

Looking to the Future = Wero from Toi Mai

Summary – *Te Pūaotanga – The New Dawn*

The report (Skills in the creative sector) from economist Shamubeel Eaqub confirmed that our creative sector – people working in creative roles and creative industries – is a core economic pillar, generating significant financial and cultural value to New Zealand.

Commissioned by Toi Mai, the economic research provides a foundation to make a case that, with the right support and investment, the creative sector could underpin our next phase of economic growth. What we need is a plan to realise this potential and enable our shift towards a high-powered, world-leading creative economy.

Our creative and digital technology sectors have potential but are being held back

One of the main factors stifling our creative and digital technology sectors is their struggle to find skilled workers – especially those trained domestically. This was a consistent theme in our engagements with industry, and is backed up by key insights from our research, including:

- 8% of people with screen-related qualifications entered the screen industry (2022)
- 45% of our current tech workforce are here on some form of visa (residence or working).

Inaction and underinvestment in these sectors risk us trailing further behind other countries, with the UK, Australia and Indonesia reaping the benefits of investment. We can learn from other countries' experience in transforming to creative economies:

- Back our creative industries with industry policy and intentional investment (e.g. Australia and the UK).
- Create partnerships with other industries for whole-economy growth, such as tourism, export and sustainability to create powerful multiplier effects (e.g. Indonesia, Australia and Canada).

- Treat creative skills as a core catalyst for innovation across our whole economy (e.g. Denmark and Ireland).
- Recognise the wider value and impact of creative and tech sectors on the economy – rather than just GDP (e.g. Denmark).

Government action is necessary to realise the economic potential of these industries

The Toi Mai wero to industry (to advocate for) and government (to act on) requires action in three areas:

- Treat creative industries like the economic engines they are and invest in them as critical infrastructure, creating multiplier effects where creative investment drives growth across the economy.
- Make current investment work smarter to create self-reinforcing cycles where education responds to industry needs and investment flows to highest-return activities.
- Change how we measure and shape impact to enable strong investment decisions and prevent skills mismatches.