Kia Mura!

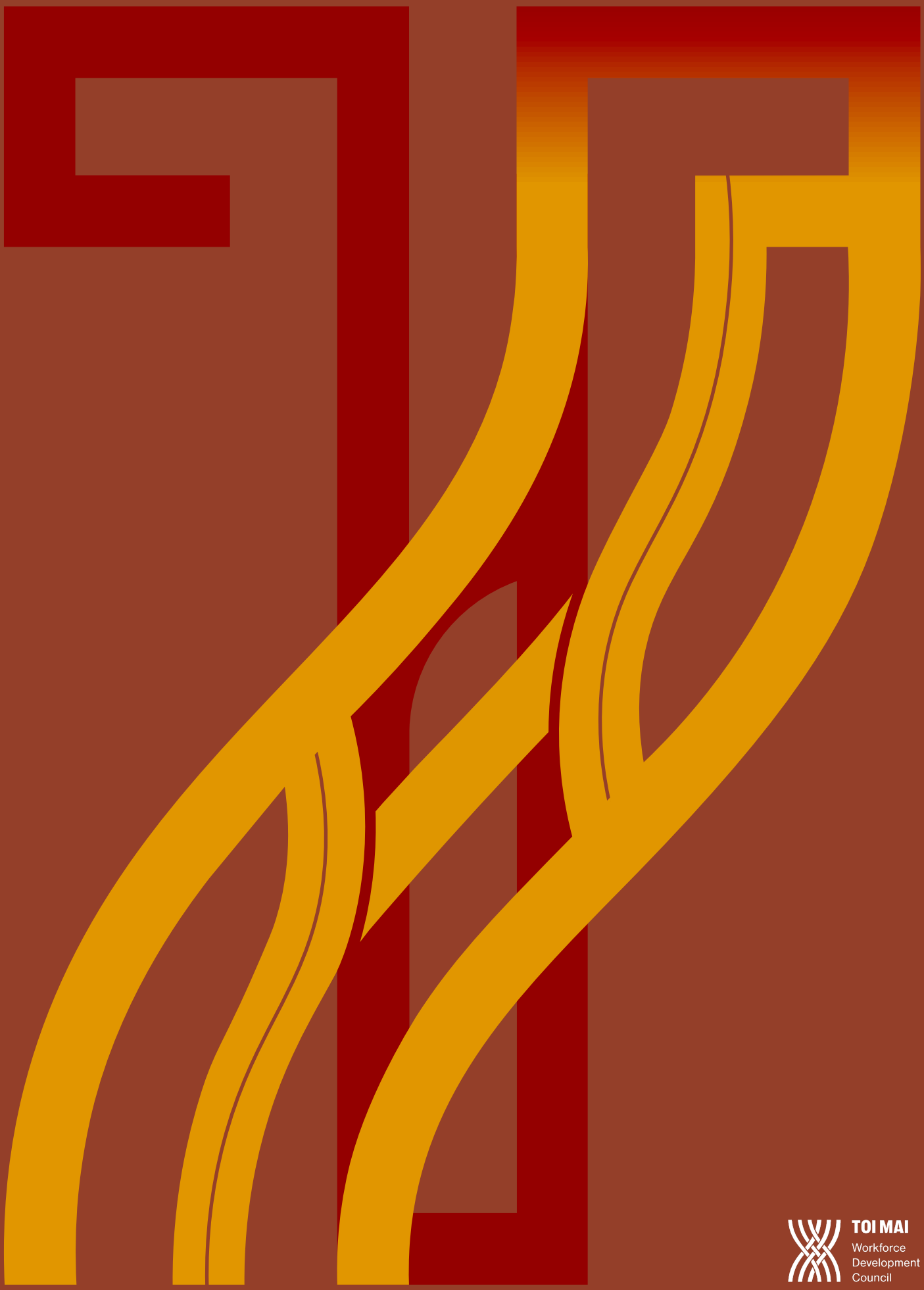

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Photo by Gantas on Pexels

Kia Mura!
The fire of Toi Puaki

ATHRIVING ECOSYSTEM

Photo by Nikhil Prasad on Unsplash

Te Mura o Te Ahi

Executive summary

Te Mura o Te Ahi

1. Te Mura o Te Ahi
Executive summary

People working in theatre and live music subsidise New Zealanders' participation in and enjoyment of the performing arts.

Of the 10,500 people working in theatre and live music in 2022, only around 1,500 people earned more than $30,000 a year. Half of the workforce earned less than $17,000 a year. This is well short of the national median of $62,000. Yet, despite these incredibly low levels of income, the shows still go on.

The performing arts workforce bears the risk and fronts a significant proportion of the cost to entertain us. Consequently, those involved in putting our stories on stage experience significant financial stress and limited choices in meeting their own needs, goals and ambitions. This situation has persisted for as long as the industry has existed in Aotearoa. Now, the cost-of-living increases, plus greater earning potential outside the sector and internationally, put us at risk of losing talent and the stories that help define who we are.

To reverse this trend and provide the workforce with a sustainable footing, incomes must be lifted to better reflect the New Zealand median income. Using this benchmark, we estimate that there is a gap of $310–420 million a year in the sector. See section 8 for details. This income gap is effectively comprised of unpaid and under-paid work that artists provide to ensure the rest of us can access the performances we value. Assigning a monetary value to this unpaid work makes the workforce the largest funder of the performing arts.

Our goal for our sectors to 'Thrive by '35' requires a concerted effort by policymakers, funders and audiences to rebalance the financial burden on the workforce. The rebalancing will create a sustainable, inclusive and accessible workforce that reflects the increasing diversity of our communities. The diversity is especially critical for thought leadership, innovation, skills development and vibrancy, and ensures we continue to see and hear everyone's stories on stage.

This WDP is the result of engagement with over a hundred people working in theatre and live music and the topics and themes reflect the concerns of those people. It isn't a complete coverage of the sector, but a snapshot in time. The voices and the understandings gained in this process inform our recommendations. The research is combined with data to produce insights into the changes needed to ensure a thriving workforce and productive industry.

About Toi Mai

In 2020, the government began the reform of vocational education, which became known as ROVE. This reform aimed to create "a system which is collaborative, flexible, innovative and sustainable for all regions of New Zealand".[1] Six workforce development councils, Ngā Ohu Ahumahi, were established in 2021 to bridge the gap between industry and training by advocating with industry for training and solutions to workforce challenges.

Toi Mai is one of six councils. Our work focuses on the creative, technology, recreation and cultural sectors. This workforce development plan (WDP) has been developed with the performing arts sector, Toi Puaki, which includes practitioners of live performance, dance, drama, circus and music, as well as the backstage workforce of producers, directors, choreographers, light, sound and rigging technicians and designers, and set and costume designers and makers, amongst others.

[1] www2.nzqa.gov.nz/about-us/strategies-projects/vocational-education-system/

Photo from Freepik

Toutoua te ahi Toi Puaki, kia mura ai
Stoke the fire of performing arts so it burns brightly

What's in this plan?

We have named this WDP *Kia Mura!* which means to set ablaze. The inspiration of te ahi (fire) helps us tell the story of the performing arts in Aotearoa.

Toi Puaki is like a fire. Creatives are its sparks who conceptualise and bring forth ideas and inspiration. Herein lies the potential of a fire, but a spark will soon dissipate to nothing if it is not cared for. Sections 7, 8 and 9 show the impact of this lack of care.

A spark needs oxygen to expand and glow and the oxygen of this fire are its practitioners, its back-of-house workforce and its musicians. Without these people, creative sparks and ideas, full of potential, would remain just that – ideas. Section 6–9 speak to ways to support the workforce and grow the fire. Sections 13, 14 and 15 highlight the successes of some practitioners and the challenges of others.

Moreover, a healthy fire needs long burning and sustainable fuel sources. Dry, plentiful wood with a good mix of soft and hard, is key to a warming hearty fire. The fuel that keeps Toi Puaki burning are its finances.

Section 9 discusses the problems of the funding system, and sections 12 and 13 explore challenges in the regions.

Currently, Te Ahi Toi Puaki (the fire of Toi Puaki) is burning low with the funding that fuels it in short and sporadic supply. Without a fair and sustainable funding model, the fire will become a few embers and eventually go out.

No one wants that. A big and healthy fire unites us. Universally, people love to sit around the fire and cook, sing and tell stories together. If Te Ahi Toi Puaki can burn fiercely, then audiences and practitioners alike will flock to enjoy its warmth and undeniable beauty. Section 16 lists our recommendations and the actions to ensure this.

Photo by Ralph Brown, Te Tangi a te Tūī - Te Rēhia Theatre & The Dust Palace at Te Pou Theatre

How will *Kia Mura!* change things?

The issues highlighted in this plan are not new and will take time and persistence to resolve. The sector has been advocating for many of these changes and it is heartening to note that as this plan was developed, work has begun in some of the areas of concern.

This plan identifies five recommendations and twelve actions. The recommendations advocate for a cross-sector approach to financial, infrastructural, training, regional and administrative solutions for the multi-level challenges experienced by the workforce – with the most important being investigating how to increase incomes in the sector.

Toi Mai actions focus on the things that we can do within our orbit in convening agencies, undertaking research, advising government on vocational funding, developing qualifications and endorsing programmes.

Taku ahi tūtata, taku mata kikoha

Keeping close to one's passion (fire) to be skilled or adept

TAKU AHI TŪTATA, TAKU MATA KIKOHA

Vision: Thrive by ’35

The performing arts sector is a space for communities to reflect, share and celebrate human experiences.

2. Taku ahi tūtata, taku mata kikoha
Keeping close to one's passion (fire) to be skilled or adept

Vision: Thrive by '35

It's 2035, and the arts are thriving in Aotearoa. The performing arts sector is supported and funded to be a space for communities to reflect, share and celebrate human experiences.

Musicians and performers are thriving in a stable and respected sector, and the wellbeing of everyone in the workforce is upheld through an ecosystem of support. These practitioners enjoy fulfilling careers across the country, with incomes and opportunities that reflect their level of expertise and the contribution they make.

They collaborate with skilled and diverse production teams to craft bold and innovative works.

People are attracted to work in the sector because of its culture, values and fair remuneration. They have ample opportunities to develop and understand how they can use their skills in other contexts.

The performing arts sector represents the true diversity of Aotearoa. Te ao Māori is upheld, and tikanga-based approaches are business as usual. Aotearoa is a world-leading centre of traditional and contemporary indigenous performing arts, and one of the kaitiaki of Pacific innovations and traditions. Tāngata whaikaha (disabled people) and tāngata turi (Deaf people) lead their own companies, tell their own stories, spearhead innovation and inform the wider performing arts landscape with their mātauranga.

Every community, big or small, has an accessible, inclusive and welcoming performing arts hub for whānau. Investment in the arts reflects how much we value culture, creativity and the wellbeing and human connection it brings.

This is our vision for the future of theatre and live music in Aotearoa. It is a vision we can achieve if we work collectively and with purpose. It is a vision that, if realised, would enrich the lives of our communities and make our economy more productive, rich and enjoyable.

Photo by Andi Crown from Movement of the Human - Tōrua

3. Taiāmiotia tōku ahi ohooho
Gather around my precious fire

Toi Puaki enriches our lives and those who work in it.

Toi Puaki benefits Aotearoa by providing live experiences that tell our stories and enable wellbeing, connection and social cohesion. These are well-documented effects, reinforced by research and survey data. Two-thirds of New Zealanders agree that the arts contribute positively to the economy,[2] while other research finds on average people would be willing to forego 6–20% of their income to enjoy the wellbeing benefits associated with being audiences to arts and cultural events.[3]

Unfortunately, this doesn't translate into financial support for the sector. Audiences are often reluctant to pay high prices for local theatre and music, and consequently, ticket prices seldom reflect the true cost of putting on a show.

"... our ticket sales hardly cover our costs ... we don't make a lot because we want our productions to be accessible ... for example, we only charge $5 for our school shows ... and people in the regions don't have the money to spend that people in the cities do."

– Funding/marketing manager, Māori performing arts company

The perception also persists that the arts are a 'nice to have', making them especially vulnerable in times of economic hardship when belt-tightening strategies remove them from city council budgets or when government departments are under pressure to save money.

[2] New Zealanders and the arts 2024, Creative New Zealand
[3] Research commissioned by Toi Mai to be released in 2024

"There's a lot of people hesitant to start in the sector ... It's a hard journey and a lot of people fall off."

– Creative director and choreographer, Te Whanganui-a-Tara

Photo by Tauranga Zinefest for Motif Poetry, from Tauranga Poetry Slam 2021

Perception matters: people aren't attracted to work in the sector

Toi Puaki is perceived to be a difficult career with many challenges – because it is. This perception and its reality dissuade parents from encouraging their children to become performers or musicians, and rangatahi, school leavers and career changers from considering it as a viable career option. Additionally, backstage roles continue to be invisible.

"The stigma of the performing arts in Māori and Pacific families. It's not a solid career but something you do in church. It's not taken seriously."

– Participant, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

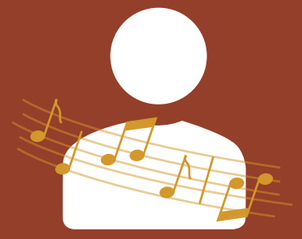
Photo from Hāpai Productions

4. Ko wai a Toi Puaki?
Who's in the sector?

There are 10,500 people in Toi Puaki working in many different roles. This is a multi-talented workforce skilled at problem-solving, logistics, team work, budgeting, ideation, project development and presentation, feedback loops, creating, adapting and pivoting.


Musician


Singer


Music Director


Stage Manager


Producer


Production Assistant


Actor


Dancer


Circus Artist


Marketing Manager, Publicist & PR


Venue Manager


Artist's Manager, Agent

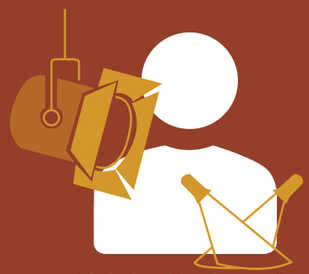
Stand-up Comedian


Spoken-word Artist

Choreographer


Costume Designer & Costume Maker


Sound Designer & Sound Technician


Lighting Designer & Lighting Technician

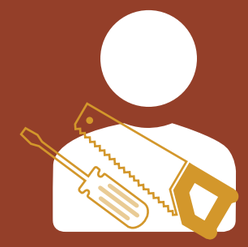

Dramaturg


Playwright


Director


Mechanist, Rigger


Art Director


Set Designer & Set Builder

Te taha ōtanga

The sector has potential to boost the economy

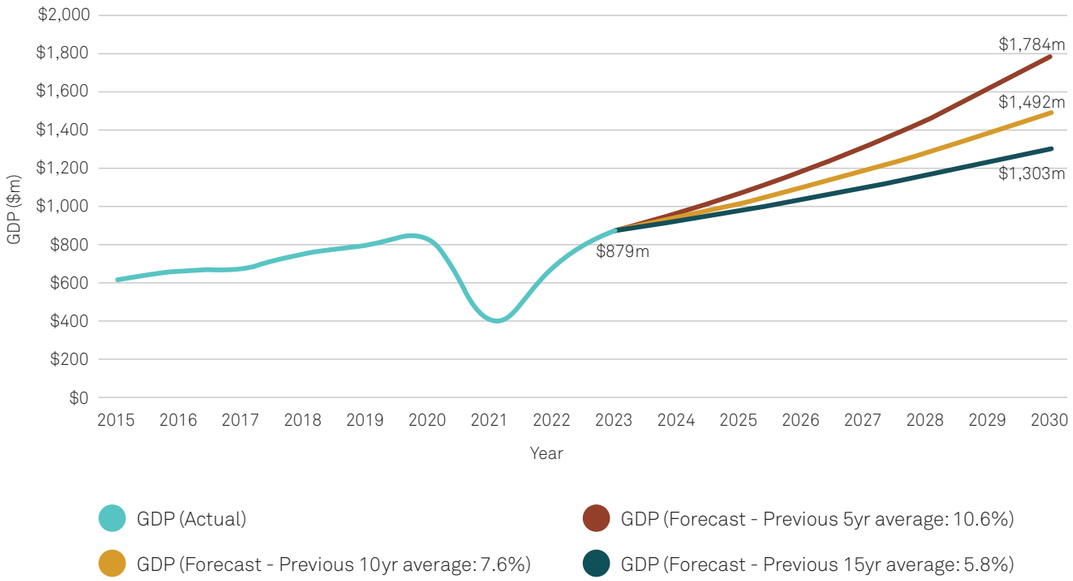
5. Te taha ōtanga
The sector has potential to boost the economy

Toi Puaki has grown faster than the wider economy.

Toi Puaki has grown faster than the wider economy between 2015 and 2023.

The sector has significant growth potential. The GDP growth average between 2015–2023 for Toi Puaki was three times the national average (8.9% vs 3.1%), with total GDP reaching $880m in 2023.[4]

GDP forecast based from previous growth[5]



[4] Infometrics
[5] Projections using historic Infometrics data

There are wider benefits to the economy that need recognition.

Toi Puaki creates positive impact across the economy. In 2020, despite limitations from COVID-19, the music industry created around $400m of indirect and induced GDP.[6]

Two-thirds of New Zealanders see the arts as contributing positively to the economy, while around three-quarters think arts create jobs both in and around creative industries.[7]

Induced = generated when the wages and salaries paid out by the music industry are spent on goods and services, thereby stimulating further economic activity

Indirect = occur when businesses in the music industry purchase goods and services from other industries in order to record and produce a song, market an album, or put on a concert.


Photo by Tauranga Zinefest for Motif Poetry, from Tauranga Poetry Slam 2021

[6] PWC NZ Music Economic Contribution Report 2023
[7] New Zealanders and the arts 2024, Creative New Zealand

6. Whakamanahia te ao Māori
Embracing te ao Māori

Manaakitanga and acknowledgement

Māori practitioners and companies bring mātauranga Māori to the sector, and over time this has been welcomed and embraced. From an audience point of view, this can be seen at the Aotearoa Festival of the Arts with its opening pōwhiri and in the manaakitanga that is extended to manuhiri, performers and kaimahi.

Despite the growing influence of te ao Māori in Toi Puaki, Māori are underrepresented in the workforce.

14% **of the workforce in 2021 are Māori,**

compared to 18% of the overall population. A feeling also remains of being undervalued.

> “As a New Zealand Māori Dance Company, my aspiration is for us to have a place in the arts sector because we’re still not fully acknowledged. If I look at NZ Ballet and NZ Symphony Orchestra, they get huge budgets but not for Māori – we are not acknowledged to the same funding level.”

– Creative director, dance company, Hawkes Bay

Photo by Andi Crown, Half of the Sky, 2019, Massive Theatre Company

Māori companies are leading the way

Taki Rua, the first dedicated Māori theatre company, was established in Pōneke in 1983. It has been extremely influential in bringing a Māori lens to theatre, producing work in te reo Māori and introducing tikanga. Te Pou Theatre based in Henderson opened its door in 2015 with a similar kaupapa – to be a home for Māori-led performing arts.

“Our role is to support Māori artists. We provide a space for Māori artists, but also for all artists. There is strength in everyone using the space and the space can inform non-Māori about kaupapa Māori and how to sit in the particular spaces.”

– Director, theatre company, Tāmaki Makaurau

Both organisations have been able to design their own business models, influencing other theatres to do the same. In 2023, Basement Theatre in Tāmaki Makaurau announced that they were ditching the directorship model of organisation in favour of a whānau-based collaborative model.

Photo by Vadim Sadovski on Unsplash

The illusion of choice

Logistically, Māori companies experience some limitations in the ways they want to operate.

Māori companies filling the training gaps

Māori companies are increasingly offering their own training programmes, especially in backstage roles like producer and on the technical side where, as mentioned above, there is a national workforce shortage.

They want to employ Māori practitioners and technicians, but are unable to do this due to shortages. Opportunities and pathways into the sector must be highlighted so that rangatahi can see the opportunities and realise the aspirations of Māori to tell their stories on their terms.

A rethink of qualifications

Ngā Rātonga Tohu Mātauranga Māori Qualifications Service (MQS) at New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) hold a number of qualifications for te ao Māori performing arts such as kapa haka and tāonga puoro. With Toi Mai holding the rest of the qualifications, we need to work with NZQA to develop alignment and exchange between the "Western" training and "te ao Māori" qualifications.

"We want our kaimahi to be able to bring a cultural perspective to all of the roles, but that's not always possible. There are very few Māori designers, for example. We have to use Pākehā designers often, and sometimes we would choose to do that and sometimes we wouldn't, but at the moment that's not a choice. So while funders say, here's the funding, go do what you want, we can't do what we want because the people aren't there. There is the illusion of choice, and the decision is often made for us especially regarding the people we use."

– Director, theatre company, Tāmaki Makaurau

Recommendation 1:
Embrace our natural advantage and adopt an “Aotearoa style” of training

Ngā Rātonga Tohu Mātauranga Māori Qualifications Service to work with training providers to develop an Aotearoa style of training and performance to leverage our unique stories and strengths.

Toi Mai actions
The road to a culturally competent workforce

1. Share and collaborate with Ngā Rātonga Tohu Mātauranga Māori Qualifications Service to develop a culturally competent, skilled workforce trained in the unique opportunity that Aotearoa presents.

2. Investigate and promote pathways for rangatahi into the production and technical roles where Māori are needed to fill specialised roles.

Photo by Jinki Cambronero from Te Kura Maninirau

7. E mura ai te ahi, me whai wahie
Our fire needs wood to burn fiercely

Working in the gig economy is difficult

The inconsistent work patterns of the sector's gig economy mean irregular incomes at unregulated market-driven pay rates if you're a contractor, or a reliance on insecure funding sources if you're an organisation or developing a project.

"The life of an artist is feast or famine."

– Festival programmer, Te Whanganui-a-Tara

Only **1,500 people** in the workforce earn more than **$30,000.**

Photo by Frankie Lopez on Unsplash

Subsidising our enjoyment with underpaid work

People working in the sector subsidise our enjoyment with hours of unpaid work – chasing contracts, applying for funding, in rehearsals, and with HR, legal and tax compliance, while the work they do get paid for is often not enough to cover the costs of their efforts.

This places constant stress and pressure on the workforce and their partners and families, who often provide financial support. It results in challenges with housing, delays starting families and taking holidays, and increased worrying about getting sick.

Photo from Wintec School of Media Arts Lighting Sound The Drowsy Chaperone

We risk losing our people to other countries

Practitioners can make better income by working overseas. Only one-quarter agree that there are sufficient opportunities to sustain their careers in Aotearoa.[8] One of our most successful dance companies, for example, regularly tours internationally and this income funds their domestic work.

"I feel a responsibility to reinject the money back into community . . . International touring is the main source of funds for our domestic work."

– Company director, Tāmaki Makaurau

"Our international work is more profitable because of better margins, even though we use/pay agents to help organise this work."

– Manager, touring theatre company

During COVID-19, high numbers of event and entertainment technicians relocated overseas where work was still available. They haven't come back. This has created a severe shortage of expertise in this part of the sector.

Research also found that over half of those surveyed (53%) in 2023 believe that it is necessary to go overseas to develop and sustain a career.[9]

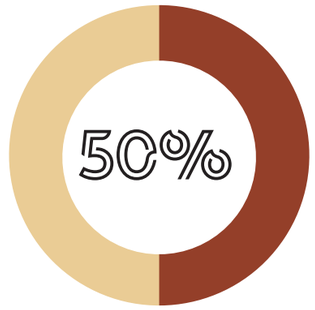
"International is seen as the pinnacle – a lot of people are leaving the country not understanding the value of community arts."

– Participant, Creative Talanoa, Porirua

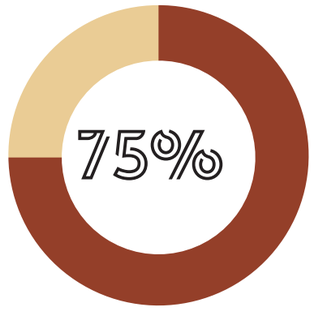
A perverse incentive has been created where people leave Aotearoa and we have to hope they come back.

Leaving the sector for good[10]

People are also leaving the sector to work in other industries, contributing to high turnover. Of those who entered the performing arts industry in 2018:



50% left the industry after one and a half years



75% left the industry after three years.

[8] A Profile of Creative Professionals 2023, Creative New Zealand
[9] A Profile of Creative Professionals 2023, Creative New Zealand
[10] Statistics New Zealand IDI

He maramara wahie
Splinters of firewood

HE MARAMARA WAHIE

8. He maramara wahie
Splinters of firewood

Incomes in the sector are derived from short-term projects.

Between projects, there is nothing to buffer the gaps. Practitioners who run companies are likely to pay themselves last to ensure everyone else is paid. Paying fair rates to others means less for themselves and they are likely to have to work outside the sector to make ends meet. Over half (54%) of performing arts professionals undertake work outside the creative sector.[11]

Pay rates

"I want everyone to be paid their worth . . . for people to be valued for who they are and what they do. Their stories demonstrate the power of the arts. They enrich people's lives and wellbeing."

– Director, theatre company, Tāmaki Makaurau

Standardised or minimum pay rates for theatre and live music are common overseas. Australia's Live Performance Award 2020 sets out pay rates for all kinds of performing artists, but there is nothing similar here. There are no safeguards for practitioners and musicians – no best-practice rates, fixed incomes, sick leave or holiday provisions, except for the minimum wage. The sector instead operates with informal market rates.

CNZ has a remuneration policy and advocates for a minimum hourly rate of $30. This is a contractual obligation for anyone who receives funding. Outside of CNZ's ambit however, it has no control. Pay rates are agreed between parties.

"Pay rates for musicians haven't changed in twenty years."

– Musician, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

[11] A Profile of Creative Professionals 2023, Creative New Zealand

"We need a set price for bands. Payment is anything from $800 for a band to $8K. We need better live performance royalties to reflect the hard work. And bars need funding to top up payments to the bands."

– Musician, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

$17,000

In 2022, the median income from creative work for performing arts professionals was $17,000 or,

$37,000

when combined with other work, $37,000.[12]

Experienced practitioners and high-profile musicians can command higher rates because they are drawcards for audiences. Lighting and sound designers and technicians are likely to be paid above the minimum rate as their skills are essential to high production values for performances.

[12] Data supplied to Toi Mai from A Profile of Creative Professionals 2023, Creative New Zealand

Photo by Andi Crown, Heart Go Boom, 2023, Massive Theatre Company

Volunteers

In the musical theatre world, there is a heavy reliance on unpaid volunteers. A model known as 'pro-am' (professional-amateur) is used to put on productions. A small number of professionals are employed to fill the high-profile roles. All the other roles, which could be as many as 200, are filled by volunteers.

Of all the performers in Toi Puaki, dancers are the least likely to get paid, except if they work in the New Zealand Ballet, where they are paid according to salary bands. Outside of that, it is the 'Wild West' for dancers.

"Dancers have no idea what they can earn. On a daily basis I get messages on my Facebook from music artists that are looking for dancers to work for free. They're paying for the camera and the camera crew, everybody else but they're not paying the dancers."

– Tāmaki Makaurau Dance Enquiry Research Report, 2023

We want live music and theatre to thrive – for their benefit and ours

Incomes for people working in theatre and live music must be lifted so that they are closer to the national median of $62,000 per annum. We estimate this would require $310m–$420m a year in additional money.[13]

Achieving our vision for our sectors to 'Thrive by '35' requires strong and focused leadership from Manatū Taonga as the Government's policy advisor on performing arts, supported by CNZ, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Social Development, and other funders and audiences.

Photo by Andew Hughes on Unsplash

[13] We have arrived at this number by subtracting the median average income from performing arts work of $17,685 from the median national average of $62,000. We know 91% of the workforce earn less than $50,000, so have used this proportion for the upper limit estimation. For the lower estimation, we have eliminated 25% of the workforce who are included, but may not want full time roles in the industry. Please note these are assumptions.

2

Recommendation 2:
Investigate policy levers to boost income for practitioners by 2035

Manatū Taonga and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate regulatory, tax and social policy options to ensure that the workforce's incomes from creative sources match the national median by 2035.

Toi Mai actions
Tracking remuneration

3.

Work with CNZ and the performing arts industry to reinforce remuneration practices so that artists are fairly paid for their work.

4.

Work with sector partners to set equitable targets to meet the goals relating to income, and track the workforce's progress towards reaching the national median income. Interim and progress targets will help us measure progress.

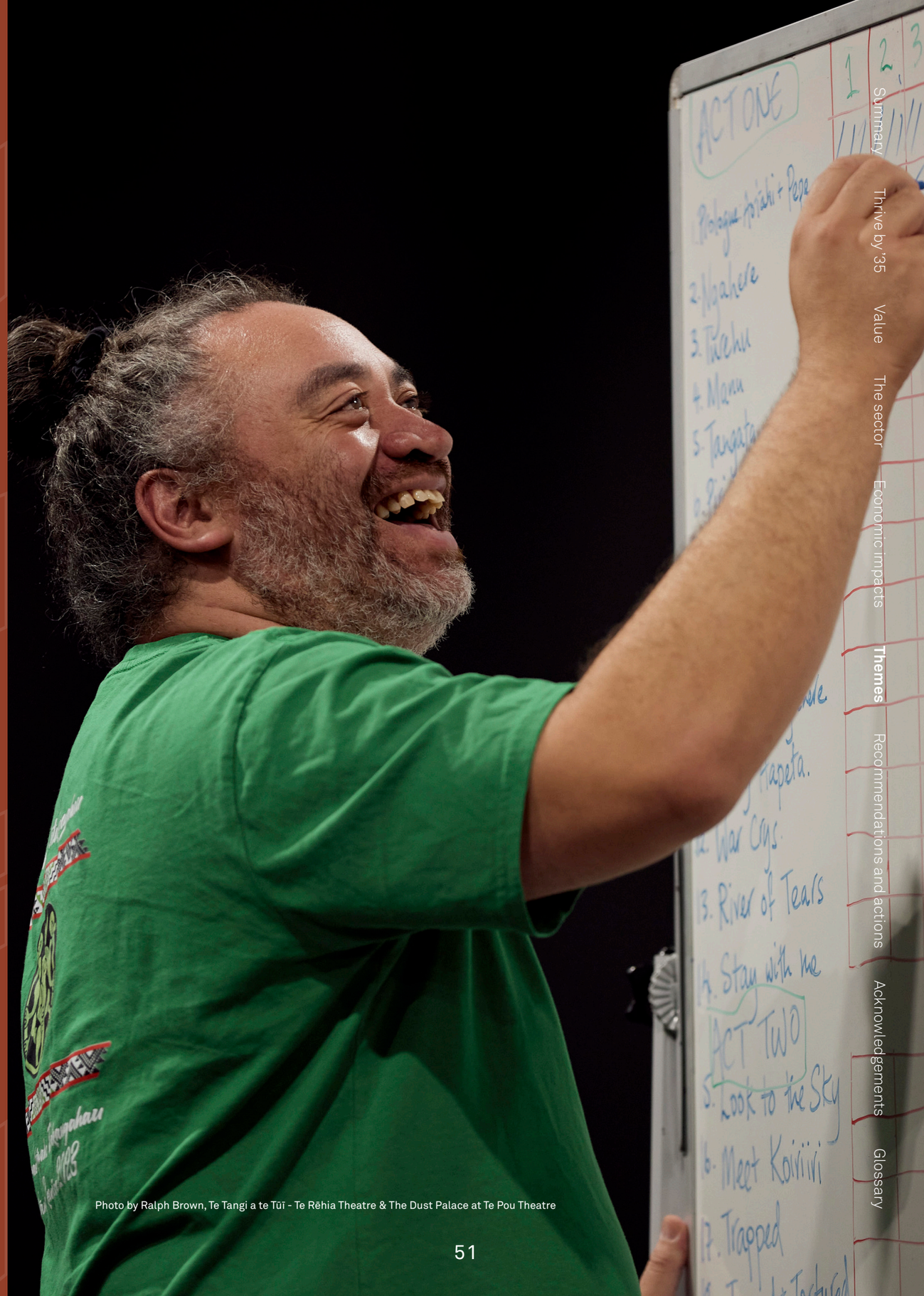
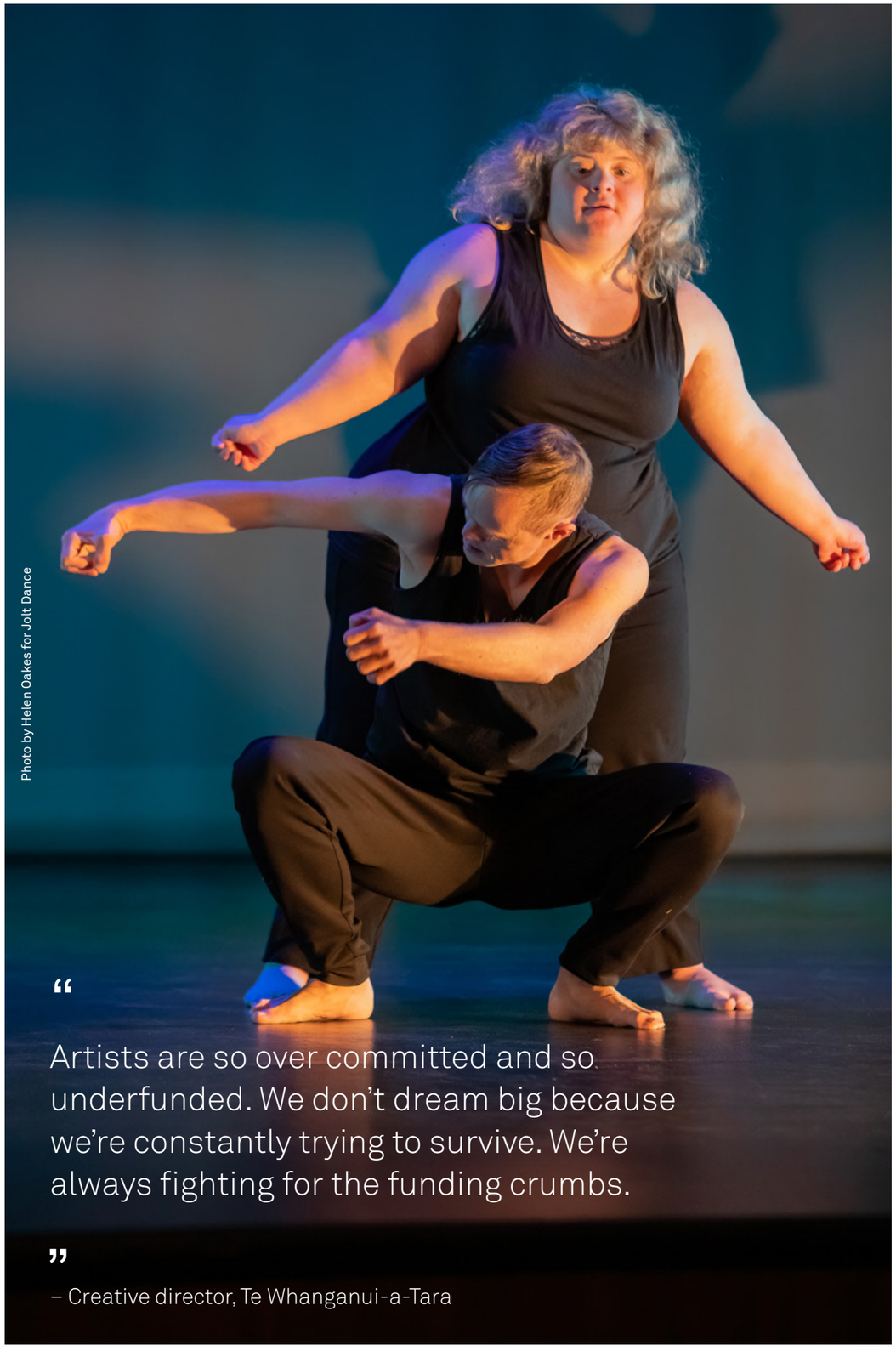


Photo by Ralph Brown, Te Tangi a te Tūī - Te Rēhia Theatre & The Dust Palace at Te Pou Theatre



9. Te kohi wahie
Collecting firewood

The burden of the funding process

Toi Puaki relies heavily on contestable funding. Our engagements with the sector suggest it makes up to 70–90% of a production’s finances. Funding is administered through an application process. Time, resources, writing and administrative skills are necessary to complete a funding application. This process can feel exclusionary, but also means less time to develop work. CNZ has recognised this challenge and recently made changes to its funding categories, but these factors remain an issue.

“The ability to access funding excludes the most vulnerable sectors of Toi Puaki, unlike the NZ Ballet for example who have grant writers to do their funding applications . . . Artists need to complete funding applications with language familiar and appealing to funding bodies. I would like funding for a writer so I can navigate funding applications and help develop new voices and authentic performers.”

– Performer/producer, Te Whanganui-a-Tara

Funding is difficult to navigate, with uncertain results

There are several agencies across government who fund the arts. A disconnection exists between the way the Government funds the arts directly through CNZ and indirectly through agencies like MSD and Manatū Taonga with different criteria and outputs. This has created messiness and confusion with little information on how to navigate the landscape.

Outside government, there are other funders including city councils, embassies, trusts and organisations that offer avenues for project funding. These are just as uncertain and disaggregated, likely to only provide smaller top-up amounts and requiring high levels of reporting.

The system is unintentionally working against practitioners

“

We try to get grants and sometimes sponsors will give us money. We would love to make money on the concerts. We’re all volunteers and sometimes people have to pay for things we need for the productions . . . Money is our biggest problem. Being a national body, we find it really difficult.

”

– Director, national organisation, Hawke’s Bay

3

Recommendation 3:
Map the funding landscape

Manatū Taonga to map the funding landscape and examine ways to streamline the funding approach across different funders and agencies. Manatū Taonga to create a guide for councils and other funders to provide understanding of reasonable expectations around reporting.

Photo by Cottonbro studios on Pexels

“

The process is so difficult to get what we need for our rangatahi. There are so many hoops to jump through to get funding and often it is just easier to not apply, but that shouldn’t be the case.

”

– Musician, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

10. Tāwhiritia te ahi
Fanning the fire and supporting the workforce

Lack of infrastructure creates duplication

Most of the Toi Puaki workforce is made up of self-employed contractors or businesses that employ them. This gig economy has little infrastructure, and what exists is highly distributed. There is no central point of data.

The workforce spends a lot of effort navigating human resource processes, compliance, contracts and tax, as well as having to do marketing, branding and self-promotion.

These activities occur alongside the actual work of developing or supporting performances and productions, leading to duplication of tasks.

The workforce would be more efficient and more productive if it could reduce the amount of effort spent navigating the commercial aspects of working in the sector.

The absence of useful tools and business skills

While the app HNRY has made a big impact in the sector with invoicing and tax management functions, there are other gaps for practitioners.

We heard a lot about the need for business skills. This reinforces CNZ's finding that over a third of creative professionals would like more support with business management. Their 2023 consultation also found that the workforce needed just as much advice, mentoring and data as funding.[14]

The workforce also recognises its need for entrepreneurial skills to be able to take advantage of opportunities to monetise aspects of creative work.

We understand there are tools and supports available through CNZ and MBIE, and more could be done to promote and access these products. We can also do more to incorporate business and entrepreneurial skills into education and training options for creative professionals.

[14] The Future of Arts Development in Aotearoa New Zealand 2023, Creative New Zealand

Toi Mai actions
Lift business and entrepreneurial skills among creatives

5.

Work with CNZ and other relevant agencies to promote existing business supports for creatives.

6.

Explore the needs of the workforce with regard to qualification support for business and entrepreneurial skills for creatives.

Photo by Ralph Brown, Te Tangi a te Tūī - Te Rēhia Theatre & The Dust Palace at Te Pou Theatre

11. Kia hāngai ngā akoranga ki te tira hōu
Opportunities for training to meet industry needs

Informal training filling the gaps

Informal training is occurring all over the sector to fill the gaps left by formal training, especially in producing and technical production skills—and especially for Māori and Pacific kaimahi. For the most part, this is a necessity to ensure that there are people with the skills to do the work on productions.

In the dance industry, a proliferation of community classes meets the demand from both adults and children for dance classes in many genres. This is a profitable but completely unregulated part of the industry. Anyone can set up a dance class and there are concerns about health and safety and the impact of unsafe practices – especially on children.

The Pacific context

Training emerged as a challenge for Pacific practitioners. Difficulties are experienced on many fronts, including the lack of Pacific content in programmes, pastoral care, racism, the cultural competency of tutors, the western educational framing, and the invisibility of pathways out of training and into industry.

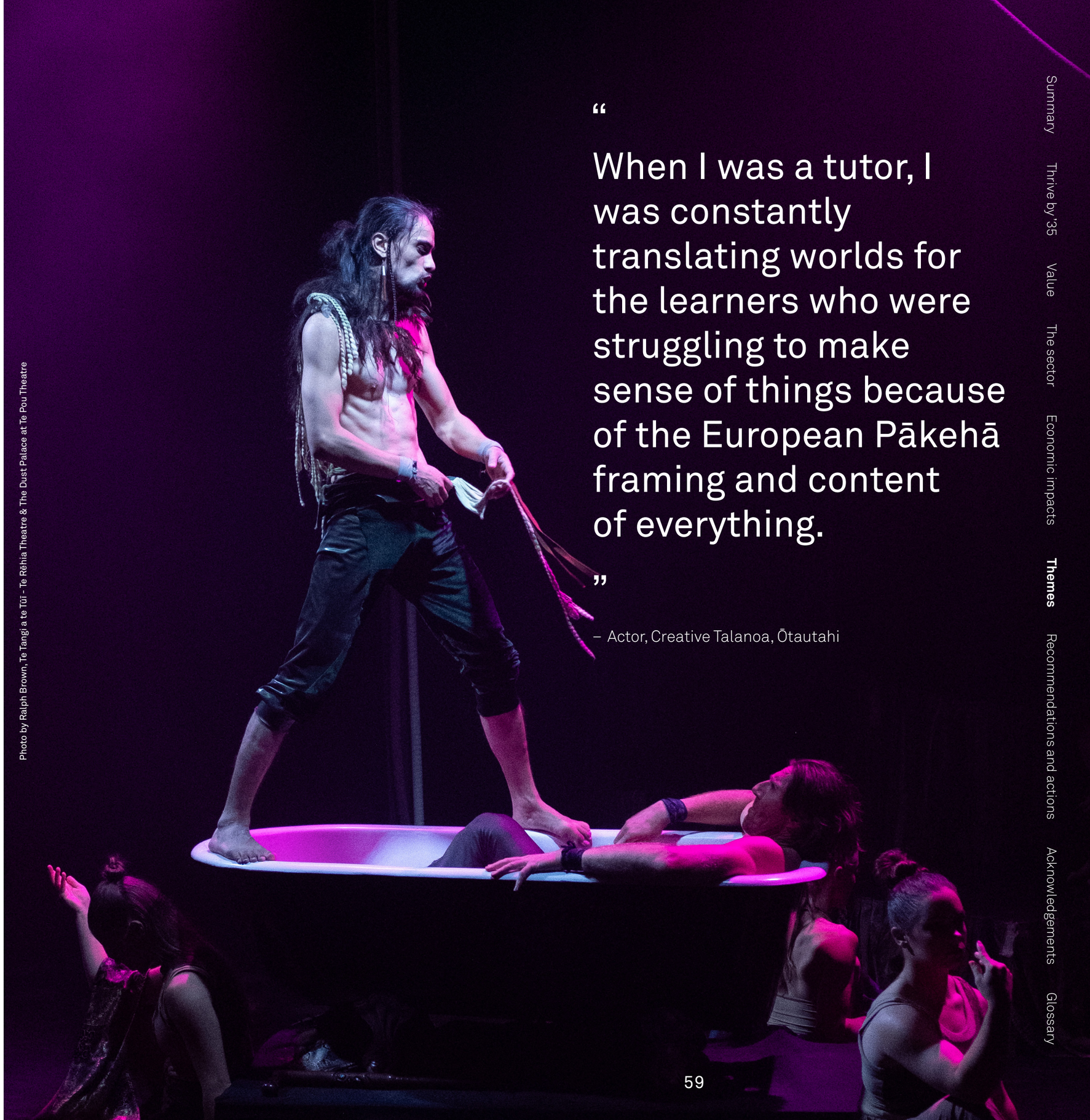


Photo by Ralph Brown, Te Tangi a te Tūī - Te Rēhia Theatre & The Dust Palace at Te Pou Theatre

> “When I was a tutor, I was constantly translating worlds for the learners who were struggling to make sense of things because of the European Pākehā framing and content of everything.”
>
> – Actor, Creative Talanoa, Ōtautahi

Other training issues emerged from interviews and the research[15]

Barriers to training are:
- working fulltime, lack of time
- cost
- opportunity, quality and distance.

Half of the creative professionals interviewed say there is inadequate training opportunities to develop their skills.

Workforce shortages in production technicians (lighting, sound, rigging, set and prop building) and backstage roles in general signal issues with current training.

[15] The first two points come from CNZ's 'A Profile of Creative Professional (2023)' and the third from our interviews with the sector

Toi Mai actions

7. Further research into the cause of the workforce shortages in technical production and backstage roles to understand why training isn't meeting these shortages and how to attract people into this workforce.

8. Ensure through our own processes and relationships that qualifications are developed with Pacific practitioners, and advocate for more Pacific content through programme endorsement.

9. Work with dance industry to create accessible qualifications for community dance teachers.

12. Ngā ahi kōmau ā rohe
The smouldering fires of the regions

Better support needed in the regions

The experiences of performing arts practitioners and audiences are varied. To highlight this unevenness, we provide the contrasting stories of two cities, Ōtepoti and Kirikiriroa. These stories focus on the situation for theatre in each place.

Ōtepoti Dunedin

In 2018, the 200-seat Fortune Theatre in Ōtepoti closed. This had an immediate impact on opportunities in the city. While this isn't the only theatre venue, it was an affordable, purpose-built, professional venue with good facilities. Without it, practitioners found themselves unable to develop and stage medium-sized works.

"The venue [Fortune Theatre] closing down has had a massive impact . . . it's really affecting the quality here. The talent here don't have the tools or the resources to do things or see good productions, to know what they can actually aspire to and what's possible. As a professional producer, I can't premiere work here because there's no venue that works for me to be able to afford to pay people professional rates, etc. And for professional development I have to leave the city – there's not really anyone here I can learn from."

– Producer, Ōtepoti

Research from CNZ into arts attitudes, attendance and participation found that in 2020, Otago residents attended the arts less in the previous 12 months compared to 2017. This decline is likely due to fewer opportunities, rather than a declining interest.[16]

[16] New Zealanders and the Arts 2020, Creative New Zealand

The Dunedin City Council and CNZ commissioned a report in 2019 to understand the problems faced in Ōtepoti. This report acknowledged that:

> "Currently there is an amazing range of arts practitioners in Dunedin. They are all making work in largely compromised infrastructure."

– Dunedin Performing Arts Feasibility Study, 2019


Photo by Andi Crown from Movement of the Human – Tōrua

Kirikiriroa Hamilton

By contrast, in 2024 a 1,400-seat theatre will open in Kirikiriroa. It will sit among three other well-used venues in the city – two community theatres and one at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato – University of Waikato. The city also has Creative Waikato, "an organisation focused on capability building in the arts, culture and creative ecosystem of Waikato",[17] which is piloting projects to connect artists and audiences and facilitate participation in local communities.

With this infrastructure and support, the Meteor Theatre in Kirikiriroa has been able to run professional development projects such as 'Boil Up' to foster the development of local artists and their work.

[17] https://creativewaikato.co.nz/about-us/who-we-are


Photo by Tom Noble for Motif Poetry, from Anti Slam 2022

13. Kia ahi kā roa ngā ahi o te motu whānui
Keep the fires burning across the whole country

Local stories to the national stage

Several salient issues are highlighted by these two contexts. Firstly, that stories begin from sparks that must be fanned, nurtured and given opportunities for growth inside and outside their local region. And with this exposure and further development, it is possible to reach the national stage and beyond.

“We are helping the little fish grow around the coral reefs so that they can go out to the big sea. Part of the model is we give three hours free and then charge, we subsidise in this way. Part-time staff help with marketing, we don’t design but we publicise. We cover the ticketing. We wrap everything around.”

– Director, theatre company, Kirikiriroa

Photo from Hāpai Productions

Photo by Andi Crown from Movement of the Human - Tōrua

Building the national capability with a regional strategy

Alongside this, the development of local talent has a similar trajectory. Some practitioners begin learning their skills in the regions and hone their craft with experiences of developing, presenting and seeing work. This may lead to national tours and projects in the main centres. Training and experience in the regions add to the national capability and complement what happens in the metropolitan areas.

A strategy that reflects the different needs and requirements of the regions and towns is needed to enable planning towards equity of resourcing and infrastructure across the motu. This strategy should include training and consider how local and national capability and capacity can be better coordinated.

A regional strategy would also provide community benefits

National capability isn't the only reason for a regional strategy. Research shows that local and isolated communities benefit from vibrant local arts as participants and audiences – and that participation in the arts builds social cohesion and wellbeing with the telling of local stories.[18] These are the more immediate and tangible benefits of flourishing regional arts.

[18] Research commissioned by Toi Mai to be released in 2024

Recommendation 4:
A strategy to support regional performing arts

Manatū Taonga and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate ways to better support the performing arts in the regions and connect regional arts initiatives with the national arts infrastructure.

14. Kia whitawhita mai a Ngāi Moana Nui a Kiwa
By Pacific for Pacific

A lot of performing arts activity is generated in Pacific communities all over the country. This activity celebrates identity, family occasions, community and cultural events.

A poor perception of a performing arts career in Pacific communities

Like Māori whānau, Pacific families don't see the performing arts as something to make a career out of.

30%

of Pacific people who joined the Toi Puaki workforce in 2017 were still there after 12 months.

"Year 12 and 13 Pacific students go to work to support their families. There is no choice of having a career – that is the economic reality. They can express themselves at school but not at home. You have to prove to parents that you can bring in the money."

– Participant, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

With better visibility and understanding of the range of careers on stage and backstage, families could be better informed and potentially more supportive.

"

We want jobs to make our families proud. If we cater to our parents, and we know that our parents are being looked after, then we can be at our best.

"

– Actor, Creative Talanoa, Ōtautahi

Photo by Tom Noble for Motif Poetry, from the Anti Slam 2022

"

When I was at Drama school, there was a Samoan student in the year above me. And I'd look at him and think 'If he can do this . . .' I just needed to see someone like me to know that was possible

"

– Actor, Creative Talanoa, Ōtautahi

Role models and mentoring

The tech roles at Polyfest are usually filled by non-Pacific people. Pacific organisations want to give the work to people from their own communities, but the challenge is finding someone. Pacific people are underrepresented in the workforce compared to the population (6.5% vs 8.5%).[19]

Rangatahi and career changers need mentoring and pastoral care to navigate into the various areas of the sector where pathways are unclear.

"For us as Pasifika there's lots of life that gets in the way. Young people can't do internships when they need to feed their mums and dads, and brothers and sisters."

– Director, production company, Tāmaki Makaurau

[19] Statistics New Zealand IDI

Pacific pathways

Pacific practitioners have made their own pathways. Black Grace was established 28 years ago by a Samoan dancer spearheading Pacific-influenced contemporary dance. The company continues to innovate. Their latest project "The Art of Black Grace" turns the ephemeral nature of dance into an immersive visual experience in a large cylindrical theatre with surround-sound audio and visuals.

"I set up [our company] to help people like me. To provide a pathway to bring Pacific and Māori men from backgrounds like me, in particular."

– Director, Tāmaki Makaurau

Parris Goebel and the Royal Family are modelling a career so far unseen in Aotearoa and inspiring rangatahi into dance.

"Those kids at the Super Bowl dancing with Rihanna are from South Auckland. In the hip-hop champs, the Pacific kids are smashing it."

– CE, Tāmaki Makaurau

Photo by cottonbro on Unsplash

A Pacific peak body would promote Pacific stories and interests

There are calls for a peak body for Pacific practitioners.

"The sector needs to consolidate the hard data . . . We need a peak body, someone to play that role for us."

– Musician, Creative Talanoa, Ōtautahi

With the assistance of a peak body, wider issues could be addressed, such as control of intellectual property, which has become more challenging as Pacific stories find a wider audience.

"Hollywood is now looking to the Pacific for stories – the last of the untapped – for stories and locations, but we need to upskill our IP now so we can be the creators not the doers of low-income work."

– Participant, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

It would also go some way in promoting Pacific work on its own terms. Musicians especially feel a sense of marginalisation in the industry.

"Have you heard of Mr Cowboy? He is a Samoan muso, a huge hit in the country scene. He was invited as a guest to the Tamworth Country Festival in Australia. Now he plays there every year. There's this big divide here between mainstream and Samoan and Pacific music. Why isn't Mr Cowboy mainstream here?"

– Musician, Creative Talanoa, Ōtāhuhu

Photo by Stephen Acourt. Toni Huata at Whitireia

Toi Mai actions advocate for the Pacific industry

10.

Advocate for a peak body to be established for Pacific workers in Toi Puaki.

11.

Explore the potential benefits for Aotearoa in embracing its status as a powerhouse of Pacific music.

15. Te hahana o te kanaku tāngata whaikaha me ngā tāngata turi
The radiant heat of tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi

The demand for participation and leadership

Tāngata whaikaha (disabled people) and tāngata turi (Deaf people) are increasingly visible in the performing arts. In the last ten years, a number of organisation have been formed by and with tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi to create, lead and present work. These include dance, theatre and circus companies.

"... it'd be beautiful to see our deaf community hold their space and tell their stories the way that they want with their own leadership, not just be brought in when an access show is needed ... to be appreciated and valued as artists. It's so beautiful to see deaf performers physically telling stories. There's no other experts like that in New Zealand."

– Deaf person, company director, Kirikiriroa

Limited data makes it hard to see how tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi experience Toi Puaki

Despite this growth of visibility and representation, data about the involvement or experiences of tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi isn't collected. Without data to understand how many apply for courses compared to how many get in, or how many make up audience numbers or are practitioners, their experiences and demand for participation are obscured.

"Access and inclusion are more than ramps. It's the way you talk to people, it's the space you give to people. Disabled people are the least paid. Our costs are 400% higher than others. To talk about ability take the 'dis' out of it for inclusion at every level. The next step is disability led. How do you empower disability into leadership when there is no pathway?"

– Disabled person, Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Tāmaki Makaurau


Photo by Helen Oakes for Jolt Dance

Challenges accessing training

We repeatedly heard about the difficulties tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi have in accessing tertiary training. Te Pūkenga commissioned research in 2021 on the accessibility of vocation education for tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi, and echoes of all the major themes from this report were heard during our interviews – inaccessible physical environments, inaccessible communication and information, lack of employment pathways, financial hardship and lack of funding, and lack of disability awareness.[20]

More data collection is needed to understand the barriers to participation and access, and to understand the needs of tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi in the sector to facilitate opportunities for leadership, training and participation.

"... I had to fight and fight and fight to go into study. Then I was accepted, and I was able to get a qualification and I was one of the lucky ones. But I'm hoping that down the track that will become a lot easier and that I will be able to extend my learning as well. But access is sometimes a fight ... we don't want to be fighting for access. We want sign language and English to be equal. We want them to come together and to have this crucible of creation."

– Deaf person, company director, Kirikiriroa

[20] www.tepukenga.ac.nz/assets/Our-Pathway/Learner-Journey/Te-Rito-Insights-from-Disabled-Learners-part-three1.pdf

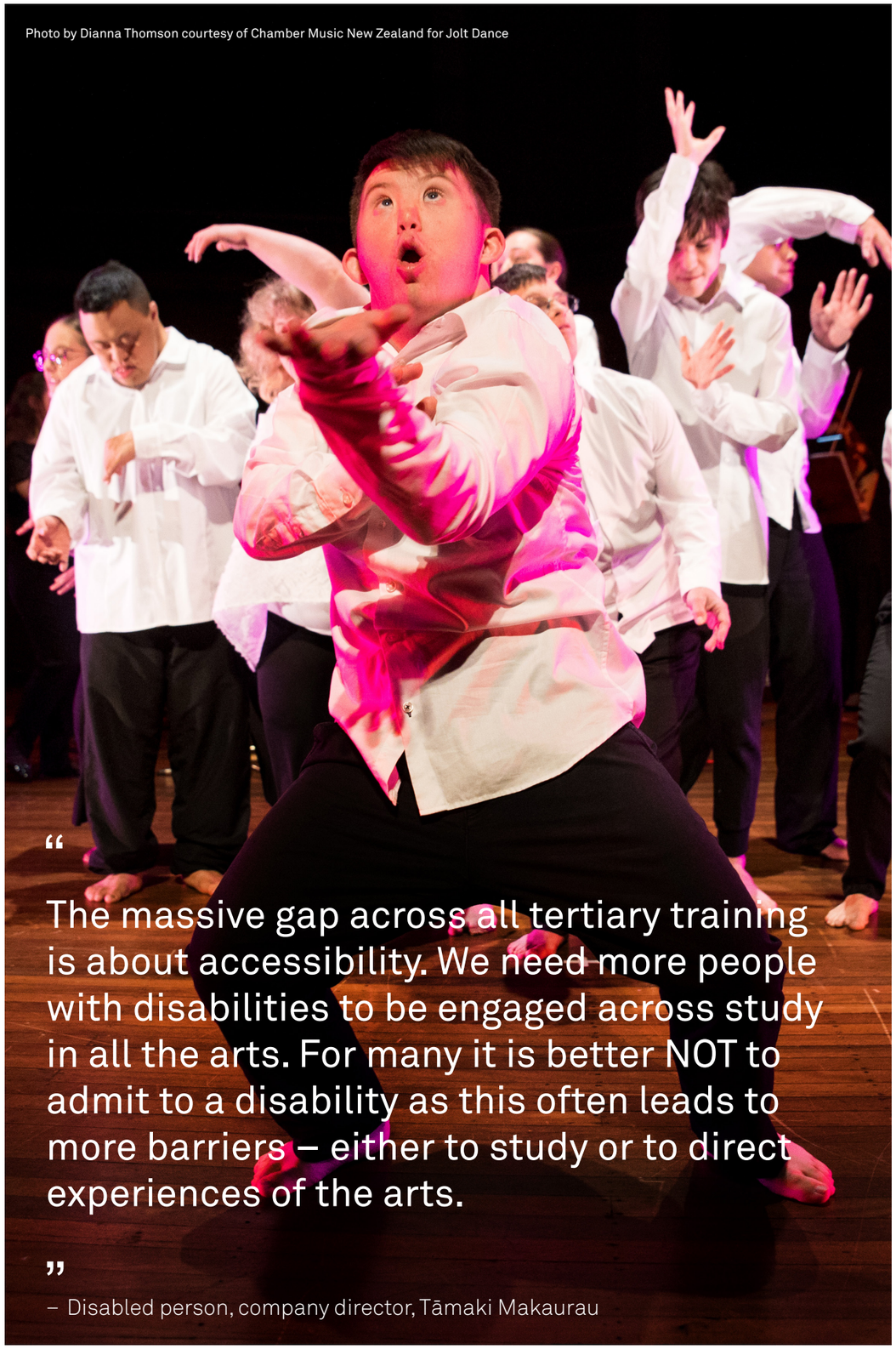


Photo by Dianna Thomson courtesy of Chamber Music New Zealand for Jolt Dance

“The massive gap across all tertiary training is about accessibility. We need more people with disabilities to be engaged across study in all the arts. For many it is better NOT to admit to a disability as this often leads to more barriers – either to study or to direct experiences of the arts.”

– Disabled person, company director, Tāmaki Makaurau

5 Recommendation 5: Improve data collection

Manatū Taonga to consult with Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People about ways to improve community-led data collection on workforce participation in Toi Puaki, training and audience experiences.

Toi Mai actions

Tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi lens on qualifications

12.

Ensure through our own processes and relationships that qualifications are developed with tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi, and that we advocate for equity of access through programme endorsement.

Ko kōwhekowheko anō ai
To ignite once more

KIA KŌWHEKOWHEKO ANŌ AI

16. Kia kōwhekowheko anō ai
To ignite once more

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Embrace our natural advantage and adopt an "Aotearoa style" of training**
Ngā Rātonga Tohu Mātauranga Māori Qualifications Service to work with training providers to develop an Aotearoa style of training and performance to leverage our unique stories and strengths.

2. **Investigate policy levers to boost income for practitioners by 2035**
Manatū Taonga and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate regulatory, tax and social policy options to ensure that the workforce's incomes from creative sources match the national median by 2035.

3. **Map the funding landscape**
Manatū Taonga to map the funding landscape and examine ways to streamline the funding approach across different funders and agencies. Manatū Taonga to create a guide for councils and other funders to provide understanding of reasonable expecta-tions around reporting.

4. **A strategy to support regional performing arts**
Manatū Taonga and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to investigate ways to better support the performing arts in the regions and connect regional arts initiatives with the national arts infrastructure.

5. **Improve data collection**
Manatū Taonga to consult with Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People about ways to improve community-led data collection on workforce participation in Toi Puaki, training and audience experiences.

ACTIONS

1. Share and collaborate with Ngā Rātonga Tohu Mātauranga Māori Qualifications Service to develop a culturally competent, skilled workforce trained in the unique opportunity that Aotearoa presents.

2. Investigate and promote pathways for rangatahi into the production and technical roles where Māori are needed to fill specialised roles.

3. Work with CNZ and the performing arts industry to reinforce remuneration practices so that artists are paid fairly for their work.

4. Work with sector partners to set equitable targets to meet the goals relating to income, and track the workforce's progress towards reaching the national median income. Interim and progress targets will help us measure progress.

5. Work with CNZ and other relevant agencies to promote existing business supports for creatives.

6. Explore the needs of the workforce with regard to qualification support for business and entrepreneurial skills for creatives.

7. Further research into the cause of the workforce shortages in technical production and backstage roles to understand why training isn't meeting these shortages and how to attract people into this workforce.

8. Ensure through our own processes and relationships that qualifications are developed with Pacific practitioners, and advocate for more Pacific content through programme endorsement.

9. Work with dance industry to create accessible qualifications for community dance teachers.

10. Advocate for a peak body to be established for Pacific workers in Toi Puaki.

11. Explore the benefits for Aotearoa in embracing its status as a powerhouse of Pacific music.

12. Ensure through our own processes and relationships that qualifications are developed with tāngata whaikaha and tāngata turi, and that we advocate for equity of access through programme endorsement.

17. He kupu whakatepe
Conclusion

The workforce's commitment to Toi Puaki is impressive, given the difficulties described above, but the fires are in danger of going out. If this workforce is not developed and looked after, it is in danger of being lost or relocating overseas. If that happens, accessing the performing arts in Aotearoa will be even more difficult, expensive and less relevant. Our stories won't be told.

The most fundamental ways to look after this workforce is to ensure it is financially supported in a sustainable way so practitioners have choices about their lives, like much of the wider workforce. And to acknowledge the vibrancy, innovation, connection and inspiration it brings to the social and cultural life in Aotearoa.

Training must be a consideration for workforce development. For Toi Puaki, the rethink around training is less about individual qualifications themselves than the way we are training. Students who want to be practitioners need to know they have options for the types of training they can do – whether Western methods, those based in te ao Māori or the Pacific, or all of the above. This would begin a conversation about Aotearoa-based performing arts training.

But qualifications could mitigate some of the workforce shortages if training was more accessible. Instead it is locked up in various ways. The funding model prevents providers from considering smaller cohorts, and pathways are not visible.

For backstage roles where workforce shortages are being experienced, more research is needed to investigate what is creating these shortages and how to encourage school leavers, graduates and career changers to fill these roles.

We have lessons to learn from the music industry, which has experienced an upsurge in the interest in live performances and tours. Audiences continue to be hungry to gather around the fires together, in person.

Our recommendations are a starting point – an offering of fresh wood for the fire. As the Ohu Ahumahi Workforce Development Council for Toi Puaki, Toi Mai is committed to carrying out our role as a thought leader for our sector. This includes doing research, connecting, advocating and being the voice for our sector. As reflected in the recommendations, a cross-agency partnership approach is required to create the necessary shifts for a thriving performing arts sector in Aotearoa.

We have the benefit of a unique set of circumstances to bring together and uplift communities through hearing our voices on stage – through gathering around the fires of creativity and expression. Let's not give up those opportunities to come together, those experiences of te ahi.

18. Ngā whakamānawatanga
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Kuputaka
Glossary of terms

a

Access
Describes the way that participation is facilitated for tāngata whaikaha. This might be physical access into a theatre or venue, but is more likely to be systemic access, in other words that tāngata whaikaha have been considered and their requirements embedded into the planning and design of a training programme.

b

Backstage roles
These include stage managers, costume assistants, mechanists, riggers.

c

Choreographer
A person who composes the sequence of steps and moves for a performance of dance.

d

Dramaturg
Experts in the study of plays, musicals or operas. It is their job to provide the cast and crew with vital knowledge, research and interpretation about the theatrical work in question so that they are better equipped to do their jobs.

Director
The person who understands and directs all of the elements of a production: the actors, understudies, sets, costumes.

e

Ecosystem
Suggests all of the elements of the sector that make it work including funding, workforce, venues.

h

Hauora
Wellbeing.

k

Kaitiaki
Guardian, custodian, keeper.

Korero
Discussion.

m

Mechanist
The person who uses mechanisms to move sets around a stage.

Motu/Ngā motu
Islands, North and South islands.

p

Practitioner
A person who creates and present work in a live event setting. This includes musician, dancer, actor, singer, performer.

Producer
Someone who organises all the logistical elements of a production, including funding, venue, publicity, contractors.

Publicist
Someone who organises the marketing and social media for productions.

s

Sector
Used to denote the wider world of Toi Puaki including production companies, theatre and dance companies, arts organisations and training providers.

t

Talanoa
A meeting to discuss community issues.

Tangata turi
A person from the Deaf community. Turi means to be deaf or deafness.

Tangata whaikaha
A disabled or neurodivergent person. The term encompasses disabled and neurodivergent people. Disabled people are living with long term physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, learning or other differences who, due to social barriers, may not experience full and effective participation in society (Office for Disability Issues, 2022a). Neurodivergent people are those people whose ways of thinking may appear different from what is considered neurotypical. This term was first coined by the autism community (Benians, 2022). Neurodiversity includes autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, dyscalculia, auditory processing disorder, attention related disorders and others. They may also be referred to as neurominorities.

Technician
A person involved in the technical aspects of a live event: sound, lighting, rigging.

Te Ao Māori
The Māori world.

Te Moana Nui-a-Kiwa
The Pacific Ocean.

v

Value
In the context of this document, when the performing arts are valued, they are supported by government investment because they are understood as vital for communities and wellbeing, and by audiences who will pay for performances and champion their critical place in the national ecosystem.

w

Whakaaro
Thoughts, views, opinions.

Work/s
This refers to the shows, theatre productions and live events developed by practitioners.

About the statistics used in this plan

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Data and Statistics Act 2022. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.

These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and Longitudinal Business Database (LBD), which are carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI and LBD please visit https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/

The results are based in part on tax data supplied by Inland Revenue to Stats NZ under the Tax Administration Act 1994 for statistical purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the IDI for statistical purposes, and is not related to the data's ability to support Inland Revenue's core operational requirements.

Kia Mura!