



# The Arts

Working hard for your community 2017



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# WHY THE ARTS MATTER

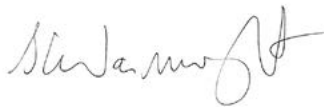
The theme of this year's conference *Liveable spaces & lovable places* is a natural fit for the arts. That's because we know the arts make our communities better places to live – more inclusive, more fun, more prosperous and more connected.

For this year's conference we are pleased to be supporting speakers who will talk about community-led initiatives that are addressing complex social, economic and cultural needs in South Auckland.

The Southern Initiative, the Cook Islands Development Agency of New Zealand and creative enterprise the Roots Collective are tapping into their area's youthful population, which has an abundance of talent, creativity and opportunity, to make lives better.

We are also delighted to support the EXCELLENCE Award for Best Creative Place. This recognises that local government is a major and welcome contributor to the New Zealand arts scene – providing arts infrastructure and events and funding local arts activity.

In this booklet there are examples of how local authorities are using the arts in their communities to improve lives. There are many more. We hope these will inspire you to consider how the arts can do more to help make your community more liveable and lovable.



**Stephen Wainwright**  
Chief Executive  
Creative New Zealand



Image: Screen Free programme at Walter Nash Centre, Lower Hutt.



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# ART HELPS TO BRING COMMUNITY CENTRE TO LIFE

In late 2015 the \$12 million Walter Nash Centre with a library, indoor sports centre, gymnasium, meeting rooms and a café opened in Taita, Lower Hutt.

While building the centre was a huge effort the greater challenge facing Hutt City Council was ensuring the local people felt pride in and ownership of the facility.

To engage people with their new community hub the council enlisted the power of art. It worked. Since the opening there have been more than 1 million visits to the centre – four times more than expected.

The council's community arts advisor worked with local artists, the education team in their gallery, and hundreds of creative and inspired primary and secondary school children to bring the centre to life.

## Community art projects

More than 2500 primary school children from Lower Hutt's north eastern suburbs took part in a project to decorate the new centre.

Working with the Dowse Gallery's education team they created personal flags with their dreams and aspirations. The flags were installed from the centre's entrance through to the indoor courts the night before it officially opened.

"They look stunning. But what I really love is the obvious pride when there's a kid in the centre showing their family or friends their flag," says Hutt City Council's general manager of community services, Matt Reid.

The council also worked with local colleges to create and paint murals for the centre's interior. While advice and materials were provided, the designs and painting were all done by the students with support from their teachers.

"The art projects have struck a chord with our local community and played a significant part in encouraging people to feel the centre is for them. There's a huge sense of ownership," says Matt.

## Local artists working on the centre

The council also called for proposals from local artists for designs that could be applied to the concrete panels on the centre's exterior.

**"We're taking what we learnt from Taita and we'll be doing even more. It clearly works."**

- Matt Reid

Four designs were carved into the panels while a fifth was used for the interior. Each tells a story which has meaning for the community. "The brief was to celebrate the community and its history and that's exactly what's happening," says Matt.

Since the centre has opened in Taita there has been a 90% decrease in tagging in the area.

## Plans for the future

With development underway for a second community centre in Stokes Valley, the council will again be using arts projects to engage with its community.



Image: Freezing Works stories at new Mātaura Museum

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# GORE'S THRIVING ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE DEFIES ITS SMALL SIZE

Enthusiastic local arts and culture supporters have made the small Southland town of Gore a hub of festivals, awards, galleries and museums keen to attract visitors – as well as funding.

Gore District Council's challenge is how to sustain the town's flourishing arts and heritage infrastructure while being mindful of its rates base, which contributes to an annual income of just \$20 million.

The council made its size an asset with its closeness to the community and nimble decision-making paying dividends. Gore is sustaining a host of successful arts and heritage initiatives while also planning for an ambitious new project.

**“While we are small it's amazing, with the right support, what a few inspired and committed people can achieve.”**

- Stephen Parry

Local residents are also happy. The council's latest annual survey registered 99% satisfaction with core arts and heritage facilities.

Work that helped the council create a flourishing cultural scene started in 1996 when it set up its Department of Arts & Heritage.

“It was a way of encouraging key cultural facilities to reach their potential. The department provided management services and support which, in turn, gave the council a view of the events happening in the community and links to the people making them happen,” says Gore District Council chief executive Stephen Parry.

The department also helped art gallery and museum trusts to realise the goodwill of

other funders in the community. In 15 years more than \$4 million has been raised for the redevelopment of key facilities including the Eastern Southland Gallery, the Hokonui Heritage Centre, Matura Museum and the East Gore Art Centre.

## Investing in success

The council has also invested in the many awards and festivals taking place in the town, ranging from the New Zealand Country Music Awards to the Hokonui Moonshiners Festival and Hokonui Fashion Design Awards.

“For a small community we are able to sustain a number of ambitious cultural projects,” says Mr Parry. “Because the council is just one of many supporters our funding can be used to keep developing and growing successful events.”

With its popular festivals and the awards Gore can also look forward to locals and visitors filling their venues, shops, cafés and accommodation.

## New arts and cultural precinct

Gore's thriving cultural sector has now encouraged the council to take steps towards another ambitious cultural development. It has provided seed funding to develop designs for a designated arts and cultural precinct in the town centre.

The intention is to refine and enhance adjacent facilities such as the art gallery, library, museum and visitor centre with a street scape that features public art and user-friendly infrastructure that can be adapted for arts and heritage events, eg areas for mobile staging or bracing for temporary sail-cloth covers.

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Creativity is not  
internationally  
a successful model  
is key to Dunedin



Now recognised  
as essential for  
modern city and  
Glasgow's future.

- Mayor Dave Cull



Image: Poetick at Vogel Street Party, Dunedin

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# DUNEDIN USES ART TO BE THE “COOLEST CITY IN THE SOUTH ISLAND”

With a long tradition of craft, music, writing, art and design, Dunedin’s vision is to be a liveable and prosperous city where creative endeavour thrives.

In late 2015, after working closely with an enthusiastic local community, the Dunedin City Council published the city’s arts and culture strategy *Ara Toi Ōtepoti – Our Creative Future* and is well on the way to bringing that vision to life.

Three-quarters of local residents believe the city has a rich and diverse arts scene. The focus on arts is helping to revitalise areas of the city and attract substantial private investment.

The strategy has encouraged a wealth of arts projects and initiatives. Local government is working in partnership with the community, key people and organisations, and national and international bodies to make “magical” things happen.

## Warehouse precinct revitalisation

Once the city’s hub of commerce and industry, the historic Warehouse Precinct had gone into decline, with many buildings needing to be strengthened and restored. The community and the council have worked hand-in-hand to develop a suite of ideas to rejuvenate the area.

Incorporating art and design into the physical improvement – bespoke furniture, street art and innovative lighting – is encouraging new creative industries to take root in the restored

heritage buildings. Inspired by this approach, the local business community has invested in a street art programme that now boasts more than 25 artworks in and around the precinct.

The council has supported progress by lining up funding and aligning financial and non-financial incentives, such as having street art outside private buildings once upgrades are complete. A public investment of \$1.5 million in the area underpins private sector investment of more than \$50 million.

## UNESCO City of Literature

Dunedin became New Zealand’s first UNESCO Creative City when it was awarded City of Literature status in 2014.

The 116 city network is a catalyst for partnerships between cities. It is a key component of Dunedin’s *Ara Toi Ōtepoti* strategy to lift its “creative game”.

**“Creativity is now recognised internationally as essential for a successful modern city and is key to Dunedin’s future.”**

- Mayor Dave Cull

Momentum is building. The Dunedin Writers and Readers Festival has been re-established. This has in turn led to the New Zealand Young Writers Festival starting in the city.

This year Dunedin successfully bid for a complimentary booth at the Bologna International Children’s Book Fair. It was an unprecedented opportunity to profile the city and New Zealand children’s authors and their work to an international audience.



Image: Artist Jeremy Shirley with the mural he designed and painted to revitalise an alley frequented by visitors to Rotorua's CBD.



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# ONE PERCENT FOR PUBLIC ART REVITALISING ROTORUA

Rotorua has long recognised the value of public art as a way of enhancing the city's spaces and making them more inviting and vibrant.

While a public art policy was in place, Rotorua Lakes Council found that the lack of ring-fenced funding meant it was at worst overlooked and at best projects were ad-hoc.

"Although there was a desire to have an artistic look and feel to capital projects, in reality the artwork was simply used as adornment to ameliorate poor design or remedy insufficient consultation," says Rotorua Lakes Council, Manager Arts & Culture, Stewart Brown.

To give certainty the council introduced a Percent for the Arts Policy in 2013. This meant that 1% of the council's annual capital projects budget was set aside to fund public art in new and existing infrastructure projects and to engage with and support local creatives.

Since the policy was introduced Rotorua has come to life. The realisation of a number of art initiatives and projects is bringing a sense of vibrancy, identity and optimism to the city.

The first significant project scheme saw the transformation of Sulphur Lake, a neglected and unsafe area in the Government Gardens. It now boasts a sculpture trail, with inviting and tranquil spaces, linking city attractions and showcasing the talent of local sculptors.

Since then the policy has supported the development of murals, sculpture, performances and events in the central city as

well as suburban shopping centres, parks and other facilities.

**"It's changed the face of our city. Given us a whole new reason to be here. We now understand the role of art in our lives."**

- Mike Steiner, retailer

## **Evolving community partnerships**

While the policy is enlivening the city it is also helping to establish new design partnerships between artists, architects and other professionals. This has led to more and broader opportunities for community expression.

The creation of murals at the Selwyn Heights Shopping Centre saw a partnership between schools, the community, police, shop owners and the council. The murals revitalised the shopping complex and enriched community identity, morale and pride.

## **Plans for the future**

With the policy now firmly in place the council is working with the New Zealand Transport Agency, Te Puia | The New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute and Opus to see the installation of a major sculptural work at the entrance to the city.

For the first time Rotorua will have a contemporary artwork which commemorates the subterranean journey of the atua (supernatural beings) of heat and fire who, according to Māori mythology, created the area's geothermal landscape.


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# HELP MAKE THE CASE FOR THE ARTS

To help make the case for the arts we have collected national and international evidence that supports the value of the arts.


Our online advocacy toolkit is regularly updated and we are always interested in new examples we can share. You can find the toolkit at [www.creativenz.govt.nz/advocacy](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/advocacy)


We also provide advice on developing arts strategies for your community. Please share this brochure with your colleagues. You can find it on our website or contact us.

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