A PROFILE OF CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

Research summary
How do creative professionals feel about their present income?

- **23%** Living comfortably
- **40%** Getting by on present income
- **24%** Finding it difficult
- **12%** Finding it very difficult

There’s also a link between how well creative professionals are ‘getting by’ and their **overall life satisfaction**.

Those who rate their life satisfaction highest are earning more, are more likely to be living comfortably or ‘getting by’, are older, established in their career and working in the creative sector only.
For creative professionals, career satisfaction is driven by a passion and love for the work they’re doing.

"It’s a fulfilling and inspiring career; I get to explore my own creativity, collaborate with other like-minded people and share it nationally and internationally."  

"I love my work and feel very privileged that I can work at something I love and believe in, even if the rewards are predominantly not monetary."  

"I love what I do and I enjoy being inspired by my surroundings, culture and people I work with. I am challenged constantly by my own need to succeed in my area of expertise."  

"I’m really passionate about the work I do, and I feel very fortunate to do that work."  

Some comments from survey respondents
Together, Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air asked research agency Colmar Brunton to survey a range of creative professionals, to better understand career sustainability in the arts and creative industries.

The research found that New Zealanders employed in creative professions juggle jobs, and rely on safety nets to ensure they can put food on the table. But even that doesn’t break their passion for their creative work.

Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air will work with our sectors to drill into this research. In the meantime, we’ve summarised key findings and agreed three joint priorities for future action:

1. **Fair reward**
   
   **We’ll work towards:**
   - ensuring lower-paid creative professionals are paid in line with technical professionals
   - lifting pay to the point where creative professionals start to feel it is a fair reward.

2. **Sustainability**
   
   **We’ll work to** make the careers of mid-career and established creative professionals more sustainable through more continuous creative endeavours.

3. **Emerging creative professionals**
   
   **We’ll work with** the sector (including peak bodies and guilds) to find better ways to support creative professionals at the start of their career.
How much are creative professionals earning?

Four in ten creative professionals surveyed (43%) earn a total income (including non-creative income) of $30,000 or less annually.

Compared to a median total income of $35,800, median creative income is $15,000. This is because just over half the creative professionals surveyed (55%) supplement their income by also working outside the creative sector.

Sixty-three percent of creative professionals surveyed feel their remuneration is unfair. The ‘tipping point’, from which they start to feel it’s fair, is $26 per hour.

The research indicated a gender pay gap but was inconclusive as to why, so this is an area for further exploration.
### Sustainability

**Are there enough opportunities to sustain a creative career?**

More than half of those surveyed **disagree** with the statement ‘there are sufficient opportunities for you to sustain a career in New Zealand’.

Close to one quarter of those surveyed **agree** with the statement ‘there are sufficient opportunities for you to sustain a career in New Zealand’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some groups of creative professionals are more likely to **disagree** with this statement than others, including:

- 88% of those who also said they are dissatisfied with their career
- 82% of those who also said they are finding it very difficult on present income
- 74% of those who also said they are not committed to the creative sector.

Some groups of creative professionals are more likely to **agree** with this statement than others, including:

- 43% of those surveyed who earn more than $100,000 per year
- 37% of those who said they live comfortably on present income
- 32% of those surveyed who have media production as their primary creative occupation.
3 Emerging creative professionals

What’s life like for those starting their creative careers?

The majority of creative professionals enter the creative sector between the ages of 18 and 24 (58%).

The average time spent unpaid when first entering the creative sector is one year, five months.

The expectation to do unpaid work at the start of creative careers appears to be increasing.

Younger creative professionals appear to be receiving more encouragement and support at the start of their careers than older professionals did, perhaps reflecting a change in perceptions of creative careers.

Younger people are also more likely to view going overseas as a necessity to further their career (60% of people under 40 compared to 47% of people aged 60 plus).
The full research report has a lot more information to explore – you can read it online:

creativenz.govt.nz/research
nzonair.govt.nz/research

We’d love to hear your thoughts on the research – let us know what you think:

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Total personal income for creative professionals is lower than the median for all salary and wage-earning New Zealanders, but comparable to what self-employed New Zealanders earn. Median creative income is $15,000, which is lower than total income because 55% of creative professionals supplement their income by also working outside the creative sector.

NOTE: All income information is before tax and after expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Source</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median TOTAL INCOME for creative professionals (including non-creative income)</td>
<td>$35,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median CREATIVE INCOME for creative professionals</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income for New Zealanders earning a wage or salary</td>
<td>$37,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median income for self-employed New Zealanders</td>
<td>$51,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total incomes vary by artform/practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artform/Practice</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video game development</td>
<td>$61,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Sound</td>
<td>$48,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing/literary arts</td>
<td>$32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>$25,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting and theatre productions</td>
<td>$32,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Heritage arts</td>
<td>$34,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngā Toi Taketake*</td>
<td>$45,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft/object arts</td>
<td>$27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media production</td>
<td>$47,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2/3 of creative professionals have a safety net

The most common safety nets are:

- 46% MY PARTNER
- 40% NON-CREATIVE WORK
- 35% MY SAVINGS

On average creative professionals work 43 hours a week...but they spend an average of 31 hours on their creative work.

Creative professionals are less satisfied in their career than the general New Zealand population

- All working New Zealanders: 66% Satisfied, 28% Neutral, 5% Dissatisfied
- Creative professionals: 53% Satisfied, 35% Neutral, 12% Dissatisfied

BUT: 82% see themselves in the creative sector in 5 years’ time, despite the challenges a creative career presents. Only 3% don’t, and 15% are unsure.

Fieldwork conducted

23 NOV – 10 DEC 2018

Online surveys

1,477 completed with creative professionals.

You can read the full research report at www.creativenz.govt.nz/research or www.nzonair.govt.nz/research

*Small base size for Ngā Toi Taketake, and Pacific Heritage arts; interpret with caution.