

19 May 2018

Waana Davis, Chairperson
Garry Nicholas, Chief Executive/General Manager
Toi Māori Aotearoa
PO Box 9570
Wellington 6011

Re: The Development of a new Māori Arts Strategy and the role of Toi Māori Aotearoa

Waana, Garry, tēnā kōrua.

Earlier this year I was invited to attend a meeting convened by Creative New Zealand regarding a new strategy for Māori Arts. It took place prior to their recently completed round of consultation meetings held throughout New Zealand. I attended the meeting to express a number of ideas including:

- The need for a much more comprehensive and ambitious vision and plan for Māori Arts
- The need to achieve much better coordination and performance from a range of organisations of relevance to Māori arts, including Creative New Zealand, Toi Māori Aotearoa, local government agencies, education providers and more.

I expressed a number of other ideas as well. Please find a copy of my presentation attached.

Since that meeting, I have been thinking a great deal about Māori arts and reflecting upon Creative New Zealand's current process. It has occurred to me that Toi Māori Aotearoa should be the organisation leading the development of a national Māori arts strategy rather than CNZ. The reasons for this are as follows:

- A national Māori arts strategy needs to be lead by Māori artists and the Māori arts community. Others may be involved (such as funders, managers, marketers etc), however, it is Māori artists and the Māori arts community who ultimately create Māori arts. It is their voice, therefore, that is critical in the leadership of Māori arts.
- Toi Māori Aotearoa has a significant mandate to represent Māori artists and the Māori arts community at a national level. A critical feature of this mandate is to be an advocate for Māori artists and to provide strategic leadership for Māori arts. Toi Māori Aotearoa is an important vehicle by which Māori artists and the Māori arts community can achieve national Māori arts leadership and advocacy.
- The mandate and capability of Creative New Zealand is primarily to be an arts funder, not an arts leader. Whilst CNZ provides arts management leadership in a variety of settings, CNZ is not a creator of art. They are mandated and have the capability to create *a strategy to fund Māori arts*, but not a strategy for Māori arts itself. (It is also important that we do not regard Creative New Zealand as the *only* arts funder, as important as they are.)

In following the progress of CNZ consultation meetings throughout the country, I am concerned that many assume that CNZ is the leader for Māori arts and the Māori arts community and at a national level. Although CNZ itself will be clear as to its mandate, others may not be able to draw the critical and strategic distinction between an overall strategy for Māori arts and a strategy for the *funding* of Māori arts. I also think that attendees made this mistaken assumption because of the absence of another organisation staking its claim and in an assertive way for national Māori arts leadership.

Because of these assumptions, I am concerned that Toi Māori Aotearoa is losing ground as the national Māori arts leader. I am concerned too that this could jeopardise your existing contract with CNZ which I expect will be up for review at some point. It is important that no assumptions be made as to whether the funding will continue and for three reasons:

- The fact that Toi Māori Aotearoa has been funded since 1995 can be used both as a reason to cease funding as much as a reason to support continuation
- If CNZ feels that it can conduct activities that Toi Māori Aotearoa should be doing, this waters down the need to fund Toi Māori Aotearoa
- If a competitor organisation was to arise, and this is possible, this could again jeopardise Toi Māori Aotearoa's position

Hence, I have written this letter to express this view and to offer my assistance to help Toi Māori Aotearoa strengthen its status as the national leader of Māori arts - by virtue of its mandate to represent Māori artists and the Māori arts community. I was present at the beginning of Toi Māori Aotearoa (at the very first meeting!), I have served on TMA committees, particularly Pūatatangi, and hence have contributed to Toi Māori Aotearoa over the years. I am also writing as a practicing artist who cares about the future of Māori arts and the role of Toi Māori Aotearoa.

I would be pleased to meet to discuss this further.

Nāku noa, nā



Te Ahukaramū
Charles Royal

Mob: 021-664907

Email: ahukaramu@gmail.com