

# Sustainable Careers for Artists and Arts Practitioners

Umanga Toitū mō ngā Ringa  
Rehe Toi, me ngā Tohunga Toi

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

“

In New Zealand, the ability to support yourself, and a family if necessary, working exclusively as an artist is an incredibly tough endeavour requiring extreme levels of mental fortitude and persistence. This simple formula does not even begin to acknowledge the requisite well-connected networks, years of training and experimentation, and, of course, the fortune to be in the right place at the right time. It is a daily struggle to find paid opportunities in a highly competitive field. Bakker's time in Central Otago and this exhibition are the result of her ongoing interest in what it means to be successful, or prosper, as an artist in 2018.

- THE PHYSICS ROOM ON THE EXHIBITION *PROSPECTING* BY WENDELIEB BAKKER (JULY 2018)

## Introduction

In 2018, Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air engaged research company Colmar Brunton to survey creative professionals, aged 16 and over and who earned at least some income from their creative work, on aspects of their creative careers.



Nearly 1,500 creative professionals took part in the survey for *A Profile of Creative Professionals*, the first major piece of research on sustainable careers in the arts and creative sectors since Creative New Zealand's *Portrait of the Artist* research was published in 2003. The results of *A Profile of Creative Professionals* were published in May 2019 and can be found on our website at: [www.creativenz.govt.nz/research](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/research)

We've created this discussion document to continue the conversation about what the research findings mean, and how we can work with the Government (central and local), the arts sector and other stakeholders (including funders) to advance more sustainable careers for artists and arts practitioners.

As a starting point, we've distilled six draft principles to inform our future work, and we have some questions for you below about what these might mean.

NZ On Air has also released a discussion document, *A Profile of Creative Professionals: NZ On Air's perspective* (20 May 2019), addressing issues relevant to its sector. This can be found on NZ On Air's website at: [www.nzonair.govt.nz/research](http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/research)

## Let us know your thoughts

We'd like to hear your thoughts on the research and potential next steps for further research in this area, as well as your views on the six draft sustainable career principles we've developed. We'd also like to know what actions could be taken to promote or embed these principles and how those actions might be prioritised.

We have a few ways you can provide feedback:

- We've created an online questionnaire where you can provide your responses. You can find this at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sustainablecareers](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sustainablecareers)

The questionnaire will remain open until **10am, 31 October 2019** – please complete it before that date so we can keep the conversation flowing.

- We're also hosting in-person forums where you can discuss the research and principles with us, face-to-face. You'll find details at: [www.creativenz.govt.nz/sustainable-careers](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/sustainable-careers)
- If you have any questions about this document or the questionnaire, or want to provide feedback to us directly, you can:

Email: [strategy@creativenz.govt.nz](mailto:strategy@creativenz.govt.nz)

Phone: 0800 CREATIVE (273 284)

Post:

Creative New Zealand

PO Box 3806

Wellington 6140

The Arts Council will consider all feedback in late 2019. This will help the Council develop further policy in the area of sustainable careers, as a critical part of what makes a resilient arts sector in Aotearoa.

## Why is this important to us?

Creative New Zealand wants to work with the sector to improve its resilience. This includes supporting the development of sustainable careers for artists and arts practitioners, something we have identified in our key strategies.

We have recently released our new **10-year strategic direction to 2029** – set out in our Statement of Intent<sup>1</sup> – which includes a new outcome:

- **Stronger arts sector** as shown by:
  - ▶ New Zealand’s arts sector is resilient
  - ▶ New Zealand arts are valued and supported

In 2018, we released our *Investment Strategy Te Ara Whakamua 2018–2023*<sup>2</sup> to guide our investment decisions over the next five years, across three key features:

- diversity and reach
- dynamic arts
- **resilient arts sector.**

## Why is this important to Government?

The Government has identified *the cultural sector is supported and growing sustainably* as a priority for the Arts, Culture and Heritage portfolio.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is investigating a number of policy initiatives to better support people to have sustainable cultural sector careers, including:

- increasing access to career development services for creative people
- establishing an artists’ resale royalty right for visual artists
- improving access to affordable legal services for creative people.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is leading policy work on these initiatives and is also involved in cross-agency work that will help support sustainable cultural sector careers. For more information, see the Ministry’s website at:

[www.mch.govt.nz/sustainable-cultural-sector-careers](http://www.mch.govt.nz/sustainable-cultural-sector-careers)



## What does the research tell us?

The creative professionals who took part in the research told us that:

- the majority have difficulty making a sustainable living from their principal artform or creative practice – 55 percent of creative professionals supplement their income by also working outside the creative sector
- they earn a median personal income of \$35,800 per annum – compared to \$51,800 for all New Zealanders earning a wage or salary, or \$37,900 for self-employed New Zealanders – but that those figures include other sources of income (the median income from creative work alone is \$15,000 per annum)
- most (63 percent) don’t feel that their remuneration is fair, and consider \$26 per hour as the level from which they would start to feel that it’s fair
- they rely on other sources of financial support or ‘safety nets’ such as their partner’s income, non-creative work or savings, and most can’t dedicate as much time to their creative practice as they would like
- most feel there aren’t enough opportunities in New Zealand to support their creative practice and seek experience and work overseas
- they are highly committed to their sector despite low earnings, with 82 percent still seeing themselves in the creative sector in five years’ time.

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Intent 2019–2029: [www.creativenz.govt.nz/SOI\\_2019-29](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/SOI_2019-29)

<sup>2</sup> Investment Strategy Te Ara Whakamua 2018–2023: [www.creativenz.govt.nz/Investment\\_Strategy\\_2018-23](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/Investment_Strategy_2018-23)

## What are our priorities for action?

Together with NZ On Air, we've identified three priorities for action based on the research.

1. **Fair reward** – working towards:
  - (a) ensuring lower-paid creative professionals are paid in line with technical professionals
  - (b) lifting pay to the point where creative professionals start to feel it is a fair reward for their work.
2. **Sustainability** – working to make the careers of mid-career and established creative professionals more sustainable through more continuous creative endeavours.
3. **Emerging creative professionals** – working with the sector (including peak bodies and guilds) to find better ways to support creative professionals at the start of their career.

## What are we already doing?

There are several areas where we're already making changes aimed at improving the resilience of the sector, and looking specifically at career sustainability. These include:

- inviting arts organisations through our Investment programmes (Toi Tōtara Haemata and Toi Uru Kahikatea) to submit programmes that respond to *Resilient arts sector* as one of three key features of our *Investment Strategy Te Ara Whakamua 2018–2023*
- changing the purpose of the Arts Grants programme to include 'more sustainable careers for individual artists' as one of four programme elements
- establishing an annual Arts Grants round offering grants of up to \$150,000 for 12 months for eligible applicants offering a regular or continuous programme of activity
- lifting the maximum grant levels for the Arts Grants programme from \$7,500 per project to \$10,000 per project (for proposals under \$10,000), and from \$65,000 to \$75,000 per project (for proposals between \$10,000 and \$75,000)
- developing fair remuneration principles for Arts Grants, to help ensure artists and arts practitioners are better rewarded for their creative work – we've made a start here by advising applicants to the

transitional Arts Grants round that opened 19 July 2019 to include pay rates of at least \$25 per hour for artists and arts practitioners

- reviewing our Capability Building Programme
- continuing to implement our *Te Hā o ngā Toi — Māori Arts Strategy 2019-2024* and *Pacific Arts Strategy 2018-2023*, which include actions relating to advancing practice development and growing support for ngā toi Māori and Pacific arts
- providing fairer remuneration for our assessors
- commissioning the first arts sector remuneration report from remuneration consultants Strategic Pay to better understand what arts organisations are paying individuals working for them and provide baseline data.

## What happens now?

Based on the research we've developed six draft principles that we believe, if consistently evident, would contribute to sustainable careers for artists and arts practitioners. A sustainable career is a pathway of paid work over the course of an individual's working life that enables them to earn a viable living to support themselves and their family.

We're interested in:

- whether we've got the principles right
- what actions would be required to promote or embed these principles.

### Principles of Sustainable Careers for Artists and Arts Practitioners in Aotearoa



Artists and arts practitioners feel their creative practice is valued and regarded as 'real work'



Artists and arts practitioners are remunerated fairly for their work



Artists and arts practitioners are well positioned to adopt a portfolio approach to achieving a sustainable career



Artists and arts practitioners are prepared for a career in the arts and cultural sector



Artists and arts practitioners can access support to grow and develop a sustainable career



Artists and arts practitioners' careers contribute positively to their wellbeing

While Creative New Zealand has a role to play in advancing the principles we don't control all the levers. We're interested in what actions need to be taken by:

- Government – central and local
- the arts sector
- other stakeholders (including funders).

For more detail refer to page 7.

## What are we thinking about researching next?

The research provided us with a range of topics we could explore further (see below).

We're interested in working with the arts sector and other stakeholders to understand how we can develop our thinking, and identify which areas we should prioritise.

### 1. Experiences vary considerably by artform

- Less sustainable artforms are Music and Sound, Acting and Theatre Production, and Craft/Object Arts. These sectors earn significantly less than the median and career satisfaction is lower than average (although Craft/Object Arts is not significantly lower).
- Those working in Acting and Theatre Production, Music and Sound and Dance are more likely than average to think there are not sufficient opportunities for them to sustain their creative career in New Zealand.

### 2. The expectation to do unpaid work at the start of a career is increasing

- Half of those that started their career in the last five years did unpaid work.
- In comparison, only 23 percent of those that started their career at least 20 years ago started by doing unpaid work.
- Nearly a quarter (22 percent) of creative professionals earned no income or made a loss from their creative practice, and a similar number (23 percent) of creative professionals earned less than \$10,000 from their creative practice. Further investigation is needed to see whether these creative professionals are 'beginning' creative professionals seeking to establish a full-time career,

or creative professionals with other employment not seeking to increase their creative practice hours and/or income.

### 3. A gender pay gap is evident for the creative sector

- The average difference in total personal income shows that men earn 21 percent more than women; this increases to 45 percent when we look solely at creative income.
- While we can say that a gender pay gap exists, more research is needed to determine how much of the gap is due to factors outside of gender.
- Interestingly, median creative income peaks at 40 to 49 years for men, and 50 to 59 years for women.

### 4. Relatively few Ngā Toi Taketake (customary Māori arts) artists and Pacific Heritage artists responded<sup>3</sup>

- Twenty-four Ngā Toi Taketake artists and 14 Pacific Heritage artists provided income information out of a total of 1,142 responses to the income section of the survey.
- Findings relating to these artforms therefore need to be interpreted with caution.
- Overall, 17 percent (244) of respondents identified as Māori and 5 percent (75) identified as Pacific Peoples out of a total of 1,477 respondents.<sup>4</sup>
- It's not clear whether Māori and Pacific creative professionals, including those working in customary or heritage artforms, experience the same sustainable career challenges as all creative professionals.

3 Job titles included under **Ngā Toi Taketake**: Traditional Māori carver (Toi Whakairo), Traditional Māori pattern / painting artist (kōwhaiwhai artist), Traditional Māori weaver / textile artist (Whare Pora / Tukutuku), Oral artist (whaikōrero / Karanga / Pūrākau / Whakapapa recitation), Traditional Māori musician or singer (waiata, mōteatea, Pao / Taonga Puoro), Traditional Māori tattoo artist (tā moko), Waka builder (Kaupapa Waka), Haka performer, Expert teacher (Whare Maire), other types of Ngā Toi Taketake artist.

Job titles included under **Pacific Heritage arts**: Material artist, performing artist, oral artist, other types of Pacific heritage artist.

4 Total responses for ethnicity were 1,759 including those with multiple ethnicities; total percentage ethnicities sum to 120 percent.

## Who are we?

Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency of Aotearoa. We encourage, promote and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders. We do this by *investing in, developing, advocating for and providing leadership in the arts.*

## Contact us

Email: [strategy@creativenz.govt.nz](mailto:strategy@creativenz.govt.nz)

Phone: 0800 CREATIVE (273 284)

Post: Creative New Zealand

PO Box 3806

Wellington 6140

Website: [www.creativenz.govt.nz](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz)

# Six Principles of Sustainable Careers for Artists and Arts Practitioners in Aotearoa

A sustainable career is a pathway of paid work over the course of an individual's working life that enables them to earn a viable living to support themselves and their family.

Principles	What we know	How could we measure progress?	Questions
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners feel their creative practice is valued and regarded as 'real work'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Careers in the arts and creative industries are not always recognised as legitimate by some in society. <i>A profile of Creative Professionals</i> tells us around 70 percent of family/whānau and peers/friends supported people in pursuing a career in the creative sector, but only 49 percent of teachers, careers advisors, lecturers or mentors did.</li> <li>▪ Some creative professionals report feeling undervalued, or that there's a lack of recognition for the work they do. This can be demoralising.</li> <li>▪ We recognise that for some artists and arts practitioners their creative practice is an integral part of their cultural practice or expression. The concept of this practice being regarded as 'work' may not resonate strongly for some. In common however is the desirability for this creative or cultural practice to be valued and acknowledged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How New Zealanders perceive the value of the arts to New Zealand.</li> <li>▪ How New Zealanders perceive the value of the work of artists and arts practitioners.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners are remunerated fairly for their work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The top reason for career dissatisfaction is low income. This is compounded by long periods of unemployment.</li> <li>▪ Creative professionals can't always earn a viable living to support themselves over the course of their career.</li> <li>▪ In many instances, creative professionals are asked – or expected – to offer their services or time for free.</li> <li>▪ Because there's not always continuous work available, creative professionals aren't always able to sustain their creative practice without having to rely on 'safety nets' (eg, savings, another job, or their partner's income).</li> <li>▪ Income varies significantly by artform/practice.</li> <li>▪ These characteristics make it difficult for artists and arts practitioners to, for example, repay student loans, contribute consistently to KiwiSaver, and maintain benefits such as health insurance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The median personal income for creative professionals relative to the median for all New Zealanders earning a wage or salary.</li> <li>▪ The level of creative income.</li> <li>▪ Level of income for those working in the least well-paid artforms (Music and Sound, Craft/ Object Arts, Visual Arts, Dance).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do we have the six principles right?</li> <li>▪ What are the actions that could be taken to promote the principles by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Creative New Zealand</li> <li>▶ Government — central and local</li> <li>▶ the arts sector</li> <li>▶ others stakeholders (including funders)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners are well positioned to adopt a portfolio approach to achieving a sustainable career</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We know that a portfolio of activities within the arts and cultural sector contributes to resilience by enabling a person to attain a sustainable income and achieve their potential in their primary creative work. The challenges of this aren't always acknowledged though.</li> <li>▪ Currently 55 percent of creative professionals supplement their income by working outside the creative sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage of total employment in arts-related occupations.</li> <li>▪ Balance between the creative practice and other related or unrelated paid work for creative professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the priority actions for each principle?</li> <li>▪ Would the measures tell us whether progress is being made over time?</li> <li>▪ What other measures might we use?</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners are prepared for a career in the arts and cultural sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formal education and training does not create work-ready graduates in all cases.</li> <li>▪ Some people who want to work in the arts and cultural sector are ill-equipped with the skills required for successful self-employment, or the knowledge or networks that they need to turn their creative talent and training into a viable career.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of support for creative professionals at the start of their career.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners can access support to grow and develop a sustainable career</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Half (49 percent) of creative professionals spend less time than they would like on their creative career – the top reason for this (59 percent) is that they receive insufficient income to make a living.</li> <li>▪ As creative careers don't often have a structured, formal career pathway, not all creative professionals are supported to develop skills or access resources to help sustain their career over the long term.</li> <li>▪ As sustainability is about evolution, adaptation and transformation, not all creative professionals are supported to accept risk and embrace innovation to sustain their career.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time spent on creative career.</li> <li>▪ Percentage of clients that agree Creative New Zealand's capability building programmes align with their needs and priorities and that they are extremely or very effective, relevant and helpful.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Artists and arts practitioners' careers contribute positively to their wellbeing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Artists and arts practitioners' careers contribute positively to their wellbeing.</li> <li>▪ There's a strong, positive relationship between career satisfaction and personal wellbeing. Those who are very satisfied with their career also feel satisfied with life and believe that what they are doing in life is worthwhile.</li> <li>▪ The research tells us that 53 percent of creative professionals are satisfied with their career compared to 66 percent of all working New Zealanders, and 69 percent of creative professionals rate their overall life satisfaction highly compared to 78 percent of all working New Zealanders.</li> <li>▪ This will have implications for creative professionals' wellbeing and, potentially, their mental health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of career satisfaction compared to all working New Zealanders.</li> <li>▪ Level of overall life satisfaction compared to all working New Zealanders.</li> </ul>	