Amplify: Toi Mai Submission

Toi Mai is the workforce development council for the creative, cultural, recreational and technology industries.

We are an independent statutory entity established under s366 of the Education and Training Act 2020. Our legislative functions include standard setting and providing investment advice to TEC, which we do by identifying gaps and needs in workforce skills and training through industry engagement and research. Toi Mai was established to act as an advisor to government on behalf of the creative, cultural, recreational and technology industries.

Our vision is that Aotearoa has confidence in and aspiration for our sectors and sees them as crucial to our success as a nation.

Our purpose is to ensure our industries are supported by a skilled, thriving and sustainable workforce. We do this through developing qualifications and standards, and providing trusted advice to government, industry and education providers about what needs to change to ensure our industries have the skills they need.

Our submission is focused on the creative industries (rather than the broader arts and culture settings). It provides feedback on the overall strategy, what's missing and what needs strengthening, and highlights where it aligns with Toi Mai initiatives in support of a skilled creative and cultural workforce.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Manatū Taonga | Ministry for Culture and Heritage to advance this strategy.

Overall Strategy

Toi Mai is supportive of the ambition and general direction outlined in Amplify (the strategy), particularly its emphasis on targeted interventions to help the creative industries thrive. As the independent voice of industry within the vocational education and training system, our work reinforces many of the key priorities and actions identified in the strategy. These align closely with the insights we have gathered from our research and engagements with industry.

We strongly endorse the Government's support for the socio-economic and socio-cultural value of the creative sector's contribution and opportunity for growth to leverage the economic benefits of creative work in Aotearoa further. The strategy presents a unique opportunity to unleash this economic and productive potential and accelerate our shift to a creative-export economy.

We recognise the resource constraints felt by creative organisations and workers, as well as the fiscal limitations that restrict any potential increase in government funding. The 'Investing for Maximum Impact' pillar provides a valuable foundation for recognition of the areas where the creative industries add value to other parts of the economy, often without equivalent return.

We are also pleased to see many of our findings from engagements around creative skills and training generally reflected in the 'Nurturing Talent' Pillar.

What's missing

We note the strategy is silent on the role of creative technology and its potential as a high growth and weightless driver of export revenue. The digital technology sector is currently on track to overtake the primary industries as New Zealand's biggest export sector.[1] We see significant opportunity to leverage the creative and technology industries to drive productivity and export growth.

There needs to be greater financial recognition of the intersecting contributions the creative industries make to other sectors of the economy

Toi Mai can see many opportunities to innovate and re-think the financial mechanisms funding the creative and cultural sectors. These should be explored in the strategy. One option could, for example, involve the Minister advocating for a hypothecation of the tourism levy to fund these sectors. This acknowledges that many tourists visit New Zealand to experience Toi Māori and other aspects of Māori culture, as well as 'the arts' more broadly. Allocating a portion of the levy to the creative and cultural sectors would reflect its significant contribution to tourism and provide more resourcing.

In October 2024 the tourism levy increased to $100 per visitor[2], with MBIE estimating this will generate a yearly revenue of $230 million[3]. Based on this number, a hypothecation of 20% to the creative sector would see an additional $46m in funding for arts and creative sectors that would not need to come from local or central government.

Recommendation:

- Include an action to explore additional financial mechanisms to fund the sector.

Better export data is needed to measure progress

There is strong recognition within the strategy of the potential to increase the export of New Zealand's arts and creative industries – however, the absence of a reliable export valuation system is a significant gap. Without accurate data on current export earnings, it is challenging to benchmark growth or set informed targets. Developing a robust valuation system that measures and differentiates between goods and services exports should be a priority action to provide evidence-based insights regarding exports.

Additionally, the lack of visible export support raises questions about the implementation of actions that could reach this target. Clarifying NZTE's role or other mechanisms to support exports would strengthen this aspect of the strategy.

Recommendations:

- Include an action to outline how export data will be gathered and analysed.
- Clarify what organisations and mechanisms will be used to support a focus on exports.

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[1] Te-Wao-Toi-Whanui-Spreads.pdf
[2] IVL increase to ensure visitors contribute more to New Zealand | Beehive.govt.nz
[3] Proposal for increasing the IVL | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

What needs strengthening

We support stronger whole-system integration of creative skills training and education to bolster workforce development in the creative sector

The World Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs' 2023 report[4] identified creative skills as the top 'skill on the rise', affirming that cultivating a larger, well-trained creative workforce can drive significant economic benefits beyond the creative sector itself. We recommend the strategy more explicitly acknowledge the economic imperative of fostering creative and cultural skills across sectors, the spillover effects, and the need for intentional and targeted investment to unlock this opportunity.

While we agree with the proposed actions to strengthen workforce development in creative industries, Toi Mai sees it as essential that creative skills are integrated across all sectors. We would like to see an additional area of focus in the strategy – to nurture talent both within and outside the creative industries. We support the proposed 2027 review of arts curriculum in schools. Investing in creative skill development across the economy would amplify New Zealand's ability to leverage its potential as a driver of productivity and innovation within and beyond the creative sectors.

Promoting creative skills across the general population broadly enriches opportunities for individuals to enter and excel in creative and other careers. General creative skills training should supplement targeted interventions for specialised creative skills for those working within the industry.

Recommendation:

- Include a new focus under the 'Nurturing talent' pillar of the strategy – to nurture talent both within and outside the creative industries. This requires more attention on creative education throughout school and across different disciplines.

The targets in the strategy should be measurable and work should be done to fill the data gaps needed to track progress towards these targets

We ask the strategy to adopt a more ambitious approach to setting measurable and, where possible, quantifiable targets. While the proposal states that evaluation measures of outcomes are yet to be designed, Toi Mai would like to see a preliminary measure of these targets developed to drive collective accountability to achieving the strategy's goals.

Toi Mai appreciates the strategy's desire to see New Zealand rank amongst the top 25 nations for culture and heritage soft power but considers the goal to be too achievable. To have real impact, New Zealand should be aiming for the top ten.

The strategy sets out a target that 'more New Zealanders are actively engaging with New Zealand arts, culture and heritage.' It would be useful to understand how the Government will measure an increase in engagement in the arts and what success would look like. It would also be useful to acknowledge where there are data gaps relating to participation and engagement to work towards filling those gaps where necessary.

We support the overall goal to increase artist income. We recommend setting a target for income from creative sources within the overall target, to reflect our ambition for creative professionals to earn a living from their craft. Specifically, we want to see the median income for

[4] Skills outlook - The Future of Jobs Report 2023 | World Economic Forum

creative professionals to match the national median by 2035, as outlined in *Kia Mura!* our Toi Puaki workforce development plan[5].

We recommend the strategy include a target median income for creative professionals *from creative sources* be set at 65% of the national median income by 2030 (the current creative median is around 31%). Achieving this target today would add $20,670 to the median income from creative sources (currently $19,500[6]) to reach $40,170, while a percentage target would account for inflation to 2030.

Recommendation:

- Amend the target for global ranking in Soft Power Index to place New Zealand within the top 10 in the world, instead of the less-ambitious top 25.
- Outline what data will be used to measure engagement in the arts and identify who will be responsible for tracking towards this target. Any target should be ambitious and quantifiable so it is clear what success would look like.
- Set the median target for creative professionals' income from creative sources at 65% of the national median income by 2030.

As a government agency supporting the creative industries, Toi Mai would like to see how different stakeholders are expected to support the strategy

Given the current funding landscape and the limited people capacity within the creative industries, Toi Mai would benefit from a better understanding on how the Government intends to implement the strategy's actions.

The strategy lacks clarity on how actions will be implemented through cross-agency collaboration or public-private partnerships. It states the Government is seeking to reallocate or better use existing funding streams, which implies there will have to be trade-offs in terms of what work is done to progress actions from the strategy. We would like to see greater articulation of the priorities, and how decision-making and resource allocation will be prioritised.

Recommendations:

- Include clarity around resource allocation, decision making and general implementation of the actions in the strategy.
- Articulation of the priority workstreams and who will be responsible/invited to work on the actions alongside MCH.

Upcoming Toi Mai projects may be able to support many of the actions outlined in the strategy

The projects currently being planned, or already underway, that could align with some of the actions in the strategy are:

- Creative Industries Summit (April 2025): bringing together industry and government to discuss the system reforms needed to recognise, support and grow the creative industries to make a greater proportional contribution to exports, employment and GDP growth

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[5] Kia-Mura-Toi-Puaki-–-Screen-version.pdf

[6]

- Ngā Toi Māori project: addressing benchmarking rates for procurement and ways of measuring the value of the Toi Māori industry

- upcoming workforce development plans: Currently scoping plans for Māori and Pacific conservation and archiving, libraries and information services, and graphic and industrial design.

While these planned projects have not been driven by this strategy, we see benefit in aligning our efforts with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Our view is the strategy's success relies on more active and intentional investment from central government than is signalled in the strategy. We want to see greater clarity around how success will be measured and how investment will be intentionally activated to make the biggest difference for those working in the creative industries. The value of this strategy will be in its ability to drive meaningful change – in investment, activity and outcomes – for the creative industries.

We look forward to the opportunity to progress important solutions for the creative sector and are happy to answer any questions regarding this submission or the strategy.