

# Arts Council Nelson

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023 / 2024



At the society's Annual General Meeting in October 2023, Arts Council Nelson Inc [ACN] welcomed the following as elected Executive Members:

Sophie Kelly (Co-Chair), Annie Pokel (Co-Chair) Amanda Raine (Treasurer), Kay van Dyk (Secretary), Faye Wulff, Samara Davis, Beatriz Goncalves, Maria Anderson and Jonny Eagle.

ACN warmly welcomed the continued and greatly valued involvement of Deputy Mayor Rohan O'Neil Stevens and Cllr. Matty Anderson as Nelson City Council Community Liaison Appointees to the Executive Committee.

Collectively, ACN's personnel provide a knowledgeable and vastly experienced creative resource, enabling the organisation to champion original and innovative opportunities that contribute to a sustainable environment for the arts to flourish in the region. Their multiplicity of roles and involvement within the community ensures that ACN is ideally positioned to maintain robust communications and offer creative opportunities which engage and enhance wellbeing to Nelson's diverse communities.

The Executive acknowledges and extends appreciation to the organisation's hardworking staff team namely, Heidi Lucas (Arts Administrator), Janja Heathfield (Refinery ArtSpace Manager) and Lloyd Harwood (Community Arts Manager). ACN's high level of service delivery is helped made possible by a strong and loyal team of volunteers to whom the organisation owes a large debt of gratitude.

Whilst the past year has seen personnel working over and above capacity the organisation has maintained concerted activity on core services, continued to grow its' signature events and engage in new initiatives and partnerships.

### **Refinery ArtSpace**

The demand for the Refinery ArtSpace galleries continues to increase with expressions of interest oversubscribed by many artists and groups seeking inclusion in our exhibition and events programme which is receiving nationwide attention.



In addition to the exhibition spaces, the facility enhances wider community engagement through offering workshop and limited performance space. Over the period the 'room of requirement' has been used by numerous and diverse groups including the Nelson Fringe Festival and other theatre practitioners as both a rehearsal, intimate performance and mentorship/teaching space. Art Group Nelson attend fortnightly meetings and daytime classes, and the space is regularly utilised for a variety of hui, film screenings, presentations, a variety of independently led day and evening classes and activities including performance, visual arts and literary events. ACN thanks Andy Robertson (Gallery Technician) whose knowledge and ability assists continued refinement of the facility to better serve the community. ACN thank Nelson City Council for their acknowledgement, vision and support for this valued facility. Please refer to the '**Refinery ArtSpace Annual Report**' for a comprehensive report on the extent of the RAS exhibition and event programme.

## Arts Promotion

**Arts Calendars:** ACN has maintained publication of monthly E-Newsletters which widely promote arts events, exhibitions and opportunities to engage in creative activities. This information is also posted and kept current on our website and social media platforms enabling awareness of the depth of creativity available in Nelson for residents and visitors alike.

ACN has produced and circulated redesigned hard copy **Pocket City Gallery Guide Maps**. These focus on the CBD promoting our galleries and their visual artists and are very popular with visitors to the city and are greatly appreciated by the listed businesses who contribute to the printing costs.

## Creative Communities Local Arts Funding Scheme (CCS)

ACN administers the Nelson City CCS on behalf of NCC. Funded to the value of \$46,000 per annum by Creative NZ, this scheme provides a lifeline for many creative projects with clear community benefits to get off the ground. This year saw an additional one-off \$15,000 added to the pool specifically to support Festival events. ACN thanks the community representatives who volunteer their valuable time to assessing grant applications received. Full details of allocations are available on request.



## Projects and Events

### Presentation of the 2nd Nelson Jewellery Week 13 - 23 April.

This ten-day event situated current contemporary jewellery within the Whakatū region, and provided opportunities for residents, visitors and the wider jewellery community to experience and engage in this field of art and design. ACN acknowledge and thank our Creative Director Kay Van Dyk, ACN staff, contractors and volunteers for all their sterling work behind the scenes in making this festival another huge success. We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders Creative New Zealand, NRDA, Nelson City Council, and our partners Te Pūkenga Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, Objectspace, the Suter Art Gallery te Aratoi o Whakatū, and Uniquely Nelson for their generous support.



### Presentation of the 15th nationally subscribed Changing Threads Contemporary Fibre Arts Awards (17 May – 16 June).

We especially wish to thank Ronnie Martin whose vision and dedication has led to this becoming a nationally recognised and valued fibre and textile art event. Ronnie has now stepped down from this role providing the opportunity to review and consider possible changes going forward. ACN thanks our valued sponsors: Creative NZ, Bernina NZ, NCC/NRDA, The Lion Foundation and various smaller Award Sponsors.



### Planning and preparation for the 2024 Nelson Clay Week and Pushing Clay Forsyth Barr Awards which are to be valued at \$10,000 for the next event.



### Presentation of 'RAW'.

An annual nationally subscribed exhibition of work by self-taught artists. This is an important and valued exhibition opportunity for artists whose work falls outside of mainstream practice, and/or those whose circumstance precludes this. RAW is particularly well subscribed to by community creative spaces and other supportive arts initiatives.



## Cause for Discussion

An on-going critical arts review writing initiative, supporting the regions contemporary practitioners.

### Public Artwork Installation

ACN commissioned and installed three 2.5m fish sculptures comprising of 500 fish created



by the community at the top of Trafalgar Street during Nelson Clay Week 2022. Residents and visitors readily engaged and excitedly appreciated the creative opportunity to participate and contribute toward a collaborative public artwork.

### Partnerships

Over the year ACN has been both proactive and receptive to approaches and opportunities to partner on projects which enrich the creative sector and nurture wider community participation. This occasionally requires ACN to act as an umbrella organisation to secure funding for creative initiatives.

### Chorus Cabinet Murals Project

ACN partnered with Chorus and NCC by undertaking the administration and project management of the for the Nelson wards.



### “Opening Doors’ Older Adults Project

ACN was asked by NCC to research, propose and deliver a curated programme of events in Nelson aimed at providing older adults an opportunity to engage with creative pursuits. This eventuated in a programme of active and passive creative participation which resulted in a varied level of participation. Notwithstanding there was sufficient interest to run another programme later in the year.



### Tuku 23 Wakatū Heritage Events

ACN undertook the financial administration of this Council led initiative.



### Shared Communities

ACN is a consortium member of this group, partnering with Multicultural Nelson Tasman, Makeshift Spaces and NCC. Supported by MCH, this initiative is already proving to be highly beneficial to our migrant and former refugee communities for whom integrating into a foreign culture is never straightforward. ACN extend huge thanks to Karolina Serano who was employed by the consortium as a ‘Cultural Navigator’ and has worked tirelessly and so successfully in this role.



### Tasman Region

ACN acknowledges and thank the Tasman District Council for its support and limited financial contribution toward maintaining advisory and support services throughout the Tasman Region and liaising with Motueka and Golden Bay residents who are also served by their own Community Arts Councils.

### Sector Networking

ACN has maintained hui and networking opportunities with many groups and organisations over and above those previously mentioned. These include but are not limited to: RANA (Regional Arts Network of Aotearoa), Uniquely Nelson, Events Korero group, Art/Work, Nelson-Tasman Funders Network, CNZ/Creative Communities Administrators Network, What if?, Golden Bay and Motueka Community Arts Councils, Make/Shift Spaces, Community Art Works, Te Taihū Māori Partnership

and Investment Forum, NMIT, Magenta Creative Space, Nelson Festivals Trust, Te Ramaroa, Nelson City dealer galleries and artist collectives, various Nelson City Council teams including: Te Kāhui Whiria, Arts and Heritage, Te Ara ō Whakatū, Comms, Facilities, Community Partnerships, etc..

### **Looking Forward**

The ACN Executive look forward to the year ahead liaison and partnerships with NCC having increased markedly over the period following ACN being chosen to transition into a larger Arts Development Agency as identified in He Tātai Whetū – Whakatū Nelson Arts and Creativity Strategy. Preparation and negotiations around this involve a huge effort by both parties and we thank NCC, their staff team and both Sophie Kelly and Maria Anderson for their collective dedication and time toward forging a path forward toward this becoming a reality.

The ACN Executive are very excited at the prospect of increasing the organisations' capacity in the coming year to add to its already widely acknowledged and valued service provision for Nelson's creative sector. The new financial year will see the addition of two contractors Anna Dean (Transition Director) and Chris Ulutupu (Funding and Partnerships) joining the team for a limited contract until February 2025. They will work towards the creation of a dedicated Arts Development Agency for Nelson as per the key recommendations from He Tātai Whetu which sits alongside the creation of an Arts Hub. In addition, we look forward to Andy Meldrum starting his role as Special Projects Manager which will markedly lighten the workload of the currently stretched staff team going forward.

The strategy was adopted by Nelson City Council two years prior and many from the sector are pleased to see the project begin, however the funding landscape on a national level is a different and transformed prospect from when the commitment was adopted by the city. The agency is tasked with finding the best solutions to create a thriving arts ecosystem across the creative industries.

Finally, our sincere thanks to our dedicated voluntary Executive Members, many supporters and funding bodies, we salute them and our wonderful creative community for their enthusiasm, commitment, and resilience.



*Our mission is to promote, initiate and support projects and activities that stimulate and strengthen the artistic and cultural life of our communities.*

**Mā te whiritahi, ka whakatutuki ai ngā pūmanawa ā tāngata**

*Together weaving the realisation of potential*