

NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL

2022 REPORT

Core Funder:



Nelson
City Council

Te Kaunihera o
Whakatū

nelsonartsfestival.nz

2022 CURATORIAL INTENTION

This guides our kaupapa and mahi throughout the year.

In 2021, we searched for connection, being seen, heard, held, together. But where can we go from here? As we continue to live in a global pandemic? What to do with the challenges of the climate crisis? What can we learn? Who can we trust? And what can we say, for certain, will come?

Throughout the last year we've heard everyone from arm-chair scientists to politicians, celebrities and even ourselves stating certainties. But what is certain?

Whakapapa / Night follows day / Death / Chaos / Change / Ageing / Destruction / Loss / Mistakes / Need for shelter, food, water / Need for community / Body / Difference / Now / Nothing / Uncertainty

E hoki ki ō maunga kia purea ai koe e ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea

*Return to your mountains so that you can be
cleansed by the winds of Tāwhirimātea*

How do we sit with this moment and not just look forward to a 'return to normal'? How does art sit with this moment? How does Whakatū?

Moving with the wind, sitting with the chaos,
playing with our absolutes, celebrating our
most basic needs, being present to now.

NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL 2022

A FESTIVAL WHICH
MOVES / SITS / PLAYS / DESTABILISES
CERTAINTY

Lydia Zanetti, Te Kaihautū | Executive & Artistic Director, Nelson Arts Festival

2022 OVERVIEW

20 - 30 October 2022

11 days of unmissable arts experiences for and with Whakatū

The Festival team and Board are very proud of what we achieved in our 2022 Nelson Arts Festival: an electric rush of 11 days of kōrero, performance, giant icebergs hanging from cranes, exquisite installations, boogie-inducing gigs and more.

54 events | 38 locations | 220 artists

From sold-out gigs to standing ovations, from the breathtaking performance of **THAW** at Port Nelson and the life-changing experience of immersing oneself in **Ko Te Ākau** to intimate conversations and inspiration on (arts) prescription, there were so many special moments during the 2022 Festival.



Pay What You Can

As an Aotearoa NZ-first for an arts festival, all of our 54 events were either free or **Pay What You Can** in 2022.

This initiative expands access to the arts for a much wider section of our community, and directly builds future arts lovers for not only the Festival, but the industry in general.

Over 33,000 people,
young and old attended one
or more of our 54 events and
reported the positive
outcomes of these
experiences:

- increased feelings of joy and inspiration,
- feelings of connection and community,
- enhanced wellbeing and accessibility,
- and increased empathy and knowledge for how our whole community experiences the world.

Art & Wellbeing

OUR 2022 PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS



Programming

- 54 events
- 220 artists involved
- 26% of events led by community
- 5 special commissions
- 16 Aotearoa premieres + 4 Aotearoa book premieres
- 3% international works: connecting Aotearoa to the world
- 33 venues and event locations

Diversity

- 26% kaupapa Māori events
- 45% led by people of colour
- 64% led by non-male identifying artists
- 3.5% of our artists identify as Disabled or Chronically Ill
- 18% led by the LGBTIQA+ community

Accessibility

- 100% of our ticketed events were Pay What You Can (PWYC)
- 20 free events and experiences
- New Access Programme: 2 audio-described and 2 NZSL interpreted live events, plus 1 Touch Tour, and clearer communication around what access available at each event
- 82% of our audience agreed that PWYC increases access to, and participation in the Festival
- More than half agreed that PWYC helped to make ticketed events feel *'more inclusive not just for myself but also for others'*

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY

PAY WHAT YOU CAN (PWYC)

Background: Why PWYC?

There are many challenges for people attending arts events in Aotearoa, including but not limited to time pressures, cost, less high-quality media coverage, sense of value of the arts, venue spaces not feeling welcoming or safe, and more.

All arts organisations and individuals are constantly finding ways to try and meet these challenges.

The Festival had received consistent feedback from the community that **the highest barrier to attendance was the cost of tickets** (even before the COVID-19 pandemic). This key insight informed the decision to **explore alternative ticketing models**.

Delivering arts experiences for everyone

Through researching various structures and global trends, we identified that Pay What You Can (PWYC) ticketing is a way which can open the door a little wider. We believe that PWYC makes the Festival more financially accessible to more of our community, reduces a significant access barrier, and will build a love of the arts in the hearts of those living in Whakatū and beyond:

Every event in the 2022 and 2023 Nelson Arts Festivals will be PWYC ticketed.

Key Goals for Pay What You Can

- Break down barriers to engaging with artistic experiences
- Build future arts lovers and audiences by creating opportunities for different parts of the community to be exposed to exciting, unforgettable and soul-stirring arts experiences
- Provide accessible options to 'pay it forward' and experience what it feels like to become patrons of the arts and giving back to the wider community
- Create a Festival for and with the whole of Whakatū Nelson – reaching more of our community through lower barriers and increased diversity

The PWYC ticketing initiative is made possible by funding from The Cultural Sector Innovation Fund, Manatū Taonga | Ministry of Culture and Heritage, as well as the support of our Kārearea Partner NBS.

KEY OUTCOMES

Based on our ticketing data, survey findings and observation at events, there is clear evidence that PWYC has helped the Festival attract new audiences as well as to increase diversity in our audience overall:

- **Increased Diversity & Inclusion:** 82% agree that PWYC 'absolutely increases access' | Tier 1 & 2 boosted first-time engagement with the Festival | majority of new attendees were young (25 and under) and/or as Māori, Pasifika and Asian | our programme and reach met the actual population: Tier 1 purchasers directly reflected in population statistics - we are delivering **"a Festival for and with Whakatū"**

"I loved seeing the range of people at all events I attended."
- Audience Feedback

- **Increased Wellbeing & Community Impact:** Increased accessibility to, as well as inclusion & representation in the arts are reported through both PWYC and programming.

"Community inclusivity and connection are vital in promoting mental and physical health, most especially because of the dismal, despairing and detrimental Covid-19 pandemic." - Audience Feedback

- **Increased Participation:** PWYC increases ability to attend a larger number (6+) of events, creating audiences with a wide range of knowledge and interests, facilitating risk-taking and an open-minded approach to arts experiences ongoing.

"I thought it was absolutely fantastic. We spent WAY more than usual on festival tickets and felt good about doing so. Great model and fully supportive of it continuing." - Audience Feedback

Feedback for choosing higher price tiers included the desire to pay more when they could afford to. This supports the intention that we are **building future arts audiences and philanthropy over time** – and not eroding the sense of value of the experience.

Programming: Diversity & Artistic Excellence

Our programming is diverse and inspiring, surprising and challenging. We take care to offer events that are free and accessible to our whole community, to try new ways of reaching audiences, like our digital commission **Belonging** and youth-led initiatives like **Whispers in the Streets** and **Tune Up**, celebrate our traditions with projects like **Masks About Town** and build local capability through projects like the **Art Chemist**.

Being an attractive destination for major touring companies like the **NZ Dance Company** and iconic artists like **Don McGlashan** as well as providing a platform for new talent like **Fine Fatale** and **Fua Creative** is just as exciting for us as bringing the talent everyone is talking about to town, like **Pax Assadi**, **Ana Chaya Scotney**, **Eli Matthewson**, **Dr Hinemoa Elder**, **Rebecca K Reilly**, **Qiane Matata-Sipu** and **Rutene Spooner**. Connecting national artists with our local creative talent in **Ko Te Ākau** and across our **Music Hub** and **Pukapuka Talks** programmes sees them build connections that will continue to grow beyond the Festival period.

Showcasing amazing local initiatives and talent like the **Cultural Conversations** artists, **Robbie Burton**, **Christine Leunens**, **Rebekah Ballagh**, **Nicola Galloway**, and our inaugural **By Whakatū Residency** recipients **Alvaro Moreno** and **Te Oro Hā** makes us immensely proud to be part of our diverse community in Te Taihū which is so rich in talent and creativity.

Welcoming the world to Whakatū



We bring world-class experiences to Whakatū and our streets come alive with activations, collaborations and connections – because **arts and creativity make Whakatū a great place for our whole community**.

The impact of these experiences is reflected in our **audience growth and diversification**, our high number of **return attendees**, the **high level of engagement** with our online content, and maybe most importantly, in our community's reports of **increased wellbeing and sense of belonging**.

Audience Growth & Engagement



- **5,643 tickets sold**
- **33,000+ attendees across our 54 events**
- **5,000+ people engaged with our digital commission series + podcasts online**
- **53% growth across in engagement our social media platforms** (343,930 people reached)
- **79% have attended the Festival before (returning audience)**
- **20% of audience were first time attendees** (this increased in 2022, particularly amongst Tier 1 purchasers)
- **94% said that they will attend future festival events**
- **587 Pukapuka Talks books sold**
- **Highest level of national media coverage** for the Festival since its beginning

"Nelson felt alive, connected, a community to be proud of, inspiring new connections, glorious mix of diversity & ages."

- Audience Member



Wellbeing

- **60% of our audience found themselves represented across the programme**
- **95% said that the Festival is a vital part of the Whakatū events calendar and contributes to the livability of the region**
- **75% reported an increase in feelings joy and wellbeing after attending Festival events**

OUR 2022 PROGRAMME | SNAPSHOT

Championing our artists & our community

With over 220 artists involved, we managed to **support local, national and international** producers and artists to develop and present new commissions, **build sustainability** for touring works, take first steps into festival presentations, national and international premieres, and directly invest into the wealth of incredible talent in Whakatū and Te Taihū, for example through our **By Whakatū Residency** programme.

Kaupapa Māori-led events made up 26% of our overall programme, with 17 of our 49 featured authors being Māori (that's almost 40% of the line-up) and both exhibitions at our visual arts hub featuring ngā toi Māori artists with **Kim Ireland** and the immersive experience of **Ko Te Ākau** by **Charles Koroneho** for **Te Toki Haruru**.

"This year's arts festival was a bold leap into some really powerful and moving work, the headline **Kō te ākau** was a work of immense significance and depth and the ability for everyone from the young to old to experience such a work was a generous koha for the people of whakatū... The programming contributed to me being able to immerse myself in the kind of arts culture I remember from being in other cities in Aotearoa & overseas and certainly showed was this 'city' is capable of. Thanks for the hard mahi and the incredible artworks shared with the local community - ka mau ti wehi!"

- Audience Feedback



Major events like the international premiere of the incredible spectacle **THAW** and our special commission **Ko Te Ākau** prove that we are a key player in our sector, and we are delighted to see artists take their mahi further afield after being part of the Nelson Arts Festival:

We are here to support, share, shine a spotlight and uplift our artists to reach their goals.



As a local musician I came out of this festival with so many new friends and connections within our Whakatū creative community. It also meant the world to the band and I to open for musicians like this] (wow). Feeling validated, encouraged and inspired.

- Local Artist



**FROM BIG NAMES TO BIG SPLASHES:
UNMISSABLE EXPERIENCES,
INSPIRED CONVERSATION
& MEMORABLE INTERACTIONS
THROUGHOUT OUR 2022 FESTIVAL.**





Legs on the Wall | THAW

International and Aotearoa premiere & call to climate action



ACCESS PROGRAMME

In 2022 we continued to build accessibility into other aspects of the Festival as well. We had NZSL interpreters at one theatre and one literary event, and an audio described tour of the **Rita Angus** exhibition and one **Fever: Return of the Ula** show.



The **Touch Tour** ahead of **Fever** was a highlight for the Festival staff and artists as our audience met the incredible performers of the show, got to touch some of their costumes and stood amongst the performers as they sang.



We also started looking at our other channels of communication and building more accessibility (such as visual descriptions and alt text and closed captions for our all videos in our digital installation, *Belonging*) throughout our social media and website.

We are committed to investing more in this ongoing.



TAMARIKI & RANGATAHI

Our Tamariki and Rangatahi programme involved the participation of close to **1,300 children and young people**.



We provided workshops and performances in three schools, four Kohanga Reo, at the Theatre Royal and at Te Noninga Kumu Motueka Public Library (**Tupu** by **Fua Creative**, **Rutene Spooner's Pīpī Paopao**, **The King of Taking** and our 2022 author in schools, **Selina Tusitala Marsh ONZM** as well as public workshops for tamariki at the Suter Art Gallery, the Nelson Museum, the Cawthron Open Day (**Icebergs As Dreamed By You**), and Community ArtWorks (**Masks About Town**).



PUKAPUKA TALKS

Our 2022 Pukapuka Talks programme featured **43 authors and thought leaders**, with the line-up's diversity reflecting the breadth of who we are here in Aotearoa, including:

- 17 Māori and Pasifika authors
- Five queer/takātapui authors

Three of our **Pukapuka Talks** authors were winners and finalists of the 2022 Ockham NZ Book Awards, with another four being nominated for the 2023 Awards - and both **Noelle McCarthy** and **Catherine Chidgey** both receiving awards. **Dr Hinemoa Elder's** kōrero set the tone for the whole Sunday dedicated to kōrero kaupapa Māori, with the panel discussion **NUKU: Live** led by **Qiane Matata-Sipu** accompanied by exhibitions at NMIT and the Nelson Airport.



"I haven't felt this excited about the Arts in Whakatū Nelson since I was an Extra for the WOW show as a child."
- Artist feedback



VISUAL ARTS

Arts on prescription, whispers, masks and explorations of identity

Our 2022 Visual Arts and Community programmes focused on wellbeing, belonging, identity and the celebration of creativity. For **Whispers in the Streets**, rangatahi voices reflected on being young in uncertain times while the installations for **Masks About Town** celebrated the love for mask making and the Mask Carnivale in Whakatū.

Audrey Baldwin's crowd-favourite **Art Chemist** offered wellbeing consultations and arts on prescription to all Festival goers over the opening weekend.



Local artist **Kim Ireland** premiered her first exhibition in clay works, **Kei Hea a Tiki?**, which has since toured across the North Island and been purchased by Te Manawa Museum and Art Gallery for their permanent collection – a **major achievement** for an early-career artist.



11 DAYS OF UNMISSABLE ARTS EXPERIENCES CAPTURED

NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL



THANK YOU

It truly takes a village.

Our whānau of partners deserves a round of applause for their support:



MOA PARTNER:



KĀREAREA PARTNERS:



KEA PARTNERS:



KERERŪ PARTNERS:

Lift N Shift | Nelson Consulting Engineers Ltd
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PĪWAKAWAKA SUPPORTERS:

NRDA | Innit Creative | VenueTech Ltd
Community Art Works | Interislander | The Green Collective

The return of the Festival after two years of disruption was met with a lot of enthusiasm and support from the community. This resulted in many new values-aligned partnerships and collaborations joining the Festival Whānau comprising long-standing supporters and partner organisations. We wrapped up the year with a strong sense of being embedded in our community and having made a valued contribution towards wellbeing, connection and livability across our region.

Keen to join our Festival whānau?

Partnership with the Nelson Arts Festival is not a donation but a sound investment in community and a great marketing opportunity for your organisation.

Let's connect: annie@nelsonartsfestival.nz

AND THAT'S A WRAP, 2022!

To our community:

From standing ovations and encores to the most moving interactions and conversations, we are thrilled and so grateful to see you all turn up for our events, interact, ask questions and celebrate these truly amazing arts events we've had the honour to present. Thank you all for your enthusiasm, your love and appreciation for our artists, for your feedback and smiling faces. You've truly blown us away, Whakatū!

To our artists:

WOW!! What incredibly talented and generous humans you are. Thank you for sharing your mahi toi with us and for making this Festival what we hope it to be - a celebration of arts and creativity, connection and community!

And **to all our amazing crew, volunteers, partners and funders:** Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. This would not have been possible without you.

Thank you all for making our Festival a celebration of art and creativity, connection and community - for and with Whakatū. We cannot wait to do it all over again in October 2023!

The Nelson Arts Festival 2022 was made possible with the support of our funders:

CORE FUNDER:



MAJOR FUNDERS:



GRANTS:



Trillian Trust | Network Tasman Trust | Top of the South Community Trust
Tasman Creative Communities Scheme | NZ Society of Authors
Read NZ Te Pou Muramura

[Watch our 2022 Video](#)

Find out more:
nelsonartsfestival.nz

Contact us:
info@nelsonartsfestival.nz

