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28 April 2023

Waitaki District Council
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Ōamaru
By email to: consult@waitaki.govt.nz

E te Koromatua, ngā Kaikaunihera mā, tēnā koutou katoa

Submission to: Waitaki District Council, Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waitaki
Subject: Waitaki Annual Plan 2023–24 Engagement Document
From: Creative New Zealand

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on Waitaki District Council's 2023–24 Annual Plan.
2. Arts, culture and creativity are an important part of developing strong and prosperous towns, and cohesive and healthy communities. We encourage Council to recognise the essential role arts, culture and creativity play in the wellbeing of its residents when making decisions for the District's future.
3. Our submission speaks to both Council's proposals for the Annual Plan 2023–24, and some of the successes from the 10-year plan 2021–2031, as they relate to arts, culture and creativity in Waitaki.
4. While we do not wish to address Council in person in support of our submission, we would be happy to discuss any aspect of it with you further, should you wish. Contact details for the team are at the end of this submission.

Draft Annual Plan 2023–24

5. **We are encouraged to see Council's continued recognition of social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing in Waitaki, and commitment to fostering livable communities in the Annual Plan and Long Term Plan (LTP) 2021–2031.** This focus on community outcomes

and the arts community in Waitaki are well placed to help Council deliver important wellbeing outcomes through their work and activity in the District.

6. We encourage Council to consider how providing opportunities to engage in arts and cultural activity can deliver social and cultural wellbeing outcomes for diverse communities, provide platforms for engaging with these communities, and help better understand their needs. Our [*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 New Zealand’s cultural diversity.

Community facilities

7. **We tautoko (support) the continued substantial investment being made by Council through the Annual Plan and the Long Term Plan, to support the District’s network of cultural and community facilities**, including the Forrester Gallery, Waitaki Museum and Archive, Waitaki District Libraries and Ōamaru Opera House. They all provide spaces and services that contribute to the District’s social and cultural wellbeing and support the arts community.

Social cohesion and cultural relationships

8. The Waitaki District has an increasingly diverse population and is home to one of the country’s fastest growing Pasifika populations. **We encourage Council to consider how investment in arts, cultural and creative activity can deliver social and cultural wellbeing outcomes to its communities**, and promote strong, cohesive communities in the Waitaki District.
9. As reflected in your Annual and Long Term Plans, the Waitaki District population is increasing in size and diversity. Māori and Pasifika populations are growing particularly rapidly in the region. We note that Waitaki is home to one of New Zealand’s largest populations of Pacific peoples per capita, and one of the fastest growing Pasifika populations in the country. It will therefore be crucial for Council to consider how the needs of your communities are changing as you plan for the future.
10. We know important work is happening in developing relationships across cultural facilities with the Waitaki Multicultural Council and the Ōamaru Pacific Island Community Group, and we encourage you to consider investing in the unique opportunity of your communities’ festivals. Cultural events and festivals can be wonderful mechanisms for bringing communities together, celebrating what’s truly unique to the Waitaki area, building on

identity and pride as well as social cohesion between the many communities that call the Waitaki District home.

Tourism opportunities

11. **We welcome Council's plans to explore ways to increase tourism opportunities through the development of 'The Waitaki Story'. We encourage you to consider how to make the most of your District's unique arts, culture and heritage assets.** This includes your suite of cultural facilities in [Culture Waitaki](#), the collaborative home of the Forrester Gallery, Waitaki Museum and Archive, Waitaki District Libraries and Ōamaru Opera House, alongside the Victorian Precinct and Steampunk HQ.
12. We encourage Council to work with the arts community, business owners and tourism authorities to promote the strong existing assets such as the Forrester Gallery, the recently refurbished Waitaki Museum and Archive, Waitaki District Libraries and Ōamaru Opera House, Victorian Precinct and Steampunk HQ. The new focus on tourism offers opportunities to develop strategies to increase visitor numbers. High-quality arts and cultural venues, organisations, events and festivals can attract visitors and further investment to the region, and act as a multiplier for hospitality and tourism. Arts, culture and creativity make Waitaki an even more vibrant and attractive place to live and visit.

Infrastructure spending

13. **We note there are further opportunities for Council to work with artists and creatives** within prioritised infrastructure spending. For example, projects such as The Forrester Gallery Redevelopment, the Waitaki Events Centre and the Kakanui Point Bridge Replacement offer meaningful opportunities for increasing the use of public and shared space. These projects can also encourage a sense of community ownership and pride. This work can build capacity into the creative ecosystem and play a key part in creative workers' income. [Matapopore](#) and [SCAPE Public Art](#) in Christchurch and the work of the team at the [Hokonui Moonshine Museum](#) in Gore are strong examples of this work. We encourage Council to partner with the creative community to deliver on its infrastructure priorities – artists and creatives are our storytellers, educators, and place-makers.

Strategic priorities

14. **It's heartening to see the development of new projects within the implementation of [Uplifting Waitaki: Hāpaitia te Waitaki Economic Development Strategy](#).** We encourage Council to consider including the creative community in the make-up of the new governance group, and to work with arts communities, business owners and tourism authorities to develop arts projects and creative experiences that attract residents and visitors to the

region. The implementation of the Strategy will act as a catalyst for increasing the region's economic activity and build audiences for arts experiences.

15. **It's great to see work underway in developing a creative arts and heritage strategy** for the district. A coordinated approach across the District's key creative agencies will offer significant benefits for the arts, culture and creative community. We strongly encourage Council to consult widely and actively engage the arts community in developing the strategy, to create a strategy that can deliver specific actions to support the arts community and grow its potential. We're happy to help where we can with this work too, and will be interested to see how the strategy is reflected in the development of the new Long Term Plan.
16. We're glad to fund and support the Creative Communities Scheme administered by Waitaki District Council. In light of the District's diversifying population, we encourage Council to ensure membership of the Creative Communities Scheme assessment panel reflects Waitaki's communities. We'd strongly encourage Council to ensure Pacific peoples are represented on this panel.
17. More broadly, artists and creatives are particularly skilled at designing and delivering innovative, strategic and cost-effective solutions, and we encourage Council to consider how arts communities can help realise and implement your 2023-24 Annual Plan.

Creative New Zealand's interest in the arts in Waitaki

18. Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency of Aotearoa, responsible for delivering government support for the arts. We're an autonomous Crown entity continued 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.
19. We recognise the importance of Otago to the arts in New Zealand. For arts that are delivered in the Otago region, **\$1,930,214** of direct financial support was provided by Creative New Zealand in 2021/22; **\$140,108** of this was directly provided in Waitaki District, supporting the funding of individual arts projects.
20. Under the Creative Communities Scheme, we also fund territorial authorities directly to support local arts activities. In 2021/22, funding of **\$188,259** was provided to the Otago region, which included **\$28,384** to Waitaki District Council and your creative community.

Conclusion

21. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We know the considerable pressure on all Council budgets and acknowledge your continued commitment to investing in arts, culture and creativity as part of the overall investment in your community's wellbeing.
22. We were thrilled to visit Ōamaru in March to co-host with the Arts Foundation [*All in for Arts—He waka toi e eke noa nei tātou*](#), at the beautiful Ōamaru Opera House. We were

excited to work with the Waitaki creative community and hear from locals, who talked about how arts and creativity impact their lives every day.

23. To quote Mayor Gary Kircher, 'Creativity absolutely brings soul to our community...it makes our place interesting, the creatives... are the fantastic people that make this community a great place to live and add so much value'. We wholeheartedly agree.
24. We share your aspirations for the Waitaki District and look forward to working with you to realise the potential of arts, culture and creativity to support your community to thrive.
25. Please feel free to 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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Position: Senior Advisor, Advocacy, Local Government focus
Kaiwhakamahere Matua Taunaki, Kāwangatanga ā Kainga

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Ngā mihi rārau ki a koutou katoa, nā



David Pannett

Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement

Pou Whakahaere Matua, Rautaki me te Tūhono