

**YOUTH ARTS NEW ZEALAND  
STRATEGY**

2020 - 2023



**YANZ**



THE FUTURE IS CREATIVE

**Youth Arts New Zealand is a creative social enterprise that connects, showcases and develops the next generation of creative New Zealanders.**



**Our vision is for an interconnected, resilient and equitable youth creative sector in Aotearoa.**

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# FROM OUR CEO



Creativity is the thread that weaves aroha, passion, and empathy into the rich tapestry of our national identity. It allows us to channel and share our human emotions in a way nothing else can.

From our thriving film industry, to our wildly successful and unique music scene, we foster an incredible amount of creative talent for such a small country. Yet, there is an immense disconnect between the wealth of creative pursuits available, and the number of creative opportunities that exist for our rangatahi. This divide has now reached a critical point.

Our youth mental health crisis is worsening (Gordon, 2019). Organisations nationwide are cutting arts funding (Gerristen, 2018). Creativity is slowly but surely being strangled out of our education system. Despite research validating its power, the arts have not been systemically recognised as a means to achieve positive mental wellbeing in New Zealand. There is much work to be done so that the arts can be truly valued in our society.

Last year, I travelled around Europe for two months to experience what life was like on the other side of the world. In Europe, creativity is everywhere. It resides in flamboyant dance classes on riverbanks, within the beautiful dichotomy of ancient and modern architecture, the permanent craft markets, and vibrant murals that illustrate community stories. It is not only seamlessly integrated into European society; it is valued, celebrated, and intrinsic to their way of life. Young people are brought up in a society that understands and values the arts. We need to learn from this.

We are all consumers of artistic output, but often we forget about the journey that allows for us to enjoy the finished product. If we don't create environments and opportunities for young creatives to flourish, our nation's creativity will slowly fizzle out, and only occur within dreams. There is such a huge opportunity for us to capitalise on the exponential growth of our creative industries, and allow our young people to benefit as a result.

Any form of creative pursuit - be it hobby or career - begins with exposure to the arts. For me, it was learning recorder at 7 years old, then beginning piano at age 9 - this has remained my main personal connection to the arts to this day. If I hadn't had that opportunity to experience music at a young age, I dread to think how different my life might be now - how disconnected I might be from my own self-expression.

I've been through some testing times, as we all have. Having music as an outlet to reflect and heal has been absolutely vital in my development. But, I acknowledge the privileged position my family and I hold in accessing creative opportunity, and have come to understand that my situation is, sadly, not that of the majority.

Access to creative education and opportunity is not a privilege. It is not a luxury. It is a fundamental human right; and it is up to us as a nation to foster and act upon this philosophy. Together, we need to break down the barriers that exist between our young people and creative opportunity. This means bringing youth creativity to the forefront of communities. Celebrating our rangatahi. Nurturing self-expression. Truly understanding the undeniable value that the arts and creativity bring to all of our lives, and the connection it has into all facets of our society and economy.

The future is creative; and now is the time to come together and ensure our young people grow up with the resources and opportunities that will enable them to connect, to express, and to develop their creative abilities.

**He waka eke noa - we are all in this waka together.**

**Matthew Goldsworthy**  
*Founding CEO, Youth Arts New Zealand*

# OUR STORY

## **DEC 2017**

Youth Arts New Zealand is founded after Year 13 Northcote College student, Matthew Goldsworthy, runs 'The Thing About Music' - an event that brings together 20+ young musicians on Auckland's North Shore with acclaimed NZ musician Avalanche City. Matthew becomes the Founding CEO of the organisation.

## **Jan 2018**

Website was first launched, with the idea that Youth Arts New Zealand would become an online hub, showcasing youth creativity and creative opportunities.

## **MAR 2018**

Harrison Sugrue joins the team as Creative Director.

## **MAY 2018**

Youth Arts New Zealand's first official event, 'Rock Dirty at Seven Thirty', takes place at the end of NZ Music Month, to showcase three top youth bands from around Auckland.

## **JUNE 2018**

Zak Devey joins the team as Project Manager.

## **FEB 2019**

Youth Arts New Zealand becomes a registered Charitable Trust.

## **JULY 2019**

Matthew visits organisations in the UK to research international models for youth creative development, which are used to shape YANZ's strategy.

## **FEB 2020**

Matthew and Harrison move into a full-time capacity with Youth Arts New Zealand.

## **MAY 2020**

Youth Arts New Zealand's 2020-2023 Strategy is released.

**OUR CHALLENGE:**

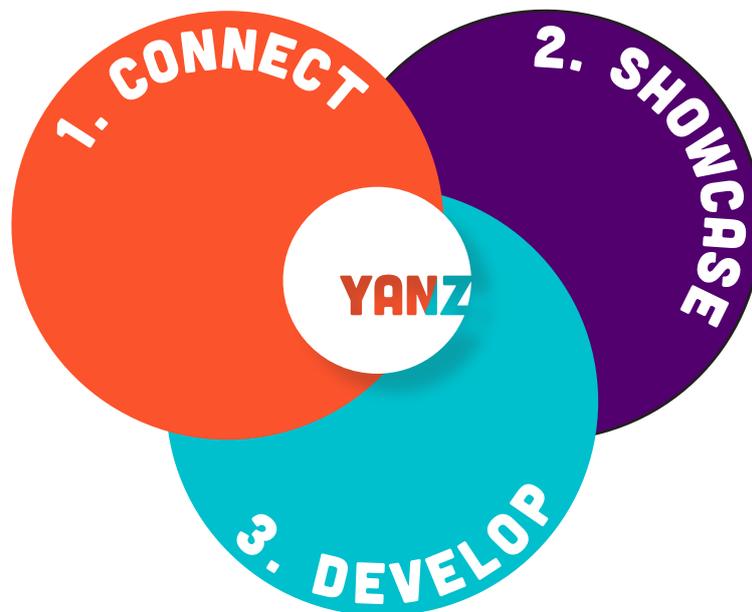
**HOW CAN  
AOTEAROA  
BECOME A  
CREATIVE  
LAUNCHPAD  
FOR THE NEXT  
GENERATION?**



# WHAT WE DO

We generate opportunities for young creatives at every level of the creative ecosystem, building an interconnected community to champion and grow Aotearoa's creative culture.

1. We **connect** young creatives with each other and opportunities to immerse themselves in creative practices;
2. We provide young creatives with professional and innovative opportunities to **showcase** and create artistic work;
3. We provide professional **development** opportunities with which young creatives can kickstart their creative career.



We execute this model through collaborations and strategic partnerships with organisations to strengthen and enrich opportunity within the youth creative sector. Combining high-level strategy and advisory work with community-level impact enables us to involve and educate young people at every level of the creative ecosystem.

## TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC

YANZ's target demographic is young people aged 15-24 years old. We believe this is the period of development where we are able to have the most impact on creative perspectives, opportunities and careers.

# PRIORITIES FOR 2020 – 2023

As a creative social enterprise, we strive to be an organisation that is proactive in seeking new opportunity to create impact. During this strategic period, YANZ aims to establish itself as a national entity for youth creative development and opportunity, and to analyse what activities will have the most impact.

Our consultation with the sector to determine ways to support and uplift the youth creative sector is ongoing. We determine the following activities to be of immediate benefit to the sector, and therefore these are our priority areas throughout this strategic period:

## 1. CONNECT

- Host regular networking and educational events for young creatives to be able to network with each other and learn from industry professionals;
- Provide youth communities with tools and resources for creative education, with a focus on marginalised youth.

## 2. SHOWCASE

- Partner with a range of organisations, including placemaking agencies, corporates, retailers, councils and arts organisations to provide young creatives with opportunities to create and showcase creative work;
- Establish our blog to showcase the work of young creatives.

## 3. DEVELOP

- Build our youth creative exchange programme, centred around intercultural collaboration and skill-sharing;
- Facilitate strategy sessions with young creatives for the benefit of external organisations;
- Develop opportunities for young creatives to gain work experience within the creative sector;
- Create a mentorship programme pairing young creatives to mentors, with a focus on commercial capability-building and providing a launchpad for creative careers.

# PAST PROJECTS



## **THE THING ABOUT MUSIC DEC 2017 & 2018**

YANZ brought together over 20 young creatives for two consecutive years to perform both individually and with acclaimed New Zealand musicians Avalanche City and Jamie McDell. Young people were involved as leaders at all stages of the project, including creative direction, production, stage management and performance.



## **APOLLO NIGHT MAY 2019**

A night of live music and poetry for young people, 'Apollo Night' was a concept created by two students from Rangitoto College who wanted to create a platform for their talented community to share their music and poetry. YANZ mentored and supported the young leaders to bring the event to life.



## **38 HURSTMERE MAY 2019 – PRESENT**

YANZ was engaged by placemaking organisation Fresh Concept to deliver youth-focused creative projects at 38 Hurstmere, a public space in the Auckland suburb of Takapuna. This included projects such as the painting of a public piano, community open mics, and running multiple events creating personalised live art for the public, all delivered by young creatives.



## **ATEED YOUTH WORKING GROUP JAN 2020**

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) invited YANZ to facilitate a Youth Working Group to advise on their Creative Industries Strategy 2030 - ensuring the strategy includes policy relevant to young creatives.



## **TE KAHUI FEB 2020 – PRESENT**

Te Kahui is a creative writing programme created by YANZ, facilitated at Mt Eden Corrections Facility for young inmates. The project centres around self-expression, and provides participants with a safe and supportive environment to reflect and develop themselves through creative writing.

# WE ENABLE FUTURE OPPORTUNITY BY INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE TALENT.

Our philosophy is to not only generate opportunities for young creatives, but actively involve them in creative leadership. We understand and value the role that young people have in co-creating a sustainable creative future for our nation.



# LONG-TERM GOALS

# 1

## RESILIENCE

- Creative rangatahi are able to showcase their creative identity and work confidently.
- All New Zealanders celebrate and value creative expression.
- There are an abundance of opportunities at all levels of the creative ecosystem through which young people can immerse themselves in creativity.
- Aotearoa is a world leader in youth creative development and opportunity.

# 2

## INTERCONNECTIVITY

- Young creatives have the networks and resources to meaningfully connect with peers, communities and opportunities.

# 3

## EQUITY

- Creative career pathways are accessible, valued and widely recognised as viable career paths.
- Creativity is democratised through realisation of creative equity and the removal of barriers to creative opportunities.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## **1. ACCESS TO CREATIVITY IS A HUMAN RIGHT.**

All members of society, regardless of circumstance or background, should have access to creative education and tools for self-expression - especially our young people. Lack of available and accessible creative experiences deprives artists of their means of individual expression and livelihood.

## **2. LEADERSHIP THROUGH CREATIVITY.**

By stimulating creative leadership within young people, we are building their capability as individuals who can create further impact for themselves and their communities. We embody our work using tino rangatiratanga, empowering young people to proactively embrace their own creative path with tenacity.

## **3. COLLABORATIVE IMPACT.**

We approach projects using whanaungatanga. In acknowledging the importance of developing, nourishing and sustaining meaningful relationships with others, we can achieve shared impact-based outcomes.

## **4. CULTIVATE CONSCIOUS COMMUNITIES.**

By encouraging communities to foster, support and value creativity, we enable accessible and confident youth participation in creative practices.

# OUR POSITION

Youth Arts New Zealand's position is unique, with the ability to work dynamically between sectors and different types of entities. YANZ recognises the importance of connecting young creatives with opportunities in multiple sectors in order to have a sustained positive impact on the sector.



# KEY IMPACT AREAS

## **EMPHASISING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH CREATIVITY.**

Emphasising creative self-expression as a path to emotional wellbeing has shown to systemically improve youth mental wellbeing. Creative initiatives form meaningful interactions, building communities for social engagement that allow self-esteem and positive behaviours to flourish. New Zealand's youth mental illness epidemic is more dire than ever, with 1 in 5 young people suffering from depression by age 18 (Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2014). It is clear we must be urgent in utilising creativity's immense power to inform the emotional self-awareness and potential of our young people.

## **UPLIFTING COMMUNITIES AND CREATING EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES.**

Youth creativity can be used as a platform to deconstruct stratification of opportunity by ethnicity, gender, and age. By striving to realise creative equity, Youth Arts New Zealand will focus on impacting marginalised youth when conceptualising and delivering creative opportunities. Ensuring communities have access to creative development opportunities their rangatahi can utilise and value is a priority. Engaging with these communities will allow us to impact how youth perceive the arts, presenting creativity as both a personal and professional resource.

## **STRENGTHENING OUR CREATIVE ECONOMY AND BUILDING FUTURE CAPABILITY.**

Today, New Zealand's creative industries contribute over \$17.5 billion to the nation's economy (Beehive.govt.nz, 2018). However, this huge economic value is often overlooked in discussions surrounding creative pursuits. To realise the potential of this economic powerhouse, leadership must be taken bring the validity of creative careers into the public eye. This means making points of entry into creative industries more accessible for young creatives, ensuring they are able to join the 7% of workers nationwide already employed in the sector.

# OUR STRUCTURE

Youth Arts New Zealand is a primarily youth-led organisation, reinforced by experienced and connected individuals that support and drive the strategy of the organisation.



Youth leadership is actively encouraged through the Youth Leaders group, comprised of a mixture of diverse young stakeholders within Aotearoa's creative sector. The YANZ Board of Trustees plays a governance role, ensuring strategic alignment and accountability. YANZ can therefore carry out activities confidently in accordance with charity laws and internal strategy.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Youth Arts New Zealand would like to acknowledge the immense role that certain individuals and organisations have played in enabling us to achieve this milestone.

Our sincerest gratitude goes to Tim Walker, who has contributed so much support to the development of our team and strategy. We would not be here without you, Tim. Your belief in our vision and unwavering support has been absolutely invaluable. Many thanks to Annie Ackerman and The Big Idea team for facilitating this mentorship, and who recognised the potential of our work right from the beginning.

To John, Simon, Laura, Joni and the rest of the Fresh Concept team; thank you for providing us with the resources and opportunities with which we have been able to build upon our impact.

YANZ also wishes to thank Jack & Sasha Crutzen (PRISMA FM), Jacob Marshall and Romana Tarau for their donations, which have allowed YANZ to cover critical start-up costs. Your generosity is so greatly appreciated.

To the volunteers that have been so willing to give up their time to work with us, especially Jono Healey, Júlia Melo and Eric Soakai - thank you for your dedication.

Thank you to our whānau, who have believed in us and supported us from the start. As three 18-year-olds, it would have been easy to laugh at our bold vision - but your love, trust and belief has enabled us to grow, both personally and professionally, into the people we are today.

To the young creatives who we work with - you make us so proud. Thank you for joining us on this crazy journey so far. We are lucky to consider you part of our incredible community.

Lastly, to everyone else who has supported us and continues to support us - from event attendees to partner organisations, and everyone in between - we are eternally grateful.

Ngā mihi nunui,  
Matthew, Harrison & Zak



# CONTACT

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