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10 May 2023

Nelson City Council  
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By email to: [Submissions@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:Submissions@ncc.govt.nz)

E te Koromatua, ngā Kaikaunihera mā, tēnā koutou katoa

### Arts, culture and creativity at Nelson City Council

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to Nelson City Council on the city's support for arts, culture and creativity.
2. We acknowledge that we have missed the closing date for submissions on your Annual Plan 2023/24, however we wish to **encourage elected representatives and council staff to recognise the essential role arts, culture and creativity play in the wellbeing of Nelson residents, as you make decisions for the future of the city and region.**
3. Arts, culture and creativity are an important part of developing strong and prosperous cities, and cohesive and healthy communities. Investment in arts, culture and creativity is an investment in community wellbeing.
4. Our feedback speaks to both Nelson City Council's delivery of the Annual Plan 2023/24 and the Long Term Plan 2021–31—Te Whakamahere Pae Tawhiti 2021–31 (LTP) as they relate to arts, culture and creativity in Nelson.

### Key points

5. We acknowledge the challenging situation facing Nelson City Council as it navigates the effects of the global pandemic, the ever-present impacts of climate change, the significant costs associated with last year's weather event recovery and significant changes to the local and national economy.
6. Arts, culture and creativity are a vital and necessary part of Nelson's communities and their wellbeing. Many New Zealanders, including residents of the Nelson/Tasman region, agree that arts and culture are important to them and their community. Our own [New Zealanders and the arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna toi 2020](#) research found that:

- 66 percent of New Zealanders say they learn about different cultures through the arts
  - 71 percent of Māori agree that ngā toi Māori is an important way of connecting with their culture/identity, and 77 percent of Pacific peoples say that Pacific arts are an important way of connecting with their culture/identity
  - 72 percent of New Zealanders agree the arts should reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural diversity
  - Asian New Zealanders, Māori and women are more likely than average to say the arts supports their identity.
7. **We were delighted to see support in the draft Annual Plan for Council investigating opportunities for a new arts hub**, to support the arts sector and the implementation of your new [He Tātai Whetū – Whakatū Nelson Arts and Creativity Strategy](#).
  8. We were thrilled to see the adoption of *He Tātai Whetū* last year, with significant funding allocated in the LTP for its implementation and delivery. This strategy provides a clear sense of direction for Council, with a planned approach to implementation, and enables it to create a specific plan to work through better support for the arts community, including partnership opportunities. The engagement process in developing the strategy also served to re-energise the arts community and wider sector. We will be interested to see how the strategy is reflected in the development of your new LTP.
  9. **We encourage Council to work with artists and creatives, and arts organisations**, within your prioritised infrastructure investment and your overall commitment to continue with project developments from the LTP in the draft Annual Plan. Artists and creatives are our storytellers, educators and place-makers.
  10. The relationship with the [Shared Communities Consortium](#) (Multicultural Nelson Inc, Community Partnerships and Nelson City Council) offers a strong example of how Council can work with the local arts community to establish a city-wide programme aimed at improving the sustainability and resilience of arts, culture, and heritage within your migrant and former refugee communities. The partnership model of [Make/Shift Spaces](#) is ensuring the successful delivery of projects, initiatives and creative spaces that meet the needs of both the arts community and its audiences. Council's relationship with Nelson Arts Council has also enabled a more joined up approach to arts advocacy; promoting and connecting up artists, arts organisations and creatives.
  11. **Investment in arts and culture is investment in Nelson's social, cultural and economic wellbeing**, and will enable it to navigate key challenges and opportunities.
  12. **We strongly encourage Council to consider the importance of maintaining its baseline funding investment in the city's arts organisations and their contributions to Nelson's communities**. Some of the city's key arts organisations, such as Nelson Arts Festival, are still working through losses of income and organisational sustainability while we continue to navigate building back from the pandemic. **We encourage Council to look at how it will maintain funding for these organisations**, to enable arts organisations like the Festival to continue delivering opportunities that engage Nelson communities with arts and creativity, as well as education and outreach programmes.

13. We believe Council's proposal to fund community groups and facilities (including Council organisations) in 2023/24 at the same level as 2022/23 could put some arts organisations and community groups under pressure, as they too are subject to inflationary cost pressures. The draft Annual Budget 2023/24 presents an opportunity for Council to make decisions that strengthen its communities through arts and culture rather than risk leaving them vulnerable.
14. We know first-hand that creative practitioners and arts organisations are **currently under significant financial strain and operating with very limited resources**. Support for the arts, culture and creativity sector is crucial for its resilience and to create sustainable careers. Creative New Zealand's recent *Profile of Creative Professionals* research with Kantar Public found the median income for creative professionals is \$37,000 per annum, substantially less than the median income for those New Zealanders earning a wage or salary (\$61,000).
15. Arts and culture in New Zealand depends on a delicate funding ecosystem, with many interdependencies. We know that this ecosystem is fragile and still recovering from the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, which disproportionately impacted the arts and cultural sector. Council's investment is a crucial component of this ecosystem in your region.
16. Responsibility for supporting cultural wellbeing through funding arts and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand is shared between local and central government, with input from the private sector and other community funders. Many arts organisations receive core funding from Nelson City Council – a lifeline in funding arts, culture and creativity.

#### **Creative New Zealand's interest and investment in Nelson**

17. Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency, 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. Our legislative purpose is to encourage, promote, and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders.
18. We recognise the importance of the Nelson arts and creativity community to the overall arts ecosystem in New Zealand. For arts that are delivered in the Nelson-Marlborough region, **\$999,768** of direct financial support was provided by Creative New Zealand in 2021/22; **\$714,803** of this was directly provided in Nelson, supporting the funding of individual arts projects.
19. Under the Creative Communities Scheme, we also fund territorial authorities directly to support local arts activities. In 2021/22, funding of **\$135,977** was provided to the Nelson-Marlborough region, which included **\$46,140** to Nelson City Council and your creative community.
20. Through the Creative New Zealand Local Government Arts Fund, **\$30,000** was provided to support the development of Whakatū Nelson Arts and Creativity Strategy. Nelson City Council more than matched this development investment. We are excited to see **\$1million** of funding now ringfenced for He Tātai Whetū.

#### **Concluding comments**

21. Thank you again for the opportunity to share our feedback. We share your aspirations for Nelson, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to realise the potential of arts, culture and creativity to support the city to thrive.

22. We were thrilled to visit Nelson in March 2023 to co-host, with the Arts Foundation, [All in for Arts—He waka toi e eke noa nei tātou](#) at the beautiful Suter Art Gallery. We were excited to work with the Nelson creative community and hear from locals, who talked about how arts and creativity impact their lives every day.
23. Hon Dr Nick Smith, Mayor of Nelson, said recently at that event, “Art seduces me because it is fun, but art is at its best when it’s got something to say about climate change, when it’s got something to say about inclusivity of a town that now has 25 percent of its people that are not just born in Nelson. Art has got something to say to us about loneliness, about the aging, about homelessness, about how we as a community are hurt by what’s going on in the Ukraine... you can connect art with every aspect of what goes on in this town. My ambition is not that art be sort of cocooned off in a corner, but art is weaved across every corner of this fabulous little community that we share in top of the South Island.” We wholeheartedly agree.
24. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or if you wish to discuss our feedback further. The key contact person is:

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**Position:** Senior Advisor, Advocacy, Local Government focus  
Kaiwhakamahere Matua Taunaki, Kāwangatanga ā Kainga

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Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, nā



David Pannett  
**Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement**  
**Pou Whakahaere Matua, Rautaki me te Tūhono**