



In 2016 WeCreate commissioned NZIER to produce a valuation of the creative and cultural sector which estimated its contribution to GDP at \$17.5bn and employment at 131,000 people – one third of whom are creative people who work outside the creative industries.

Between 2017 and 2019 WeCreate undertook extensive consultation across the sector, via hui and specific working groups (some of which are ongoing), resulting in the primary objective of an industry and whole-of-government partnership on an Action Plan to boost economic development, employment and growth in the sector. A draft Action Plan was delivered to government in March 2019, and the sector was delighted to learn that it would be included in the Industry Transformation Plan programme from 2020.

Industry and government working together on a committed and concerted strategy to super-charge the creative sector would:

- Drive growth in the digital age through innovation & productivity
- Diversify our output beyond traditional industries
- Support sustainable careers & businesses, in the sector, & increasingly in other industries
- Grow exports globally, weightlessly, & often tariff-free
- Help our transition to a zero carbon economy
- Improve educational outcomes
- Offer greater opportunities for Māori, Pasifika, women, small business and regional development
- Enhance our cultural pride, inclusion, access, participation & identity

A similar strategic partnership between the UK creative and cultural sector and government launched in 2012, saw their sector grow five times faster than the average

rate of the UK economy (pre-COVID), and increase their contribution to GVA by 60.5% in eight years.

In June 2023 the UK government announced an updated [‘Creative Industries Sector Vision’](#) with the ambitious objectives of growing their creative industries by an extra £50 billion, while creating one million extra jobs by 2030.

Australia launched its whole-of-government [‘Revive – National Cultural Policy’](#) in January 2023, with Prime Minister Albanese saying: *‘Revive’ will guide our plan to deliver a better future for our creative workers and organisations, while expanding economic opportunities, supporting ethical marketplaces for creative workers, and providing more avenues to deepen and showcase our national identity.*

The development of the WeCreate Action Plan included officials from MBIE, MCH, MFAT, NZTE, MoE, Stats NZ, and Callaghan Innovation. Regular hui were held to connect these Ministries and agencies with industry, and with each other, in a more ‘joined-up’ approach to the sector.

Alongside the sector-level Action Plan, WeCreate was closely connected to the development of the Interactive Aotearoa report and the subsequent advocacy for a Game Development Rebate and increased investment in our interactive industries, the Screen Sector Strategy. WeCreate has also remained involved with a variety of regional creative industries and arts strategies – all of which share strong similarities of intent with our Action Plan, and make recommendations to maximise opportunities and solve issues that could be most effectively addressed in a pan-sector approach.

In late July 2020, WeCreate was informed by MBIE and MCH that the Industry Transformation Plan for the creative sector would not be progressing for the foreseeable future, in light of the significant Budget 2020 investment made by government to support the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector through its recovery from COVID-19.

Much of WeCreate’s Action Plan remains highly relevant in 2023 – it would be easy and fast to expand and update, and some of its objectives have already been achieved through the advocacy of WeCreate and its Members and Friends.

New Zealand is not preparing adequately for the creative sector’s potential to contribute to our economy, and is lagging behind some of its closest competitors and trading partners in not having a creative and cultural economic strategy, especially in the digital age.

We are asking the next government to show vision and leadership, and join with the sector in a committed and concerted strategy to drive our Creative and Cultural Economy for the future.

WeCreate’s current and recent key work-streams on behalf of the sector include:

- Ongoing liaison with government departments and agencies regarding policy relevant to the potential of the sector and its impact on social and economic prosperity – including MBIE, MCH, MoE, MFAT, NZTE, NZ Story, MSD, Stats NZ, Callaghan Innovation, Creative NZ, NZ Film Commission, NZ Music Commission and NZ On Air.
- Working closely with MBIE, NZTE and NZ Tech to ensure the representation of the NZ creative technology sub-sector in the Digital Technologies Industry Transformation Plan, and the NZ Tech & Innovation Story.
- Advising the Toi Mai Creative Cultural Recreation and Technology WDC, and liaising between Toi Mai and WeCreate’s membership. Victoria was a member of the Reference Group for the design of the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) in the Reform of Vocational Education during 2020 and 2021.
- Providing industry advice and connections to MFAT regarding current and forthcoming trade negotiations, and development of policy for creative exports and digital trade. WeCreate are currently working with MFAT on their Digital Trade Review , focusing on New Zealand’s international digital trade policy settings.
- Submitting on behalf of the sector to:
 - Manatū Taonga MCH Long Term Insights Briefing
 - MBIE Long Term Insights Briefing - ‘The Future of Business’
 - Digital Strategy Aotearoa
 - Data and Statistics Bill
 - Draft Emissions Reduction Plan
 - Te Pūkenga Operating Model
 - NZQA Simplifying NZ Qualifications & Other Credentials
 - Manatū Taonga MCH Artist Resale Royalty Scheme
- Facilitating a pan-agency Data & Insights Group to explore the development of a more accurate measurement model for the sector.
- Participating in the Review of the Copyright Act from a sector-level perspective.
- Providing industry advice and connections to the Productivity Commission in respect of its ‘Frontier Firms’ and ‘Improving Economic Resilience’ enquiries.
- Ongoing liaison with other strategic work in, or relevant to, the sector including the Screen Sector Strategy, Interactive Aotearoa, Te Taumata Toi a Iwi, Create Auckland 2030 and other regional arts/creative strategies – all of which have many commonalities with WeCreate’s Action Plan.
- Ongoing liaison with CreaTer – the alliance of creative tertiary educators co-founded by WeCreate.