



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

OPERA HOUSE
1899

WHANGANUI DISTRICT COUNCIL

Arts and Culture Strategic Plan



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*Round and Around, Stuart Welch
Bason Botanic Gardens*

*Cover image: Light Up Bike Spectacle 2018
Photo: Mark Brimblecombe*



Foreword

From the Mayor

Arts and culture are pivotal to quality of life in Whanganui. Our city is a national destination every year with successful events like Artists Open Studios and Whanganui Opera Week. While their intrinsic value draws people to these events, creative practitioners will tell you the arts also have a role to play in health and well-being, social cohesion and education.

Arts and culture initiatives are threaded through many of Whanganui District Council's plans, from regenerating our town centre, to welcoming newcomers to our district. We know that arts and culture contributes toward 'placemaking' and can unify, inspire, and encourage diversity among the Whanganui community.

As creative people will know, one of our community's most significant milestones for the arts is the redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua – which will be completed in 2021 and will bring national and international visitors to see the collection.

The creative sector is being nationally supported for its capacity to generate employment and grow innovation in business and Whanganui is showing how this can be done in a small city thanks to a group of innovative creative industries.

These creatives have taken advantage of our inexpensive living costs and attractive built and natural environment to set up businesses while connecting with others in similar industries, sparking ideas off each other and making Whanganui home.

When I'm not a politician, I'm a writer, while my wife is an artist. When we moved to Whanganui we found the community of artists, writers and musicians so welcoming. This has inspired our children to grow their own artistic pursuits.

The Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2019-2029 pulls all this potential together and recognises the critical role arts and culture play in positioning Whanganui as a liveable, exciting place to be. Creativity is at the heart of our identity – it has been for hundreds of years and will continue into the future.

Hamish McDouall
Mayor of Whanganui

**Arts and
culture
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Introduction

Whanganui's arts and culture facilities are impressive. The Pukenui Queen's Park area presents four significant cultural institutions that house collections of national interest. The redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery-Te Whare o Rehua has attracted massive local and national support and its re-opening is eagerly awaited. Making great use of the city's abundance of heritage buildings, Taupō Quay houses the Wanganui Potters Society, Whanganui Arts at the Centre, UCOL's Creative Programme, boutique galleries, and more.

A strong profile of applied arts is evident with the Quartz Museum of Studio Ceramics and the New Zealand Glassworks. The impact of these incredible facilities can be seen in the success of events such as Artists Open Studios, attracting escalating visitor numbers to these spaces, and also to the many homes of creative residents when they generously open their doors to the public each year. Performing arts are well served with the legacy of Amdram, New Zealand's oldest active musical theatre group, Wanganui Repertory Theatre, and the last surviving Victorian Theatre in Aotearoa, The Royal Wanganui Opera House.

The activity fostered by these splendid facilities spills to the streets with vibrant festivals and events. The Festival of Cultures, the biannual Whanganui Literary Festival, Whanganui Opera Week, La Fiesta, Pūanga - are all hallmarks of an inclusive and trailblazing city. Whanganui needs to be prepared for creative people who choose Whanganui as their destination to live and visit.

The activity inside and outside our facilities has grown exponentially, yet we haven't taken stock and looked at who is not participating. We are missing opportunities to work together, get connected and become more sustainable. While being fortunate in the physical inheritance of those that truly valued the arts, we have not looked at who will be the arts and culture champions of tomorrow.

Council recognises the pivotal identity of nga tangata whenua with mana whenua and the hapū whanui throughout the District [the mana whenua]. The objective of the Plan includes the determination to reinforce the partnership, protection and participation of the mana whenua in arts and cultural leadership and activities, to achieve greater visibility and benefit the wider cultural identity of the District. This will assist the local economy to participate in the profile of the national and international Māori economy, estimated to be worth \$52 billion.

Employment growth from creative industries can attract investment and stimulate the local economy. We need to keep building a spirited and supportive environment that offers creatives a place to build and sustain their careers. Whanganui's ongoing reputation for creativity and the sustained well-being of our arts and culture infrastructure is critical in putting Whanganui on the map as an arts and culture destination.

These aspirations for our district will require a Council-led, community-inclusive approach to understanding what the steps to take are, and then commit to taking them together. We must work hard for Whanganui's thriving arts and culture to be at the heart of our identity.

Light Up Bike Spectacle 2018
Photo: Basil Hooper



Purpose & Scope

Why We Need a Strategic Plan

Leading Edge - the vision policy for Whanganui District Council identifies 'Creativity' as one of five key themes to direct its overall aim. It positions the vibrancy of Whanganui's cultural personality as an aspect of its success, and recognises that the arts community and its reputation are an important part of our identity. Cultural heritage is indicated as our point of difference, and creativity as a potential economic driver for the district. There are many other links between Arts and Culture and the 'Leading Edge' Strategy. These can be seen in APPENDIX A. Most importantly, it outlines the need for the development and implementation of an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan.

This Plan is the response to that call, and will drive aspirations for Whanganui's arts and culture over the next 10 years.

The Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2019-2029 builds on previous policies, and responds to engagement and consultation with the Creative Sector regarding the need to collaboratively foster the continued health of arts and culture, while addressing the needs of a growing creative city. Refreshing the strategic direction of arts and culture also enables delivery on related aspirations of Council's other plans, growing traction and inclusion for creativity across core business.

This Plan will also help unite the strategic direction and actions of Whanganui's major arts and cultural institutions, and wider creative sector, enabling us to all work together to achieve the most impact.

Developing the Plan

The Arts and Culture Strategic Plan has been conceived and developed in two parts. A strategic front end, Part A, and a delivery or implementation plan, Part B. Part A has been developed in collaboration with creative sector stakeholders. The strategic goals of the Plan represent five themes that emerged from sector and public consultation over the last three years. The goals are also understood to be priorities that align with the wider Council policy vision for Whanganui - 'Leading Edge'.

Consultation has enabled the community to understand the role Council plays in enabling and supporting arts and culture, which then complements the sector's role as deliverers of arts and culture. Creative sector stakeholders want to clearly see what Council is doing regarding arts and culture. Arts and culture directives appearing in all other Whanganui Council policies have been reviewed and included, to communicate the breadth of Councils delivery and strategically align this strategy to others.

This Plan outlines objectives under each goal, and provides actions that Council will take or play a leading role in, towards achieving them.

Part B, the implementation plan, will identify all agencies delivering actions. Whanganui's arts and culture practitioners and wider creative sector will get an opportunity to both sign up to the Goals and Objectives with their own actions, and receive visibility on how they are currently committed to these collective aspirations. The five goals and fourteen objectives in the Plan will facilitate clear decision making around priorities and funding Council-led initiatives. Creative sector partners also delivering on the Plan will keep it alive and generate momentum for systemic change.

Definitions

Culture in this plan refers to the ideas, customs, attitudes, social behaviour and physical artefacts of a particular people or society.

The **arts** refers to all forms of creative practice, including performing arts, visual arts, screen and digital arts, literary arts. Creative practitioners are a wider group than artists, and also include people who may not necessarily classify themselves as makers or performers but who may be necessary to creating, presenting or distributing creative works. For example: Administrators, Lighting Technicians, Curators, Exhibition Designers, Producers, etc.

Creative industries is a specific term used to define industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent. They have the potential to create wealth and jobs through generating and exploiting intellectual property. Creative industries include design, publishing, screen production, radio, digital media, performing arts, visual arts, and music.

The **creative sector** makes no distinction between industries and arts, and this term has become popular because it reflects the cross-pollination and hybrid nature of contemporary creative life.

What is Not Covered

Sports and Recreation, Economic Development, the Built Environment and Natural Heritage, are not covered by this Strategic Plan, but are addressed in others. For example, Making Whanganui Visible Strategy (2016) identifies an increase in arts and culture visibility within the Town Centre as a critical component for regeneration of public space.

Public art activity, intrinsic to the many goals of this plan, is detailed in the Whanganui District Council's Public Art Strategy (2010-2012).

All the Plans and policies that relate to this Plan are outlined in APPENDIX B.



Carillon, Pukenui Queen's Park
Photo: Whanganui District Council

Strategic Context

The Local Government Act 2002 (“LGA”) provides for councils to meet the current and future needs of their communities for good-quality local public services. Arts and culture are a community amenity, which is a core service to be considered by Council in performing its role under the LGA Section 11A.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage administers the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014, which outlines how local authorities may act as community arts providers. The national strategic direction for arts and culture sector funding and development is set by Creative New Zealand through a range of corporate documents including the Creative New Zealand Strategic Direction, Te Hā o Ngā Toi – Māori Arts Strategy 2019-2024 and Creative New Zealand Pacific Arts Strategy 2018-2023.

This provides the National strategic context for our Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

Locally it is not a stand-alone document. While it directly responds to the Whanganui District Council vision Policy, *Leading Edge*, it must influence, support and align with Council's other plans. It also contributes to a wide range of Council and non-Council strategies and work programmes.

A full look at the alignment of this Plan to LEADING EDGE can be seen in APPENDIX A.

Strategic alignment to wider strategy and Councils other complementary plans and policies can be seen in APPENDIX B.

Background

In 2015 the Whanganui District Council began a review of its 2008 Arts Policy. The lack of a dedicated full-time Arts and Culture appointment at that time however, resulted in limited capacity to fully engage with stakeholders in order to reach clarity on the real needs of the Creative Sector.

Council has appointed an Arts Advisor which is enabling the development and in the future, implementation of, an Arts and Culture strategic Plan as requested by *Leading Edge*, Whanganui District Council's Vision Policy.

This has enabled a fuller picture of Council's arts and culture delivery. Consultation with arts and culture stakeholders during the 2015-2018 period, contributed to the realisation of the five goals of the Plan.

Developing the Plan has helped to understand the full scope of stakeholders in the Whanganui District, and the Part B Implementation Plan will further unlock the potential they bring to drive the goals forward.

The Role of Council

The main way the public sees Council supporting arts and culture is through the provision of Council owned or operated facilities and infrastructure, or community run facilities on council land or in council owned buildings. Whanganui District Council has strategic relationships and directly funds the Sarjeant Gallery, New Zealand Glassworks, Whanganui Regional Museum, Whanganui District Libraries, and the Royal Wanganui Opera House.

Contestable funding rounds that enable many organisations and individuals to deliver arts and culture activities, services and events are administered by Whanganui Council on behalf of Creative New Zealand, through the Governments Creative Communities Scheme.

Event programming and delivery is another way Council supports Arts and Culture. Events can be initiated and funded from many Council business portfolios - examples of this include Artists Open Studios, Whanganui Opera Week, Festival of Cultures and the Whanganui Literary Festival.

The Council also understands the importance arts and culture plays in creating a beautiful, healthy, and prosperous city, and therefore has a significant advocacy role - for instance, setting strategic direction through the writing of a Plan. Council also has a role to play in developing the representation of mana whenua in Council owned and operated facilities. There are many arts and culture initiatives or creativity objectives threaded throughout the plans of multiple business units in Council.

Who is the Creative Sector in Whanganui?

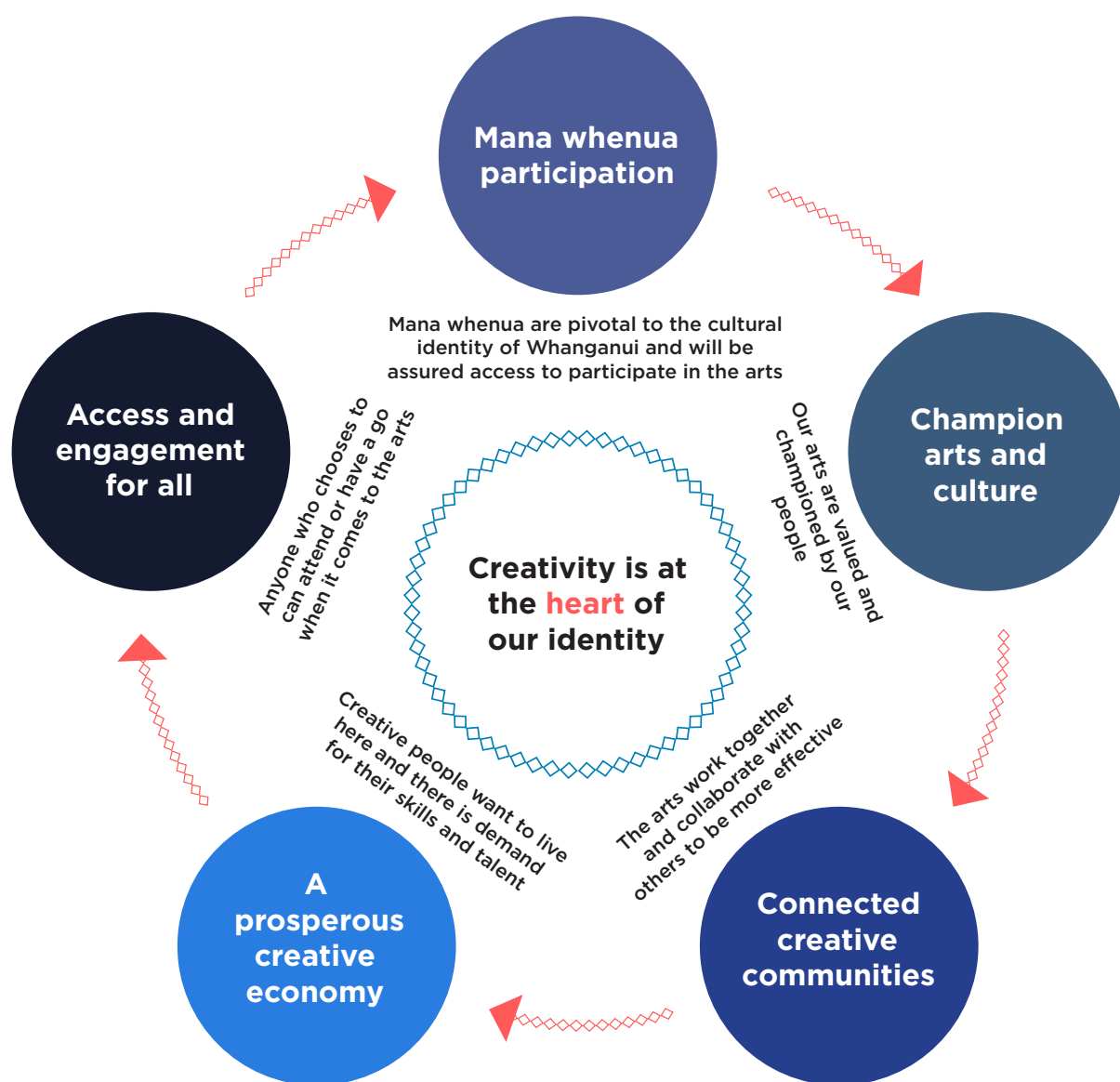
The Plan will focus on an integrated partnership approach consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: partnership, protection and participation. This will be taken into account in planning and policy development related to urban design, cultural events, and public art installation based on hapū narratives, to enhance the āhua (appearance) of Whanganui.

The focus on mana whenua will be taken into account in everything to do with the arts, creative industries, community groups and societies, education providers, funding and philanthropic organisations and audiences.

An expansive draft matrix of Whanganui's Creative Sector is seen in APPENDIX C. This is a preliminary document that continues to grow as the Sector expands and develops.

Vision

The Plan proposes five goals to direct our thinking, resources and actions. All are designed to deliver the vision shown in the centre.



Goals

The Draft Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2019-2029 identifies 5 goals and 14 objectives aimed at achieving the Whanganui District Council *Leading Edge* strategic direction: **Creativity**. The goals and objectives feed the community-sourced vision: 'Creativity is at the heart of our identity'.

The following pages investigate each goal - looking at what it actually means, what needs to change and what further actions are required. The 5 interrelated goals are not in order of priority, but are numbered for ease of reference.

- 1 **Mana whenua participation**
 - ◇◇ Be responsive to mana whenua aspirations and expectations to participate in the physical, cultural and creative landscape of Whanganui
 - ◇◇ Work with individuals, hapū, community groups, funders, Whanganui & Partners, and other creative sector partners to include the contribution and benefits of working with the established Māori economy, locally and nationally.
- 2 **Champion arts and culture**
 - ◇◇ Promote the Whanganui creative sector regionally and nationally,
 - ◇◇ Encourage new creative sector champions,
 - ◇◇ Nurture existing philanthropic relationships and foster new partners for investment and sponsorship,
- 3 **Connected creative communities**
 - ◇◇ Support networking opportunities with the Whanganui creative sector, including effective mechanisms for Council to regularly interface with the Creative Sector,
 - ◇◇ Raise the awareness of funding opportunities and co-ordinate application processes,
- 4 **A prosperous creative economy**
 - ◇◇ Advocate the value of partnering the creative sector with wider businesses to generate innovation,
 - ◇◇ Promote the vocational pathways for Creative Industries and foster professional development and education opportunities across Council facilities and funded bodies,
 - ◇◇ Grow tourism and new business potential towards Whanganui as an arts and cultural destination,
- 5 **Access and engagement for all**
 - ◇◇ Effectively communicate Creative Sector events, activities and opportunities with the wider community,
 - ◇◇ Increase young people's engagement with the creative sector, by enabling the full scope of public art and arts related events
 - ◇◇ Identify barriers to access and participation to arts and culture and investigate possible mitigation,
 - ◇◇ Provide opportunities for the expression of diverse cultures and their cultural practices



Encounters, Mark Southcombe and Judd Bailey
Photo: Mark Brimblecombe

Mana Whenua Participation

Mana whenua are pivotal to the cultural identity of Whanganui and will be assured access to participate in the arts

Context

The tangata whenua, with mana whenua, are the first people of the land. They hold the mana of the land based on ancestry and occupation.

The role of mana whenua enriches and distinguishes Whanganui as a unique place in the world. Mana whenua are also best placed to provide access to Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) for those in the community who are finding their place in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Be responsive to mana whenua aspirations and expectations to participate in the physical, cultural and creative landscape of Whanganui
- 1.2 Work with individuals, hapū, community groups, funders, Whanganui & Partners, and other creative sector partners to include the contribution and benefits of working with the established Māori economy, locally and nationally

Council Actions

- 1.1

- 1.1.1 Proactively foster the inclusion of toi Māori – Māori artists and the Māori community in all creative sector and wider community events and support new Māori arts and culture initiatives, events and festivals
 - 1.1.2 Ensure that Council-led architecture, landscaping and place-making projects include mana whenua at the earliest stages to identify opportunities to work together on areas of shared interest
 - 1.1.3 Ensure Māori expertise is represented on Public Art decision making forums
- 1.2

- 1.2.1 Undertake research and develop a contact register of Māori creative practitioners, orators, historians and business, to help include Māori in Creative sector opportunities



Champion Arts and Culture

Our arts are valued and championed by our people

Context

The arts play a valuable role in enabling social cohesion, health, education and economic prosperity. In order to sustain and grow the creative sector locally, and make the most of the associated wellbeing outcomes, it is important to be able to champion the value of the arts.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Promote the Whanganui Creative Sector regionally and nationally
- 2.2 Encourage new Creative Sector champions
- 2.3 Nurture existing philanthropic relationships and foster new partners for investment and sponsorship

Council Actions

2.1

- 2.1.1 Promote Whanganui as a centre for arts excellence and innovation
- 2.1.1 Develop a Glass Strategy

2.2

- 2.2.1 Showcase success and highlight exemplary local creative champions
- 2.2.2 Facilitate the establishment of Creative Sector Steering Group

2.3

- 2.3.1 Take a strategic approach to philanthropic support and sponsorship across Council so that effective supportive partnerships are placed where they are needed most
- 2.3.2 Undertake a strategic overview of Council Plans and Policies to scan opportunities for arts and culture objectives and actions. Embed arts, culture and creativity within Council planning and policy development.



3 Connected Creative Communities

The arts work together and collaborate with others to be more effective

Context

Whanganui enjoys an abundance of enthusiastic artists, community groups, and creative organisations for a relatively small city. However, the isolated nature of much creative practice can produce disconnection from a collective overview.

Connectivity is about cultivating working relationships between individuals, public, private, and educational stakeholders that can provide opportunities to work together and achieve greater results. Together we can support our creative sector to build on existing strengths and create exciting new opportunities.

Key Objectives

- 3.1 Support networking opportunities with the Whanganui Creative Sector, including effective mechanisms for Council to regularly interface with the Creative Sector
- 3.2 Raise the awareness of funding opportunities and co-ordinate application processes

Council Actions

3.1

- 3.1.1 Provide the venue, programme and support for an annual Creative Sector hui
- 3.1.2 Support a feasibility study for an artist-led studio initiative, as indicated in Making Whanganui Visible Strategy

3.2

- 3.2.1 Continue to run and promote Council-administered funding schemes, including Creative Communities Scheme and the Public Art Fund
- 3.2.2 Run a funding boot camp



Bearing, David McCracken
Photo: Mark Brimblecombe

4 A Prosperous Creative Economy

Creative people want to live here and there is demand for their skills and talent

Context

A strong creative sector offers opportunities for employment growth and the attraction of a talented workforce. Creative people are sophisticated problem solvers who are an asset to the business community as well as the drivers of start-ups and entrepreneurship.

Creative cities are healthy and wealthy. More and more creative people have been attracted to Whanganui in recent years, as the district provides cost-efficient residential living, great schools, and a dynamic arts community. Talent also wants to be where talent lives.

Key Objectives

- 4.1 Advocate the value of partnering the creative sector with other businesses to generate innovation
- 4.2 Promote vocational pathways for Creative Industries and foster professional development and education opportunities across Council facilities and funded bodies
- 4.3 Grow tourism and new business potential towards Whanganui as an arts and culture destination

Council Actions

4.1

- 4.1.1 Support entrepreneurship and initiatives that make use of partnerships within the sector, as well as other industries

4.3

- 4.3.1 Profile the district as an arts and culture destination to accelerate cultural tourism

4.2

- 4.2.1 Support creative internships and mentoring programmes
- 4.2.2 Support new residency and incubator programmes developed by the creative community



Participants in Whanganui Walls mentoring programme
Photo: Yoshitaro Yanagita, courtesy of Whanganui Walls

5

Access and Engagement for All

Anyone who chooses to can attend or have a go when it comes to the arts in Whanganui

Context

Whanganui has long-held a reputation as a distinctive creative environment with an extraordinary number of resident creators of visual and applied arts. Its splendid facilities have also encouraged and nurtured a loyal audience. As in many regions, however, access and participation in cultural activity is not equitable across the District.

The arts have an impact on community spirit through the hearts and minds of people. They unify, inspire and encourage diversity and debate. The engagement of all residents and visitors in the district’s cultural landscape will affirm our thriving arts and culture identity.

Key Objectives

- 5.1 Effectively communicate Creative Sector events, activities and opportunities to the wider community
- 5.2 Increase young people’s engagement with the Creative Sector, by enabling a full scope of public art and arts related events
- 5.3 Identify barriers to access and participation in arts and culture and investigate possible mitigation
- 5.4 Provide opportunities for the expression of diverse cultures and their cultural practices

Council Actions

- 5.1

5.1.1 Create an Events Plan to better co-ordinate and promote Creative Sector activities, and leverage the arts off other events
- 5.2

5.2.1 Review Public Art Strategy to ensure relevance
- 5.3

5.3.1 Promote existing toolkits for arts and culture providers

5.3.2 Host development workshops for local creative providers
- 5.4

5.4.1 Support existing and new events and initiatives that express and develop our community’s unique cultural identity

Measuring Success

Implementation

As this is a sector wide Plan, responsibility for the delivery of actions is shared by Council, the sector and other stakeholders.

After the adoption of Part A, Part B (the Full Implementation Plan) will be completed with wider arts and culture stakeholders. Having signed up and provided their own actions, an oversight group representing the interests of delivering parties will assist with the monitoring and reviewing of their actions.

Council is also committed to continue hosting an opportunity for the Creative Sector partners to collectively report on their progress with an annual 'Creativity Summit'.

New parties who want to become lead agents or contributors can be incorporated into the Implementation Plan at any time. New actions and initiatives can be added where they will support the goals and objectives, and are generally supported by the wider sector.

Council will use existing measures to track progress on the goals.

Measurement

The Whanganui Leading Edge policy provides measures to help tell the story of progress ('How will we know when we get there'). We will use these as a framework to measure the success of the Arts and Culture Strategic Plan'.

Review

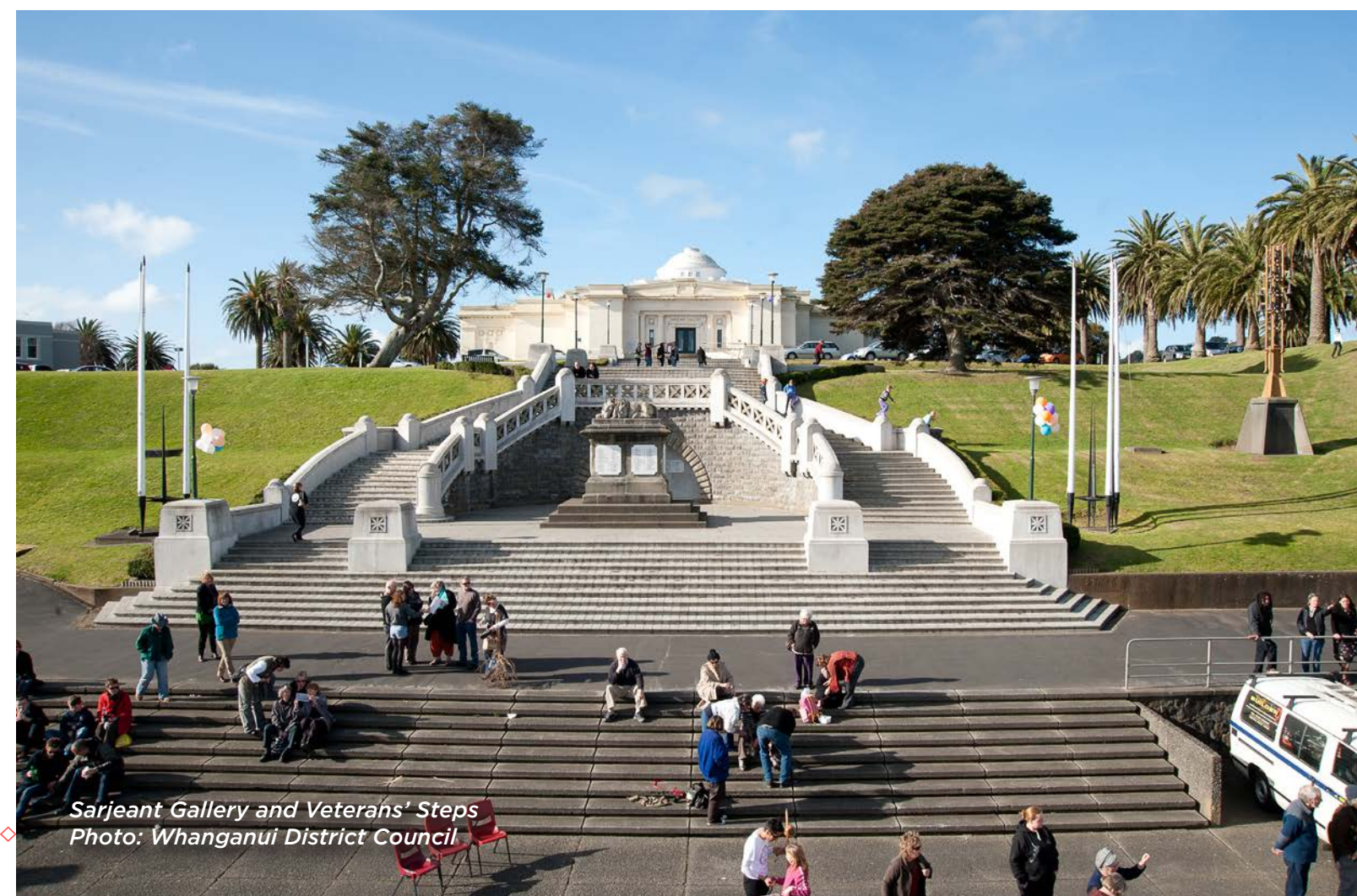
A review of the progress on Council actions will be undertaken one year after the adoption of the Plan and its Implementation Plan, and a progress report presented to Council.

The entire Plan will be reviewed in five years, or earlier if required, as priorities change when new needs arrive.

Any Council funding required for implementation will be related to allocation through the Long Term Plan, and/or the annual reviews under the annual planning process.

Closing Remark

Whanganui District Council wishes to thank the many organisations and individuals of the creative sector who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan, and who will contribute to its delivery alongside us. Achieving a vibrant arts and culture identity for Whanganui cannot happen without you.



*Sarjeant Gallery and Veterans' Steps
Photo: Whanganui District Council*



*Artist Claire Foxton at work
Photo: Yoshitaro Yanagita, courtesy of Whanganui Walls*