



WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Whangarei District Council

Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy

April 2009



Creating the ultimate living environment

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Background

A project to develop an 'arts strategy' for Whangarei District was jointly commissioned by Whangarei District Council and the Whangarei Art Museum (through funding provided by Te Papa) in late 2005.

Consultants were engaged to implement a robust and extensive research and sector-based consultation programme and their findings were reviewed and discussed by a Steering Committee comprising Council staff, Councillors and representatives of various stakeholder organisations from within the sector. After several drafts a final version of 'Tapapa Toi – the Cultural Seedbed' was presented to Council for adoption.

However, as acknowledged by its authors, in its final form the strategy was not Council's, but that of the sector as a whole. It identified a number of ways that Council could give effect to the strategy, but had no mandate to bind Council to do these things. As such, it became a vision for what the sector wanted, rather than a strategy that Council could adopt as its own.

When asked to adopt the strategy, Council had little choice but to decline to do so, as doing so could be seen to committing to a course of action that had not been through Council's broader decision making processes.

With the change of Council in 2007, consideration was given to making significant changes to the strategy to address these issues. However, it was considered more appropriate to retain the integrity of Tapapa Toi as the 'voice of the sector' and utilise it as a comprehensive backdrop for a policy position for Council around each of its recommendations. Council has now formed its own Arts Policy and an integrated Action Plan for implementation that is informed by Tapapa Toi.

Acknowledgement

Whangarei District Council has formally received and endorsed Tapapa Toi and records its appreciation for the effort of the many people in developing the document and recommendations. Council has developed its policy around the recommendations of Tapapa Toi.

Introduction

The Arts, Culture, Heritage and Creative Industries 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.

It is important that we continue to make Whangarei District an attractive place to live, work and play and we should also be encouraging visitors to stay in Whangarei rather than just pass through. We need to have a diverse range of attractions of high quality, such as the planned Hundertwasser Museum, Maunu Heritage Park or Clapham's Clock Museum through to our natural environments like our walkways, Whangarei Falls and the Poor Knights, that all encourage our visitors to stay a night or two to have a unique and integrated Whangarei experience.

The creative sector needs cohesion and a common direction so organisations can plan for the future, become sustainable and develop a coordinated approach that sees us combine resources rather than compete for them. Tapapa Toi will play a significant role in providing that common vision.

We need that long term vision, but also need to acknowledge the environment that it will be implemented in. We have to accept that the implementation of this vision will be influenced by changes in the physical landscape, political changes, decisions made by parties within the sector, funding priorities and resource availability.

Policy

As acknowledged in the Creative New Zealand Strategic Plan 2007, "the arts play a vital role in the lives of New Zealanders. They challenge us, entertain us and enrich our lives. And they provide employment, skill development and opportunities for international exposure that benefits artists and our country."

Definitions

In this policy, the term 'arts' encompasses the full gamut of artistic expression, whether through our, language, culture, art, music, dance, literature, customs, religion, work, behaviours, social interaction, recreation, sport or the way we live our daily lives. Through the arts our heritage is bequeathed from generation to generation. The sector encompasses individuals, not for profit organisations, commercial operators, local bodies and crown entities.

Other definitions are outlined in Tapapa Toi section 1.1.

Philosophy

- To have a vibrant, innovative and active Arts, Culture and Heritage sector in Whangarei District.
- To create opportunities for Whangarei residents, communities, visitors and tourists to participate in a wide variety of arts, cultural and heritage activities.
- To support and develop a healthy and flourishing arts, culture and heritage sector in the Whangarei District.
- To achieve a profile nationally and internationally as a centre for the arts.
- For the arts sector to be a key driver for tourism and economic development.

This policy comprises the main recommendations of Tapapa Toi duly modified to match the resources and capabilities that Council is able to commit to this sector.

The arts are directly supported by the Whangarei District Council through libraries, multi-purpose facilities, community grants funding to arts organisations and rental subsidies. Additional to this in the culture and heritage area Whangarei District Council provides support to the sports sector and parks and reserves.

Policy Goals

Goal 1: The Precinct Concept

Council endorses the precinct concept outlined in Tapapa Toi and supports:

- The Town Basin as a heritage and culture experience precinct
- Forum North as a heritage and culture generator precinct
- The Quarry as a heritage and culture studio practice precinct

Comment:

In this context Council is endorsing these areas as general locations where activities and/or attractions of a similar nature form a natural cluster. There is no specific expectation that all new developments within a category are allocated within these precincts; it is simply

acknowledged that there are benefits in locating similar activities in close proximity to each other.

Actions:

- Where practical, Council will support development around these precincts in line with the Goal.

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 1: The Precinct Concept

That encouragement be given to Whangarei District Council's 20/20 Development to consider the alignment of the precincts identified in the HCACI Strategy in the inner city development planning they are undertaking.

Goal 2: The Heritage and Cultural Experiences Precinct – Town Basin

Council fully supports development of the Town Basin as an experience precinct.

Comment:

The Town Basin should become a “must see” component of the City, creating a big draw card both for the community and visitors.

A significant building such as the proposed Hundertwasser Museum could be a compelling experiential building and could be supported with other Town Basin buildings for the Museum and Heritage Park exhibits and those of the Whangarei Art Museum. Tangata Whenua also want a presence in this area. Clapham’s Clock Museum and Reyburn House also add a significant component of the overall experience.

Actions:

- Development of the Hundertwasser Museum.
- Utilisation of Hundertwasser or other Town Basin buildings for Whangarei Art Museum and Museum and Heritage Park exhibitions – will be developed following Hundertwasser or as an alternative (three to five years).
- Tangata Whenua will be catered for at the proposed Hihiaua Cultural Centre and within the Museums.
- Continued presence of Clapham’s Clock Museum and Reyburn House.

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 2: The Heritage and Culture Experience Precinct – Town Basin

That the Whangarei District Council consider, as part of the 20/20 development within the greater Town Basin area, the inclusion of a destination and heritage/cultural attraction with significant and compelling quality.

Goal 3: Multi-Purpose Performance Space

Council supports the development of a multi-purpose 800 seat performance space within a ten to fifteen year timeline.

Comment:

The development of a multi-events centre at Okara Park will provide some additional conference/event space, but will not satisfy the outcome outlined above.

Actions:

- The Exhibition Hall at Forum North could potentially be converted into a venue of approximately 800 tiered seats by 'squaring up' the current building and replacing the mezzanine floor with tiered retractable seating. However, due to other priorities it has not been possible to make provision for this project, which is estimated to cost around \$1.5 - \$2 million, in the draft 2009 - 2019 LTCCP.
- Community interest in re-developing the old library as a community arts centre, which could include a small performance space and boutique cinema/theatre is acknowledged, but Council has no funding allocated for any capital works required in the draft 2009 – 2019 LTCCP.

For Information:***Tapapa Toi Recommendation 3: Multi-Purpose Performance Space – 1,000-1,500 capacity***

That the Whangarei District Council gives high priority to investigating the establishment of a multi-purpose performance space.

Goal 4: Forum North Heritage and Culture – Generator Precinct

Council supports the Generator Precinct.

Comment:

The proposed new Council building adjacent to the Northland Regional Council is expected to adjoin the offices and Council Chamber, which will remain in Forum North. The proposal to relocate the Art Museum to the old library building has been rejected by Council.

The Arts Promotion Trust has commissioned a feasibility study for a project to convert the old library into a Community Arts Centre via external funding. If this eventuates, this would further reinforce the establishment of a generator in the Forum North precinct.

Actions:

- Council supports the cultural heart encompassing the new library, the old library building, the Capitaine Bougainville Theatre, the Exhibition Hall, the Whangarei Art Museum building (in Cafler Park) and the Community Arts Centre all under the Forum North Generator banner.
- It does not support decommissioning of the Council Chamber or WDC Management Suite.

For Information:***Tapapa Toi Recommendation 4: Forum North Heritage and Culture – Generator Precinct***

That the intrinsic value of the Community Arts Centre being part of the generator precinct is acknowledged and that it remain within the generator precinct if the Whangarei Art Museum moves into the Old Library Building.

That Whangarei District Council considers the use of Forum North facilities for the arts, culture and heritage sector in the event that the building is no longer required as a Civic Centre.

Goal 5: Iwi Input and Participation in the Sector

Council supports development with Iwi to ensure Maori art, culture, heritage and toanga are recognised, promoted and enhanced.

Comment:

An independent project has begun planning for a Cultural Centre on Council-owned land on Hihiaua Peninsula at the end of Lower Dent Street.

Actions:

- Develop arts and cultural protocols with Tangata Whenua.
- Support the incorporation of a relevant Maori perspective within Council projects that have an arts component.
- Encourage other ethnic and cultural groups, including new migrant communities, to articulate their identity through artistic and cultural expression.

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 5: Marae Toi – Terenga Paraoa Marae – Porowini Avenue

That further consultation take place to ensure significant input from Iwi in the development and implementation of the heritage, culture arts and culture industries strategy over the next 10 years.

Goal 6: Heritage, Culture, Arts and Creative Industry Bodies

Council is directly funding many bodies within the sector. The present Council is not prepared to increase funding or other resources above the present level, which is currently under pressure for a reduction to meet overall financial targets.

Comment:

Council may create a sector Focus Group if sufficient matters are in need of consideration – presently two Councillors are designated responsibility for this portfolio within the Finance & Support Committee and a number of other Councillors are designated representatives on various organisations.

Actions:

- Council continues its substantial financial support to the sector with grant or subsidy quantum being subject to annual review.
- Financial constraints mean no increase in finance or resources to the sector is contemplated by Council in 2009/10.

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 6: Heritage, Culture, Arts & Creative Industry Bodies

That there is a staged process towards the establishment of a structure within Council to implement the Strategy.

- A Council Focus Group be established to develop a work programme/ implementation plan for the Strategy.*
- That the Focus Group includes representatives from 20/20 and the economic development committees, including politicians and staff.*
- That an Advisory Group, comprising stakeholders from the heritage, culture, arts and creative industries sectors that the implementation of the strategy has a potential impact on, be established.*
- That Council makes the required resources available to co-ordinate the implementation/action planning of the strategy.*

Goal 7: Whangarei Museum & Heritage Park – Recreational Precinct/Experience Precinct

Council acknowledges the recreational precinct of the Museum and Heritage Park and is keen to relocate the Whangarei Art Museum and exhibitions from Whangarei Museum and Heritage Park to the Town Basin.

Comment:

Whangarei District Council may wish to move some of the Museum exhibitions and the Art Museum exhibits to a high profile site at the Experience Precinct at the Town Basin within or adjacent to the Hundertwasser Museum, creating the logical nucleus of a heritage/arts centre at the Town Basin in conjunction with a parallel Cultural Centre development. Whangarei Museum has expressed support for this concept, with a centrally based exhibition space having the potential to raise awareness and interest in a more 'in-depth' experience at the Maunu venue.

Actions:

- Develop Hundertwasser and utilise Hundertwasser or buildings in the wider Town Basin precinct for the Art Museum and Museum (three to five years).

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 7: Whangarei Museum & Heritage Park – Recreational Precinct / Experience Precinct

That a greater level of heritage promotion is "flagged" within the strategy.

That Whangarei District Council work with Whangarei Art Museum and Whangarei Museum to scope a more closely aligned shared future that is of mutual benefit to the organisations and the District.

Goal 8: CHART – Culture, Heritage & Arts Resource Trust

Council supports the concept of CHART provided it is truly representative of the whole sector, is developed by the sector rather than Council and it does not require dedicated Council staff.

Comment:

The concept of CHART as an umbrella organisation for the sector is a commendable idea. It would provide opportunities for shared services, such as administration, accommodation, etc, as sought in Goal 9 below. It would provide a single forum to deal with various stakeholders. However, to bring such diverse and often conflicting interest groups into one umbrella organisation will not be easy and may not in fact be practical.

Council would far prefer to pass the funds being expended in the sector to a single group like CHART for distribution amongst its members, but acknowledges that the diverse interests and priorities of each group may not make this practical.

Actions:

- Support the concept of CHART.
- Provide advice and limited support to the sector to develop CHART if there is sufficient demand.
- Provide Councillor participation on CHART if necessary.

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 8: CHART – Culture, Heritage & Arts Resource Trust

The need for and support in principle for the establishment of CHART is acknowledged. The structure of CHART is considered in conjunction with the establishment of a Policy Planner/Arts Advisor position within Council.

Goal 9: Community Based Not For Profit Organisations

A number of organisations are faced with problematic issues relating to governance, capacity, capability and sustainability. Whilst Whangarei District Council notes and acknowledges the problems these very valuable volunteer based organisations face, it cautions organisations to rationalise their operations and utilise shared services where possible.

Comment:

Council's financial constraints do not allow resources to assist in these areas. Council is concerned that there are too many organisations and they are spreading their resources too thinly to remain effective and functional into the future. These bodies also have different governance structures and varying relationships with Council and each other. Their future sustainability will best be realised if they work towards common long-term visions together. While Council can facilitate this process, it cannot force any specific actions, other than through funding conditions, which is not a preferred path.

Actions:

- Provide limited advice or facilitation if required.
- Council acknowledges that CHART would be a suitable vehicle to progress these issues

For Information:

Tapapa Toi Recommendation 9: Community Based Not For Profit Organisations

That sufficient resources are identified and allocated to provide on-going support to assist building the sectors' capability, capacity and sustainability to enable success.