

29 April 2016

Submission on the: Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan 2016/17

Made to the: Wellington City Council

From: The Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa (Creative New Zealand)

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to consider and make submissions on Wellington City Council's **Draft Annual Plan 2016/17**.
2. Creative New Zealand does not wish to be heard in support of this submission.
3. The key contact person for matters relating to this submission:

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Proposed new initiatives

4. Of the 11 new initiatives Council is proposing, we would encourage priority for (in no particular order): 'Community Grants changes', 'New Outdoor Events Series', 'Toi Pōneke support' and 'Council Art Collection'.
5. Creative New Zealand **strongly supports** the proposed \$200,000 in additional funding for the proposed new flagship *Outdoor Event Series*. The opportunity for Wellingtonians and visitors to further experience music, dance, theatre, circus and digital art in the central city, free of charge, is an exciting proposition. The resounding success of the Wellington City Council-partnered *LUX: A light festival for Wellington* is just one example of the value outdoor arts events bring to the city.
6. Creative New Zealand **strongly supports** the proposed funding increase for the Toi Pōneke Arts Centre of \$140,000 per annum. Council's commitment to increasing connectivity between Wellington's arts sector and artists is commendable. We are especially supportive of this funding being used for specialist programming advisors to consult on different art sector disciplines. In addition, the support of 12 exhibitions a year will further Wellingtonians' ability to participate and experience the arts.
7. Creative New Zealand **strongly supports** an increase of \$120,000 per annum for Arts Culture and Community Grants, as well as \$40,000 per annum for the Katherine Mansfield Trust. This signals a strong commitment from Council towards continued support for the arts at all levels. While we are fully supportive of this increase in funding, we also echo the views of Councillor Ahipene-Mercer and Councillor Coughlan that a large increase to this fund is required if Wellington is aiming to maintain its position as New Zealand's arts and events capital.¹ Council should look at

¹ Michael Forbes, 'Newtown Festival funding falls short', *Dominion Post*, 27 April 2016, p.3.

the benefits of an additional sum being added to this fund, over and above the proposed \$120,000 increase.

8. Creative New Zealand **supports** the proposed increase of \$29,500 per annum towards the Council art collection for on-going conservation work and an increase in Arts Collection Advisor hours. We hope this will help Council's ability to invest wisely in its art collection and to ensure existing pieces in the collection are properly cared for. Further, we hope Council continues to prioritise the public display of as much of this art collection as is practicable, and to promote this asset to residents and visitors alike.
9. While it isn't for Creative New Zealand to comment on rates increases, we would strongly recommend that any required savings arising from a lowering of the proposed rate increase do not come from the *arts and cultural activities* planned operational expenditure. Research from *New Zealanders and the arts 2014* indicates that seven in ten people (71 percent) believe 'my local council should give money to support the arts.'
10. Also, while Creative New Zealand is highly supportive of the proposal for four new arts and culture-related initiatives, we remain concerned about the gap between funding for sports and funding for arts and culture. The proposed operational expenditure allocation for *recreation promotion and support* is 39.3 percent higher than for *arts and cultural activities*. Proposed capital expenditure for recreation is also 26 percent higher. We hope to see this funding gap decrease in coming annual plans.

Operational projects – Business as usual

11. Creative New Zealand **highly commends** the continued investment in the New Zealand Festival by Council. We note Council's investment of \$500,000 complements the fact that the festival is now successful at raising the majority of its own funding. Furthermore, the plan to *secure 'off-year' events or shows in the city* will aid in maintaining energy around the Festival. We look forward to continuing our involvement with the Festival alongside Wellington City Council.
12. We would recommend though that Council considers the potential connection between these off-year events and Council's proposed new initiative for an outdoor event series. There may be opportunities for a more effective use of budget, utilisation of scales of economy and shared resources, and other benefits that would not be possible if the projects remain siloed.
13. Creative New Zealand also wishes to acknowledge the contribution Council makes to the Wellington Regional Amenities Fund. This fund now amounts to just over \$1 million, with Council contributing \$609,000. We continue to support this fund and recognise the strategic benefit of it, as well as its contribution to strengthening the cultural infrastructure of the lower North Island. Creative New Zealand has observed the benefits of Auckland regional amenities funding to Auckland's cultural sector, and would like to see the Wellington fund continue to grow and champion the cultural sector in greater Wellington in a similar way.

Operational projects – Improvements

14. Creative New Zealand, as the major financial supporter of Circa Theatre, **strongly supports** the \$250,000 budgeted grant for improvements, as well as \$15,000 per annum for the first three years of the Long Term Plan to provide technical support to external groups. Support for Circa Theatre is another area in which Creative New Zealand and Council share responsibility for supporting the arts in Wellington.

15. Creative New Zealand **supports** improvements to the *citywide network of community centres that support community wellbeing*. Local community centres are a vital part of any community arts and culture programme, and deserve proactive attention.

Special notes

16. Creative New Zealand would like to publically acknowledge the hard work and tireless dedication of Councillor Ray Ahipene-Mercer, who is standing down in October. As Arts Portfolio Leader on the Economic Growth and Arts Committee, Ray has made an invaluable contribution to the promotion, development and advocacy of art and culture in Wellington. His retirement from local government politics will be greatly felt and we wish him all the best for the future. We look forward to working with his successor and continuing the strong relationship between Council and Creative New Zealand.

Creative New Zealand and its interest in Wellington City Council's Draft Annual Plan 2016/17

17. Creative New Zealand receives funding through Vote: Arts, Culture and Heritage as well as the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board. In 2014/15, Creative New Zealand invested over **\$41.5 million** into New Zealand's arts sector.
18. At least **\$6.2 million** of this went to the Wellington region. This includes funding for individual arts projects as well as for organisations such as the New Zealand Festival, Orchestra Wellington, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Footnote Dance Company, Victoria University Press, Bats Theatre, Circa Theatre, Creative Capital Arts Trust and many more.
19. As well as being based in the capital ourselves, Creative New Zealand funds a number of national arts organisations based in Wellington. These include Arts Access Aotearoa, Chamber Music New Zealand, DANZ, the New Zealand Book Council, Playmarket, SOUNZ and Toi Māori Aotearoa.
20. Wellington residents benefit from the presence of these organisations in Wellington and their combined range of arts and cultural activities which are offered not only in the capital, but also extend to the rest of the Wellington region.
21. We look forward to seeing Council continue to place a high level of importance on art and culture through funding and its strategic planning. We commend Council for the work it has already done and look forward to the strong relationship between Council and Creative New Zealand continuing to grow.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to further discuss this submission.

Ngā mihi nui



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