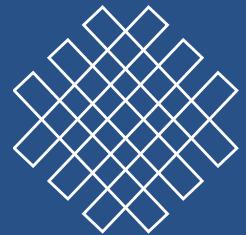


Arts Matter

A *Value for Investment* evaluation of the value of arts investment by Auckland Council in Tāmaki Makaurau

November 2025

Mihi and acknowledgement



We would like to acknowledge the many artists, community leaders, council leads and other supports of the arts in Tāmaki Makaurau for their time, knowledge and consideration in contributing to this evaluation.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

This project was commissioned and funded by Auckland Council.

This mahi was carried out by Adrian Field, Georgia Parslow, Cat Ruka and Amanda Hunter at Dovetail Consulting.



About this evaluation

Background and approach

Auckland Council plays a key role in shaping the arts and culture landscape of Tāmaki Makaurau through investments in programmes and infrastructure to support the sector. Amid growing scrutiny over public spending and critiques of the economic return and cultural value of such investments, the case for sustaining investment in arts and culture has become a pressing policy consideration.

This evaluation

Auckland Council commissioned Dovetail Consulting to carry out a Value for Investment evaluation of Auckland Council's investment in arts and culture. The purpose of this evaluation is to capture and explore the impact of Auckland Council arts and culture investments and the value they offer for Auckland communities. The evaluation draws on a series of six case studies that profile the value of arts investment by Auckland Council in Tāmaki Makaurau.

The evaluation explores the extent to which Toi Whītiki (Auckland's Arts and Culture Strategy) and other council strategies are evident through each investment, including participation by Māori and reflection of Māori aspirations for the region. It has also identified insights to support ongoing development of each project or programme, and the broader arts and culture sector.

Key Evaluation Questions

The following KEQs have guided this evaluation:

- In what ways does investment in arts deliver value for Tāmaki Makaurau, and for whom?
- To what extent does Auckland Council's arts investment demonstrate value (through the lens of case studies)?
- What have we learned for future arts investment so that it can maintain and deliver increased value?

The evaluation was underpinned by a robust design process with arts and culture leads and policy teams from Auckland Council.

Value for Investment

Value for Investment (VfI) is an evaluation system designed to assess how effectively resources are used, whether sufficient value is created, and how greater value could be achieved. The VfI system operates on four principles:

- Inter-disciplinary approaches combining evaluation and economics
- Mixed methods using quantitative and qualitative evidence
- Evaluative reasoning through explicit criteria and standards
- Participatory stakeholder engagement

The framework follows eight steps across design and evaluation phases, focusing on building shared programme understanding, establishing clear criteria, and evidence gathering through to analysis and reporting.

Value for Investment Framework



Data collection

A tailored data collection process was undertaken across the six case studies, comprising a mix of qualitative interviews, surveys, observations and documentation analyses. Data collection approaches were designed in partnership with key case study personnel and were undertaken over April to July 2025.

Theory of Change and Theory of Value Creation

A Theory of Change and a Theory of Value Creation were designed for this evaluation. These tools guided the evaluation and are displayed on the following page.

Theory of Change and Value Proposition | Value of Arts and Culture

Theory of Change

Impact	Belonging and participation		Opportunity and prosperity		Māori identity and wellbeing		Environment and cultural heritage	
Impacts for Auckland	All Aucklanders will be part of and contribute to society, access opportunities, and have the chance to develop to their full potential.		Auckland is prosperous with many opportunities and delivers a better standard of living for everyone.		A thriving Māori identity is Auckland's point of difference in the world - it advances prosperity for Māori and benefits all Aucklanders.		Aucklanders preserve, protect and care for the natural environment as our shared cultural heritage for its intrinsic value, and for the benefit of present and future generations.	
Long term outcomes	Arts and culture are built-in to Auckland's placemaking	Auckland values and invests in arts and culture	Auckland has a robust and flourishing creative economy	Auckland celebrates a unique cultural identity	All Aucklanders can access and participate in arts and culture	All Aucklanders can participate and benefit equitably	A thriving, resilient and cohesive creative sector	Tāmaki Makaurau is rich with Māori identity and culture
Impacts for the creative sector								Mātauranga Māori is valued and showcased
Medium-term outcomes	A&C are embedded as a core consideration in council decision-making processes, with consistent investment	The diversity of Auckland is celebrated and seen as integral to the city's cultural identity	Communities take ownership of cultural initiatives that are diverse and reflect shared values	Auckland is seen as a vibrant cultural hub, attracting visitors and contributing to the economy	Public and private organisations use AC generated evidence for decision-making	A thriving and diverse arts and culture workforce is established, retaining and attracting local talent	Increased community engagement, advocacy, and support for sustained funding	The A&C sector demonstrates resilience in the face of natural and economic challenges
We will know we're achieving the right things when...								A&C become a defining feature of Auckland's built environment
Early outcomes	Decision makers see the value in and prioritise arts and culture in planning and strategy	A&C activities and planning reflect the diversity of Auckland, and local identities and stories are represented	Communities actively participate in shaping the A&C sector, with a range of events and initiatives engaging diverse audiences	A&C offerings are high-quality, highly visible, and reflect the interests and needs of communities	Auckland Council funding and activity decisions are guided by robust evidence	Clear and equitable pathways exist for individuals to access career and participation opportunities	The public widely recognises and agrees on the value of A&C investment	The A&C sector has access to resources, training, and networks that strengthen its adaptability
We will know the activities are running well when...								Arts and culture are reflected in the city's infrastructure and public spaces
Activities	Policy, strategy, and framework development	Strategic investment and funding	Sector development and capacity building	Community engagement and consultation	Event and programme delivery	Infrastructure and digital tools	Research, evaluation and reporting	Advocacy and awareness
The things we do with our resources and inputs...								Partnerships and collaboration
Resources & Inputs	Strategy and mandate, strategic guidance and elected member direction	Internal resources including time and infrastructure	Knowledge and expertise including advice and research	Economic resourcing including funding and infrastructure	Communication and marketing resource	Strategic partnerships	Advocacy, including policy and sector leadership	Community knowledge, expertise and creativity
The things we need to carry out our mahi								Community resources such as financial, volunteer and infrastructure

Value Proposition

Generating social and economic value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Te Ao Māori embedded in Tāmaki Makaurau and contributes to Māori identity and wellbeing Fostering economic growth Cohesive communities Healthy, well, engaged and informed citizens Sense of place, identity and vitality
Building artistic, social and cultural capital
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mana enhancing, authentic and equitable relationships across communities and iwi in Tāmaki Makaurau Catalysing creative activity Ngā toi Māori is thriving Artistic development, storytelling, self-expression and leadership are fostered in the arts Communities are enabled to participate and engage in the arts Taonga for future generations
Stewardship of resources to enable arts & culture in Auckland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent and strategic investment that is aligned with priorities, needs and evidence Relational integrity and working in partnership Te Ao Maori and Te Tiriti honoured and prioritised Protection of mātauranga

The case studies

The following case studies have been developed to illustrate the different ways Auckland Council's investment in arts and culture is experienced across the city. Each example highlights a distinct type of investment and demonstrates how these contribute to outcomes such as community cohesion, cultural expression, sector capability, and local economic vitality. The case studies cover the following key investment areas:

01 Pride Fest Out West

A festival that celebrates Rainbow communities in West Auckland, supported through Auckland Council's investment in festivals and performances.

02 Te Manu Ka Rewa

A public artwork created by an emerging mana whenua artist, demonstrating Auckland Council's role in placemaking and embedding iwi narratives in the built environment.

03 Stand Up Stand Out

A free, region-wide secondary school performance competition, exemplifying investment in youth and talent development that nurtures emerging artists and creative pathways.

04 Basement Theatre

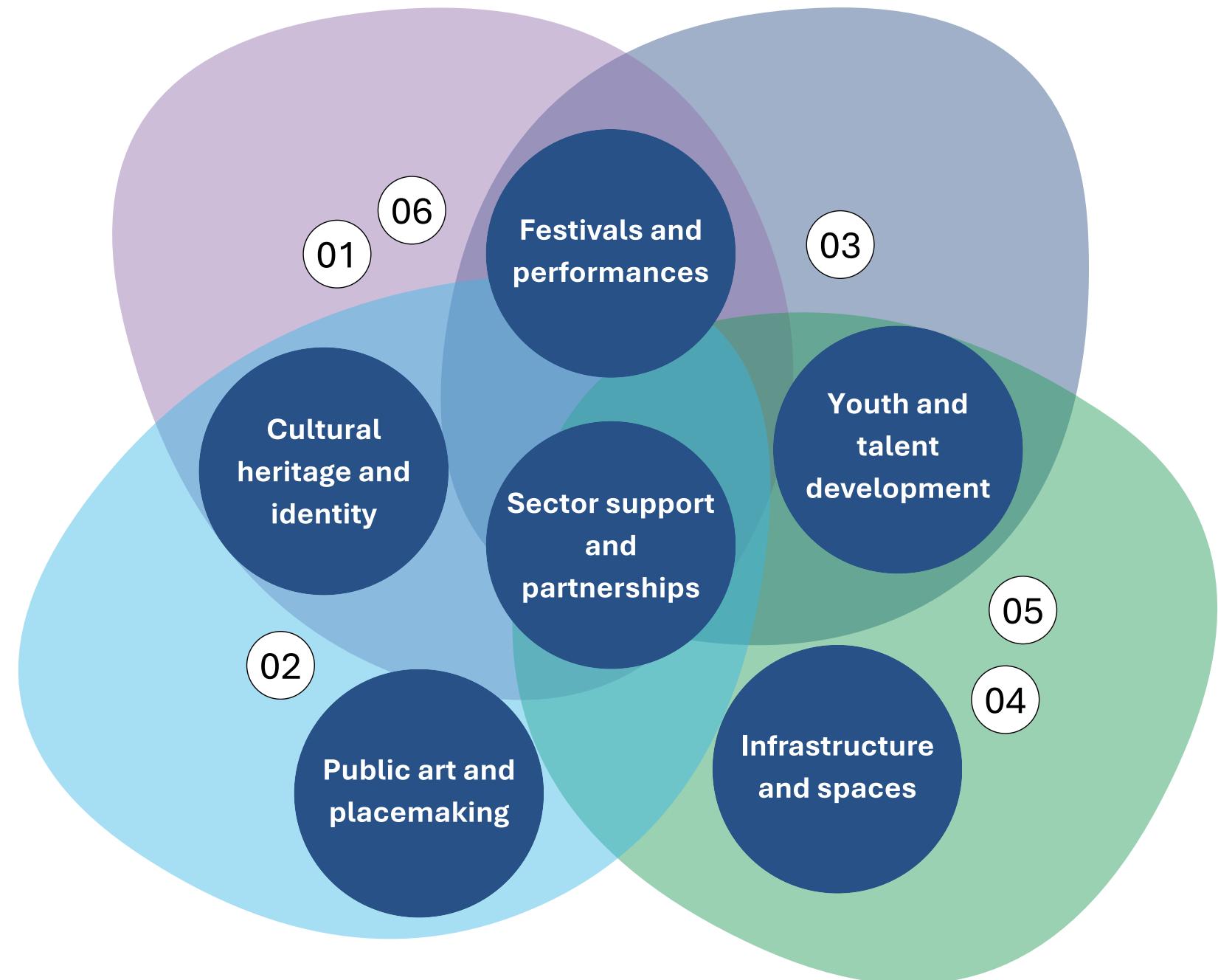
An independent theatre supported by Auckland Council venue subsidies, representing investment in spaces that sustain independent arts and provide pathways for emerging talent.

05 Te Oro

A purpose-built youth and community arts facility in Glen Innes, reflecting investment in infrastructure that provides access to creative programming, residencies, and community events.

06 Dragon Boat Festival

A celebration of Chinese tradition and an investment in culture, heritage and identity that fosters intercultural connection and belonging.



Pride Fest Out West

About

Pride Fest Out West is a community-led initiative that offers a range of events to West Auckland during Pride Month each February. The festival has been running since 2021 and takes place across 20 community venues, including libraries and neighbourhood centres across the West Auckland area.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

Financial resources, Proud Centre library infrastructure and the programming knowledge and expertise of Auckland Council staff are leveraged to deliver impact across West Auckland. The relationship between Auckland Council and Auckland Pride is a highlight of this collaboration, demonstrating true partnership in delivering rainbow programming to communities.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

Pride Fest Out West looks to build artistic, social and cultural capital within West Auckland communities by creating safe spaces where all communities are welcome to showcase and engage in the arts. The event amplifies Rainbow artists and small businesses and brings communities together to create social connection as a result of shared experiences.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

Pride Fest Out West fosters local economic growth by offering opportunities for community partners to share their small businesses and create connection across the community. The significant value delivered by the festival is its contribution to supporting residents to be informed and engaged citizens in their communities. By embedding Rainbow visibility in everyday spaces, building networks of support, and affirming diverse communities, Pride Fest Out West strengthens the social fabric of West Auckland.



Te Manu Ka Rewa

About

Te Manu Ka Rewa is a semi-permanent public art sculpture located at Manurewa Library in South Auckland. It was created by emerging Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua mandated artist Jadyn Flavell. *Te Manu Ka Rewa* took two years to come to fruition and was unveiled in December 2024 with a dawn ceremony and blessing from Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

Te Manu Ka Rewa demonstrates a partnered approach to public arts investment, with Auckland Council providing financial, in-kind, and capacity-building support alongside the cultural leadership and creative contributions of Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua. Together, these investments highlight the depth of relationship-building and often unseen layers of support required to realise meaningful and enduring public artworks.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

The commissioning process for *Te Manu Ka Rewa* shows how council investment can build artistic, social, and cultural capital by strengthening an emerging artist's practice, deepening iwi storytelling, and embedding whakapapa into the public realm. The artistic process itself developed capability for Jadyn and his collaborators and also created a lasting expression of *toi Maaori* that affirms mana whenua identity and presence in place.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

The new public artwork exemplifies a high-quality and highly visible arts and culture offering that genuinely reflects the needs and aspirations of the Manurewa community. As part of Ngā Kaupapa here Toi Tūmatanui, Auckland Council's Public Art Policy, the sculpture brings cultural specificity and depth to its surroundings, turning a public space into a site for storytelling, reflection, and intergenerational exchange.



Blessing by Ngaati Te Ata Waiohua Dec 24' photos by David St George

Stand Up Stand Out

About

Stand Up Stand Out (SUSO) is an annual secondary school performance competition led by Auckland Council, welcoming a wide range of performing arts disciplines. In operation for over 35 years, SUSO has grown into a regional programme that remains deeply rooted in South Auckland, with competition heats held in Auckland Council venues across the city.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

SUSO demonstrates how relatively modest but well-targeted council investment can be maximised through strong partnerships, enabling high production value and meaningful pathways for young artists. Its growth over time reflects a responsive design approach that keeps the programme relevant to the evolving interests of rangatahi.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

SUSO builds artistic, social, and cultural capital by bridging secondary education with the creative industries, providing young people with professional-level experiences and networks often unavailable in school settings. The programme develops artistic skill and confidence while also fostering community, inclusivity, and pathways into creative careers for the next generation of artists.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

SUSO's alumni culture contributes to Auckland's broader cultural vitality by fostering pride, visibility, and long-term engagement in young musicians. As part of Auckland's designation as a UNESCO City of Music, SUSO reinforces the city's commitment to preserving and investing in its musical and cultural identity and brings communities together to celebrate artistic expression.



Band Category performers Rumpus Machine at Stand Up Stand Out Finals 2024



Group Vocals Category performers Toka Tu Moana Choir at Stand Up Stand Out Finals 2024

Basement Theatre

About

Basement Theatre is an artist-led multidisciplinary performing arts venue located in the central Auckland arts district. Originally developed by a group of young creatives, Basement Theatre began as a grassroots initiative in 2009 and quickly grew into a hub for artists and producers. Basement Theatre currently runs roughly 160 productions each year.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

Basement Theatre is sustained through a number of discrete investment streams, including Auckland Council and other creative funders. Basement Theatre partners with a diverse range of organisations to enhance its offerings for both artists and audiences and utilises an equity programming approach, platforming urgent, experimental, and diverse work within the arts ecosystem.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

Basement Theatre fills a gap in the post-tertiary ecosystem as one of the few venues in Tāmaki Makaurau designed to bridge the transition from graduate to professional creative practice. The venue acts as a hub for artistic collaboration and provides welcoming and inclusive spaces for audiences and artists alike.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

Basement Theatre has a reputation as a home for marginalised and experimental artistry that creates space for a broader range of social and cultural perspectives and experiences to be presented on stage. The theatre is regarded as a vital arts institution in Tāmaki Makaurau, contributing to a more liveable, diverse, and creatively rich city through accessible, community-focused programming. Described by stakeholders as a “radical” initiative, Basement Theatre is seen as a reliable presence as broader urban changes unfold in the city centre.



The Slab/Dirty Passport Poetry Show - photo by Ankita Singh



Summer/Pride - The Butterfly that Flew into the Rave - photo by Jinki Cambronero

Te Oro

About

Te Oro is a multi-functional rangatahi and community arts facility located in the heart of Glen Innes town centre, East Auckland. The facility offers a wide range of creative offerings, including visual art exhibitions and installations, performing arts and theatre spaces, a fully equipped music studio and recording suite, and regular workshop programming.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

Te Oro demonstrates good stewardship of resources by leveraging Auckland Council funding, staff expertise, and community partnerships to maximise impact for Glen Innes and the wider region. Its collaborative approach with mana whenua, local organisations, and Auckland council teams ensures investment is shared, responsive, and anchored in community aspirations.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

Te Oro builds artistic, social, and cultural capital by nurturing emerging arts leaders, strengthening the practice and networks of local artists, and providing culturally grounded programmes that reflect and affirm community identity. Designed by and for Māori and Pacific communities, it is recognised as a space that reflects the identity and values of its local community.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

Te Oro enhances the built environment of Glen Innes through its distinctive, culturally grounded design, which serves as both a community facility and a work of art that strengthens local identity and contributes to the transformation of public spaces through art. Its presence supports vibrancy in the town centre while also generating economic opportunities for local businesses, vendors, and community partners.



Dragon Boat Festival

About

The Dragon Boat Festival is a traditional Chinese cultural festival that is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, typically in May or June. It commemorates the patriotic poet Qu Yuan with dragon boat races and the eating of zongzi (sticky rice dumplings). The day-long celebration includes cultural performances, arts and crafts and zongzi demonstrations.

Working in partnership to deliver value through investment

The Dragon Boat Festival was delivered through a partnership between the Chinese Association of West Auckland, Auckland Council and Corban Estate Arts Centre (CEAC). With modest financial investment leveraged from multiple sources, the festival created a significant cultural celebration and laid the groundwork for the delivery of future events.

Building artistic, social and cultural capital

The Dragon Boat Festival brings Chinese traditions, food, and art into a public setting where people of all backgrounds can participate and learn. The festival is a platform for artists and performers to share their cultural art forms with large audiences, while also creating opportunities for older and younger generations to connect through shared celebration.

Delivering value for the people of Tāmaki Makaurau

The Dragon Boat Festival fosters intercultural connection by creating opportunities for West Auckland residents of many backgrounds to experience and celebrate Chinese traditions together. Its inclusive approach encourages curiosity, participation, and a stronger sense of belonging across communities.



Value of Arts Investments

Together, the case studies demonstrate how Auckland Council support creates value beyond the immediate activities undertaken. These benefits are social, cultural, economic, and civic, contributing to the wellbeing of Aucklanders and to the city's identity as a place where creativity is celebrated.

Festivals and performance

Festivals and performance opportunities, such as celebrations and competitions, bring communities together at scale. Being temporary in nature means that they can be run within a scoped timeframe, enabling delivery through collaboration with interested communities. Both Pride Fest Out West and the Dragon Boat Festival are examples of festivals that were brought together through collaborative efforts with specific communities (Auckland Pride Festival and the Waitakere Chinese Association). When designed in true partnership with communities, festivals can bring diverse communities together and create platforms for the sharing of significant cultural stories. Festivals and performance events can also create opportunities to contribute to local economies by drawing people to towns or suburban centres, creating demand and promotion pathways for small businesses.

Rangatahi and talent development

Rangatahi and talent development opportunities, such as performance, mentoring, leadership development and investments in infrastructure, focus on nurturing current and future artistic talent. Four of the case studies in this evaluation worked in the rangatahi and talent development space: Basement Theatre, Stand Up Stand Out, *Te Manu Ka Rewa* and Te Oro. All of these examples created opportunities for emerging artists to develop their talent and worked to build or support sustainable pipelines into arts careers. This was seen as a way to retain talent in New Zealand by offering viable pathways for artists to build sustainable careers and continue contributing to arts and culture in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Infrastructure and spaces

Investment in infrastructure and spaces creates the foundational architecture for artists to develop and showcase their talent. Auckland Council has invested in custom-built infrastructure in the case of Te Oro, with the purposeful and inclusive design meaning it is a well-used venue for artistic design and performance. Basement Theatre is an example of subsidisation of independent arts infrastructure, which enables the organisation to provide affordable access to performing spaces and production support.

Investment in infrastructure and spaces also enables the development of artistic communities by creating hubs where people can come together and collaborate, share ideas and build lasting relationships. Venues like Basement and Te Oro create safe environments where communities can gather, networks can be established and strengthened, and cross-pollination can take place. For some venues, such as Basement, the spaces draw communities into public places, creating the potential to boost activity for surrounding cafes, restaurants, and small businesses.

Public art and placemaking

Investment in public art and transforming public spaces through art, as a result, creates lasting taonga that reflects the values and communities of local communities. Works such as *Te Manu Ka Rewa* show how public art can embed whakapapa, mātauranga, and iwi narratives into Auckland's built environment, making Māori identity visible in everyday spaces. These works can contribute to a stronger sense of place, giving communities landmarks that reflect who they are. Public art also enhances the look and feel of public spaces, making town centres, libraries, and parks feel welcoming and authentic. By placing art where people live, work, and gather, council investment ensures that creative expression is accessible to all Aucklanders, not only those who visit galleries or performance venues. These works invite reflection and spark conversation while strengthening pride and the cultural distinctiveness of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Cultural heritage and identity

Investing in a range of artforms and events that promote cultural heritage preservation and expressions of identity support the participation of specific communities and allows diverse cultural artforms to be shared with the public in ways that are meaningful, celebratory and accessible. Centring the diverse communities of Tāmaki Makaurau ensures broad representation across the city's arts offerings. Audiences and participants throughout the region are able to be exposed to ideas, expressions, and art forms beyond what they encounter in their everyday networks. Festivals and public art forms that celebrate specific cultural traditions help to strengthen social cohesion by promoting the public visibility of different cultural groups. Events like the Dragon Boat Festival offer safe and welcoming places for cultural expression and connection across migrant communities and encourage opportunities for curiosity and cultural education for local residents from other cultural backgrounds.

Performance of investments

In collaboration with Auckland Council during the design phase of this evaluation, three key value areas were identified for assessing Auckland Council's investment in arts and culture. Each case study was treated as data and was used to make assessments about Auckland Council's stewardship of resources, contribution to building artistic, social and cultural capital and generation of social and economic value. Assessments were made against the standards from "below expectations" through to "excellent".

Stewardship of resources to enable arts and culture

Strategic allocation of funding through diverse programming, partnership co-investment, robust data practices, and collaborative relationships that sustainably support Auckland's arts ecosystems.

Building artistic, social, and cultural capital

Fostering Māori identity through iwi partnerships, developing artistic leadership and career pathways, enabling community participation and co-design, and preserving taonga for future generations.

Generating social and economic value

Creating jobs and economic growth through Māori-led initiatives, fostering community cohesion and cross-cultural connections, and activating spaces that celebrate local communities and promote civic engagement.

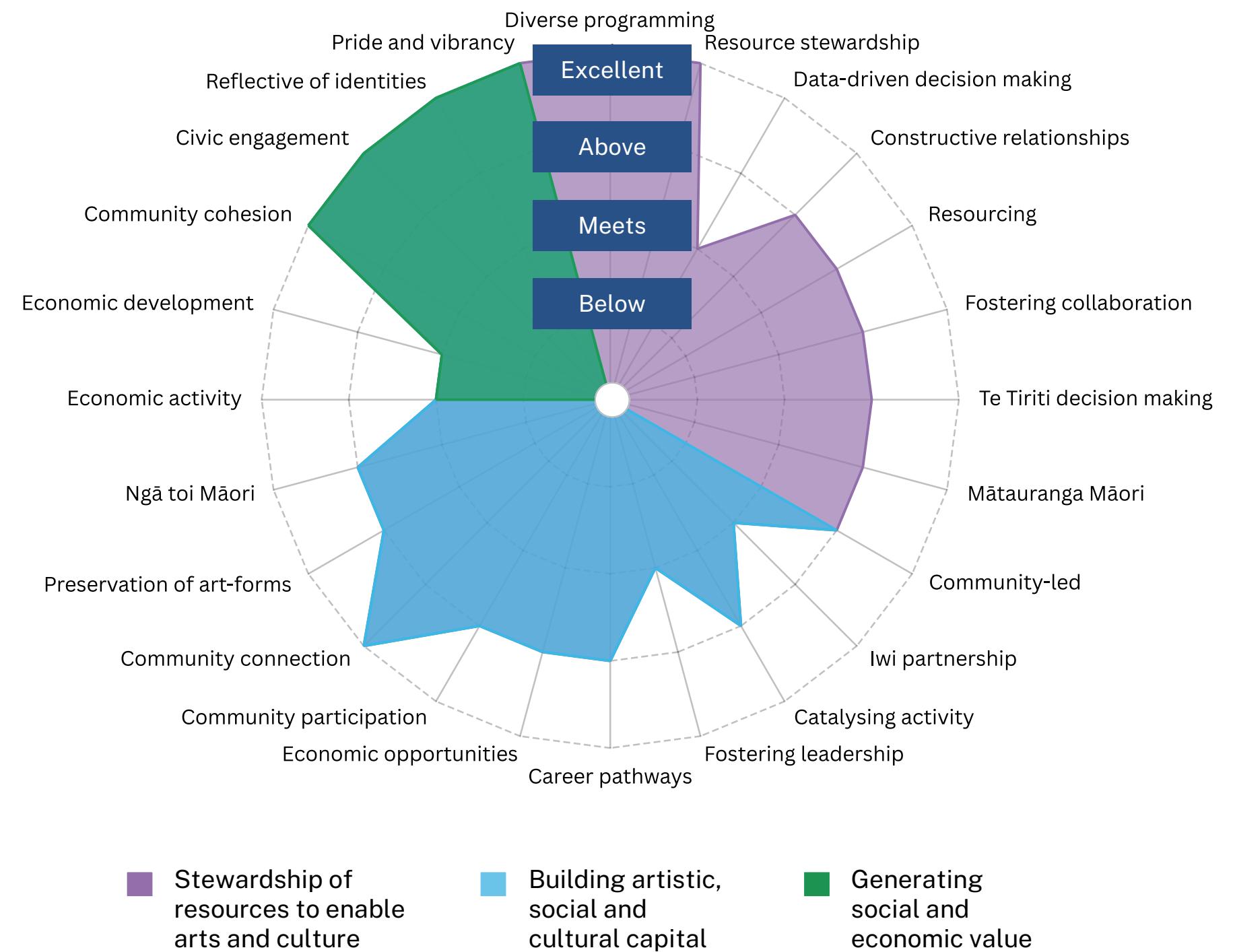
Investment performance

The adjacent figure demonstrates consistently strong performance across all case studies. Every programme meets baseline expectations, with the majority either demonstrating a clear pathway to excellence or already achieving excellent outcomes against the established criteria.

Future applications

Beyond this evaluation, these criteria will provide a useful framework for assessing value for future arts and culture investments.

Visual overview of Auckland Council investment performance



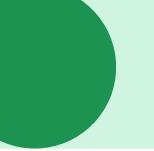
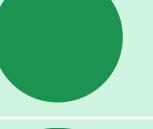
Stewardship of resources to enable arts and culture in Auckland

Criteria topic	Below expectations	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent	Comments
Transparent and strategic investment that is aligned with priorities, needs and evidence					
Programming activities that reflect Auckland's diversity					Case studies collectively show a strong representation of the diversity of Auckland, designed and delivered with community mandate and participation.
Resource use for intended purposes, co-investment and partnerships					Case studies collectively draw on co-investment, strategic partnerships and in-kind leveraging of resources within and outside Council to support the delivery of their programmes.
Data collection approaches					There is evidence of some data collection across all case studies, but approaches are generally inconsistent. One case study had built their own reasonably well-developed data collection processes; however, most could benefit from support to understand what to collect and how.
Relational integrity and working in partnership					
Constructive and mutually beneficial relationships					There are generally good and cohesive relationships between Auckland Council and case study sites and alignment of investment with Council goals. This is particularly evident with lead contacts within council.
Provision of funding and support to enable arts to thrive					Funding enables activities to take place, but the extent to which other forms of support such as capacity-building and brokering of relationships and other resources are visible vary across case studies and tend to be developed within case study sites, rather than as a discreet resource investment from Auckland Council.
Council contribution to relationships and partnerships					There are three clear exemplars of genuine commitment to Tiriti-centred practice including in partnership with mana whenua, and culturally grounded practice. Others could benefit from clear guidance from Auckland Council around what it means to be guided by Te Tiriti in practice.
Te Tiriti-based practice					
Te Tiriti guiding and underpinning design					There are three clear exemplars of genuine commitment to Tiriti-centred practice including in partnership with mana whenua, and culturally grounded practice. Others could benefit from clear guidance from Auckland Council around what it means to be guided by Te Tiriti in practice.
Protection of mātauranga					
Utilising and uplifting mātauranga, and mana-enhancing and culturally grounded practice					There are three clear exemplars of mana-enhancing and culturally grounded practice. Others prioritise cultural responsiveness in a variety of ways, which includes being responsive to the specific communities they are looking to uplift.

Building artistic, social, and cultural capital

Criteria topic	Below expectations	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent	Comments
Mana enhancing, authentic and equitable relationships across communities and iwi in Tāmaki Makaurau					
Council funding or co-designing activities or supporting community led design					There are some strong examples of community-focused design and led initiatives. Strengthening community feedback systems will ensure the continuity of community voice in planning and delivery in other investment sites.
Council consulting and partnering with iwi					Clear examples of engaging or partnering with iwi are evident in some investments. The extent to which this followed through across all sites is an area where council can provide further support.
Catalysing creative activity					
Enabling initiatives and providing capability and capacity support					There are some clear examples of catalysing activity through council-funded and run initiatives. In instances where council is providing partial funding, there is an opportunity to provide capability and capacity building.
Ngā toi Māori is enabled and fostered and Tamaki Makaurau is rich with Māori identity and culture					
Showcasing mātauranga Māori authentically and grounded in te reo Māori					There were three excellent exemplars of authentic showcasing of mātauranga Māori. Some organisations are actively working towards this, while others may need additional support to feel confident working in this space.
Artistic development, self-expression, resilience and leadership are fostered in the arts					
Fostering and cultivating arts leadership					There are examples of fostering and cultivating leadership indirectly through artist development and residencies. There remains an opportunity to strengthen future investments with intentional leadership investment.
Supporting arts career pathways and developing creative workforce					There are exemplars in which organisations are supporting or providing platform for artists' development and brokering network relationships which may lead to future career opportunities.
Pathways to employment and economic opportunities					There are some economic opportunities that are created through investments, specifically relating to supporting small businesses, vendors and stall holders through events and festivals. Two case studies contribute to building the foundations for future careers in the arts, which may also contribute to economic benefits.
Communities are enabled to participate and engage in the arts and appreciate its value					
Community participation, co-design and leadership					Community-led exemplars are evident in some case studies of which draw heavily on local knowledge and community voice to deliver and adapt initiatives.
Community connection, shared and inclusive spaces that celebrate local identity					All case studies are strong examples of community connection, uplifting and bringing together diverse communities and artforms that make up Auckland.
Taonga for future generations					
Preserving and celebrating taonga in dynamic ways that are accessible and relevant					There are some clear examples across case studies of intergenerational, diverse programming that supports cultural identity including through the use of storytelling, language, dance and ngā toi Māori.

Generating social and economic value

Criteria topic	Below expectations	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent	Comments
Te Ao Māori embedded in Tāmaki Makaurau					
Ngā Toi Māori features, and/or is produced and maintained by Maori					There are some strong examples of centring Māori ownership, design and participation, testament to the engagement with mana whenua and intentional use of ngā toi Māori in design for these examples.
Fostering economic growth					
Generating economic activity, and/or an economic driver that creates jobs and enables organisational growth and development					Case study sites are a catalyst and platform for some artists to gain economic value and advance careers; but is not a core or distinct outcome that can be attributed directly to case study programmes.
Benefits for associated sectors and integrated into economic development strategies					There are some general economic benefits from artistic activity although these are disparate and not a primary driver of activity across all case study sites.
Cohesive communities					
Creating connection across communities					All case studies show strong evidence of community connection, offering exposure to new ideas and artforms as well as intergenerational and cultural connection across communities.
Healthy, well, engaged and informed citizens					
Encouraging community conversations and tools for fostering civic engagement					There are key exemplars of investment resulting in starting community conversations and creating tools that foster civic engagement and these were seen to be effective.
Communities feel seen, heard, and valued in how arts and culture reflect their communities					All case studies are firmly grounded in and reflect and represent their communities.
Healthy, well, engaged and informed citizens					
Arts and culture initiatives celebrate local communities, activate public spaces, and foster belonging, pride, and vibrancy					All case studies are seen to add vibrancy to their communities, and offer a range of value that supports, fosters and showcases art of various forms in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Lessons for future investment

This section answers the final key evaluation question: *What have we learned for future arts investment so that it can maintain and deliver increased value?*

Enabling success

Based on insights gathered through discussions with each case study site, a range of reflections emerged regarding the nature and scale of Auckland Council's investment in their respective contexts. The key investment features that enable success are:

- **Diverse investment types:** The types of support and investments made by the council in arts and culture programmes are multifaceted beyond operational funding, and include staff resources and support, lease of venues and facilities, rent subsidies and capability building support. A mix of resources and investments supported in achieving value from investments.
- **Partnerships and relationships:** Sustaining strong, mutually beneficial relationships with programme partners remains key to leveraging investments, and where brokering connections with other organisations or parts of council can be highly beneficial.
- **Co-investment:** Co-investment is a key enabler for arts organisations in the region. Auckland Council funding is often a critical funding stream, but the reality for arts organisations is that their sustainability, even at a project level, often depends on securing funding from a range of sources.
- **Cultural responsiveness:** Cultural responsiveness and mana-enhancing practices have been an important foundation for success, across organisations, events and venues. These provide a welcoming and supportive environment for different cultures, including Māori, to undertake their activities, art and performance.
- **Community co-design:** Activities and venues that drew on community input and co-design also demonstrated a high level of cohesion and participation with their communities (whether ethnic, geographic or communities of interest). All case studies are strong examples of community connection.
- **Ngā toi Māori and Māori ownership:** It was evident in case studies that drew on ngā toi Māori that centring Māori ownership and design is a key enabler of art that resonates with and has the support of wider hapori Māori and iwi.

Some of the key opportunities to improve

Leveraging core funding to support growth and innovation: Some case study sites have observed that core operational funding had remained static over time and, in some cases, was insufficient to respond to growing demand and scale. Opportunities exist to ensure operational investment keeps pace with programming costs.

Supporting newer initiatives with capacity development, system navigation and administrative support: In the case of newly established programmes and community-led projects working with council for the first time, artists experienced challenges with limited dedicated project support. Resourcing and additional support is an area for development.

Bridging creative practice, iwi relationships and Council systems: Projects such as *Te Manu Ka Rewa* illustrate the ongoing challenge of working between tikanga-based, iterative creative processes and the time-bound, often rigid structures of council systems. Co-design and administrative support opportunities could support with this in future.

Ensuring capability within Council to broker sector relationships: The success of several initiatives was often attributed to the skills, relationships, and reputations of key team members which may have implications for sustainability of programmes as they change. Formalising the brokering of sector relationships was seen as important.

Guidance to support Te Tiriti-centred practice: Although many case study sites demonstrated a commitment to honouring Te Tiriti, there was uncertainty for some sites around what it means to resource, govern, and partner in a truly Te Tiriti-centred way. Developing clear, practical guidance for programme partners will support this.

Building pathways into arts employment and leadership: While many programmes provide creative industry exposure, capability building and connection to creative communities, there were limited bridges into paid long-term employment or arts leadership development pathways, which is an area for future growth.



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