

Tell local councillors and mayors about the value of the arts

Local government (city, district and regional councils) is responsible for improving the social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of Aotearoa's communities.

The four wellbeings a council is responsible for improving are:

- **Social wellbeing:** Involves individuals, their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, and a range of communities being able to set goals and achieve them, such as education, health, the strength of community networks, financial and personal security, equity of opportunity, and rights and freedoms.
- **Cultural wellbeing:** Looks at the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and identities reflected through language, stories, visual and performing arts, ceremonies and heritage that make up our communities.
- **Economic wellbeing:** Looks at whether the economy can generate the employment and wealth necessary to provide many of the requirements that make for social wellbeing, such as health, financial security, and equity of opportunity.
- **Environmental wellbeing:** Considers whether the natural environment can sustainability support the activities that constitute healthy community life, such as air quality, fresh water, uncontaminated land, and control of pollution.

Source: Taituarā – Local Government Professionals Aotearoa

The infrastructure, services and activities that a council invests in and delivers should have positive impacts on a community's wellbeing.

Regional, district and city councillors represent their communities and decide the outcomes they want to achieve for their community, and the funding priorities for their council.

Council officers are responsible for providing councillors with advice on how best to achieve positive outcomes for their community.

Before contacting your council, research which councillors and mayors have an interest in the arts. Arrange a meeting or invite them to see your work. Any contact is an opportunity to show them that investing in the arts benefits their community.

Stay in touch by inviting them to events and giving them updates on what you are doing. They receive many invites and a lot of correspondence so keep yours relevant and short.

You will usually find contact details for your mayor and councillors on the council website.

Not sure what to say when you approach your local councillor or mayor? Below are some examples of what they may be interested in knowing.

- Your project involves/engages many people in their community from a range of backgrounds <<people involved in the project>>.
- Your project helps to address <<an important issue relevant to your community>>.
- Your project is a great opportunity for people in their community to meet and enjoy an event.
- Your project reflects the unique stories and histories of your rohe <<explain the stories and histories reflected>>.
- Your projects regularly attract an audience of <<number>> including <<number>> from outside their region or city.
- The ways in which the council's support or investment has enabled you to deliver your project.
- The arts help to attract people to their city/region because they improve wellbeing and quality-of-life.
- Highly skilled people are attracted to places with a good quality of life. A vibrant arts scene is part of that.

Make a submission to your local council's planning processes

Local councils frequently ask for submissions on specific issues or projects, as well as their planning documents such as long-term plans, annual plans and sector strategies – some of which affect the arts. Anyone can provide feedback.

To tautoko arts communities in Aotearoa to have their say, Creative New Zealand has produced this guidance, which provides tips on what to look out for in a long-term plan and how to write an effective submission. The guidance will also assist with writing submissions on annual plans and strategy documents.

If you have any questions or want further assistance with making a submission, please contact Creative New Zealand's Advocacy Team at advocacy@creativenz.govt.nz.

What is a long-term plan?

A long-term plan (LTP) sets out the work a council plans to do over a ten-year (or longer) period, why it plans to do that work and how much it will cost. Specifically, a LTP should describe how the work a council plans to deliver will enable it to support its community's wellbeing.

Every three years councils are required to review their LTP. This gives a council the opportunity to make any changes to its plan (to reflect significant changes in

circumstances, or feedback from the community). Each time a council reviews its LTP it is required to ask the community to provide feedback on the draft.

Annual plans:

An annual plan is published between LTPs and outlines prioritised activities and projects, intended service levels, funding information and financial policies. Annual plans refresh the LTP for the coming year and allow the community to provide feedback on any proposed changes.

The long-term plan consultation process

Every council will adopt a different process for seeking feedback from its community.

Check your council's website, or contact your council's service centre, to find out when you'll be able to provide your feedback, and how.

Some councils may provide a submission template for you to fill in or ask a series of specific questions for you to respond to.

Often the timeframe for sharing your feedback will be tight (usually around a month). Late submissions usually aren't accepted, so the earlier you can get prepared the better.

If there is an arts advocacy group in your town, city or region, it would pay to check whether it is planning to engage with your council's LTP consultation process. Many arts advocacy groups find ways to make it easy for the members of their community to feed into the consultation process. (See below for further information on Collective Submissions).

Why is submitting on your council's long-term plan important?

A LTP makes significant decisions about the work a council will do and the money it will spend. Councils value hearing from the communities that will be impacted by these decisions.

The submission process is an opportunity to have your say on what you want your community to look and feel like, now and in the future.

Community feedback can influence a council to make changes to its draft plan. Councils don't necessarily have all the good ideas themselves – make sure you share yours.

The more focus or 'noise' there is on an issue or opportunity, the more likely a council is to take notice and listen. If you don't make your views heard, there's no guarantee they'll be known or considered.

Councils are responsible for many issues and services, so it's important to constantly remind elected members of the value of investing in arts and culture. While things like roads, rubbish and water are essential services, so too is investing in arts and

culture for our communities' wellbeing, particularly given that councils need to deliver to each of the four wellbeings.

What to look out for in a long-term plan and things to consider when pulling together your submission

To help you navigate your council's LTP, the table below sets out some things to look out for from an arts and culture point of view. Based on what you find (or don't find!) ask yourself the pātai (questions) set out in the table below and use your answers to pull together your submission. You can comment on both anything that's included in the draft LTP, and anything that you think is missing and needs to be added.

There are often several things to consider when developing the content for your submission. If you're short on time, we'd suggest prioritising consideration of the questions that are italicised under the 'Things to consider' column of the table below.

What to look out for	Things to consider
<p>The outcomes that your council wants to achieve for its community</p> <p><i>Note: These are often called community outcomes or priorities. The work that your council plans to invest in should reflect these outcomes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do the community outcomes reflect what you'd like your town or city to look or feel like?</i> • Do the community outcomes articulate the role that arts and culture plays, or could play, in your community? • Do the community outcomes reflect the needs and contributions of Māori, Pasifika and other diverse communities? • How would investing in arts and culture enable your council to achieve its desired outcomes? • If your council has an arts and culture strategy (check your council's website to find out if you're not sure), do the community outcomes reflect the outcomes set out in the arts and culture strategy?
<p>Proposed investments in cultural infrastructure or facilities (such as performing arts venues, galleries, community halls, libraries, marae, etc)</p> <p><i>Note: This might include development of new facilities or refurbishment,</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are you happy with the investments that are proposed? How could they be improved?</i> • Is there any cultural facility that your community is lacking that you think the council needs to consider investing in? • How could mana whenua and/or artists work with the council on its arts and culture infrastructure projects to incorporate Māori cultural and creative

<p><i>improvements or upgrades to existing facilities.</i></p>	<p>elements that are distinctive to your rohe (city, district, region, area)?</p>
<p>Proposed investments in arts and culture activity and services (such as library services, ongoing operation of art galleries and museums, ongoing operation of performing arts venues, provision of community facilities, public programmes, events, arts funding (including grants or contestable rounds), public art etc)</p> <p><i>Note: Local government is the core funder of public libraries, galleries, museums and venues</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are you happy with the investments that are proposed? Is there anything else you'd like to see?</i> • How could your council work with its local arts community to deliver the activities and/or services it plans to invest in? Are there activities or services your council could engage artists to assist with the delivery of? • Are the activities your council is planning to invest in consistent with the outcomes and plans set out in your council's arts and culture strategy (if it has one)?
<p>How much money your council is planning to invest in arts and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the proposed investment enough? What areas need more investment?</i>
<p>When is your council is planning to invest in arts and culture activity (ie, the timing of its investments)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you happy with the time at which the council is proposing to invest? Is there any investment that needs to happen sooner? • Do you think your council's investment should be a one-off investment or sustained over a longer period? • How will the proposed timing of the investment impact the local arts community?
<p>Proposed changes to fees for use of facilities or services (such as costs of hiring a venue, borrowing items from a library, making an application for consent etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed fee reasonable? Or will it make it difficult for the arts community to access a facility or service?
<p>Proposed changes to rates</p> <p><i>Note: This may include increasing rates, maintaining them at the existing level or decreasing them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed change to rates reasonable/affordable? What level of rates are you comfortable with paying? • If the council is proposing to increase rates to enable it to deliver more services, do you agree with this? • Are you concerned that certain essential services may not be provided

	if rates aren't increased, or are decreased?
Significant non-arts and culture related projects that your council is proposing to undertake (such as infrastructure development or revitalisation of public space)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could mana whenua and/or artists be engaged by your council early to ensure that the project incorporates cultural and creative elements and the unique history of your city, district or region?

How to write a good submission

Once you've reviewed your council's draft LTP and given thought to the pātai in the table above, here are some tips to keep in mind when writing your submission:

- **Summarise:** Provide a summary of your key points at the start of the submission.
- **Suggest tangible actions:** Keep your submission action oriented. Practical recommendations that your council can 'pick up and run with' are good. For example, if you think that your council's community outcomes could more strongly recognise the role that arts and culture can play, don't just say this, but provide your council with suggested re-wording of the outcome (see the box below for some examples of community outcomes that refer to the role of arts and culture). Provide the council with specific examples of venues or activities that you think it could invest in or support.
- **Be realistic:** Keep your list of recommendations to an achievable number by prioritising those that are most important to you.
- **Keep it brief:** Often the most effective submissions are the briefest. A one to two-page submission is sufficient if you don't have time to provide more detail.
- **Articulate potential impacts of decisions:** Explain how the decisions you want your council to make (or not make) would impact on you, your organisation and/or the wider community. Specific and actual impacts are useful for growing your council's understanding of how its decisions will affect you.
- **Talk their talk:** Use the language that local government uses in your submission, to make it relatable. Referring to things such as 'community wellbeing', 'impact' and 'outcomes' is a good idea.
- Keep your submission concise.
- **Include examples:** Include examples of the ways in which investing in arts and culture has wider benefits for your community's social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing. Use a mixture of storytelling and data to get your points across. Some councillors are interested in data; others are more swayed by good storytelling. (See below for examples of data that you might like to include in your submission. Consider including your own audience or venue data).
- **It's on the record:** Your submission will likely be made public. If there's anything you don't want members of the public to know, don't include that in your submission.

- **Get feedback before submitting:** Ask a colleague, whānau member or friend to review your draft submission and provide feedback.
- **Examples to guide you:** Check out some of the examples of submissions provided below to help you write your own.

Examples of community outcomes that refer to the role of arts and culture

Our communities have opportunities to celebrate and explore their heritage, identity and creativity. We are proud of and celebrate our history and heritage and how that contributes to our identity. We have a strong sense of community, enhanced by the wide range of arts, culture and sporting opportunities on offer.

- Nelson City Council 10-year Plan 2018 – 2028

A creative city with a rich and diverse arts and culture scene.

- Dunedin City Council 10-year Plan 2018 – 2028

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Councils are responsible for many issues and services, so it's important to constantly remind elected members of the value of investing in arts and culture. While things like roads, rubbish and water are essential services, so too is investing in arts and culture for our communities' wellbeing, particularly given that councils need to deliver to each of the four wellbeings.

A collective submission

Instead of submitting as an individual, you might like to write a collective submission with other artists and/or arts organisations in your community or sector. Collective submissions can be effective in that they show councillors that several people and/or organisations support the points raised, which can help to get them noticed.

However, don't be concerned if the arts community (or communities) you are part of isn't able to make a collective submission. It's still useful for a council to receive a

range of submissions. You'll likely find that within those various submissions there are common themes that emerge.

If you think it would be useful for your arts community to come together to agree on what the common challenges and opportunities are, you might like to suggest in your submission that your council could play a role in facilitating such a discussion. If your community has a regional arts organisation or network, you might also like to encourage it to facilitate this discussion.

See below for an example of a collective, template submission, prepared by Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi.

In-person submissions

Anyone who makes a written submission can usually opt to speak to their submission in-person at a council hui. Here are some tips for making a good in-person submission:

- **Keep to time:** Keep to the time you've been allocated to make your submission. Prepare notes to help you do this.
- **Summarise:** Don't read your submission word-for-word, but instead provide an overview of the decisions you'd most like your council to make (or not) and how these decisions would impact you, your organisation and/or the community.
- **Don't introduce new ideas:** Don't use your in-person submission as an opportunity to raise additional, new points that aren't included in your written submission.
- **Find out if your time allocation includes questions:** Often the time you're allocated to make your in-person submission will include time for councillors to ask questions, if they have any and if you're comfortable with responding to questions. Council staff will usually provide guidance ahead of the hui around how much time will be set aside for questions. If you aren't provided with this guidance, feel free to ask the council officer who arranges your speaking slot with you.
- **Prepare to answer questions:** If there is going to be time for questions, give some thought ahead of the hui to the types of questions you might be asked and how you might respond to them. Don't be afraid to share a different view to the view a councillor may express through their question; the point of in-person submissions is for councillors' own thinking or position on issues or opportunities to be challenged by the communities they serve.
- **Articulating the value of arts and culture in your answers:** If you're asked any questions that call into question the value of investing in arts and culture, or whether arts and culture are an essential service, a good way of responding is by pointing out that councils are required by law to promote the cultural wellbeing of their communities. Investment in the arts is a key way in which councils can do this. Investing in arts and culture also has positive benefits for a community's social and economic wellbeing, which a council is also required to support.

How to get your council to engage with your whakaaro (thoughts and ideas)

While making a submission on your council's LTP is important, there are some other steps you can take to make sure that your council, and in particular elected members, are fully across your whakaaro. This is important because sometimes councillors aren't provided with, or don't read, every submission that is made (given the often-high volume of submissions received).

You could:

- **Email:** Email a copy of your submission to councillors who are supportive of arts and culture. By doing this, those councillors will be more across the points you've made and better able to articulate and support them in council deliberations. To find out who your arts-friendly councillors are, visit your council's website to see which councillors hold arts and culture or community focused portfolios, check councillors' social media feeds, ask friends or colleagues, or contact your council's service centre and ask.
- **Meet in person:** Arrange a time to meet with arts-friendly councillors or relevant council staff to talk through your submission and allow them to ask any pātai. (Useful council staff to talk with include arts advisors, funding advisors, gallery/museum or library staff and staff who work in community services or community development roles).
- **Extend invitations:** Invite elected members and council officers to see and engage with your work. This helps to demonstrate the impact that your council's investment in arts and culture has on the mahi you do and the communities/audiences that engage with it.
- **Hui or Fono:** Māori and Pasifika communities might like to contact their council and ask for a dedicated hui or fono at which they can share their whakaaro with councillors and council staff. If your council has Māori or Pasifika elected members, they may be a good first point of contact to help you with arranging this.
- **Be creative:** Think about how you can present your submission creatively, so that it stands out. Include photographs, illustrations or video. Just make sure that any points you make are easy to understand and can be easily referenced.

Some things to suggest your council includes in its long-term plan to support its local arts community

Submitting on your council's LTP provides an opportunity for you to advocate to your council for the support or opportunities that you'd like to see included in its LTP that aren't there already.

Here are some things you might like to suggest that your council includes in its LTP:

- If your council doesn't have an arts and culture strategy or plan, encourage it to develop one in collaboration with its local arts community. A strategy or plan guides investment decisions, so it's a good idea to have one.

- If your council has an out-of-date arts and culture strategy or plan that needs a refresh, encourage your council to work with its local arts community to do that.
- Encourage your council to develop a strategy for how it invests in and supports Ngā Toi Māori.
- Encourage your council to increase funding for arts and culture over each year of the LTP.
- Encourage your council to make dedicated funding available for arts organisations, groups, projects and initiatives. An easy way for your council to do this may be by topping up the Creative Communities Scheme funding that it receives annually from Creative New Zealand.
- Encourage your council to collaborate with other funders and supporters of arts and culture activity in your community (such as community trusts, cultural institutions, central government and crown agencies) to help regionally join-up your arts community, and identify opportunities for collaborative support or investment.
- If your council is undertaking a major infrastructure project or an upgrade of a public space, encourage it to work with mana whenua and local arts communities to incorporate cultural and creative elements into the project.
- Encourage your council to make its cultural venues (eg, theatres, community halls and performing arts centres) available to arts communities to use free-of-charge or at reduced rates for rehearsals and/or the presentation and performance of works.
- Encourage your council to provide dedicated spaces for Māori and Pasifika communities to make, rehearse and show their work, and to gather.
- Encourage your council to meet with members of local Māori and Pasifika arts communities to understand the support they need, and how they can support the council to provide greater opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with Toi Māori and Toi Pasifika.

Examples of submissions to councils

Here are some examples of submissions made by Creative New Zealand and other arts organisations on long-term plans (and annual plans), which may be useful to refer to when writing your own submission:

- [CNZ submission on Palmerston North City Council's 10 Year Plan 2018 – 2028 \(PDF. 442KB\)](#)
- [CNZ submission on Dunedin City Council's 10 Year Plan 2018 – 2028 \(PDF. 554KB\)](#)
- [CNZ submission on Wellington City Council's Draft 10-Year Plan 2018 – 2028 \(PDF. 587 KB\)](#)
- [CNZ submission on Auckland Council Emergency Budget 2020 \(PDF. 387\)](#)
- [Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi template submission on Auckland Council Emergency Budget 2020 \(Docx. 42KB\)](#)

Helpful resources

Here are some resources that might help you to write your submission:

- [New Zealanders and the Arts 2017](#). Creative New Zealand's three-yearly research into New Zealanders' attitudes to, attendance at and participation in the arts. (Note: Creative New Zealand will be releasing the findings of research undertaken in 2020 in the coming months).
- [An overview of statements about the value of investing in the arts, and key findings from New Zealand-based and international research](#).

Suggested structure and content for submission

Below is a suggested structure you might like to follow to pull together your submission.

Be sure to check your council's website as it may include a submission form that you can fill in, or a series of questions to respond to.

Background

- Introduce yourself and/or your organisation. Include a description of your work and the communities you engage or work with.

Summary

- Make a high-level statement about the importance of your council investing in arts and culture and the value this creates for your community.
- Provide a bullet point list of the key decisions you want your council to make (ie, changes or additions you want it to make to its LTP, or proposed decisions you don't want it to make).

Substantive submission

- Outline under separate headings each of your recommendations in detail. Explain what it is that you want to happen.
- Explain why you want the recommendation to be adopted. Outline the impact that adopting the recommendation would have on you, your organisation and/or the wider community. Outline the ways in which adopting your recommendation will result in positive wellbeing outcomes for your community. Use evidence and/or storytelling to back up your explanation.

Conclusion

- Finish with a statement about the value of your council investing in arts and culture. Sum up the impact that the council adopting your recommendations would have on you, your organisation and/or the wider community.
- Provide your contact details in case the council wants to contact you for further information.

- Note whether you'd like to speak to your submission in-person at a council meeting.

If you have any questions or want further assistance with making a submission, please contact Creative New Zealand's Advocacy Team at advocacy@creativenz.govt.nz

We encourage you to share this guidance with colleagues or people in your networks who may be interested in submitting on your council's LTP.