



# **A Business Case for Investment in Regional Arts, Culture and Creative Sector Development**

Executive Summary

August 2023

## The current landscape of arts and culture sector development and investment

The current infrastructure that supports arts, culture and creativity is fragmented, inconsistent and inadequately resourced. Where regional infrastructure does exist, it is fuelled by passionate people in lean organisations that are trying to respond to escalating regional needs impacted by covid, climate events, cost of living increases, local government funding cuts and wider funding competition/scarcity.

Regions that do have established regional arts organisations (RAOs) – such as Waikato and Auckland – can demonstrate significant value and impact but have very limited access to sustainable funding and operate with insufficient resourcing to adequately meet sector needs.

The arts, culture and creativity sector and its communities lack access to support and development, and their potential contribution to the wellbeing of communities and society is unfulfilled.

Investment in national and regional arts infrastructure is not centralised and is provided by a siloed mix of funding from central government (via ministries, commissions, and crown agencies), local authorities, regional community trusts and other private philanthropy. Regional arts organisations are forced to seek competitive funding alongside the artists, arts organisations, and communities that they are seeking to serve.

## A future landscape of centralised investment in regional arts organisations

**Our proposed solution is a long-term, centralised investment to establish and grow a network of regionalised arts organisations (RAOs), designed to support sector development and the activation of arts, culture and creativity.**

Precedents for regional sector support infrastructure exists internationally; as well as domestically in other sectors - most notably in Sport where the Regional Sports Trust (RST) model is well established and centrally resourced through Sport NZ (14 RSTs receive a total of \$13.25m per annum).

Establishing a comparable model for the arts, culture and creativity sector would look like:

- A new central government investment stream (managed directly by Manatū Taonga or via one of its commissions/agencies), providing a long-term commitment for core annual resourcing of a national network of RAOs.
- Potential parallel long-term co-investment from local authorities and philanthropy, on a region-by-region basis.
- Options for RAOs to manage and distribute devolved regional funding on behalf of central government-funded commissions and agencies (e.g., Creative NZ).

## Potential investment model and principles

- **New investment:**

As a core principle, the proposed funding would represent new investment into the sector for new capacity i.e., not a redirection of funding already tagged to support artists or arts and culture organisations.

- **Phased approach:**

Investment would be staged as a mixture of development funding and core funding, to support phased establishment of the RAO network. Funding of evaluation would be built into core funding.

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:**

Te Tiriti considerations would underpin the investment model. A partnership approach would be taken to ensure equitable (50/50) investment in culturally appropriate infrastructure support for Māori alongside investment in whole-of-sector support.

- **Pro-rata funding model:**

Core investment would be provided on a pro-rata basis by region (calculated around factors including e.g., population size, priority populations), in line with the existing RST model. Where a region may have more than one receiving organisation (e.g., where a separate Māori entity exists), funding would be shared across those organisations.

- **Regionally bespoke:**

RAOs would be regionally bespoke with each RAO's boundary, structure and programme offering shaped around regional needs, aspirations and priorities – determined through sector-led engagement.

- **A national network:**

RAOs would also operate collectively as a national network – sharing insights, learning and tools/programmes, co-commissioning research, and providing centralised policy and strategy advice to central government and other national stakeholders.

## Proposed RAO roles and examples of key activity

- **Sector infrastructure and development:**

Design and delivery of capacity and capability programmes for artists, sector professionals, volunteers; navigation to and direct provision of universal resources, toolkits, and guides; and governance and leadership development.

- **Arts and culture programming:**

Provision of community events, festivals, exhibitions, wānanga, workshops, symposiums, lectures.

- **Connectivity and relationships:**

Sector engagement, networks and convening; brokering collaboration; partnerships with tangata whenua and ngā toi Māori entities; and relationships with other stakeholders regionally and nationally.

- **Research and insights:**

Commissioning of sector research; evaluation of RAO impact; and open source sharing of knowledge, good practice and insights.

- **Regional strategy:**

Design of regional strategy in collaboration with regional sector and local authorities and activation of regional strategy through collective impact models.

- **Sector-led policy and strategy advice:**

Submissions and briefings to central and local government about regional needs; and developing platforms for sector voices to engage in regional and national policy and strategy engagement processes.

- **Devolved funding and commissioning:**

Management of devolved, participatory and commissioning-based funding models that are co-designed with the sector; and advisory roles to other funders investing in regional arts, culture and creativity outcomes.

- **National RAO network activity**

Sharing of regional research, evaluation and intelligence to identify and collate evidence of national sector needs, gaps, aspirations, priorities and impact; open-source sharing of programmes, tools and other activations; and collaborative arts sector advocacy.

## Priority impact areas

The RAO model would deliver a range of critical outcomes including:

- **Participation:**

Increased and inclusive participation in arts and culture activity.

- **Wellbeing:**

Enhanced community wellbeing, including strengthened belonging, identity, mental and physical wellbeing, social connection, and cultural capital.

- **Regional development:**

Thriving regions with increased community pride, strengthened cultural identity and creative contribution to economic development).

- **Mātauranga Māori:**

Intergenerational transfer of mātauranga.

- **Capability:**

Strengthened capacity and capability for artists, arts sector organisations/professionals and community arts volunteers.

- **Sustainable careers:**

Sustainable employment pathways and careers.

- **Partnerships:**

Strengthened partnerships, collaboration and sector connectivity.

- **Activated strategy:**

Relevant, collaborative, and activated regional arts and culture strategy that centres te ao Māori.

- **Sector voice:**

Sector engagement in regional and national decision-making and strengthened advocacy.