



Wellington
UNESCO City of Film
Te Upoko o te Ika



Wellington UNESCO City of Film

Annual Report

2020/21

Contents

Introduction	2
Executive summary Tanya Black	3
A word from...	4
Robyn Baker	4
Philippa Boyens	5
Mayor Andy Foster	7
The report	8
1. Developing the strategy	10
2. Annual meeting of Aotearoa's UNESCO Creative Cities	12
3. The launch	13
4. Ngā Whanaunga, supporting indigenous voices	14
5. Getting to know our sustainable development goals	15
6. The Pahi to Māoriland	18
7. A voyage to the city to see the stars	20
8. Inspiring our Someday leaders	22
9. Empowering digital screen creators	24
10. Keeping it real	26
Looking ahead	28

Stories can connect us to our place and each other, we need to ensure everyone has that opportunity to engage with our stories and to tell their own.

Executive summary

Almost two years ago, in October 2019, Wellington was given the coveted title as a Creative City of Film by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Wellington is now one of 246 cities that make up the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) committed to a common objective - placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at a local level and co-operating actively at an international level.

The network itself covers seven creative fields, which include crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music.

With Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington, becoming a UNESCO City of Film, Aotearoa New Zealand now boasts three UNESCO Creative Cities covering the motu and forming a holy trinity of words, pictures and song. Dunedin was recognised as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2014 and Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, designated a UNESCO City of Music in 2017.

Globally, Wellington has 17 "sister Cities of Film", the closest being Sydney UNESCO City of Film.

The full list of film and creative cities in the network can be found [here](#).

So why Wellington?

Wellington has been recognised for its rich and diverse screen activity across the region over many years.

It is about the many people and programmes using film and screen cultural activities to develop our rangatahi and communities, and our demonstrated commitment to use screen creativity and technology to drive positive change, particularly for those from under-represented and underserved communities.

What is in it for us?

Being part of the global network of UNESCO Creative Cities means we can take the Wellington screen culture to the world and bring the world to Wellington.

What do we do now?

We have the support and the mandate to use our screen creativity and technology to improve lives, increasing diversity and inclusion in our screen sector which will make it more relevant and ensure it remains sustainable.

The benefits to our sector and city and our plans to activate the designation so that all Wellington citizens reap the rewards can be found in the **Wellington UNESCO City of Film strategy**.

This report though, sets out what the Wellington UNESCO City of Film has been involved with, supported and promoted in the last year.

To the uninitiated, no-one is surprised when I tell them Wellington has been recognised as a UNESCO City of Film.

What no-one could have predicted was that a few months after receiving the prestigious title, our thriving screen sector and most of the country would be stopped in its tracks.

For the screen sector in Wellington, Covid presented a myriad of challenges to survive and continue operating. In response there was a rallying and resilience, and ultimately Covid provided significant opportunities for our screen sector as we emerged as one of few countries able to produce content without restrictions.

After initially causing massive disruption and anxiety, the inherent resilience of an industry accustomed to operating in an unpredictable volatile environment meant the sector found new ways of working in each alert level.

While the global environment still presents challenges and our cinemas haven't fully recovered, for some the continued impact overseas has provided opportunities for New Zealand's film industry which can operate without Covid restrictions. We've also seen how it has further focussed local minds on telling local stories, welcomed by an increasingly intrigued global audience.

I started in the role of activating and introducing the UNESCO City of Film designation a week before New Zealand's 2020 Lockdown put a halt to all but essential commerce. Having conversations about our connection to a far-off UN agency and how our abundance of screen creativity can contribute to more sustainable communities wasn't high on anyone's agenda. However, soon after Wellington's initial Lockdown people were able to discuss what the UNESCO title

could mean for the city, how they could contribute and how we all might benefit.

Developing a strategy, deciding where we will put our focus and limited resources where we could make some small difference was a challenge.

It's probably only since the beginning of 2021 that we've started to see awareness of the title and the City of Film in action. This awareness makes it easier to get the programmes up and running - once people see the benefit, and how the programmes are targeted to remove barriers and give under-represented, underserved groups an opportunity to engage in screen culture, it can only be a good thing.

The official launch in November 2020 was an opportunity to bring the sector together and outline plans.

I've been humbled by the support to remove barriers and change perceptions - achieving our lofty goals on a small budget means partnering with individuals and organisations that have the same aspirations and belief in the power of creativity and stories to change lives.

These partnerships help us to be greater than the sum of our parts and make a genuine difference.

I would like to thank some very busy, overworked and heavily consulted individuals who have lent their time and expertise to guide me and this project, ensuring we are keeping on track.

In truth, Wellington has been a "film city": for more than 100 years, and whatever "film" looks like 100 years from now, Wellington will still be leading the way. For this reason, we're taking a long-term view with our relationships and our mahi.

As always, we are keen to hear from anyone with suggestions or ideas for Wellington as a UNESCO City of Film, to achieve our objectives and grow awareness of our special recognition.

Tanya Black

MANAGER, WELLINGTON UNESCO CITY OF FILM

A word from...



Robyn Baker

CHAIR OF NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

The national commission was absolutely delighted when Wellington was successful in its bid to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in 2019.

In its inaugural year as a Creative City - and in a year that can only be described as challenging and like no other - we want to acknowledge the hard work that has gone into ensuring Wellington's creative heartbeat has remained strong and sustainable.

UNESCO Creative Cities commit to placing culture at the centre of their development strategies, and Wellington has taken this commitment seriously.

One of the key advantages of being part of the Creative Cities Network is the opportunity for national, regional and international collaboration with other Creative Cities.

While the pandemic has limited some of the face-to-face opportunities, it has also created different ways in which Wellington can work with the Creative Cities Network, opening the door for other types of international co-operation and knowledge exchange.

The year 2020 has seen our Aotearoa New Zealand Creative Cities cement their working relationship and showcase to the world the creativity that we are proud of.

We look forward to seeing what the future holds for Wellington UNESCO City of Film, as we settle into our new normal, and continue to celebrate and support the initiatives, programmes and projects it is rolling out as a Creative City and as part of the New Zealand network.



Philippa Boyens

AMBASSADOR TO WELLINGTON UNESCO CITY OF FILM

When I was first approached to be an ambassador for Wellington UNESCO City of Film, I felt very honoured, but also, to be honest, dubious that I would have the 'time'. I've always felt so lucky to have been given the opportunities that I have had, and in the back of my mind I've felt conscious of wanting to give back in some way to the industry.

It wasn't until I sat down with Tanya Black (Manager, Wellington UNESCO City of Film) UNESCO and learnt about the focus areas and plans for Wellington UNESCO City of Film that I realised how important it is that we do the work now, not tomorrow. Now is the time for us to be putting forward our best efforts to grow and strengthen this wonderful gift that we have been given as a city - this incredible depth of creative talent and communal knowledge that has been built up over the years.

I feel strongly that we need to make visible the importance and skill of those who work behind the scenes - all those incredibly talented people, from camera operators to sound engineers, from stand-by wardrobe to production assistants who add to our visual stories' complexity, believability and quintessential originality.

I want to champion the awesome crews we have here in New Zealand, but more than that, I want us to inspire a new generation of industry professionals. And in order to do that we need to address the issue of accessibility.

How can we make young students aware of the vast array of career paths available to them within the screen sector? How can we provide more resources to our educators, not just in terms of information, but in terms of providing professional talks and workshops, in terms of providing more audio visual equipment and technical expertise?

Here in Aotearoa, we have the talent, the drive, but most importantly the desire within our young people to tell their own stories and share their thoughts on the issues that matter to them.

But we need to throw the net more widely. If we keep looking in the same place, we're going to continue to elevate the same people.

One of my favourite visions as laid out in the City of Film's four-year strategy is to enable Wellington's youth to envisage a creative life living and working in Wellington.

I'm a big believer in going off and experiencing the world, but ideally, we'll have a screen sector and a city that our young people want to come back to, bringing home to Wellington what they've seen and learnt, contributing to our creative sector's ongoing vitality, growth and sustainability.

One of my favourite experiences to date was joining the UNESCO City of Film team in Ōtaki at the Māoriland Film Festival. I knew Libby Hakaraia, the festival director, from way back and it was lovely to reconnect.

I was invited to a screening and pitching session by the rangatahi filmmakers from Māoriland's Ngā Pakiaka incubator programme. I was genuinely blown away by the calibre of the young filmmakers, especially the young women who spoke so confidently in Te Reo and English about their films, the themes and ideas that were informing their storytelling as well as their excitement at learning through doing. It was inspiring to witness this next generation of filmmakers emerge, possessed with such imagination, confidence and determination.

I'm excited to continue supporting the Wellington UNESCO City of Film. So if Tanya should come knocking on your door asking for advice or help with any of her programmes to support our young people in their creative screen pursuits, don't wait. I encourage you to help if you can - it is incredibly rewarding.

' I want to champion the awesome crews we have here in New Zealand, but more than that, I want us to inspire a new generation of industry professionals. And in order to do that we need to address the issue of accessibility.'



Mayor Andy Foster

AMBASSADOR TO WELLINGTON UNESCO CITY OF FILM

On my first day as mayor of Wellington city, the capital was confirmed as a UNESCO City of Film and that was the just the beginning!

Being recognised in this way is a huge honour and testament to the talent and dedication of the screen creatives who choose to live and work here. Over many years these people have built a thriving and vibrant industry that contributes to the region economically, providing employment and work for countless adjacent small businesses.

The vision for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network which we have adopted has us thinking broadly about sustainability and the contribution our creative industries can make to our social, cultural and environmental sustainability. Our focus is ensuring there are opportunities provided across the wider community for participation and engagement.

Partnerships, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, are key to making the small budget allocation for the UNESCO City of Film programmes successful. We are grateful to the businesses and organisations with aligned values that are helping us deliver these programmes.

The AR Virtual Film History Trail, previewed in prototype form at the launch of the City of Film, was received with much excitement. This project will prove to be an innovative way for residents and visitors to learn about the stories behind our stories.

At the time of writing, we are preparing a networking evening for graduates of the VAKA screen creative entrepreneur workshops. Invited to the evening will be some of Wellington's top-flight screen creative companies, so this will be a great opportunity for graduates to test their networking, communication and sales skills.

Looking ahead, the thing that excites me most about Wellington UNESCO City of Film is the access to the global platform that is the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the channel it provides to take more of Wellington's screen culture to the world.





The report

A year of progress



In the year that has been, Wellington UNESCO City of Film has been actively developing new programmes or supporting and promoting existing ones that align with the City of Film strategy and the UNESCO mission of more sustainable, culturally vibrant and connected cities.



1. Developing the strategy

Despite people's focus being diverted by Covid in April 2020, we were able to convene a small diverse group and gather input from the wider sector and community to provide a pathway for the City of Film and its programme of work.

We reconnected with those who had advised or provided support when bidding for the City of Film designation along with a few key players from local government, our film schools, sector representatives and NFPs such as Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision. Via group discussions and individual interviews we were able to establish what the issues were, what resources we had and how they could be used to improve our screen sector and community. We decided on our focus areas with some lofty goals, underpinned by an intention to build a bicultural foundation.

Next, we sent out a draft strategy to the wider community and we were heartened by the feedback we received. With a few tweaks, but mostly tautoko, we got it printed up and started setting about putting it into action - you can read the full strategy [here](#).

Wellington

UNESCO City of Film Strategy 2020-2024



Wellington City of Film
Te Upoko o te Ika

Taking Wellington to the World
Showcasing the best place to watch, learn about and make films



Bringing the World to Wellington
The UNESCO Creative Cities Network provides connections to cultures and communities of the world

VISION Wellington UNESCO City Of Film Contributes to a more Vibrant, Sustainable and Inclusive, Screen Sector And City.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



Rangatahi
Our future leaders and storytellers



Māori storytellers
Celebrating our unique identity and culture



Technology
Our experience and innovation



Diversity
Authentically reflecting our world



The Pacific
Our extended whānau

HOW WE GET THERE TOGETHER

YEAR ONE: CELEBRATE, EXPLORE & BUILD

YEAR TWO: ACT, ITERATE & LEARN SOME MORE

YEAR THREE: IMPLEMENT, COLLABORATE & CONNECT

CELEBRATE
Our film heritage – where we have come from and where we are going

EXPLORE
Opportunities to leverage our screen sector creativity and commitment to transforming communities

BUILD
Trust, Partnerships and Programmes together

ACT
Deliver programmes for change

ITERATE
Refine programmes for improved targeting and outcomes

LEARN SOME MORE
Strengthen partnerships. Share our challenges and successes to grow together

CONNECT
Community & screen sector to each other and local and global networks. Community to Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

IMPLEMENT
Continues with improved and more focused programme of work

COLLABORATE
Programmes include international cooperation between Wellington and other Film Cities. Partnerships formed to scale impact & progress

ALIGN
To the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

TRANSFORM
Generational partnership foundations formed. Programme results and goals reached

PLAN
Evaluate effectiveness. Plan activity for next four years of being a UNESCO City of Film

*In partnership, we will build capacity and leadership with communities to create and drive City of Film programmes.

BUILDING A BICULTURAL FOUNDATION

	LEADERSHIP	PARTNERSHIP	CULTURAL FRAMEWORK, MODEL AND PRACTICES
Strategic Goals	<p>01 Wellington Rangatahi are creative, engaged global citizens</p>	<p>02 An increased understanding and appreciation of our unique culture</p>	<p>03 Wellington is a world leader in immersive and interactive technology</p>
What this will mean	<p>Young people see a future career and creative life in Wellington</p> <p>Young people take the lead in designing programmes</p> <p>Young people connect to Wellington's film heritage via latest technology</p>	<p>People of Wellington are connected to our place through our stories</p> <p>Young people build stronger connections to their culture via screen and storytelling experiences</p> <p>Increased prominence of Te Reo Māori via inclusion in Wellington UNESCO City of Film content and programmes</p>	<p>Ensuring opportunities for underrepresented groups</p> <p>Shining a spotlight on our world leading screen innovation</p> <p>Repurposing screen innovations for different applications to improve our world</p>
Sustainable Development Goals			

2.

Annual meeting of Aotearoa's UNESCO Creative Cities

The UNESCO Creative Cities of Aotearoa (UCCA) and their respective mayors met for the first time in November 2020.

There are now three UNESCO Creative Cities in Aotearoa - in 2014 Dunedin became New Zealand's first city to be appointed to the Creative Cities Network as a **UNESCO City of Literature**. And Auckland's bid to become a **UNESCO City of Music** was accepted in 2017. In October 2019, Wellington received the official designation as a **UNESCO City of Film**.

Representatives from the three cities met with the New Zealand National Commission for

UNESCO to connect and discuss how our cities can leverage our unique cultural and artistic sectors, particularly in post-Covid recovery.

We like to say we have the holy trinity of words, pictures, and songs and at the heart it is all about telling stories. There are plans to work together on projects which bring together creatives from each of the cities and sectors to cross-pollinate ideas, fast track our inclusion initiatives and promote Te Reo through our storytelling.

It was gratifying to have Wellington mayor Andy Foster and Dunedin mayor Aaron Hawkins in attendance and showing support for their regions' creative sectors.

3.

The launch



In November 2020 we welcomed people from the screen sector, iwi, education and different community groups to the launch event for Wellington UNESCO City of Film.

It was an opportunity to celebrate the stories, the filmmakers, the history, heritage, and unique cultural, social and economic impact film has had on this city.

It was also a chance to introduce Wellington's UNESCO City of Film strategy and its vision to harness that creativity for the better of all our communities.

Honiana Love, Tumu Whakarae of Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision now based at the National Library, welcomed us and spoke of the aligned focus held by Ngā Taonga and Wellington UNESCO City of Film - and our intentions to work together.

The City of Film ambassadors Wellington mayor Andy Foster and Academy Award™-winning writer/producer Philippa Boyens both spoke about the power for positive change within the screen sector. Deputy Prime Minister

Grant Robertson reminded us of our obligation to protect and promote the mana whenua stories and storytellers.

Entertainment was provided by young Wellington singer songwriter RIIKI, who played her track *High Heights* which features on the Wellington UNESCO City of Film trailer, a retrospective of Wellington film heritage.

We also showcased some of the opportunities on offer to people who work in AR/VR, opportunities City of Film is already helping to develop and support.

A good example is **Whakakitenga, the first Māori VR film**, a story about Ngāti Toa and the impact of colonisation by Ngāti Toa filmmaker Wiremu Grace.

Like everything we do, we want to provide opportunities for our rangatahi with a passion for film (or whatever screens they use for narrative visual storytelling) to connect and learn.

To emphasise that, graduates of Massey University's School of Commercial Music and Creative Media Production helped as hosts, with some reporting that they had made new connections or reconnected with creatives and had plans to create together in the future.



4.

Ngā Whanaunga, supporting indigenous voices



One of the first of several long-term partnerships Wellington UNESCO City of Film has formed was with Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival.

The first iteration of that partnership was to support the Ngā Whanaunga Māori Pasifika Shorts at the 2020 festival by presenting the first ever Wellington UNESCO City of Film Award for Best Film.

The \$3000 cash award was presented to the winning film *Money Honey* with a packed, excited crowd that included the filmmakers, actors and supporters all attending the screening at Wellington's Roxy Cinema.

The judging panel included indigenous filmmakers from sister UNESCO Cities of Film, Mumbai and Sydney, alongside New Zealand actor and head of Toi Whaakari school Tanea Heke.

The partnership with NZIFF to support Ngā Whanaunga filmmakers is Wellington UNESCO City of Film's first action toward elevating Wellington Māori and Pasifika films and filmmakers.

5.

Getting to know our sustainable development goals

At the end of our four-year tenure Wellington will need to demonstrate how our programmes have contributed towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO Creative Cities mission.

We will need to show evidence of lives and communities positively impacted through screen culture and creativity as well as our support and co-operation with the other UNESCO Creative Cities in New Zealand and around the world.

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** is a plan of action for the planet, people, and prosperity. It was adopted by the United Nations member states in 2015.

All UN agencies use the 2030 agenda and associated **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** as a framework for their work, including UNESCO and the Creative Cities Network.

The Creative Cities mission is based on the UN sustainable agenda and SDGs and it was therefore important that our strategy and our work were aligned with these goals. Governments and large corporations are using





the SDGs as a framework for sustainable growth - for us, understanding how the City of Film's work relates to the SDGs is essential to our work in achieving the Creative Cities mission. We invited our partners and stakeholders to a workshop to learn more about the SDGs and how they relate to our work.

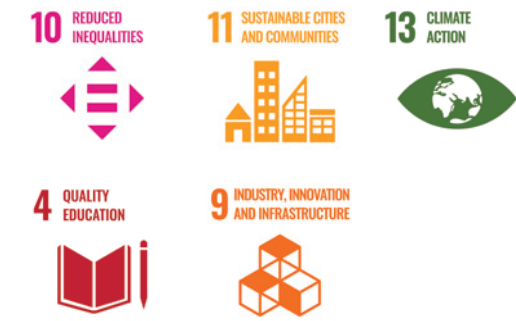
We enjoyed a lively and creative session with Bridget Williams from **Bead and Proceed**, a social enterprise that exists to educate people about the 17 UN SDGs and inspire action towards them with creativity.

We made beaded necklaces and key chains and painted the beads in the colours of our personal top five SDGs.

It's a way to wear your commitment to a better world and spark conversation around the SDGs - Wellington UNESCO City of Film's Tanya Black has worn her necklace many times, and when complimented on it, she takes the opportunity to explain the meaning behind it.

As a group we decided on which of the SDGs are most relevant to Wellington UNESCO City of Film and its kaupapa.

We decided on the five SDGs most relevant to the City of Film's work and in our strategy, you can see where they link to our own focus areas and ambitions for the city:



6.

The Pahi to Māoriland



For Wellington UNESCO City of Film, removing barriers to cultural screen activities is one of our main priorities.

The festival usually draws an international audience, but Covid put paid to that. City of Film wanted to promote the festival and make it accessible to Wellington citizens, many of whom are unaware we have something very special right on our back doorstep.

Māoriland Film Festival is New Zealand's premier international indigenous film festival. It is a cultural and arts event that invites New Zealanders to the indigenous worlds through screen storytelling.

Normally patronised by indigenous people from around the world, in the time of Covid the festival would miss its international visitors. Due to our Covid control in Aotearoa, the festival could be held but was not able to extend its manaakitanga and welcome to the indigenous filmmakers from around the world. It was an opportunity to ensure more people from around Aotearoa knew about the festival and were able to enjoy it.

Māoriland Film Festival aligns with so many of the UNESCO and the Creative Cities Network values. We took up director Libby Hakaraia's idea of a film festival bus to provide a sustainable transport option for Wellington city citizens get to Ōtaki and the festival.

We were joined on the inaugural journey by Māoriland's Pat Hakaraia, who gave the passengers background on the festival and various other activities at the Māoriland hub in Ōtaki.

An urban electric and accessible bus that did double duty promoting the wonderful film *Cousins* made the trek up the coast twice a day and ferried people from the Waikanae train station to Ōtaki. While we were not able to fill the bus every day, it was really appreciated by those who did.

Wellington UNESCO City of Film ambassador Philippa Boyens joined the incubator session on the Friday to lend her messages of support.

'For our school, transport costs are a major barrier to participation in cultural events, so it was amazing and so easy to take a large group of our year 13 media studies students to Māoriland Film Festival. Seeing the short films and especially hearing from the young filmmakers in Ōtaki was inspirational for the students.'

JACQUI BISLEY

Art co-ordinator for St Patricks Town and St Catherine's, Wellington

A highlight was taking a bus load of year 13 media students from St Patrick's College in Wellington, mostly Māori and Pacifica students, who got to see carvers in action, some of the short films and a lively pitching session from the Ngā Pakiaka rangatahi filmmaker incubator programme introducing their films to industry leaders.

The rest of the year at Māoriland hub is not any quieter, Libby Hakaraia running an incubator programme for young filmmakers and an animation course for screen creatives. There's also an art gallery with resident weavers – the City of Film hopes to keep sending city kids up to be inspired.



'This year we were over the moon to have Wellington UNESCO City of Film to support us by bringing a bus from Wellington to Ōtaki. It's always been that missing piece of the puzzle of, how do we get people to come to the festival, how we travel them up from Wellington and the wider regions ... it is make or break for some people to come and enjoy everything Māoriland has to offer.'

MADELEINE DE YOUNG

Kaiwhakahau Hōtaka – Rangatahi; Ahurei; Kawenga Kōrero | Māoriland Programme Manager – Rangatahi, Festival, Story



7.

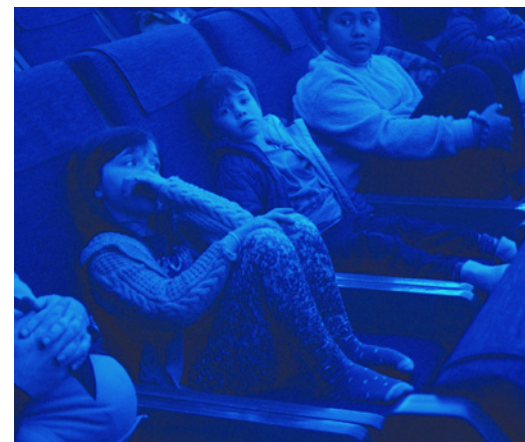
A voyage to the city to see the stars

Having established the partnership with Māoriland, Wellington UNESCO City of Film was keen to reverse the cultural exchange and bring residents of Kāpiti to the city for a special screen experience.

This unique voyage of discovery saw tamariki transported to Space Place at the Carter Observatory throughout July for special screenings of *Matariki Dawn*, a film about the Matariki star cluster specially filmed for projection in the planetarium dome. After the screening, passionate astronomer Haritana Mogosanu entertained and educated the visitors with her fascinating 'night sky' talk.

The journeys and partnership with Māoriland hub are all part of our focus on providing unique and inspirational screen culture experiences, particularly for underserved and under-represented communities. Many of the tamariki who made the trip to Wellington had not visited a planetarium before.

The tamariki from Kāpiti relished the opportunity to learn about Matariki and the night sky through an entertaining film in the starry dome.



8.

Inspiring our Someday leaders



In Wellington, our UNESCO City of Film platform partnered with The Outlook for Someday to deliver a creative leadership programme for aspiring young filmmakers.

If you ask people in the film sector which is the most misunderstood, undervalued and scarce of the skills, it would be those of a producer. The role of producer is that of ship's captain, shouldering the responsibility of the project and enabling creatives to work at their best. Learning about the role of producer is a great way to learn about leadership, especially for our rangatahi. The team from The Outlook for Someday devised a pilot project that provides young people with an insight into the role of producer or creative leadership with a "get the crew together" approach to creating and promoting projects in their own communities.

Over the course of a weekend, young people aged 13-19 from a variety of schools and diverse backgrounds were asked to form teams and make a short film with a sustainability focus. During that process they learnt how to manage conflict, have difficult conversations, motivate others and think about audience and their art in a wider context.

Late on Sunday they took turns presenting the short films they had made, and they were amazing, especially considering the short timeframe and basic equipment they used. The films ranged in themes and genre from a moody and erratic tale of someone struggling with

mental health issues to a mockumentary about an environmental superhero gone rogue.

The workshops finished with participants writing postcards to their "future selves" about their creative goals and how they would achieve them. In eight weeks' time they receive that reminder and we're thrilled to hear some participants have already reconnected and started working on projects together, and registered for other The Outlook for Someday programmes, including the annual sustainability film challenge.

Wellington UNESCO City of Film is excited to collaborate again with The Outlook for Someday and offer the Someday leaders programme in 2022. You can register your interest at info@wellingtoncityoffilm.com.

'I aspire to be a film director and my experience with the Someday leadership workshop confirmed that I was headed in the right direction. It was great meeting likeminded people and working together to create a film.'

WYNTER TICKLE

15, student



COLLEGE OF
CREATIVE ARTS
TOI KAOIWHĀRANGI

Special thanks to Massey University's School of Commercial Music and Creative Media Production for hosting

9.

Empowering digital screen creators

When friends and colleagues told Andrea Fua and Jesse Armstrong that they wanted to go into business like them, the young entrepreneurs decided to create a programme to impart what they'd learnt in developing their own creative screen tech business VAKA.

Together with Wellington UNESCO City of Film, the team from VAKA created an extensive workshop, business boot camp and mentoring programme for Māori and Pasifika screen creatives who want to be their own boss. Called Ignition 101, the three-week-long workshops designed to provide real-world experience and business opportunities have proved hugely successful.

The Ignition 101 workshops focused on networking, identifying client solutions, deal-making, closing and the nuts-and-bolts of running a small, creative-led business. In each session the participants heard from other Māori and Pasifika entrepreneurs from a variety of screen-related fields, with insights on developing creative content and protecting intellectual property.

This pilot programme includes a year-long mentoring component where the students receive ongoing support and guidance. We can't wait to see how that peer support springboards them as entrepreneurs.

The partnership with VAKA is all part of our commitment to work collaboratively to achieve our strategy goals, particularly around empowering Māori and Pasifika visual storytellers, increasing diversity in the sector and ensuring all of Wellington's young people see a future creative life and living to be made here in Wellington.



' Ignition 101 is by us, for us. As Māori and Samoan creative entrepreneurs ourselves, we can relate to the unique struggle of other Pasifika and Māori creatives trying to make something of themselves while fighting self-doubt and aiga/whānau that don't always understand what we're doing. Ignition 101 is a special space that we're really proud of ... designed specifically for Pasifika and Māori screen creatives to come together both kano ki te kano and online to learn 'the business stuff' in a straightforward, collaborative and practical way.'

ANDREA FUA
Chief Operating Officer VAKA

' The environment provided the mental and emotional support that was very similar to the cultural values I was raised with - I met people I had either looked up to or were working in a field I aspired to be in, and I love that we now have mentors to continue through this journey.'

PARTICIPANT JOSEPHINE BONNINGTON-MAILISI

' After being here the last two sessions, I just know that I can do this man. I just know.'

RANGIMARIE TEAUTAMA

Currently working as a PE teacher but has discovered a love of making short films / vlogs and wants to pursue this as a new career path.

10.

Keeping it real



Wellington UNESCO City of Film is committed to supporting and promoting screen projects and content that authentically includes or represents our diverse communities.

‘ I can’t thank you enough for your contributions to last night’s event, which went better than we had even hoped! We seem to have reached the public beyond the university, and that benefits the students enormously. The filmmakers were also really pleased with the audience’s enthusiasm for the film.’

DR MISSY MOLLOY

Senior Lecturer, Film Programme Victoria University of Wellington

Rūrangi

City of Film recently partnered with Victoria University of Wellington to provide a special screening of *Rūrangi*, with a discussion afterwards with the filmmakers and writers Craig Gainsborough, Cole Meyers and Tweedie Waititi.

The feature film *Rūrangi* started its life as a web series but the story resonated with so many people that the creators were encouraged to create a feature film.

It tells the story of transgender activist Caz Davis, who skipped town a decade ago and returns to the remote, politically divided dairy community of Rurangi. Caz hopes to reconnect with his estranged father, who hasn’t heard from him since before he transitioned.

The film has been hailed for its authentic casting and *Rūrangi* is a production which tackles the lack of visibility, empowerment and the sharing of power and creative decision-making head on. You can find out more about the inclusive kaupapa that drives the production and promotion of the film [here](#).

The screening was opened by Green MP Dr Elizabeth Kerekere and the organisers ensured Wellington’s many LGBTQI+ community groups were invited to celebrate this charming and very important Kiwi film.



Poppy

Another ground-breaking film, *Poppy*, tells the story of a young woman with Down Syndrome who refuses to be defined or limited by her disability. She strategises and employs the help of friends in her small town to live her dream of an ‘ordinary life’, becoming a qualified mechanic, a girlfriend and champion drag racer. *Poppy* was filmed entirely in the Wellington region.

The producers considered it essential that the lead actor be someone with Down Syndrome and knew when they met Libby Hunsdale, they’d found their “Poppy”.

Libby owned the role of “Poppy”, becoming the first woman with Down Syndrome to have a leading role in a New Zealand feature film.

Keeping with the production’s focus on empowering young people with disabilities, the Wellington premiere was a fundraiser for Special Olympics and Wellington UNESCO City of Film was thrilled to play a small part in creating a true red carpet gala event for all those attending.

Looking ahead

Coming up in the next few months, Wellington UNESCO City of Film will work with existing partners and establish new connections to keep delivering the City of Film strategy and the UNESCO Creative Cities mission.

Wellington UNESCO City of Film has partnered with Ministry of Social Development to provide seven paid internships in a variety of roles on an exciting film project to begin in September.

To be shot all over Wellington, "Dox" focuses on the escapades of a couple of inventive Tongan rugby fans. The interns, who are currently unemployed, will get hands-on-learning and mentoring, and should they decide a life in film is for them, support to grow their careers - watch this space!

We've also lined up opportunities for young filmmakers and students to meet with Wellington talents, director James Ashcroft and producer Desray Armstrong. They will talk about the themes of their film *Coming Home in the Dark* and offer advice to participants, who will then get to attend the film's red-carpet world premiere.

We are working in tandem with the tech sector, archives, museums and filmmakers on an AR film heritage trail that will connect people with Wellington's rich and diverse film history. It's a

project that takes the idea of a film museum to the streets, an AR platform that will allow residents and visitors alike to interact with the stories behind our stories, in the places they happened.

The project's development is aligned with the United Nations Sustainability agenda 2030 by involving significant stakeholders and community in a co-design process. The build will also include jobs and skills development for our city's young people, particularly those from previously underserved and under-represented groups.

Also in the pipeline - the three UNESCO Creative Cities of Aotearoa are joining forces and planning events to highlight and support the creatives in our cities' respective fields.

All this work ties in nicely with year two of our strategy, which sets out how we will look at what resonated and what worked from this year, strengthening our partnerships, and sharing and learning from our challenges and successes with our partners here in Wellington and our Creative Cities Network around the globe.

If you're interested in how culture and creativity can have a positive impact on our communities and would like to contribute to this UNESCO City of Film project, there are many ways to get involved. Please get in touch by emailing cityoffilm@wellingtonnz.com

