

## Introducing Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi

Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi is the regional arts trust for Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. It was founded in 2001, by the former city councils of Auckland and Manukau to support the Auckland region’s arts, culture and creative sector. The trust is governed by a board supported by a small staff.

**Our participation in this consultation was driven by sector concerns about the serious impacts on Auckland’s arts and culture events, festivals, and performing arts of the proposed cuts in the draft budget.**

In this submission we address:

- The importance of Auckland’s arts, culture and creative sector
  - Economic contribution
  - Social cohesion
- Sector assessment of the proposed impact of the cuts
  - A quantitative survey
  - Voices from the sector - case studies
- Other sources of funding
- Is a funding pause a solution?
- Our request

### Appendices

- Background on Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi
- Economist’s report
- Sector survey

## The importance of Auckland's arts, culture and creative sector

There are multiple benefits delivered to Auckland by our arts, culture and creative sector. We want to touch on two in particular:

- The economic importance of the sector
- The sector's role in building social cohesion

### Economic impact

We note Tātaki Auckland Unlimited's assessment of the economic impact of Auckland's creative sector:

- It makes up 5% of Auckland's economy
- It directly employs more than 57,500 people
- It generated \$7.8bn in GDP (50% of NZ's total creative GDP) and \$1.59bn in exports
- It grew by 5.4% on average over the five years to 2022, outpacing the rest of the Auckland economy
- It has significant growth potential (forecasts predict 7,500 new jobs 2023-2028)

We also note WeCreate's statement in their submission to Council about the importance of Auckland's community arts and culture programmes to the growth of the city's creative industries such as our screen industry, gaming industry, and music industry.

*"The sector's future and growth in Tāmaki Makaurau relies on the experiences and skills that are, in part, developed through community arts and culture programmes, along with Tātaki Auckland Unlimited's economic development initiatives."*

We also note Creative New Zealand's comment in their submission:

As Auckland recovers from three years of COVID disruption, recent floods and the Cyclone – now is the time to maintain investment in community wellbeing, social connection and social cohesion through arts & culture.

Arts and culture play a vital role in strengthening community resilience and contributing to Auckland's recovery, by creating connected, healthy and strong communities:

Our research in 2020 also found half of Aucklanders we surveyed saw the arts playing a vital role in Auckland's COVID-19 recovery.

You'll be aware that Council is required to promote the cultural wellbeing of your community (section 10(1)(a), Local Government Act 2002)

Auckland's community arts and culture programmes, which Council helps fund alongside other funders, play an important role in the city's arts, culture and creative sector. The sector is an ecosystem, with our community arts and culture sector providing the training ground for our

professional arts, which in turn provide a pool of talent and creative inspiration that feeds our creative industries. Take our performing arts for example.

*When you see a play or comedy event or dance performance at the Waterfront Theatre, at the Basement or at Q Theatre you see the tip of the creative sector iceberg – behind those actors, comedians, or dancers stand writers, designers, choreographers, make-up artists, animators, lighting experts, creative marketers and more.*

*When you look at your fellow audience members, you are looking at the people who help feed our hospitality industry. Go to Wynyard Quarter restaurants, for example, before or after an event at the Waterfront Theatre – you will see them crowded with patrons.*

### **Social cohesion**

Auckland is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, and over 40% of our population was born overseas. It has the largest Māori population, and the largest Pacific community. It is well-evidenced that arts, culture and creativity have a positive impact on the cultural, social, health and economic wellbeing of communities.

Our arts, culture and creative sector plays a key role in bringing our communities together, and plays a key role in bringing migrants into our community, giving us insights into the cultures and stories of our neighbours.

*From seeing a production by Prayas Theatre, New Zealand's largest South Asian theatre and cultural group, to taking part in CultureFest, to sharing with your children one of the books from Reading Warrior's Kāinga Pukapuka programme, to taking in the street art in the Bradley Lane Project festival, to seeing a young migrant make connections at a MIXIT creative workshop – these are just a handful of the multitude of opportunities our arts and culture sector offer us to come together as Aucklanders. And all of these are made possible, in part, by Council support.*

As our city starts to come alive again after three years of COVID restrictions and anxieties, and as Aucklanders face the likelihood of more disastrous weather events that will test community resilience, we should not undervalue the impact of arts, culture and creative experiences on the social cohesion in our city.

A review for Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage that gathered and assessed research on the impacts arts and culture activity had on cultural, social, health and economic wellbeing in the community in the Christchurch region following the earthquakes in 2010/2011.

Key findings included:

- There were perceived physical and mental health benefits for those participating in Christchurch's post-disaster artistic and creative initiatives
- Arts and culture can help preserve and/or reinvent social memory, which contributes to post-disaster resilience and urban identity:

- Having a collaborative and all-inclusive arts infrastructure is important for full recovery:
- Community groups often played vital roles in their neighbourhood's resilience and wellbeing:
- The presence of pre-existing community infrastructure contributes to stronger post-disaster community resilience:
- The provision of appropriate venues is vital for the prosperous and sustainable development of the arts and culture sector:

## Sector assessment of the impact of the proposed cuts

- Sector survey
- Voices from the sector - case studies

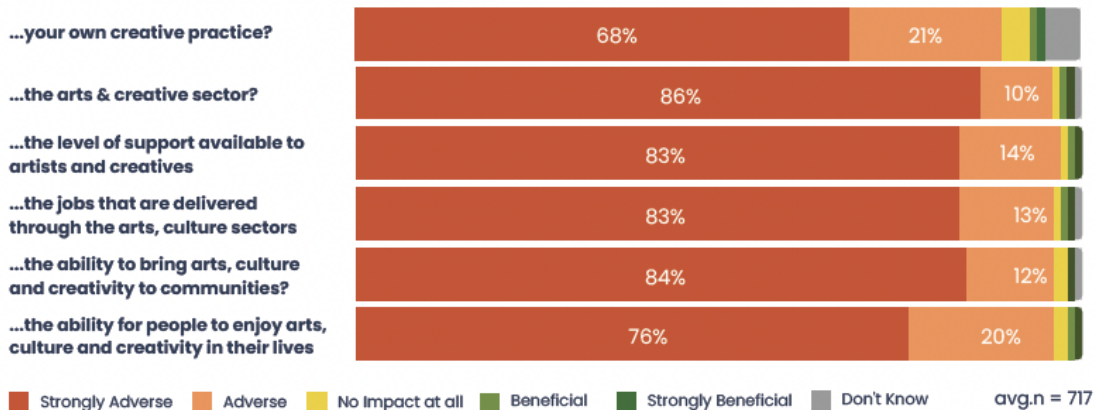
### Sector Survey

To ensure that members of the arts, culture and creative sector in Tāmaki Makaurau were able to inform councillors on the potential impacts of these proposed cuts to Auckland Council, Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi commissioned a Community Feedback Survey, which has been carried out independently by Dovetail Consulting.

The survey had 1068 responses, with 94% of respondents working or based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Of these, 54% of respondents who work in the creative sector receive Council funding.

This is a summary of respondents' assessment of the impact of the cuts;

#### WHAT IMPACT WILL THESE BUDGET CUTS HAVE ON..



Respondents provided an overview of the range of arts and cultural events that they have been involved in, which Council funding has helped to enable. These included:



### **LARGE SCALE EVENTS**

Annual Arts Festival | Music in Parks | Auckland International Buskers Festival | Symposiums | Heritage Festival | Matariki events | Pride Festival | Te Tīmatanga | ASB Polyfest | Whānau Mārama NZ International Film Festival | Auckland Festival of Photography | Auckland Comedy Festival | The Farmers Santa Parade | Secondary Schools Kapa Haka Festival | Autaia Rangatahi Event | Going West



### **WORKSHOPS, MENTORING AND SUPPORT**

Creative skill development workshops | After school programmes | Development initiatives | Arts education programmes | Internships and support for emerging artists | Holiday programmes | Artists talks | Mentoring programmes | Master classes | Residencies



### **PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS**

Art displays | Exhibitions | Proudly Asian Theatre Productions | Market days | Youth performances | Dance performances | Live poetry | Play readings | Comedy performances | Cultural shows and performances | Concerts | Art stalls | Neurodivergent inclusive events | NZSL Accessible events and performances | Blind and low vision performances



### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Community Hubs | Proud Centre's Programme | Arts and Heritage Facility | Corban Estate Arts Centre | The Art Centre | Art Facilities | Community Art Galleries | Koha for Communities | National and International Tours | Research | Evaluation | Venue hire for events | Wages | Mentoring support

Respondents noted their concerns about the wider impacts of the proposed cuts on Auckland's communities.

# BEYOND BUDGETS AND SERVICE REDUCTION

Survey respondents pointed out that the impacts of council funding are not limited to services and resources - the arts and cultural experiences that the funding enables have wider reaching impacts for areas such as livelihood, wellbeing, accessibility, economic health and the livability of Auckland as a city.

## SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

"Any reduction in grant funding will impact directly on our arts programme. The likely impact will be to close the art gallery, reduce the offering in other areas and cut opening hours."

## ACCESSIBILITY

"Accessibility is - unfortunately - often the first thing that gets dropped when organisations find themselves with less funding."

## ACCESS FOR YOUTH

"What about our future generations? How will we show them that they can create their future if funding can't even help them buy basic materials."

## CULTURAL EXCLUSION

"These cuts mean there will be no funding available to pay artists to create exhibitions that are free to attend, particularly impacting Māori artists who are not only creating artworks but sharing their culture and mātauranga with gallery visitors."

## SOCIOECONOMIC EXCLUSION

"Without the support of partners like Auckland Council, we would inevitably have to reduce our events and only people able to access the big venues would be able to participate."

## WE WILL LOSE COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

"These are the things that make it worth living in Tāmaki Makaurau. If we lose our thriving arts and culture then what is the point of people continuing to make this very expensive city home?"

## PEOPLE WILL MOVE ELSEWHERE

"Lack of support for industries will see film and production companies move their business to regions where support is available. Many artists and practitioners will leave the city to work elsewhere."

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING WILL SUFFER

"The proposed cuts would negatively effect our local theatre and a range of events which enrich and support the mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our local community."

## LGBTQI+

"I think the biggest impact will be on communities in the creative arts that aren't as mainstream. I'm worried about the impact this will have on emerging queer and BIPOC artists."

## SMALL BUSINESSES WILL SUFFER

"Contractors who are hired by arts organisations will lose business. This includes photographers, healthcare contractors dance organisations, marquee hire, staging, audio/lighting technicians, portaloos and hospitality providers."

## TOURISM WILL BE IMPACTED

"To minimize these essential programmes would directly affect the audiences who - when they visit our city - want to connect to us, our culture our history, our stories."



Of note also, was respondents' concerns about the adverse impact on marginalised groups



## Voices from the sector - case studies

Te Taumata's survey provides a quantitative insight into sector perceptions of the likely impact of the proposed cuts. An investigation by The Big Idea provides an insight into the likely impact on a range of arts and culture organisations and practitioners.

Quotes from people in Auckland's arts and culture sector in [The Big Idea article](#) include:

### Jessica Pearless and Jonathan Organ, Co-Directors of NORTHART, Directors of Paragon Matter Art Services and practising artists

We are on the precipice of uncertainty.

On a personal level, our vision to continue to create a dynamic, enriching, resilient arts sector for artists, audiences and communities through NORTHART is being thrown into question through the proposed funding reductions from Auckland Council.

Resilience and the ability to lead through a crisis should be at the top of every creative industry leadership position description. As Co-Directors of NORTHART since 2020, we have steered the organisation through COVID-19, significant flooding, and the proposed redevelopment of the Northcote Town Centre.

And now, we are staring down the barrel of funding cuts, on top of an already stretched set of resources.

### Amy Saunders, DEPOT General Manager

Our core funding comes from Auckland Council and without this financial commitment, we wouldn't be able to operate or leverage other partnerships and investment.



We have been told to expect between 10-60% cuts - plus our lease is up for review - we and others who operate from a council building, could be facing changes to our leases which could see tenants paying up to \$10,0000 per year.

These cuts are devastating for an already stretched creative sector that is still suffering from the impacts of COVID. The amount Council is saving from these proposed cuts is approximately \$35 million, but the amount Auckland is losing is worth far more than that. It is years and years of organisational development, community development, cultural integrity, complex investment strategy development and grass roots support for often vulnerable, under-served communities who rely on these networks, partnerships and organisations to support them.

### **Cat Percy, Crescendo Chief Executive Officer**

Crescendo is a social enterprise that uses music to engage disengaged rangatahi/young people throughout Tāmaki Makaurau. With professional mentoring, we pass on industry-standard technical skills and work with each individual to uncover their own intrinsic gifts and talents. Our impact goals centre around outcomes where an individual understands their own unique skill set, understands future pathways available and feels empowered to create their own positive futures.

We are privileged to see many rangatahi flourish on their journey when they are connected to community, creating a sense of belonging, a sense of responsibility and a sense of purpose.

The proposed budget cuts would have long-term negative impacts on the two sectors that Crescendo's mahi works across: creative and youth. There will be both direct and indirect negative impact on the wellbeing of rangatahi, their whānau and consequently, our broader communities across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Whilst the proposed budget cuts would not have an immediate impact on us, Crescendo believes in thinking and acting holistically. The proposed budget cuts reflect an archaic mindset when it comes to the power of the arts and youth programmes, their economic and social benefits and their impact on individual and community building; all of which go into creating more vibrant, prosperous and liveable cities.

### **Huia O'Sullivan, Ngā Rangatahi Toa Creative Arts Executive Director**

We are supporting other organisations that are heavily impacted by this draft budget to assist in navigating not only the physical loss and financial, but also the emotional and wellbeing aspect of these budget cuts.

Understanding that this sector has been hit particularly hard and while other sectors and industries may have had a small window to future and recession proof, the arts sector is unable to have any kind of reprieve before the next blow comes..post COVID, flooding, cyclones...It is absolutely relentless!

Our organisation is positioned differently to other more traditional "arts" organisations. We have a diversified portfolio and aren't that reliant on either local or central government money. We do, however, seek council funding to enable us to further innovate, collaborate and develop systems for us to be able to strengthen and outreach further.

### **Gina Dellabarca, Show Me Shorts Festival Director**

Auckland Council and the Local Boards have been active for many years in supporting arts organisations like Show Me Shorts Film Festival to deliver vibrant cultural enrichment and provide robust industry training. This has enabled us to become a leading international film festival, recently ranked as one of the top 20 short film festivals in the world.

If all of the proposed budget cuts go ahead, this will reduce our ability to deliver a world-class short film festival here in Auckland.

We currently present our short film screenings and training events in more than ten different locations across the Auckland isthmus - but many of our screenings in smaller locations like Great Barrier Island and Titirangi require a top-up of funding support to bring the festival to these communities. As do our schools programme and filmmaking workshops for children.

The planned reduction in support from Auckland Council and the Local Boards would make these financially unviable so we would be forced to cut them.

### **Mark Roach, Auckland City of Music Director**

These budget cut proposals come at the worst possible time for Auckland. The city's creative industries are in a crucial stage of development, and one where it needs strategic investment to unlock the full potential of the city, and for it to compete as a global capital of creativity.

Whilst much of the focus of the Council's proposed budget has been on Arts and Culture, there is an equally concerning regression being asked of our city's economic development department, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, that threatens the workforce and investment pipeline of the creative industries.

There is no doubt that Council is presented with a very large headache, but cost-cutting is just one of four levers that the Council has at its disposal, and careful balancing of the other three levers (rates increase, debt increase, and asset sale) should be a paramount consideration rather than just the wholesale slashing of services, projects, initiatives and talented staff working in and with our major growth sectors.

## Other sources of funding

A comment from Creative New Zealand summarises an important point about arts and culture funding in our city.

*Arts and culture in Auckland depend on a delicate funding ecosystem with many interdependencies. This ecosystem is fragile, and still recovering from the ongoing impacts of Covid-19.*

It is unlikely that Council funding will be easily replaced.

Te Taumata is involved in regular meetings with other organisations which provide support to Auckland's arts, culture and creative sector. Alongside regional funders, including Auckland Council and Foundation North, this forum includes Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage, and Creative New Zealand.

While much of the arts and culture activity that enriches the life of Aucklanders has multiple funders, Auckland Council's funding often provides a critical foundation from which other funders can be engaged. The importance to the funding ecosystem of the 'seeding' funding of much of Auckland Council's support for the sector, cannot be underestimated.

A recent meeting of this forum suggested that other funders have limited capacity to "fill the gaps" that will occur if Auckland Council's proposed cuts go ahead.

**[How do Auckland's rates compare to other centres? An independent analysis. — Stop the Cuts](#)** by economist Andrey Ivanov of Ivanov Consulting noted:

*'If the Council goes through with its proposed budget reduction, in the current environment where massive infrastructure investment is needed especially after the cyclone destruction and clean-up, the community entities will require other sources of funding to survive. Insofar as those exist, there will be a rush to utilise these to cover the shortfall that the Council will push downstream—this will lead to overdemand for other (also, fixed and likely shrinking) sources of funding by the entities that have higher cost of funds and fewer possibilities to find extra funding. Effectively, by outsourcing the funding problems to the entities that can deal with these problems less effectively, the Council will be committing many community organisations to death.*

*The death of community organisations—or else, the significant reductions in the services that they render to their communities—will significantly hinder the resilience of communities to deal with the environmental concerns...'*

## Is a funding pause for a year a solution?

Many of our artists, arts organisations and facilities are currently engaged in the process of recovery and rebuilding from COVID-19. The sector's survival through the pandemic has been largely funded by central government. This funding ends over the coming year. The end of this funding, combined with a pause in Auckland Council funding, will further destabilise the city's already fragile creative ecosystem.

Many of our arts and culture experiences are delivered by organisations and individuals at minimal cost. A 2018 survey of nearly 1,500 creative professionals, commissioned by Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air found that the majority have difficulty making a sustainable living from their principal artform or creative practice, with a median income just two thirds that of all New Zealanders earning a wage or salary. The challenges of making a living from the arts in Auckland specifically, and New Zealand generally, is a factor in the loss of many of our creatives to Sydney and Melbourne.

Our city's cultural life is made rich, by arts practitioners who earn little, and ask for little from Council other than minimal financial, marketing and facilities support.

The bigger issue for the city is to look beyond the current budgetary concerns and create a more sustainable investment plan. The aim should be to maximise the sector's potential for Auckland to secure the economic and social benefits of being an outstanding Australasian creative city.

## Our request to Council

We note that in the announcement of the budget consultation, the Council CEO noted the following:

*“Following public feedback, if this proposed budget package is not supported or if our financial challenge worsens, we would need to make up the shortfall another way. The alternatives are likely to be limited to:*

- *increasing general rates by up to 13.5 per cent, or a total increase of \$336 annually for the average value residential property (around \$6.50 per week)*

We think our arts and culture, environmental, youth and community initiatives and programmes, organisations and facilities are worth the extra \$6.50 a week.

While Te Taumata is not positioned to advance a particular solution, or to assess the impact of adjusting the various funding levers, we note the following:

*The Taxpayers Union 2022 Ratepayer’s Report [2022 Ratepayers’ Report Released - Taxpayers’ Union](#) 2022 Ratepayers’ Report Released - Taxpayers’ Union 2022 Ratepayers’ Report Released - Taxpayers’ Union identifies that the average Auckland ratepayer pays approximately the same amount of rates as the average ratepayer in Carterton, where incomes and residential property values are significantly lower.*

We also note the following from the Ivanov Consulting report:

- 29. Comparing e.g., 2020 & 2022 Ratepayers’ Reports, and looking at two unitary councils, e.g. Nelson and Auckland, we see that Nelson rates increased by 7.8% in this time frame (from \$2,785 to \$3,001) while Auckland rates increased only by 5.4% during the same time period (from \$3,469 to \$3,656).
- 30. Moreover, adjusting for the incomes (Nelson average income in 2022 being \$1,956 and median being \$1,324 versus Auckland’s \$2,581 and \$1,726, respectively; source: Stats NZ)<sup>2</sup> we see that if Aucklanders were to pay the proportion of their income in fees that the ratepayers in Nelson pay, Auckland rates would’ve been \$3,960 (compared to the average income, or \$3,912 when compared to the median). In Nelson, the rates are 153% of the average weekly income and 227% of the median weekly income, while in Auckland the corresponding figures are only 142% and 212%, i.e., ~10%age-points less.
- 31. So, both dynamic (compared to the past years and inflation) and static (compared to the other councils) arguments point to Auckland rates being lower than they should be.

## Our request:

Council has obligations under local government legislation to promote the cultural wellbeing of its community. Arts, culture and creativity are an essential contributor to community wellbeing. Our survey indicates that the impact of funding cuts will be significantly greater than Council is anticipating.

As such, we strongly urge Council to:

- Conduct further sector analysis to further understand the short, medium and long-term impacts of the damage to Auckland's cultural life and creative economy.
- Review the range of options available to raise the funds it needs to maintain and develop the city's current physical and social infrastructure
- Look to work with the sector to secure its long-term strength as a major contributor to our city's economy, quality of life, and international competitiveness.

# Appendices

## 1. Te Taumata Toi-a-lwi background

Over the last 20 years the trust has supported programmes and initiatives to strengthen the arts and culture of Tāmaki Makaurau. Today, we are a centre for creative knowledge and practice, we co-design and facilitate sector conversations and connections, and we advocate for the policies, practices and infrastructure the arts, culture and creative sector needs to make Auckland a city alive with creativity.

Recent work by Te Taumata includes:

- Sector surveys to identify the impacts of COVID-19 on Auckland's arts, culture and creative sector. Our surveys helped inform local and national funders of the impacts on the sector of lockdowns and audience hesitancy. The surveys provided valuable information to policymakers and the Government on the support needed.
- Programmes to support the development of sector leadership and governance.
- Sector capability initiatives, such as the development of strategy.
- Support for the development of wellness resources for the sector.
- Research into the needs of the toi Māori, Pasifika and Asian arts communities.
- Convening and servicing the Ngā Toi Advocacy group, a forum for leaders from Auckland's arts and culture sector.
- Convening a forum for regional investors in arts and culture
- Supporting the development of Te Manawa, a Māori artist-led collective to lead transformational change in the creative sector in Tāmaki Makaurau



# Auckland Mayoral Budget Proposal & Rates Investigation

By Andrey Ivanov, PhD for Te Taumata

## Situation

### MAYORAL PROPOSAL FOR ANNUAL BUDGET 2023/2024<sup>1</sup>

Emphasis added.

1. “Latest assessments of changes in the economic environment and their impacts on the council’s cost base indicate ongoing operating budget pressure of \$295 million for 2023/2024.”
2. §5 “The COVID-19 pandemic and associated monetary injections has been followed by dramatic increases in demand, supply-chain limitations, and a war in Europe as the global economy recovers. This has led to rapid increases in inflation and monetary responses from reserve banks around the world in the form of interest rate increases.”
3. §7 “Auckland Council’s cost base continues to grow each year, driven not only by inflationary pressure on our cost base but also the costs of owning, maintaining, and operating our growing asset base.”
4. §8 “Addressing the city’s growth and legacy of underinvestment in infrastructure has required significant capital expenditure by the council since amalgamation. This investment, and its consequential impact on operating costs, has historically been funded by a growth in council borrowings (to reflect the intergenerational benefits) supported by operating cost savings and annual increases to general rates above the headline rate of CPI inflation (to cover the growing cost base). Additional operating funding pressure has come from the need to gradually increase the share of depreciation funded from current revenue as we move toward a more sustainable approach for funding asset replacement.”
5. §9 “Recent dramatic increases in inflation have resulted in the general rates increase falling below the CPI increase. As a rule, this means that the costs of the services we deliver to existing ratepayers are growing faster than the revenues we receive from them. At the same time it is becoming harder to find further cost savings that do not impact on service levels for the community.”

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<sup>1</sup> From: Draft Annual Budget 2023/2024 – Staff Advice to support Mayoral Proposal.  
<https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/media/ghopmktl/2-embargoed-until-12-noon-staff-advice-to-support-mayoral-proposal.pdf>

6. §23 On the potential *other* mitigation levers: “Some of these levers cannot be a large part of the solution to the current budget challenge: [...] **Government funding**: further opportunities exist but likely to be limited scope for this budget”
7. §41 “Current budgets assume an average increase to general rates in the 2023/2024 year of 3.5 per cent.”
8. §42. “If the council were not to take other additional mitigating actions (above those indicated in the Annual Budget 2022/2023) general rates would need to increase by a further 10% to address the increase to the operating challenge which is \$205 million more than the \$90 million signalled in the Annual Budget 2022/2023. This would mean a total average general rates increase of 13.5%.”
9. §43. “Appendix C includes advice around the potential impacts of general rates increases at 7% and 10% and of making changes to other rates policy settings.”
10. §46 “As a general principle, continuing with general rates increases that are significantly below inflation will mean not addressing the underlying issue of an imbalance between the council’s costs and revenue trends. Even if this could be achieved by using other levers to solve the current \$295 million estimated budget challenge, such an approach is unlikely to be credible or sustainable and could lead to the need for even higher rates increases within the next few years.”

#### **ANNUAL BUDGET 2023/2024: CONTEXT SETTING AND PROCESS (FILE NO.: CP2022/15348)**

11. §17 “A credible and sustainable plan is required to tackle the many financial pressures facing us, while continuing to prepare for further challenges such as climate change and the dynamic economic environment. A lack of a credible plan would impact confidence of key stakeholders such as auditors, central government, investors, and council’s credit rating agencies and could lead to unacceptable rates shocks for households and businesses in the future.”
12. §27 “The budget also noted further mitigations (e.g., higher rates increases or further service reductions) of around \$60 million might be needed if inflation and interest rates turned out to be at the higher end of projections.”
13. §30 “As of late October, these economic factors along with some other operating pressures have been assessed as creating an unmitigated operating budget gap of around \$270 million for 2023/2024. This is based on the currently planned 3.5 per cent general rates increase for 2023/2024 and may change if there are further inflation and interest rate movements.”
14. §33 “The available budget levers include: [...] **General rates** –the currently planned 3.5 per cent increase could be higher provided this remains within

affordability guidelines and does not create an unacceptable shock for households and businesses.”

## 2022 RATEPAYERS' REPORT

15. [2022 Ratepayers' Report Released - Taxpayers' Union](#)
16. “The New Zealand Taxpayers' Union, in collaboration with its sister groups the Auckland Ratepayers' Alliance and the Tauranga Ratepayers' Alliance, has today published the 2022 edition of Ratepayers' Report – online local government league tables – at [www.RatepayersReport.nz](http://www.RatepayersReport.nz)”
17. “Rates: Auckland Council ranks highest for average residential rates at \$3,656, with Carterton District Council a close second at \$3,650. The lowest average residential rates in New Zealand is Ōpōtiki District Council (\$1,826).”

## CHRONIC UNDERINVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

18. Infrastructure underinvestment is cited in the Mayoral Budget Proposal (\$8 – see above).
19. Bernard Hickey covered decades-long infrastructure underinvestment issue in his writing and investigations, e.g., *When Facts Change* podcast episode from 7 January, 2022, called “Summer reissue: An epic intergenerational wealth transfer” ([When the Facts Change | Podcasts | The Spinoff](#)), his article “Bernard Hickey on his most despairing and ugly column ever” ([Bernard Hickey on his most despairing and ugly column ever | RNZ](#))

## Complication

20. The new Mayor of Auckland ran on the platform of cost reduction.
21. There are many forces adding the cost reduction pressure, one of which is the Taxpayers' Union, which claims that Auckland rates are already the highest in the country (at face value, this is so – see discussion later).
22. In addition to all the risks and economy pressures highlighted in the Mayoral Budget Proposal (as well as accompanying reports and meeting notes) – Auckland had suffered a series of additional environmental disasters in early 2023 (e.g., Cyclone Gabrielle), adding an extra pressure on the capital expenditure.
23. While it is clear that the Auckland Council is suffering from its increased cost base, the same is true for all the community entities that depend on the Council funding support for their existence – while in addition, all the funded entities (by nature of being much smaller than the Council) have much fewer and weaker possibilities to raise funds and have much higher cost of funds than the Council.

## Questions

24. Are Auckland rates appropriate for the level of expenditure and ambitions of the Supercity?
25. Is the Mayoral Budget Proposal's slashing of the budget appropriate for the level of community services that befits the Supercity?

## Answers

26. No, the answer to both questions is a resounding no.
27. Auckland Council itself already acknowledged that the rates are insufficient to cover the costs, *even if* it were possible to use levers other than the rates to fix the estimated budget gap of \$295 million (see point 10 above).
28. In particular, the rates *increases* had been insufficient over the past few years, given the inflation: "such an approach is unlikely to be credible or sustainable and could lead to the need for even higher rates increases within the next few years" (see same point 10 above).
29. Comparing e.g., 2020 & 2022 Ratepayers' Reports, and looking at two unitary councils, e.g. Nelson and Auckland, we see that Nelson rates increased by 7.8% in this time frame (from \$2,785 to \$3,001) while Auckland rates increased only by 5.4% during the same time period (from \$3,469 to \$3,656).
30. Moreover, adjusting for the incomes (Nelson average income in 2022 being \$1,956 and median being \$1,324 versus Auckland's \$2,581 and \$1,726, respectively; source: Stats NZ)<sup>2</sup> we see that if Aucklanders were to pay the proportion of their income in fees that the ratepayers in Nelson pay, Auckland rates would've been \$3,960 (compared to the average income, or \$3,912 when compared to the median). In Nelson, the rates are 153% of the average weekly income and 227% of the median weekly income, while in Auckland the corresponding figures are only 142% and 212%, i.e., ~10%<sub>age</sub>-points less.
31. So, both dynamic (compared to the past years and inflation) and static (compared to the other councils) arguments point to Auckland rates being lower than they should be.
32. Finally, considering the ambitions of the Supercity and what the people of Auckland deserve, it is clear that many community entities that depend on the Council funding for their survival would simply not be able to survive with lower budgets.
33. Council itself acknowledges that other sources of funding (e.g., central government one) would not be able to pick up the slack (see point 6 / §23).

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<sup>2</sup> [Household income by region, household type, and source of household income \(stats.govt.nz\)](#)

34. If the Council goes through with its proposed budget reduction, in the current environment where massive infrastructure investment is needed especially after the cyclone destruction and clean-up, the community entities will require *other* sources of funding to survive. Insofar as those exist, there will be a rush to utilise these to cover the shortfall that the Council will push downstream—this will lead to overdemand for other (also, fixed and likely shrinking) sources of funding by the entities that have higher cost of funds and fewer possibilities to find extra funding. Effectively, by outsourcing the funding problems to the entities that can deal with these problems less effectively, the Council will be committing many community organisations to death.
35. The death of community organisations—or else, the significant reductions in the services that they render to their communities—will significantly hinder the resilience of communities to deal with the environmental concerns, exactly at the time when the Council has shown itself to be unprepared to rise to the challenge.<sup>3</sup>

## ICL Signature

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**[This letter contains confidential information and is for the intended recipient(s) only]**

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<sup>3</sup> [Analysis: Wayne Brown appears to have missed what a mayor's job is in a crisis | Stuff.co.nz](#)

### 3. Survey Results

MENTORING PROGRAMMES • DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

AUCKLAND INTERNATIONAL BUSKERS FESTIVAL • ARTS AND HERITAGE FACILITY

EVALUATION OF YOUTH WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

EXHIBITIONS • MASTERCLASSES • PROUDLY ASIAN THEATRE

SUPPORT FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

ART DISPLAYS • MUSIC IN PARKS  
ART RESEARCH

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

NEURODIVERGENT INCLUSIVE EVENTS • MARKET DAYS • SECONDARY SCHOOLS KAPA HAKA FESTIVAL

ACTING WORKSHOPS • SYMPOSIUMS  
NZSL ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

MATARIKI EVENTS • HERITAGE FESTIVAL

ART EXHIBITIONS

YOUTH PERFORMANCE EVENTS • PRIDE FESTIVAL  
TE TĪMATANGA

ASB POLYFEST • INTERNATIONAL TOURS

WHĀNAU MĀRAMA NZ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

DANCE PERFORMANCES

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES • LIVE POETRY • AUCKLAND FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SURVEY •

### FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CREATIVE SECTOR BUDGET CUTS

INTERNSHIPS AND SUPPORT FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

THE FARMERS SANTA PARADE

KOHA FOR COMMUNITIES

AUCKLAND COMEDY FESTIVAL

BLIND AND LOW VISION PERFORMANCES • PUBLIC PLAY READINGS

COMMUNITY HUBS • PROUD CENTRES PROGRAMME

FILM WORKSHOPS • LITERARY FESTIVALS

SUMMARY REPORT • EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES **2023**

*"What is a city? It's the people within. If there is no art or culture, we have no city."*

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# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CREATIVE SECTOR BUDGET CUTS

In March 2023, Auckland Council will begin consultation on its draft budget for 2023/2024. This proposed budget proposes \$36.5 million in funding cuts to services that directly support the arts, culture and creative sector.

The proposals would see cuts to funding for arts and leisure programmes, contestable regional arts culture and events grants, festivals, cultural celebrations, regional events like Music in Parks, as well as organisations such as Auckland City Art Gallery and Auckland Live.

To ensure that members of the arts, culture and creative sector in Tāmaki Makaurau are able to provide feedback on the potential impacts of these proposed cuts to Auckland Council, Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi commissioned the Community Feedback Survey, which has been carried out independently by Dovetail Consulting.

The electronic survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey and distributed via Te Taumata toi-a-iwi email and social media networks from 10 February, 2023 to 8 March 2023. A snowball sampling approach was undertaken, in which recipients were encouraged to distribute the survey to others in the sector. In total, 1068 responses were received from people working in or with organisations in the arts, culture and creative sector.

The survey included a mixture of multi-choice questions and open-ended questions inviting respondents to share what impact they believed the proposed impact cuts would have for them personally and for wider communities within Tāmaki Makaurau.

The sampling approach means that the results may not be representative of the creative sector in the region; nor can a response rate be accurately calculated. The results do however point to a range of issues for consideration that are explored in this summary report.

Responses were analysed and reported on by Dovetail Consulting.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

There were 1068 responses to the Auckland Council Budget Survey:

- 94% of respondents work or are based in Tāmaki Makaurau
- 54% of respondents who work in the creative sector receive council funding
- 13% of respondents have a disability or support people with a disability
- 67% of respondents identified as female
- 26% of respondents identified as male
- 6% of respondents identified as non-binary



## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The draft funding proposal will see funding cuts of \$36.5 million to services that directly support the arts, culture and creative sector. Respondents shared what council funding has enabled them to fund and achieve, all of which is subject to significant change, or discontinuation under the current proposed budget. Some of the specific projects and services include:



### LARGE SCALE EVENTS

Annual Arts Festival | Music in Parks | Auckland International Buskers Festival | Symposiums | Heritage Festival | Matariki events | Pride Festival | Te Tīmatanga | ASB Polyfest | Whānau Mārama NZ International Film Festival | Auckland Festival of Photography | Auckland Comedy Festival | The Farmers Santa Parade | Secondary Schools Kapa Haka Festival | Autaia Rangatahi Event | Going West



### WORKSHOPS, MENTORING AND SUPPORT

Creative skill development workshops | After school programmes | Development initiatives | Arts education programmes | Internships and support for emerging artists | Holiday programmes | Artists talks | Mentoring programmes | Master classes | Residencies



### PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS

Art displays | Exhibitions | Proudly Asian Theatre Productions | Market days | Youth performances | Dance performances | Live poetry | Play readings | Comedy performances | Cultural shows and performances | Concerts | Art stalls | Neurodivergent inclusive events | NZSL Accessible events and performances | Blind and low vision performances



### INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

Community Hubs | Proud Centre's Programme | Arts and Heritage Facility | Corban Estate Arts Centre | The Art Centre | Art Facilities | Community Art Galleries | Koha for Communities | National and International Tours | Research | Evaluation | Venue hire for events | Wages | Mentoring support

# BEYOND BUDGETS AND SERVICE REDUCTION

Survey respondents pointed out that the impacts of council funding are not limited to services and resources – the arts and cultural experiences that the funding enables have wider reaching impacts for areas such as livelihood, wellbeing, accessibility, economic health and the livability of Auckland as a city.

## SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

"Any reduction in grant funding will impact directly on our arts programme. The likely impact will be to close the art gallery, reduce the offering in other areas and cut opening hours."

## ACCESSIBILITY

"Accessibility is – unfortunately – often the first thing that gets dropped when organisations find themselves with less funding."

## ACCESS FOR YOUTH

"What about our future generations? How will we show them that they can create their future if funding can't even help them buy basic materials."

## CULTURAL EXCLUSION

"These cuts mean there will be no funding available to pay artists to create exhibitions that are free to attend, particularly impacting Māori artists who are not only creating artworks but sharing their culture and mātauranga with gallery visitors."

## SOCIOECONOMIC EXCLUSION

"Without the support of partners like Auckland Council, we would inevitably have to reduce our events and only people able to access the big venues would be able to participate."

## WE WILL LOSE COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

"These are the things that make it worth living in Tāmaki Makaurau. If we lose our thriving arts and culture then what is the point of people continuing to make this very expensive city home?"

## PEOPLE WILL MOVE ELSEWHERE

"Lack of support for industries will see film and production companies move their business to regions where support is available. Many artists and practitioners will leave the city to work elsewhere."

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING WILL SUFFER

"The proposed cuts would negatively effect our local theatre and a range of events which enrich and support the mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our local community."

## LGBTQI+

"I think the biggest impact will be on communities in the creative arts that aren't as mainstream. I'm worried about the impact this will have on emerging queer and BIPOC artists."

## SMALL BUSINESSES WILL SUFFER

"Contractors who are hired by arts organisations will lose business. This includes photographers, healthcare contractors dance organisations, marquee hire, staging, audio/lighting technicians, portaloos and hospitality providers."

## TOURISM WILL BE IMPACTED

"To minimize these essential programmes would directly affect the audiences who – when they visit our city – want to connect to us, our culture our history, our stories."

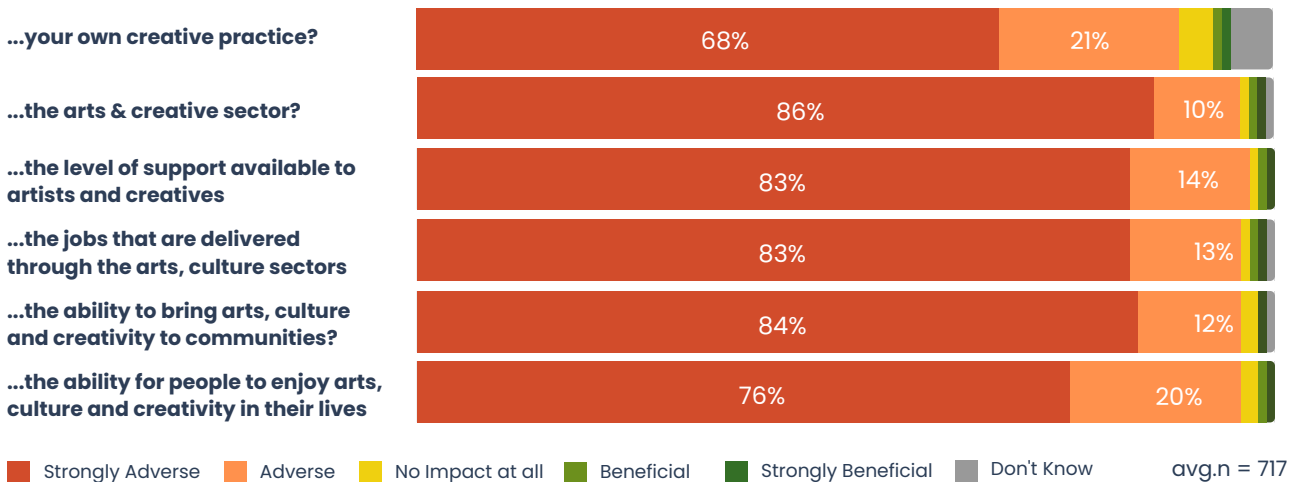


# THE IMPACT IN NUMBERS

The majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact across a range of areas including access to the arts, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and equitable access to arts and community events.



## WHAT IMPACT WILL THESE BUDGET CUTS HAVE ON..



## IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

We asked survey participants to indicate the level of impact the proposed budget cuts would have on their own creative practice and work in the arts sector. A majority of participants (89%) indicated that the changes would have an adverse impact. Qualitative feedback from participants revealed that the main areas of impact on individual artists and their organisations would be:

- Wage reductions and job insecurity
- Reduction in arts programmes, facilities and services
- Strain on an already stretched funding environment

### WAGE REDUCTIONS AND JOB INSECURITY

Many respondents spoke to the practical implications that these cuts would have for their work and practice, specifically in relation to income and job security. For many, the cuts would mean a loss of income, as a result reduced funding grants and council income available or as a result of reduced income from contracts and wages. Some organisations had council funding earmarked for specific roles. Funding cuts would mean having to reduce hours or number of staff. There was a belief that staff reductions will put pressure on other resources and a number of respondents also predicted that cuts as extensive as those proposed will likely result in organisations having to close their doors all together.

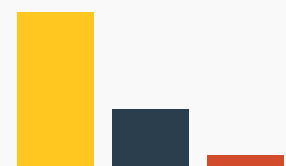
*"I expect it will mean that arts workers conditions, which are already unregulated and low-waged, will become even more so, more vulnerable to being exploited as organisations will be working on much smaller budgets, or may have to close their doors."*

*"A 5-10% cut would mean the loss of one or more staff members, which in turn would lead to further burn out risk for remaining staff members and the likelihood that the organisation may no longer be viable."*



89% of respondents believe the proposed budget changes

**WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT**  
on their own creative practice / work in the sector



n = 613

### REDUCTIONS IN ARTS PROGRAMMES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Respondents highlighted the impact that the proposed funding cuts will have on arts programmes, facilities and services in the Auckland community. A number of events in Auckland rely on council funding, and several markets, festivals, exhibitions and large scale events were named as unlikely to go ahead if the current proposals are realised.

*"With an annual fund of under \$3,000, we already operate on a strained budget and 100% volunteer work to stay within our means. Cuts to funding would mean our budget would become even tighter resulting in cuts to workshops, capacity at our markets and compensation for the work of our volunteers, performers and workshop facilitators."*

*"These cuts jeopardise my ability to perform music in Auckland, and threaten the existence of the arts organisation I work for, which has been running for over 10 years"*

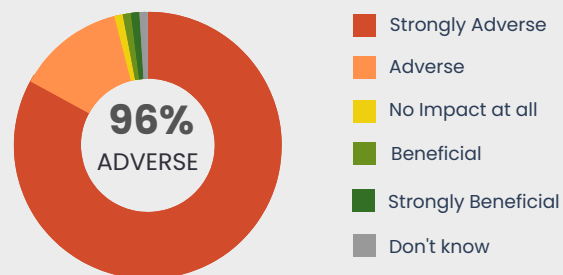
## **STRETCHED AND COMPETITIVE FUNDING CLIMATE**

Another strong theme across the responses was increased pressure on an already "strained" and "highly competitive" funding climate. There was a general fear that greater competition for resources will mean artists are forced to spend more time on administrative work to fund resources for projects.

*"It will create even more competition in an already fraught funding environment that pits organisations and individual artists against each other. It will be the decimation of for-community, by-community arts practice and events "*

***"The funding opportunities in Tāmaki are already limited and stretched with more worthy projects, organizations and communities than funds availability. Without the funding of the Auckland Council you are adding further stress on creative New Zealand and other funding bodies and severely limiting the projects and communities that will be successful."***

What impact will budget cuts have on services that are delivered through the arts, cultural and creative sectors



n = 718

## REGIONAL IMPACTS

We asked survey participants to indicate what level of impact the proposed budget cuts will have on the Auckland arts, culture and creative sector. A majority of respondents indicated that the cuts would have an adverse or significantly adverse impact on (1) the viability of arts, cultural and creative organisations (2) the ability for people to enjoy arts, culture and creativity in their lives and (3) the connection that arts and creativity builds within communities. The key themes identified in respondent qualitative feedback were around:

- The liveability and vibrancy of Auckland as a city
- Flow on impacts on other sectors
- Impacts on community wellbeing and connection
- Artists leaving the arts sector and the city
- Exacerbation of impacts of COVID-19 and recent weather events

### AUCKLAND AS A LIVEABLE AND VIBRANT CITY

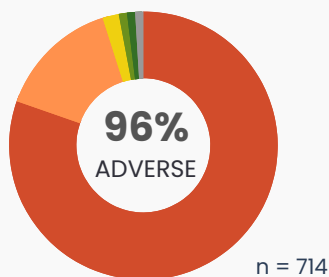
Many respondents felt strongly that the proposed budget cuts will impact on the livability and vibrancy of Auckland as a city. Respondents described a city devoid of arts as "dull", "grey" "less-diverse", "beige" and "soulless". Several respondents pointed to the high-cost of living in Auckland and the low return on investment if the city was to develop in this way.

*"The rich cultural life of Auckland makes up a big part of its appeal, both for its residents and its visitors. Losing some of our art community to budget cuts an abomination, as it would cut out the beating heart of the city."*

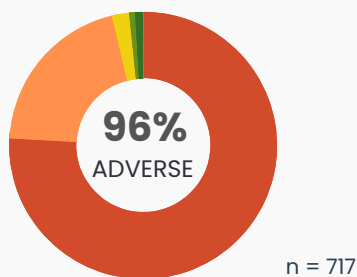
*"If these budget cuts are going to directly effect library programmes, after school, swimming, creative arts, installations, theatre companies, city art walks, museum displays, cultural events and the like - these are the things that make it worth living in Tāmaki Makaurau. If we lose our thriving arts and culture then what is the point of people continuing to make this very expensive city their home?"*

### WHAT KIND OF IMPACT WILL BUDGET CUTS HAVE ON:

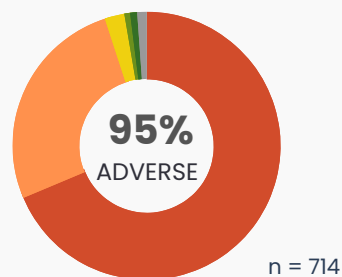
The viability of arts, cultural and creative organisations



The ability for people to enjoy arts, culture and creativity in their lives



The ability to go to live theatre and events



■ Strongly Adverse 
 ■ Adverse 
 ■ No Impact at all 
 ■ Beneficial 
 ■ Strongly Beneficial 
 ■ Don't know

## FLOW ON IMPACTS FOR OTHER SECTORS

Respondents pointed to the wider-reaching impacts that would be felt in other industries and sectors if the proposed cuts are implemented. This included marketing, hospitality, film, television, production, venue hire, education, healthcare, equipment rental, event security, development consulting, hotel and accommodation providers. There was some concern that this could have knock-on effects for the tourism industry as well as immigration.

*"Huge loss of income to hospitality and accommodation providers, huge loss of revenue for commercial hires of performance spaces."*

*"As a sole trader providing Healthcare support to arts organizations (dance predominantly) with limited funding already further cuts would likely make my services untenable moving forward. Yet dancers are elite athletes and thus deserve the equivalent support of athletes in Aotearoa."*

*"Massively reduce tourism as arts expose Tamaki Makaurau and cause significant issues in the education sector. Already visas are difficult but why would a student apply to our school internationally if there are no arts and tech jobs to go to."*

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND CONNECTION

A significant proportion of respondents felt strongly that the proposed budget cuts would have far reaching consequences for community wellbeing and in particular, for community connection, with 96% of respondents expressing that the proposed budget cuts will have an "adverse, or a strongly adverse" impact on this.

Specifically, respondents spoke about the impacts they believed the budget cuts would have on "crime", "social issues", "health issues", "suicide rates", "holistic health", "civic engagement" and "community connection".

*"It is such a shame that the powers that be don't understand the role of the arts as the building block of creative thought, improving learning outcomes and health outcomes across the board. The research is there."*

*"The arts perform a vital function for holistic health - engaging in creative activities, even as a visitor, or audience member, is integral to wellbeing. Given the disruptions that the pandemic has caused, the arts have an ability to help with mental health by uplifting and connecting them to their communities. This can't be measured in dollars or spreadsheets, and yet it is incredibly important."*

A number of respondents spoke to the importance of wellbeing and mental health considerations in light of the impacts of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and weather events. For these respondents, there was concern that many arts communities and artists are "struggling to survive" in the wake of three years of COVID-19 lockdowns and further cuts would force many out of business, which in turn would have impacts on community mental health and wellbeing.

*"It will significantly impact the communities we work with and the platforms created for them to gather safely - this WILL impact the wellbeing of our communities especially post covid and all these crazy weather events we are having as for some it is their one 'outing'.*

*"After three years of absolute devastation in our industry (though unbelievably high consumption of the work our industry creates), we need to be paid and have sustainable opportunities for the work we do. People are watching art and stories everywhere, all the time. But on the frontline of creation the work is not being valued. "*

## **ARTISTS WILL MOVE TO WHERE THEY ARE VALUED**

Some respondents expressed concern that the budget cuts reflected a general lack of appreciation for the importance and value of the arts within society. This was paired with the belief that artists will move to cities or countries where their work and contribution is adequately valued.

*"It sends a message clearly that artists are not valued or worthy of support by the council."*

*"There will be less artists who are able to have creative careers. People will leave Auckland and move to other places to live. I am one of those people myself. I do not want to live in Auckland because of the terrible way it treats artists so I have made the decision to move based on this."*

*"Majority of Aucklanders have already been moving from New Zealand to Australia for a better life in terms of cost of living, housing market, living wage. By cutting funds to the arts, the soul of the city will be sucked out and to be honest, a lot of people already hate living here. Arts keeps us grounded. When I didn't get arts funding for my projects in Wellington and saw that the local environment was becoming increasingly difficult for artists to sustain a living within, what did I do? I made the decision to go somewhere else."*



## DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

We asked survey participants to identify the different populations and communities who would be affected by the proposed budget cuts. While respondents expected there to be impacts for Aucklanders across the board, respondents did feel that some groups would be disproportionately impacted:

- Higher deprivation communities
- Rangatahi and budding young artists
- Māori and Pacific peoples
- The rainbow and LGBTQI+ community
- Migrant communities
- Disabled communities
- Elderly

### HIGHER DEPRIVATION COMMUNITIES

Several respondents were concerned that a reduction in accessible art and cultural events or programmes will limit the participation and enjoyment of the arts to those with high-means. There was a general concern that a reduction in free/accessible arts programmes and services would disproportionately impact artists and art-consumers in lower-socioeconomic communities who may not otherwise have the means to access these services.

*"We would have less capacity to offer programmes in different parts of the city which rely more heavily on funding support. This will restrict our offerings to more affluent regions which will continue to further division and inequity among New Zealanders."*

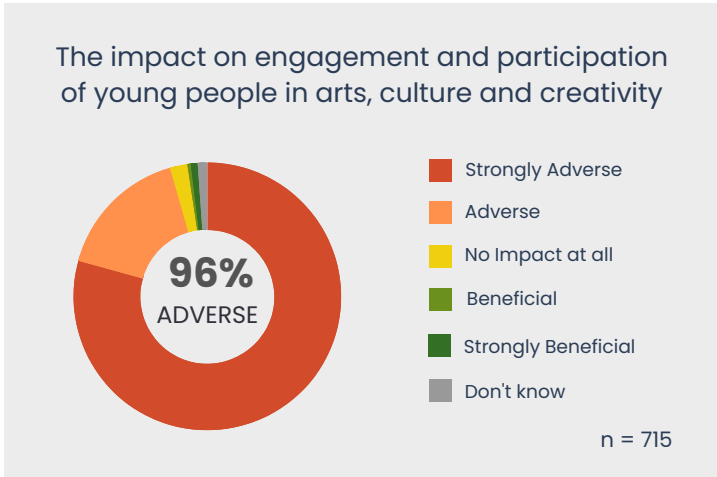
*"I work with young people from South Auckland, Pacific, Māori, Asian and Palagi we work with them... alongside some of the best artists from Pacific islands and NZ, the fundings allow us to operate as a bridge for communities and classes of young people who couldn't afford or have access to high quality and level art practitioners."*

### RANGATAHI AND YOUNG ARTISTS

A significant number of respondents spoke of the impact budget cuts would have on Auckland's young people and emerging artists. Some feared that the loss of council funded events and arts education programmes would signal the loss of safe and healthy creative outlets for struggling or disadvantaged youth. Others spoke of concerns that artists looking to make their way in the art world would lack opportunities to learn and showcase their work, threatening the pathways that exist to forging a viable career in the creative sector.

*"The arts support healthy and thriving societies not just artists themselves. Kids get to see themselves and wider possibilities for their futures and work through emotions in the arts - it gives them a rich experience and lifelong way to connect with the world."*

**“The Auckland Council arts funding has given me some of the most informative experiences in my life and have allowed me to carve out my career. While I am not reliant on the funding now, it is funding from the council in the formative years of my art practice that has allowed me to have a sustainable arts career.”**

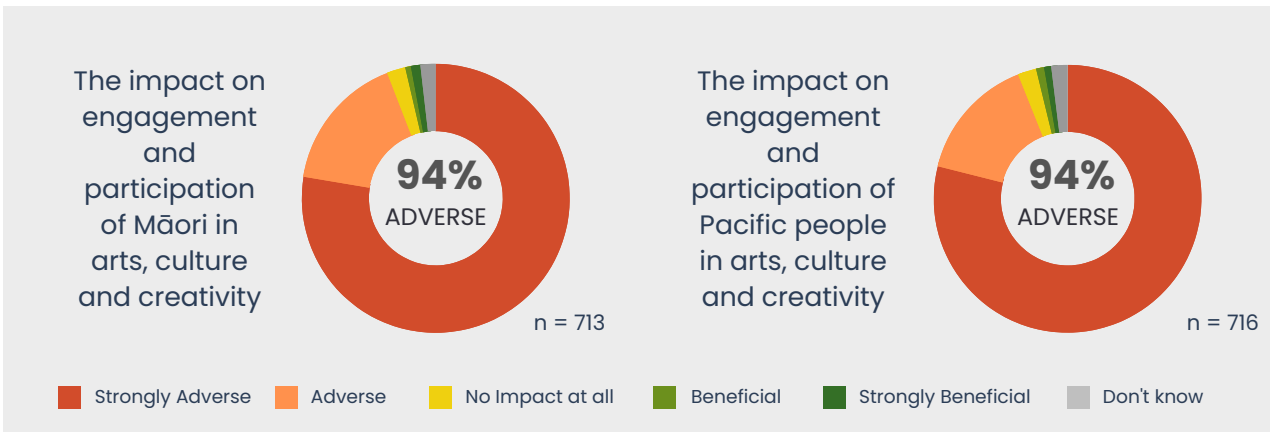


**MĀORI AND PACIFIC PEOPLES**

Many survey respondents felt that the budget cuts would disproportionately impact and disadvantage those who identify as Māori or as Pacific peoples. Some of the key themes that were touched on included access issues, the loss of cultural and historical artforms, reduced representation in the arts and culture space and impacts for future generations of Māori and Pacific artists. There were also concerns about the wider impacts of removing safe spaces for diverse groups to gather and discuss the challenges that they face.

*"My mahi is about celebrating and uplifting Māori and Pacific creativity and expression within frameworks that traditionally minimise these cultures. Removing the ability for our people to express themselves removes the accessibility and presence of our people in media and social/creative spaces. If our young people can see it, they can be it, dream it, believe and become it."*

*"From a Pacific perspective, the arts are a very important outlet for our communities. Especially in this day and age, there is so much going on, our country has the worst youth-suicide rates BUT when there is an artistic and creative outlet and avenue where our people can properly explore those feelings and thoughts - WITH a good amount of support, our people are able to better navigate daily Western life."*



## THE RAINBOW AND LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

Some respondents felt that queer and gender diverse communities would be disproportionately impacted by the proposed budget cuts. Respondents pointed to the fact that funding plays a crucial role in servicing Auckland's art communities that fall outside of the mainstream and provide a platform for Auckland's queer artists. According to respondents, funded events and performances create safe spaces for queer and gender diverse communities to express and mobilise on the issues they face, while fostering a sense of pride, empathy and freedom of expression. Auckland's pride events, for example, currently receive significant funding from Auckland Council.

*"I think the biggest impact will be on communities in the creative arts that aren't as mainstream, and particularly rely on funding to get a start. Being away from the mainstream also means opportunities and spaces needs to actively be created, which funding helps a lot with. In particular I'm worried about the impact this will have on emerging queer and BIPOC artists."*

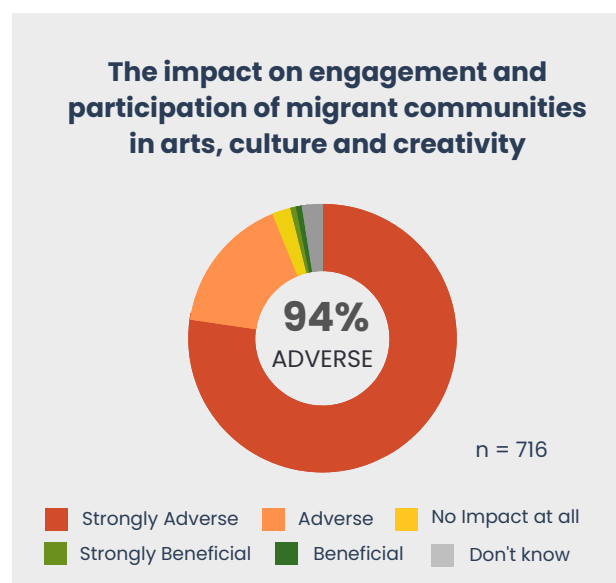
*"Our community is empowered by the creatives who share our artwork, it provides us with the opportunity to connect and mobilise on issues. When you cut budgets to community art projects you deplatform the artists and the spaces that bring our community together."*

## MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Many respondents fear that the proposed council funding cuts will reduce resources available to highlight and celebrate Auckland's diversity through cultural arts and events - specifically for migrant cultures. Respondents pointed out that these events support community cohesion, language acquisition and retention, wellbeing, and fostering a community of respect and understanding for different cultures. Without these events, there was concern that this could impact Auckland's general understanding of migrant communities and contribute to social isolation for those who belong to these communities.

*"There are so many things yet to be done to uplift and carve safe spaces for the ethnic and diverse communities, to fight against racism, and to prove that representation matters. To cut arts support where people have autonomy to share their voices, stories and perspective will take a huge opportunity of growth not only for the wellbeing of the Asian, ethnic and diverse communities, it'll be a huge loss and rip for the growth of Aotearoa as a nation that proudly claims itself multicultural."*

*"Funding cuts will erase visibility of marginalised communities and minority cultures which leverage events for celebrations such as Latin Day, World of Cultures, Songkran, Nepal Day, and Pride."*



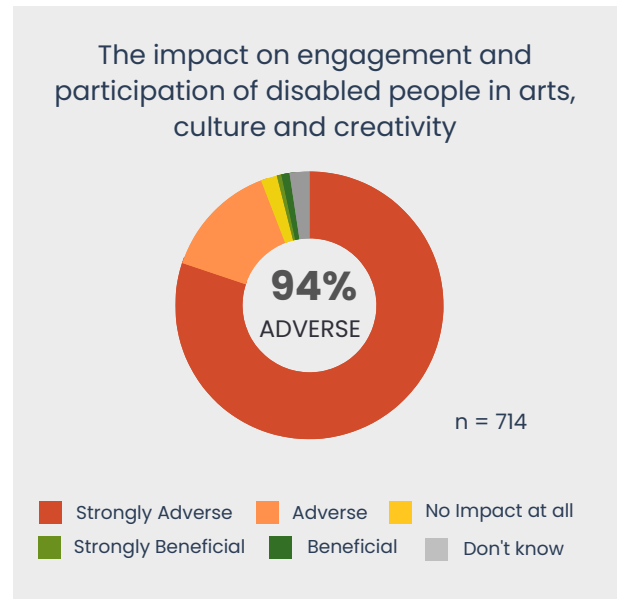
## DISABLED COMMUNITIES

Several respondents noted that funding reductions will likely impact the accessibility of performances - excluding participation of those with disabilities. Specific impacts included accessibility components for those in the blind and deaf communities as well as for those with physical disabilities.

*"The organisation I work for supports 'differently abled' adults. We have been receiving funding each year to carry out projects that highlight the abilities of those I support and aid people's perception of their value within the wider community."*

*"Often times accessibility is unfortunately the first thing that gets dropped when organisations find themselves with less funding than before - Huge loss of income for the organisation, also loss of income for Deaf people we employ."*

**“Accessibility is something that organisations often add late in their planning. Budget cuts mean that accessibility will be viewed as something that is unaffordable. This will mean that blind people will no longer have access to arts and culture in Auckland. The impact on community connectedness and wellbeing will be significant.”**



## ELDERLY MEMBERS OF THE ARTS COMMUNITY

Several respondents felt strongly about Auckland's elderly community being impacted by the proposed budget cuts - specifically by the loss of physical and mental health benefits of access to funded facilities. Libraries, for example, were frequently mentioned as a community service that are currently being accessed and enjoyed by thousands of senior citizens and which would be impacted by budget cuts.

*"As a former librarian, I foresee that cuts to libraries will also affect older adults - many of whom rely on libraries for social and intellectual engagement."*

*"Senior citizens who currently access the arts through various companies and practitioner delivery. This delivery of arts medicine keeps our elders well and out of hospital, and thriving not surviving. So much of this work is invisible but vital."*

## SUMMARY

The Community Feedback Survey commissioned by Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi has received strong engagement from the arts and creative community – sitting at 1068 responses.

Respondents identified a range of events, services, resources and projects that currently receive council funding and will be subject to significant change, or discontinuation under the current proposed budget. This includes numerous:

- Large scale events
- Workshops, mentoring and support programmes
- Public performances and exhibitions
- Arts infrastructure and administration costs

The majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact across a range of areas including access to the arts, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and equitable access to arts and community events.

Beyond the practical and direct implications that these cuts would have on incomes and livelihoods, the wider-reaching and more specific areas of concern for participants included:

- The impacts on groups such as Māori, Pacific Peoples, LGBTQI+ communities, migrant communities, youth, elderly and those living with disabilities.
- The creation of an economic barrier to participating and engaging with the arts – limiting access to wealthy groups and individuals.
- The impact that these cuts will have on the vibrancy and livability of Auckland.
- The effects on other industries such as tourism and hospitality.
- Impacts on resident wellbeing and community cohesion.

Future decisions regarding funding cuts to the arts, culture and creative sector would be wise to take into account the feedback from communities who will be directly impacted by these decisions. The responses received in this survey speak to the wide range of social and economic impacts that the proposed budget could trigger if implemented in its current form.

# MENTORING PROGRAMMES

AUCKLAND INTERNATIONAL BUSKERS FESTIVAL • ARTS AND HERITAGE FACILITY  
EVALUATION OF YOUTH WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

# EXHIBITIONS

MASTERCLASSES • PROUDLY ASIAN THEATRE  
SUPPORT FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

# ART DISPLAYS

MUSIC IN PARKS  
ART RESEARCH

# CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

NEURODIVERGENT INCLUSIVE EVENTS • MARKET DAYS

# ACTING WORKSHOPS

SYMPOSIUMS  
NZSL ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCE

# HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

MATARIKI EVENTS • HERITAGE FESTIVAL

# ART EXHIBITION

# YOUTH PERFORMANCE EVENTS

PRIDE FESTIVAL  
TE TĪMATANGA

ASB POLYFEST • INTERNATIONAL TOURS

WHĀNAU MĀRAMA NZ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL • AUCKLAND FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES • LIVE POETRY

# INTERNSHIPS AND SUPPORT FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

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DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES • EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

# AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

SECONDARY SCHOOLS KAPA HAKA FESTIVAL

# DANCE PERFORMANCES

