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**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SURVEY**

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**SUMMARY REPORT** • EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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*"What is a city? It's the people within. If there is no art or culture, we have no city."*

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# FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CREATIVE SECTOR BUDGET CUTS

In March 2023, Auckland Council will begin consultation on its draft budget for 2023/2024. This proposed budget proposes \$36.5 million in funding cuts to services that directly support the arts, culture and creative sector.

The proposals would see cuts to funding for arts and leisure programmes, contestable regional arts culture and events grants, festivals, cultural celebrations, regional events like Music in Parks, as well as organisations such as Auckland City Art Gallery and Auckland Live.

To ensure that members of the arts, culture and creative sector in Tāmaki Makaurau are able to provide feedback on the potential impacts of these proposed cuts to Auckland Council, Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi commissioned the Community Feedback Survey, which has been carried out independently by Dovetail Consulting.

The electronic survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey and distributed via Te Taumata toi-a-iwi email and social media networks from 10 February, 2023 to 8 March 2023. A snowball sampling approach was undertaken, in which recipients were encouraged to distribute the survey to others in the sector. In total, 1068 responses were received from people working in or with organisations in the arts, culture and creative sector.

The survey included a mixture of multi-choice questions and open-ended questions inviting respondents to share what impact they believed the proposed impact cuts would have for them personally and for wider communities within Tāmaki Makaurau.

The sampling approach means that the results may not be representative of the creative sector in the region; nor can a response rate be accurately calculated. The results do however point to a range of issues for consideration that are explored in this summary report.

Responses were analysed and reported on by Dovetail Consulting.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

There were 1068 responses to the Auckland Council Budget Survey:

- 94% of respondents work or are based in Tāmaki Makaurau
- 54% of respondents who work in the creative sector receive council funding
- 13% of respondents have a disability or support people with a disability
- 67% of respondents identified as female
- 26% of respondents identified as male
- 6% of respondents identified as non-binary

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The draft funding proposal will see funding cuts of \$36.5 million to services that directly support the arts, culture and creative sector. Respondents shared what council funding has enabled them to fund and achieve, all of which is subject to significant change, or discontinuation under the current proposed budget. Some of the specific projects and services include:



### LARGE SCALE EVENTS

Annual Arts Festival | Music in Parks | Auckland International Buskers Festival | Symposiums | Heritage Festival | Matariki events | Pride Festival | Te Tīmatanga | ASB Polyfest | Whānau Mārama NZ International Film Festival | Auckland Festival of Photography | Auckland Comedy Festival | The Farmers Santa Parade | Secondary Schools Kapa Haka Festival | Autaia Rangatahi Event | Going West



### WORKSHOPS, MENTORING AND SUPPORT

Creative skill development workshops | After school programmes | Development initiatives | Arts education programmes | Internships and support for emerging artists | Holiday programmes | Artists talks | Mentoring programmes | Master classes | Residencies



### PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS

Art displays | Exhibitions | Proudly Asian Theatre Productions | Market days | Youth performances | Dance performances | Live poetry | Play readings | Comedy performances | Cultural shows and performances | Concerts | Art stalls | Neurodivergent inclusive events | NZSL Accessible events and performances | Blind and low vision performances



### INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

Community Hubs | Proud Centre's Programme | Arts and Heritage Facility | Corban Estate Arts Centre | The Art Centre | Art Facilities | Community Art Galleries | Koha for Communities | National and International Tours | Research | Evaluation | Venue hire for events | Wages | Mentoring support

# BEYOND BUDGETS AND SERVICE REDUCTION

Survey respondents pointed out that the impacts of council funding are not limited to services and resources – the arts and cultural experiences that the funding enables have wider reaching impacts for areas such as livelihood, wellbeing, accessibility, economic health and the livability of Auckland as a city.

## SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

"Any reduction in grant funding will impact directly on our arts programme. The likely impact will be to close the art gallery, reduce the offering in other areas and cut opening hours."

## ACCESSIBILITY

"Accessibility is – unfortunately – often the first thing that gets dropped when organisations find themselves with less funding."

## ACCESS FOR YOUTH

"What about our future generations? How will we show them that they can create their future if funding can't even help them buy basic materials."

## CULTURAL EXCLUSION

"These cuts mean there will be no funding available to pay artists to create exhibitions that are free to attend, particularly impacting Māori artists who are not only creating artworks but sharing their culture and mātauranga with gallery visitors."

## SOCIOECONOMIC EXCLUSION

"Without the support of partners like Auckland Council, we would inevitably have to reduce our events and only people able to access the big venues would be able to participate."

## WE WILL LOSE COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

"These are the things that make it worth living in Tāmaki Makaurau. If we lose our thriving arts and culture then what is the point of people continuing to make this very expensive city home?"

## PEOPLE WILL MOVE ELSEWHERE

"Lack of support for industries will see film and production companies move their business to regions where support is available. Many artists and practitioners will leave the city to work elsewhere."

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING WILL SUFFER

"The proposed cuts would negatively effect our local theatre and a range of events which enrich and support the mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our local community."

## LGBTQI+

"I think the biggest impact will be on communities in the creative arts that aren't as mainstream. I'm worried about the impact this will have on emerging queer and BIPOC artists."

## SMALL BUSINESSES WILL SUFFER

"Contractors who are hired by arts organisations will lose business. This includes photographers, healthcare contractors dance organisations, marquee hire, staging, audio/lighting technicians, portaloos and hospitality providers."

## TOURISM WILL BE IMPACTED

"To minimize these essential programmes would directly affect the audiences who – when they visit our city – want to connect to us, our culture our history, our stories."

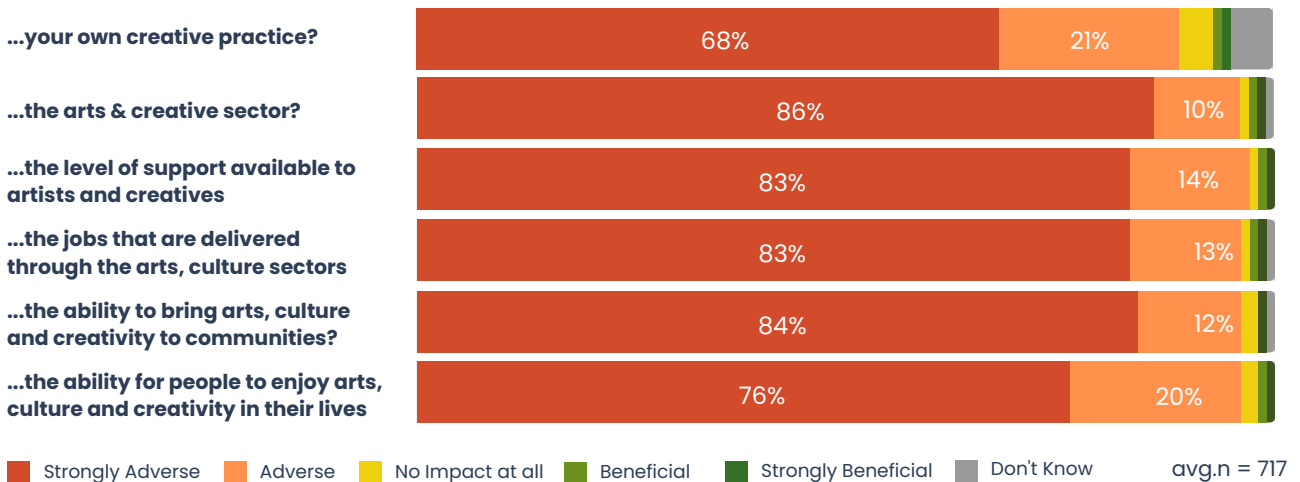


# THE IMPACT IN NUMBERS

The majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact across a range of areas including access to the arts, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and equitable access to arts and community events.



## WHAT IMPACT WILL THESE BUDGET CUTS HAVE ON..



## IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

We asked survey participants to indicate the level of impact the proposed budget cuts would have on their own creative practice and work in the arts sector. A majority of participants (89%) indicated that the changes would have an adverse impact. Qualitative feedback from participants revealed that the main areas of impact on individual artists and their organisations would be:

- Wage reductions and job insecurity
- Reduction in arts programmes, facilities and services
- Strain on an already stretched funding environment

### WAGE REDUCTIONS AND JOB INSECURITY

Many respondents spoke to the practical implications that these cuts would have for their work and practice, specifically in relation to income and job security. For many, the cuts would mean a loss of income, as a result reduced funding grants and council income available or as a result of reduced income from contracts and wages. Some organisations had council funding earmarked for specific roles. Funding cuts would mean having to reduce hours or number of staff. There was a belief that staff reductions will put pressure on other resources and a number of respondents also predicted that cuts as extensive as those proposed will likely result in organisations having to close their doors all together.

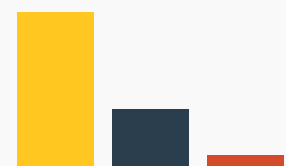
*"I expect it will mean that arts workers conditions, which are already unregulated and low-waged, will become even more so, more vulnerable to being exploited as organisations will be working on much smaller budgets, or may have to close their doors."*

*"A 5-10% cut would mean the loss of one or more staff members, which in turn would lead to further burn out risk for remaining staff members and the likelihood that the organisation may no longer be viable."*



89% of respondents believe the proposed budget changes

**WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT**  
on their own creative practice / work in the sector



n = 613

### REDUCTIONS IN ARTS PROGRAMMES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Respondents highlighted the impact that the proposed funding cuts will have on arts programmes, facilities and services in the Auckland community. A number of events in Auckland rely on council funding, and several markets, festivals, exhibitions and large scale events were named as unlikely to go ahead if the current proposals are realised.



*"With an annual fund of under \$3,000, we already operate on a strained budget and 100% volunteer work to stay within our means. Cuts to funding would mean our budget would become even tighter resulting in cuts to workshops, capacity at our markets and compensation for the work of our volunteers, performers and workshop facilitators."*

*"These cuts jeopardise my ability to perform music in Auckland, and threaten the existence of the arts organisation I work for, which has been running for over 10 years"*

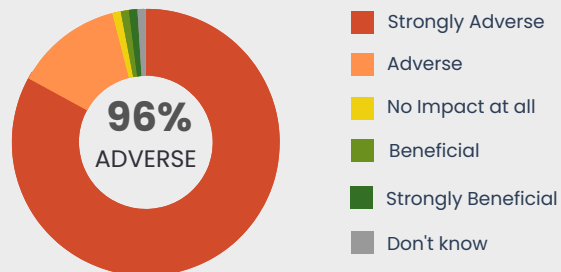
## **STRETCHED AND COMPETITIVE FUNDING CLIMATE**

Another strong theme across the responses was increased pressure on an already "strained" and "highly competitive" funding climate. There was a general fear that greater competition for resources will mean artists are forced to spend more time on administrative work to fund resources for projects.

*"It will create even more competition in an already fraught funding environment that pits organisations and individual artists against each other. It will be the decimation of for-community, by-community arts practice and events "*

***"The funding opportunities in Tāmaki are already limited and stretched with more worthy projects, organizations and communities than funds availability. Without the funding of the Auckland Council you are adding further stress on creative New Zealand and other funding bodies and severely limiting the projects and communities that will be successful."***

What impact will budget cuts have on services that are delivered through the arts, cultural and creative sectors



n = 718



## REGIONAL IMPACTS

We asked survey participants to indicate what level of impact the proposed budget cuts will have on the Auckland arts, culture and creative sector. A majority of respondents indicated that the cuts would have an adverse or significantly adverse impact on (1) the viability of arts, cultural and creative organisations (2) the ability for people to enjoy arts, culture and creativity in their lives and (3) the connection that arts and creativity builds within communities. The key themes identified in respondent qualitative feedback were around:

- The liveability and vibrancy of Auckland as a city
- Flow on impacts on other sectors
- Impacts on community wellbeing and connection
- Artists leaving the arts sector and the city
- Exacerbation of impacts of COVID-19 and recent weather events

### AUCKLAND AS A LIVEABLE AND VIBRANT CITY

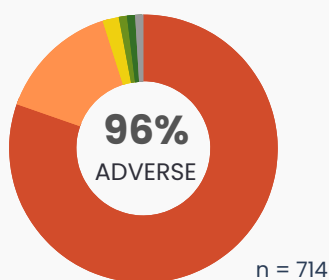
Many respondents felt strongly that the proposed budget cuts will impact on the livability and vibrancy of Auckland as a city. Respondents described a city devoid of arts as "dull", "grey" "less-diverse", "beige" and "soulless". Several respondents pointed to the high-cost of living in Auckland and the low return on investment if the city was to develop in this way.

*"The rich cultural life of Auckland makes up a big part of its appeal, both for its residents and its visitors. Losing some of our art community to budget cuts an abomination, as it would cut out the beating heart of the city."*

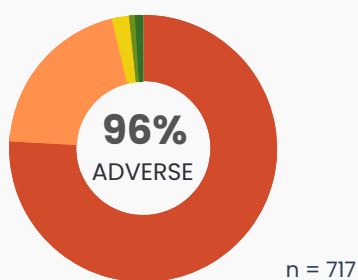
*"If these budget cuts are going to directly effect library programmes, after school, swimming, creative arts, installations, theatre companies, city art walks, museum displays, cultural events and the like - these are the things that make it worth living in Tāmaki Makaurau. If we lose our thriving arts and culture then what is the point of people continuing to make this very expensive city their home?"*

### WHAT KIND OF IMPACT WILL BUDGET CUTS HAVE ON:

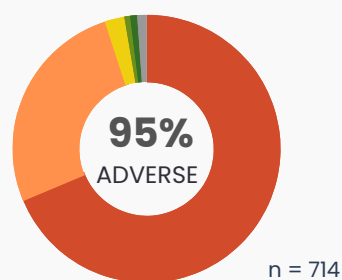
The viability of arts, cultural and creative organisations



The ability for people to enjoy arts, culture and creativity in their lives



The ability to go to live theatre and events



■ Strongly Adverse  
 ■ Adverse  
 ■ No Impact at all  
 ■ Beneficial  
 ■ Strongly Beneficial  
 ■ Don't know

## FLOW ON IMPACTS FOR OTHER SECTORS

Respondents pointed to the wider-reaching impacts that would be felt in other industries and sectors if the proposed cuts are implemented. This included marketing, hospitality, film, television, production, venue hire, education, healthcare, equipment rental, event security, development consulting, hotel and accommodation providers. There was some concern that this could have knock-on effects for the tourism industry as well as immigration.

*"Huge loss of income to hospitality and accommodation providers, huge loss of revenue for commercial hires of performance spaces."*

*"As a sole trader providing Healthcare support to arts organizations (dance predominantly) with limited funding already further cuts would likely make my services untenable moving forward. Yet dancers are elite athletes and thus deserve the equivalent support of athletes in Aotearoa."*

*"Massively reduce tourism as arts expose Tamaki Makaurau and cause significant issues in the education sector. Already visas are difficult but why would a student apply to our school internationally if there are no arts and tech jobs to go to."*

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND CONNECTION

A significant proportion of respondents felt strongly that the proposed budget cuts would have far reaching consequences for community wellbeing and in particular, for community connection, with 96% of respondents expressing that the proposed budget cuts will have an "adverse, or a strongly adverse" impact on this.

Specifically, respondents spoke about the impacts they believed the budget cuts would have on "crime", "social issues", "health issues", "suicide rates", "holistic health", "civic engagement" and "community connection".

*"It is such a shame that the powers that be don't understand the role of the arts as the building block of creative thought, improving learning outcomes and health outcomes across the board. The research is there."*

*"The arts perform a vital function for holistic health - engaging in creative activities, even as a visitor, or audience member, is integral to wellbeing. Given the disruptions that the pandemic has caused, the arts have an ability to help with mental health by uplifting and connecting them to their communities. This can't be measured in dollars or spreadsheets, and yet it is incredibly important."*

A number of respondents spoke to the importance of wellbeing and mental health considerations in light of the impacts of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and weather events. For these respondents, there was concern that many arts communities and artists are "struggling to survive" in the wake of three years of COVID-19 lockdowns and further cuts would force many out of business, which in turn would have impacts on community mental health and wellbeing.

*"It will significantly impact the communities we work with and the platforms created for them to gather safely - this WILL impact the wellbeing of our communities especially post covid and all these crazy weather events we are having as for some it is their one 'outing'.*

*"After three years of absolute devastation in our industry (though unbelievably high consumption of the work our industry creates), we need to be paid and have sustainable opportunities for the work we do. People are watching art and stories everywhere, all the time. But on the frontline of creation the work is not being valued. "*

## **ARTISTS WILL MOVE TO WHERE THEY ARE VALUED**

Some respondents expressed concern that the budget cuts reflected a general lack of appreciation for the importance and value of the arts within society. This was paired with the belief that artists will move to cities or countries where their work and contribution is adequately valued.

*"It sends a message clearly that artists are not valued or worthy of support by the council."*

*"There will be less artists who are able to have creative careers. People will leave Auckland and move to other places to live. I am one of those people myself. I do not want to live in Auckland because of the terrible way it treats artists so I have made the decision to move based on this."*

*"Majority of Aucklanders have already been moving from New Zealand to Australia for a better life in terms of cost of living, housing market, living wage. By cutting funds to the arts, the soul of the city will be sucked out and to be honest, a lot of people already hate living here. Arts keeps us grounded. When I didn't get arts funding for my projects in Wellington and saw that the local environment was becoming increasingly difficult for artists to sustain a living within, what did I do? I made the decision to go somewhere else."*

## DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

We asked survey participants to identify the different populations and communities who would be affected by the proposed budget cuts. While respondents expected there to be impacts for Aucklanders across the board, respondents did feel that some groups would be disproportionately impacted:

- Higher deprivation communities
- Rangatahi and budding young artists
- Māori and Pacific peoples
- The rainbow and LGBTQI+ community
- Migrant communities
- Disabled communities
- Elderly

### HIGHER DEPRIVATION COMMUNITIES

Several respondents were concerned that a reduction in accessible art and cultural events or programmes will limit the participation and enjoyment of the arts to those with high-means. There was a general concern that a reduction in free/accessible arts programmes and services would disproportionately impact artists and art-consumers in lower-socioeconomic communities who may not otherwise have the means to access these services.

*"We would have less capacity to offer programmes in different parts of the city which rely more heavily on funding support. This will restrict our offerings to more affluent regions which will continue to further division and inequity among New Zealanders."*

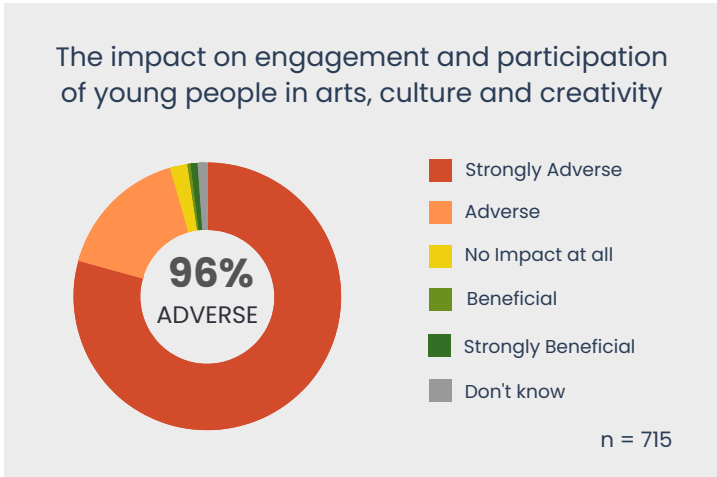
*"I work with young people from South Auckland, Pacific, Māori, Asian and Palagi we work with them... alongside some of the best artists from Pacific islands and NZ, the fundings allow us to operate as a bridge for communities and classes of young people who couldn't afford or have access to high quality and level art practitioners."*

### RANGATAHI AND YOUNG ARTISTS

A significant number of respondents spoke of the impact budget cuts would have on Auckland's young people and emerging artists. Some feared that the loss of council funded events and arts education programmes would signal the loss of safe and healthy creative outlets for struggling or disadvantaged youth. Others spoke of concerns that artists looking to make their way in the art world would lack opportunities to learn and showcase their work, threatening the pathways that exist to forging a viable career in the creative sector.

*"The arts support healthy and thriving societies not just artists themselves. Kids get to see themselves and wider possibilities for their futures and work through emotions in the arts - it gives them a rich experience and lifelong way to connect with the world."*

**“The Auckland Council arts funding has given me some of the most informative experiences in my life and have allowed me to carve out my career. While I am not reliant on the funding now, it is funding from the council in the formative years of my art practice that has allowed me to have a sustainable arts career.”**

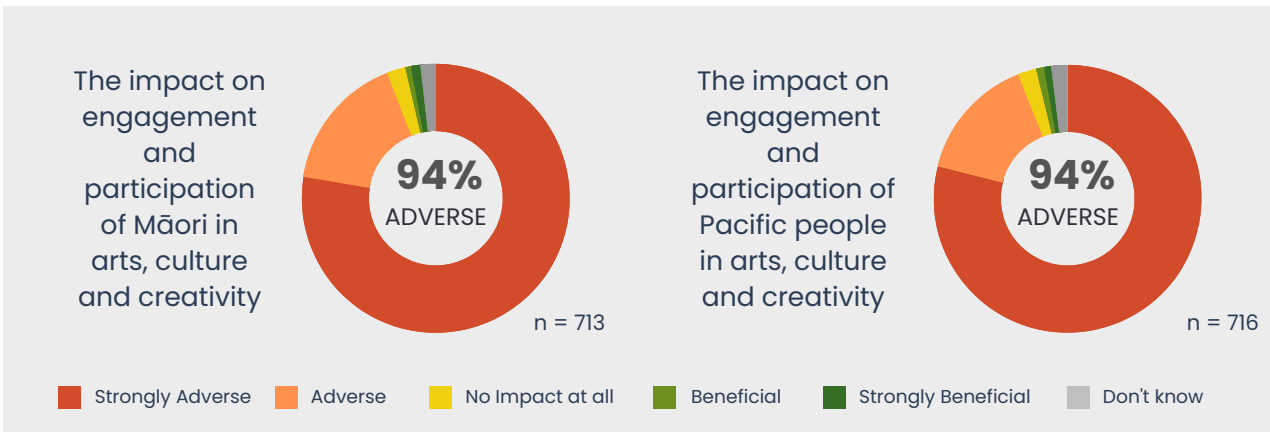


### MĀORI AND PACIFIC PEOPLES

Many survey respondents felt that the budget cuts would disproportionately impact and disadvantage those who identify as Māori or as Pacific peoples. Some of the key themes that were touched on included access issues, the loss of cultural and historical artforms, reduced representation in the arts and culture space and impacts for future generations of Māori and Pacific artists. There were also concerns about the wider impacts of removing safe spaces for diverse groups to gather and discuss the challenges that they face.

*"My mahi is about celebrating and uplifting Māori and Pacific creativity and expression within frameworks that traditionally minimise these cultures. Removing the ability for our people to express themselves removes the accessibility and presence of our people in media and social/creative spaces. If our young people can see it, they can be it, dream it, believe and become it."*

*"From a Pacific perspective, the arts are a very important outlet for our communities. Especially in this day and age, there is so much going on, our country has the worst youth-suicide rates BUT when there is an artistic and creative outlet and avenue where our people can properly explore those feelings and thoughts - WITH a good amount of support, our people are able to better navigate daily Western life."*



## THE RAINBOW AND LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

Some respondents felt that queer and gender diverse communities would be disproportionately impacted by the proposed budget cuts. Respondents pointed to the fact that funding plays a crucial role in servicing Auckland's art communities that fall outside of the mainstream and provide a platform for Auckland's queer artists. According to respondents, funded events and performances create safe spaces for queer and gender diverse communities to express and mobilise on the issues they face, while fostering a sense of pride, empathy and freedom of expression. Auckland's pride events, for example, currently receive significant funding from Auckland Council.

*"I think the biggest impact will be on communities in the creative arts that aren't as mainstream, and particularly rely on funding to get a start. Being away from the mainstream also means opportunities and spaces needs to actively be created, which funding helps a lot with. In particular I'm worried about the impact this will have on emerging queer and BIPOC artists."*

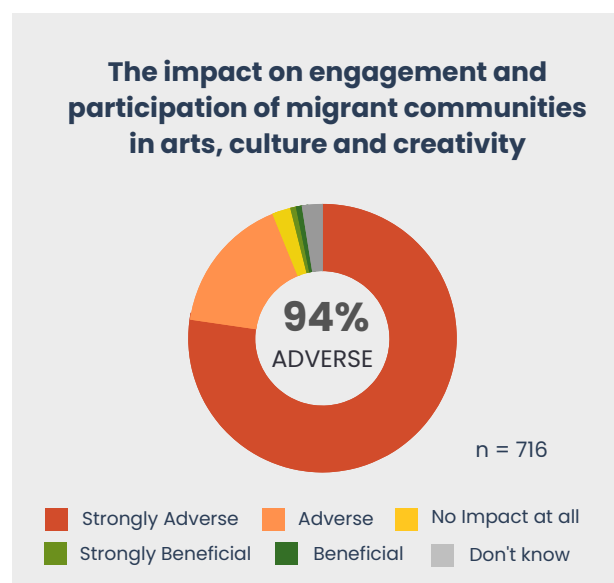
*"Our community is empowered by the creatives who share our artwork, it provides us with the opportunity to connect and mobilise on issues. When you cut budgets to community art projects you deplatform the artists and the spaces that bring our community together."*

## MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Many respondents fear that the proposed council funding cuts will reduce resources available to highlight and celebrate Auckland's diversity through cultural arts and events - specifically for migrant cultures. Respondents pointed out that these events support community cohesion, language acquisition and retention, wellbeing, and fostering a community of respect and understanding for different cultures. Without these events, there was concern that this could impact Auckland's general understanding of migrant communities and contribute to social isolation for those who belong to these communities.

*"There are so many things yet to be done to uplift and carve safe spaces for the ethnic and diverse communities, to fight against racism, and to prove that representation matters. To cut arts support where people have autonomy to share their voices, stories and perspective will take a huge opportunity of growth not only for the wellbeing of the Asian, ethnic and diverse communities, it'll be a huge loss and rip for the growth of Aotearoa as a nation that proudly claims itself multicultural."*

*"Funding cuts will erase visibility of marginalised communities and minority cultures which leverage events for celebrations such as Latin Day, World of Cultures, Songkran, Nepal Day, and Pride."*



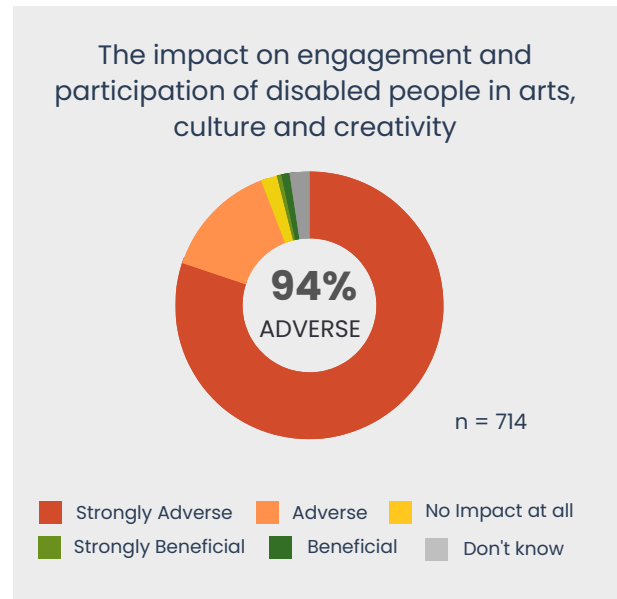
## DISABLED COMMUNITIES

Several respondents noted that funding reductions will likely impact the accessibility of performances – excluding participation of those with disabilities. Specific impacts included accessibility components for those in the blind and deaf communities as well as for those with physical disabilities.

*"The organisation I work for supports 'differently abled' adults. We have been receiving funding each year to carry out projects that highlight the abilities of those I support and aid people's perception of their value within the wider community."*

*"Often times accessibility is unfortunately the first thing that gets dropped when organisations find themselves with less funding than before – Huge loss of income for the organisation, also loss of income for Deaf people we employ."*

***Accessibility is something that organisations often add late in their planning. Budget cuts mean that accessibility will be viewed as something that is unaffordable. This will mean that blind people will no longer have access to arts and culture in Auckland. The impact on community connectedness and wellbeing will be significant.***



## ELDERLY MEMBERS OF THE ARTS COMMUNITY

Several respondents felt strongly about Auckland's elderly community being impacted by the proposed budget cuts – specifically by the loss of physical and mental health benefits of access to funded facilities. Libraries, for example, were frequently mentioned as a community service that are currently being accessed and enjoyed by thousands of senior citizens and which would be impacted by budget cuts.

*"As a former librarian, I foresee that cuts to libraries will also affect older adults – many of whom rely on libraries for social and intellectual engagement."*

*"Senior citizens who currently access the arts through various companies and practitioner delivery. This delivery of arts medicine keeps our elders well and out of hospital, and thriving not surviving. So much of this work is invisible but vital."*



## SUMMARY

The Community Feedback Survey commissioned by Te Taumata Toi-a-Iwi has received strong engagement from the arts and creative community – sitting at 1068 responses.

Respondents identified a range of events, services, resources and projects that currently receive council funding and will be subject to significant change, or discontinuation under the current proposed budget. This includes numerous:

- Large scale events
- Workshops, mentoring and support programmes
- Public performances and exhibitions
- Arts infrastructure and administration costs

The majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact across a range of areas including access to the arts, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and equitable access to arts and community events.

Beyond the practical and direct implications that these cuts would have on incomes and livelihoods, the wider-reaching and more specific areas of concern for participants included:

- The impacts on groups such as Māori, Pacific Peoples, LGBTQI+ communities, migrant communities, youth, elderly and those living with disabilities.
- The creation of an economic barrier to participating and engaging with the arts – limiting access to wealthy groups and individuals.
- The impact that these cuts will have on the vibrancy and livability of Auckland.
- The effects on other industries such as tourism and hospitality.
- Impacts on resident wellbeing and community cohesion.

Future decisions regarding funding cuts to the arts, culture and creative sector would be wise to take into account the feedback from communities who will be directly impacted by these decisions. The responses received in this survey speak to the wide range of social and economic impacts that the proposed budget could trigger if implemented in its current form.

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SECONDARY SCHOOLS KAPA HAKA FESTIVAL

# DANCE PERFORMANCES

