

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

December 2011

Te toi whakairo, ka ihiihi, ka wehiwehi, ka aweawe te ao katoa.

Artistic excellence makes the world sit up in wonder.

1. Introduction

Wellington is a creative city that welcomes and promotes participation, experimentation and collaboration in the arts. It has a tolerant population that is passionate and inquisitive.

We acknowledge the unique position of Māori as tāngata whenua and the Council values the relationship it has with its mana whenua partners. Much of what makes New Zealand art unique lies in what makes New Zealand unique – our indigenous culture.

As the capital of New Zealand, we are the seat of government and home to an international diplomatic community that connects us to the world. Wellington provides tertiary training opportunities in all art forms; has the highest rate of attendance in cultural activities¹.

Wellington's arts and cultural environment is a strongly interconnected weave of: arts organisations (of many sizes); individual arts practitioners; volunteers; audience members; the general public; funders/supporters; and industries such as film and media.

Wellington is fortunate to be home to many leading arts organisations and businesses that deliver world class experiences, products and services; attract and retain talented people; and provide essential development and career pathways for arts practitioners in the city.

However, the current financial environment and other factors are damaging our arts infrastructure as organisations face reduced income from sponsorship, community trusts, and in some cases, public funding. This is constraining their ability to develop and deliver to their full capability, and some organisations may struggle to survive long term.

We need to strengthen elements in our environment that support experimentation and innovation and ensure that key arts organisations, venues and events, which support the retention of talent and deliver on the City's priorities, are sustainable. We also need to make provision for the future by

¹ Creative New Zealand (2008) *New Zealanders and the arts: Attitudes, attendance and participation in 2008* – Wellington focus questions. 91% of Wellingtonians (versus 83% nationally) had attended at least one arts event in the previous 12 months.

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responding to our changing population and the increasing role that technology plays in all facets of our lives.

The Arts and Culture Strategy aims to address these issues and opportunities by:

- focusing on Wellington's key strengths and opportunities to provide the best and boldest arts experiences; opportunities for all people to actively participate in the arts; as well as arts learning experiences at all stages of life.
- charging the Council with an advocacy role to clearly promote the value of, and encourage ongoing investment in, key arts organisations (and the sector as a whole) to central government, other local authorities in the region, community trusts, the business community and other supporters.
- identifying key roles we want arts entities to perform in the city and consequently providing a clear basis on which organisations should approach the Council for support.
- promoting the Council's role as a facilitator of contact and collaboration between arts organisations, training organisations and creative industries to develop new strategies to retain and grow talent.
- facilitating greater collaboration between arts organisations in the areas of arts marketing, education and management to reduce the costs to individual organisations and build overall capacity.
- providing greater access to new technology so talented people in the city can develop, promote and commercialise their ideas through direct access to markets.
- encouraging the arts community to develop and present experiences in partnership with, and of relevance to, our changing population.
- reinforcing the need to maintain existing and support new events and venues that enable talented people to develop and present their work. A new area for focus here is creative experiences using new technology.
- recognising the value of international connections and collaborations, with the Council facilitating these where possible.
- promoting the development of new opportunities in arts in education and communities that will support community well-being as well as providing employment opportunities for practitioners.

2. Scope of the strategy

The scope of the Arts and Cultural Strategy includes community and professional: *performing arts* (such as dance, theatre, music); *visual arts* (ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, printmaking, photography, film, video, design and crafts); *literature* (fiction, non-fiction,

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essays, poetry); *inter-arts* (such as new-media and digital work); and *pan art-form festivals*.

3. Reasons for a strategy

Arts and cultural activities are essential contributors to Wellington's identity, distinctiveness, and position as a sophisticated, tolerant and exciting location for residents and visitors.

The Council has been a strong supporter of arts and culture over the last two decades, but it is time to review the city's Arts and Culture Strategy considering:

- the changing demographic make-up of the city's residents and visitors
- the impacts and opportunities of new technology;
- changes in the Council's capacity and role in relation to arts and cultural activity – for example the establishment of Toi Pōneke Arts Centre (2005); the Public Art Fund and Panel (2006); City Arts Team (2007); and Wellington Venues Ltd to manage the city's venues (2010).

Wellington City Council has recently adopted a 30-year city strategy named *Towards Wellington 2040: Smart Capital*, a vision for the city that recognises that our people are the city's greatest asset.

The Arts and Culture Strategy provides direction for Wellington to:

- build on the goals of *Smart Capital* and our success as New Zealand's creative capital
- maintain the arts and culture sectors' contribution to a strong, diverse economy; healthy and connected communities; and a high quality of life now and in the future
- respond to urgent needs and pressures that existing arts organisations are currently experiencing; and
- strongly support the development of new creative enterprises in the city.

The strategy provides a clear direction for the Council's investment, asset management and staff resources that support arts and cultural activity. The strategy also identifies areas where the Council could advocate for, or partner with, others to achieve its goals.

4. Vision

Wellington is the place for all people to experiment with, learn about and experience New Zealand's arts and culture, especially contemporary work.

This is a people-centred vision. We want Wellington to be a place where both Wellingtonians and visitors are able to actively explore our culture and experiment with their own creativity. We will continue to value heritage arts, culture and traditions. We also want to focus on new ways of expressing what is happening now and experiences that result from collaboration, both within the professional arts sector, and with communities.

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When we achieve this vision, Wellington will attract talent from around the world because they want to live in the city's thriving communities, experience our dynamic central city and work within a truly innovative creative economy.

5. Council's roles

The Council will:

- **maintain its role as funder** (of galleries, museums, community arts, arts and cultural organisations, major and community events and public art); **and provider** of access to venues but evaluate its investment to ensure it contributes to the Council's priorities.
- **be more active as an advocate** on behalf of our cultural entities with central government, funding partners and other stakeholders
- **extend its role as a facilitator to build and strengthen connections** between the arts and cultural sector, creative education providers, communities and business.
- **give greater consideration to the impact of regulation** and how the Council might be more flexible with some compliance activity to ensure we maintain our business and arts friendliness.

6. Strategic priorities and areas of focus

The strategy focuses on three priorities:

- **Enabling the best and the boldest of arts and culture**
- **Diverse experiences by diverse communities**
- **Thriving creative enterprises**

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Each priority has particular areas of focus and a draft set of actions that the Council could pursue to achieve its ambition. A schedule of initiatives is attached in **Appendix One**.

PRIORITIES	FOCUS AREAS		
<p>ENABLING THE BEST AND THE BOLDEST OF ARTS & CULTURE</p>	<p>Reinvigorate the capital city cultural experience</p>	<p>The city as a hothouse for talent</p>	<p>A city of ideas providing inspiration to all</p>
<p>DIVERSE EXPERIENCES BY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>Wellington as a region of confident identities</p>	<p>Active and engaged People</p>	<p>A centre of creative learning</p>
<p>THRIVING CREATIVE ENTERPRISES</p>	<p>Our creative future through technology</p>	<p>Enabling creative enterprise</p>	<p>An internationally connected creative sector</p>

6.1 Enabling the best and the boldest of arts and culture

Arts and cultural experiences are at the heart of the ‘dynamic central city’ goal of Smart Capital Strategy. The Arts and Culture Strategy will reinvigorate Wellington as an inspiring Capital City, both for those experiencing it (residents and visitors) and those generating the experiences.

Wellington has many strengths in this area, but they are under threat. As home to national and high-quality regional institutions, we have built our enviable reputation as a creative capital. We have many clusters of talented creative people and excellent arts and cultural organisations that readily work together within and across art forms. We are also home to international diplomatic and cultural entities that want to see their country’s culture showcased in the Capital City.

However, many cultural entities tell us they are financially vulnerable and are consequently not in a position to grow and take risks. The creative sector and the public highly value distinctive Wellington events such as the *Cuba Street Carnival* and have expressed concern that they have not taken place as planned. Also, arts practitioners are telling us that changes to the way the Council operates are reducing access to city venues and the ease with which cultural activities can take place in the city.

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This strategic priority has three areas of focus:

a) Reinvigorate the Capital City cultural experience

The Council will strongly advocate the value of Wellington's cultural institutions and try to work with others to develop sustainable funding models. We want our cultural institutions to have the capacity to innovate, collaborate internationally and meet the needs of the changing demographic of our region and New Zealand. This includes increasing the visibility of contemporary Māori, Pasifika and Asian arts as well as, encouraging greater cross-cultural exploration. We want to increase city and regional collaboration in the areas of marketing and education programmes. We also want to see organisations show leadership within the creative sector by providing opportunities for emerging talent to learn and develop.

b) The city as a hothouse for local talent

Wellingtonians support creative risk-taking and love to be surprised by creative activity taking place in public spaces. We need to maintain an environment where this activity can readily take place. This means ensuring our local creative talent can access the city's venues and public spaces to develop and present their work. It also means valuing events and venues that provide opportunities for creative people to experiment, and be messy and boisterous. As well as this, when creative people show they have talent, we need to ensure their development is supported and profiled. This includes doing what we can to facilitate their access to new technology, financial resources and opportunities to learn.

c) A city of ideas providing inspiration to all

Every day, the thinking, discussions and decisions made in Wellington impact on New Zealand and our place in the world. This unique characteristic of Wellington should be profiled and celebrated. We want to maximise the potential of this environment by seeing a greater flow of ideas, information and talent between those involved, including public and private sector organisations, education institutions, and communities in Wellington.

6.2 Diverse experiences by diverse communities

A 'people-centred city' is another key goal of the Smart Capital Strategy. We want Wellington to reflect the diversity of cultures and communities that are both part of our city's past and also its future. We want to realise the city's untapped potential – ensuring our programmes and activities excite children, young people and diverse communities as well as grow the unique identities of our suburbs to complement the vibrancy of the central city.

New Zealanders growing up today have a new level of understanding, exposure and appreciation of 'New Zealand culture'. *Te reo Māori* is heard on mainstream media and in our schools; our place in Asia-Pacific is relevant to our lives, and we have a growing pride in our unique aesthetic, style and talent.

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This environment has stimulated interest in exploring our creative talents and expressing our unique identities.

We need to recognise and value the cultural traditions of mana whenua. These traditions are the earliest expressions of culture in this country. They set us apart as a nation and they are increasingly embraced by all New Zealanders as a unique expression of our cultural identity. As well as being valued in their own right, these traditions are increasingly having an impact on contemporary arts practice. As a city, we need to embrace opportunities to work with mana whenua to increase the visibility, understanding and potential of these traditions and their contemporary expression

In addition, we should enable and celebrate the creativity and culture of our diverse communities. We think the best way to do this is to enable communities to connect with talented creative people living in our city. We want to support them to work together to create and share experiences that are relevant to, and actively involve, communities in our city. These experiences will add to the feel of Wellington as a tolerant city while also building connections between, and resilience within, the city's communities.

This strategic priority has three areas of focus:

a) Wellington as a region of confident identities

We will work with mana whenua to increase the visibility of the city's Māori heritage, and with the wider Māori arts community to showcase and celebrate our contemporary indigenous culture.

We will support activities that reinforce Wellington as a welcoming and interesting place for all ethnic, demographic and suburban communities to share and display their own cultures. We want to also support the development of more cross-cultural work.

b) Active and engaged people

We will lead by example and ensure Council-funded organisations and activities are accessible and relevant to diverse audiences. We want to support art practitioners to work with communities to develop work of, by and for those groups. We also value, and want to enable the public to actively participate in, recreational cultural activity.

c) A centre of creative learning

Wellington is already home to outstanding arts education experiences developed by skilled creative people, innovative arts organisations and tertiary institutions across the city. By valuing, developing and promoting the expertise we have in the city, we believe Wellington will become the 'place of choice' to learn about the arts at any age.

6.3 Thriving creative enterprise

The Smart Capital Strategy also has the goal of Wellington as a ‘connected city’. This will see us connected regionally, nationally and internationally through our infrastructure and relationships. Wellington’s concentrated central city already enables people to readily connect and collaborate. We want to build on this strength and maintain an arts and business-friendly environment to support the development of new ideas and creative enterprises.

The creative sector also has a role to play in Wellington’s future as an eco-city – finding new ways to create and develop products and services so we can reduce our impact on the planet and contribute ideas, services and products to develop the city’s ‘weightless’ economy.

Technological changes are providing new opportunities for people to create, promote and distribute cultural experiences. As a city, and region, we need to embrace the opportunities this change presents by enabling particularly our young people and creative communities to readily access new technology and knowledge.

This strategic priority has three areas of focus:

a) Our creative future through technology

To create and take advantage of future opportunities, we want to give young people and those working in the creative sector access to leading-edge technology, the knowledge of leading people working in these fields and opportunities to explore the interaction between digital and physical worlds. We also want to showcase their creative achievements so that Wellington’s strength and profile as a digital city grows.

b) Enabling creative enterprise

Wellington has an international reputation based on creative people’s ideas and their willingness to collaborate and take risks. We want to work with enterprise development agencies to reduce barriers and provide support programmes that enable more creative enterprises to succeed. We also want to facilitate closer relationships between the creative and business sectors in our city to ensure the expertise and resources within each are maximised for the benefit of the Wellington economy as a whole.

c) An internationally connected creative sector

Wellington individuals and organisations already have strong connections internationally and our profile as a place of innovation is growing. We want to focus on this area by leveraging this activity to build our brand as a creative region and by increasing international connections that benefit the creative sector.

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7. Areas of focus and actions

The tables below provide greater detail on each area of focus by identifying activities we propose to implement and possible ways to measure the success of these activities. These tables will form the basis of an action plan to be developed in partnership with the arts sector to implement this strategy.

7.1 Enabling the best and the boldest of contemporary arts and culture

Reinvigorate the capital city cultural experience	
AREAS OF FOCUS	HOW
Ensure national and regional cultural organisations have the resources to adapt to a changing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote the value of national and regional cultural organisations and advocate for appropriate investment where required ▪ Work with other local authorities and funders to develop sustainable funding models for regional cultural amenities
Ensure Wellington is the place where the best of New Zealand and international cultural experiences can be seen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the sector to strategically support activities and events that achieve this goal ▪ Where necessary, facilitate stronger links between the diplomatic community and our creative sector ▪ Progress Channel Wellington or work with existing entities to promote, give access to and enable interaction with, arts and cultural experiences taking place in Wellington
Value and increase the visibility of Māori cultural traditions and their contemporary expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value and advocate for the skills and entities currently based within the region ▪ Encourage other cultural organisations to actively work with the Māori organisations, artists, curators and programmers to develop, programme and showcase more Māori cultural experiences in Wellington ▪ Investigate new opportunities with Māori arts communities to increase activity across the city and region ▪ Encourage greater cross-cultural collaborative work
Increase activity related to and the visibility of Pasifika and Asian arts and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value and advocate for the skills and activities currently based within the region ▪ Encourage cultural organisations to actively work with the Pasifika and Asian organisations, artists, curators and programmers to develop, programme and showcase more diverse work in Wellington ▪ Investigate new opportunities with Pasifika and Asian arts communities to increase activity across the city and region ▪ Encourage greater cross-cultural collaborative work

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<p>Attract and embrace the best and boldest creative people from across New Zealand and the world to present their ideas and collaborate in Wellington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly define and promote Wellington’s competitive advantages as a ‘creative city’ ▪ Increase the visibility - both nationally and internationally - of training and development opportunities available in the Wellington ▪ Facilitate stronger links between training institutions and creative industry sectors to better retain talent ▪ Build and maintain connections with Wellington ‘alumni’ to support the development of the creative sector here ▪ Strategically support residencies and exchanges and other programmes that contribute to this goal ▪ Provide access to Council facilities such as the Bolton Street Cottage and Toi Pōneke Arts Centre and work with Wellington Venues to host inspiring talent and activities
<p>The city as a hothouse for local talent</p>	
<p>Ensure access to affordable spaces for the development of creative talent and experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate access to underused Council and private spaces across the city that can be used by creative talent ▪ Take into account the needs of the creative sector when considering the future development of public spaces and Wellington’s urban design
<p>Encourage and facilitate the use of venues and public spaces for creative activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a single point of contact within the Council that supports groups to undertake creative activity in venues and public spaces ▪ Actively assist groups to address insurance, regulation and health and safety issues in undertaking activity in public spaces
<p>Ensure there is an appropriate range of platforms for local talent to present their works</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure existing venues and festivals that support emerging talent are valued and supported ▪ Investigate the need for new platforms such as one for creative experiences using new media
<p>Value new talent and connect it with support networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for a one-stop shop for advice on progressing a creative career ▪ Support mentoring and other programmes that enable creative talent to develop ▪ Support initiatives that develop marketing and management talent working in the creative sector
<p>A city of ideas providing inspiration to all</p>	
<p>Encourage greater visible connections and the sharing of ideas between the public and private sector, creative business, educational institutions and communities in Wellington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate regular meetings for local authorities, creative enterprises and tertiary institutions to discuss shared issues and opportunities ▪ Support initiatives that strengthen the links between the tertiary sector and creative enterprises where necessary
<p>Encourage and profile activities that promote debate on contemporary issues, and stimulate new thinking and ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress Channel Wellington or work with existing entities to promote, give access to and enable interaction with, these types of activities taking place in Wellington
<p>Encourage the expression of traditional knowledge, skills and heritage arts generated by diverse cultural communities and people living in New Zealand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highlight and promote traditional knowledge, expertise and heritage arts in partnership with local communities, and regional and national institutions

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7.2 Diverse experiences by diverse communities

Wellington as a region of confident identities	
Recognise and celebrate the role of mana whenua and Māori history in the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with mana whenua to deliver their arts and cultural aspiration in the city ▪ Partner with mana whenua on the development and promotion of events and activities that profile mana whenua and Māori history in the region ▪ Support public artworks that highlight the relationship of mana whenua to the city
Enable all ethnic, demographic and suburban communities to explore, celebrate and share their own cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to fund projects that contribute to this goal ▪ Support public artworks that reflect and celebrate the diverse communities based here ▪ Encourage cultural organisations to develop, programme and showcase experiences of and for diverse communities
Enable suburban and other geographical communities to undertake projects that explore, celebrate and share their own identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to fund projects that contribute to a 'love of the local' and sense of place for suburban communities ▪ Support public artworks that reflect and involve local communities ▪ Encourage and support community centres and other facilities to develop and deliver quality arts and cultural experiences
Active and engaged people	
Support arts practitioners to work with communities to develop work of, by and for that community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate the value of such activity to all stakeholders ▪ Encourage the establishment of a regional 'community arts & education' entity or programmes that meet the training and facilitation needs of those working in these areas. ▪ Support professional development initiatives for artists working in this area ▪ Develop a 'toolkit' that helps third parties (including local authorities) that want to partner with arts practitioners and communities, to undertake such projects
Ensure the sustainability of organisations that facilitate and/or undertake activities within communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate the value of such activity to all stakeholders ▪ Facilitate access to people and resources that enable these organisations to be sustainable and develop
Ensure Council-funded organisations and activities are accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require organisations and events that receive Council funding on a recurring basis to maintain and enact an accessibility policy. (that considers both physical and sensory impairments as well as attitudes and affordability). The policy will be based on the definition of "accessibility" in the Council's proposed Accessibility Action Plan. ▪ Develop a mechanism that identifies people who require the assistance of a companion when they participate in cultural activities so that arts entities can provide free access to the support person as part of their accessibility plan
Enable the public to actively participate in recreational cultural activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to value and appropriately support activities that enable the public to actively participate in arts and cultural experiences for leisure and wellbeing purposes

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Maximise the potential of arts and cultural activities to increase community connectedness, resilience and participation in community/city decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise the potential of arts and cultural activity to increase a community's resilience ▪ Use arts and cultural practitioners and groups to engage the communities in city-level decision-making
A centre of creative learning	
Support children and young peoples' exposure to the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate the benefits of children and young peoples' exposure to and participation in arts experiences ▪ Support, profile and celebrate opportunities for children and young people to create and present their own creative experiences
Make Wellington the destination of choice for arts education experiences for people of all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Profile and promote opportunities for people to participate in arts and cultural learning experiences in Wellington ▪ Support arts practitioners to develop their skills in delivering quality arts-based learning experiences for people of all ages ▪ Facilitate the sharing of expertise and opportunities between organisations that develop and deliver arts and cultural learning experiences in Wellington

7.3 Thriving Creative Enterprises

Our creative future through technology	
Increase access to technology for use in the creation, distribution and marketing of creative products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate children and young peoples' access to, and training in, the use of new technology ▪ Facilitate the creative sector's access to, and training in, the use of new technology ▪ Ensure Council venues and facilities meet the needs of those wanting to create, present and showcase creative experiences using new technology
Profile, celebrate and provide access to digital activity in Wellington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate and support platforms that showcase digital activity in Wellington
Enabling creative enterprise	
Enable access to enterprise training and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate access to business mentoring and other business support programmes ▪ Facilitate and support networking opportunities for creative entrepreneurs and people that can support them ▪ Work with Grow Wellington to enable access to appropriate training and support for export-focused creative enterprises
Increase financial support for arts and creative enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate micro-funding and angel-investment programmes for the creative sector ▪ Facilitate relationships between arts and creative enterprises and potential financial supporters
Profile and celebrate our creative enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to support and award programmes that celebrate our creative entrepreneurs ▪ Profile and showcase our creative entrepreneurs and their work

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An internationally connected creative sector	
Ensure our talent is exposed to and learns from international talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to facilitate and support residency programmes ▪ Facilitate exchanges between our creative sector/institutions and our international contemporaries
Increase access to offshore creative technology, investment and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through the Council's international activities, facilitate greater access to offshore creative technology, investment and skills ▪ Support other initiatives that increase access to offshore creative technology, investment and skills

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance measures will be finalised for each area of focus in the strategy. These will use data that is drawn from existing surveys so that we can chart our progress.

Potential sources include:

- The Residents' Satisfaction Surveys undertaken by Wellington City Council
- The *New Zealanders and the arts: Attitudes, attendance and participation* research undertaken by Creative New Zealand every three years
- The *Get Smart* survey tool developed by Angus and Associates used by cultural institutions and events
- The *Cultural Indicators for New Zealand* research undertaken by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage
- The *Economic Impact Survey: Understanding the Economic Impact of Arts and Culture Organisations in the Wellington region* research undertaken by Arts Wellington
- The methodology used in the *Economy of the Arts of Wellington* research undertaken by MartinJenkins & Associates for Wellington City Council
- Economic impact reports from individual events such as the New Zealand International Arts Festival and other major exhibitions.

To enable better evaluation of the Council's investment in cultural activities, it is proposed that organisations and events receiving regular Council funding be required to use the *Get Smart* survey tool (or another means of collecting robust information) to report on who is attending their activities and what impact they are having on the Council's goals.

It is also proposed that an annual gathering of stakeholders be held to look at progress against this strategy. It will be an opportunity to:

- profile and learn from activities undertaken that relate to the strategy
- report on progress against the strategy
- revisit the strategy and its goals on a continuing basis
- celebrate and learn from achievements within the sector.