

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Creative businesses are ‘weightless’ exporters and develop ‘green skills’. The Creative sector could play a key role in supporting Aotearoa transition to a greener economy. The sector is highly digital and includes screen and music streaming; games and interactive media; digital publishing and digital visual arts; design and advertising; immersive cultural experiences; and even fashion design and architecture. Being weightless, Creative industries often emit fewer emissions comparatively. The technology developed in the Creative sector often underpins the green skills shift in non-creative sectors (e.g. manufacturing).

Te Puna is the new creative industries precinct in Henderson, and its vision is to drive quality jobs for West Auckland. Existing businesses Auckland Film Studios, Corban Estate Arts Centre, and Whoa! Studios will be the anchor for the precinct. Together, they will connect education providers; create pathways and opportunities for talent and ideas; and be a collaborative hub for entrepreneurs, artists, performers, makers, and storytellers. Being surrounded by like-minded individuals and supportive organisations is expected to result in a high level of innovation. Te Puna is expected to boost employment in and out of the creative sector. In this area of high deprivation, this creative hub will contribute to uplifting West Auckland’s mana and add to the region’s creative capital.

Rangatahi are attracted to the sector, but more support is needed to help youth find the right fit. The sector has the capability of telling its ‘career story’ and this needs to better connect to career influencers such as parents, teachers, and tutors. The RSLG is keen to surface initiatives with key regional stakeholders such as ‘Screen and Creative Trades Academies’ and more work is planned.

Paid internships and apprenticeships would boost attraction and retention. Modern (up to degree level) apprenticeships would provide an opportunity to better meet workforce and learner needs. Apprenticeships help students access employment and training, by reducing risk for creative businesses/studios, which are often SMEs doing work for hire projects and contracts. The work is often cyclical, particularly if it’s a screen business, so mid-senior level staff with the skill to train ākonga often lack the capacity to take on and mentor interns and apprentices. Toi Mai (the creative Workforce Development Council) is continuing to look at the potential for a group trade training model for the creative industries.

BY THE NUMBERS

- Tāmaki Makaurau is home to 48% of the national screen sector, and 36% of the national games sector.
- In 2022 Auckland’s Creative sector contributed 50% of New Zealand’s total creative Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$7.8b).
- In 2022 it made up 5% of Auckland’s economy and employed more than 57,500 people.
- With 17,100 business units, Tāmaki Makaurau makes up 47% of NZ’s creative companies.
- The sector has significant growth potential. It grew by 5.4% on average over the past five years, faster than the rest of the Auckland economy.
- Forecasts suggest 7,500 new jobs will be generated by 2028.

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

A new [micro-credential](#) is being developed to create a pathway into the broadcast and screen sector. This micro-credential will teach ākonga the operations and structure of the screen industry, get them familiar with local industry ethics and provide basic business operation skills. This will help address the shortages in the Toi Pāho (broadcast and screen sector) workforce.

A design for a Creative Digital Ecosystem is at the proof-of-concept stage. This will complement the physical spaces and programmes under Te Puna Henderson Creative Quarter but will also reach an Auckland-wide audience (and probably have national reach in some content areas, e.g. funding/grants).

Toi Mai is developing a Workforce Development Plan. It will give industry a greater voice in the vocational education system; ensure workforce needs are met; address the acute shortage of skilled below-the-line production workers in Toi Pāho; and reduce the challenges of attracting, training and developing Toi Pāho workers.

The Creative Commercial Essentials (CCE) programme is being developed in collaboration by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, WeCreate, and The Big Idea. It will be a comprehensive programme aimed at fostering business skills within the creative industries, and provide networking opportunities in a collaborative and creative community environment. Specialist mentors are matched to individual needs and pathways through a series of industry-led workshops, interactive sessions, peer-to-peer and facilitated learning. The programme will equip participants with the essential tools and knowledge required to survive and thrive in the competitive creative landscape. It is designed to grow the future leaders of the sector in the Tāmaki Makaurau region. A pilot has been completed, but funding is required to continue.

The RSLG supports working with Screen Auckland (part of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited) to provide workforce upskilling for the industry in West Auckland. The RSLG is supporting Tātaki Auckland Unlimited develop Te Puna, looking for opportunities to partner to promote education pathways into sustainable screen and creative sectors careers. Upskilling will likely focus on West Auckland, which is home to Te Puna, but could also be held in other parts of the region.

CreaTech skills are in high demand in both the creative sector (e.g. screen, games, design) and other non-creative, sectors. CreaTech work is highly productive, with pay at levels well above the median. The [Tech Tāmaki Makaurau \(TTM\) strategy](#) has a vision for Auckland to be a global hub for innovation in technology and talent, so this is an area RSLG will continue to explore.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

The traditional education model doesn’t work in the creative sector. ‘The vast majority of Toi Pāho workers in Aotearoa are sole traders, with over 70 percent of screen workers classified as self-employed’ according to Te-Wao-Nui-o-Toi [report](#). The screen industry has a lot of contract workers, and more experienced workers tend to work for big companies with international contracts. This leaves few experienced workers to work for small and medium-sized companies and local projects which limits options for on-the-job training. Although initiatives such as micro-credentials and the CCE programme will encourage and support new workers to the industry, these are still in development.

Access to creative education is not consistent across all schools, and creative tertiary training programmes are often the first to be downsized or cut in times of financial stress in the tertiary sector. The investment model for tertiary education is predicated on enrolments rather than future workforce needs which can lead to a mismatch in the supply of labour with the demand for labour. Although this is an issue for all sectors of the economy, it particularly effects the creative sector.

Innovative models of delivering skills and training can take too long to be approved for a sector where the speed of technology development and change is rapid. Private Training Establishments (PTEs) play an important role in providing training for the sector, including the development of new programmes, and partnerships with industry. Although most PTE’s keep up to date with the hardware and software needed for creative tech learning, this can be beyond the means of other education providers.

Greater visibility across the industry is needed in terms of career pathways, to encourage participation in the Creative workforce. For new entrants and those already in the industry showcasing the diversity of work opportunities is crucial, including craft and technical roles. Increasing visibility would lift understanding of available roles and remuneration, although this would require the industry to provide clarity of job descriptions and be open about remuneration. It is important for new entrants to understand what a freelance/gig-based vocation looks like – and what skills are needed to self-manage a career. This would help lift both attraction and retention in the sector.

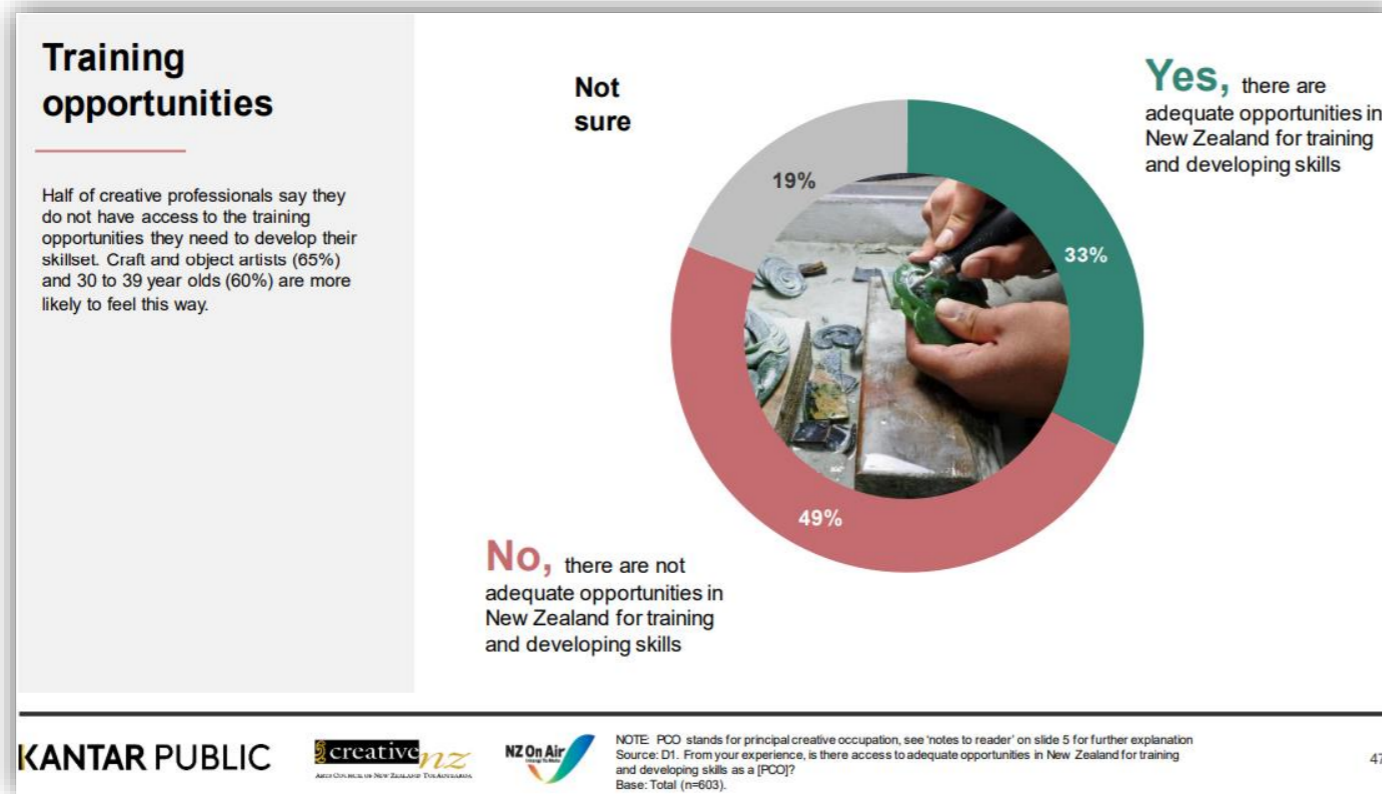
The education pathway to support the sector is lagging, even though the creative sector reflects what we expect the future of work to look like. As with the tech sector, there are high levels of creation and use of digital tools, along with a prevalence of self-employment. However, the education system is predicated on “employers and employees” and fixed places of work, limiting skills development opportunities and failing to meet the needs of the creative workforce.

The industry lacks a single repository of accurate information about the sector. There are many existing disjointed systems across different platforms/formats that make it difficult to find and action opportunities that exist within the creative industry. This causes concerns about the intensity of competition for roles, having the right skills fit, and the contacts and networks to get started with work in the sector. Creatives want a sense of community and belonging, and equitable access to tools and information to develop their personal and business skills. There are further concerns about sustainable careers in the sector, including in relation to job security, continuity with project-based work, and working conditions/practices. These issues affect the sector’s ability to attract and retain the workforce.

Career development opportunities are insufficient and irregular for creatives compared to many other sectors. There is a lack of professional development training and opportunities for creatives entering the workforce. Professional development is missing in most creative arts programmes and courses – for example, how to build a successful career/business is rarely included in the curriculum (or is light-touch only) and the learning opportunities provided by industry bodies or creative organisations, are often impacted by the variable funding and income streams of these entities.

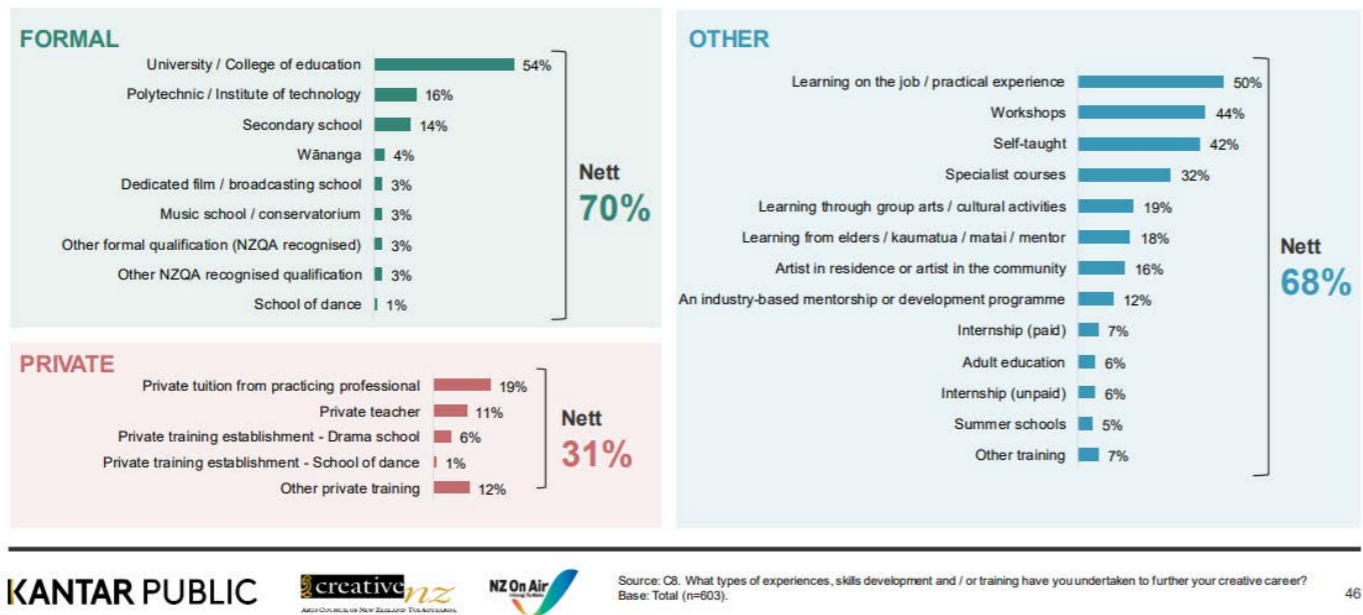
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Creative New Zealand and NZ On Air commissioned research, [Profile of Creative Professionals 2023](#) to understand how sustainable having a career in the creative sector is. Surveying the Creative workforce, the report indicates that half of the respondents felt they did not have access to skills development training.



Training undertaken

Seventy percent of creative professionals have undertaken some formal training to further their creative career and a third have had some private training. Women are more likely to get formal qualifications than men (74% vs. 65%).



REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATES

Screen and creative sector actions

- The RSLG supports a Māori workforce focus: There is an opportunity for the Screen and Creative sector to expand in Tāmaki Makaurau with [Tāmaki 10,000](#) engaging Māori communities, whānau, hapū and iwi to become more proactively involved in communications and media, particularly as more opportunities for relationships between Māori and non-Māori productions arise in the future. The RSLG will continue to support 'Māori' business support organisations such as ['Whāriki'](#) and ['Amotai'](#) and look forward to an upcoming initiative between [Creative New Zealand and Tātai Aho Rau CORE Education](#) on resources for artists and arts practitioners helping them have sustainable and financially resilient careers.
- The RSLG supports working with Screen Auckland to provide workforce upskilling for the industry in West Auckland. The RSLG is supporting [Tātaki Auckland Unlimited](#) develop Te Puna - a West Auckland Creative Quarter - in particular the education pathways towards sustainable careers in the screen and creative sectors.
- The RSLG advocates secure and sustainable employment in the Screen and Creative sector given the casual nature of work within the sector, and to address workforce concerns around jobs and work.
- The RSLG will support and provide insights to the Toi Mai Workforce Development Council as they build regional sector insights and workforce and industry aspirations. These insights are vital for a sector that is not fully and accurately counted in many government data sources. The RSLG cross checked its screen and creative workforce development advice with [Toi Mai](#) the Workforce Development Council prior to providing it to the Tertiary Education Commission in November 2023.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

- Support Tātaki Auckland Unlimited with the skills and capability development aspects of the Te Puna initiative
- Provide industry-led tertiary provision advice relevant for the Screen and Creative sector to the Tertiary Education Commission
- Surface with key regional stakeholders initiatives for attracting and supporting young people on Screen and Creative career pathways