

2020

WELCOME TO

WAIKATO

The beating heart of New Zealand

CULTURE
AND ARTS



CONNECTION AND IDENTITY

Expressing ourselves through the arts and culture helps build a sense of identity and belonging in our communities. They bring us together and create community connection.

The majority of Waikato residents recognise the societal benefits of a healthy arts sector: improved wellbeing, vibrancy, interconnectivity and a positive contribution to the region's economy are all highlights.

For those working in the arts, there are challenges. Difficulty finding sustainable funding for projects, pressure from venue closures, and challenges finding ongoing, well-paid work have all been exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions in 2020.

The arts are a vehicle for celebrating and supporting culture and diversity in our region, increasing community cohesiveness. Language is a crucial part of collective Maaori identity and te reo is highly valued in the Waikato.

“Arts and culture feed the soul and the heart. They are wonderful connectors of people... the arts are not a luxury, they are the shining light that keeps us going in the hard times and allows us to celebrate in the good times.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

The Waikato Region values the arts*

WE ARE ENGAGED WITH THE ARTS

78% **engaged** with the arts by attending or participating in at least one art form in the past 12 months, similar to the national average of 80%.

67% **attended** at least one arts event or location in the past 12 months, compared to 73% nationally. Price, choice and social isolation are the main barriers for people who agree some arts events interest them but they still don't go much.

47% **participated** in at least one arts-based activity in the past 12 months, compared to 52% nationally. Time is the main barrier, followed by affordability and self-doubt about creative ability.

“We have skills in the community, talented artists and cultural people.”

– Otorohanga workshop participant

“Hamilton's art sector could be an economic driver but lack of basic support means people keep leaving for work, volunteer leaders in particular need and deserve support.”

– Hamilton survey participant

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

Our **libraries** and **free/affordable family events** are seen as the top two arts-based things important to making the Waikato Region a great place to live.

“If we want our city to be interesting, appealing and exciting for youth, we need to invest in the creative arts venues and events and ensure this area of growth is being considered when planning for the future.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

ARTS CREATE CONNECTION

56% agree the arts help **create connections** between different people in the community.

31% agree the arts encourage people to **visit the Waikato**.

“Harness the creative talent in the Waikato and see the arts as an opportunity for domestic tourism...I would love for the Waikato and Hamilton to be known as the best arts region and capital of New Zealand.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

OUR IDENTITY

38% feel the arts and culture are very or extremely **important to the region's identity**.
43% believe the arts are fairly important.

47% agree the arts activities available in the Waikato give young people an opportunity to **express themselves**.

42% agree the range of arts events and activities on offer in the Waikato **reflect the diversity** of the region's communities. Many of those who do not share this view hold a neutral position (neither agree nor disagree), rather than a negative one.

“Support communities to continue to thrive and maintain their culture while they make Waikato their home.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

** The arts include visual arts, craft and object art, performing arts, literature, Pacific arts and Maaori arts.*

Sources: New Zealanders and the Arts 2017, Survey findings for residents in the Waikato Region, Creative NZ Arts Council of New Zealand/Toi Aotearoa; Waikato Vital Signs® Consultancy Report 2020.

Ngaa toi Maaori



1 IN 5 PEOPLE

- have attended a ngaa toi Maaori (Maaori arts) event in the Waikato Region in the past 12 months
- agree ngaa toi Maaori improve how they feel about life in general and motivate them to. speak te reo Maaori.

Source: New Zealanders and the Arts 2017, Survey findings for residents in the Waikato Region, Creative NZ Arts Council of New Zealand/Toi Aotearoa.

“My hope is that we are celebrating our rich culture and that Maaori are flourishing.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

Te reo Maaori

KO TOKU REO, KO TOKU IA MANA
MY LANGUAGE, MY IDENTITY

A higher proportion of our population can korero (speak) te reo Maaori than the national average.

TOTAL POPULATION*

6% Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 Region
4% New Zealand average

11% Waitomo
7% Waikato District
7% South Waikato
7% Otorohanga
6% Hamilton
5% Hauraki
4% Thames-Coromandel
4% Matamata-Piako
3% Waipa

* Te reo Maaori speakers, Census 2018.

MAAORI POPULATION**

23% Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 Region
21% New Zealand average

27% Waikato District
24% Waitomo
24% Hamilton
22% Otorohanga
20% Matamata-Piako
19% South Waikato
19% Thames-Coromandel
19% Waipa
17% Hauraki

** Proportion of the Maaori population who reported that they could hold a conversation about everyday things in te reo Maaori.

“Significantly increase teaching and use of te reo, make it an official language of the city so everything has te reo versions.”

– Hamilton survey respondent

“It’s so refreshing to see younger generations so comfortable with te reo”

– Waitomo workshop participant

THE NUMBER OF MAAORI LANGUAGE SPEAKERS WITHIN A POPULATION CAN INDICATE HOW CONNECTED MAAORI AND NON-MAAORI LIVING IN OUR REGION ARE WITH REGIONAL AND NEW ZEALAND HISTORY; OUR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE AND PEOPLE; AND EACH OTHER.

Waikato Wellbeing Project target



Volunteers catalyse community

A pressing concern expressed by a spectrum of Waikato Vital Signs® Survey respondents is the fragility of the volunteering that enables the very existence of communities and the local activities people enjoy.

Volunteers' contributions are seen as the foundation of community, not as simply an add-on to the financed and employed economy. Concern about "volunteer burnout" was specifically flagged as a threat to the community and recreational activities in a range of submissions.

A Waipa survey respondent said: "there used to be a homework club here, but it closed down because of volunteer burnout".

A Thames-Coromandel respondent: "there is an overwhelming need for volunteers in every aspect of community life, not enough people doing the work and volunteer burnout is a significant risk".

Event coordinator, former Hamilton Fringe Festival Director and musician Macaila Pescud articulated a common thread when she asked: "How long does it take passionate volunteers to burn out?"

"Our volunteer leaders who put in large amounts of hours deserve financial remuneration or their input will not be sustainable. To have a healthy society, those passionate people working to make it better need to have enough time and money to look after their own wellbeing too."

Another artist's submission said the 'big questions' for them were "How can we be more visible? How can our endeavours be more viable in Hamilton? Why should we stay here when we can move to a different city where the creative communities are stronger?"

Macaila says later that the Hamilton arts and performance scene "fluctuates" creatively, socially and economically over years, as waves of volunteer leadership commits energy and then runs out of steam as they're ground down by the lack of resources and support.

This scenario, common to every kind of volunteer outfit, often happens because folks get diverted away from the core activity that attracted them, and on to tedious but seemingly essential support functions like admin and fundraising.

Jack Clayton, the General Manager at the Waikato Institute for Leadership and Sport Studies, sees an equity issue. Sport at all levels is dependent on the time donated by volunteers, particularly coaches.

"Parent's expectations have increased around what they want from community organisations such as sports clubs. This has seen things like academies and development programmes set up at a significant cost to the parents," says Jack in his survey submission.

"This is great for those that can afford it, but it means that those that can't fall behind and leave the sport because they are disconnected from their peers."

In an interview Jack confirms falling volunteer numbers is further widening the gap, as poorer communities simply miss out altogether.

"I've seen amazing young athletes in places like Taumarunui, kids with a good attitude. If they were in Hamilton they would walk into the rep teams, but instead they never get spotted because the sport has shrunk or closed down there due to lack of volunteers."

Survey submitters also expressed concerns about the sustainability of volunteers in sectors such as aged care, disability and chronic conditions support, community centres and mentoring.

A Hauraki voice said of their town: "The heart of this community lies with the large number of volunteers, dedicated hard work by so many people, involvement in the town of many organisations and agencies whose can-do attitude has seen the community develop to be a safe, vibrant, gracious and proud community."

However, elsewhere one wrote: "It is some concern to us that in Otorohanga 74% have a sense of community but only 27% do volunteer work. As volunteers ourselves we see the lack of younger people coming into community organisations as a concern."

Status can be the challenge in getting volunteers for caring roles. A Hamilton respondent said: "we need to destigmatise support and provide positive volunteer options, so the adult working population can contribute in meaningful ways while unemployed."

Jan Wright, Chair of Creative Mercury Bay and Creative Coromandel, also commented on the general community roles of volunteers in a smaller centre.

"We have retired people moving into Mercury Bay permanently, who are from cities where social infrastructure is already in place and many don't know they need to volunteer their times and skills to make a small community work," says Jan.





In a follow-up interview Jan says: “Central and local government need to realise how much of New Zealand goes round because of volunteers. As a society and at all levels of government, we need to see and clearly understand the scale of our volunteer economy. I think the country doesn’t know how tremendously significant this unpaid contribution is.

“So, the first step is a real audit. The depth of the Census questions on volunteering is entirely inadequate, a lot more drilling down is required.

“And there needs to be greater recognition of this work being done. For instance, could volunteers have the hours they do recognised for tax rebates and flexible work experience points for qualifications?” asks Jan.

Heather Moore, General Manager at Volunteering Waikato, cautions that organisations need to recognise that volunteering is changing and they need to adjust their expectations.

“They need to chunk the work up into smaller bits, into tasks and projects, rather than expecting people to take on roles for long periods.”

“They need to change their idea of what a volunteer looks like, they might not look like them,” says Heather. “The biggest group of volunteers we see are young people seeking work experience.”

This might mean the first role they need to fill, whether paid or voluntary, is a Volunteer Coordinator, as more people need to be managed to get the same hours. As a profession, Volunteer Coordination is deserving of greater recognition.

“Generally, people want to match up their skills with doing something meaningful – many organisations underestimate the range of skills that are out there,” says Heather.

Funders and philanthropists can achieve greater social impact by specifically resourcing the volunteer capacity across the sectors they care about, because the voluntary effort multiplies the value of their investment.

The challenge is in matching the nature of the supply with the expectations of the demand.

What is clear from the Waikato Vital Signs® 2020 public engagement is that volunteering needs to be recognised and treated as a critical element of society and the economy.



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