served to remind us of our humanity. What is needed now is to translate this into a broader understanding of the concept of value for the arts in the wider community.

EXAMPLES OF ARTS-BASED SOCIAL COHESION

Public art can contribute to safety in civic spaces.

Public art and murals can encourage people into our towns, uplift spirits and stimulate economic activity.

Collective shared musical experiences (concerts, singing, dance, movement) create connection, positive emotions, and serve both mental and physical wellbeing.

Transform empty shop windows into temporary gallery spaces to showcase local artwork and installations. This can transform depressed areas into spaces of pride.

Run an arts festival. This can bring people back together, strengthen the bonds in our communities, and support a sense of belonging.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

When investing in local arts initiatives, make sure you have the right people behind these projects to ensure success. Sometimes that means bringing in expert knowledge.

Ensure that creatives are paid for their work where possible.

Artists as First Responders

The power of art to restore some wholeness to psyches and souls shaken by disaster has emerged as a major theme in artist-led recovery efforts.⁴⁴

Artists have been among the first to respond to disasters and crises. They have galvanised efforts to connect communities in providing post-recovery solutions. Artists have shown they are able to take initiative and create innovative forms of leadership to provide necessary services and amenities in their communities.⁴⁵ This has been in spite of the fact they are not always supported monetarily.

Our artists and storytellers open up creative spaces of opportunity, help to show us what is possible, and guide us to imagine better futures. Arts, culture and creativity allow us to connect, to share new ideas, and to navigate change.

The arts can be, and should be, embedded in all facets of our community. They feed into a broader understanding of the ecosystem of our community and place. When we collectively utilise an understanding of arts-based methodologies there is a way to ensure that we can move forward in an inclusive and engaging way.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

Support projects that raise awareness of psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Celebrate local identity and use arts, culture and creativity to bring communities together.

Use the arts to reframe how we respond to crises.

Create spaces to share stories.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Collaborate with artists, empowering their critical thinking and creative skills to bring communities together.

Remove barriers to create opportunities for connection.



⁴⁴ Jon Spayde, 'How artists help communities heal', Public Art Review, (2013) <https://forecastpublicart.org/how-artists-help-communities-heal-after-disasters/>.

⁴⁵ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Gauging the Impacts of Post-Disaster Arts and Culture Initiatives in Christchurch' (2021) <https://www.eqrecoverylearning.org/assets/downloads/2045-Gauging-the-Impacts-of-Post-Disaster-Arts-and-Culture-Initiatives-in-Christchurch-main-document.PDF>.

Arts-enabled Decision Making

It is vital for government, sector leaders, and strategic organisations to acknowledge the role that arts can play in terms of wider sector engagement, communication, creative thinking, and the reimagination of what our world could be.

By definition, artists are innovators and lateral thinkers. They see ideas and solutions where others may not. They are masters at problem solving, as this is a core part of their creative work.

Councils, governments and sector leaders are facing new problems that require new solutions. People looking to address big audacious goals for system change would benefit from embedding creative thinking as a pathway to understanding and exploring the broadest potential pathways to encourage meaningful change. Build from design-thinking and arts-based approaches to explore future possibilities with an open mind.

There is strength in applying an arts-informed framework to decision making, and strategic development in all facets of community leadership. By engaging in an artistic and creative process we are embracing vulnerability, opening our minds and tapping into what makes us human.

Creative thinking is vital to thriving communities. Artists should be involved wherever possible in decision-making processes, as they look from different angles, engaging imaginations, testing new ideas and sharing new perspectives.

EXAMPLES OF ARTS-BASED SOCIAL COHESION

Artists can be instrumental in contributing to civic projects and developments i.e., infrastructure projects, spaces and environmental design etc.

Engage in multi-disciplinary approaches to address complex problems – this means encouraging unconventional and creative responses to create new opportunities.

Recognise the value of creative approaches as being core to addressing new problems, not something that can be value-engineered out of the process.

Artists' ability to think laterally and innovatively can make connections across-sectors i.e., health care, community development and civic engagement.

Utilising creative thinking in mapping pathways to achieving aspirational and long-term community wellbeing goals.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Include artist input from the beginning of projects, where ideas have maximum impact.

Avoid removing creative activations as an accounting exercise – reducing an understanding of holistic value and impact.



Arts, culture and creativity are powerful levers for positive social change. They show us that we make the world rather than simply inherit it.

A 10-year

outlook

The 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.

In this version of the future, the arts, culture and creativity are valued and celebrated in our communities where everyone feels like they can access the activities that resonate with them. There are flourishing opportunities for participation of all kinds and diverse audiences who feel connected and engaged. Our creatives have robust pathways for training and capability development at all levels, and artists can have thriving careers in their local communities. This ultimately results in an ecosystem that serves all people and artists.

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 and localised in its action.

‘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’⁴⁶

Long-term Focus Areas

To ensure arts and creativity becomes integral to who we are as a region, we need to understand the environments in which we operate: how we connect, work and play together.

This requires a consistent, collaborative approach to ensure the arts and creativity can inform and in turn, enhance what we do and how we do it.

This vision is a long-term one, however, there are some focus areas that can lead us on the path toward a dynamic, inclusive and transformative region.

Embedding Arts and Creativity

Arts, culture and creativity in our society is like an iceberg floating in the ocean. The visible bits above the water are the tangible products of culture—paintings, sculpture, music, dance, theatre, poetry, etc. Then, extending down beneath the water we discover the foundational and ephemeral, intangible elements of these things—the values, beliefs, thoughts, and emotional responses that are essential in our understanding of ourselves and each other.

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, culture 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.

Surface Culture
Tangible elements

Deep Culture
Values, beliefs, thoughts and emotions

Ongoing Sustainable Investment

To be truly transformational there must be ongoing sustainable investment into the arts sector. Investment is not only monetary, it is also supporting and enabling arts activity to become integrated into the lifeblood of our region.

Sustained, long-term investment ensures key infrastructure is entrenched, spaces and places are activated, arts activity can flourish and pathways for employment are supported.

This strategy provides key threads as areas of investment to ensure our region remains dynamic and strong moving forward.

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. We are able to have broader visions for activity because there is more time to plan, opportunity to collaborate with both the arts, culture and creativity sector, and wider communities because there is more time and scope to create meaningful relationships.

Many arts organisations in the Waikato region rely on a range of funding sources, and a lot of time is spent finding and securing funding. There is a need for more sustainable funding streams for arts and cultural activity. If we see investment as people-focused we can then look at opportunities to explore the way our community and arts funding models work.

Collaboration to Foster and Grow Creative Activity

There is a whole ecosystem that is required to keep a functioning and beneficial artistic culture alive; having spaces to present work, having people to help make work, having access to materials and technology to craft work, and having audiences to engage with the work. Much of the time, each of these elements are running on volunteer hours and goodwill.

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 ecosystem that can support a regeneration of ideas, cultivate new connections and realise transformative ideas.

A collaborative region is a stronger one, where we are all working toward a common purpose and believe in the power of the arts and the importance it has for humanity.

Supporting Artistic Pathways Through Capability Building

Art is a strong manifestation of culture, and having sustainable and accessible arts activities is fundamental for strong cultural identity. Making, sharing and enjoying art is foundational to our collective cultural life. It engages our creativity and allows us to experience the world through someone else's reality. The arts encourage us to tell our stories, and allow us to share ideas.

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.



where to

**from
here**

Creative Waikato continues to work with Councils, funders and other partners on their specific plans and engagement with the WAN. This framework is designed to help focus efforts, while creating a common language and purpose that can be used across many areas and align direction and decision-making.

This regional strategy is a strong Waikato example of a collective and community-led approach for positive outcomes. It is a framework that becomes stronger with continued activation.

Important next steps

Contact Creative Waikato to start your Action Plan

Ensure that these outcomes align with your Long-Term Plan

Ask your communities

A Call to Action

We look forward to working with you to devise an action plan to enable your communities to prosper.

Find us

Creative Waikato
11 Garden Place
Hamilton

Opening hours

Monday to Friday
Office: 9am–5pm

Contact us

hello@creativewaikato.co.nz
0508 427 892
PO Box 9304
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

About Creative Waikato

Creative Waikato is the regional arts organisation for the Waikato region, which includes 10 local authorities — Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Waikato, Waipā, Hamilton, Waitomo, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato and Ruapehu. Our area of activity and engagement also connects with four Iwi — Waikato-Tainui, Hauraki, Raukawa and Maniapoto.

We provide creative capability development for artists and arts organisations, strategic direction and support for sustainable arts, culture and heritage in our region.

Our vision is that

‘The Waikato thrives with diverse and transformative creative activity’

What does this mean?

The arts, culture and creativity are valued and celebrated in our communities.

Our region has robust and flourishing pathways for participation and audience engagement and our creative and artistic professionals.

Ongoing sustainable development of a range of artistic and cultural activities throughout the region.

The arts, artists, arts and cultural organisations and arts activity are seen as being a vital part of the Waikato region and the wellbeing of its people.

Our purpose is

We are navigators who lead the elevation of creativity in our region and collaborate to provide opportunities for cultural wellbeing.

Our role is

To help navigate our connections with our community and guide the way we work with artists, arts organisations and other key stakeholders.

We have four key pou that support our work

ELEVATE — HĀPAI

We help you to succeed through advice, training and support.

CONNECT — TŪHONO

We connect you with people and places for stronger creative outcomes.

AMPLIFY — WHAKARAHĪ

We share stories far and wide and drive engagement with creative activity.

ADVOCATE — TAUNAKI

We stand up for arts, culture and creativity as they are essential to the wellbeing of our region.

Creativity.

Auahatanga.

Wellbeing.

Hauora.

People.

Ngā Tāngata.

