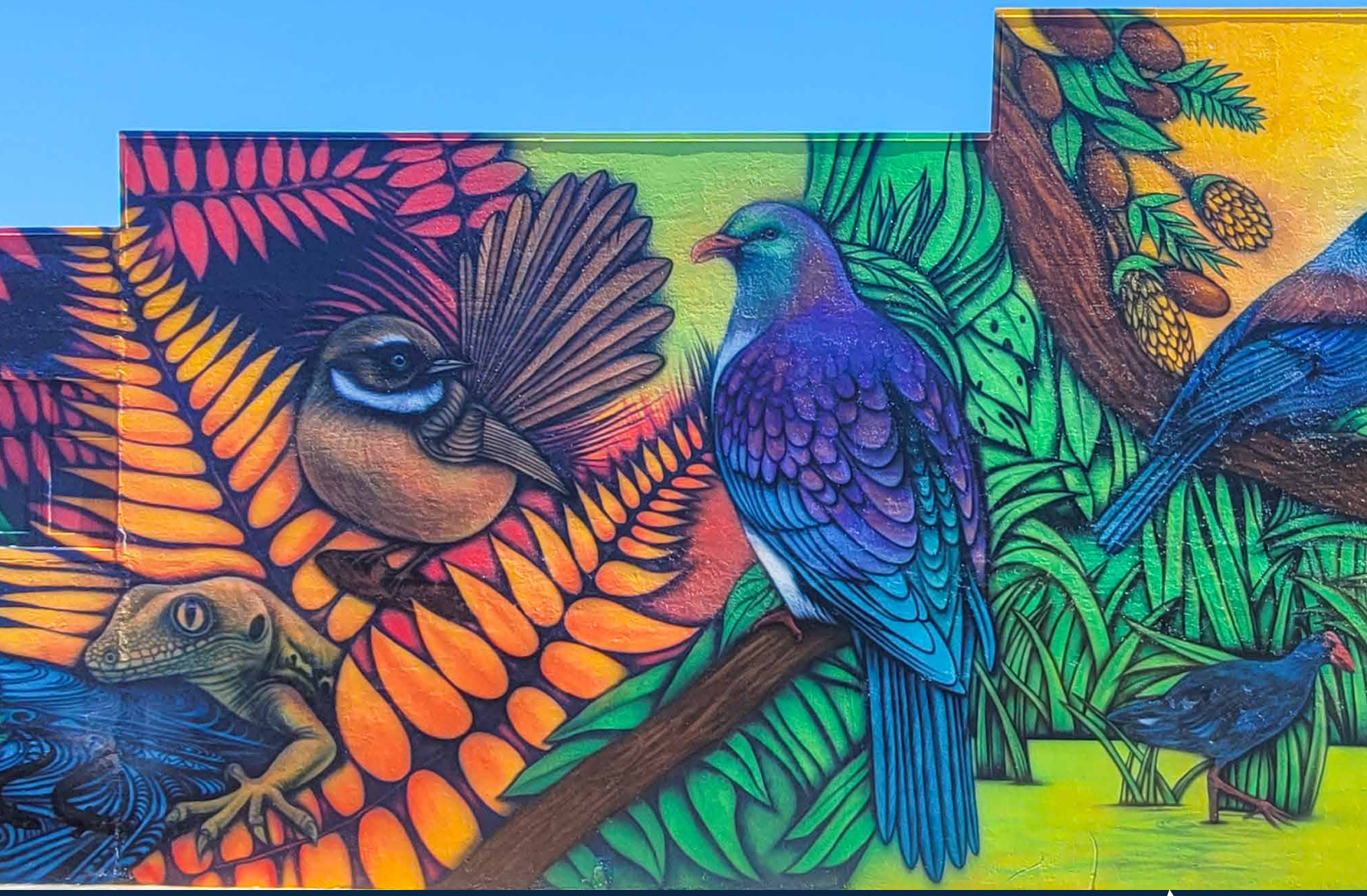

S25-001

Art in Public Places Strategy

Status: Approved by the Council on 24 June 2025

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NPDC

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Introduction

New Plymouth District is increasingly recognised as an arts destination. From Len Lye's iconic *Wind Wand* to Mr G's stirring portrait of Hana te Hemara, art in public places contributes significantly to the vibrancy of our district and our reputation as a centre for creativity. It provides us with opportunities to reflect on our unique stories, places, and people, and to forge a sense of community identity, while supporting positive regional positioning and encouraging tourism.

Cover image: Michael Montgomerie, Untitled (2025), Dowding Place Waitara
Opposite: Len Lye, *Wind Wand* (opened 2000), Coastal Walkway New Plymouth

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Strategy Purpose

The Art in Public Places Strategy guides public art initiatives across New Plymouth District, whether delivered by New Plymouth District Council, the New Plymouth District Art in Public Places Trust, or in partnership with other parties. It demonstrates Council's commitment to supporting vibrancy and access to the arts in our communities.

Filipe Tohi, *Humu (Mata'a Tangaloa) Eyes of the Gods* (2002), Coastal Walkway New Plymouth

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The Value of Art in Public Places

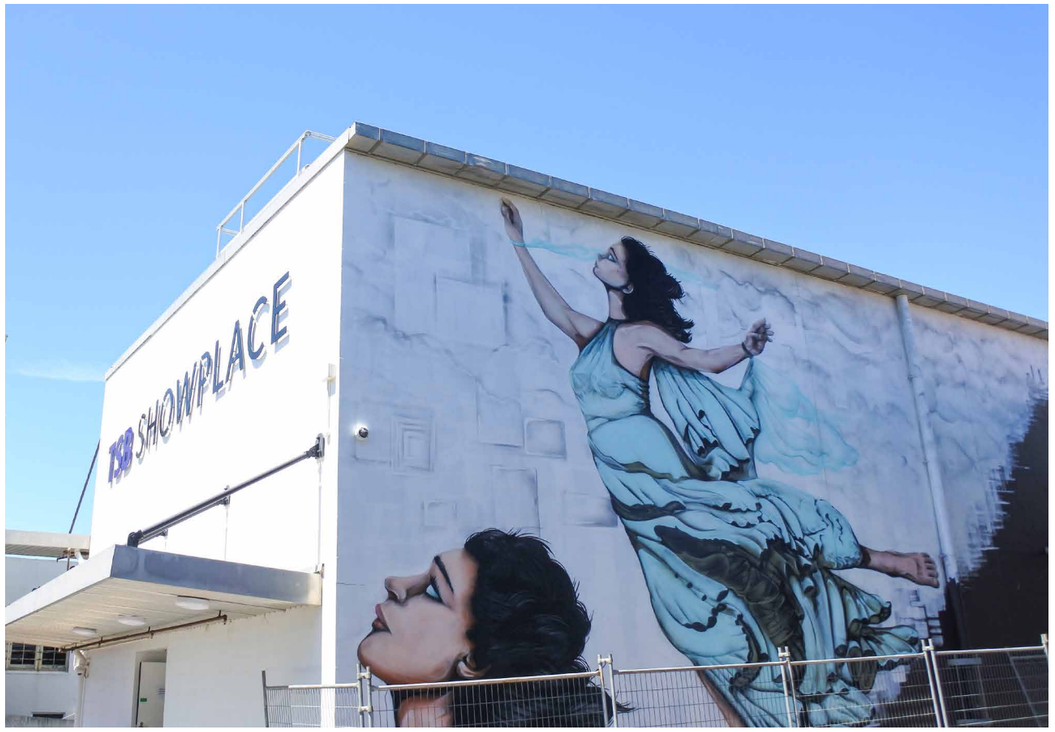
> *"The creative sector is essential to the vitality and diversity of any economy, serving as a catalyst for innovation, cultural expression, and economic growth."*
>
> **-Tapuae Roa Action Plan 2025/26**

Art in public places contributes to the vibrancy of our communities and the wellbeing of our people. As outlined in Creative New Zealand's 2023 report New Zealanders and the Arts, most New Zealanders feel that art is good for their mental health and that it helps them connect with their culture. The presence of art in public places offers opportunities for diverse audiences to access the benefits of creativity in their everyday lives. Specifically, art in public places[1]:

- improves local economies through tourism and regeneration
- fosters a sense of individual, cultural and community identity
- provides opportunities to engage with and reflect on social issues.

Regionally, the Taranaki 2050 Roadmap identifies the significant potential of the arts to drive growth in other sectors as a transition pathway towards a low-emissions economy. The Roadmap envisions our region as an arts destination, with the central business district as a "living canvas" of art in public places at its core. In the immediate term, the Tapuae Roa Action Plan 2025/26 aims to further strengthen the region's creative sector as a catalyst for tourism, investment, and social cohesion. Through Council's Strategy, art in public places contributes to the realisation of this vision in the New Plymouth District.

Odjobs, Untitled (2020), TSB Showplace New Plymouth



1 Ming Cheung, Natasha Smith & Owen Craven, "The Impacts of Public Art on Cities, Places and People's Lives," The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society 52: no. 1 (2022): 37-50.

Definitions

For this Strategy, "Art in Public Places" is defined as works of art experienced in public places under the control of New Plymouth District Council. These places include open spaces, streets, pathways, parks, reserves, foreshore areas, and any other area that can be accessed at any time.

Art in Public Places may be:

- Permanent, that is designed and manufactured to be durable and maintained across its lifespan
- Temporary, with a defined and finite lifespan

Art in Public Places can take many forms, including:

- Stand-alone three-dimensional sculptures
- Sculptures and designs integrated into other structures
- Small- to large-scale
- Static or kinetic
- Light, sound, and digital media
- Site-specific, being designed for a particular location that is integral to its meaning
- Applied, such as murals and street art

Artworks may be located on private property provided that:

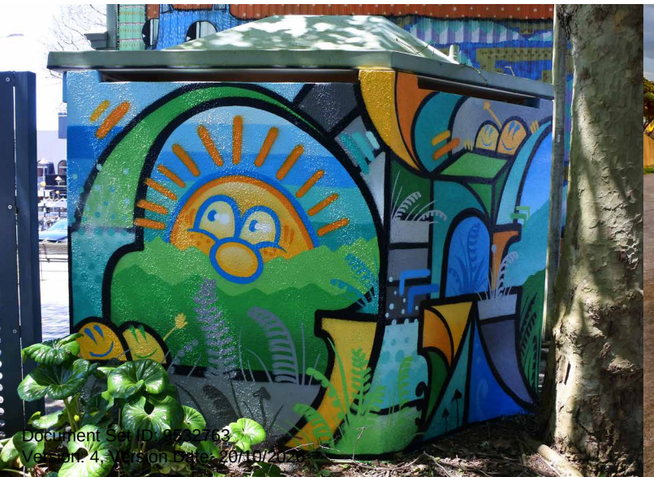
- The work is freely accessible to the public
- The work and public access are protected by an appropriate covenant.

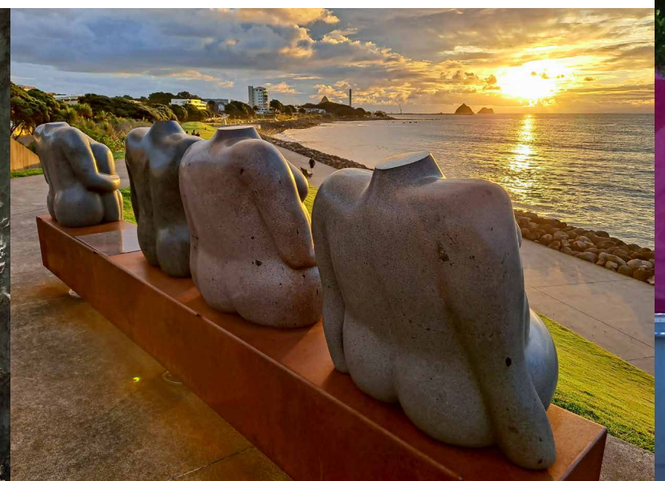
Exclusions

For this Strategy, art in public places does not include:

- Memorials, which are defined under Policy P04-009 Memorials in Public Open Spaces
- Council's institutional art collections or exhibitions
- Performance-based art
- Street furniture
- Landscape architecture
- Urban design

L: Sean Duffell, Untitled (2025), Devon Street West New Plymouth
R: Renate Verbrugge, *Mothers and Daughters* (2020), Coastal Walkway New Plymouth
Opposite: Mr G, *I Am Hana* (2022), Puke Ariki Library New Plymouth





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Vision

New Plymouth District will be enhanced by impactful art in public places that reflects our unique stories, places and people, and contributes to the vibrancy, culture, and connectedness of our communities.

Objectives

Art in public places will enhance our diverse communities' sense of belonging, connectedness, and identity through:

- Artworks that respond to our unique landscapes and examine our past, present, and future
- Supporting mana whenua aspirations for toi Māori and Te Ao Māori to enhance public spaces
- Support for community-led public art initiatives where possible
- Art in public places will activate and elevate public spaces by:
- Creating vibrant, innovative, and impactful streetscapes, experiences, and focal points
- Regenerating and enhancing our central business districts and community spaces
- Incorporating opportunities for play and interaction

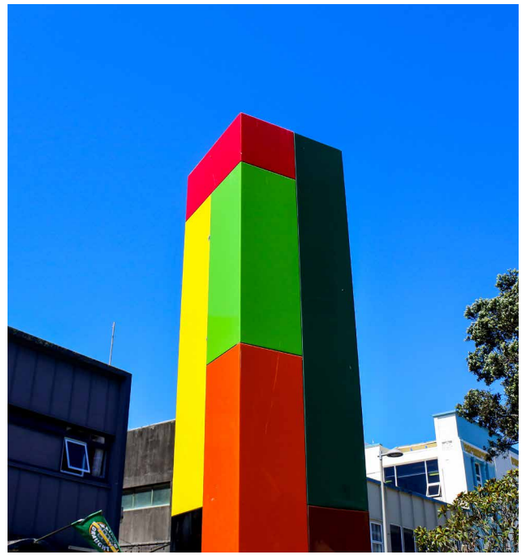
Art in public places will increase access to and understanding of art through:

- A strategic, district-wide approach to the identification of potential locations
- The development of interpretive content for artworks
- Opportunities for the community to engage in the process of commissioning new artworks where possible

Art in public places will contribute to the development of creative and cultural tourism to the district through:

- The commission of new artworks
- Opportunities for connected experiences such as art trails, tours, festivals, and events
- Promotion and celebration of our district's creative sector

L: Michael Parekowhai, *Atarangi* (2013), Lower Brougham Street New Plymouth;
R: Paul Rangiwahia, *I AM (So) Worth It* and *A Mental WOF* (2019), Lower Brougham Street New Plymouth



Guiding principles

Working in partnership

- The Strategy guides public art initiatives across Council activities.
- Council will partner with the New Plymouth District Art in Public Places Trust (the Trust) who support the delivery of this strategy. The Trust will commission artworks and provide advice on proposed donations or bequests of public artworks to Council that aligns with this Strategy.
- Council and/or Council partners will engage with mana whenua on the nature, installation, and placement of art in public places.
- Council and/or the Trust will support public art projects initiated by other community partners including mana whenua, artists, and groups such as the Len Lye Foundation, the Govett-Brewster Foundation, and New Plymouth Partners where possible.

Responding to place

- Council will prioritise art in public places that conceptually reflects the unique stories, places, and people of New Plymouth District.
- Art will be integrated into key strategic projects where possible, helping to activate and elevate significant public places district-wide.
- Council and/or Council partners will seek and consider stakeholder community views when commissioning public art where possible.

Responsible delivery

- Council will leverage partnerships to access greater amounts of funding, minimising costs to ratepayers while enabling the delivery of innovative projects.
- Art in public places will be high quality, ensuring best 'whole of life' cost.

Supporting local

- Council and/or Council partners will engage local artists, technical experts, and manufacturers where possible to support New Plymouth District's creative industries.

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Implementation

Delivery of the Art in Public Places Strategy will be supported by the following documents that will be revised and updated as needed:

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

An MOU between Council and the New Plymouth District Art in Public Places Trust, in effect unless the Trust ceases to operate, will outline the agreed roles and expectations of each party in the delivery of public art initiatives, including:

- Delivery targets
- Trust governance
- Decision making

Art in Public Places Toolkit

A toolkit outlining processes and procedures will guide the internal management of Council's public art collection, including:

- Acquisition data collection
- Disposal procedures
- Guidelines for artist proposals

The strategy will be reviewed at least every six years.

FLOX x SWEATS, *Fantastical Forest (Continued)* (2023), Puke Ariki Landing New Plymouth

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Appendix 1: Strategic links

New Plymouth District Council's vision of Taranaki as a Sustainable Lifestyle Capital where people want to live, learn, work, play and invest is reflected in this strategy through the following community outcomes:

Trusted
Strengthening Te Titiri partnerships and building trust with the community through a partnership-based approach to delivery of the Art in Public Places Strategy

Thriving Community and Culture
Seeking opportunities to support mana whenua aspirations and reflect community identity in the creative sector

Prosperity
Creating vibrant spaces to live, work and play and leveraging the economic benefits of the arts by activating art in public places

While the Art in Public Places Strategy applies to the whole district, it also links to the following Ngāmotu New Plymouth City Centre Strategy principles:

Uniquely Ngāmotu
Using creativity in public places to reflect and celebrate the unique history, stories, and identities of our district and communities

Responsive delivery through collaborative relationships
Enabling the Art in Public Places Trust and collaborating with other partners to have the greatest impact

Howard Tuffery, *Light on the Land* (2016), Coastal Walkway New Plymouth