**Response ID ANON-FS2Y-XQC3-3**

Submitted to **Mental Health and Wellbeing Long-Term Pathway**

Submitted on **2021-03-24 15:05:33**

**Introduction**

**What is your organisation?**

**Organisation:**

Te Ora Auaha - the Community Wellbeing Alliance Aotearoa

**Is there a community or sector area you relate to, or are representing with your submission?**

Other (please see next question)

**If there is another community or sector area you relate to, please share in the text box below.**

**Please share in the text box below:**

Te Ora Auaha is a national network and resource for anyone interested in the contribution of the arts to health and wellbeing. This submission represents the collective response of the leadership group, including people from various sectors and centres.

**Do you work for a mental health and/or addiction provider?**

No

**Principles**

**Uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the principles of Te Tiriti underpin all actions in Kia Kaha.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

Te Ora Auaha acknowledges Te Tiriti plays a central role in supporting all New Zealanders to live lives they value, full of meaning and purpose. Colonisation has taken a heavy toll on the wellbeing of Tangata Whenua, Pacific peoples and all those who have been economically or socially displaced and now call Aotearoa home. Decolonisation processes can bring healing and new ways of imagining our future together – such processes underpin the wellbeing journey of individuals and communities and can lead to enhanced mental wellbeing at a national, regional, community and individual level.

The arts, culture and creativity can play a unique role in the complex process of educating and reconciling our people to our history and reimagining a more just future. Māori arts, te reo Māori and tikanga can also provide therapeutic pathways for Tangata Whaiora to find healing and wellbeing.

**Equity – people have different levels of advantage and experience and require different approaches and resources to get equitable**

**outcomes.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

Many people and communities support their wellbeing, and the well-being of others, by creating or interacting with the arts. There is now a strong evidence base for the multiple ways the arts can contribute to equity (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017; Fancourt & Finn, 2019). As the evaluation of Ōtautahi Creative Spaces Trust illustrates, many people, particularly Tangata Whaiora, and youth, do not have equitable access to the arts.

Increasing equity of access, including increasing arts education, will redress this. We support concerted efforts, policy and funding to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to the arts as a means to individual and collective/community wellbeing.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Well-being. (2017). Creative health: The artsfor health and wellbeing. <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf>

Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). Health evidence network synthesis report: What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review (Report no. 67), World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329834/9789289054553-eng.pdf>

**People and whānau at the centre – whānau are a crucial part of the support network for individuals experiencing challenges. This principle seeks to strengthen the capacity of people and whānau to lead their own pathways to wellbeing.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

One way in which the arts and creativity promote wellbeing is by nurturing agency, a sense of identity and a sense of purpose. Evidence suggests that enabling people to engage with and practice creativity allows people to reimagine and redefine identity eg a ‘service user’ ‘becomes’ ‘ a poet/painter/potter/dancer (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017; Fancourt & Finn, 2019). There is evidence that young people in New Zealand propose that greater access to activities, such as the arts, would help to improve their mental health and wellbeing (Fleming et al., 2020). Services and funding should prioritise opportunities for individuals and whānau to engage with the arts as a pathway to wellbeing. (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Well-being. (2017). Creative health: The arts for health and wellbeing.

<https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf>)

Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). Health evidence network synthesis report: What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review (Report no. 67), World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329834/9789289054553-eng.pdf>

Fleming, T., Ball, J., Kang, K., Sutcliffe, K., Lambert, M., Peiris-John, R., & Clark, T. (2020). Youth19: Youth Voice Brief. The Youth19 Research Group. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75ccef37259122e59aa/t/5f3394a2654885030c051243/1597215912482/Youth19+Youth+Voice+Brief.pdf>

**Community focus – strong communities provide a foundation of support and connection which is vital for mental wellbeing.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

Arts and creativity can enable communities to grow and celebrate their uniqueness. Evidence shows engagement in the arts can benefit communities in many ways: fostering co-operation, social consciousness, and civic engagement and action; cultivating friendships; connecting different and divided groups; generating a sense of connection to and pride in a neighbourhood/place; transforming local areas and creating common resources (Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Arts Council England, 2017) An effective mental health strategy recognises and supports opportunities to build social capital and local knowledge via the arts, culture and creativity.

Fleming, T., Ball, J., Kang, K., Sutcliffe, K., Lambert, M., Peiris-John, R., & Clark, T. (2020). Youth19: Youth Voice Brief. The Youth19 Research Group. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75ccef37259122e59aa/t/5f3394a2654885030c051243/1597215912482/Youth19+Youth+Voice+Brief.pdf>

Arts Council of England. (2012). Be creative be well. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Be_Creative_Be_Well.pdf>

**Uphold human rights – human rights are central to implementing an effective, equitable and balanced future mental health and addiction system.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27, states everyone has the right to participate in and enjoy culture and the arts. Protecting people’s right to participate in the arts, ensures continued cultural expression and engagement with tangible and intangible cultural heritage. New Zealand is a signatory to the declaration, a commitment to ensuring that all people are able to access, participate in, and enjoy the arts and culturally relevant forms of creative expression.

**Collaboration – working together is vital to create stability, efficiency and enhanced support for New Zealanders.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

Te Ora Auaha would like to see greater recognition that mental wellbeing is promoted through arts and creativity , formally and informally. Effective collaboration recognises that much valuable ‘therapeutic’ work is carried out informally, by non-clinicians who nurture and support people to make or engage with the arts.

Ensuring funding and other support for collaborating with non-clinical community partners will enhance wellbeing outcomes for many New Zealanders.

Collaboration is a big challenge when this work does not fit neatly into any particular sector. Arts, creativity and wellbeing is nurtured in a complex ecosystem and there is need to support cross sectoral working to redesign systems, and work across silos within the wider social sector. Arts and wellbeing initiatives do not want to compete for precious service funding but we do seek recognitions for our valuable contribution, and the potential which has not yet been fully developed.

**Innovation – innovative and original approaches to mental and social wellbeing support will facilitate transformation of the mental health and addiction system.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

Aotearoa New Zealand is home to highly innovative, distinct approaches to arts, health and wellbeing, some of which have received international recognition. But, the sector overall is fragmented and under resourced. Sector development, capability building, collaboration and knowledge sharing are inhibited by a lack of policy and funding support.

It is important not to jeopardise the sustainability and growth of small and successful programmes by prioritising innovation over long term funding options. In fact, evidence suggests that greater innovation and experimentation with new approaches is more likely when funding is adequate, secure and stable (Mullen, 2019).

Innovation is not automatically the answer, especially if there is no in-built evaluation to ensure the evidence base for new and old interventions is robust. (Mullen, M. (2019). Applied theatre: Economies. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.)

**Focus areas**

**What support is most needed to build the ability of communities to initiate and lead mental wellbeing initiatives?**

**Please provide your comments in the text box below:**

Good population mental health outcomes are linked to strong social capital. Funding for community initiatives and small NGOs needs to be accessible and sustained, including investment in evaluation and professional development. Many people rely on local organisations to sustain and build their mental health, through enabling art and cultural practice ie kapa haka, weaving, dancing, etc. Resilient communities are often characterised by strong social and cultural networks, with multiple small clubs and outlets for such practice.

While Te Ora Auaha applauds the increased funding for Creative Spaces, we would like to see this built on to ensure equitable access across regions, and sustainable funding for local organisations so that they are a viable pathway for many tangata whaiora to access wellbeing through creativity.

Further, Te Ora Auaha would like to see investment in Arts on Prescription initiatives across the regions, with significant investment in co-creation to ensure equity of access and a focus on community-led services. This may involve collaboration at national, regional and local levels with arts galleries, museums and libraries.

**What examples of mental health and addiction services are working well, and what makes these successful?**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box below:**

Te Ora Auaha applauds the $18million funding boost for creative spaces, announced earlier this year. Ōtautahi Creative Spaces Trust is just one example of how this type of work can transform people’s lives - <https://www.ihi.co.nz/what-we-do/otautahi-creative-spaces-evaluation>

Peer support initiatives to support arts are also very valuable in building and sustaining social connection and self expression eg <https://awarenesscanterbury.com/mad-poets-society/>

What makes these successful is the way they support people to grow their sense of identity and purpose, as well as practice the five ways to wellbeing, outside a clinical setting.

**Enablers**

**Workforce – growing and supporting a sustainable, diverse, competent and confident mental health and addiction workforce.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

Te Ora Auaha would like to see significant investment in arts-based training and professional development of the mental health promotion workforce, and support for many community and arts workers to understand that their work involves mental wellbeing promotion.

**Information and data – timely, accurate and comprehensive information and data will be crucial for longer-term success.**

**• Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

This data needs to include greater awareness of the international and local evidence base for arts as a means to mental wellbeing, including investment in evaluation so that the impact of arts-based interventions are better understood and valued.

**Policy and regulation – policy decisions and legislative changes set the framework within which on-the-ground services operate.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

At the moment arts for health and wellbeing is not explicitly covered by any policy. This hinders the development of a strong, innovative, accessible and thriving community of practice. We recommend policy and legislation changes are needed:

• To recognise the significant role of the arts in maximising the potential for individual, community, social health and wellbeing.

• To invest in national strategic leadership and resourcing to resolve the deep-seated, significant challenges to the growth and sustainability of this sector.

• To develop a national arts strategy to embed the arts across all government policy areas.

• To adequately resource national bodies representing the sector.

• To invest in high-quality professional development, evaluation and research to strengthen quality practice.

• To fund research at a national level to better understand the strengths and needs of arts, health and well-being in Aotearoa.

(Critical Research Unit in Applied Theatre, 2019)

**Investment – ongoing investments and enhancements to existing funding arrangements will be critical for ensuring people in Aotearoa**

**New Zealand have free and easy access to a range of mental wellbeing support.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

Please see previous statements.

Many aspects of the funding context go against what is known about good practice in arts, health and well-being. We propose six opportunities for change to support a flourishing arts-for-youth-well-being sector in Aotearoa:

1. Given the overall policy ‘turn to well-being’, a collaborative, cross-sector fund for arts and well-being could be formed.

2. In line with recommendations from the funding sector itself, long-term funding and alternatives to contestable grants can be explored.

3. More funders to offer core, unrestricted funding; to ‘invest in the “what” and let [the] organisations you fund determine the “how”’ (Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, 2019, cited in J R McKenzie & Centre for Social Impact, 2019, p. 21).

4. Funders can promote equitable cultural well-being by developing models that are ‘responsive to the cultural practices, aspirations and sovereignty of indigenous communities’ (J R McKenzie Trust & Centre for Social Impact, 2019, p. 27)

5. Funders can commit to providing full funding for salaries, acknowledging volunteer time as matched funding, and addressing salary pay parity.

6. Researchers, practitioners, funders and policy makers could collaborate to establish platforms for knowledge, evidence and practice sharing. (Mullen, Walls, Ahmad and O’Connor, forthcoming)

**Technology – ensuring resources reach people with limited access to digital technology is a priority.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

Digital innovations always need to be well evaluated to ensure that they are achieving their aim, and that they are equitably accessible

**Leadership – effective communication, collaboration and guidance from leaders will help ensure responses are coordinated, mental wellbeing needs are met, and individuals and whānau feel supported.**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided below:**

**What are the key longer-term shifts (ie, in the next 6-10 years) you think are needed to support system transformation?**

**Please share your thoughts in the text box provided:**

**Other thoughts**

**Please share any other thoughts in the text box provided below.**

**Please provide your comments in the text box below:**

Te Ora Auaha acknowledges that mental wellbeing is not the same as the absence of mental illness, drawing on Corey Keyes work on the double continua of wellbeing. The national conversation about mental health/illness has become too focused in deficit models and clinical, often pathologising, solutions. Our alliance believes that arts and creativity offer the opportunity for a paradigm shift, since practicing or engaging with art enables individuals and communities to grow their sense of agency, calm, safety, connection and hope.