

7 March 2024

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills
Via Email : penny.simmonds@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister,

We have two reasons for writing to you.

Firstly – to introduce WeCreate which is the alliance of Aotearoa’s creative industry associations and creative organisations (representing 30,000+ Kiwi creators, support people, and creative businesses), which was founded in 2014 to propel growth in the sector and increase its contribution to New Zealand’s economy. The creative economy contributes \$15b¹ to New Zealand’s GDP and, with the right policy settings, could be worth \$25b by 2030. A key aspect of the policy settings needed to achieve this economic and employment growth is skills and tertiary education.

During 2020, WeCreate made a considerable contribution to the Reform of Vocational Education, and particularly with the design of the Workforce Development Councils. In this we worked closely with the tech sector, to ensure the structure of vocational education is set up to deliver for learners, businesses, and workforce development in future-focused industries like ours. We are aware that there are other significant changes happening in education and this leads me to our second reason for writing.

We understand that the future of the Workforce Development Councils is under review, and the implications of this for the creative (including CreativeTech) sector are significant. Prior to the establishment of the WDCs the creative and tech sectors did not have an ITO that undertook the collation of industry skills insights and set out the training needs of our sector. The establishment of Toi Mai, and the connections the organisation has made with the creative and tech sectors, have made vital in-roads into addressing the gaps in knowledge and understanding of our workforces’ skills and training needs.

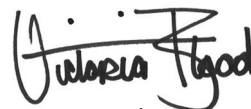
Creative and tech skills and training are needed for both the creative and tech sectors, as well as the rest of the economy. While referred to as “future skills”, the reality is that the future is already here, and our workforce needs an organisation that is focussed on training for new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, if we are to achieve the government’s goal of doubling exports in the next ten years.

We ask to be included in your consultation process relating to the WDCs, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you soon regarding this.

Ngā mihi nui, nā



Paula Browning
Chair



Victoria Blood
Leader

¹ (2023) *Infometrics Arts & Creative Sector profile for Ministry for Culture & Heritage as at March 2022.*