

Te Ara Mana Tautika o ngā Toi – Equity in the Arts Policy (Draft)

April 2026

This policy sets out Creative New Zealand’s approach to **equity in the arts** and how we fulfil our legislative role and mandate under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014.

In line with the Act, the policy reflects our responsibility to encourage, promote and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

The policy applies to and supports our people, our work and the way we work with the arts and ngā toi Māori sector and communities, as described in *Tū Mai Rā, Toi Aotearoa*, our long-term strategy to 2040.

This policy replaces our Diversity in the Arts Policy 2015.

Ngā whakaaetanga, Our commitments

We serve all New Zealanders as the national arts development agency of Aotearoa New Zealand

We uphold our purpose under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014, working alongside communities so all New Zealanders – across diverse ages, genders, ethnicities, disabilities, sexual orientations, locations, religions and other dimensions of identity – can access, participate in and benefit from the arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is our foundation

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the foundation for equity and for all people who call Aotearoa New Zealand home – tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti – enhancing the dignity of everyone. It guides how we work by, with and for ringatoi and communities, supporting relationships, tino rangatiratanga and accountability.

Mana Tautika – Equity

We design and deliver policies, programmes and services that are fair, accessible, culturally safe and non-discriminatory. We work to remove structural barriers and address discrimination and exclusion across the arts and ngā toi Māori.

Te Mana Tāngata Hei Kaihautū – Representation and Leadership

We have the leadership and cultural expertise so Creative New Zealand remains relevant and responsive to the diverse artists, creative practitioners and communities we serve. We foster an equitable and accessible arts and ngā toi ecosystem that recognises our Te Tiriti responsibilities and reflects the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Whakawhanaungatanga – Relationships and Cultural Safety

We build and maintain strong, long-term relationships with the arts and ngā toi sector and communities. The diverse knowledge, cultures and intersectional perspectives of those we serve, shape our work in the arts and ngā toi Māori. We facilitate cross-government and arts sector collaboration and support communities with diverse whakapapa and cultures to participate confidently in the arts and ngā toi Māori.

Ngā whanonga pono, Our values

This policy is informed by our values, which reflect how we work – with each other, with the arts and ngā toi Māori sector, communities, government and other stakeholders.

- **Āwhinatia, Strengthen and support:** We're inclusive and supportive, we're responsible and accountable for the things we do, and we act with integrity.
- **Honotia, Connect and grow:** We foster a culture of collaboration, respect and connection, with each other and those we work with.
- **Māiatia, Have courage and confidence:** We stand tall, strive for excellence and embrace the future with optimism.

Ngā tumu, Our foundations

This policy supports Creative New Zealand's role as Aotearoa New Zealand's national arts development agency and how we carry out our responsibilities (purpose, principles and functions) under the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014.

This includes recognising the cultural diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand and the arts of its diverse cultures; the role of Māori as tangata whenua in the arts, the arts of Pacific peoples and upholding the principles of participation, access, excellence and innovation, professionalism, and advocacy.

The policy is also informed by the principles and rights included in:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Bill of Rights Act 1990
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007
- Creative New Zealand's strategies (*Tū Mai Rā, Toi Aotearoa; Toi Ora Strategy; Pacific Arts Strategy*), policies and procedures.

This policy is supported by the Arts Council's Governance Charter and Creative New Zealand's internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (2022).

Ngā kupu me te reo, Words and language we use

We use the words and language preferences that people choose to describe their identities, experiences and communities. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of this document. Language evolves, and we will update the policy as required.

For kupu Māori, translations are drawn from [Te Aka Māori Dictionary](#). Our language and terminology:

- reflects the social model of disability, as outlined in the [UNCRPD](#) and the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](#)
- aligns with the principles and guidance of [Te Ngākau Kahukura](#), supporting safe and accessible communities, environments and systems for rainbow people
- draws on definitions included in the City of Melbourne Arts House [Equity Builder Glossary](#), the [Oxford Learner's Dictionary](#).

Me pēhea te whakatinanatanga o tēnei kaupapa here, How this policy will be implemented

Creative New Zealand will apply this policy as we implement our strategies.

A policy implementation plan and measures to track progress and impact will be developed with communities and sit alongside the policy.

Tō mātou tūranga, Our role

Equity requires collective effort. We will advance equity both through our own work and in partnership with the sector, communities and government through the following roles:

- Steward: setting direction, values and standards
- Partner: supporting leadership and capability
- Connector: supporting relationships with and between organisations, regions, artforms, communities, iwi, hapū and government (both local and central)
- Data holder: building a shared evidence base (research, evaluation data and lived experience) to inform insights, decision-making and advocacy.
- Advocate: promoting the value of the arts, culture, creativity and ngā toi Māori in all our lives.

Āhea te arotake i te kaupapa here, When the policy will be reviewed

We will monitor and report on implementation at least every three years to ensure the policy remains effective and responsive to arts and ngā toi Māori sector and community needs. The policy will be formally reviewed at least every six years, with updates made as required.

Kuputaka, Glossary

A glossary of terms used in this policy is provided below.

- **Accessible:** means the ability for all people – including persons with disabilities – to access, use and benefit from the physical environment, built spaces, information, communications (including digital), services, cultural and public facilities, on an equal basis with others. It involves the identification, elimination, and prevention of barriers – physical, informational, communicational, social, technological or attitudinal – that might otherwise exclude or hinder participation, access or enjoyment.¹
- **Arts:** Under our Act, ‘the arts’ includes all forms of creative and interpretive expression. We talk about ‘the arts’ we support. These include craft and object art, dance, literature, music and opera, theatre, visual arts, ngā toi Māori, including customary and contemporary Māori arts; Pacific arts, including heritage and contemporary Pacific arts; and multidisciplinary arts, which involve two or more of the artforms listed.
- **Artist:** means someone who produces artwork in one of the artforms we support.
- **Arts practitioners:** means someone who plays a role in the creation, presentation, or distribution of artwork. This includes artists and others such as producers, stage managers, technicians, publishers, editors, translators, designers, curators, agents and dealers, or community-based practitioners.
- **Āwhina(tia):** to assist, help, support, benefit.
- **Barrier:** is something that makes it difficult or impossible for people to do something.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

- **Community/communities:** We use the word ‘community’ or ‘communities’ to mean a group of people who have artistic practices, experiences or interests in common, or are in the same demographic group or groups, or live in the same place. People can belong to multiple communities.
- **Cultural safety:** a practice of ensuring respect for cultural and social differences through self-reflection and recognition of the attitudes, beliefs and social, historical, political and economic circumstance that creative power relationships and inequalities.
- **Disability:** any long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and effective participation of disabled people in society on an equal basis with others. When we talk about disability in this policy, we include mental health experiences, neurodiversity, and impairments that people may experience or identify with.
- **Discrimination:** the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability.
- **Diverse:** including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders or sexual orientations.
- **Diversity:** the state of being diverse and having variety. In the context of equity work, diversity refers to seeking involvement of people of different social backgrounds.²
- **Equity:** the quality of being fair and just, especially in a way that takes account of and seeks to address existing inequalities. Equitable systems and practices are based on safety, belonging, dignity and access to equally-distributed resources.³
- **Ethnicity:** belonging to a population group or subgroup made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent.
- **Gender:** including **gender identity** (a person’s sense of their gender or sense of self as male, female, masculine, feminine, non-binary, or intersex. This can be the same or different to one’s physical sex) and **gender expression** (the way in which a person expresses their gender identity, through their appearance, dress, and behaviour).

² Arts House. Equity-Builder, Glossary. <https://www.artshouse.com.au/equity-builder/glossary/>

³ Ibid.

- **Hono(tia):** to join, connect.
- **Impairment:** can be intellectual, psychiatric, physical, neurological or sensory, and be temporary, intermittent or ongoing. People may acquire an impairment through an accident or illness, and/or a person may be born with an impairment. Multiple impairments are common, especially with increasing age.
- **Intersectional:** overlaps in a person's identity or circumstance (e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and location) which mean that people experience layers of discrimination and marginalisation that affect their access to services and feelings of safety and respect in society.
- **Kaupapa Māori:** Māori approach, customary practice, principles or ideology – incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.
- **Māia(tia):** be brave, bold, capable, confident.
- **Mana:** the power, prestige, esteem in which a person, group is held by others.
- **Mana Tautika:** equity.
- **Mātauranga:** knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill.
- **Ngā toi Māori/ngā toi:** Māori arts.
- **Non-discriminatory:** is not discriminating or not treating somebody or a particular group in society less fairly than others.
- **Rainbow/Rainbow communities:** We use rainbow as an umbrella term to describe people whose sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics differ from majority, binary norms. This includes people who identify with terms like takatāpui, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, transgender, queer, non-binary or fa'afafine, as well as people who don't use specific words for their identity.⁴
- **Ringatoi:** artist.
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders of people to which they are attracted.

⁴ Te Ngākau Kahukura. Rainbow population terminology.
<https://www.tengakaukahukura.nz/rainbow-population-terms>

- **Social model of disability:** recognises that people with impairments are excluded by barriers created by society, and so are disabled by inaccessible services, barriers in the built environment or prejudice and stigma.
- **Tangata Tiriti:** people of the Treaty, non-Māori citizens and residents of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Tangata whenua:** local people, indigenous people, ‘people born of the whenua’ (i.e. of the land).
- **Te Moana nui a Kiwa:** The Pacific, Pacific Ocean.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** the Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- **Tikanga:** correct procedure, custom, practice, convention, protocol.
- **Tino rangatiratanga:** self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy.
- **Whenua:** country, land, nation, state.
- **Whakapapa:** genealogy, lineage, descent.
- **Whakawhanaungatanga:** the process of establishing relationships, relating well to others.