



Whangārei

A City of Creativity

*Exploring the UNESCO Bid to be a
City of Creativity for Craft and Folk Art*



Let's stand together to recognise we have a lot to offer the world. The creative & cultural sector of Whangārei is vibrant & amazing.

Support Whangārei to become known as a global City for Craft & Folk Art. **This designation recognises and represents the celebration of human creativity, tradition and cultural heritage of the people of this place.**

CALL TO ACTION:

Back this opportunity!
Show your support for the vibrant creative community of Whangārei to become recognised as a City of Creativity, shaped by its community, creativity, culture and heritage.

He Ngāhere Tātou We Are The Forest

UNESCO is a global United Nations platform to showcase our **strengths and identity** and connect us to a network of **408 cities & 70 million people** through building a creative & cultural engagement strategy.

UNESCO is like a water/awa source in the Ngāhere that helps us **grow**



What is UNESCO?

UNESCO stands for the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**. It is a specialised agency of the United Nations that promotes international cooperation through education, science, culture and heritage. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network recognises cities that use creativity as a driver for sustainable development and community wellbeing.

The WHY: UNESCO is an opportunity to showcase to the world what Whangārei has to offer. It will:

- **Connect what you do or represent into a global network** of creative cities promoting Whangārei to millions
- **Increase Whangārei's** national and international visibility
- **Create a point of difference** for Whangārei
- **Increase visitors, partners and investment** for Whangārei's creative products and services
- **Recognise our creative diversity** and celebrate our communities practitioners
- **Elevate** Whangārei's creative and cultural identity as a connected living ecosystem.
- Create a more **cohesive platform** for our creative sector



The Kaupapa so Far

- Three Councils letters of support. WDC approved a resolution to carry on the exploration.
- Council resolution and Memorandum Of Understanding in place
- Understanding Whangārei's strengths
- Support from our Regional Economic Development & Tourism Agency Northland NZ
- Green light from UNESCO NZ to submit EOI (Expression of Interest), EOI now in progress
- Preliminary engagements explored across the community
- Many supporters across Whangārei engaged to date
- More than **500 community volunteer hours** invested in this huge opportunity so far
- Community consultation phase commencing



The Road Ahead

June –July: Community Hui & Sector / Stakeholder Engagements

July: Public Campaign Launch to integrate community support

July: Develop the Expression of Interest to UNESCO to showcase Whangārei as a Creative City

July 31st: EOI Submission Due

August: UNESCO makes a decision.



Next Steps: Community Hui

What you can put your hand up for:

- Host a community hui - we will come to you
- Offer a venue or meeting place to host discussions
- Join a panel discussion
- Be a part of the campaign discussions/ content & own the campaign in your own way.
- Encourage community participation



Help shape the journey

Your Voice Matters

*This kaupapa will be shaped by the diverse voices, perspectives and experiences of the community. This is about recognising you as the community, whether you're excited, uncertain, supportive, curious or concerned, we want to hear from you by **20th July***

This feedback form is an opportunity to:

- Share your thoughts
- Raise ideas to help
- Identify opportunities
- Register your interest in participating



Scan here



<https://forms.gle/MHmYEeg8dPCR5vsr6>








UNESCO is a platform that reflects us as we are and encourages us to focus on future visibility to recognise our unique creative, cultural and heritage sector.

Whangārei has in abundance creativity, culture, heritage, knowledge and resilient people that make this place unique. UNESCO gives the creative community of Tai Tokerau a global voice.

UNESCO shines visibility on our strengths to be connected and valued by new audiences nationally and internationally. Greater visibility creates greater opportunities, partnerships, visitation, investment and a stronger future for our region.

UNESCO links us globally with other creative cities. It enables a more connected ecosystem and opportunities for partnership and exchanges for our artists, makers, educators, cultural leaders, businesses, tourism operators, community organisations, and volunteers.

Evidence from comparable cities*

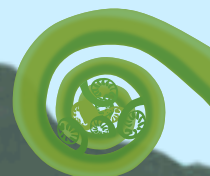
CITY	VISITATION & TOURISM	ECONOMIC IMPACT	JOBS & EMPLOYMENT	ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES
Santa Fe USA 	1.1 MILLION visitors annually (↑ 50% since designation)	US\$1B+ annual arts & cultural economy	14,000+ jobs in the creative sector	Stronger brand, investment attraction, higher visitor spend
Ballarat Australia 	↑ 26% increase in domestic overnight visitors	A\$658 MILLION annual creative sector contribution	5,500+ jobs supported	Major events, heritage tourism growth, investment
Paducah USA 	14.7% increase in tourism	US\$195 MILLION total economic impact	3,123 jobs supported	Business growth, revitalised downtown
Ulaanbaatar Mongolia 	↑ 20% increase in international tourists	US\$74.7 MILLION increase in creative sector GDP	11,234 jobs in creative sector	Global visibility, new markets for artisans
Icheon Republic of Korea 	↑ 30% increase in cultural tourists	US\$804 MILLION in ceramic industry exports	10,826 direct jobs created	Industry growth, craft brand internationally recognised

*Source: UNESCO Creative Cities reports, city case studies and tourism/economic data.

UNESCO Creative Cities designations has helped other cities: worldwide

1. Increased visibility
2. Stronger destination & visitor positioning
3. Growing their cultural tourism
4. Increased investment and partnerships
5. Develop greater economic opportunities
6. Enhance and celebrate cultural identity and pride
7. Providing more opportunities and jobs for local creatives and businesses

Together we can grow a creative future that benefits everyone - now and generations to come.



Q: Does this UNESCO bid change who we are?

A: No. It recognises and celebrates the creativity, culture, and identity that already exists in Whangārei and Te Tai Tokerau.

Q: What does "Craft & Folk Art" mean?

A: It recognises the many ways people express creativity through culture, making, storytelling, traditions, skills, and connection to place. This is not related to a folk art movement.

Q: How does this kaupapa see Ngā Toi Māori?

A: We acknowledge that Ngā Toi Māori stands within its own integrity grounded in whakapapa, mātauranga, tikanga, and lived practice that remains central to how the region and country expresses itself creatively and culturally. UNESCO simply provides a platform for global recognition.

Q: Who owns this kaupapa?

A: The community. It belongs to everyone who contributes to the creativity of our region.

Q: Who holds the power?

A: The community. Participation and decision-making remain with local people, iwi, hapū, organisations, and communities.

Q: What is councils role in the designation

A: The Whangarei District Council plays a central governance and delivery role. While UNESCO grants the designation, it is the council that ensures it is meaningful, sustained, and aligned with local development working with the community.



Q: Do I have to participate?

A: No. Participation is completely voluntary.

Q: What happens if Whangārei is successful?

A: The community would work together to explore how the designation could be used to benefit the region. Any future branding would be discussed through collective consultation.

Q: Is this only about Māori creativity?

A: No. Ngā Toi Māori is central, while also recognising the diverse creative traditions of all communities.

Q: Is this only about the arts?

A: No. It recognises creativity / craft across arts, culture, education, business, innovation, design, food, language, and everyday life.

Q: Why does this matter?

A: Greater visibility can create opportunities for community pride, partnerships, tourism, investment, cultural exchange, and economic growth for generations to come.

*UNESCO does not define us. It provides a platform to celebrate who we already are.
He Ngāhere Tātou – We Are the Forest.*

Every person, organisation, marae, business, and community contributes to the creative ecosystem that makes Whangārei unique.

