



Creative Bay of Plenty

1 JANUARY - 31 JUNE 2026

PROGRESS REPORT

TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL
WESTERN BAY DISTRICT COUNCIL
TECT
BAYTRUST

Photo: Tuatara Collective's theatre performance 'For The Fallen'

Creative Bay of Plenty

Progress Against Key Performance Indicators



NGĀ TOI MĀORI

Ururangi: Navigating
Creativity - Q&A Panel
- shaping our creative future



26

public art or
exhibition projects



6

capability building
workshops
delivered



WESTERN BAY MINI ARTS GRANTS

11 grants worth \$20,000
approved



50

meetings each
month with
creatives and
organisations



44,075 newsletters delivered
239 events/workshops promoted
78 profiles on Creative Directory



37

sector events
and activities
attended



74

interactions within
2026 mentor scheme



\$82,000

in scholarships and
awards delivered



6

events hosted to
engage the sector



SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

2% on Facebook
6% on Instagram



QUILTS FOR HITACHI

New exhibition opportunity
including 15 photographic
artworks



6,622 PEOPLE & 2,788
ORGANISATIONS
on CRM database

Visit www.creativebop.org.nz for more!

creative bay of plenty

PROGRESS REPORT

Tauranga City Council
Western Bay District Council
TECT & BayTrust

1 January to 30 June 2026

Introduction

Creative Bay of Plenty champions the growth of arts, culture, and creativity across Tauranga and the Western Bay, recognising their vital role in enriching community life. The sector not only boosts regional economic prosperity but also strengthens social cohesion, sparks innovation, and enhances wellbeing for individuals and communities alike. By supporting creative practitioners and organisations, we help unlock the full potential of the region's cultural assets, ensuring that arts and creativity remain central to vibrant, connected, and resilient communities.

This report highlights our progress against the KPIs outlined in our funding agreements with Tauranga City Council, Western Bay District Council, TECT and BayTrust. Covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2026, it showcases the programmes and services we have delivered under the following four strategic pillars, demonstrating how our work supports artists, strengthens the arts sector, and contributes to communities throughout the sub-region:

- Connecting:** We develop meaningful relationships to connect artists, audiences, funders and stakeholders so that knowledge, networks, creative projects, and resources can be shared.
- Capability Building:** We unlock capacity, capability and potential, facilitating pathways and building skills and confidence to enable artists and the wider community to grow and achieve their goals.
- Advocacy:** We strategically and intentionally advocate the value, relevance and influence of arts, culture and creativity to decision makers, community leaders, funders and the wider community.
- Promotion:** We profile and tell the stories of creative people and cultural experiences to amplify arts, culture and creativity, building greater interest, awareness, and audiences.

Highlights & Opportunities

The Creative Bay of Plenty team delivered a strong programme of activities over the six-month reporting period, while also designing and rolling out new initiatives. Key highlights are outlined below, with additional detail provided in the 'Progress Against KPIs' section:

CREATIVE BAY OF PLENTY CHARITABLE TRUST INCORPORATED

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- Demand for our expertise in public art continues to grow, reflecting our established reputation for delivering high-quality projects that create meaningful public spaces and opportunities for artists. We provide end-to-end project support, including developing artist briefs, managing procurement and selection processes, facilitating agreements with property owners, and advising on the cultural narratives and storytelling that give public artworks a strong sense of place and identity. Over the past two years, we have supported the delivery of 64 public art and exhibition opportunities, including 26 projects completed in the last six months alone.
- We developed the programme for *Ururangi - Navigating Creativity*, a Matariki event focused on shaping the creative future of Tauranga Moana through a curated Q&A session exploring Māori artistic voices in a rapidly changing world. This includes the impact of global influence, cultural identity, technology and AI, and the future of the arts sector in Aotearoa, and is being held on 1 July 2026.
- Our tailored mentoring programme for 2026 supported 12 creatives through 74 one-on-one mentoring sessions over the first six months of the year. Each participant received a customised package of support, including access to paid mentors and experienced practitioners in their artform, guidance from our team, and specialist expertise in areas such as website development, online sales and business capability. The programme continues to deliver measurable outcomes, accelerating the development of participants' creative practice and professional skills. Delivering the programme over a more condensed timeframe has proven particularly effective, maintaining momentum, strengthening engagement, and helping participants stay focused on achieving their goals.

Challenges & Risks:

Our challenges and risks have not changed much over the last four years, at both a local and national level, however we have found the last 18 months considerably more challenging for local artists and creatives.

- *At a national level:* While the coalition government has taken a positive step by developing a creative sector strategy, there has been no increase in funding through Creative New Zealand over the last 20 years. The average proportion of applications to Creative New Zealand's funding streams that are successful is just 10%, with only 2% of that funding supporting activity in the Bay of Plenty region.
- In addition, cuts to central government services, coupled with mounting pressure on philanthropic organisations, have further marginalised public investment in the arts, which is increasingly viewed as less critical than sectors such as health and social services.
- *At an organisational level:* Our 43% reduction in funding from Tauranga City Council from 2022/23 has resulted in a substantial reliance on reserves to sustain the delivery of our annual programme of work. Unfortunately, our proposal to Tauranga City Council's review of partnership agreements in May 2026 was unsuccessful in securing additional investment. Instead, the review resulted in a further 10% reduction in funding across the partnership group, creating additional financial pressure for Creative Bay of Plenty and other organisations delivering vital community services.
- *At an artist / creative level:* Our engagement with local artists and creatives has highlighted two key challenges being experienced on an ongoing basis:
 1. The high cost of living is significantly impacting creatives, who often have irregular income and need to depend on part-time work outside the arts sector to survive. We continue to cancel planned workshops due to lack of registrations and attendance at ticketed networking events has also decreased, which has been largely attributed to the current economic situation.

2. The lack of exhibition spaces is a considerable challenge for visual artists, which make up the majority of creatives in our community. While they are innovative in the development of opportunities such as BOP Open Studios and collaborating to deliver group exhibitions, getting their work in front of audiences remains a challenge.

Progress Against Key Performance Indicators

1. Advocacy & Leadership

TOI MOANA ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Demand for our support in the delivery of public art projects continues to grow, and we have established a strong capability in this area. We provide comprehensive support from start to finish, including the development of artist briefs, management of artist procurement processes, assessment of submissions, facilitation of agreements with property owners, and advice on the cultural narratives and storytelling that underpin successful public art commissions. Over the last two years we've been involved in delivering 64 public art or exhibition opportunities, with 26 projects taking place in the last six months. Some of the highlights include:
 - The successful delivery of a large-scale mural on Wharf Street, at the gateway to Durham Street and on the land commonly known as the TV3 site. This strategically significant location sits adjacent to Te Manawataki o Te Papa. Over the past eight months, we led all aspects of the project, including developing the artist brief, coordinating the artist callout process, securing funding, and managing delivery. Despite several unforeseen challenges, the project was completed successfully and within budget on 16 June.
 - The curation of the *Threads of Connection* exhibition at TOLO [The Old Library at Ōmokoroa], bringing together works by internationally renowned Indigenous artist Darcy Nicholas alongside artists from Tauranga Moana and Ōmokoroa. The Matariki themed exhibition, held during June, celebrated connections between people, place, culture, and creativity, showcasing a diverse range of artistic perspectives and practices.
 - Nine new community public art projects and exhibitions, through funding provided by the Creative Communities Scheme [Western Bay], our Western Bay Mini Arts Grants fund [delivered in partnership with TECT], and private commissions. These projects were either progressed or completed during the reporting period.
 - Our continued partnership with Accessible Properties, where we explore opportunities for integrating original artwork into their new residential developments, helping to create welcoming, vibrant spaces that reflect the identity and character of local communities. Over the reporting period, we have sourced and engaged artists to develop and deliver artworks for developments in Merivale and Greerton, supporting both creative practitioners and placemaking outcomes.
 - Partnering with LOA Law to deliver a Wonder Women event in February, attended by more than 130 people. The evening celebrated the achievements of local women in the arts, featuring three visual artists who shared insights into their creative practice, career pathways, and artistic journeys. Their work was also showcased in a curated exhibition, providing attendees with an opportunity to engage directly with the artists and their work.
 - Providing advice and support to a community group in Ōmokoroa developing a series of

interpretive storyboards for the Ōmokoroa Bar-tailed Godwit / Kuaka Festival, to be held on 15 November. This included facilitating connections with Pirirākau hapū, which is now actively collaborating on the project, and helping to strengthen the cultural narrative and local significance of the initiative.

- Supporting Public Art Ōmokoroa in the development of funding applications for their Symposium at the Point sculpture exhibition, which will form part of the 2026 Bay of Plenty Garden & Art Festival. This assistance has helped position the project to attract investment and enhance opportunities for artists and community engagement within the Western Bay and Tauranga.
 - Working with a social enterprise to commission a ngā toi Māori artist to develop creative concepts and design collateral for the launch of a new project. This collaboration enhanced the project's creative vision and delivered a meaningful paid commission for a Māori creative practitioner.
 - Attending the launch of the Project Parore mural at its new site in Katikati in March. The organisation focuses on restoring freshwater quality, habitats, and biodiversity in the northern Tauranga Harbour region. They heard about our services at a WBOPDC hui and we supported them to develop a successful funding application. Increasingly, organisations are seeking our guidance after recognising the value of art in promoting and communicating work across areas such as the environment, the social sector, and health and wellbeing
 - The early stages of planning the commission of new artworks in collaboration with Envirohub, Downtown Tauranga, and The Kollektive co-working space.
 - Facilitating connections between local visual artists and Tauranga Club to create opportunities for artists to showcase and sell their work through a rotating exhibition programme. This initiative has the potential to evolve into a broader arts engagement programme, including artist talks, exhibition openings, and other events that connect artists with new audiences.
- We partnered with TECT to deliver two rounds of the Western Bay Mini Arts Grants, receiving 46 applications overall. Capped at \$2k each, 11 grants worth \$20k were approved. They included a number of public murals, performance opportunities for young musicians, a free screen acting workshop for rangatahi, a ukutangi [clay sound vessels] wānanga for tamariki, storytelling workshops around the Te Arawa waka landing story at Maketu, a youth brass band workshop weekend, and a series of kaupapa Māori led creative wānanga for takatāpui that whakapapa to Tauranga Moana.
 - We provided two submissions during the reporting period: to Creative New Zealand's Equity in the Arts 2026 Draft Policy and to Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Draft Annual Plan 2026-27 and Long Term Plan Amendment.
 - During the reporting period, we provided seven letters of support for arts practitioners and creative organisations. These letters highlighted the cultural, social, and economic value of arts, culture, and creativity, and were used for a range of purposes, including funding applications, partnership proposals, and project development initiatives.
 - We worked with Acorn Foundation, PANNZ [Performing Arts Network of New Zealand], and FAME Trust to distribute additional funding into the performing arts sector, benefitting both local and national organisations. These will be annual distributions.

- We are a member of RANA [Regional Arts Network Aotearoa], a leadership group of regional arts agencies from around the country. RANA has a focus on advocacy, developing strategic relationships, sector infrastructure, building capability, and engaging as a sector with central government ministers and ministries.
- During the reporting period we responded to a Creative New Zealand EOI as the first stage in establishing a regional delivery model for arts support and grants. Shortlisted organisations will be invited to participate in the second stage, which will involve the development of a proposal outlining a process for delivery. This initiative aims to shift arts decision-making closer to communities, creating a nationwide network of trusted regional partners that support sustainable creative ecosystems, stronger regional arts economies, and increased participation in the arts and ngā toi Māori.

2. Advocacy & Support of Māori Arts

INCREASE UNDERSTANDING, PROMOTE FRAMEWORKS FOR INCLUSIVITY & PARTICIPATION

Our Ngā Toi Māori Navigator strengthens relationships and inclusivity through public art projects by encouraging meaningful connections with mana whenua and empowering Indigenous artists and organisations. This has included curating collaborations, providing cultural guidance, and facilitating hapū involvement in public art projects.

Examples of the role in practice include providing cultural advice and resources for public art projects across organisations, individual practitioners, and businesses; representing mana whenua on curatorial panels; supporting artist callouts; and assessing submissions for public art commissions.

There was a strong focus during the reporting period on supporting both ngā toi Māori and non-Māori working in cultural spaces, including making introductions, fostering opportunities for collaboration, building relationships, and sharing learnings to strengthen understanding between cultures. These initiatives aim to support culturally responsive practice, encourage meaningful engagement with te ao Māori, and create spaces where diverse creative perspectives can be explored respectfully and authentically. Highlights of activities that took place during the reporting period included:

- Developing the programme for *Ururangi - Navigating Creativity*, a Matariki event focused on shaping the creative future of Tauranga Moana through a curated Q & A featuring leading Māori artists and creative practitioners. The event will explore the opportunities and challenges facing Māori arts in a rapidly changing world, including the influence of global trends, the importance of maintaining cultural identity, the impact of technology and AI on creative practice, and the future direction of the arts sector in Aotearoa. Scheduled for 1 July 2026, the event will cultivate meaningful dialogue, inspire new thinking, and strengthen connections within the creative community.
- Partnering with The Old Library at Ōmokoroa [TOLO] to present a special exhibition featuring works by internationally renowned Indigenous artist Darcy Nicholas. Creative Bay of Plenty played a key role in bringing the exhibition to life through in-kind support, including the curation of artworks and the development of promotional and marketing collateral. Alongside Nicholas' work, the exhibition showcased pieces by artists from Tauranga Moana and Ōmokoroa, creating a rich and diverse exhibition that celebrated local creative talent while connecting audiences with the work of one of Aotearoa's most respected Indigenous artists. The exhibition provided an opportunity to elevate

regional artists, further community engagement with the arts, and strengthen cultural connections through a shared creative experience.

- Undertaking strategic advocacy and contributing to public art and design initiatives, including representing Tauranga City Council's iwi leaders' group [Te Rangapū] on Tauranga City Council's Public Art Panel, contributing through the Cultural Advisory Panel to the work of Western Bay Museum, and representing Creative Bay of Plenty on the Toi Ohomai Bachelor Creative Arts Panel and the Tauranga Art Gallery Māori Advisory Group – 'Te Kāhu o Hinewa'.
- Delivered three Kapu & Kōrero events during the reporting period, including a special session at Toi Tauranga Art Gallery and the inaugural *Meet the Makers* mini expo, which connected creatives with suppliers and service providers supporting the sector. These events continue to grow in attendance and impact, regularly attracting around over 30 creatives and providing a welcoming environment for emerging and established practitioners to build relationships, exchange ideas, discover new opportunities, and strengthen their creative practice. Feedback gathered through the programme continues to shape future hui and inform Creative Bay of Plenty's programmes and workstreams.

3. Arts & Culture Database

DEVELOP DATABASE TO CAPTURE CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS & ORGANISATIONS

- We continued to add to our CRM database and organise the information in a range of ways to facilitate communication and collaboration. As at 30 June, our database contains the contact details of 6,622 people and 2,788 organisations arranged among 63 campaign groups [people can belong to multiple campaigns]. This is an ongoing programme of work and has resulted in the most comprehensive database of creatives and stakeholders in the sub-region.
- On an ongoing basis, we add content to our Creative Directory, with 21 new profiles of arts practitioners, arts organisations / groups and new spaces developed during the reporting period. At the same time, there are profiles that are retired as they are no longer relevant. There are currently 533 profiles across these three categories in total.

4. Active Promotion of Arts Activities

THROUGH PHYSICAL PRESENCE, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITE & EMAIL

- Twenty-five electronic newsletters were issued to 1,763 subscribers [44,075 circulation over six months].
- We promoted 239 events and arts, culture, and creative opportunities throughout the sub-region. This includes the searchable What's On section of our website, which is updated on a regular basis.
- We have 7.8k followers on Facebook and 4.5k on Instagram. Total interactions over the six-month report in period were 3.2k on Facebook and 4.1k on Instagram. We had 2% growth in new followers on Facebook and 6% growth on Instagram.
- We maintained a strong media relations presence by actively promoting our activities and local creatives via Our Place magazine and SunLive.
- Nine new in-depth interviews of local creatives were developed through our Creative Patapatai series [we currently have 78 interviews in total].

- Featuring regularly updated imagery and dynamic calls to action on the homepage, our website engages visitors with fresh content, highlights key initiatives, and encourages people to explore our programmes, participate in events, and access funding opportunities.
- Findings from our most recent State of the Arts Sector Survey indicated that some creatives were unclear about the services and support offered by Creative Bay of Plenty. In response, we developed the comprehensive *'We Can Help You...'* social media campaign, comprising around 25 tiles that clearly outlined the ways we assist the creative sector. Each tile paired concise key messages with endorsements from artists and organisations we have supported, strengthening awareness, credibility, and understanding of our role. We plan to repeat the campaign regularly to keep the creative community informed about the opportunities and assistance available.

5. Build Effective Relationships

WITH SECTOR & STAKEHOLDERS

- We maintain meaningful relationships with over 60 organisations, spanning those actively involved in arts, culture, and creative activities, as well as organisations outside the sector that provide opportunities for collaboration. Through these partnerships, we foster knowledge sharing, joint initiatives, and cross-sector engagement that strengthens the creative ecosystem and expands the reach and impact of our programmes.
- We are an active member of RANA [Regional Arts Network Aotearoa], comprising arts organisations throughout the country. This group has a strong focus on advocacy, developing strategic relationships, sector infrastructure, building capability, and engaging as a sector with central government.
- Our team facilitates or participates in around 50 meetings each month with sector stakeholders, arts leaders, and local creatives. These include group meetings, strategy sessions, and one-on-one consultations, all aimed at supporting the development of creative projects, sharing expertise, and strengthening connections across the arts community. By maintaining this high level of engagement, we ensure that local creatives have access to guidance, resources, and collaborative opportunities that help their work and the wider sector thrive.
- During the reporting period, team members attended 37 exhibition launches and sector events, actively engaging with artists, cultural organisations, and community stakeholders. These visits enabled us to celebrate new work, stay informed about emerging trends, develop and grow relationships, and identify opportunities for collaboration and support, reinforcing our ongoing connection to the local creative community.
- We are partners to the Western Bay International Strategy, alongside Tauranga City Council, Western Bay District Council, Priority One, Tourism Bay of Plenty, Toi Kai Rawa [Māori economic development], Education Tauranga and University of Waikato. Our responsibilities include:
 - Identifying opportunities to facilitate cultural exchange through leveraging arts and culture networks; and
 - Developing a plan on how best to ensure mana whenua are engaged in representing the sub-region internationally [lead alongside Toi Kai Rawa].

We will be joining a delegation to Yantai, our sister city in China, in August 2026 to identify and support collaborative opportunities and champion cultural exchange through arts and culture.

- We hosted two Creative Connections Lunch events during the reporting period, bringing together around 80 creatives, arts organisations, and sector stakeholders. These events are designed to foster networking, encourage collaboration, and strengthen relationships throughout the creative sector. They also provide a platform to share opportunities, showcase initiatives, and facilitate the exchange of ideas, helping to build a more connected, informed, and resilient creative community.
- We held three Kapu & Kōrero informal networking events during the reporting period, bringing together emerging and established artists for connection, conversation, and creative and cultural exchange. Our May event introduced a mini-expo format featuring key suppliers and service providers to the creative sector, creating new opportunities for creatives to discover tools, services, and partnerships while strengthening professional networks. The June event celebrated Matariki with a special gathering at Toi Tauranga Art Gallery, providing attendees with opportunities to connect with others and view the gallery's latest exhibitions.
- We are an active member of the Tauranga Boys' College Arts Council, providing guidance and support to help link student creatives with the broader arts community. By participating in the council, we help support early engagement with the sector to support the development of the next generation of artists.
- We also supported a team of students from Ōtūmoetai College taking part in the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme, where senior students undertake market research before establishing running a real business. This provides a practical entrepreneurial experience while developing business skills and working toward regional and national awards.
- We partnered with TECT to establish a networking group for marketing professionals in the not for profit sector. This group meets regularly to share successes and challenges, discuss best practice, and get practical support from others who work in the same space. Other participants include BayTrust, Acorn Foundation, Sport BOP, Toi Tauranga Art Gallery, Our Place Magazine and Socialink. One meeting was held during the reporting period, with the second scheduled on 15 July.
- We are delighted to be re-establishing our creative exchange with Hitachi, Tauranga's sister city in Japan, through participation in the Friendship Quilt Exhibition in September 2026. Following the cancellation of the annual exhibition in 2024, this renewed collaboration marks an important step in strengthening the long-standing cultural relationship between our two cities. Alongside a selection of tapestry artworks, the exhibition will feature 15 photographic artworks by Tauranga artists, providing valuable international exposure for local creatives and showcasing the diversity and quality of our region's artistic talent to new audiences. This exchange reinforces the role of arts and culture in building enduring international connections and fostering cultural understanding between our communities.

6. Creative Communities Scheme

COORDINATE & ADMINISTER SCHEME

- We administer the Creative Communities Scheme [CCS] for Western Bay District Council and support applicants to Tauranga's fund by providing resources, guidance, and connections, helping creative practitioners and organisations access funding and strengthen their projects.
- During the reporting period, 20 applications were received for the second CCS funding round of 2025-26 for Western Bay District Council, just below last year's record of 24 submissions. Applicants sought more than \$55k in funding, with the full allocation of \$26,136 awarded across nine projects.

These grants enable a diverse range of creative initiatives that enrich community life, increase access to arts and culture, and support local artists and organisations to deliver projects that benefit local communities.

- Within Tauranga city and the Western Bay of Plenty, we advised and supported 23 applications and projects, working directly with 16 individuals or organisations to provide one-on-one guidance to strengthen their submissions.
- We offer specialist support for applicants to Tauranga's CCS fund who have been unsuccessful in previous rounds, with a particular focus on assisting ethnic communities and those for whom English is not a first language, ensuring equitable access to funding opportunities.
- To further support applicants, we presented funding workshops in Te Puke and Katikati, providing practical guidance on preparing and submitting applications.
- One assessment panel meeting was coordinated for Western Bay district under Creative NZ guidelines during the reporting period, ensuring rigorous and transparent decision-making.
- We submitted six-monthly outcomes reports for Western Bay District to Creative NZ as of 30 June 2026, demonstrating accountability and impact of the funded projects.
- Our contracted photographer attended six activities to capture and promote CCS outcomes, helping to showcase the creativity and achievements enabled by the funding.

7. Needs Identification & Capability Building

IDENTIFY NEEDS & DEVELOP PATHWAYS FOR ACCESSING & DELIVERY OF CAPABILITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

- Supporting the capability development of the creative sector remained a priority during the reporting period, with six workshops delivered across a range of arts and cultural topics. While demand for skills development remains strong, ongoing cost-of-living pressures continue to affect participation, resulting in a lower number of registrations and one workshop cancellation, despite subsidised fees. We continue to review ways to make learning opportunities more accessible, including flexible delivery options, targeted engagement, and additional support mechanisms to reduce barriers to participation.
- During the reporting period, we delivered six workshops, three of which were on new topics. These were *'Art Shows 101 – Preparing, Pricing & Presenting Your Work in Person'*, *'Event Health Check'*, and *'Putting Your Best Foot Forward for Public Art Opportunities'*. We also delivered a sold out *'Canva for Creatives'* workshop and two funding workshops for Creative Communities Scheme applicants. These workshops have been designed to address key skill gaps identified through consultation with local creatives and our annual capability survey, which took place in June. They aim to open new opportunities for artists to build professional confidence, strengthen their practice, and expand their visibility in the arts sector.
- Our 2026 mentor programme, which is tailored to the specific needs of each participant, supported 12 mentees and was completed over the first six months of the year. A total of 74 mentor sessions took place, including referrals to paid mentors or people with expertise in their artform, support from members of our team, and access to specialist advice [eg website development, online selling]. This programme delivers tangible results in terms of the progression of the arts practice of attendees. We found the more condensed delivery has proven effective, helping to maintain momentum, strengthen engagement and keep participants focused on their goals.

- We supported the development of a new flexible art and design programme at Toi Ohomai’s Mokoia Campus in Rotorua, creating accessible opportunities for learners from Tauranga and the Western Bay. The three-year programme, including a foundation year, will be delivered free of charge and aims to strengthen pathways into further study and employment in the arts and creative industries. A combination of in-person and online learning is providing greater flexibility, making creative education more accessible to a wider range of students.
- We received an excellent response to our Creative Capability Needs Survey in June, with 128 people sharing their insights. The highest areas of demand were social media, online marketing and sales [47%], followed by marketing and audience growth [37%]. Reflecting ongoing cost-of-living pressures, the biggest barrier to participating in workshops was cost [51%], with time constraints identified as the second most significant barrier [34%]. We will use these insights to shape our 2027 workshop programme, ensuring it responds to the sector's identified needs. We are also exploring more flexible and cost-effective delivery models, including options that enable creatives to access training outside standard business hours.
- We continue to work in partnership with Acorn Foundation and FAME Trust to strengthen pathways into the performing arts and support participation at both local and national levels. This includes administering awards and scholarships that help emerging performers pursue formal study and training, alongside ongoing grant funding that enables community theatre groups to deliver high-quality productions, build local capability, and create opportunities for people of all ages to participate in the performing arts.

8. Mapping of Creative Sector

TO PROVIDE VALUABLE & RELEVANT SECTOR DATA

- Due to a 10% reduction in funding from Tauranga City Council from 1 July 2026, we have had to defer our planned research programme for 2026–27. This follows two significant pieces of sector research completed over the past two years: the second State of the Arts Sector Survey in 2025, and a youth creative participation mapping study in 2024, which captured insights from more than 535 students from five local secondary schools and 293 parents.
- Our key priority remains undertaking research into the social return on investment [SROI] of arts, culture and creativity. This work would provide robust evidence of the wider social, cultural and economic value generated through investment in the creative sector, helping to demonstrate impacts such as improved wellbeing, stronger community connection, skills development, placemaking, and economic activity. The findings would strengthen advocacy, support funding applications, and inform future investment decisions within the region. While current budget constraints mean this project cannot proceed as originally planned, we are actively exploring alternative funding opportunities and innovative research partnerships to enable this important work to move forward.