

Strengthening
Arts Advocacy

TE
RŌPŪ
MANA
TOI

Impact Study
The first three years
January 2021 – January 2024

Prepared for Creative
New Zealand by:

TOIĀRIA
DESIGN FOR PUBLIC GOOD

TE RŌPŪ MANA TOI



CNZ
ADVO-
CACY
TEAM



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Introduction

The story of Te Rōpū Mana Toi is a story of collective advocacy. Te Rōpū Mana Toi (Te Rōpū) is Creative New Zealand's external arts advocacy advisory group. It was established to support Creative New Zealand (CNZ) in its advocacy work and advance arts advocacy at a national level.

This impact study considers the insights that are emerging about the form, function and future potential of Te Rōpū Mana Toi. As well as informing its ongoing development, it offers ideas and recommendations for others across Aotearoa who may be working to strengthen collective advocacy in other realms of interest.

In these first three years, evidence of Te Rōpū Mana Toi's impact can already be seen rippling out from Te Rōpū members and CNZ staff to wider society:

- For the participating individuals there has been development of leadership capability and stronger relationships across disciplines;
- For Creative New Zealand, advocacy has become a higher priority and confidence has developed;
- For the wider arts sector there is the beginnings of a more energised, collective voice and access to more skills and tools;
- For wider society, the work of Te Rōpū Mana Toi is helping to build understanding about the value of arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori — and their role in creating a world where all New Zealanders flourish.



Te Rōpū Mana Toi Wānanga 2023

A note on the process and approach to this impact study

The current iteration of Te Rōpū Mana Toi has been working together since 2021. Three years in, both Te Rōpū themselves and CNZ wanted to reflect on the journey so far.

This document is based on a series of interviews with members of Te Rōpū Mana Toi and other key stakeholders, gathering qualitative information and analysing the insights that emerged.

The objectives of the process were:

- To document a collective narrative around the work of Te Rōpū;
- To share individual experiences of the process;
- To showcase a model for collective advocacy.

As facilitator of Te Rōpū gatherings, Anna Brown was asked to lead the development of this Impact Study with her team at Toi Āria: Design for Public Good, Toi Rauwhāangi Massey University. Twenty-one discovery interviews were conducted with Te Rōpū members, Creative New Zealand staff, and individuals who are part of a wider arts advocacy Community of Practice.¹

The interviews followed a semi-structured question methodology framed around individuals' understanding of the whakapapa and kaupapa of Te Rōpū Mana Toi, as well as key perceived achievements, challenges and opportunities. Synthesis of the material was undertaken by the Toi Āria team, in collaboration with the members of Te Rōpū and CNZ. The members faces and voices are featured throughout this document.

¹A full list of contributors can be found at the end of this document.

The whakapapa of Te Rōpū Mana Toi

“We thought it would be great to have two groups—one internally focused working group and an externally focused group called Te Rōpū Mana Toi after our value of Mana Toi—upholding and celebrating the value of the arts in our lives.”

— CNZ Staff Member

ESTABLISHMENT

Te Rōpū Mana Toi was formally convened in January 2021. Based on an earlier, informal network initially convened in 2017, Te Rōpū is a group of artists, practitioners, managers and directors of arts organisations from across Aotearoa. With no peak arts advocacy body in Aotearoa, the idea for Te Rōpū reflected CNZ’s strategic aim of building knowledge, expertise and connection to enable more impactful advocacy to be advanced at the national level.

The initial attempt at developing an advocacy network demonstrated the importance of a stronger arts advocacy voice in Aotearoa. It inspired the current ‘two pillared’ structure of an internal Advocacy Team (appointed February 2020), and an external arts advocacy advisory group — Te Rōpū Mana Toi. This approach was led by David Pannett, Senior Manager, Strategy and Engagement, who saw the strategic potential of embedded advocacy for the organisation, and the need to resource advocacy activity.

MEMBERSHIP + COMPOSITION

Members were selected for being adept advocates for arts and culture across a range of artforms and kaupapa. They were chosen for having strong relationships with others in the sector, an understanding of the needs of Māori, Pasifika and diverse arts communities, excellent strategic thinking and communication skills, and an understanding of government processes. They were formally appointed to Te Rōpū by CNZ’s Chief Executive.

Rather than acting as a representative of a particular organisation, network, artform, or community, members are expected to contribute knowledge and perspectives from across the breadth of their experience and their networks. In this way, their role is to act as champions for the arts sector in all its diversity.

Members are resourced to come together at eight weekly intervals for a full day in various locations across Aotearoa.

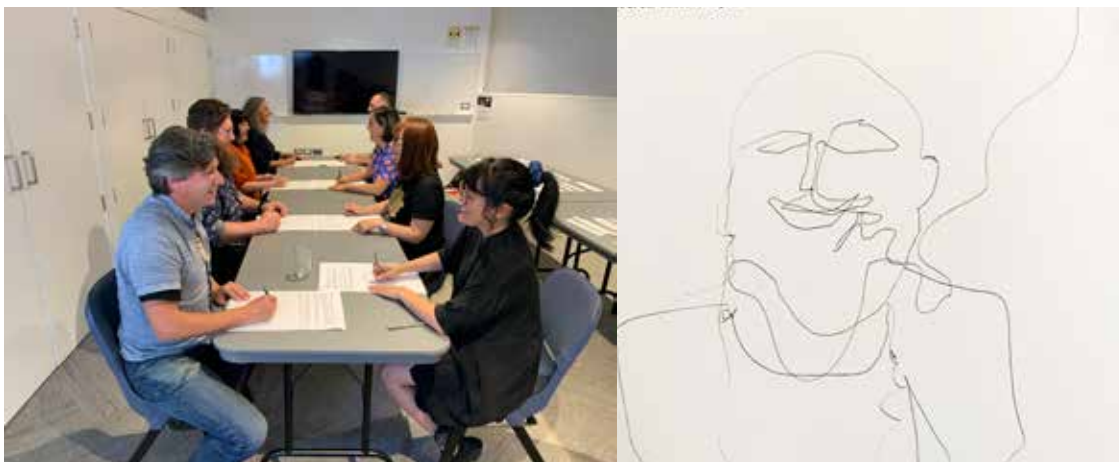
Original one-year terms were extended to three years to maintain momentum, provide stability during the COVID-19 pandemic and the CNZ Advocacy Team’s foundational phase, and ensure the group could advance substantial work. Succession planning is currently underway, with three members standing down in early 2024, making way for three new members.

“It’s given us a more regular and more focused relationship with important stakeholders in the sector. I look at the heft of that group and I’m always really impressed that our team got together this great bunch of people who reflect quite different parts of the sector. I think that’s a tricky thing to do when you’ve got a sector that is as crazily diverse as ours is, right? So I don’t just mean from a diversity point of view but from an interest point of view, a geographical point of view, from a genres point of view.”

— Arts Council Member

“Positioning the role of Te Rōpū is important and its umbrella-ing by CNZ is important. We believed CNZ would be more successful in our advocacy work if we could have the advice from a group of good people from the sector.” — CNZ Staff Member

“We looked at breadth of voice, perspective, range of artforms. A range of backgrounds and perspectives stretching across the motu—and basically went through a process of figuring out what the best variation of that group might be.” — CNZ Staff Member



Team building exercise, Te Rōpū second hui, 2021

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

“The name Te Rōpū Mana Toi was gifted by one of our senior leaders Haniko Te Kurapa and really embodies the intention and values of the group—upholding the mana of the arts. That's come through really strongly in the waiata which was developed about a year later.” — CNZ Staff Member

Te Rōpū meet six or seven times a year, usually in person for a full-day hui. When Te Rōpū haven't been able to meet in person (for example due to Covid lockdowns and Cyclone Gabrielle) meetings have been moved online.

Across the three years, Te Rōpū have met for approximately 18 working days. Te Rōpū members have also undertaken a range of additional engagements including meetings with the Arts Council, training sessions, and presenting work at sector engagements including Nui te Kōrero, PANNZ Arts Market, EVANZ conference, and Taituarā conference.

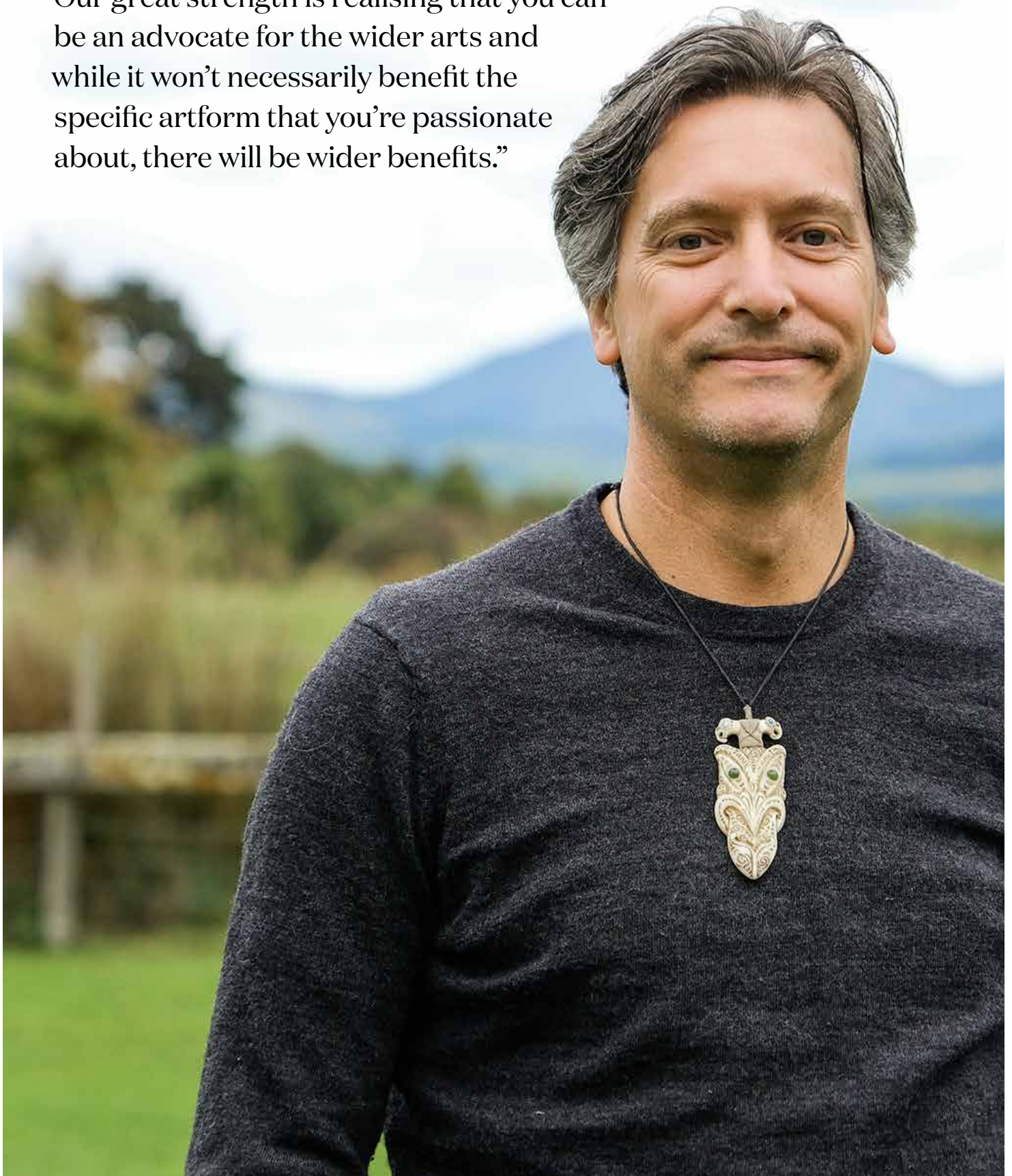


Haniko Te Kurapa and Rosabel Tan, 2024

Tānemahuta Gray

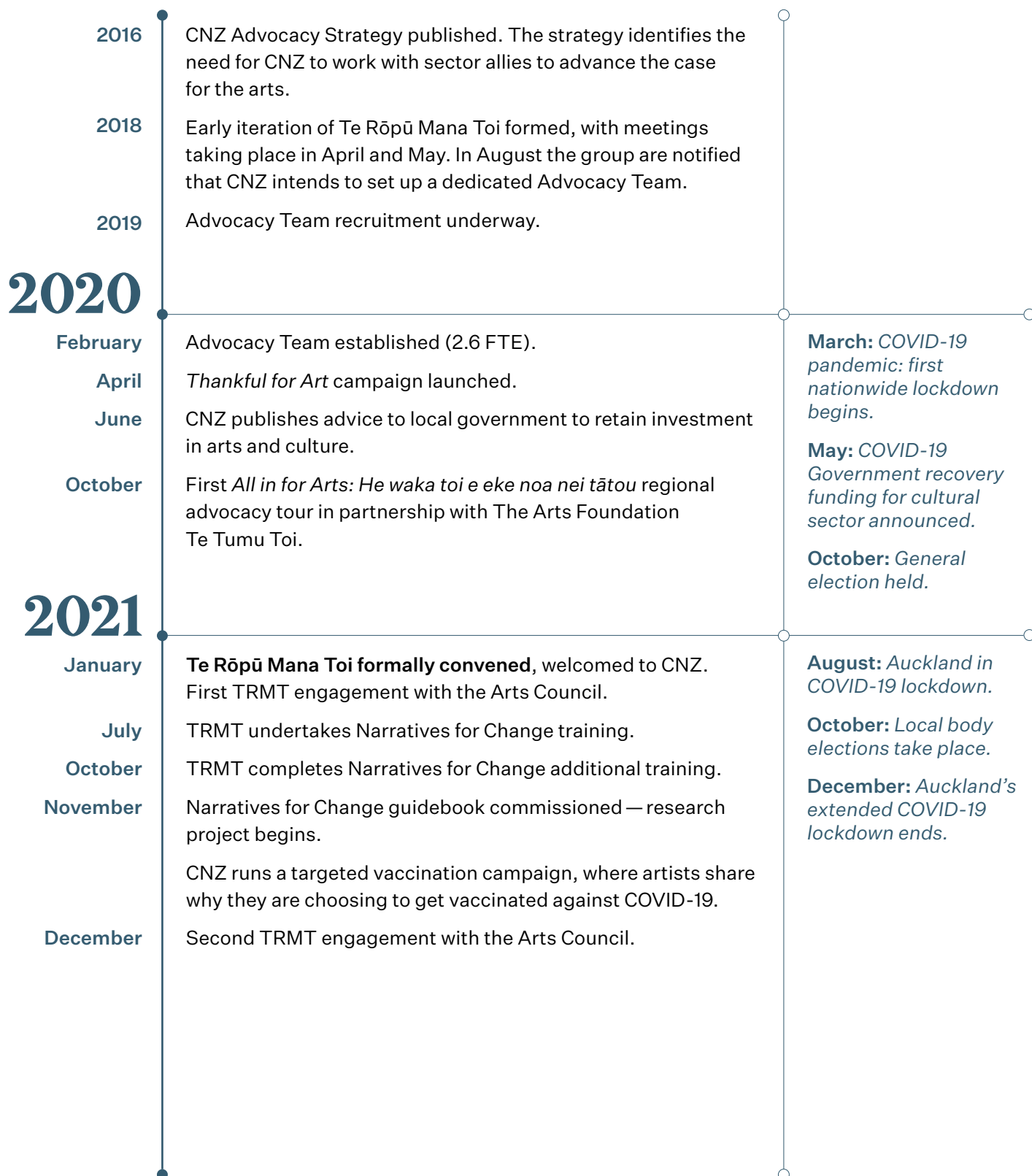
Ngāi Tahu, Rangitāne, Tainui/Waikato
Director, choreographer, dancer and outgoing
Chief Executive of Taki Rua

“Our great strength is realising that you can be an advocate for the wider arts and while it won’t necessarily benefit the specific artform that you’re passionate about, there will be wider benefits.”



Timeline

Establishment of Te Rōpū Mana Toi and Creative New Zealand advocacy projects





Thankful for Art campaign, 2020



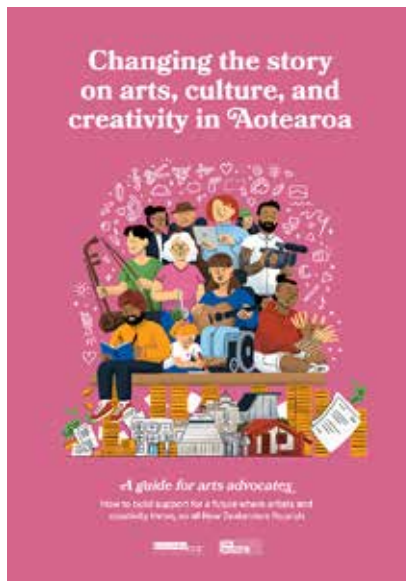
CNZ Advocacy Strategy, 2016



Targeted vaccination campaign 2021



Creative Wellbeing storytelling series, 2022



Narratives for Change guide for arts advocates



Te Rōpū Mana Toi hui, CNZ Wellington office, 2021

2022

- March** Due to COVID-19 the second iteration of *All in for Arts* is held online.
- April** *Creative Wellbeing* series launched, with stories about the benefits of arts and culture appearing in newspapers, on Stuff and Ensemble magazine, in partnership with *All Right?*
- August** Te Rōpū Mana Toi member Gretchen La Roche is appointed as Senior Manager Arts Development at Creative New Zealand, and steps down from TRMT.
- October** Third TRMT engagement with the Arts Council.
Narratives for Change guide for arts advocates launched.
- November** First Narratives for Change masterclass takes place.
Narratives presentation at Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) conference.

2023

- January** Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage publishes Long-Term Insights Briefing, which includes input and advice from TRMT.
- February** CNZ and TRMT members involved in sector engagement to support advocacy to Auckland Council, who have proposed significant cuts to arts and culture.
- March** TRMT members join PANNZ Arts Market advocacy session.
All in for Arts returns to in-person delivery with 10 events across the motu.
- April – October** Narratives for Change Community of Practice runs with involvement from TRMT members.
- May** *Art Work* campaign launched with The Spinoff, which showcases the working lives of artists. The campaign runs until late October.
- June** *Visibility Matters* research launched, which looks at arts and culture coverage in New Zealand media.
- August** Community of Practice meets with TRMT.
- September** TRMT presence at Nui Te Kōrero sector symposium, including keynote advocacy panel and breakout sessions.
- October** Masterclass wave two takes place.
Final facilitated Community of Practice session.
- November** Release of report *New Mirrors: Strengthening arts and culture media for Aotearoa New Zealand*.
Advocacy panel at Taituarā local government conference, with involvement for TRMT members.
- December** LGNZ Young Elected Members hui, featuring TRMT member.
Fourth TRMT engagement with the Arts Council.

August: *The Government lifts all remaining COVID-19 restrictions.*

October: *General election held.*



Narratives for Change masterclass, members went on to form an advocacy community of practice with support from CNZ and participation from TRMT



Visibility Matters report



Posters from the Art Work campaign



All In For Arts, 2023



New Mirrors report

Dolina Wehipeihana

Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Raukawa

**Producer, dance artist, Kaiārahi Māori of Performing Arts
Network New Zealand, Festival Co-Director of Tāwhiri**

“There is respect for each other’s
experiences and perspectives in the
room that is really important.”



The kaupapa of Te Rōpū Mana Toi

PURPOSE AND KAUPAPA

Te Rōpū Mana Toi was established to support Creative New Zealand to become a powerful advocate for the arts by advising and informing its advocacy work, and helping to prioritise and advance collective advocacy on matters of national significance to the arts sector in Aotearoa.

Te Rōpū Mana Toi supports CNZ to fulfil its legislative purpose to encourage, promote and support the arts for the benefit of all New Zealanders. Its work aligns with CNZ’s strategic direction² and its Advocacy Strategy, which includes the intention to work with allies to advocate for the value of the arts.

The remit for Te Rōpū initially encompassed four key areas: inform, advise, prioritise and advance. Its aims, as per its Terms of Reference are:

- **Articulating the value of the arts and their contribution to New Zealand society;**
- **Amplifying work already underway in the arts community to promote the arts;**
- **Growing support for the arts through recognition of its public value.**

“There is an imperative on us, given our job, and that’s laid down in the law, that we [CNZ] do play some kind of advocacy role. For me it was just about us getting much better organised about how we did this, with some strategy underpinning it to make sure that we were developing the right level of advocacy effort and that we were using it well.”

— Arts Council Member

“Advocacy is collective work, it’s a collective responsibility. We can’t do it alone. So it’s been really important that we bring sector voices and sector advice into our thinking to be able to advocate more strongly together.” — CNZ Staff Member

²[Creative New Zealand Statement of Intent 2022–2026](#)

Te Rōpū Mana Toi Waiata

Ki te kotahi te kākaho ka whati!
Ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati!
Te whakaoratanga o ngā mahi toi katoa
Mai te timatatanga, ki te whakamutunga
Te mana, te ihi, te wehi, te wana
Mai te whānau o Te Rōpū Mana Toi

*Working alone we are easily broken
Combining forces together we are unbreakable
Keeping all our artforms thriving
From the beginning to the end of time
Upholding the essence of the arts
Within the whānau of Te Rōpū Mana Toi*

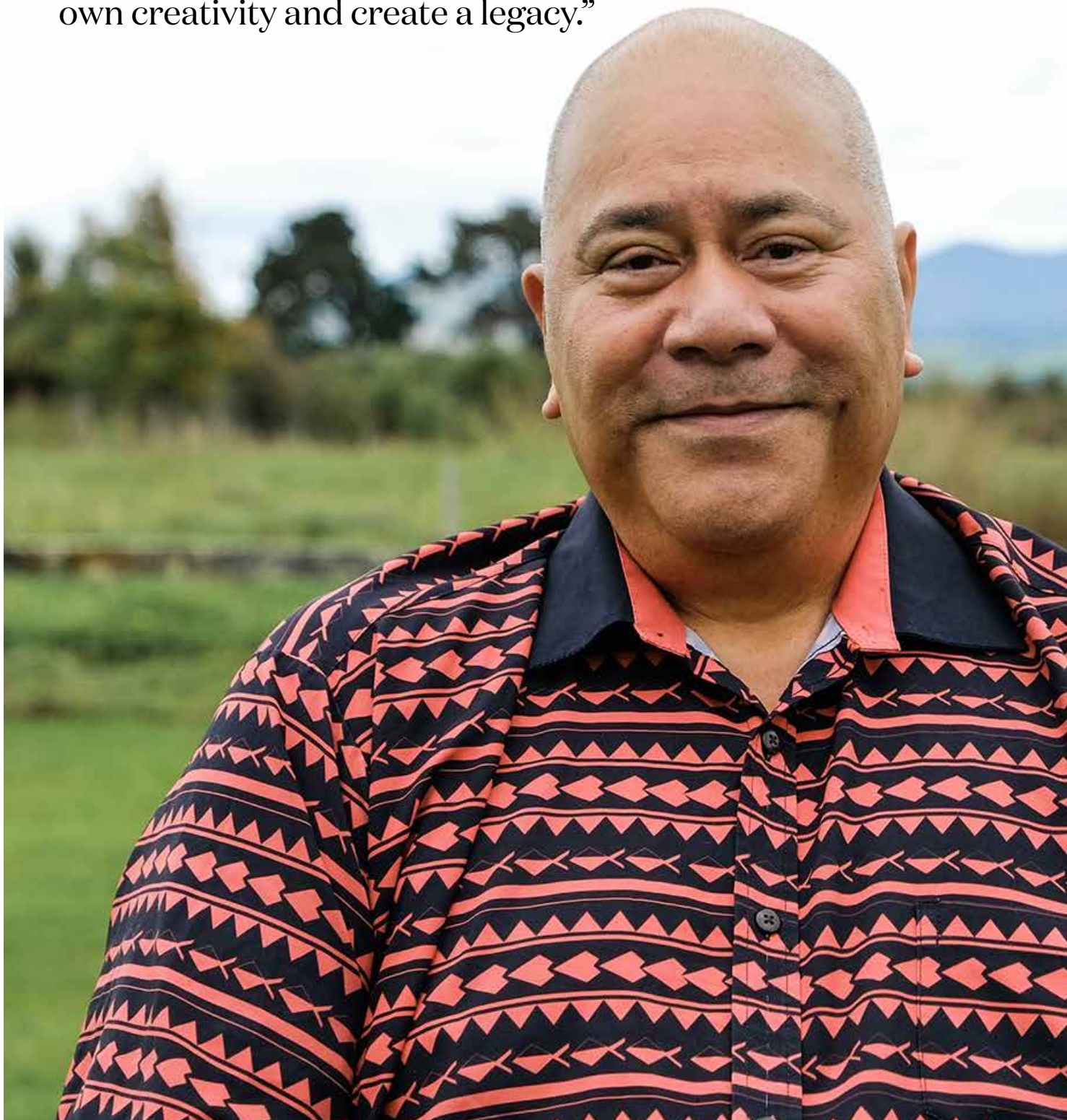


The waiata was created by Pati Umaga, Tānemahuta Gray and Rosabel Tan at a 2023 wānanga; with input from Te Rōpū Mana Toi. It speaks to the sense of purpose the group shares with Creative New Zealand, Toi Aotearoa and the arts community.

Fonoti Pati Umaga

QSM, musician and composer, Pacific and
whaikaha/disabled communities' advocate

“Writing the waiata was a highlight. There we were—me, Tāne and Rosabel—Samoan, Māori and Asian weaving this all together. I’m really grateful that we can bring our own creativity and create a legacy.”



The Guide – Changing the story on arts, culture and creativity in Aotearoa

A key headline success over this period has been the development of *Changing the story on arts, culture and creativity in Aotearoa: A Guide for Arts Advocates*, also known as The Guide.³ The Guide evolved from training provided by The Workshop called ‘Narratives for Change’⁴ — a short course ‘for people who want to understand and use better narratives for talking about the big issues.’ Te Rōpū and the Advocacy Team attended the training and then supported The Workshop to research, develop and launch a bespoke arts advocacy guide. The Guide is a publicly available tool for arts advocates which provides language and concepts to help with strategic advocacy. Te Rōpū have been integral to championing this work.

One of the principles of the Narratives for Change work is the need to build and maintain a collective vision. This prompted a series of masterclasses to provide training to other arts advocates from across Aotearoa. This in turn led to the development of a Community of Practice — a wider group of art advocates supported to learn together. This peer learning network is a tactical tool for longer term change.

“The advocacy guide is an awesome part of our kaupapa. To have the tools to be able to share that with other people is awesome. We’re still at the start of that work so it’s hard to claim it as a success or achievement at this point because we’ve just dipped our toe in the water—but the potential is huge.”

— Te Rōpū Member

³[Changing the story on arts, culture and creativity in Aotearoa: A Guide for Arts Advocates](#)

⁴[Narratives for Change, The Workshop](#)

REFLECTIONS ON THE GUIDE

“I had an email from a regional arts leader who’s been working on an arts and culture strategy saying how much The Guide helped in the conversation they were having with elected council members. That’s a profound example in a time when most places are cutting arts. These are the tiny ripples on the surface, but they are the things that build up into the big waves. And that’s where it has to start.” — Te Rōpū Member

“I feel like this conversation about advocacy is becoming much more aligned and joined up than it was previously because there’s more voices in the mix and part of the reason there’s more voices in the mix is through the Narratives for Change workshops.” — Te Rōpū Member

“The critical piece of Narratives for Change was on a relationship level. Bringing in professional researchers and advocates who usually work in other sectors is exciting and will have long-term impact on the advocacy capability of our sector.” — Te Rōpū Member

“Through the Community of Practice we’ve got trusted relationships, authentic engagement and something that’s of real value — the tools and strategies to help build and sustain advocacy within the sector. We need to wrap support around this work because now is a time when the collective story about the value of supporting the arts is going to be picked apart.” — Community of Practice member

“The Narratives for Change work is the best example of a tangible achievement and tangible impact. That is due both to the connections and relationships but also credibility. Te Rōpū are the ambassadors and messengers for that work which gives it credibility out there in the sector.” — CNZ Staff Member



The Guide — Changing the story on arts, culture and creativity in Aotearoa

The impact of Te Rōpū Mana Toi

The purpose of Te Rōpū Mana Toi is to support the strengthening of the arts and creative sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. The people we interviewed spoke of the wide range of impacts that Te Rōpū Mana Toi is having. By bringing a group of advocates together to strengthen arts advocacy, Te Rōpū Mana Toi has been a 'pebble in a pond' creating multiple ripples of impact:



Te Rōpū Mana Toi is the drop creating ripples of impact



Impact for individual members

- Stronger leaders
- Stronger relationships



Impact for Creative New Zealand

- A model for better engagement with the sector
- Greater confidence in advocating for the arts



Impact for the sector

- A more energised, collective voice
- More skills and tools to help people advocate



Impact for wider society

- Helping build a deeper understanding of the value of the arts in people's lives



IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Stronger leaders

“I get more out of Te Rōpū than I give to it. The conversations we have, and the kind of strategic thinking we need to do is configured for the whole sector.” — Te Rōpū Member

Te Rōpū has had an important capacity building element for arts sector leaders. One of the reciprocal elements of being a member of Te Rōpū is having access to training, leadership and the opportunity to build close working relationships with other arts leaders from different parts of the sector. There has also been significant upskilling in individuals' advocacy capabilities.

“I’m usually thinking at a regional level, or only for one discipline or area. Understanding the potential of advocacy at a national higher level has been a real eye-opener and something that has really stretched me and made me think differently.” — Te Rōpū Member

“One of the personal challenges that I’ve had — and I think it’s been a challenge for Te Rōpū as well — is just stepping out of the slipstream of very quick response work. It’s been a real thing of personal and professional growth to step into this bigger time scale. Within te ao Māori people talk of mokopuna decisions, right? Or another context might be thinking about being a tree and putting down roots and the time it takes to grow and strengthen and stretch up to reach the sky. That’s the scale that we need to operate on, because it takes time to create sustained change to hearts and minds.” — CNZ Staff Member

“Our great strength is realising that you can be an advocate for the wider arts and while it won’t necessarily benefit the specific artform that you’re passionate about, there will be wider benefits.”

— Te Rōpū Member

IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Stronger relationships

“I think the greatest achievement has been creating the space for these relationships to form. To me that is going to have such a profound impact for everybody as we continue on whether we’re part of Te Rōpū or not.” — Te Rōpū Member

Building a network of connected and engaged advocates is about building strong relationships. For the last three years Te Rōpū have been working closely and collaboratively with the Advocacy Team. The relational aspect to this work cannot be underestimated. Members believe that the connection, trust and confidence built through these relationships will have a lasting impact on the sector.

“So much of the value of Te Rōpū Mana Toi has been forming a group that has gelled together, not just ten individuals sitting around the table. They are a group who have learned and grown together and they’ve improved their own advocacy skills and also the advocacy work that they do.” — CNZ Staff Member

“We’ve been given the time to have the depth of relationships that we require in order to have some of the hard conversations about our work. We’ve purposely built trust — it couldn’t have been successful if we hadn’t built trust and hadn’t been really honest with each other. I think that’s really rare.” — Te Rōpū Member

“What we have now is a network of advocates, woven together through a shared approach to advocacy. They are carried by each other, they don’t all have to do everything. We have the ability for the group to hold the work collectively.” — CNZ Staff Member



Meeting of advocactes — Te Rōpū and Narratives for Change
Community of Practice, Auckland, August 2023

Karl Chitham

Ngā Puhi, Te Uriroroi, ONZM
Head of Arts and Culture at Hutt City Council
and Director of the Dowse Art Museum

“It does feel like there’s more appetite for collaboration and for a unified voice than there ever was before.”





IMPACT FOR CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND

A model for better engagement with the sector

“There’s a wider benefit too for CNZ — Te Rōpū has spearheaded a new approach to working together with the sector on important kaupapa. Manga Tipua, Toi Ora, and our engagement around contestable grants all come later. Te Rōpū showed us the proof and the benefits of that approach.” —CNZ Staff Member

The members of Te Rōpū Mana Toi are united in their commitment to advocacy for the arts. Bringing these leading voices together has amplified and strengthened the advocacy undertaken by the organisation. It has also provided a model for advisory into Creative New Zealand and built a process of developing collective advice.

“The success of having an Advisory Group is that it embeds a work plan and a working culture. I’ve worked with other advisory groups or been on groups where the consultation is one-off or at a particular time to serve a particular need or outcome. With Te Rōpū Mana Toi the outcome is collectively decided so it comes out of the fact of having Te Rōpū.”

— Te Rōpū Member

Greater confidence in advocating for the arts

“Since our work got started it feels like there’s more connection, energy and momentum for advocacy and maybe we’ve contributed a tiny bit towards that. And we have a greater confidence about making noise.” — Te Rōpū Member

One of the impacts of the work of Te Rōpū is promoting and deepening the value of arts advocacy. The potential of collective advocacy (as opposed to issue-based advocacy) is that it builds confidence in the approach, and helps build confidence in the teams delivering the work inside and outside Creative New Zealand.

“We look at advocacy work as being one of the success areas of CNZ. It’s a combination of a good reason for doing it, plus a good strategy, plus good people inside our place, great people who would join the whānau and good applications of their effort. The right ingredients, right recipe, right time, right kind of oven!” — Arts Council Member

“They’ve been our guiding lights — their support and their encouragement and their questions and their willingness to come in behind the work and stand up front of the work has been phenomenal.” — CNZ Staff Member



IMPACT FOR THE ARTS SECTOR

A more energised, collective voice

“I think the most important thing is that we’re building a collective approach—that our advocacy is strengths-based, that it’s future-focused, that it’s informed by the priorities and needs of the sector.” — CNZ Staff Member

The shock of the COVID pandemic acted as a powerful reminder of the need to come together in the face of major threat and change. A powerful outcome of building and embedding the Advocacy Team and Te Rōpū during this period has been the resulting elevation of advocacy as a conversation amongst the creative community. Advocacy has a wide remit and there is now a deeper understanding of the need for collective advocacy in the sector.

“Many more people are conscious of advocacy now. They’re aware of it, talking about it — that’s a lot to do with both the work of the CNZ Advocacy Team but also the contribution of Te Rōpū.” — CNZ Staff Member

“We’re starting to see results from our ambition to grow the choir. We don’t all need to be saying exactly the same thing, but we are speaking with collective spirit and we are leading with vision, we are talking about the strengths. This is the power of working together and understanding that value of the arts proposition.” — CNZ Staff Member

More skills and tools to help people advocate

“It’s such a good recipe for how advocacy can work really well in that you can give people the tools, who can then give more people the tools to go on and advocate—and you can see a difference.”

— Arts Council Member

Building a collective of advocates is enhanced when they have the skills and tools to enact the work of advocacy. The Narratives for Change training and Community of Practice network emerging from this approach are powerful steps toward movement building that strengthen the ability of this work to make a significant impact.

“Going through the Narratives for Change workshop and understanding how it is such impactful work made us ask ‘How can we apply this to the arts and culture sector? How do we turn this into a resource that anyone can access — including the wider sector? The Greens Manifesto pulled from The Guide and used the language of ‘art, creativity and culture’. Getting that language into a political party’s manifesto, if that’s not a win then I don’t know what is!” — CNZ Staff Member



IMPACT FOR WIDER SOCIETY

With so much collective commitment to advocacy, there was always ambition that the impact of Te Rōpū would extend beyond the group themselves and CNZ. Whilst three years is a relatively short time frame to consider any societal impact, there are early indications that this work is creating important ripples in terms of wider perception of the arts.

Helping build a deeper understanding of the value of the arts in people's lives

“This is a long game. Changing mindsets isn’t something that happens easily or overnight, it only happens with consistent messaging.”

— Te Rōpū Member

“I think that Te Rōpū, in connection with the Advocacy Team, has seen greater engagement with local government around New Zealand, which makes a big difference. When those small communities hear from Creative New Zealand and are asked to support stuff that’s happening locally, that carries a lot of weight.” — Te Rōpū Member

“We’ve got really big goals around the advocacy work around the value of the arts and public perception so I feel like we’re only just getting going on that piece of work, which is about moving the rock and shifting public opinion in order to gather support to make upstream changes. There have been short term wins but the work itself is a longer burn.”

— Te Rōpū Member

“The biggest impact that I’ve seen is a slow change of mindset within local government. Being on Te Rōpū is really empowering because you are with other leaders from regional New Zealand. When I sit in Chambers and I talk about how I’m on a CNZ Advisory board for advocacy they all go ‘What? Hastings?’ because it’s a national board. It gives us in the region so much more status and reinforces that it’s really important to be an arts, creativity and culture advocate.” — Te Rōpū Member

Elise Sterback

Former Director of Basement Theatre and PhD candidate
at the University of Auckland

“Advocacy is all about empowerment right?
It’s about empowering people to have a voice.”



The values, model and tikanga of Te Rōpū Mana Toi

Aspects of the model and tikanga for Te Rōpū Mana Toi have emerged organically over these first years — and continue to evolve as time goes on. Conversations with members suggest that several core principles underpin how the group works and learns together. These principles have not been formally defined, but represent values developed (through workshops and time spent together) and have come to be held collectively by the group.

They include:

- **Multiplicity and authenticity**
- **Collaboration + co-design**
- **Shared responsibility**
- **Clarity of mandate and relationship**
- **Connection + alignment**
- **Culturally grounded approaches**
- **Ako — learning from each other and together.**

“Independence, respect and the deep, deep knowledge and mana are the key values that I have come to see over and over again in the group.”

— CNZ Staff Member



Te Rōpū hui, Creative Waikato, June 2022

MULTIPLICITY AND AUTHENTICITY

“You need people with the right intentions, open minds, and with a sense of willingness to explore, even when we have doubt.” — Te Rōpū Member

From its inception, Te Rōpū was intentionally drawn from different parts of a broad and diverse arts sector. As well as representing specific artforms, members come from different cultural backgrounds, different age groups and different parts of Aotearoa. What unites them is a willingness to bring their ‘whole selves’ to the table, and act with honesty and integrity amongst peers and colleagues.

“In the end you want to have advocates on the bridge who are willing to be part of the support conversation. So I’m about opening the door for people to come and run in rather than slamming it in their face and going, you know, come back when you’re decolonised.” — Te Rōpū Member

“It’s important to have voices from the sector who are able to bring those perspectives from different areas of the arts industry, different artforms, different roles and different connections. Whether it’s an artistic voice or the voice of someone that’s working with local council or a voice of an organisation or a voice of a particular artform or particular cultural perspective through to the conversation.” — Te Rōpū Member

COLLABORATION + CO-DESIGN

“This sort of structure requires the right amount of time together to build those relationships and start operating in a trust-based way.” — CNZ Staff Member

From the start, Te Rōpū were conscious about how they wanted to be and work together. There was no blueprint for the process, the group had to co-design what their collaboration would look like over the course of their time together.

For the first three hui, an external facilitator was engaged to help guide the conversations. This was found to be a helpful process and this support role was continued. There is potential to utilise alternative cultural facilitation models in future iterations of Te Rōpū to draw out different ideas, ways of relating and different cultural paradigms.

*“There was a lot of work in the initial stages to put thought into the way that we work and what we think is important. When I’m involved in the various hui or activities the values that I see are manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, auahatanga, creativity, good communication and curiosity.”
— Te Rōpū Member*

“Facilitation is so important because it helps keep us on task. When the conversation is meaty and worthwhile the facilitator allows us to move further in that direction, encourages us to continue or expand, then steers us when we don’t.” — Te Rōpū Member

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

“When you’re co-hosting you’ve got a foot in and a foot out and really it feels very much like you’re all on the same playing field. You’re sharing the responsibility for the structure and focus.”

—Te Rōpū Member

One of the principles that sits at the heart of Te Rōpū Mana Toi is that of co-responsibility for managing and hosting the group hui. Within the first few months of being together, the group agreed that there would be no single person in the role of chair. Instead, members of Te Rōpū share responsibility for ‘co-hosting’ each hui. Firstly, this means the time and effort required to plan, structure and hold each gathering is fairly distributed. Secondly, sharing this function allows for different modes of leadership and energy to be offered to the group.

Te Rōpū also requested early on that meetings should move around different locations in Aotearoa — both urban and regional. To date, the group have met in Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch, Wellington and Wairarapa. Most meetings have been hosted at CNZ offices, allowing access to the organisation and enabling other CNZ teams to engage directly with Te Rōpū. Some have been hosted outside of CNZ offices, changing the energy and dynamic of the sessions.

“The thing about co-hosting is that it challenges everybody in the group to take that lead role. While we’re all leaders in different areas, I think it challenges us all to think about our job as members of Te Rōpū Mana Toi in a different way and to think about what it is to host the meeting.”

— Te Rōpū Member

“There hasn’t been any ego in the group. I think that tag team thing has been powerful. If something happens, someone would step in and we would be able to do the juggling.” — Te Rōpū Member

“It helps to bring people together for full days — and actually a lot of the time I feel like wow, wouldn’t it be great to do a second day and keep going! We’re not in that environment where you’re only together for 2-3 hours and there’s time pressure on — that’s helpful.” — CNZ Staff Member

Megan Peacock-Coyle

Manager Arts & Culture at Heretaunga Hastings
District Council and Co-Chair of PANNZ

“This is a long game. Changing mindsets isn’t something that happens easily or overnight, it only happens with consistent messaging.”



Rosabel Tan

Writer, strategist, producer and director of Satellites

“I think the greatest achievement has been creating the space for these relationships to form. To me that is going to have such a profound impact for everybody as we continue on whether we’re part of Te Rōpū or not.”



CLARITY OF MANDATE AND RELATIONSHIP

“You need the right Skipper—you know, the right leadership of the group.” — Te Rōpū Member

Having a clearly defined mandate, and a well-defined, positive relationship with the CNZ Advocacy Team has been intrinsic to the success of Te Rōpū. As the two entities exist side by side, being clear on the scope of work was important to ensure a productive and satisfying collaboration. By and large, this has been achieved — with many Te Rōpū members attributing this to the drive, motivation and thoughtful participation of the Advocacy Manager.

“It took some time at the start to understand that our role isn’t about doing, it’s an advising and discussing role. We inform ‘the doing’. It’s about advising and doing the dreaming work, but with a laser focus. We are linking different perspectives with similar mindsets to explore possibilities.” — Te Rōpū Member

“The flow of ideas and advice between Te Rōpū and the Advocacy Team works well when you have built that relationship and confidence in each other’s ability. Increasingly you start to see the magic happen because lots of those barriers that surround groups when you’re working together melt because you’ve established those relationships to get the best out of each other.” — CNZ Staff Member

CONNECTION + ALIGNMENT

**“The people that you work with in both the Advocacy Team and in Te Rōpū Mana Toi are the real joy and that’s the thing I don’t want to give up.”
—Te Rōpū Member**

The particular alchemy of this group is a consistent theme from the interviews. The strength of this group is the relational bonds, the shared commitment to advocacy work, and alignment in how Te Rōpū work together despite coming from different places, disciplines and roles.

“The thing with relationships is it only matters if there’s an ongoing reciprocity to that relationship — that’s what forms a deep and trusting relationship.” — Te Rōpū Member

*“The relationships that we bring externally and those relationships internally have been very easy and useful to connect with. The whakawhanaungatanga of our whānau has been really strong.”
— Te Rōpū Member*

“There’s something about that alchemy of when you bring people together in relationship. I think that in our meetings and in our gatherings around the motu, and in our wānanga we’ve managed to find those moments of time where we can connect in those special ways that are outside of just meeting agendas.” — Te Rōpū Member

CULTURALLY GROUNDED APPROACHES

“There is a respect for each other’s experiences and perspectives in the room that is really important.”

—Te Rōpū Member

Respect for cultural process and diversity sits at the heart of Te Rōpū Mana Toi. The tikanga of Te Rōpū has been held by senior Māori leaders in the group, led by Tānemahuta Gray. Tānemahuta’s mana and sensitivity to this role, as well as his ability to respond to the needs of the group has been vital to the tone of each hui. Having members of Te Rōpū willing and able to navigate these processes with the group has enabled deep relationships, cross-cultural understanding and high levels of trust to develop.

“I see myself as a bridge builder and someone who can walk in both [te ao Māori and Pākehā] worlds. You have to find the space that people are willing to meet at on the bridge and take the journey with you — it can be challenging. Showing them the potential empowerment and transformation that can happen is just going to enrich their lives so much more.” — Tānemahuta Gray

“The waiata was a wonderful thing that came out of the wānanga and is something that brings the collective together through song.”

— Te Rōpū Member

AKO — LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER, AND TOGETHER

“What’s been so unique and special is having a different kind of relationship into CNZ, that is not funding or advisor based or being the client but actually being an ally and being a collaborator and a colleague. This is what gets lost in a competitive funding paradigm.” — Te Rōpū Member

Te Rōpū was designed to enable reciprocity and shared learning. Members have found having a different perspective on the work of CNZ enlightening and valuable. Working with colleagues from different parts of the wider sector also enables the generation and strengthening of collective learning. The time Te Rōpū have spent together has helped them build their comfort with not knowing what the outcomes of the work might be, and allowing for what may come out of an iterative process.

“It’s a powerful reciprocal experience — to have these relationships and get strategic updates on advocacy and other key shifts in the organisation and the political sphere. We then bring all of our updates together and start generating collective knowledge, collective strategy, collective visioning and intention.” — Te Rōpū Member

Looking ahead

“I think inevitably it will evolve into something slightly different. A different relationship and a different set of outcomes.” — Te Rōpū Member

This first three years has been a solid grounding for Te Rōpū and has been primarily focused on building foundational work and relationships. This has also led to significant insights into how to do this work well. Looking ahead, there is also an awareness that the group will continue to develop in the coming years.

“A lot of the work was done in probably our own identity building of what we are as a group and what we stand for. And in a way that may see its full strength come through 3-5 years from now if it continues on. I think that was kind of the foundational work and hopefully new people that do come on will get the benefit of that, but also create their own direction for where it wants to head.” — Te Rōpū Member

“Early on, Caren Rangi — then Acting Chair of the Arts Council came and spoke to Te Rōpū — ‘How do we change the narrative together?’ That was one of her challenges. The second was ‘successful advocacy needs a choir’ so those are the two things that have become the work over the last three years.” — CNZ Staff Member

“I think we are constantly questioning our role and how that shifts and changes because advocacy as a function is constantly shifting and changing.” — Te Rōpū Member

“Three years ago I didn't know the journey we were going to go on, but I knew that if we put the right people in the room together that we would figure it out together. That we would navigate it together. That if we know where we are headed to we'll find a way and I have the same faith that we will continue to navigate.” — CNZ Staff Member

“I want to keep reminding Te Rōpū — and embedding this in their Terms of Reference — that there is real value in Te Rōpū being a conscience for the sector back in its conversations with Council, and in laying down some challenges to Council based on what they are hearing — because we just don't get that enough.” — Arts Council Member

Dr Jeremy Mayall

Composer, musician, researcher and CEO of Creative Waikato

“You need people with the right intentions and open minds. People with a sense of willingness to explore, even when we have doubt.”



Challenges for Te Rōpū Mana Toi

“Having a well-resourced and stronger advocacy advisory group has encouraged us to keep the momentum going because we’ve been so busy ourselves. The work has been done by the kaimahi so that we can come in and provide expertise.”

— Te Rōpū Member

The work of Te Rōpū and arts advocacy is not without its challenges. Advocacy requires dedicated time and resources, the work is complex and often involves shifting public mindsets and embedding strategic goals. For Te Rōpū there are added challenges. Being the external arts advocacy advisory to the national arts development agency — who also resources the group — raises questions of independence, representation and mandate. Members also grapple with perception issues from the sector, the ability to critique and challenge the organisation and structure of arts funding.

The interviews with participants identified two primary challenges:

- **Issues of representation and mandate;**
- **Issues related to the resources needed to sustain Te Rōpū.**



Jeremy Mayall and Dolina Wehipeihana, promotional preparation for The Guide

ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION AND MANDATE

“I think the way we were chosen was the best way that it could be done at the time. I don’t think there’s any right or wrong way as long as you’ve got enough diversity in the group so that it feels like there’s enough touchpoints from the different ethnicities and communities in our sector, that they feel like there’s a voice.” — Te Rōpū Member

The issue of mandate and representation is a big question for Te Rōpū. The current group is neither directly mandated by nor representative of the sector, and this is a cause of deep reflection and conflicting feelings for many existing members.

“The question of mandate always comes up in every advocacy group I’ve ever been a part of and it was present in this group too. This feeling of ‘Who are we, why are we in this room together? Why have we been chosen and not others?’ I think we need to have that conversation and look at what it means to have chains of accountability and representation when it comes to advocacy.” — Te Rōpū Member

“Mandate is complicated. We are independents, but we’re actually contracted and paid by CNZ to participate so we become part of the system. That’s where I find it the most complicated — you become used to the system and then you become part of it. So how can I continue to bring my fresh eyes?” — Te Rōpū Member

RESOURCE — TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY

A key element to the set up and maintenance of Te Rōpū is resourcing it — with time, money and energy to do this complex and distributed work.

“In the first version of Te Rōpū there was a lot of volatility and resistance and that had a lot to do with not being paid. In this Rōpū we are passionate about advocacy and are excited to be at the table, but being paid helps that. It values your time, values who you are, what you’re giving. It allows you to dedicate time and energy to the kaupapa.” — Te Rōpū Member

“I feel like Te Rōpū Mana Toi needs to be an even stronger wraparound for the Advocacy Team. With funding cuts on all fronts, in jobs, education, local government, and central government and the significant impacts on the creative sector, I feel like the next steps are going to be harder than the ones we’ve taken.” — Te Rōpū Member

“Everyone in the group has been incredibly committed to moving the mahi of advocacy forward. As a group we are all doers. And the problem with doers is that they’re always doing. We’re all, without exception, over-committed. We have put other things to the side in order to do Te Rōpū work which acknowledges the Advocacy Manager’s ability to bring everybody on the journey, but it also acknowledges that we were all ready to give to this kaupapa.” — Te Rōpū Member

Kim Morton

Mental health advocate and Director of Ōtautahi Creative Spaces

“Since our work got started it feels like there’s more connection, energy and momentum for advocacy and maybe we’ve contributed a tiny bit towards that. And we have a greater confidence about making noise.”



Opportunities for Te Rōpū Mana Toi

“It’s growing a coalition of willing people—and even if you’re not in Te Rōpū at the time you’re part of the collective of Te Rōpū. It’s that Hotel California vibe—you can check out any time you like but you can never leave.” — Te Rōpū Member

The findings of this report show that the establishment of Te Rōpū Mana Toi has been successful, and there is appetite for it to continue. The role Te Rōpū has found themselves most useful in — and most comfortable inhabiting — has been to advise and support the work of the CNZ Advocacy Team. The questions that arise now are around what is needed into the future. Who else needs to be involved and how might momentum be maintained? What could this work inform or become, with some even bigger thinking?

Participants suggest that there are a number of opportunities for the future:

- **Grow the whānau of advocates;**
- **Go deeper and wider;**
- **Dream bigger.**



Te Rōpū Mana Toi group photo, 2023

GROW THE WHĀNAU OF ADVOCATES

“It won’t work if all nine people stop and nine new people come on. If three people go and three new people arrive, you’ve still got six people who understand what’s going on who can awahi the new people through.” — Te Rōpū Member

Te Rōpū membership began as a one year term. However, it was quickly understood that this timeframe was not tenable and for deeper impact, the tenure needed to be longer. Current members were asked to make a commitment to Te Rōpū for three years, with renewal taking place in groups of three members at a time to support continuity of knowledge and sustained engagement. This raises the question of how to retain the insights of departing members, whilst also keeping the energy fresh in the group. What might a wider whānau of advocates look like, and how might it operate?

“What does Te Rōpū and the advocacy community that’s been nurtured over the last three years look like now? Where might it head? What might the role be for the Community of Practice people, the masterclass people, the people who are leaving Te Rōpū? How are they going to stay connected to the work? How does that network and community grow and emerge? Because that’s ultimately the enduring legacy of the group.”

— CNZ Staff Member

GO DEEPER AND WIDER

“The more you can distribute the importance and the passion for advocating for the arts, the more you grow the ability to do bigger and better things.”

— CNZ Staff Member

There is also an awareness that the ‘choir’ needs to grow and reach out more widely into different communities of arts practice. What might be possible with an even greater reach, and an even greater breadth of thought incorporated into Te Rōpū? What might other cultural facilitation modes offer to future iterations?

“The opportunity now is to keep building on the work that’s been established, to keep growing the choir, deepening the influence, and to keep growing the network of advocates who share an approach. We’re shifting gear out of this foundational phase into a ‘building momentum’ phase.” — CNZ Staff Member

“How well are we establishing relationships with younger people and understanding their aspirations? The Advocacy Team and Te Rōpū have made wonderful spaces to explore things so I have confidence that they would be able to explore how young people’s voices could be heard in the future.” — Arts Council Member

DREAM BIGGER

“You want to kind of insulate the mana and wairua of advocating for the arts away from changes in government or changes in council chambers so that the community can exist and do its work. You want it to get to a point where it’s thriving enough to withstand that stuff that absorbs lots of time and attention.” — CNZ Staff Member

A number of members of Te Rōpū expressed concerns for the group maintaining the advances of the last three years with future changes in government and funding. Others shared ideas for growing momentum and the potential for an independent national advocacy body. It was suggested that this bigger picture thinking could be part of the next iteration of Te Rōpū.

“This group has been great for this establishment phase, for developing a rōpū model and providing the Advocacy Team with enthusiastic support. We were the right group for that. We’ve stayed mainly in the advice space and I see the value that’s played and what that enables in terms of the Advocacy Team’s work. I still hold the dream and vision for the potential of a national advocacy voice to emerge from the beginnings of an Advisory Group like this.” — Te Rōpū Member

“The biggest thing for the future is using this platform to enable the kind of prototyping and elevating of a national independent advocacy voice for the sector in which things like greater investment to CNZ and the arts in New Zealand can be advocated. A space where we can advocate for whatever we need from the Ministry in terms of research and policy development.”

— Te Rōpū Member

Gretchen La Roche

Senior Manager Arts Development, Creative New Zealand,
member of Te Rōpū Mana Toi Jan 2021 – Aug 2022

“Many more people are conscious of advocacy now. They’re aware of it, talking about it—that’s a lot to do with both the work of the CNZ advocacy team but also the contribution of Te Rōpū.”



Conclusion

Mapping the journey of Te Rōpū Mana Toi over three years has shown the value of collective advocacy at a number of levels. This report highlights the personal and organisational impacts that Te Rōpū Mana Toi has generated. The hope is that in sharing the journey of learning and discovery of Te Rōpū will have value for others in the arts, culture and creative sectors, and across Aotearoa.

There are impacts created by this model for individuals, Creative New Zealand, the arts sector, and out in wider society. And there is so much potential to develop it further in the coming years.

Future priorities of Te Rōpū include maintaining and accelerating momentum, continued strengthening of structures and process, growing a wider whānau of advocates, addressing issues of representation and mandate and — vitally — continuing to resource and support this work.

**Advocating for the arts needs a bigger choir.
Te Rōpū Mana Toi is enabling that choir to grow.**

“I describe the Palangi term for advocacy as ‘communications’—that is one person, or one entity like Creative New Zealand, singing about how fabulous the arts are. That’s one-way traffic. Real advocacy is five million people singing ‘We love the arts’—that’s advocacy. Empowering five million voices.” — CNZ Staff Member

Contributors

Te Rōpū Mana Toi Members — All appointed 2021

Karl Chitham, ONZM

(Nga Puhi, Te Uriroroi)

Head of Arts and Culture at Hutt City Council and Director of the Dowse Art Museum.

Tānemahuta Gray

(Ngāi Tahu, Rangitāne, Tainui/Waikato)

Director, choreographer, dancer and outgoing Chief Executive of Taki Rua.

Dr Jeremy Mayall

Composer, musician, researcher and CEO of Creative Waikato.

Kim Morton

Mental health advocate and director of Ōtautahi Creative Spaces.

Megan Peacock-Coyle

Manager Arts & Culture at Heretaunga Hastings District Council and Co-Chair of PANNZ.

Elise Sterback

Former director of Basement Theatre and PhD candidate with the Centre for Art and Social Transformation at the University of Auckland.

Rosabel Tan

Writer, strategist, producer and director of Satellites.

Fonoti Pati Umaga, QSM

Musician and composer, Pacific and whaikaha/disabled communities' advocate.

Dolina Wehipeihana

(Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Raukawa)

Producer, dance artist, Kaiārahi Māori of Performing Arts Network New Zealand, Kia Mau Festival General Manager from 2020 – July 2023, Festival Co-Director of Tāwhiri from 2024.

NB: Gretchen La Roche

Former CE of Chamber Music New Zealand, was a member of Te Rōpū until joining Creative New Zealand as Senior Manager, Arts Development in September 2022.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

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Tracey Monastra

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External Stakeholders

Meg Williams

Jane Yonge

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Appendix 1 – a resource for others working with collective advocacy approaches

The experience of Te Rōpū Mana Toi has offered many lessons in the work of collective advocacy. Below is a summary of these that may be of use to others exploring this approach.

Considerations for collective advocacy	Guiding questions
Provide clarity of purpose / kaupapa	What are we aiming for? What are our guiding principles and aspirations? What ethical frameworks will we work within?
Establish the membership and mandate of the group	Who should be on this journey with us? How do we consciously build in diversity? What is in our realm? And what is outside?
Enable participants to co-design how the group operates	How do we want to organise our time together? What models of engagement work for our collective? How do we foster conscious collaboration? What are our shared responsibilities?
Ensure a solid cultural grounding	What tikanga will guide the group? How will the space be held and by whom?
Prioritise trust and relationship building	How will we make time to develop mutual respect? How do we spend time together outside set agendas?
Hold fast to the core values of the work	What are the principles that will always guide the work that we do together?
Build in reciprocal learning	What can the group and the hosting organisation offer each other? How can we learn and grow together?
Sustain and resource the approach	Is there long term organisational support? Do we have support from leadership? How do we sustain this work?
Prioritise both tangible outcomes and long term aspirations	What will demonstrate the value of this approach in the short term? What are our long term aspirations?

Appendix 2 – notes

A note on context

Interviews were undertaken at the end of 2023. This was a time of particular turmoil for the sector.

In late October, Creative New Zealand announced a likely significant decrease in sector funding due to a tightening fiscal environment, the end of the government's COVID funding, and changes to the way the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Te Puna Tahua allocates its funding. This was followed by the announcement that CNZ's Chief Executive Stephen Wainwright would step down from his role in 2024 after more than three decades service. This will coincide with the end of the current term of the Arts Council Chair, Caren Rangī. In November, CNZ announced a new model for CNZ contestable funding and a new government was elected.

This churn and change was the backdrop for the conversations recorded here.

Te Rōpū Mana Toi — Key functions

Te Rōpū Mana Toi provides advice to Creative New Zealand on how to advance its advocacy aims, as set out in the Advocacy Strategy.

Te Rōpū:

- Offers its collective knowledge and experience to inform Creative New Zealand's advocacy agenda, including refreshing its advocacy strategy.
- Prioritises key advocacy issues that align with the collective needs of the arts community and advises on how to advance these.
- Identifies key advocacy messages and appropriate audiences for those messages.
- Helps Creative New Zealand to build an understanding of the contribution the arts are making across a diversity of artforms and communities.
- Identifies opportunities for Creative New Zealand to support existing work underway within the arts community to advocate for the value of the arts.
- Promotes the value of ngā toi Māori and Pacific arts consistently within the messaging and workstreams of the group.
- Increases understanding of Creative New Zealand's advocacy work and the work of Te Rōpū within the arts community.
- Maintains links with external stakeholders (ie, the arts community, local authorities and other funders, partners and collaborators) to promote greater understanding of the value of the arts, and to grow support for the arts.
- Advances collective advocacy work that resonates at a national level.

NGĀ MIHI NUI

This report was written and designed by Toi Āria: Design for Public Good.
Our thanks to Te Rōpū Mana Toi, the CNZ Advocacy Team and various other stakeholders for providing their time and expertise.
Thank you for letting us come on this journey of discovery with you.

Anna Brown, Hannah Smith, Hanna Breurkes and Jean Donaldson

2024