

# **Aho-Tini 2030 - Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy To Wellington City Council**

*May 2021*

We would like to appear in person to support our submission

*Contact person:*

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Te Rūnanga Taiohi o te Kaunihera o Pōneke

## Introduction

1. The Wellington City Youth Council (Youth Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on Aho-Tini 2030 - Arts, Culture & Creativity Strategy (Aho-Tini) for Wellington City.
2. We would first like to applaud the Arts, Culture and Creative Strategy team for including Youth Council members in the process of developing this strategy.
3. Collaboration is a core element highlighted in this strategy through the way which we enhance the pathways and opportunities for creatives in this city, so we commend the Strategy team on their genuine moves to include this focus throughout the creation and development of this strategy.

## Overview of submission

4. The submission by Youth Council on Aho-Tini will address the following topics:
  - a. Utilising Council facilities outside of traditional usage-hours as spaces for creative and cultural development.
  - b. Working in partnership with leading organisations and institutions to identify what changes are required to retain talent in the city after graduation.
  - c. Empowering and highlighting the stories and culture of mana whenua across the city.
  - d. Creating year-round opportunities for employment of creatives by increasing the number of street festivals and performances on display.

## Are we truly the coolest little capital?

5. Youth Council supports the aspirations of the Aho-Tini strategy is promoting Wellington in such a way as to attract world-class talent.
6. In particular, we believe that the character and appeal of Wellington will only be strengthened through a true partnership with mana whenua and the elevation of te reo Māori.

7. Retaining talent in our city (particularly after education/training finishes) is going to be of critical importance in the future of the arts, culture and creativity scene in Wellington.
8. As it currently stands, many of our students are encouraged by their institutions to seek opportunities outside of Wellington (particularly overseas) if they wish to pursue a career following graduation, due to the lack of opportunities.
9. Therefore, we need to drastically improve and increase the creative opportunities available to 20-30-year-olds if we wish to retain them in our city following graduation.
10. Collaboration with local, regional, and national organisations and institutions is a great way to support this move - if Council is able to work directly with these organisations and institutions, particularly those who act as education/training facilities, we will be able to speak directly to the source to understand and act on the issues that currently prevent creatives from being retained by the city in the long-term.
11. Highlighting the stories of our capital and mana whenua are great ways to bring the city to life. As “it is the people who make the place”, we need to focus on promoting the stories of our people and communities throughout the city by providing them the opportunities to be heard.
12. Access to venues and facilities is reported to be a major barrier for creatives, particularly for younger individuals who may not have the exposure or budget to hire a larger, popular facility.
13. At present, many of these creatives are using the street as their stage, such as through busking or performance street art. Although these are great opportunities for creatives to gain exposure and entertain the general public, they would also benefit from having access to proper equipment and facilities.
14. Council could look to support this access to equipment and facilities by considering which Council facilities (such as theatres, community halls etc) are currently empty after-hours that may otherwise be able to be repurposed for performance, practice, or design spaces outside of their traditional operation hours.

## Our people/Aho Tangata

15. One particular area of the Our People focus area which Youth Council supports is that of communities being empowered to tell their stories through public art programmes.
16. Wellington is known for being a melting pot with a diverse population of ages, ethnic groups, and experiences. This melting pot focus needs to be seen as more of a strength, with this diversity being showcased and celebrated.
17. In particular, the stories and experiences of mana whenua need to be promoted to the wider Wellington community and its visitors.
18. Although there are already many different cultural festivals on the calendar, Wellington could benefit hugely from an event/programme focused on promoting the stories of mana whenua.
19. We are lucky enough to see some aspects of this through architectural features such as the tile design in Te Aro park, but much of this is background detail - we believe these stories need to be promoted front and centre.
20. For many ethnic and minority groups, funding is a major barrier to being able to engage with or promote arts and culture. Therefore, Youth Council sees this as being an important step for Council to take - bearing the burden of the financial cost associated with creating it in order to allow the city to reap the benefits of our diverse communities being able to share their stories, creativity and experiences.

## Partnership with Māori/Aho Hononga

21. Youth Council sees immense value in telling the nation's and region's stories with mana whenua. We hope to see these stories become more widely known and acknowledged and hope that through the partnership with Māori we can have a bilingual city one day.
22. We see immense value in the education of Māori culture and customs, especially for the youth of our city. Starting out with children and young people will help ensure that this inclusive culture which we strive for will be passed down to the next generation.
23. We can see the value in potentially having educational programmes that are run at every school. This programme would also help generate an income for

the Māori community and promote diversity and acceptance of different cultures.

24. Youth Council sees the significance in ensuring that ngā toi Māori and te reo Māori are highly visible. We can see this visibility being implemented through including te reo Māori in our everyday lives, from signs to brochures.
25. We believe that normalising the use of te reo Māori in our everyday lives will help create an inclusive city.
26. Wellington would benefit from seeing role models and people in public positions using te reo Māori as well as teachers using te reo Māori in class.
27. We hope that this education would also encourage respectful use of tikanga.

## **Our places and spaces/Aho Whenua**

28. Wellington City already has multiple venues and facilities that we feel are not being used to their maximum potential due to lack of accessibility and financial barriers.
29. Youth Council believes that it is important to make use of these spaces, especially as they promote creativity. Taking away the financial barrier and making these facilities available to a wider range of people will help foster the diversity which we already have, and in turn make education about other cultures and the arts more accessible.
30. We believe it is extremely important to share Wellington and the nation's stories across our cityscape, and believe that this can raise awareness about other cultures as well as promote creativity.
31. Youth Council would like to see more focus on female empowerment as well as partnering with Māori to develop the art.
32. We also see this focus on diverse outcomes and our history as an opportunity to connect with a wider range of minority communities, as well as an opportunity to boost employment in the arts. Providing local artists with the opportunity to share their views and opinions on the history of Aotearoa.
33. Youth Council would love to see a focus on Māori culture and history as well as an increased focus, however, it is important to us to see inclusivity of other cultures as well.

## Pathways/Aho Mahi

34. The lack of pathways and careers for those in the creative sector is a significant issue and consideration for many creative young people in Wellington.
35. Although we are home to incredible training institutions such as the New Zealand School of Music, New Zealand School of Dance, and Toi Whakaari, many of the young people who train in these programmes are forced to leave upon completion due to the lack of local opportunities.
36. Anecdotally, we have heard from young people that this view of needing to leave Wellington is their expectation well before graduation - that it is inherent in their lessons, both in advice from teachers and other students, that if they want to have a successful career after graduation, that they need to set their sights overseas rather than in Wellington.
37. It is crucial that this trajectory be interrupted as soon as possible - once these students come to Wellington to study at these world-class institutions, we need to ensure that Wellington as a city is set up with the opportunities they need to continue to call the city home long after graduation.
38. CubaDupa is an excellent example of the city being able to showcase the talent that we have in a way that allows these artists to have paid work. However, this festival is only providing employment for performers for a few days a year, and does not support the finances required to continue practice and performances through the remainder of the year.
39. As well as creating more opportunities, these opportunities need to be sustainable and long-lasting rather than one-offs. We hope that performing opportunities which are set up can be passed down to the next generation in order to inspire new talent within our city.
40. Youth Council believes that although the current creative events and opportunities have their strengths, the number and longevity of these opportunities needs to be increased in order to provide a reliable pathway for creatives in the city.

## Conclusion

41. Our post-COVID experiences have left Wellingtonians keen to engage with our city and culture. Now is the time to optimise on this enthusiasm, and deliver the opportunities and festivals that Wellington City is known for.

42. CubaDupa is a world class event which attracts people from all over the country to celebrate our diversity and experiences. In 2021, this festival was one of the largest of its kind in the world. We as a capital city need to look to build on the success of this event by creating more frequent opportunities such as this for Wellingtonians to showcase their skills and talent in a supportive, creative manner.
43. Retention of creative talent is a major issue for Wellington, one which we should not be experiencing considering the strength of the creative training facilities we host.
44. In order to remedy this, we need to be supporting opportunities for creatives year round - through increasing the number of events and festivals we host, as well as improving both access to and the facilities themselves to allow creatives to share their talents with the wider city in a more financially-accessible manner.
45. Wellington used to have such a strong reputation for being a vibrant, cultural, creative city full of life. Although we still retain many of these aspects, much of the strength of the city has been diminished over the past few years - now is our chance to reconnect with what makes Wellington such a cool place to be, and enhance our arts, cultural and creativity scene.