

REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

**SUBMISSION ON THE NEW ZEALAND PROFESSIONAL
ORCHESTRA SECTOR REVIEW**

1. Purpose of report

To finalise the Council's submission to the New Zealand Professional Orchestra Sector Review being undertaken by the Ministry for Culture & Heritage.

2. Executive summary

Key points in the proposed submission:

- The Wellington City Council recognises the value and importance of orchestra sector to the arts ecology of Wellington and New Zealand.
- It feels the discussion document does not sufficiently examine the contribution that the orchestra sector makes in supporting and stimulating the arts in New Zealand more widely.
- The Council believes that the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Vector Wellington Orchestra are both necessary and should remain based in Wellington City.
- It is disappointed that the review document does not accurately represent the level of the Council's current contribution.
- We point to the establishment of a regional amenities funding mechanism as a potential means to increase the region's contribution to the professional orchestra sector.
- The Council has little comment to make on the administrative arrangements of the funding bodies and orchestras themselves.
- The most important area to make progress on is the appropriate sharing of resources and expertise. This should be done on the basis of a clear understanding of the complementary roles the different orchestras play.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy & Policy Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to the submission (attached in appendix one) on behalf of Council to the Ministry for Culture & Heritage in response to the New Zealand Professional Orchestra Sector Review discussion document.*
3. *Delegate to the Chief Executive and the Arts & Culture Portfolio Leader, the authority to amend the proposed submission to include any amendments agreed by the Committee and any associated minor edits.*

4. *Delegate to the Chief Executive and the Arts & Culture Portfolio Leader authority to meet with representatives of the Ministry for Culture & Heritage to discuss Council's submission.*

4. Background

The Ministry for Culture & Heritage is conducting a review of the New Zealand professional orchestra sector. A discussion document was released on 23 July and submission sought in response to it. The date for public submissions has been extended until 26 August 2012. After discussions with the Ministry, Council has been told it can submit its submission anytime before 3 September in order for it to be considered by this Committee.

5. Discussion

The scope of the review is limited to five orchestras:

- New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
- Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra
- Vector Wellington Orchestra
- Christchurch Symphony Orchestra
- Southern Sinfonia (Dunedin).

The purpose of the review is to:

- assess whether the current model of one national and four regionally based orchestras provides optimal delivery of orchestral services to New Zealanders
- identify options to ensure New Zealand audiences have access to high-quality, cost-effective orchestral music and services within current resourcing levels.

The discussion paper has been informed by input from the orchestras, their boards and funders, an international expert and an external reference group. It outlines the challenges facing the sector and presents some ideas for future. The discussion document and related reports are available from the Ministry's website¹.

As part of the review process, Council officers were interviewed by Avi Shoshani, the international expert brought in by the Ministry.

The discussion document invites comment on four 'potential scenarios for change'. These are summarised as:

- Scenario one: a single company for New Zealand orchestras, which enables each orchestra to operate with local day-to-day management, but without individual boards.

¹ <http://www.mch.govt.nz/orchestra-review>

- Scenario two: A ‘funding assessment panel’, which ensures most effective services through co-operation and shared resources, while the orchestras retain their own governance, management and identity.
- Scenario three: An industry-led body ensures funding proposals reflect negotiated targets, collective delivery, agreed roles and geographic spread. The orchestras retain their own governance, management and identity.
- Scenario four: A city and community orchestra network, which would not include a government-owned, national touring orchestra.

None of these scenarios represent the status quo. In our discussions with the NZSO and the Vector Wellington Orchestra, they indicated they would be supporting a modified version of scenario two.

The proposed submission is attached to this report as appendix one.

The Ministry has indicated that in mid September, it intends to meet with Council representatives to discuss the contents of its submission.

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

The Portfolio Leader and officers met with both the NZSO and the Vector Wellington Orchestra to inform its view on the discussion document.

5.2 Financial considerations

There are no financial implications from this submission.

5.3 Climate change impacts and considerations

There are no climate change implications from this submission.

5.4 Long-term plan considerations

This submission is consistent with Council’s current strategies and the 2012-22 Long-Term Plan.

6. Conclusion

The Council recognises the value in revisiting the arrangements around the orchestra sector in New Zealand. It agrees with the success factors identified in the discussion paper but believes the role of orchestral music and training needs to be better understood and taken into account when making any changes to the current arrangements.

The Council is disappointed that its full contribution, and that of other local authorities, to the orchestra sector through the provision of venues and marketing support is not more visible in the paper. This seems to perpetuate a tendency for central government agencies to undervalue the contribution local authorities make.

The Council supports the retention of both the NZSO as a world-class national touring orchestra and the Vector Wellington Orchestra as a regional orchestra serving local arts entities and the community. It believes that the collaboration between the two orchestras is a model for how other regional orchestras should work with the NZSO.

The Council supports the idea of greater collaboration across the orchestral sector, including with those orchestras not covered by the review. It feels that this should be the focus of the review, and of everyone who values the role orchestras play in our communities.

Contact Officer: *Martin Rodgers, Acting Manager, Research, Strategy & Urban Design*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

The paper supports Council's overall vision of Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

No immediate impact.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are not considered to be any impacts in this area.

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision. The submission reflects the views and preferences of those with an interest in this matter.

5) Consultation

a) General consultation

The Portfolio Leader and officers met with both the NZSO and the Vector Wellington Orchestra to inform its view on the discussion document. Their views have been taken into account in this submission.

b) Consultation with Māori

Māori were not consulted on this submission.

6) Legal implications

There are not considered to be any legal implications from this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The paper and submission are consistent with the Council's Arts & Culture Strategy and its role as an advocate for, and funder of, Wellington based arts institutions.

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NZ Professional Orchestra Review

Submission from the Wellington City Council

Summary:

- The Wellington City Council recognises the value and importance of the orchestra sector to the arts ecology of Wellington and New Zealand.
- It feels the discussion document does not sufficiently examine the contribution that the orchestra sector makes in supporting and stimulating the arts in New Zealand more widely.
- The Council believes that the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Vector Wellington Orchestra are both necessary and should remain based in Wellington City.
- It is disappointed that the review document does not accurately represent the level of the Council's current contribution.
- We point to the establishment of a regional amenities funding mechanism as a potential means to increase the region's contribution to the professional orchestra sector.
- The Council has little comment to make on the administrative arrangements of the funding bodies and orchestras themselves.
- The most important area to make progress on is the appropriate sharing of resources and expertise. This should be done on the basis of a clear understanding of the complementary roles the different orchestras play.

Introduction:

The Wellington City Council highly values the contribution orchestras make to our city and the country as a whole.

They provide a link to our early musical and artistic roots. It is an artform that demands great skill and inspires people to achieve excellence. It enjoys high levels of public participation from young people learning instruments, community ensembles and tertiary institutes, through to our world-class national orchestra. The experiences produced are enjoyed by many people on a daily basis through live performances, broadcasts and recordings. Orchestral services are required for other artforms such as choral music, musical theatre, ballet and opera. Increasingly, orchestral music is also a feature of multi-media and digital artforms such as film, television, electronic games and more.

Orchestral music, like all music, fulfils a basic human need and desire. Rather than becoming less relevant as new musical genres develop, orchestral music is sustaining its audiences, developing new ones, making significant contributions

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at a community level and contributing to new media experiences that people are enjoying in contemporary society.

Orchestral music in Wellington:

Throughout its history, Wellington has been home to the best of New Zealand's large music ensembles; from the early colonial military bands and the establishment of the Wellington Orchestral Society (1879), through to the creation of the National Orchestra in 1946 (now known as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra) and the vibrant orchestral scene of today.

Wellington is home to the NZSO and Vector Wellington Orchestra, as well as a number of amateur orchestral ensembles, including the Wellington Chamber Orchestra, the Capital Performing Arts Orchestra, the Wellington Youth Orchestra and Sinfonietta, and the New Zealand School of Music Orchestra. Each year these ensembles present many concerts that cater to all ages, tastes and budgets.

The musicians of the NZSO and Vector Wellington Orchestra also play an important role in the community, as private music teachers and musicians in small chamber ensembles, and as guest conductors and performers with the amateur ensembles where they provide leadership and inspiration. There can be little doubt that orchestral music is valued highly by Wellingtonians and that the NZSO and Vector Wellington Orchestra contribute prominently to Wellington's vibrancy and reputation as the Cultural Capital.

The review:

The Wellington City Council recognises that it is important to review organisational and resourcing issues within and across sectors from time to time. It agrees that the review of the orchestra sector is timely, especially given the constrained resources of central government, local government and within the wider community. However, the Council notes that the orchestras themselves are disputing the degree to which the wider financial environment is impacting on their audience attendance and finances. They note that while there was a period of decline in both of these, the figures have since stabilised.

The Council agrees with the success factors outlined in the discussion document, but recognises that some success factors are more aligned to the interests of some orchestras and funding bodies.

However, the Council would have liked to have seen in the discussion document more research into the contribution that orchestral music makes beyond the artform itself and those that engage orchestral services. Many believe that orchestral music is a 'foundation artform' that has long played a role in education, community celebrations and rituals, as well as now making a contribution to new media experiences.

Therefore, it would be important to assess the wider impacts of this artform before contemplating any significant changes to the sector. For example, if the capacity of a particular orchestra is diminished, that would mean less

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opportunities for quality players within that community, which may result in players leaving the area, which would reduce young people's access to quality tutors, which removes the opportunity for them to engage in artistic expression, and develop an appetite, talent and passion for the arts. However, this relationship between orchestras and talent, audience and arts development can only be assumed because of a lack of research within the discussion document. Similarly, orchestras across the country are also leading a number of innovative community and education programmes. Everyone is excited at the potential of these programmes to contribute to improved social, as well as cultural, well-being within communities. However, the value and potential of these developments are not explored.

While it presents some limited financial and audience information, the discussion document lacks any investigation of such wider policy issues or the associated intervention logic that would provide justification for the current, or a potential increase in, public investment.

The Council does agree with the paper's reference for a need for stronger relationships and greater collaboration with tertiary training institutions. The Council is keen to play whatever role it can in supporting this outcome.

The Wellington City Council's role:

In December last year, the Council adopted a new Arts & Culture Strategy. It can be accessed from our website².

You will note that it reinforces the importance of arts and cultural activities to our city. It confirms our commitment to:

- Reinvigorating the capital city cultural experience
- The city as a hothouse for talent
- A city of ideas that provides inspiration to all
- Wellington as a region of confident identities including ethnic, suburban and other communities people associate themselves with
- Enabling people to become active and engaged in the arts
- Wellington as a centre of creative learning for all people and any stage of life
- Our future as a centre for the use of technology for creativity
- Enabling creative enterprises to flourish
- Supporting our creative sector to be internationally connected.

Given the above, our interest in the review does span across a number of the success factors identified. In particular, success factors 7-10 (i.e. all orchestras

² <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/plans/policies/artsculture/index.html>

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accompaniment services for the performing arts are of appropriate quality; diverse communities access live performances; valued orchestra brands are protected and here is support for local, possibly regional needs and interest and orchestral sector activities support broader outcomes in community and youth development) are closely linked to the Council's goals.

The discussion document identifies the contribution that local authorities make to the orchestras covered by the review. The Wellington City Council is disappointed that the document downplays our contribution, particularly with regards to providing access to venues.

Local authorities are almost exclusively responsible for the provision of venues for the arts across New Zealand. This review document perpetuates what seems to be a blind spot amongst government agencies about the value and importance of this contribution. If it were not for the provision of venues then there would be no galleries for exhibitions to take place in, no venues for performances and no centres for community arts activity.

The full extent of support provided to the two orchestras is detailed below:

2012/13	Cash contribution:	Venue subsidy:
NZSO:	\$40,000	\$216,000
VWO:	\$80,000	\$ varies

In addition to this, our Council's regional tourism body, Positively Wellington Tourism, actively and continuously promotes the orchestras and their events. Moreover, the Council itself promotes the events in its weekly page in *The Dominion Post*.

The Council notes that its cash contribution to the Vector Wellington Orchestra has increased from \$50,000 (+GST) in 2006 to \$80,000 (+GST) in 2012. While this is a 63% increase, the Council does recognise that the current level of funding is lower than other local authorities provide to their regional orchestras. One significant issue to note is that the catchment for the Vector Wellington Orchestra extends beyond the boundaries of our city, incorporating a number of local authorities in the region. The Wellington City Council should not be expected to fund a regional orchestra by itself. The proposed regional amenities funding mechanism has the potential to address this issue.

The Council's cash contribution to the NZSO is modest but we believe we are meeting our commitment to provide a home venue for the orchestra, as we have for the Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB). Beyond this, we believe it is largely government's responsibility to fund national cultural institutions. They are here to serve the needs of the whole country. It is right that they are based in the capital city, home to the nation's political institutions and storehouses of our shared history. Wellington, the Council and its people, have been excellent caretakers of these treasures. We have housed them in the most prominent locations and welcomed people from across the country and the world so that

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they can access and experience them. Wellingtonians highly value them and provide an engaged and supportive audience for the experiences they offer. For touring institutions such as the NZSO and the RNZB, being located in the centre of the country has proven practical and financial benefits. We welcome and value these institutions but do not believe it is our responsibility to sustain them financially.

While there is a temptation for money to flow proportionately to where the population resides, this is not an appropriate response when considering national cultural institutions. First, they should be based in the nation's capital city, in which all New Zealanders have a stake and sense of ownership. Secondly, in the case of Wellington, there is a highly engaged audience that provides these institutions with full-houses on a continuing basis, which is much harder to achieve in other centres, despite their larger populations.

As indicated in its submission to Creative New Zealand at the time of its review of recurrently funded organisations, the Council is willing to discuss its role in funding arts entities alongside government agencies, and the respective levels of funding.

Comment on the options:

The Wellington City Council has little comment to make on the administrative arrangements in terms of the orchestras and the funding agencies. It is noted that the NZSO wishes to remain a Crown entity.

In the Council's view, the critical question to resolve is around the respective roles that the orchestras play. The discussion paper is inconsistent with Avi Shoshani's paper in terms of the relative artistic strength of the various orchestras. It is our view that the NZSO is clearly an international standard orchestra with the regional orchestras achieving a high, but not as consistently high, standard. Given this, they each have different roles to play in a local, national or international context. This review presents an opportunity to achieve clear agreement on the respective, and ideally complementary, roles that the different orchestras will play.

In Wellington, the orchestras and the Council believe that this separation of roles has been achieved. For this reason the Council supports the retention of both Wellington-based orchestras. The NZSO should remain as the world-class national touring orchestra that it is, based in Wellington as the capital city. The Vector Wellington Orchestra should continue to serve the needs of the community and local arts entities in the region, and connecting areas, as it does currently. Both orchestras should continue to collaborate and share resources where possible. This relationship between the national and regional orchestra should be the model that is replicated throughout the country.

Until this is achieved there will increasing competition for limited funding, sponsorship and audiences. We do not believe that New Zealand can sustain such a 'free market' approach. The danger is that this will potentially result in loss of overall quality, as some orchestras are forced to cut costs.

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Given that clarity about respective roles has not been achieved across the orchestral community to date, the Wellington City Council believes there does need to be a moderating body that influences the respective roles that the orchestras play and ensures that collaboration occurs where it can. In our discussions with the orchestras, we have heard that the opportunities for collaboration are limited. The Council would like to see all stakeholders increase their efforts to promote and facilitate collaboration and shared services as much as possible.

This leads us towards supporting option 2, although the Council would not like to see a new level of administration created that may take resources away from the institutions that we are all looking to support.

Conclusion:

The Council recognises the value in revisiting the arrangements around the orchestra sector in New Zealand. It agrees with the success factors identified in the discussion paper but believes the role of orchestral music and training needs to be better understood and taken into account when making any changes to the current arrangements.

The Council is disappointed that its full contribution, and that of other local authorities, to the orchestra sector through the provision of venues and marketing support is not more visible in the paper. This seems to perpetuate a tendency for central government agencies to undervalue the contribution local authorities make.

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The Council supports the idea of greater collaboration across the orchestra sector, including with those orchestras not covered by the review. It feels that this should be the focus of the review, and of everyone who, like us, values the role orchestras play in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on this discussion paper. We look forward to discussing it in more detail with the Ministry, as proposed in the discussion document.

If you require further information, please contact:

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