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28 April 2023

Wellington City Council  
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By email to: [policy.submissions@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:policy.submissions@wcc.govt.nz)

E te Koromatua, ngā Kaikaunihera mā, tēnā koutou katoa

**Submission to:** Wellington City Council—Te Kaunihera o Pōneke  
**Subject:** Mahere ā-tau Annual Plan 2023/24  
**From:** Creative New Zealand

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on Wellington City Council's Mahere ā-tau Annual Plan 2023/24, noting Council's alignment with and focus on your Long-term Plan (LTP) for 2021–2031.
2. Arts, culture and creativity are an important part of developing strong and prosperous cities, and cohesive and healthy communities. We encourage Council to continue to recognise the essential role arts and culture play in the wellbeing of Wellington's residents as you make decisions for the future of the city.
3. Our submission speaks to both Council's proposals for the Annual Plan 2023/24, and some of the successes from the LTP 2021–2031, as they relate to arts, culture and creativity in Wellington, while looking ahead to the current development of your next LTP.
4. While we do not wish to address Council in person in support of our submission, we would be happy to discuss any aspect of it with you further, should you wish. Contact details for the team are at the end of this submission.

#### **Draft Annual Plan 2023/24**

##### *Community Outcomes and Priority Objectives*

5. We strongly support Council's long-term strategic vision of "Wellington 2040 – an inclusive, sustainable and creative capital for people to live, work and play" as set out in your current

LTP. It's very encouraging to see cultural wellbeing at the centre of supporting the delivery of this vision.

6. **Arts communities are well-placed partners to help Council achieve this vision and deliver wellbeing outcomes to Wellington's diverse communities.** We encourage Council to recognise the strong contribution investment in arts and culture makes to all four dimensions of wellbeing – social, economic, environmental and cultural. For example, we note projects continuing in the Annual Plan 2023/24 include upgrading public spaces, social housing, waste minimisation and the future of the Southern Landfill. As connectors, activators and innovators, arts communities are uniquely positioned to help Council communicate and deliver across these different projects. Artistic, cultural and creative activity attracts economic investment, creates cohesive and connected communities by enhancing communication and trust, and can contribute to finding innovative solutions to climate challenges, cycleway design, urban development and placemaking.
7. *Aho-Tini 2030* is a major step in delivering to this vision, and **we commend Council's ongoing commitment to supporting Wellington's arts communities through its implementation.** As a co-investor in the arts in the Wellington region, we have been encouraged by the work of the new team in the Council dedicated to delivering this ambitious and enabling arts strategy. We encourage Council to ensure the vision and direction under *Aho-Tini* informs decisions on the Annual Plan 2023/24, including providing funding for the strategy to adequately deliver to its aspirations and implement its actions.
8. We welcome Council's commitment to strong partnerships with Mana Whenua in Te Whanangui-a-Tara in the Annual Plan, and note the Plan is intended to start implementing short-term actions from the Tūpiki Ora Māori Strategy, including support for existing cultural initiatives. We encourage Council to continue aligning these actions with *Aho-Tini*, including the delivery of actions for ngā toi Māori, with funding and support, to ensure ngā toi are a highly visible part of the artistic, cultural and creative fabric of the city.

#### *Arts and culture infrastructure*

9. It was encouraging to see 'resilient and fit-for-purpose community, creative and cultural spaces... where people to connect, develop and express their arts culture and heritage' identified as a priority objective in the LTP. These facilities not only provide vital space for arts communities to make, share and present their work, but they also foster exchanges of knowledge and shared creativity. They are a key vehicle through which Council can support the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities.
10. **We congratulate Council on its achievements to date with significant investment in the city's arts and culture infrastructure,** including ensuring existing venues and community facilities are fit-for-purpose such as the St James Theatre, Town Hall, and Te Matapihi, and building new facilities with the development of Tākina and the Waitohi Johnsonville Community Hub. We encourage you to continue this mahi, as access to arts spaces is still a key challenge for the arts sector.
11. **As Council evaluates further venue upgrades, we encourage you to also explore how you might enable greater access to spaces for arts communities to make, rehearse and perform their work.** Beyond the current venue developments underway, there is increasing need for

accessible and affordable spaces where artists and practitioners can not only share their work with audiences, but create and develop work behind the scenes.

12. **We are thrilled to see the series of community conversations evolve through *Re-imagining Toi Pōneke*.** We know Council is at a crossroads with the lease for Toi Pōneke and currently exploring a fit-for-purpose approach for the next stage of arts space investment. We know community grows out of creative work, and investing resources on arts spaces such as Toi Pōneke grows a strong and thriving creative sector. As access to spaces remains a key challenge, we are interested to see how this mahi unfolds to support the needs of diverse communities, support artists' development and career pathways, and demonstrate true partnership with mana whenua.

#### *Te Matapihi Central Library*

13. We are heartened to see Council continue on the path towards reopening Te Matapihi Central Library. Public libraries are a core component of a city's arts ecosystem, given their place as community hubs that enhance community wellbeing and social cohesion. We encourage Council to deliver ambitious and progressive facilities and services at Te Matapihi that foster a supportive environment for arts and culture.
14. The reconstruction of the Te Matapihi Central Library provides a unique opportunity for Council to think about how it might develop and enable Wellington's strong literary community, including by providing spaces accessible to arts communities. We encourage Council to:
  - continue working with the literary community to progress the development of a Literary Hub – this Hub could be an opportunity to share resources, amplify Wellington's reading and writing communities, and develop the library into a central home for reading and literature
  - partner with the literary community to programme and activate the space through projects, events and residencies
  - work with mana whenua to identify how the library can grow the broader public's understanding of, and engagement with, local stories and histories, mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori
  - ensure library facilities include spaces are accessible to artists and community-based arts groups, where they can make and present their work to audiences.

#### *Community Infrastructure Investments*

15. We welcome Council's recognition of the need to invest in community infrastructure to support residents as the city grows. **We note there are opportunities for Council to work with artists and creatives within this prioritised infrastructure spending.** For example, projects such as Kilbirnie Park and Rec Centre, Karori Pool, Khandallah Swimming Pool, Huetepara Park, Cuba Street Playground, 44 Frederick Street Urban Park, and the Begonia House Precinct offer meaningful opportunities for increasing the use of public and shared space. Working with artists and creatives in the design and implementation of these projects

can encourage a sense of community ownership and pride. This work can also build capacity into the creative ecosystem and play a key part in creative workers' income.

16. We support Council's engagement with the community for developing additional community facilities, such as the Former Workingmen's Bowling Club Newtown, **and encourage Council to work with artists and creatives in delivering these projects.** We are aware of the [Vogelmorn Community Group Trust's](#) partnership with Council to transform the Vogelhorn Bowling Green into a highly valued and community-led facility; we note the strong presence of artists and creatives on the Trust and creativity in the services offered to the community, including performances, theatre shows, music rehearsals and film launches. Council's engagement with the local community on the future of the Former Workingman's Bowling Club Newtown presents a meaningful opportunity for Council to work with artists and creatives to ensure the project's success – artists and creatives bring communities together as our storytellers, educators and place-makers.
17. The pilot arts projects in [Commonspace](#) could also be revisited with the work planned towards the 'Poneke Promise' and upgrading the Te Aro Precinct with a focus on inner city community spaces. Commonspace offered a safe and inclusive community hub, a 'living room in the city' facilitated by local artists.
18. Reviewing community infrastructure investment is also an opportunity to activate focus area three of *Aho-Tini*, 'Aho Whenua – our city as a stage'. We encourage Council to consider:
  - the importance of communities having opportunities for face-to-face connection, particularly for building social cohesion and bridging differences, and especially so within our new COVID landscape where social isolation can be a significant barrier to greater wellbeing
  - the location of services and facilities, to ensure they're accessible to the communities they intend to serve – acknowledging the city centre focus but also the networked approach to enabling community-based services and facilities in Wellington's suburbs
  - how any leasing or partnership arrangements may result in changes to the costs of using facilities (since smaller community-based arts groups and organisations would likely struggle to keep up with cost increases)
  - whether any of the new spaces developed could support arts communities by providing spaces where they can make and present their work to audiences
  - whether any former spaces that Council may look to deploy or redevelop could be repurposed to provide vital space for arts communities to make, share and present their work.

#### *Venues Strengthening and Upgrades*

19. It is positive to see the refurbished St James Theatre open to the public, along with the ongoing work on the Town Hall. Once completed, the availability of these venues will have significant value for the arts sector. They provide high-quality spaces that can grow and develop audiences, attract investment in the wider city, and increase economic activity such as by further strengthening the city's tourism offering.

20. We welcome Council's continued planning to identify other venues requiring upgrades, and encourage Council to work closely with arts communities to ensure any developments or upgrades are in line with the needs of those who use the facilities. It is important to ensure that these venues are affordable and accessible to Wellington's arts and culture organisations and communities, as well as to the new and diverse audiences that these venues and the city wish to attract.
21. We strongly encourage Council to involve and consider arts communities in its work on city housing provision. This includes considering whether there's an opportunity to involve arts communities in the Te Kāinga programme, and how this programme might support the city to attract and retain talent by providing space for artists and creatives to live and work.
22. We note there are a large number of community facility upgrades proposed over the next 10 years. Again, we encourage Council to work closely with arts communities to consider how these facilities might provide vital spaces to make and present work, and how arts communities might help Council to deliver wellbeing outcomes to the wider community as New Zealand's creative capital.

#### **Creative New Zealand's interest in the arts in Wellington**

23. Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency of Aotearoa New Zealand. We are an autonomous Crown entity, continued under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014. Our legislative purpose is to encourage, promote, and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders.
24. We recognise the importance of Wellington to the arts in New Zealand. For arts delivered in the Wellington region, **\$8,339,785** of direct financial support was provided by Creative New Zealand in 2021/22; **\$6,638,615** of funding for individual arts projects as well as over 17 significant Wellington-based arts organisations and programmes. These include theatre companies, festivals, art galleries, dance companies, publishers and residencies.
25. Under the Creative Communities Scheme, we also fund territorial authorities directly to support local arts activities. In 2021/22, funding of **\$433,361** was provided to the Wellington region, which included **\$144,780** to Wellington City Council and your creative community.

#### **Conclusion**

26. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We know the considerable pressure on all Council budgets and acknowledge your continued commitment to investing in arts, culture and creativity as part of the overall investment in your community's wellbeing.
27. We also acknowledge the hard work of arts, culture and creative staff at Council, maintaining and developing new relationships and partnerships that are integral to the ongoing delivery of *Aho-Tini*.
28. We share your aspirations for Wellington and look forward to working with you to realise the potential of arts, culture and creativity to support your community to thrive. We will continue to participate in ongoing conversations about the long-term direction of the city,

including as you develop the next LTP. Our collective approach will ensure arts and culture can deliver value to all New Zealanders and to communities throughout Aotearoa.

29. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or if you wish to discuss this submission further. The key contact person is:

**Name:** Cara Paterson

**Position:** Senior Advisor, Advocacy, Local Government focus

Kaiwhakamahere Matua Taunaki, Kāwangatanga ā Kainga

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Ngā mihi rārau ki a koutou katoa, nā



David Pannett

**Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement**

**Pou Whakahaere Matua, Rautaki me te Tūhono**