

## **Toi Mai feedback on Tū Mai Rā, Toi Aotearoa**

Toi Mai is the workforce development council (WDC) for the creative, cultural, recreational and technological industries. We are an independent statutory entity established under section 366 of the Education and Training Act 2020. Our legislative functions include standard setting and providing investment advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which we fulfil by identifying workforce skills and training needs through industry engagement and research.

Our purpose is to ensure our industries are supported by a skilled, thriving and sustainable workforce. We achieve this by working closely with industry to identify workforce development challenges and solutions. Our research and workforce development plans are available [here](#), including key studies in the creative industries:

- [Toi Pāho WDP 1](#) - Screen industry, 2022
- [Toi Puaki WDP](#) - Performing arts industry, 2023
- [Toi Māori WDP](#) - Toi Māori industry, 2023
- [Toi Pāho WDP 2](#) - Screen industry, 2023

Our feedback on the *Tū Mai Rā, Toi Aotearoa* strategy is informed by these industry insights, alongside engagement with creative organisations, communities and individuals. Toi Mai enjoys a strong working relationship with CNZ and the shared ambitions that we have for supporting the creative workforce. We appreciate this opportunity to give feedback while we still can.

### **Support for the strategy's vision and goals**

Toi Mai supports the overarching direction of the strategy and its commitment to building a thriving creative sector. We are pleased to see the goal of “*Thriving artists, ringatoi and practitioners, with viable creative careers, supported by a healthy arts infrastructure*”. Sustainable careers and the supporting infrastructure are top priorities for the creative industries we engage with, aligning with our vision for artists and others working in our sectors: Thrive by 35.

We also endorse the goal of “*He mana toi, he mana tangata – thriving and highly visible ngā toi Māori, valued in Aotearoa and around the world*”. Our recent benchmarking wānanga with ringatoi Māori highlighted the lack of industry infrastructure and standards of remuneration, reinforcing the importance of targeted support for ringatoi enabling them to flourish and create even more taonga to enrich them and our country.

### **Clearer articulation of the current factors driving this strategy is needed**

Historically, there has been a strong link between government investment and the Arts Council's (now CNZ's) direction. The draft strategy could be stronger by clearly outlining the key challenges facing artists and creative organisations between now and 2040, and how CNZ can act on its vision within a broader domestic and international context.

Although pages 8-9 acknowledge some of the sector's challenges, greater clarity is needed. For example, the bicentenary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 2040 is noted, but its relevance to this strategy is not well defined. The 200-year anniversary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi represents a critical moment for Aotearoa New Zealand to reflect on its journey in honouring its founding agreement and to set ambitious goals for the future. This milestone

provides an opportunity for CNZ to position the creative sector as a leader in expressing, upholding, and advancing commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

How does CNZ envision honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 2040, and how does this strategy contribute to that? What role does the arts and creative sector play in shaping a national narrative that is both reflective and forward-thinking as Aotearoa reaches this significant historical moment?

A more explicit intervention logic for getting to 2040 would strengthen the strategy, outlining what specific problems or circumstances it seeks to address and the benefits of long-term investment in the arts for Aotearoa's economy, culture, and society.

### **We believe that more understanding of the demand side of the arts economy is needed**

As a funding agency, we appreciate that CNZ operates within financial and resource constraints, balancing support for both emerging and established artists. We believe that there is an opportunity to explore how the value of the arts can be increased to drive greater demand, ultimately reducing reliance on CNZ as a funding body while also supporting artists.

If New Zealanders appreciate and engage with the arts, how can this translate into a stronger market for creative work? Beyond funding, what role can CNZ play in shifting public perception and fostering conditions for a more commercially viable arts sector? A focus on demand generation, helping artists connect with audiences, build market opportunities, and commercialise their work, could ease the pressure on CNZ while enabling more sustainable careers. We believe that this aspect of the conversation around value could be impactful to driving and connecting many of the goals outlined in the strategy.

### **There could be a more defined pathway for achieving the strategy's goals**

Currently, the strategy does not clearly outline how its goals will be actioned. While the vision is ambitious, it lacks a roadmap detailing:

- The specific actions CNZ will take to realise these goals
- What change CNZ will implement to move towards this vision
- How success or progress will be measured

Greater transparency on decision-making, prioritisation, and resource allocation would enhance confidence in the strategy's implementation. Toi Mai would welcome further clarity on how the public and industry stakeholders can expect to see the strategy reflected in CNZ's work.

Toi Mai supports the overall direction of *Tū Mai Rā, Toi Aotearoa* but sees opportunities to refine and strengthen its focus. We believe that clearer articulation of the strategy's drivers, a stronger emphasis on increasing the value of the arts to drive demand, and more concrete actions would enhance its impact. We look forward to continued engagement and collaboration until the end of 2025 to support a thriving, sustainable creative sector in Aotearoa.