He wāhi aroha A place of aroha

Investing in accessible arts





The arts are for everyone

"Arts Access Aotearoa is great because it supports the arts by people with disabilities. It helps give us a place to stand and be heard."

Duncan Armstrong,

performer and advocate for inclusion

Read <u>Duncan Armstrong a trailblazing performer</u>

Who we are

Arts Access Aotearoa is the national leader and advocate for equity, inclusion and accessibility in the arts. We work to ensure that every person in New Zealand can experience, engage in and create art, whatever their background, identity or circumstance.

Arts Access Aotearoa works with government agencies, individuals, philanthropic trusts, arts organisations and community groups to drive change and build a more accessible and equitable arts sector.

Why access matters now

When access is not prioritised, the impact falls hardest on people who experience disability, incarceration, mental distress, cultural and social isolation, or inequity. Without appropriate support, their perspectives are left out of our national story.

The need for access to the arts is growing – and so is the opportunity. More artists are calling for our support. More organisations are seeking our guidance. We're poised to expand our reach.

How you can help

As a supporter, you will power our national networks, our advocacy and our frontline impact.

Together, we can build an arts sector where everyone belongs.

Contact:

artsaccess.org.nz info@artsaccess.org.nz 04 802 4349

Our impact

We:

drive change to make the arts more accessible

influence, advocate and offer strategic advice

champion the human rights of everyone to create, engage and lead in the arts

support Deaf and disabled artists to have sustainable careers

celebrate success, tackle issues and amplify voices

support rehabilitative arts programmes in prisons and Community Corrections

strengthen the community arts sector, growing capacity and leadership

provide accessibility training, toolkits and resources

30

years providing national leadership in arts accessibility

65

members of the Create Spaces Network supported

300+

accessible events and services delivered every year through members of the Arts For All Network

970+

individuals and organisations engaged in accessibility through the Arts For All Network

40,000+

people regularly attend creative spaces in communities across New Zealand

1500+

professional arts workers, artists and teachers are employed by creative spaces

Building an inclusive, creative future

Creative expression lies at the heart of humanity. It fosters aroha, identity, understanding and connection. It's vital that everyone living in Aotearoa New Zealand can engage in our arts and culture.

<u>Arts Access Aotearoa</u> exists to ensure that everyone in New Zealand can experience and contribute to the arts, whatever their circumstances.

We break down barriers, foster inclusion, and empower people and communities by advocating for equity and accessibility in the arts.

Through collaboration, advocacy and the support of artists, community groups, professional arts organisations and government agencies, we strive to build an inclusive arts sector where access to the arts is available to everyone.



Artist Jacob Dombroski and Richard Benge, Executive Director of Arts Access Aotearoa, co-hosting Te Putanga Toi Arts Access Awards 2021 at Te Papa

"This is about more than art. It's about equity, opportunity and dignity. When we remove barriers, we give people a voice."

Richard Benge, Executive Director, Arts Access Aotearoa



Advisors, activators and advocates



Lead Accessibility Advisor Stace Robertson, Equal Voices Arts Artistic Director Dr Laura Haughey and Arts For All Activator Katie Querin at Carterton Events Centre ahead of a performance of *Where Our Shadows Meet*

"Arts Access Aotearoa is the country's most outspoken advocate on removing barriers of participation for creative endeavours."

This comment was included in an article on <u>The Big Idea website</u> about the positive impact of Manatū Taonga's three-year funding for creative spaces delivered in partnership with Arts Access Aotearoa from 2021–2024.

Together with our partners and supporters, we create pathways for people that lead to lasting change and open doors to creativity, inclusion and stronger communities.

Our national networks of artists, art workers, professional arts organisations, cultural institutions and community members drive accessibility. They are backed by the expertise of our team of advisors, activators and advocates, providing services throughout the country.

Read more about our staff

What we do



Fiona Sharp, Creative Spaces Network Development Advisor, and Jazz Lolesio, Arts Access Activator Auckland, facilitate a meeting of the Creative Spaces Network steering group, bringing together members from across the country

Opposite: Arts in Corrections educators and artists attended a wānanga in May 2024, facilitated by Arts Access Aotearoa, to discuss and share knowledge about a planned practical guide for Arts in Corrections educators

- We empower Deaf¹ and disabled artists, supporting them with resources and opportunities to develop their arts practice and career paths through our <u>Taha Hotu initiative</u>.
- We encourage increased access to arts and culture, advising and supporting professional arts organisations and cultural institutions in collaboration with Deaf and disabled members of our <u>Arts For All</u>
 Network
- We guide positive change through our <u>Arts in Corrections Network</u>, encouraging best practice in the delivery of effective, rehabilitative arts programmes in prisons.
- We strengthen community arts leadership through the <u>Creative Spaces</u> <u>Network</u>, activating peer-led professional development, opportunities and funding advice.
- We share powerful stories and blogs, highlighting achievements and tackling issues, promoted through our digital platforms and information service.
- We influence policy at national, local and organisational levels, working with others to shape policies and action plans so all people in Aotearoa can enjoy accessible and inclusive arts.
- 1 The word Deaf (spelt with a capital "D") refers to Deaf culture. The use of sign language as a person's first language is the principle characteristic of people who identify with this culture.



You can help remove barriers and empower more people to experience the arts. 04 802 4349 | artsaccess.org.nz/support-us



What guides us

Our vision

All people in Aotearoa can access and participate in the arts.

Arts Access Aotearoa is a partnership organisation grounded in the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, recognising Māori as tangata whenua and upholding te tino rangatiratanga.

"We come from a place of aroha"

Arts Access Aotearoa's Equity Statement

At Arts Access Aotearoa, we value people.

We value people's time.

We value people's lived experience and we understand it as expertise.

We recognise that we don't all start from the same place.

Sometimes there can be an imbalance.

Some people have more power and privileges.

We understand that it can take extra effort for some people to turn up and be involved.

At Arts Access Aotearoa, we come from a place of aroha.

We work in relationship with each other to understand, connect and share. We want to create a fairer and more just world where everyone is valued for all parts of who they are.

We'd love to korero.

Our tikanga and values

- Rangatiratanga respecting the mana of others
- Whanaungatanga appreciating the value of relationships and partnerships
- Kotahitanga working in harmony to achieve common purpose and chared vision.
- Kaitiakitanga service to others and nurturing leadership within others.
- M\u00f6hiotanga seeking understanding and awareness

Our goals

- Accessibility is embedded and sustainable in the arts sector.
- Deaf and disabled artists are an integral part of the arts sector, leading and shaping the artistic landscape.
- The creative spaces sector is sustainable and empowered.
- Increased high-quality art programmes are available in New Zealand prisons and Community Corrections.
- Rangatahi benefit from the delivery of high-quality art initiatives in youth justice residences.

Read more about Arts Access Aotearoa



A legacy of leadership

"Arts Access Aotearoa is about upholding the mana of every voice, ensuring the arts are truly accessible and inclusive for all communities, including people in prisons. In alignment with te ao Māori, we lead by embodying the values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga."

Hone Fletcher, trustee and recipient with Lawrence Ereatara of the Arts Access Accolade 2021

Since 1995, Arts Access Aotearoa Putanga Toi ki Aotearoa has been the national advocate for access and inclusion in the arts. The organisation was founded on a powerful belief – that everyone has the right to create, participate in and experience the arts, whatever their circumstances.

From the beginning, Arts Access Aotearoa has provided leadership. It pioneered the concept of "creative spaces" – inclusive community art studios supporting Deaf and disabled people; people with mental distress; and those who face other barriers to participation.

Creative spaces are a vibrant, often unrecognised part of New Zealand's cultural life. Through mentoring, training and advocacy, Arts Access Aotearoa champions these spaces and the artists within them.

In 2004, it broke new ground again, partnering with Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections to bring high-quality arts programmes into prisons nationwide. This work continues to transform lives and reduce re-offending, offering dignity, purpose and hope through creativity.

The launch of the Arts For All Network in 2010 saw Arts Access Aotearoa bring together arts organisations, venues, and the Deaf and disability communities to make New Zealand's arts and cultural sector more accessible and welcoming. The Network is a catalyst for change, supporting the arts sector to become more inclusive.

And now, Arts Access Aotearoa has established the Taha Hotu Deaf and Disabled Artists Initiative. Disability-led and facilitated by Arts Access Aotearoa, Taha Hotu supports Deaf and disabled artists to navigate the arts sector and develop their creative practices.

Arts Access Aotearoa champions a movement for access and inclusion through the arts – always upholding its belief that access to the arts and creativity is a basic human right.

We have achieved a great deal, working alongside diverse communities. Together, we will continue to build a future where the arts truly are for everyone.

Read more about our impact over 30 years



"Changing my future"

"Doing arts and whakairo when I was inside changed my life. Now I'm reaping the benefits of my mahi and sharing with the community through my whakairo business in the gallery."

Mark Lang



Hineahuone Me ana Koe kite a Hine-ahuone (Pay heed to the mana of women), an art installation by Mark Lang



Mark Lang outside his gallery, Tika Pono Toi Gallery and Studio, in Dargaville with Tracy Robertson, an employee at the gallery

For people in the criminal justice system, the arts can provide a powerful path to rehabilitation and reintegration. Our Arts in Corrections Network connects artists, educators and organisations with opportunities to deliver life-changing arts programmes in prisons and Community Corrections across Aotearoa.

When the cell door shut behind Mark Lang (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Horahia) on his first night in prison, he made a promise to himself that he would change. He took every class and opportunity that Corrections offered him.

"The art of carving provided a pathway for me to navigate a journey back to wellbeing and restoration of mana," he says. "I learned my craft when I was

in Hawke's Bay Regional Prison and I am now an esteemed carver."

Mark recalls his pōwhiri (welcome) into the prison's Te Tirohanga (Māori focus unit). "I felt a huge shift. The programme's te ao Māori worldview and the opportunity to connect with my whakapapa enabled me to find myself; learn who I was and what I stood for; where I belonged – and now, where I am heading."

Opening his gallery, Tika Pono Toi Gallery and Studio in Dargaville, and offering carving classes in the community is a dream come true.

Mark started planning for his future when he was in prison, completing a Level 4 business certificate and business plan. "I saw this as a chance for me to change my future and bring hope to others that you can transform your life and achieve your dreams.

"Doing arts and whakairo when I was inside changed my life. Now I'm reaping the benefits of my mahi and sharing with the community through my whakairo business in the gallery."

Neil Wallace, Arts in Corrections Advisor at Arts Access Aotearoa, says Mark's journey is an outstanding example of the transformative power of the arts, particularly within the context of Māori cultural practices.

Neil facilitates the Arts in Corrections Network. He connects people, sharing resources and evidence of how arts programmes contribute to rehabilitation. ●

Listen to the podcast <u>Carving out</u> a better future with Mark Lang



Rodney Bell: leading the change

"His work shows us why accessible arts matter. He's not just making art, he's leading change."

Stace Robertson, Arts Access Aotearoa



Rodney Bell, Jodee Mundy and Stace Robertson after presenting a panel on arts and disability at the Performing Arts Network New Zealand (PANNZ) Art Market 2025

Valued, expected and anticipated. This is the kaupapa of the Taha Hotu Deaf and Disabled Artists Initiative, disability-led and facilitated by Arts Access Aotearoa. Taha Hotu advocates for change so these artists can tell their own stories on their own terms.

Rodney Bell (Ngāti Maniapoto) has received numerous accolades for his groundbreaking work as a dancer and choreographer. He is an arts leader, teaching and mentoring disabled and non-disabled dancers, and an advocate for greater accessibility in the arts.

"I didn't dream of dancing when I was young," Rodney says. "Dance found me after I acquired my disability."

Growing up in Te Kuiti immersed in Māori culture, Rodney's early life was full of sport, motorbikes and a strong sense of identity. In 1991, a motorbike accident left him paralysed from the chest down. Suddenly, Rodney faced the challenge of rebuilding his life and redefining who he was.

Through sport – he was a member of the New Zealand wheelchair basketball team – Rodney rebuilt his strength and confidence. But it was dance that changed his life.

In 1997, working alongside choreographer Catherine Chappell, Rodney became a founding member of the pioneering inclusive dance company Touch Compass – now disability-led.

Since then, Rodney's career has flourished, and he's built a creative career spanning decades and the world.

"Rodney's resilience and artistry have paved the way for other disabled performers," says Stace Robertson, Lead Accessibility Advisor at Arts Access Aotearoa. "His work shows us why accessible arts matter. He's not just making art, he's leading change."

Taha Hotu translates as "to lean together". The name was gifted by Rodney. "As a disabled community, I believe we all lean differently in the wind. So let's hold on to the desire to lean towards each other, especially when we are in need of community or support." ●

Read Rodney Bell's artist profile



Describing the scene onstage

"When we understand the value of art to people's wellbeing, it's vital that blind people can also experience it. Audio description enables that to happen."

Nicola Owen



Nicola Owen, left, listens in while Alanah-Jay Harris uses a stenomask to describe a kapa haka performance at Te Matatini 2023 for students from the Homai campus of BLENNZ Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ in Auckland. Photo: Jinki Cambronero

The Arts For All Network, facilitated by Arts Access Aotearoa, connects individuals and organisations across the country committed to making the arts more accessible and inclusive.

It's a packed theatre. The lights dim and the audience is silent. Transmitted through headphones worn by blind and low-vision audience members, a clear, calm voice describes the scene unfolding onstage.

This is more than audio description. It's presence. It's participation. It's belonging.

This is the groundbreaking work of <u>Audio Described Aotearoa</u>, which has been reshaping what accessibility in the arts looks and sounds like in Aotearoa since 2014.

Audio Described Aotearoa is a member of the Arts For All Network, a national disability-led movement powered by connection, shared learning, and the belief that everyone deserves to experience the arts.

"One of the strengths of the Network lies in the connections it creates," says Katie Querin, Arts For All Activator. "That's where change begins."

Audio Described Aotearoa works with theatres, galleries, festivals and museums, turning performances and experiences into rich, immersive journeys for blind and low-vision audiences.

Co-director and audio describer Nicola Owen says: "When we understand the value of art to people's wellbeing, it's vital that blind people can also experience it. Audio description enables that to happen."

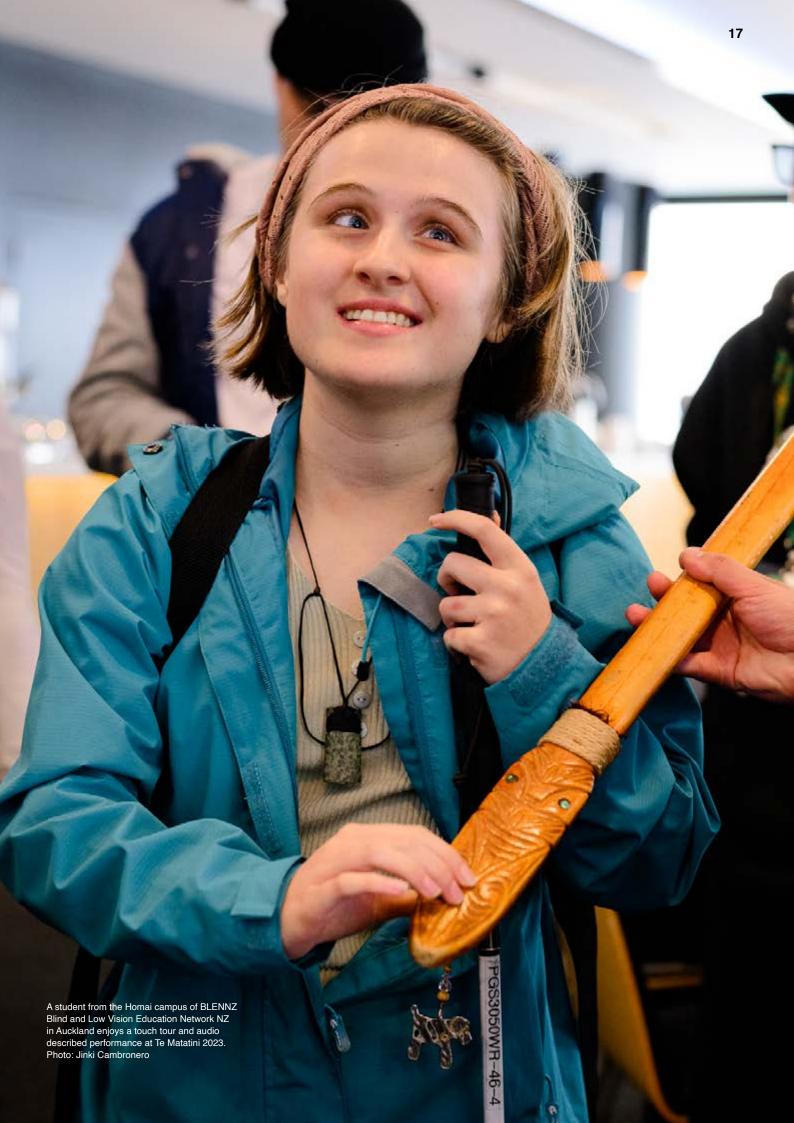
There are more than 900 members of the national Arts For All Network. It means that artists

and organisations are no longer working in silos, guessing at what access means. They're connecting directly with Deaf and disabled people, asking questions, testing ideas and being challenged to do better

It's this culture of mutual respect, learning and bold leadership that defines the Arts For All Network. And at its heart are the voices of Deaf and disabled people: not just present but leading.

The Arts For All Network is full of trailblazers. Arts Access Aotearoa is proud to stand alongside them as they carve new pathways towards an arts landscape where everyone belongs. ●

Read **Realising an audio** description dream



"You belong here"

"Art is a very healing thing. I feel like I've found my whānau at Vincents. I've lived in many places and never found anything like it. If it wasn't here, I don't know what I'd do. I know many others feel like that too."

Ash Gibson



Artists at work in Vincents Art Workshop

In communities across Aotearoa, creative spaces are enriching people's lives. These are organisations where people facing barriers to participation can find a sense of belonging and purpose through the arts.

On any given day Vincents Art Workshop is a hive of activity. Brushes clink in jars. Clay is being shaped at the back table. A gentle hum of conversation weaves through the space, grounded by the quiet rhythm of creative work.

At one of the tables, you are likely to encounter Ash Gibson (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou). Arriving in Wellington in 2022, Ash says that discovering this creative space was lifechanging.

"Art is a very healing thing," she says. "I feel like I've found my whānau at Vincents. I've lived

in many places and never found anything like it. If it wasn't here, I don't know what I'd do. I know many others feel like that too."

Stories like Ash's don't happen in isolation. They're part of a national movement called the Creative Spaces Network, coordinated by Arts Access Aotearoa.

This Network connects 65 creative spaces across Aotearoa with each other, with funders and with opportunities to share knowledge, build resilience and increase impact.

Vincents Art Workshop is the oldest creative space in New Zealand and is celebrating its fortieth anniversary in 2025. Through the Network, its staff can access resources, advocacy, professional development and peer-to-peer learning. For artists like Ash, that means confident and capable tutors, stronger programmes, and a space that continues to grow in reach and richness

These creative spaces support and nurture more than 40,000 people.

This work needs champions!

Every pencil, every dance step, every moment of mentorship and every exhibition depends on support from people who believe in the power of the arts and creativity to enrich and transform lives.

Creative spaces offer more than artistic opportunities. They offer hope, healing and connection. Because sometimes, all it takes is a paintbrush, a welcoming space and someone to say, "You belong here." ●



The value our work adds

Equitable arts experiences

Through the Arts For All Network, Arts Access Aotearoa works with galleries, theatres, festivals and other professional arts organisations and cultural institutions to help them build their knowledge and capability in accessibility and inclusion. We offer expert advice, resources and collaboration, which has led to an ever-growing number of accessible arts and cultural events and services.

The end result? More people get to experience the magic of the arts.

Empowered artists

Arts Access Aotearoa supports Deaf and disabled artists to lead, create and thrive through Taha Hotu and its resources. Our work builds visibility, opportunity and equity, working with artists to help them develop sustainable careers and shape a more inclusive arts sector.

Connected communities

Creative spaces are vital hubs where people facing barriers find expression, learning, connection and belonging. Through the Creative Spaces Network, Arts Access Aotearoa works to support and strengthen 65 community-led art spaces with leadership development, advocacy, advice and peer support, coming alongside them to help them grow, connect and change lives.

Transformative programmes

Arts in Corrections isn't just about the arts and creativity. It's about identity, hope and new pathways. Arts Access Aotearoa advises Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections on its arts programmes and activities, and advocates for the increased use of the arts as a tool supporting the rehabilitative process of prisoners and their reintegration back into the community on release.



Why our work is important

60%
of New Zealanders
say the arts help
improve society.

of Deaf and disabled people attended arts events in the previous year, in line with the national average (68%).

of Deaf and disabled people say the arts make them less lonely and isolated, compared to 38% of all New Zealanders.

80% of young New Zealanders say creating arts makes them feel good.

of New Zealanders say that ngā toi Māori is an important way of connecting with their culture/identity.

63% of New Zealanders say the arts help us define who we are.

In 2023, the arts and creative sector contributed \$17.5 billion or 4.2% of GDP (Manatū Taonga statistics).

How your support can work

All of this meaningful work needs ongoing investment. The core income Arts Access Aotearoa receives supports us to deliver the work we've started. However, we are keen for more supporters to join us so we can meet the growing demand for our services and develop new programmes. This will ensure our work continues to make a difference, now and in the future.

Will you be part of our movement for accessibility in the arts and join us today? Here are some ways you can support us.

Donations and regular giving

Support for Arts Access Aotearoa's core business is vital so we can get on with our work to make the arts more accessible and inclusive. The costs to work nationally and in ways that are accessible are high but essential to our purpose.

We are seeking the financial support needed to deliver on our vision and achieve our goals.

Gifts in wills

The assets people accumulate over a lifetime often outweigh the cash they have readily available. A gift in your will can leave a lasting legacy, helping Arts Access Aotearoa to continue its vital work for generations to come.

Sponsorship and strategic partnerships

We invite you to partner with Arts Access Aotearoa, a charity you or your organisation can be proud to champion. By working with us, you will help remove barriers and create more opportunities to participate in the arts. We offer tailored, corporate relationships that deliver mutual value, including opportunities to engage with our team and diverse communities.

Sponsorships and strategic partnerships offer valuable opportunities to support corporate social responsibility goals – at the same time contributing to increased accessibility in the arts.

Project support

At any given time, we have exciting projects under way with others ready to launch as funding becomes available. Developed in collaboration with the community, the projects are aligned to our vision and poised to create meaningful change.

Your partnership can bring these projects to life and achieve clear strategic outcomes.





When you invest in us

When you invest in Arts Access Aotearoa, you are investing in a vibrant, resilient and connected society.

Arts Access Aotearoa wants to expand its funding sources to meet increasing costs, the growing demand on existing services and other areas of need. With your support, we can grow our reach and deepen our impact where it's needed most.

With funders and supporters like you, Arts Access Aotearoa can meet the challenges of today and build an inclusive tomorrow.

Arts Access Aotearoa is proud to have enduring support from key funders. They include:

- Creative New Zealand, which has provided core funding since our inception. This supports our business framework and the delivery of our essential services.
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections through a major contract to provide a prison arts advisory service.
- Wellington City Council and Auckland Council, which recognise the value and impact of our work in local communities.

Work in targeted regions and projects is recognised and supported by:

- Foundation North
- T G Macarthy Trust
- Holdsworth Charitable Trust.

We're grateful for the ongoing support of our current funders. As demand for our services grows, we're expanding our <u>network of partners</u>, <u>sponsors and supporters</u> who share our commitment to accessible arts.

As a supporter, you will be helping us expand our reach and empower more communities, artists and organisations.

Arts Access Aotearoa is a well-regulated, non-profit organisation, building on 30 years of success. <u>Our trustees</u> include representatives of communities for whom we advocate, professionals in social-change advocacy, law, research, business, public service and te ao Māori.

Our <u>annual reports</u> can be found on the Arts Access Actearoa website and the Charities Commission website (registration CC33533).



Your support can ...

Fund a programme

Your support can help break down barriers and transform lives through creativity.

- Sponsor a regional or national conference or strategic meeting.
- Support New Zealand Sign Language interpretation at a training workshop.
- Sponsor one of the fellowships included in Ngā Toi Rangatira o
 Aotearoa Arts Access Fellowships each supporting an individual's
 leadership in accessibility.

Create a resource

Your support can help equip the arts sector with the practical tools it needs.

- Help us produce a new professional development tool for Taha Hotu Deaf and Disabled Artists Initiative.
- Fund a professional development session or peer learning for creative space managers and art tutors.
- Underwrite the cost for the delivery of an accessibility responsiveness training workshop to an arts organisation.

Sponsor staff at Arts Access Aotearoa

Your support can enable our staff to create change.

- Co-fund an activator's salary to drive support in our communities.
- Fully fund an advisor to extend our reach into more communities across the country.
- Sponsor a leadership role at Arts Access Aotearoa to build our capability.

Support visibility

Your support can help us share stories, tackle accessibility issues, and amplify the voices of people we work with and support.

- Sponsor an event, campaign or publication.
- Fund the creation of accessible videos with captioning, audio description and New Zealand Sign Language translation.
- Fund the translation into alternative formats such as New Zealand Sign Language and Easy Read.





Daniel Phillips sketching portraits at the opening of his exhibition *Art Makes Me Happy!*, a retrospective of his work over 20 years at Thistle Hall, Wellington in 2025. Daniel works from MIX creative space in Lower Hutt.

Read about creative spaces and Te kaha o ā tatou mahi - the power of our work

Create a legacy

We invite you to consider including a gift in your will to ensure access to the arts, now and in the future.

Making a donation, leaving a gift in your will, or choosing to support Arts Access Aotearoa in another way can be personal. There may be specific aspects that are best discussed in person.

Please contact Richard Benge, Executive Director Kaiwhakahaere Matua

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