

Tēnā Koutou Katoa

I make this submission as a concerned independent citizen; despite a lifetime of creating work, supporting fellow practitioners, and advocating for Dunedin's arts community I am no longer engaged with any creative sector organisations and am of the opinion that many of the worst case predictions for this industry have been proven correct. My submission is from an informed perspective, owing to my many years experience as a professional independent practitioner and more recently as the Director of the Dunedin Fringe Arts Trust. In the latter capacity I contributed hundreds of hours engaging with various DCC arts strategies, partnerships, networks, plans, visions and other consultation exercises which generated hot air and shelved documents but have manifestly failed to arrest the slide of Dunedin's creative sector to a level comparable to that of a big town with enthusiastic amateurs. Not that there is anything wrong with amateur participation in the arts par se, but it requires affordable, equitable, progressive, and safe scaffolding from a professional industry for it to thrive and provide growth pathways. The Fortune Theatre was so much more than a building.

I refer to page 38 of your Draft 9 year Plan:

'We are committed to supporting the development of performing arts for our city and we will continue to work with the community on how best to do'.

In light that capital funding of \$17.1 million for a new performing arts centre has been removed from the 10 Year Plan this statement is at best last laughable, and whoever wrote this farce deserves their own plaque in the Octagon writer's walk. This Council has clearly shown it's lack of commitment to the local creative sector, flying against the evidence of it's own reports into the economic impact of the arts, the aspirations of Ara Toi Ōtepoti, and a statutory responsibility to promote wellbeing within the community (for which participation in the arts are an inherent part).

I submit that capital funding for a new purpose built arts centre should be reinstated to an appropriate level, and investment into Dunedin's creative industry includes an increase for existing infrastructure and organisations alongside new opportunities such as the \$2 million budgeted for stadium events. Or in the least, a portion of the new stadium event budget is earmarked for local organisations. My children, and the next generation of Ōtepoti's young people, should not be held hostage to previous generations' recalcitrance to properly invest in the city's creative sector or current trends towards philistinism.

Ngā manaakitanga

Gareth McMillan