

UPPER HUTT CITY

Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy

2014



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Introduction

The Upper Hutt City Council has developed this Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy with input from two Councilor workshops, a public stakeholder focus group (a list of attendees at that workshop is attached as an appendix) and public consultation as per the Local Government Act 2002.

The strategy seeks to provide Upper Hutt City Council with a clear set of priorities for the enhancement of arts, culture and heritage facilities and initiatives across the city.

Reasons for a strategy

The arts, culture and heritage sector plays an important role in creating a vibrant, diverse and interesting community for residents and visitors alike. As well as enriching the experiences of our daily life, the sector plays an important role in our economic development through employment, entertainment and tourism.

Arts, culture and heritage contribute to a sense of identity both for individuals and the community. They are part of what makes Upper Hutt City a special place to live, contributing to community connectivity and well-being. The benefits have been categorised as contributing to individual well-being, a strong economy and a vibrant community:

Individual well-being

- Fun and enjoyment through participation
- Opportunities for lifelong learning
- Uplift of the spirit
- Contributes to holistic well-being
- Stimulation of the brain and body
- Opportunities to contribute to the community
- Providing new experiences for children and young people
- Affirms the worth of all generations

Strong economy

- Vibrant city increases business
- Attracts visitors
- Generates business and employment opportunities

Vibrant community

- Attracts new residents
- Promotes Upper Hutt as a place for families/whānau
- Instills a sense of local identity
- “Soul” of the place
- Promotes understanding, a greater appreciation of others
- Development of community pride
- Strong artisan community
- Visual enhancement of the environment
- Fosters collaboration across cultures and generations

The Council has a vision for the City developed for the Long Term Plan¹, which recognises the importance of the arts as a strong contributor to realising that vision: “We celebrate our heritage and culture, and we thrive through our diversity”. This Strategy will help us focus attention on how the sector and Council can work together to strengthen and enhance arts, culture and heritage activities, groups and institutions. It will provide a framework for making decisions on priorities for Council support to the sector and provide direction on where the focus needs to be over the next five to ten years.

Scope and definitions

There are many definitions for what we mean by the terms arts, culture and heritage. Our definition is:

- *Culture* is our being;
- *Arts* are the expression of our being;
- *Heritage* is the history of our being.

By this we mean that culture is about people, who we are, what makes us different and special and what binds us together. Culture is about the way we do things and express who we are and it can change and develop over time. We express our culture through language and literature, art and music, dance and drama, food and beverage, craft and creative industries, recreation, media and film, as well as customs, festivals and observances. Heritage is what connects the past with the present and the future through stories and traditions, objects, buildings and places and through memories captured and kept over time.

¹Upper Hutt City Long Term Plan 2012-2022 p.25 retrieved from www.upperhuttcity.com/store/doc/LTP2012-2022.pdf

Community participation in arts, culture and heritage

The Council is only one player in delivering a vibrant arts, culture and heritage experience for Upper Hutt. The City has a wide and varied range of participants and activities in the arts, culture and heritage sector. It encompasses individuals, not-for-profit organisations and commercial operators as well as the Council.

The Council recognises and acknowledges the important part played by:

- Individuals who volunteer their time and energy in a wide range of activities;
- Individuals and businesses who provide commercial services that support participation in the sector;
- Individuals, groups and societies that contribute in a wide range of activities, e.g. put on performances and events for public attendance; preserve and enhance our physical heritage, e.g. Forest and Bird;
- Educational, cultural and religious organisations that contribute rich knowledge and experiences;
- Central Government, particularly through funding support;
- Donors, both financial and in kind;
- Advocates who develop ideas for possible Council action;
- People who act as patrons and are involved in friends groups.

The role of Council

The Council has a number of roles to play in relation to fostering a strong and vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector:

ROLE	EXAMPLES
Provider of facilities and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Hutt City Library, Expressions, HAPAI Building, Parks, etc.
Provider and distributor of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community grants • Distributes grants from government Creative Communities fund • Contributes to Wellington Regional Amenities fund • Artworks, e.g. sculpture
Policy maker and planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of this Strategy
Supporter and facilitator of groups and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes staff time and resources to support events • Makes Council facilities available • Facilitates community and cultural networks • Supports and nurtures groups to achieve excellence, e.g. provides Governance and auditing advice • Provides training, runs events
Advocate and Promoter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises local talent • Celebrates excellence, e.g. Young Achievers' Awards • Makes submissions to Select Committees • Promotes Upper Hutt as a destination • Advocates for funding for particular events or organisations • Provides Community Directory
Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects the heritage and natural environment through regional and central Government legislation, rules and regulations

In fulfilling its various roles the Council contributes significantly to the two major institutions involved in arts, culture and heritage.

Upper Hutt City Library

Owned and operated by Council, the Library has received national recognition for its innovative and community-focused services. Through its resources and extensive programme offering, it actively supports the arts and fosters a sense of cultural and local identity by:

- Supporting independent lifelong learning and providing opportunities for personal creative development;
- Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage and appreciation of the arts,
- Fostering cultural diversity and understanding;
- Recognising the unique place of Tangata Whenua through the provision of dedicated resources and programmes.

The Library also plays a unique role within Upper Hutt as the only organisation to collect, preserve and facilitate access to the city's documentary heritage. Community input into content creation is also actively sought and supported through the provision of the Library's heritage database, Recollect.

Expressions Arts and Entertainment Centre

The Expressions Whirinaki Arts and Entertainment Trust is a Council Controlled Trust which provides cultural, arts and leisure opportunities for the city. The Trust is charged with managing the facility and with the advancement of, and education in, cultural activities, the arts, recreation, and leisure. Expressions is the flagship facility for arts, culture and entertainment for Upper Hutt and a major contributor to the cultural and economic wellbeing of its people. Expressions includes a 200-seat theatrical performance venue – Gillies Group Theatre which hosts live theatre, comedy, film, dance and music ranging from circus acts to classical music, multicultural concerts, local theatre and dance groups. It also houses the public gallery for the city and presents a constantly changing programme of exhibitions ranging from the very best New Zealand and international art, to local arts and craft and historical exhibitions. Expressions also houses The Professionals Recreation Hall. The Recreation Hall hosts a wide range of sporting and cultural events as well as conferences, public meetings and weddings.

The core objectives of the Trust are:

- Maximising Arts Opportunities: Educating the community about the arts and enabling the community to celebrate their cultures and identities through participation in the arts and by providing opportunities for shared community and cultural experiences.
- Maximising Centre Usage: Expressions is a draw card for visitors to the area and contributes to the economic development of the city through attracting visitors and showcasing the city, providing and supporting events and exhibitions, and encouraging and supporting local artists to share their creativity, cultural diversity and innovation with the community.
- Relationship Development: Building relationships with partners, sponsors and community groups to celebrate the identity of Upper Hutt, foster community pride and promote Upper Hutt as a great place to live.

Goals for success

It is important to remember that the Strategy is NOT a plan with specific actions that may or may not require funding. The Council, with help from the stakeholder group, has identified a number of areas where energy and effort would make a significant difference to growing and developing arts, culture and heritage in Upper Hutt. These goals provide a framework that can help direct effort and assist with prioritisation of resources, including financial resources. Under each goal there is a list of possible strategies or actions. However, it is important to note that any new initiatives which might require funding will need to go through an annual plan process before there is a commitment to deliver on them.

Goal 1: Support and enable a flourishing community led arts, culture and heritage sector

Strategies may include:

- Support the development and growth of facilities for use by community arts groups to encourage greater sharing of resources and networking;
- Provide advice and support on governance, finance and administration to ensure wise use of resources;
- Undertake an information stock take to create an arts, culture and heritage database to build local knowledge and facilitate networking.

Goal 2: Create opportunities for participation in arts, culture and heritage appealing to the city's diverse range of ages, cultures and interests

Strategies may include:

- Develop a calendar of events, including a Heritage month;
- Celebrate and recognise achievements, e.g. parades, awards etc.;
- Support and encourage the growth of existing craft fairs and the development of other artisan/craft markets;
- Greater connection between schools and the community to showcase and encourage young talent;
- Link existing infrastructure together to form a Heritage Trail - better signage, promotion etc.

Goal 3: Capitalise on our unique history to enhance Upper Hutt as a culturally rich destination and place to live

Strategies may include:

- Develop a register of heritage sites and related organisations;
- Collect and preserve the memories of the past through oral history and other media;
- The promotion, show casing and audience engagement with and around memories;
- Work with Tangata Whenua and the Orongomai Marae;
- Develop a citywide sculpture trail.

Goal 4: Recognise and develop the role that arts, culture and heritage play in sustainable city and regional development

Strategies may include:

- Support community champions for arts, culture and heritage to strengthen Council's ability to deliver the outcomes from the Strategy;
- Investigate the feasibility of rationalising and enhancing existing community facilities to derive better value from investment;
- Promote and foster partnership(s) between the business community and arts, culture and heritage for mutual benefit;
- Advocate regionally and nationally for the value that the sector delivers to encourage greater investment by government, philanthropists and business;
- Maximise participation in regional opportunities that benefit Upper Hutt.

Goal 5: Improve local identity by developing the city centre to act as a place where people can engage, respond and explore Upper Hutt's story

Strategies may include:

- Sharing Upper Hutt's culture, heritage and identity throughout public spaces and facilities to incorporate images, textures, symbols, words and stories within the City centre;
- Acknowledge the identity of the City by introducing references to Upper Hutt's natural surroundings;
- Establish set themes to ensure that future works within the City centre remain consistent and complementary over time.

Appendix

List of attendees at Stakeholder workshop

Gail Clark, Upper Hutt City Library	Sue Mecklen, Spinners and Weavers
Elaine Gousmett, Spinners and Weavers	Vale Hull, Spinners and Weavers
Etta Farmer, Spinners and Weavers	Leanne Wickham, Director Expressions
Peter O'Flaherty, Heritage Research	Jim Noice, Musical Theatre
Brian Pearce, Local Historian	Rod Evans, Totara Trust
Jade Bennett, Youthtown	Hine Poa, Orongomai Marae
Ake Lanford, Orongomai Marae	Pohswan Narayanan, Multicultural Council
Peter Richardson, Expressions Trustee	Chris Wilson, Artist
Ranea McLean, Orongomai Marae	Reid Perkins, Community Heritage Co-coordinator



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