

**GREY
DISTRICT
ARTS
STRATEGY
2023 - 2028**

“I’m pretty new to making art, but it’s definitely improved my wellbeing and confidence.”

– Lisa

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“Everyone from here knows someone or is related to someone who has artistic talent. It’s awesome. Such local talent. It’s all here. We don’t need to pay people from Christchurch when they’re all here.”

– Cary

Artist Profile

Ivory Wallace (Ivory Racho)

I feel I'm not just a painter... as I love creating in all forms. I play guitar and sing ...I love singing - just love it. I play and sing in church and for our youth group. The most important thing is representing myself and what my vision is, letting people see through my eyes and see the beauty that I see in nature and animals.

When I'm creating I get lost in what I'm painting! Time just passes so quickly. The time to create is something I really have to chase, especially as a mum. I paint in the living room where I claimed the area with the large windows but I need more space now that I have started painting on pots too. Next step is a studio and a shop that gives customers the chance to browse my art and also so I can get to know them.

I am mostly self taught. I've taken it seriously since I moved to New Zealand in 2009. In the Philippines you have to buy your own art supplies in school. I was born in Biliran in the Philippines. I moved to New Zealand with my family. Dad was a mechanic. Dad's employer became like family to us and has helped us make New Zealand our forever home. My husband's parents moved to the West Coast and we came to visit and we just fell in love with it. Now we have a house at Runanga which we never thought we'd be able to have. We're so happy to have that and so happy to live in a place where we fit in.

I really wanted to study fine arts, but not with Asian parents! So I studied accounting! That didn't pan out great when I had my first child in my first year of study. After babies I just really wanted to paint again and so that's what I did! I got such good feedback from family and friends that I have kept going and now I mostly paint on commission from people nationwide. People are mostly wanting portraits of pets that have passed and even those that are still with them. It's quite rewarding to know that what I'm doing is creating joy to those that want to cherish moments with their loved ones.

www.ivorysart.co.nz

www.facebook.com/rachosart/

[@_ivorysart](https://www.instagram.com/_ivorysart)



Foreword

As long time film-makers, residents of the West Coast and patrons of our Regional Art Gallery in Māwhera, we feel strongly about the need for a vibrant and healthy arts scene.

Aotearoa, with a population similar to a small city in other parts of the world, has an arts output above and beyond what might be expected. From pottery, painting, sculpture, writing, music, through to top flight film-making we generate an extraordinary international contribution of outstanding quality.

The contribution the arts make to us here at home, to the health and wellbeing of our society is also considerable. Particularly so, here on the Coast, where our relative isolation means we must rely on ourselves to fulfil our yearnings for the arts. It's not often that the National Orchestra or NZ Ballet or international arts exhibitions come to our towns but we are so fortunate to have many fantastic local artists who fill the spaces.

We believe in offering all encouragement and support to our practitioners in the arts.

Sincerely,

Helen & Alun Bollinger



Introduction

We outline here the collected hopes and wishes of our communities, our desire for a more dynamic landscape - to see ourselves reflected more in our public spaces - to have more opportunities to be creative and express ourselves.

Together, we are creating a vision, a strategy for the arts across the Grey District. This strategy is where we collect together the common language for our shared vision. We describe our goals. It enables us to track where we're at with achieving those goals. It lays out what each of us can bring to help make them happen.

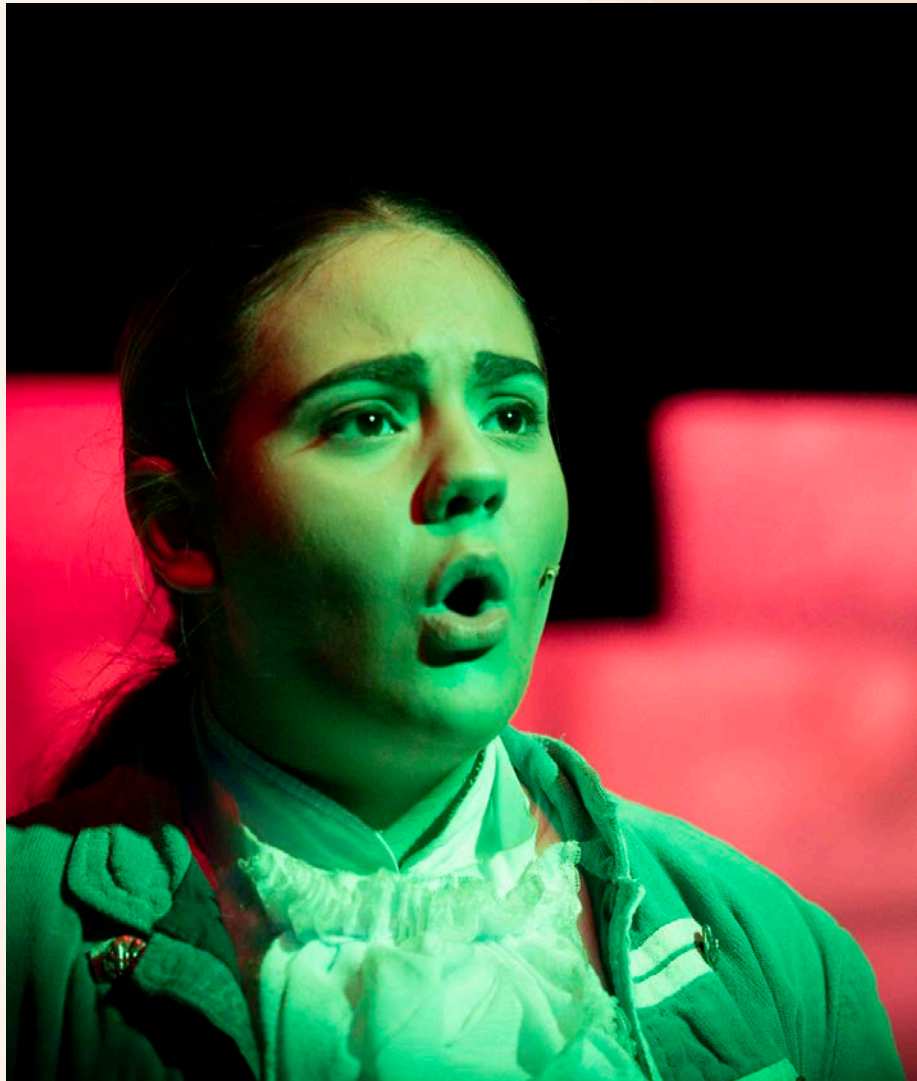
The strategy is intended as an evolving document to help challenge and guide community, investors, and Council when making strategic decisions into the next five or so years.

This document draws on the community's input into the various plans and strategies done in the Grey District over the last ten years, and is largely the result of the feedback we collected from over 170 interviews and surveys of general public and arts sector groups. It focuses on what people have said they want to see happen in the arts space in their communities. It addresses how, through the arts, together, we can help make our communities of the Grey more vibrant, more reflective of who we are, more connected, and thereby more resilient.

It is through the arts that we communicate what is unique to us - as individuals, as a diverse community - and we can express how we're proud of who we are and grateful to live in this beautiful part of the world.

The Grey District Council has a vision in its Long Term Plan for its cultural sector as being proud, unique, interconnected and vibrant. The Council understands that the community needs access to participation in a wide range of recreational, sporting, leisure, art and cultural activities.

As a community, here, together with Council and investors, we set the intention to partner together to meet the goals of this strategy in co-creating the kinds of communities we are all proud to live in.



Approach to the strategy

At the end of 2021 Creative New Zealand offered Councils across New Zealand some funding to create an arts strategy for their district. Using this fund, the Grey District Council contracted the West Coast Society of Arts* to bring together a community-led set of priorities for the arts in our district.

As part of this process we surveyed 151 individuals and interviewed 23 arts-related community groups in the Grey District. We collected information on how people engage with the arts and what might hold them back from being involved in the arts more. We asked what the arts mean to members of our community, and how they imagine the arts contributing to the best-possible future version of the Grey District.

As a further part of community engagement we work-shopped some of the survey questions, and results, in greater depth with the Cultural Sector Network Te Tai o Poutini. This, now ongoing, group was formed in response to early and strong indicators that more connectedness was needed across the sector. Other early survey results indicated that interest in public art was high. We therefore undertook a photographic inventory of public art across the district, collating what we have, and its condition.

We analysed relevant national and local plans and reports impacting the arts including Grey District Council 2021 – 2031 Long Term Plan, Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Strategy 2018-2025, Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) 2022 supporting document, GDC Resident Satisfaction Survey 2022, GDC Public Art Policy - adopted 2015, GDC Signage, Interpretation & Public Art Framework 2014, GDC Economic Development Strategy 2015, and the Greymouth CBD Redevelopment Plan 2019.

The proposed actions in this strategy combine results from our survey of the public and the arts sector with findings from our research and the work previously done for the local plans and strategies.

*The West Coast Society of Arts (WCSA) is a regional arts society based in Māwhera/ Greymouth in Te Tai o Poutini - the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. We are a non-profit organisation formed to run the first public art gallery for Greymouth, which was officially opened by Toss Wollaston in February 1982. This gallery, The Left Bank Art Gallery, is now the regional Gallery for Te Tai o Poutini. We work to support a culture of art and creativity on the West Coast.

www.leftbankartgallery.nz

Artist Profile

Ana Krakosky

I just love to create - to design - to mix different products, techniques, and mediums. The moment that I wake up in the morning... there's always this conversation there... what to learn, what to make... and I feel good when it's like that. It helps me keep everything ordered in my mind and it balances out the academic stuff. While I'm creating... sometimes I'm not thinking about anything... and other times I'm processing all that's going on. I've always got multiple things on the go. If I get to a stage with a piece and I feel that I don't know what to do with it... I just put it to one side and pick up something that I've previously put down.

I have several workspaces. One is a carving and silversmithing workshop. Our lounge is huge and we've got this small TV nook and everything else is dedicated to painting, drawing and creating! My family has been very supportive. They've believed in me even when I haven't. That's made all the difference.

My goal used to be paying off my mortgage but my goal now is just to be at peace and be happy and to love what I do and do it really well. At the moment it's a combination of carving pounamu and metal smithing. But it's almost like design is my main mode of expression... everything comes from that... a sense of visual rightness. I've always been someone who appreciates beauty and harmony in my surroundings.

Because I grew up outside of the marae, disconnected from my iwi, working with pounamu has helped me find my place in life. Feels like something I was meant to do. It's like my history





has lined up behind me. I think if it wasn't for that, I might have moved on to another medium. That spiritual Māori connection is very important to me.

Once I finish my day job I'll branch out into more mediums. I'm a hard materials teacher at secondary level. I love working with kids... it's not teaching them to be creative - it's helping them to learn to be creative... working alongside them and seeing their processes.

It's not that I don't want to teach, but rather that I'll be able to devote more time to my art.

I love it when someone stops and sees something in the work that they connect with. Sometimes it's something that I had in mind when I created it and sometimes it's something that didn't even occur to me. And the thought that in a thousand years time... that some of the things that I've made will still be around... like the things we find from the ancient Egyptians. I feel really privileged and that it's really important that I get it right. It goes beyond me and the person who might buy the work. It goes into the future!

Ana is a graduate of the Jade and Hardstone Carving Course at Tai Poutini Polytechnic and sells her work in galleries all over New Zealand - The Left Bank Art Gallery, Little River Gallery, Craig Potton Gallery, Coolstore Gallery, Kina Gallery, and Kura Galleries in Wellington and Auckland.

© @jade_and_form

Context

The Grey District has a land area of 3,513 km; it stretches roughly from the south banks of the Punakaiki River in the north, as far east as Mt Barron, then southwest to Jacksons and along the Taramakau River to the Tasman Sea. With the total population of its many settlements an estimated 14,200, it is the most densely populated area on the West Coast/Te Tai o Poutini, which in turn is the least populous and least-densely populated area in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

OUR DISTRICT

POPULATION (2018 CENSUS)

Category	Grey District	All New Zealand
Population	13,344*	4,699,755
People per sq km (2013 Census)	3.8	15.9
Median age	43.9 years	37.4 years
Employed full-time	49.1%	50.1%
Unemployed	3.5%	4.0%

*In 2013, the median population for all Councils was 30,096

ETHNIC GROUPS FOR PEOPLE IN GREY DISTRICT AND NEW ZEALAND, 2018 CENSUS

Category	Grey District (%)	New Zealand (%)
European	92.2	70.2
Māori	10.2	16.5
Pacific peoples	1.3	8.1
Asian	2.9	15.1
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	0.4	1.5
Other ethnicity	1.6	1.2
Unemployed	3.5%	4.0%

Māwhera/Greymouth is the largest town in the District and on the West Coast and was established at the mouth of the Grey River/Māwheranui. Ngāti Waewae had lived in the area for a considerable time before European settlement and the town was established at the site of Māwhera Pā during the West Coast Gold Rush of the 1860s. For 150 years the economy of the Grey District was based on coal mining and native timber forestry. Dairy farming and fishing have also become important parts of the economy. Health care and social assistance, retail, construction, education, manufacturing and services are key industries. (greydc.govt.nz)



Whilst Māwhera is often perceived as primarily a service town, it has a rich history of arts and culture, with a number of well-established arts organisations; the Greymouth Competitions Society (est.1916), Greymouth Operatic Society (est.1944), and the Greymouth Municipal Band (formalised circa 1914) are some of the oldest of their kinds in New Zealand. Performance venues in the district range from community halls and churches to the Greymouth Regent Theatre and legendary Barrytown Hall. The Left Bank Art Gallery - the West Coast's regional art gallery in the Greymouth CBD on the town square - houses a nationally-significant contemporary pounamu collection.

The Te Tai Poutini Artist Legacy Project currently underway by the West Coast Society of Arts has identified over fifty creatives with meaningful connections to Te Tai o Poutini who have been influential in the national scene in artistic fields including pottery, pounamu carving, painting and photography. Nationally-significant artists have often sought refuge on the West Coast during their lifetimes, and this place and its people have influenced their artistic and literary work – iconic works include Rita Angus's painting *Tree* and Bill Pearson's novel *Coal Flat*.

ARTS AND OUR ECONOMY

Creative Industry Alliance WeCreate reports that books, music, television and film sectors of New Zealand's creative industries annually contribute more than \$3.5 billion to the national economy and that NZ-wide, between 2000 and 2021, the economic contribution of the arts and creative sector more than doubled (+121 percent) in real terms, outstripping the economy as a whole (+70 percent).

The 2015 Grey District Community Development Strategy SWOT analysis of perceptions of our district lists our natural environment and beautiful landscapes, our image as a healthy place to live, and our good infrastructure and amenities as strengths we can capitalise on to attract new visitors, residents and investors. This arts strategy is an opportunity to celebrate and support the arts and our artists, to develop added-value industries using design and creativity, and to collaborate through the arts and design on innovative solutions to challenges we may come up against.





Similarly, on a more recent and regional level, The Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Strategy 2018-2025 identifies several goals to which the arts can make an important contribution, for example:

- ▶ *Building depth and dimension into the regional economy to attract new business* - businesses are people, and the arts bring depth and dimension to people's lived experience of a region. The arts can encourage innovation, investment, and spending that benefits local businesses and aligned sectors such as hospitality, tourism and education
- ▶ *Developing culture and heritage tourism to grow the visitor economy* - creative arts are an excellent vehicle for developing and delivering inspiring and innovative projects
- ▶ *Better outcomes beyond economics* - the broader social, cultural and environmental outcomes described in the document as important to Māori may be supported by mahi toi and creative arts, which can connect communities, uplift the stories of mana whenua and promote a sense of belonging and pride for all

“I would want to see a shared cultural facility, museum, library.”
– Robert

Artist Profile



Paul Maunder

Theatre is my first love. In terms of skills; I'm a theatre person, a film person and a writer. With theatre, you just need a space and some people willing to work with you... whereas writing, and film, are mediated by publishers and producers. Money. A capitalist venture.

I've probably spent all of my creative life finding the gaps... where things aren't all sorted out, stitched up by the system and then working in those gaps... where the opportunities are. Somewhere in the 90s we decided to call ourselves cultural workers. Culture being ...how people organise their experience internally and externally in the world. My definition of art being... showing a kind of people in a kind of place. My work is interactive, the ideas and issues come from the community, the artist is in reciprocal relationship with the community, there's an element of education or advocacy or celebration, we're producing something more than an art object... we're working with people, and everyone is creative.

It's a journey really. The start was trying to make sense of being a New Zealand settler. Trying to make sense of the cultural paradigm of being a Pākehā New Zealander. My early plays were exploring this and so was the work I did in television. I explored people's experiences living here... solo mums before there was the DPB, directing the 1979 film - Sons For The Return Home...

I tried to understand biculturalism. My work took me touring the major marae in the '80s. I got a grant to work in Zimbabwe. Which took me into community theatre in Petone in the '90s. We came to the Coast with a play, played the Hilton in Blackball... it felt different, the environment was amazing. I was sick of the commodification of city culture. There was a need here. A need for organising in the community. A Cultural Worker. We built a life here. Caroline started work as a midwife. We started a theatre group, the museum in Blackball... studying, writing; practising writing really... started the Readers and Writers Festival, Classics in the Bathhouse. Just recently we opened the Kotuku Project... a year of hard slog, project managing the repair and upgrade of the historic building - Jack's Mill School - situated at Kotuku. Now it's a residential centre for the exploration of social change - as well as a community resource... hoping to work in an element of guiding people into the future... helping people explore new tools for dealing with crises.

In the 2023 New Year Honours, Paul was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to the arts and the community. He achieved a doctorate in Theatre and Film Studies in 2010.

paulmaunder.com
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Maunder





"We would like some connection to us and our community made visible - here doesn't feel Māori, we can't see it reflected. We would like to see access, provide access to Toi Māori. Accessing funds to support this is difficult."

- Eli

"I really appreciate the Council having earthquake-strengthened the Left Bank Art Gallery building. Personally I'm disappointed that the History House building hasn't been recognised and strengthened - BUT there's an opportunity to do something even better in conjunction with the new library."

- Stewart

"Greymouth has work to do. It's a service town, but when it comes to art, it's got nothing on Westport or Hokitika."

- Anonymous

"I am passionate that art enhances people's perceptions of life. I believe in positivity, encouragement + individuality. I learn new perceptions for myself from every art exhibition, course, talking with other artists ...finding out what people think."

- Nikki

Findings

Most of the questions in our survey were open-ended, so it is remarkable that such strong patterns emerge in the responses. The themes that emerged were echoed by significant proportions of respondents.

Much of our survey data and research tells us there is still appetite for the proposals in the 2019 Greymouth CBD Redevelopment Plan and those aspects of other district plans that apply to the arts.

The strongest themes are:

- ▶ **Increasing vibrancy:** More public art in our communities. Revitalise the Central Business District
- ▶ **Participation:** For everybody - in arts activities, in community life
- ▶ **Celebrating our assets:** Showing who we are, celebrating what we have, enticing visitors to stay longer
- ▶ **Boosting well-being:** Increasing access to creativity, connection and belonging for all community members.

INCREASING VIBRANCY

“I feel a sense of pride in the way my district looks and feels”

Every year the Grey District Council Resident Satisfaction Survey asks if we agree or disagree with this statement. In 2022 only 34% of respondents agreed. That proportion is significantly lower than in 2015, when the GDC Economic Development Strategy chose this as a measure, with a target of 80%. As the 2022 survey notes, “those who do not feel a sense of pride primarily mentioned the District is run down, untidy and in need of better maintenance, that the Greymouth Central Business District is dying with lots of empty shops...”



Data from the Resident Satisfaction Survey shows this perception of a dying CBD has been increasing steadily for the last 10 years.

In our Arts Strategy survey we asked how the arts can contribute to the best possible future version of the Grey District. This was an open question revealing strong patterns in what people wanted.

Three of the four top results focus on increasing vibrancy, two specifically on upgrading the Māwhera Central Business District:

20% of respondents said they would like to see more public art works, including murals and sculptures.

18% of respondents said the arts could help beautify the town and increase vibrancy. They proposed ideas including having artists be part of urban planning and development, choosing a colour palette for downtown, having annual competitions for best looking building, having artists create garden areas, and creating a covered performance space in the town square.

A further 14% of respondents proposed uses for empty buildings, including pop-up events and galleries, artists studios, window displays and fully repurposing key heritage buildings.

These survey results strongly echo the 2019 CBD Redevelopment Plan's recommendations about the importance of storytelling, inclusivity and representation, repurposing empty spaces, using local talent, and adding colour.





PARTICIPATION

A strong theme in our survey results was people's enjoyment in active participation in all aspects of the arts, and their desire for more opportunities to be creating and participating.

In the visual arts there were repeated calls for more workshops and classes, and several for a maker space/creative hub.

In the performing arts, there was a strong desire to have more live music of all kinds, and from local performers, for better venues to support this, or, for venues to better support this.

Proposals for an outdoor, but covered, venue came up repeatedly, often suggested for the town square area. A need for a practice venue and a performance venue that was not a bar was also identified a number of times.

The strong desire for more live music was evident in the answers to several different survey questions.

Another aspect of participation is to involve people from the creative sector in the urban renewal process. The Greymouth CBD Redevelopment Plan 2019 recognises the importance of community and arts sector participation:

“Arts, community involvement, greening (rewilding) of Greymouth and events are all a major part of the revitalising of the town centre. A strategy and action plan should be developed with both organisations and individuals involved in these fields to pull them all together to form a Creative Activation Trust to develop and manage urban arts, events and planting.”

CELEBRATING OUR ASSETS

By 2025, the Grey District will be a progressive, growing, vibrant province, renowned for its people, culture, talent, environment and desirable location
– (Grey District Community Economic Development Strategy 2015)

Running through the survey results was an obvious sense of love and appreciation for our environment, and a belief that the arts can help us make more out of what we have and more fully realise the potential of our region.

Themes of inclusivity and of fostering a vibrant, diverse community, in which people feel a sense of belonging and pride, came up often. Interestingly, people often indicated not only that they wanted to experience their community this way, but also that it would entice visitors to stay longer, thus having an economic as well as social benefit.

In response to our open question “how can the arts contribute to the best possible future version of the Grey District” :

9% of respondents proposed promoting the Grey District as an arts destination and boosting arts tourism. There were repeated calls for organised tours of local artists’ studios, and for ‘buy local’ campaigns and raising the profile of local arts and crafts.

7.5 % of respondents wanted an outdoor but covered downtown performance venue.



This links to the 13% of respondents who said they wanted more live music in answer to an open ended question about what they felt was missing in the local arts scene.

The Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Strategy doesn't directly mention the arts, but identifies several important goals where we see the arts playing an important role:

To attract new business “the West Coast needs to build depth and dimension into the regional economy” - we argue, not just the economy, but the lived experience.

And to grow the visitor economy the strategy suggests “culture & heritage tourism development”. Current tourist offerings focus on wilderness and adventure - the arts can both enhance this aspect and offer further options.

BOOSTING WELLNESS AND WHOLENESS

Our survey shows that respondents recognise that the arts bring benefits beyond a narrow, dollar-focused measure, both on an individual and societal level.

We asked “Out of ten, how necessary do you feel the arts are to a healthy society?”. Nobody at all scored this 0 to 4, and 67% gave it the highest possible score of 10, or “absolutely essential”.

49% of respondents said having a thriving arts scene available contributed substantially to their decisions to stay in the district (that is, they scored it between 8 and 10 out of 10. Only 22% scored this question lower than 5).

People named 44 different arts groups that they participated in, and said how much these activities meant to them.

We asked “Can you access all the arts you want in your life?”. 56% of respondents said no, and 43% said yes. Most people had specific things they'd like to see more of, but some sectors of the community perceive a general lack of access or empowerment. Some Māori have told us they feel unwelcome in current spaces and some other people feel the arts are elitist or unaffordable.

In 2020, commissioned by Creative New Zealand, Colmar Brunton conducted two surveys for New Zealanders and the Arts — Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi: one with adults (aged 15 and over) and one with young people (aged 10–14). A conclusion from that study was - more New Zealanders appreciate the arts' powerful role in connecting whānau and communities, but access to the arts could be improved.

These findings are drawn from 151 individual responses to our Grey District Arts Strategy Survey - as well as interviews with representatives from arts groups and businesses. A list can be found in the acknowledgments.

Many of the questions we asked were qualitative in nature. Some of the figures quoted above come directly from quantitative response data, and some from our interpretation and collation of qualitative responses.

Early Outcomes

Early on in the survey process two things became quickly apparent.

There were repeated statements about a lack of connection and cohesiveness amongst those working in the arts across the Grey District and also across the West Coast. Altogether, there seemed to be a lack of understanding around who was in our cultural sector and what it was made up of. We, the West Coast Society of Arts, realised we could begin to address this right away, and that doing so would benefit our Strategy process.

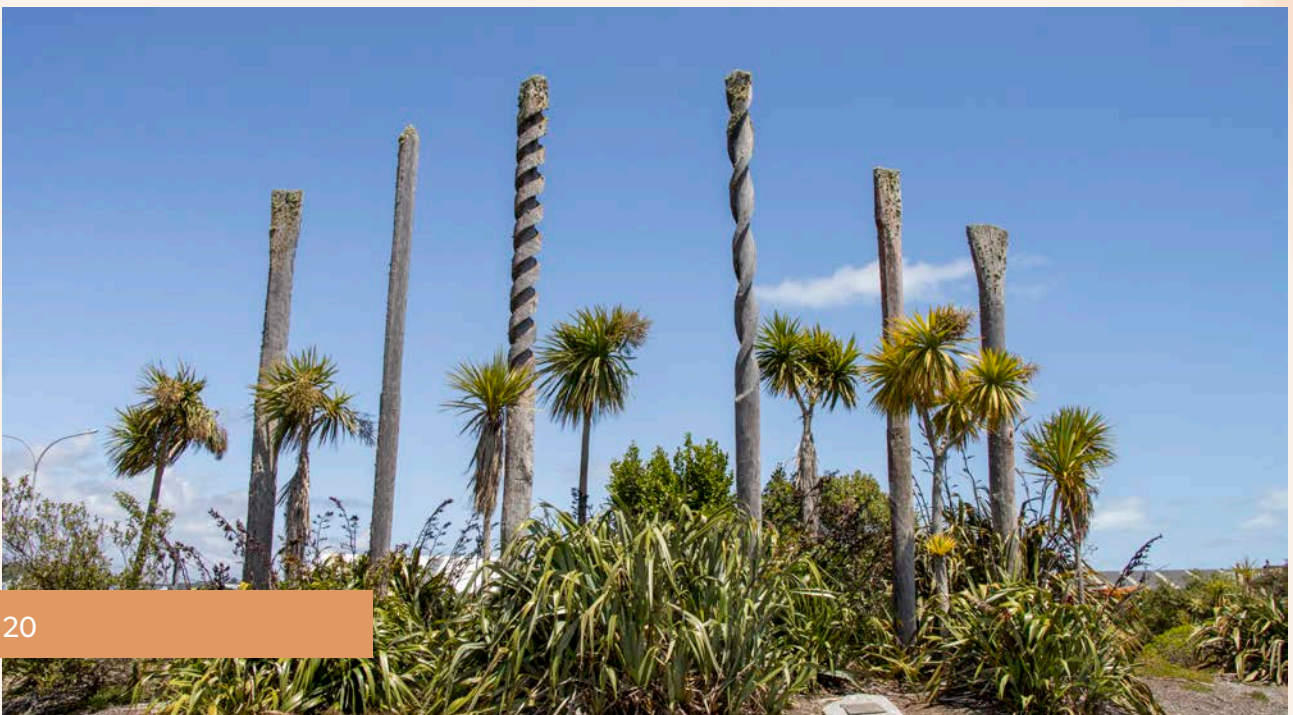
We have now held three Cultural Sector Network meetings. At the first one, we collected feedback around how everyone would like to see these proceed. It was clear there was a desire for some form, but also time for networking and making connections. Subsequent events took account of that and were thoroughly enjoyable and also productive. These events will continue at roughly three monthly intervals. We believe they will serve to strengthen and enhance our creative sector and wider communities.

There was also a surprising and steady call for more public art.

We realised we needed to know what public art already existed across our district, so we engaged a local photographer (Lynne Berry) to research and identify what there was, and where. She went out scouting across the district photographing what she could. As there can be quite a grey zone between monuments and public art, we determined that Lynne should just document whatever she could and not to be too exclusive. Mostly, if a work was believed to be on a private, domestic property, we did not include it. The database is by no means exhaustive and there is still much to be known about the provenance of the works, but an excellent start has been made.

It is quite clear that there is not a large amount of public art, and what there is has suffered from lack of maintenance.

These issues are addressed in the strategy and will need further attention.





Vision

The vision is drawn from the collective feedback in our survey.

Our communities working together, creating multiple and diverse opportunities for involvement and connection - out of which we express ourselves; we tell our many stories and make them visible in different forms across our district

We are working toward a vibrant and inclusive social and cultural landscape which we all enjoy living in and feel proud of.

Visitors enjoy it too and want to stay longer to experience more of it. Creative people want to join us and our economy thrives.

Creativity is valued and actively practised and our creative sector is a leading force.

Artist Profile

Fi Ginivan

I'm a 3D artist. I don't sculpt the works. Instead of working on a flat canvas, I'm always looking for quirky things to paint on. Originally I was into everything being recycled, but I've had to buy in things from overseas - to satisfy the market. But they still have to have something different about them. People love animals, so that's where I've moved into more... but I'm still searching out secondhand things. And lights! I love light! It's great to combine something practical with art. I've found a little niche for myself there.

The mural on Mackay St was a whole new experience. I started with painting Chorus boxes... and then the doors on the Council utility buildings. I love it. Give me more! It's a whole new pathway.

I learned piano as a kid. I was in the Christchurch Youth Orchestra at 18 - we were playing a concert over here... and instead of taking the bus I hitchhiked. And never left. 30 years. My son is a 6th-gen Coaster.

I have a degree in education so I teach piano from my studio in Greymouth. That's how I mainly make my living. Although I'd love to live off my painting! I don't need to be rich or anything, but I'd like to get by. Maybe I should be painting something more mainstream!

All my spare moments are taken up with painting. I've always painted in my kitchen but now I've got a studio... that gets me out of Catherine's hair! I paint till 4 in the morning, and often! Especially before Art shows. I've been a regular at Christchurch and Dunedin art shows for a few years. This year in Auckland will be my second time there. And Art In The Park. I totally recommend people try going in those kinda shows... it gave me confidence and I got into galleries. And heaps of good feedback even if I'm not selling.

It's not so much about making a statement for me at the moment. I thought that's what I might do... because I have strong political views. But doing the work is enough for now. I would like to explore more ideas around body image in the future. My art gives me a sense of purpose, I suffer from depression and my art really keeps me going. Gives me an outlet for my creativity...and originally that was all it was but now I make a little bit of money off it.

I'm trying to strike a balance...trying to make work that sells but not losing myself and sense of originality in the process. And it's important to keep evolving!

Fi won the People's Choice Award at the Auckland Art Show in 2020 and Celebrity Award at the Christchurch Art Show in 2018. Fi currently has work in galleries in the Coromandel, Mapua and Christchurch.

 facebook.com/fi.artist/







Goals

Four themes have been identified running through public feedback and existing plans, and these themes have informed our goals.

- ▶ **Increasing Vibrancy** - more public art in our communities! Revitalise the Central Business District (CBD)
- ▶ **Participation** - in arts activities, in community life
- ▶ **Celebrating our assets** - showing who we are, celebrating what we have, enticing visitors to stay longer
- ▶ **Boosting well-being** - increase access to creativity, connection and belonging for all community members.

We propose the following actions to reach these goals, and identify potential leadership and level of urgency for each one.



INCREASING VIBRANCY

The arts make our civic landscape exciting! People love coming to Māwhera!

Rationale: Telling our stories/seeing our unique cultures reflected, attracting visitors, increasing civic pride, enhancing our own experience.

Challenges: Lack of coordination, ongoing maintenance, funding plan, over-committed volunteers.

Actions:	Priority level	Leadership
<p>Set up the Creative Activation Team (CAT) proposed in the 2019 CBD redevelopment plan - This needs to be Sector-Led, including people from our local iwi, Council, and ideally connecting to young people and the wider community. This would be an independent advisory body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This team would help coordinate public art, create relationships with artists and volunteers/public, make regional connections, ensure positive messaging, map and enhance pathways for increasing prosperity for creatives, create opportunities for networking across the sector and grow into a pivotal role. 	1	WCSA/GDC
<p>Create a paid role for a district Cultural Activator (CA). This role would be responsible for assisting many of the proposals in this strategy, including support of the Creative Activation Team..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Support practitioners to develop, coordinate, resource ideas, to tell their stories ◆ Coordinate networking opportunities and events, promote collaboration across the sector ◆ Could house the arts coordinator in an empty CBD building 	1	CAT/GDC/WCSA
<p>Develop a cohesive plan and resource stream for maintaining the existing artwork across the Grey. Act quickly, start with Tony Manuel's Gateway/Pou. Adjust Public Art Policy if necessary.</p>	2	CAT/GDC
<p>Increase the amount of high-quality public art in the CBD. (Connecting Ara Pounamu to new public art and CBD revival could be an opportunity and priority.)</p>	2	CAT
<p>Telling our stories. An opportunity to address the historical imbalance of who is represented in public art through collaboration with iwi.</p>	1	Iwi/CAT
<p>Activate empty downtown spaces with pop-up events and installations.</p>	1	CAT/Mawhera Inc/landlords/GDC
<p>Complete work on gateways and CBD redevelopment plan.</p>	In progress	GDC/BPA

PARTICIPATION

Diverse and accessible opportunities to engage

Rationale: Strong desire from community as evidenced in Arts Strategy survey data.

Challenges: Affordability, choice and variety, paying performers, tutors, organisers.

Actions:	Priority level	Leadership
Cultural Activator/Creative Activation Team helps coordinate and promotes activities, and supports existing efforts	2	CA
Resourcing for Kaupapa Māori creative spaces	2	Iwi/CAT/GDC
Cultural Activator helps facilitate local groups' access to funding	2	CA
Enhance communication and access to information about cultural activities	2	CAT/GDC



CELEBRATING OUR ASSETS

Our stories, who we are, made manifest in our environment. Our own enjoyment of our district is enhanced, increasing numbers of visitors recognising the Grey as an arts destination

Rationale: We love living here - we communicate that and all that our district offers

Challenges: Visitors don't stay long in the district. Ensuring messaging is congruent with experience

Actions:	Priority level	Leadership
Raise profile of local arts and artists through the Te Tai Poutini Artist Legacy Project, an annual Open Studio tour, and an arts trail map	In progress	WCSA/CAT
Investigate how the arts can help retain visitors for longer in the District	2	CAT/DWC
Promote the district as an arts destination	2	DWC/CAT
Support existing efforts for annual arts / performing arts festival/s	2	All

BOOSTING WELL-BEING

Safe spaces to connect, a thriving and inclusive community

Rationale: We recognise the power of the arts to boost wellbeing, but some sectors of the community perceive a lack of access or empowerment

Challenges: Feelings of isolation, some Māori have told us they feel unwelcome in current spaces, some other people feel the arts are elitist or unaffordable

Actions:	Priority level	Leadership
Facilitate and support the development of family-friendly and diversely-welcoming spaces where group, cultural and arts activities can be programmed	1	CAT
Resource education around inclusivity, focusing on biculturalism	1	GDC

DWC = Development West Coast

GDC = Grey District Council

WCSA = West Coast Society of Arts

BPA = Greymouth/Māwhera Business and Promotions Association

Iwi = Te Runanga o Ngati Waewae



***“If a community is supported to express itself
then it will be the best version of itself.”
– Angela***



Sources

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- ▶ Takiwā Poutini Whanau and Community Voice 30th April 2023
- ▶ Te Tai o Poutini District Plan (Proposed)
- ▶ Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) 2022 supporting document
- ▶ WeCreate (Creative Industries Alliance)

(All sources available online)

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West Coast Technology Education Trust
West Coast Theatre Trust (The Regent
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Programme
Whare Manaaki o te Tai Poutini

All of the individuals who were interviewed and who responded to the survey - thank you very much.

Special thanks to Penny Kirk for making sure this opportunity was realised. Thanks to Mère Hearty for getting us started and to Missy Campbell for ensuring Māori voice was heard.

Artist Profile

Cary Lancaster

I'm incredibly passionate about performing arts. I love to see people experiencing the joy it brings. I'm always working on trying to create memorable events. Artistically for me it's always focussing on the aesthetics and professionalism of the performance. The professionalism being... getting it as good as it can be in that place and time. Sometimes we've pulled the plug because we feel that we haven't quite got there. I've been to events in Christchurch and just thought - what the hell? It's a hobby for some people... but it's a skill that can be honed and turned into a professional career. You can tell when people are winging it.

It is ridiculously hard work. Without Lisa's understanding it would be soo much harder. I'd still do it - even if I was living in a tent! But It's 24/7. I don't expect people to know or even see the hard work, really. All their attention and experience should be focussed on that

event. Ideally they understand that only certain people can pull off events like this... but they don't need to know how. It might ruin the spectacle.

Within the course of a production... I tend to occupy each space for a period of time... this helps me to know how it's going for each department, how they work, how they're tracking ...not so much with costuming, but overall design and aesthetics - writing, sound, staging and direction, financials, promotion, performance, music. It also helps if we're short staffed! For New Year's Eve 2021 we were short a band, so I pulled one together and took the vocal lead with Montana and on we went!

SuperBrain ProductioNZ has grown out of my professional collaboration with Jamie Mosher. She auditioned when I was directing for the Operatic Society and she was ridiculously good. It was inspirational. There was limited pathways for the kids to experience musical theatre and music performance at a professional standard. We both wanted to do more modern, relatable theatre. We wanted to create theatre that was so good that people could be paid for it. They put so much work in! We haven't quite reached the paying actors point yet, but we'll get there! We believe in Greymouth. It's an amazing place. Coasters are an anomaly. Everyone from here knows someone or is related to someone who has artistic talent. It's awesome. Such local talent. It's all here. We don't need to pay people from Christchurch when the talent and skill is all here.

<https://www.superbrain.co.nz>





Summary

This strategy is intended as an evolving document to help challenge and guide community, investors, and Council when making strategic decisions into the next five or so years.

Drawing on funding from Creative New Zealand, the Grey District Council contracted the West Coast Society of Arts to bring together a community-led plan for the arts in our district.

We analysed relevant national and local plans and reports impacting the arts including: GDC 2021 – 2031 Long Term Plan, Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan 2022, GDC Resident Satisfaction Survey 2022, GDC Public Art Policy 2015, GDC Signage, Interpretation & Public Art Framework 2014, GDC Economic Development Strategy 2015, Greymouth CBD Redevelopment Plan 2019, and the recent Takiwā Poutini report.

We surveyed 151 individuals and interviewed 23 arts-related and community groups in the Grey District.

In our survey we asked how the arts can contribute to the best possible future version of the Grey District. Three of the four top results focus on increasing vibrancy, two specifically on upgrading the CBD:

- ▶ 20% of respondents said they would like to see more public artworks, including murals and sculptures.
- ▶ 18% of respondents said the arts could help beautify the town and increase vibrancy.
- ▶ 14% of respondents proposed uses for empty buildings, including pop-up events and galleries, artist studios, window displays and fully re-purposing key heritage buildings.

“Arts should be seen as part of a wider Creative Industries sector that could provide a major focus for future West Coast development, supporting NZ creative/digital strategies, providing employment opportunities, encouraging creative businesses and people to move to the Coast.”
– Andrew

Four themes have been identified running through public feedback and existing plans, and these themes have informed our goals.

▶ **Increasing vibrancy: More public art in our communities.**

Revitalise the Central Business District.

1. Set up the Creative Activation Team (CAT)
2. Create a paid role for a district Cultural Activator (CA)
3. A cohesive plan and resource stream for maintaining the existing artwork across the Grey.
4. Increase the amount of high-quality public art in the CBD.
5. Address the historical imbalance of who is represented in public art through partnership with Iwi.
6. Activate empty downtown spaces with pop-up events and installations.

▶ **Participation: For everybody - in arts activities, in community life**

1. Cultural Activator/Creative Activation Team coordinates and promotes activities, and supports existing efforts such as WCSA and Art4Me.
2. Resourcing for Kaupapa Māori creative spaces.
3. Cultural Activator helps facilitate local groups' access to funding.
4. Enhance access to information and communication about cultural activities.

▶ **Celebrating our assets: Showing who we are, celebrating what we have, enticing visitors to stay longer.**

1. Raise profile of local arts and artists through the Artist Legacy Project, an annual Open Studio tour, and an arts trail map.
2. Investigate how the arts can help retain visitors for longer in the District.
3. Promote the district as an arts destination
4. Support existing efforts for annual performing arts festival

▶ **Boosting well-being: Increasing access to creativity, connection and belonging for all community members**

1. Facilitate and support the development of family-friendly and diversely-welcoming spaces where group cultural and arts activities can be programmed.
2. Resource education around inclusivity, focusing on biculturalism.

“The artists in this region are first rate and worthy of solid support. Support of the arts also benefits the wider community in terms of normalising the value of creative work and creating cultural understanding of the arts. It also makes the region more interesting to visit.”

- Lesley





Produced by:
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Cover image: Katrina Brown
Art Soup/Sam Duckor-Jones collaboration for
Grey District Youth Trust Christmas Parade float