

It's great to be writing as MP for Tauranga in Creative Beat for the first time, in what will be a quarterly column. I want to recognise the fantastic work Creative Tauranga does in our community each and every day of the year. In some of my columns I will offer news on what the Government is doing in arts and culture nationally, while in others I will give you my own personal reflections. In both cases I acknowledge the experience and expertise in what is an increasingly exciting local creative environment. Please continue to share your views with me so that I can make them heard in Government.

A recent proposal announced by the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Christopher Finlayson will be of interest to you. Creative New Zealand's four governing bodies will be streamlined into a single board to improve its effectiveness and to free up resources that would be better directed to artists.

A review of Creative New Zealand's governing legislation was promised in the National Party's Arts, Culture and Heritage policy in the 2008 election, which was well informed partly by Mr Finlayson's first hand experience as Chair of the Arts Board from 1998 to 2001.

As Mr Finlayson has noted, a streamlined unitary board requires fewer resources, and frees up staff to focus on what is important – artists, arts organisations and arts development.

The review of Creative NZ has recommended the creation of a single board responsible for policy, strategy and funding allocation, replacing the current more unwieldy division of responsibilities between four separate councils and committees including the Arts Council, the Arts Board, Te Waka Toi and the Pacific Arts Committee.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage, working with Creative New Zealand, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, carried out the review, as well as targeted consultation with the arts sector.

The proposed streamlined board would have up to thirteen members, including a minimum of four members with knowledge of Māori arts and at least two with knowledge of Pacific arts.



The new arrangement will guarantee that issues involving Māori and Pacific arts are represented at the top table for decision-making, which under the current cumbersome structure is not the case.

Along with the arts sector, which has voiced concerns for years about Creative New Zealand's governance structure, we can look forward to the improvements in service, focus and efficiency these changes will allow.

It's estimated that the governance reforms will reduce the number of board and committee members from 28 to 13, and will result in direct cost savings of approximately \$200,000 per annum. The benefits of freeing staff up to concentrate on core responsibilities to the arts sector, rather than servicing bureaucracy, should be even more significant.

Hopefully legislation will be introduced this year to enact the changes. Other changes may also be made as a result of reviews of the Historic Places Trust and of the NZ Film Commission. All of this is in the context of increasing arts funding over the next four years.

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