

27 April 2025

Tauranga City Council  
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E te Kaunihera, tēnā koutou katoa

**Submission to:** Tauranga City Council  
**Subject:** Draft Annual Plan 2025/26  
**From:** Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa (Creative New Zealand)

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Tauranga City Council's draft Annual Plan 2025/26.
2. We thank Council for its ongoing support and celebration of arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori in the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan (LTP), to help create a vibrant Tauranga.
3. Arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi are vital parts of communities in Tauranga. They contribute significant economic, social and cultural benefits to the city, with the city's creative ecosystem providing essential infrastructure for strong, prosperous, connected and healthy communities.
4. Secure and stable investment from Council in cultural infrastructure, services and activities is essential for a healthy arts and culture ecosystem in Tauranga. **We strongly encourage Council to continue investing in arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi in the Annual Plan.** This enables communities and mana whenua to continue making valuable contributions to life in Tauranga, and its growth as a city.
5. We share your aspirations for Tauranga and look forward to working with you to realise the potential of arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi to support your communities to thrive. Our collective approach ensures arts, culture and creativity can deliver value to all New Zealanders and communities throughout Aotearoa.

#### **Arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori are vital parts of local communities**

6. From our most recent *New Zealanders and the Arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi* research in 2023, we know that New Zealanders' personal connection with the arts continues to grow.<sup>1</sup> Many feel the arts contribute strongly to their mental health and wellbeing. New Zealanders are also increasingly recognising the economic benefits of the arts, and support for public funding of the arts, including funding from councils, is higher than ever.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Zealanders and the Arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi* (2023). Creative New Zealand.

7. The evidence tells us that art, creativity and ngā toi Māori are good for us, our whānau and our communities.
  - Engagement with arts, culture and creativity positively enhances wellbeing, and means communities are more likely to have strong connections to community, land and place.<sup>2</sup>
  - Two-thirds of New Zealanders believe arts facilities are important to create a vibrant place to live.<sup>3</sup>
  - The creative sector contributed \$17.5 billion to New Zealand's GDP in 2024.<sup>4</sup>
8. Young people, Deaf and disabled, Māori, and Pacific peoples participate in the arts most frequently, and are more likely to agree that the arts are important to their personal wellbeing. LGBTQIA+ communities also participate highly in the arts and need more accessible and inclusive environments to support their engagement.
9. In the Bay of Plenty region, our research shows that Bay of Plenty residents are strong advocates of the arts, with 62 percent agreeing that the arts can play a role in raising awareness of issues facing our society. Seventy-two percent of residents see the value of the arts in generating employment in creative industries.<sup>5</sup>

**Investment in arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori is investment in prosperous, healthy and vibrant rohe and communities**

10. We are very encouraged to see Council's recognition of the creative sector's important social, cultural, economic and environmental contributions to Tauranga, through investment in cultural infrastructure and arts and cultural activities in the LTP and Annual Plan.
11. Supported arts organisations and regular arts and culture experiences feed other parts of the creative ecosystem and local economy, including education, health, trade and enterprise, hospitality, retail and tourism. The creative industries in Tauranga create jobs, drive economic growth and attract new businesses, while enhancing the city's reputation as a destination to visit, live and invest in.
12. It is fantastic to see Council's prioritisation of ongoing development of major cultural infrastructure in the city, including construction on the museum and library for Te Manawataki o Te Papa, and reopening the upgraded Tauranga Art Gallery.
13. We encourage Council to work closely with creative communities on the operation and delivery of these spaces. Council's investment in the 'soft' infrastructure that supports these facilities is equally as important. This includes ensuring these facilities resource and support staff who have the skills, knowledge and experience to successfully deliver

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<sup>2</sup> *Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato: Understanding the impact of arts, culture and creativity on the people of the Waikato region.* (2022).

<sup>3</sup> *New Zealanders and the Arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi.* (2023). Creative New Zealand.

<sup>4</sup> *Infometrics sector profiles 2024.* Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture & Heritage.

<sup>5</sup> Tauranga residents survey results New Zealanders and the Arts – Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi (2023) <https://creativenz.govt.nz/-/media/project/creative-nz/creativenz/publicationsfiles/2024-nzers-and-the-arts/20240730nzartsbayofplentyfinal.pdf>

services and activities. This will help ensure the facilities will be fit-for-purpose, high-quality and responsive to the needs of residents and visitors alike.

14. We appreciate the Council is focused on looking after what it has in the Annual Plan, rather than building new facilities. As part of this focus, **we strongly encourage Council to maintain its commitment in the LTP to prioritise ‘investments in community spaces and facilities to enhance the wellbeing and vibrancy of the city’.**
15. The Incubator is a fantastic example of community facilities that support the presence of arts and ngā toi Māori in Tauranga. Based at the Historic Village, it offers creative studios, working spaces, galleries and workshops – in accessible and diverse ways – that support artists and ringatoi. This includes Okorore Ngā Toi Māori, a whare taonga gallery and artist studio space to support ngā toi. Council’s support enables The Incubator to enhance access to creative experiences in Tauranga.
16. The population in Tauranga has doubled since many community spaces were initially developed, and there is a strong feeling from arts communities in Tauranga that existing spaces are no longer fit-for-purpose or able to serve the size and diversity of the city’s communities. Upgrading infrastructure will enable Tauranga to secure and host national touring work and support creative communities to access affordable public spaces in the city to share, create and develop work.
17. To build on Council’s important investment, **we strongly encourage Council to ensure its investment in arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi** is reaching across the wider creative ecosystem (including artists, creatives, creative communities and organisations), to retain its valuable contributions to Tauranga and its communities.

**Te reo, mātauranga and ngā toi Māori, brought to life by tangata whenua and ringatoi, strengthen communities’ sense of belonging and connection and are central to our unique national and regional identities**

18. Ngā toi Māori are increasingly embraced by Māori and New Zealanders as a whole. We strongly encourage Council to recognise the importance of Māori culture and heritage in Tauranga, and work closely with mana whenua to prioritise ngā toi the city.
19. Success in protecting, revitalising and promoting Māori artforms positively enhances Tauranga’s national and international reputation, and supports many artists, practitioners and tourism operators in the region. Investment in ngā toi also supports the revitalisation of te reo Māori and te ao Māori. It grows knowledge and value of the stories, values and places of importance to tangata whenua.
20. Council’s support for mana whenua, and ngā toi Māori organisations, is a crucial part of ensuring ngā toi is being produced, enjoyed and celebrated. Local government also has an important role in funding and management of Māori cultural institutions, including marae and whare wānanga.
21. We are heartened to see the ways Council is working with mana whenua to incorporate toi Māori design principles in its cultural wellbeing work, such as to profile important local cultural and historical narratives in Te Manawataki o Te Papa. Dedicated funding and leadership of ngā toi in Council staff also supports building cultural capability, and decision-makers should consider partnerships with iwi and hapū to build well-resourced, thriving and visible ngā toi practice and Māori cultural institutions.

**Local councils play a crucial role in offering stable support for arts, cultural and creative activity and infrastructure that enable communities to thrive**

22. Tauranga City Council is a major, and crucial, investor and partner in arts and cultural activities in the city, and the organisations that deliver them. Although New Zealanders' participation in arts and cultural events is growing, the current outlook for the creative sector is very difficult and we remain concerned about the sustainability of the arts community. Arts organisations are operating on thin margins, with revenue streams under pressure, making them vulnerable to any changes in relationships with funders.
23. Many creative organisations in Tauranga receive core investment from the Council, often in partnership with central government and private funders. Arts and culture services are reliant on local government contributions as this support is not guaranteed from other sources. Creative New Zealand's own ability to support the sector is under strain. Challenging economic conditions are also putting pressure on other funding sources, with pressing social needs often taking priority.
24. To maintain our collective approach, we encourage the Council to ensure funding support for arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori remains a core part of its decisions for the city's future. We value our shared investment and ongoing collaboration with you to support a resilient arts and cultural sector in Tauranga.

**Arts, cultural and ngā toi Māori organisations, iwi and hapū can be wonderful collaborators with Council to build strong relationships with communities and create flourishing localities**

25. Strong relationships with creative communities and mana whenua fosters new partnerships and collective approaches. Arts organisations and practitioners in Tauranga hold valuable relationships with funders, government, non-profits, businesses and other community groups.
26. As connectors and innovators, they are uniquely positioned to help Council communicate and deliver on prioritised work across the city, including Te Manawataki o Te Papa, enhancing access to places and spaces, and preparing for a changing climate. Artists and creatives are particularly skilled at designing and delivering innovative, strategic, and cost-effective programmes.
27. There is strong appetite from the wider local arts communities, artists and arts organisations in Tauranga to support Council in achieving its priorities. The establishment of the Public Art Panel is a fantastic example of independent expertise from the arts and cultural sector supporting Council to achieve social and wellbeing outcomes. We look forward to seeing the Panel's work with Council to create public art in Tauranga.
28. As a regional arts organisation, Creative Bay of Plenty Te Waka Auaha Toi, is a fantastic partner for local government. Founded in 1969, Creative Bay of Plenty supports and advocates for the growth of arts, culture and creativity with a focus on building and facilitating relationships between schools and educators, iwi, non-profits, and funders throughout the wider Bay of Plenty region to enhance quality of life through the arts.
29. Partnerships can also build capacity into the creative ecosystem and play a key part in creative workers' income. While the arts funding system tends to deliver well for the public, it does less well for those working in the sector. The median income of creative

professionals in Aotearoa New Zealand remains stubbornly low at \$37,000 per annum, compared with \$61,800 for salary and wage earners.

### **Creative New Zealand's interest and investment in the arts in Tauranga**

30. Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency of Aotearoa New Zealand, responsible for delivering government support for the arts. We're an autonomous Crown entity under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014.
31. Our legislative purpose is to encourage, promote and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders. We do this by investing in the arts, developing the arts, advocating for the arts, providing leadership in the arts, and by partnering for the arts.
32. Creative New Zealand receives funding through Vote: Arts, Culture and Heritage and the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Te Puna Tahua. In 2023/24, Creative New Zealand **invested nearly \$79.4 million in the arts**. In 2023/24, we invested \$2,471,663 in the Bay of Plenty region, with **\$902,447** of direct financial support in Tauranga for individual arts projects as well as arts and cultural organisations.
33. Under the Creative Communities Scheme, we fund territorial authorities directly to support local arts activities. In 2023/24, we invested **\$360,655** in the Bay of Plenty and **\$82,028** with Tauranga City Council and your creative community.
34. This year we're working with Tauranga Moana Iwi Collective, in partnership with mana whenua Iwi, for the hosting of our biennial arts leadership conference, Nui Te Kōrero. The theme for 2025's event is '**Kia Kotahi te Tū: Standing Together for the Arts**', which aims to strike a balance between future vision and current challenges, sector insights, and widespread calls for kotahitanga.

### **Final thoughts**

35. Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your draft Annual Plan 2025/26.
36. It's heartening to see the ways that Council's support for arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori is enabling Tauranga to thrive. By working together, and in partnership with creative communities and mana whenua, we can continue to build strong, prosperous and vibrant communities.
37. Please contact us if you have any questions or if you wish to discuss this submission further. The key contact person is:

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Ngā mihi maioha, nā



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