

NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL

IMPACT
REPORT
2024

CORE FUNDER:  **Nelson**
City Council | Te Kaunihera o
Whakatū

nelsonartsfestival.nz

TRUST OVERVIEW

The Nelson Arts Festival has been at the heart of our community for 30 years, bringing people together through creativity, storytelling, and shared experiences. As we reflect on 2024, we celebrate not only the festival's rich history but also its continued evolution in response to the challenges and opportunities of our time.

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on expanding our reach and deepening audience engagement, while recognising the increasing pressures faced by households across Te Taihiti and beyond. Our commitment to community development saw us extend our venue programming further into the Tasman region and create more opportunities for people to connect with the arts.

The impact of these efforts was evident in the growing number of attendees, especially those who came to multiple events, more tamariki and rangatahi taking part in our educational, artist-led workshops and in Tune Up, as well as the remarkable participation in the Mask Parade, which nearly tripled from last year to 1,388 participants.

Our success would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our key partner, Nelson City Council, and the generous contributions of our major funders. Their backing has enabled us to present 56 events, showcase 200 artists, and deliver 13 premieres, all while fostering a positive return on investment through increased attendance, participation, and enhanced community wellbeing.

2024 also marked a refreshed strategic direction for the Nelson Festivals Trust, reinforcing our role as a connector, supporter, and enabler of creative initiatives. As we celebrate three decades of arts and culture, we embrace the responsibility of shaping the festival's future—honouring our loyal audiences while welcoming new ones.

We are Nelson's arts festival: local and international, experienced and yet ever evolving. Let's continue the conversation.

Ruth Roebuck
General Manager | Nelson Festivals Trust

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

This thematic vision guided our mahi and programming for our 30th year, ensuring we reflect on the world at large and our place in Te Taihiti and Aotearoa.

Change is swirling in 2024. Big waves are beginning to break, and we're in the impact zone.

We have retreated into our own, with democracy, the environment and reality on trial, edging on frailty, once secure routes blocked and cycles fraying. With more than 70 countries facing some form of election this year - 2 billion+ people heading to the polls - 2024 is set to step us further into liquid.

When we are in the trough, we reach for language, for connection to and empathy with others, and for mind-opening and awe-inspiring experiences, to help us ride out.

From the depths, we stand with artists and their work at the ihu, the prow of the waka - in the best position to first see the horizon, the way to break through (or work with) the curling crises.

Nose into the wind, we seek perceived order amidst chaotic sets, moments of collectiveness in our deglobalising fleet, deep breaths to settle us into fluidity, flexibility, and curiosity in the face of crashing polarisation.

And as we crest and look back, we see 30 years of incredible artists, conversations, challenges and Festival whānau paddling with us. With artists leading in front and this force propelling us, we know we can sing/dance/make change, ideas moving like the water beneath our feet.

Many boats in one ocean, looking to many stars in one sky.

Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tina.
Seek out distant horizons and cherish those you attain.

2024, our 30th Nelson Arts Festival.
A Festival (and a fleet) carving a path through the cresting wave.

[Lydia] Zanetti
Te Kaihautū Artistic Director | Nelson Arts Festival

SNAPSHOT



Credit: Lissy & Rudi Robinson-Cole, *Waka of Dreams: Punanga Pohewa*
Image by Melissa Banks

OUR FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

24 OCTOBER – 3 NOVEMBER 2024
11 DAYS OF AUDACIOUS, ACCESSIBLE AND
AWE-INSPIRING ARTS EXPERIENCES FOR,
AND WITH, OUR COMMUNITY

This year marked our 30th Nelson Arts Festival – a milestone birthday well worth celebrating. At the beginning of the year, we dove deeply into the archives and reflected on the history of the festival and the people who shaped it, both behind the scenes and on stage. We welcomed back numerous artists (including **Patricia Grace**, who made her fifth Nelson Arts Festival appearance) alongside first-timers, while our local community brought their creative prowess to the *Mask Carnivale*. We were delighted that our judging panel included the daughter of the late Kim Merry, co-founder of our iconic event.

As birthdays are as much about the milestone as looking to the future, we were immensely proud to commission a special new work by **Lissy** and **Rudi Robinson-Cole**, two of the most exciting contemporary artists in Aotearoa, host ground-breaking dance and theatre shows on our stages, celebrate impressive new talent alongside literary legends and renowned thought leaders, and showcase the future stars of contemporary music in Aotearoa side by side with those who have already claimed the world stage.

The 30th Festival saw us return to 21 beloved venues across Whakatū and Te Taihu, transform spaces and activate our central city, with people dancing in the streets and the whole community, young and old, coming together to celebrate.

"I thought the programming this year was fabulous! From *Waka of Dreams* to *Aiga*, I felt the uplifting and inclusive scope of the Festival. Well done!"

CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

The Nelson Festivals Trust board members and Festival team are incredibly proud of all the moments, big and small, that made this milestone year so special – and with more than six thousand tickets sold and an estimated 55,000 people engaging with our free events and exhibitions, our community tells us that we have created a Festival that was relevant, timely and inspiring.

The arts have the remarkable ability to move, challenge and unite us, and there is no doubting the enriching impact of creative experiences on our community. We are proud to have widened the festival's reach through our diverse programming, while at the same time enhancing our access programme and continuing Pay What You Can ticketing this year. We witness how creative encounters at festival events create meaning, which is reiterated through our surveys as well as direct feedback from our community. We continue to position ourselves as a key player in our sector through our innovative programming and are proud to build a reputation among artists for our outstanding manaakitanga and supportive approach. Our audiences speak of the positive impact of our events, reporting feelings of joy, positivity and wellbeing, as well as an increased sense of connection with their community and inspiration fuelled by their festival experiences.

It is this vast impact that inspires how we create our festival each year and guides our vision for the next 30 years.

KEY STATS



est. **55,000**
people engaged



176,100+
viewed our digital content



6,021
tickets sold



Net
Promoter
Score



56
Events



540+
Artists

PROGRAMME



Credit: Rutene Spooner, *Be Like Billy?*
Image by Melissa Banks

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY, REPRESENTATION + ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Nelson Festivals Trust exists to co-create a multiverse of audacious, accessible and awe-inspiring arts experiences enriching connection and care with the world around us. Our core taonga, the Nelson Arts Festival, presents a thoughtfully curated programme each Spring, to ignite creativity and connection through transformative arts experiences. As a fierce champion for artists and the arts, a catalyst for crucial conversations, and a mirror to our moment in time, the festival fosters connection and collaboration by uplifting and celebrating our whole community through artistic and cultural experiences.

In 2024, our programme featured hundreds of artists from Whakatū, all over Aotearoa and further afield, across 56 outstanding events, including a fluorescent pink waka setting sail in the Refinery ArtSpace, a ground-breaking, disability-led theatre wowing audiences at the Theatre Royal, some of the most exciting contemporary NZ music and a sold-out one-woman show inspiring vulnerable conversations about the justice system. We were wowed by literary excellence and thought leadership exploring the most pressing topics of our time, invested in creative workshops for rangatahi and offered a participatory exhibition to support our most vulnerable communities and acknowledge our collective humanity. We inhabited much-loved venues and experimented with innovative new spaces, set up a quirky welcoming committee at Nelson Airport, and transformed the Theatre Royal into a night club. Our community celebrated and danced in the streets during the *Mask Carnivale*, and we recollected our festival roots with the World of WearableArt team.

"Brilliantly curated festival with a diverse range of artistic expression. Well organised, educational, and immersive!"



200+

local, national + international artists
contributed to our main programme



1,388

creative locals
performed in mask parade

400+

books sold in
festival bookstore

13

premieres, incl. book
and visual arts premieres

340

local + national
performers in the
Mask Carnivale

1

major special
commission for our
30th anniversary

31%

of all events were
community-led

"I was really impressed with the curation of events - felt on a par with or better than festivals I've been to overseas and in major cities. I loved that there were diverse voices and experiences represented, and that you worked to make the pricing accessible for all."

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We are committed to continuous improvement when it comes to representing our community in our programme. More than half of our overall programme featured original works by tangata whenua and people of colour this year. A third of the 22 authors featured in our Pukapuka Talks line-up are Māori, alongside 4 Asian-New Zealand writers. In our Visual Arts offering, the exhibitions presented ground-breaking contemporary kaupapa Māori mahi toi alongside emerging artists from our Palestinian and LGBTQIA+ communities here in Aotearoa.

Locally, we were thrilled to continue our creative partnership with the **Pasifika Arts & Culture Collective** to celebrate outstanding Pasifika artists from across Te Taihū – the Pasifika Stage showcased more than 120 performers and once again was an absolute crowd favourite during the *Mask Carnivale*. We worked closely with local arts organisation and social enterprise Cultural Conversations to host the *Make Art Not War* project by **Rana Hamida** as well as to create beautiful street decorations from our back catalogue of festival flags, while our long-standing community partners Multicultural Nelson Tasman and Community Art Works brought their outstanding creativity to the *Mask Carnivale*.

To ensure our offering is inclusive and relevant to young people in Te Taihū, we once again collaborated with NMIT Arts & Design and Nelson Youth Council on youth-led design installations across our central city bollards as well as the third and biggest-to-date youth music event *Tune Up*, which featured a stellar line-up of rangatahi musicians from Whakatū, Motueka and the wider Tasman area.

We also increased direct participation in our programme through bespoke *Workshops with Artists*, for both the wider creative community and specifically for tamariki and rangatahi, through our Authors in Schools offering as well as visual arts, theatre and dance workshops led by programme-headlining artists.

We know that representing our whole community matters, and it is important for the festival to hold space for, and share the voices of, historically underrepresented groups. Representation of diverse backgrounds, identities, cultures and perspectives can increase social connection, belonging, and community support. The below statistics speak to our continuous journey to increase representation in our programme.



11.1%

international artists

50.2%

led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

61.7%

led by female and gender diverse artists

6.5%

of our artists identify as Disabled, d/Deaf or Chronically Ill, including a major installation

13.7%

led by the LGBTQIA+ community



kaupapa Māori events

“Seeing and hearing from performers who don't look like me (and the majority of our community) is imperative for our personal and cultural growth. Thank you Whakatū Nelson Arts Festival team.”

ACCESS PROGRAMME

It is our intention as an organisation to provide greater accessibility throughout the whole Festival, which is reflected in both our programming curation and event delivery.

Once again, working with the excellent team from NZ Platform Interpreting, our Access Programme included four New Zealand Sign Language Interpreted events in three key venues this year: the Pukapuka Talks session, *Housing For All*; a sold-out performance with autistic comedian **Abby Howells**; and big theatre experiences, **Rutene Spooner's** *Be Like Billy?* and *AIGA* by **Touch Compass**.

The latter events also included audio-description, while our major exhibition of the year, **Lissy and Rudi Robinson-Cole's** *Waka of Dreams: Punanga Pohewa* offered a recorded Audio Described tour and a bespoke guided curators' tour for members of our blind and low-vision community.

We were particularly proud to host the South Island premiere of *AIGA*, an extraordinary theatre experience which is disability-led and created with full accessibility in mind, telling the life story of award-winning NZ-Samoan artist **Lusi Faiva**, who was born with cerebral palsy. Here, NZSL interpreter **Kelly Hodgins** joined the cast on stage not on the side, but as a performer central to the story unfolding.

To improve the experience of the *Mask Parade* for the blind and low vision community as well as mobility chair users, we established a dedicated seating area, ensuring safe seats and proximity to the performers.

In addition to these bespoke experiences, we continued our accessible Pay What You Can ticketing model to enhance financial accessibility for more of our community as well as a strong focus on creating a safe festival experience for all through the way we market and deliver our events.

More generally, great care goes into selecting our festival locations each year, and we are proud that our venues are wheelchair accessible and welcome service dogs. Looking ahead, we are committed to continuous investment in removing barriers to our events and experiences and put great efforts into keeping both our physical and online space safe for everyone.

"Accessibility is a fundamental part of our everyday with different types of programming accessibility for all disabled people who are interested and want access to the festival communities."



Credit: Touch Compass, *AIGA*
Image by Melissa Banks

PUKAPUKA TALKS PROGRAMME

Our 2024 Pukapuka Talks programme featured 22 authors joined by local authors and thought leaders facilitating the conversations, with the line-up's diversity reflecting the breadth of who we are here in Aotearoa.

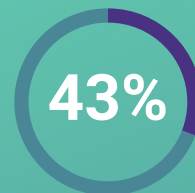
Once again, we strived for artistic excellence in our programming, featuring both international bestsellers and acclaimed literary legends as well as sensational debut writers, and readers and book lovers turned out in droves, with record audiences at many sessions. We were delighted to see four of our 2024 authors long-listed for the 2025 Ockham NZ Book Awards – kaituhi Māori **Becky Manawatu**, debut author **Saraid de Silva**, environmental advocate **Dave Hansford** and prose poet **Lee Murray** who also recently became a recipient of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2025 New Years Honours list for services to literature.

We celebrated the world premieres of **Becky Manawatu**'s highly anticipated sequel, *Kataraina*, and **Susie Ferguson**'s raw and compassionate memoir *Bloody Minded*, as well as the global launch of **Jacqueline Bublitz**' dazzling follow-up to her international bestseller debut, *Before You Knew My Name*. Multi-award-winning novelist, short story writer and children's author **Patricia Grace** appeared on stage to discuss her latest pukapuka, the astonishing *Bird Child and Other Stories*, and reflect on her almost 50 years-long writing career with local poet and playwright **Donna McLeod**.

"I loved meeting the artists and the workshops, getting to know the exhibit more by learning about the creatives. Always love pukapuka talks. I definitely represented as a wahine Māori creative myself."



22
authors



of authors
identify
as BIPOC

7

authors from
LGBTQIA+ community



16
events



Kaituhi
Māori

5

book premieres



Credit: Donna McLeod and Patricia Grace in *Fly Here, Fly There, My Bird*
Image by Melissa Banks

VISUAL ARTS

In recent years, we have paved the way for ground-breaking new works through our special commissions, mostly in close collaboration with ngā toi Māori artists. Following on from the successful commissions of **Charles Koroneho**'s *Ko Te Ākau* in 2022 and *Tense* by **Te Oro Ha** in 2023, our 30th festival invited contemporary visual artists and crochet extra-ordinaires **Lissy** and **Rudi Robinson-Cole** to create their latest large-scale work, *Waka of Dreams: Punanga Pohewa*, together with their long-time collaborator **Hollie Tawhiao**.

Alongside this incredible sculpture, we were proud to present the first exhibition of Lissy and Rudi's crochet and light-based works in the South Island.

- 1 major special commission (*Waka of Dreams*)
- 2 world premieres: *Waka of Dreams* and *Myths&Legends*

Our investment in new works did not stop there: **Sam Duckor-Jones** premiered his new sculptures *Myths&Legends* at Lee Woodman Studio this year, while **Rana Hamida**'s *Make Art Not War* had its first presentation outside of Tāmaki Makaurau, involving the South Island's Palestinian and migrant communities in Te Taihū. Local initiatives and artists showcased their creative powers across town with *Whispers in the Streets* and the busy workshops and activations during *Slow Art Day*. Our collaborations with local galleries and arts organisations brought outstanding talent from all over Aotearoa to Whakatū, with excellent group exhibitions at The Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatū, new works by award-winning urban artists **Charles** and **Janine Williams** at Atelier Studio|Gallery and ephemeral sculptures and innovative making at the second *Sculpt Nature* symposium at the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.



Credit: Sam Duckor-Jones, *Myths&Legends*
Image by Steve Hussey



Credit: Alvaro Moreno and Rana Hamida at the opening of *Make Art Not War*
Image by Melissa Banks

CHAMPIONING THE POWER OF THE ARTS

Artists are storytellers and dreamers, their work grappling with big questions and ideas. Collectively, they enable us to reflect on our histories, understand different ways of being in the world and imagine alternative futures.

- Rosabel Tan & Dr James Wenley, *New Mirrors* (published by the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa, 2023)

There is no shortage of research that verifies that arts experiences have a positive impact on our mental and physical wellbeing. Participation in creative projects increases positive social and learning outcomes for tamariki and adults alike; exposure to the arts is prescribed for medical recovery in many countries around the world and arts-centered therapies deliver outstanding results for many.

As an arts organisation, this positive impact on our community drives our efforts to curate and deliver an inspiring, audacious and accessible festival each year, working closely with artists near and far to share their perspectives with an engaged and passionate audience here in Te Taihuhu. It is a core part of our kaupapa to bring experiences to the region that our community would otherwise not have (easy) access to, and which uplift and inspire the local arts sector.

That so many of our artists highly rate their festival experience is proof that our Festival is punching above its weight with our dedication to elevating, and advocating for, artists and the arts in Aotearoa. Again, in the 2024 artist survey, 95% of our visiting artists said they would be keen to return to Whakatū - both as a visitor and to be part of the Festival again, reporting that the manaakitanga they experienced was 'outstanding', both from the festival team and the wonderful audience here in Te Taihuhu.

"The audience was incredible! It took us completely by surprise, the support, love, and energy! We fell in love with them and cannot wait to return one day!"



Credit: audience fun at the Mask Carnivale
Image by Melissa Banks



Credit: theatre workshop with Rutene Spooner
Image by Steve Hussey

COMMUNITY & ENGAGEMENT



Credit: Tamaiti ole Vine at Mask Carnivale
Image by Melissa Banks

We are proud to see the fruits of our programming and engagement efforts reflected not only in the highly positive and constructive feedback from our audience, but also in the continued growth of our attendee numbers.

This includes both long-term festival devotees and first-time festival goers alike, with the increasing diversity in our audience's demographic not only reflecting more of those who call Te Taihū home but also solidifying Whakatū as a creative tourism destination.

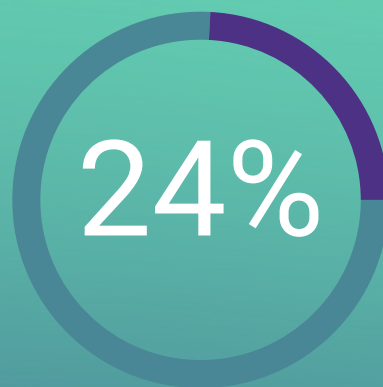
GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION

The positive impact of the festival's arts experiences and activations on our community is reflected in our audience growth and diversification, the high number of return attendees, the continued growth in visits to our online platforms and high level of engagement with our social media content, and most importantly, in our community's reports of increased wellbeing and sense of belonging.

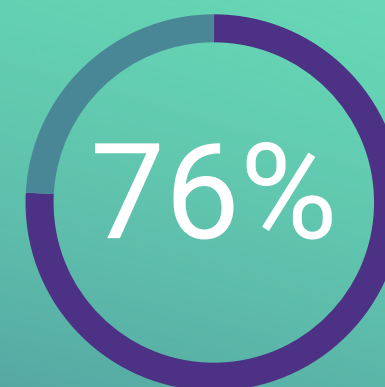
We are proud to see a steady increase in Māori, Pasifika, Asian and other BIPOC audiences engaging with the festival in recent years as well as the growing numbers of rangatahi and young adults participating. Most new attendees, as well as those with young families, cite the Pay What You Can initiative as crucial to their ability to take part.

Another key factor to participation is programming – we aim for a diverse and inclusive offering in which people see themselves reflected and represented in.

“Super saturation of media from bus advertising, billboards at the airport, posters line the streets, print and digital media - really helps to build the excitement and anticipation of the event. Love it. Every Nelsonian would know the Festival is on, you couldn't avoid it, even if you didn't leave your house.”



new
attendees



returning
audiences

176,100

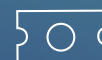
eyes across our
digital content*

47,000+

unique visits
to our website

55,000

est engaged
with our events
and exhibitions



6,021

tickets sold



of attendees highly
likely to recommend
the festival to others

"Can't imagine Whakatū Nelson without the Arts Festival. It's like we as a community come out of hibernation and come alive again preparing ourselves for a summer in the sun."

"A wonderful event for a new Nelsonian."

"I look forward to the arts festival each year and this year did not disappoint."

*This number does not include the hundreds of thousands of eyes across our nationwide media coverage in print and digital media, nor the ads and signboards with our media partners.

IMPACT & PARTICIPATION

Our programming is diverse and inspiring, surprising, and challenging – and with audiences and artists at its heart. World-class touring shows like *Slip* and *Prima Facie* and internationally renowned artists like **Tami Neilson** and **Patricia Grace** sit alongside emerging artists' first festival appearances and locally-led community events that celebrate the incredible creative potential in our region.

We carefully design events that are free and accessible to our whole community, select artists and shows that would otherwise not travel to our region, and challenge ourselves to reach and engage with new audiences, for example through unconventional venues like the Victory Boxing ring and the Nelson Airport terminal, or by staging a cooking show in a cocktail bar.

Youth-led initiatives like *Tune Up* are made possible with strategic partnerships with music industry key players like RockQuest, and thrive through the direct involvement of rangatahi in programming and delivery; while central city-wide activations invite everyone to get creative; and high-calibre artists invite curious new audiences to our city venues.

"I love the fact that Nelson for those 10 days was saturated with art, talent, creativity, new thinking, music. It's an incredible achievement, I couldn't fault the organisation, volunteers, set up at each event, it seemed like a smooth operation (as an onlooker). Huge amount of work has obviously gone into this."

The 2023 Massey University research project, *Measuring and Articulating the Value of Live Performance in Aotearoa*, provides clear evidence that live performance is of significant economic, social, and wellbeing value to Aotearoa. Attending live performances provides an immediate boost to life satisfaction and contributes to a lasting improvement in overall wellbeing, and audiences value live performance for its ability to affirm identity, build and maintain social connections, and enliven public spaces. At the same time, events like the Nelson Arts Festival provide a direct boost to the local economy, as the study shows: for every \$1 spent on live performance, \$3.20 is returned in benefits to the wider community.[1]

This positive impact on community and individual wellbeing is palpable when looking at our highly engaged audience during and after our events each year and directly informs our programming and wider planning decisions. We select works that question and confront the status quo, inspire and uplift us, celebrate diversity of thought and background, discuss the urgent topics of our time and invite us to consider the world beyond our own bubble – as well as to enjoy and celebrate, dance and come together with our community for a shared experience.

"Thanks for bringing great art and experiences to our region!"

"The arts festival inspired me, I felt uplifted in what has been a challenging time & I loved the diversity (...) Thank you so sincerely, it lifted my spirits to have such an amazing event here in Whakatū."

"I always find attending (festival) events thought provoking, stimulating, inspiring and joyful."

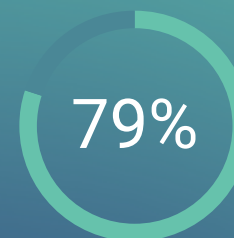
As a result of participating in the festival,



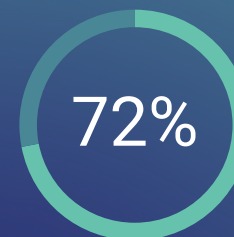
of attendees report that their feelings of joy, positivity, wellbeing have increased



of our audience would recommend us to their peers (NPS)



of attendees feel more connected to their community



say they learnt something new and/or look at the world in a different way

[1] <https://www.massey.ac.nz/about/colleges-schools-and-institutes/college-of-creative-arts/college-of-creative-arts-research/measuring-and-articulating-the-value-of-live-performance-in-aotearoa/>



Credit: Tami Neilson, Neilson Sings Nelson
Image by Melissa Banks



Credits: Naomi Arnold and Susie Ferguson in Bloody Minded;
Thabani Gapara; Lisa Tomlins with Rhombus
Images by Melissa Banks

BUILDING AUDIENCES FOR THE FUTURE

Credit: Te Pouahi tamariki opening performance at *Mask Carnivale*
Image by Melissa Banks

YEAR 3 OF PWYC TICKETING

Opening the door a little wider: in the current post-pandemic economic climate, many people cite financial hardship as a key barrier to accessing arts experiences.

As an Aotearoa NZ-first for a major arts festival, all Nelson Arts Festival events were either free or Pay What You Can (PWYC) in both 2022 and 2023, thanks to the backing of the Te Urungi Innovation Fund by Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage and our festival partner NBS. Based on the results of this two-year PWYC trial, we can confidently say that PWYC ticketing increased access to Festival events for many people - particularly those who hadn't engaged with the Festival in the past.

In 2024, Nelson Festivals Trust made the decision to continue this ticketing model to enable more people to attend our events. This is a courageous step to take as the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is clearly felt in the creative sector throughout the country, alongside a changing funding landscape. That said, financial accessibility is an important tool to reach more of our community and to build a love of the arts and audiences for the future - not simply for the festival alone, but to benefit the overall arts sector in Te Taihū, year-round.

The number of tickets sold and the many full houses at our ticketed events proved PWYC was once again a success this year. A huge mihi to NBS for sharing the Trust's vision and their continued support of this initiative.

In our survey, those who chose to 'pay it forward' with higher-tier tickets say they did so to support others to attend festival events and to support the festival overall. This feedback is a clear indicator that PWYC also enables philanthropy and that there is potential for our organisation to further develop this valuable tool for individual giving and fundraising.

"As a low-income earner, I completely appreciate the pay what you can initiative. It has made the festival accessible for me so very grateful."

\$ 100%
of ticketed events were
Pay what you Can

20%

free events
in overall
programme

29%

chose the
recommended
ticket price

98%

agree PWYC
increases
accessibility

66%

required lower
tier tickets
(Tier 1+2)



Credit: Rebecca Jensen, Slip
Image by Melissa Banks

"Thought that this year's festival was the most well coordinated + offered a programme of true interest to us. Well done! We bought tix to two events which at the last moment we could not to attend. Very happy for the ticket price to be a donation to the festival."

"Thank you for another fantastic festival and for continuing with PWYC as well as free events. This made it possible for our family to attend multiple events. Love the vibrancy and community connection the festival brings to our town every year."

TAMARIKI & RANGATAHI ENGAGEMENT

Within our diverse programme each year, we curate several offerings to spark joy and creativity in curious young minds, with school matinees, age-appropriate evening performances and our literary events. It is important to us that these opportunities are relevant to our rangatahi; therefore, we aim to create opportunities to participate and get directly involved with the Festival.

This year, we saw the participation in our schools' programme triple – we had sold out sessions for our authors in schools, **Rachael King**, **Lauren Keenan** and **Claire Mabey**, who invited the students to workshop and write their own mystical stories. While the Mask Parade has not yet reached its pre-pandemic participation numbers, we were pleased to see the return of several schools: we saw more than 1,100 kids in the parade, all donning fantastic costumes and having a lot of fun dancing through our city streets. We supported the teachers' mammoth preparation efforts through bespoke mask-making workshops, and broadened our workshop offerings to visual arts, theatre and dance. The ngā toi Māori and mahi crochet workshops with **Lissy and Rudi Robinson-Cole** culminated in fantastic kapa haka performances by the participating tamariki as a mihi to the artists, and students were raving after their theatre and voice coaching with cabaret star **Rutene Spooner**.

The third iteration of our youth-led, outdoor music mini-fest Tune Up received a record number of applications from rangatahi musicians - 18 groups and soloists wanted to be part of this year's line-up. The selection and planning committee again directly involved Youth Council Nelson delegates, and the selected acts represented five different colleges across the region plus Nelson Intermediate School – the youngest performers to date rocked their stage debut.

Providing the opportunity for rangatahi to develop skills in event planning and programming provides a sense of ownership and results in a high level of participation at the event: a big crowd of young people coming together to celebrate their peers performing, whilst creating a free outdoor music event accessible to the whole community.

We can clearly see the benefits of creative workshops complimenting the school curriculum and look forward to continuing to work directly with teachers and schools to create a bespoke programme for the next generation of artists and arts lovers.



Credit: Nelson Central School tamariki at Mask Carnivale
Image by Melissa Banks



1,140

tamariki in Mask Parade



543

tamariki & rangatahi in our schools programme + workshops



9

bands, duos & sololists/ 32 young local musicians performed at tune up

I took my four-year-old boy to see Moon and we both laughed so hard. It was a wonderful show. Thanks. And thanks for the pay what you can option - we probably wouldn't have gone otherwise."



Credits: schools workshop with Lissy and Rudi Robinson-Cole;
 Bernie Duncan and Alistair Deverick in *Moon*; Abby Howells in *La Soupco*
 Images by Steve Hussey and Melissa Banks



Credit: Shedheads at *Tune Up*
 Image by Steve Hussey



Credit: Trick of the Light, *The Suitcase Show*
Image by Melissa Banks



Credits: Touch Compass, AIGA;
Rhys Mathewson, *10th Rodeo*; Kathryn van Beek in *Otherhood*
Images by Melissa Banks



Credit: Shepherds Reign
Image by Steve Hussey



Credits: Ariana Tikao and Bob Bickerton in *Muriwai*;
Aviva Endeane in *Slip*; Tamaiti ole Vine at *Mask Carnivale*
Images by Steve Hussey and Melissa Banks



Credit: Oli Mathiesen with Lucy Lynch & Sharvon Mortimer,
The Butterfly Who Flew Into The Rave
Image by Melissa Banks



Credit: tamariki in the Mask Parade
Image by Melissa Banks



Credits: By Whakatū Residency Sharing with Chloe Loftus;
Silent Disco at Mask Carnivale; Esther Swift
Images by Melissa Banks and Steve Hussey

NGĀ MIHI NUI – THANK YOU



Credit: Hollie Tawhiao, Rudi and Lissy Robinson-Cole, Jazmin Cole at the festival opening
Image by Melissa Banks

AND THAT'S A WRAP ON OUR 30TH YEAR – THANK YOU FOR AN AWE-INSPIRING, ACCESSIBLE AND AUDACIOUS 2024 FESTIVAL, WHAKATŪ!

Our immense gratitude goes to all our wonderful artists, venues, partners, sponsors, funders, and our amazing volunteers, crew and team. All together, we make magic.

To the incredible community:

Thank you for all your love and support, for coming to the events and exhibitions, for standing ovations, great questions, big smiles, dancing in the streets and supporting all these audacious artists and festival makers to live their dreams. We couldn't do it without you.

And to our dedicated funders and festival partners and supporters:

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It is not only about supporting an annual event; the past 30 years of unmissable arts experiences would not have been possible without you. Here is to the next 30 years of visionary festivals!

The 2024 Nelson Arts Festival was made possible with the support of our funders:

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KEEN TO JOIN OUR FESTIVAL WHĀNAU?

Partnership with the Nelson Arts Festival is not a donation but a sound investment in community and a great marketing opportunity for your organisation.

Let's connect: annie@nelsonartsfestival.nz



Credit: one of the Twisty Twinz at the Mask Carnivale
Image by Melissa Banks

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

We could not do what we do without the ongoing support of our incredible partners. Every year, our festival whānau comes together to create the way forward and an awe-inspiring festival for our community.

From the joyful Pīwakawaka to the mighty Moa, our partners all play a part in making the Nelson Arts Festival possible. Please give them a round of applause and support them in return.

MOA PARTNERS



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Credit: Rutene Spooner, *Be Like Billy?*
Image by Melissa Banks



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