Auckland Council

**Re. Proposed Annual Budget 2023/2024 (“Budget”)**

Date

From: [Insert Name]

Kia ora koutou

I am a *[insert role e.g. recording artist and songwriter]* and am writing, as part of the music sector, to voice my deep concern at Auckland Council’s recently proposed Budget. *[If applicable insert here how you have directly, or indirectly benefited from Auckland Council’s funding in the past].*

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and its people are still recovering from the lasting impacts of COVID restrictions and recent severe flood and cyclone damage - including many people like me working in our music, arts & cultural sectors who have suffered through two years of job losses and cancelled events.

Now is not the time to undo the hard work of our sector and Auckland Council’s previous investment by taking away the things that give ‘colour’ and joy to the city, and which keep people wanting to work, learn and visit here, and thereby keep our economy pumping.

**Submission**

I submit that Auckland Council’s proposed Budget poses an immense and imminent risk to prosperity and opportunities for Aucklanders and their businesses, which will have a consequent economic effect nationally, and on Aotearoa’s talent pipeline and international reputation.

The proposed cuts to arts & culture funding would stifle the music ecosystem and the benefits that music provides; and threaten the cultural well-being of our communities and the overall liveability, vibrancy, social cohesion and identity of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Of particular concern to me are:

* **the reduction to Tātaki Auckland Unlimited**;
* **the reduction to Regional Services** such as music programmes, community development groups, regional events, social services and local board funding and to Eke Panuku Development Auckland Limited; and
* **the negative impacts this will have on under-represented groups** such as Māori, Pasifika, youth, refugee, new migrant and rainbow communities who benefit greatly from the Regional Services’ cultural initiatives which will suffer from the proposed cuts.

These proposed cuts will inevitably result in:

* **Fewer music events**.
* **Job and income loss**.
* **Reduced Tourism**.
* **Harm to our cultural heritage and community well-being**.

**Response to Auckland Council’s Request for proposed solutions**

I understand and appreciate the enormity of the task Council faces. However, it is difficult to propose detailed solutions/options to overcome the Budget shortfall due to the lack of detailed financial information, and especially economic analysis of the impacts of the proposed cuts on Auckland’s economy and employment prospects in the Consultation Documents.

When faced with making difficult decisions – either in expenditure or in policy – it is my understanding that best practice is to start with an evidence base. I don’t see an evidence base for the proposed budget and am very concerned that the Budget has been prepared without due diligence, and the impact on current and future generations of Aucklanders has not been properly considered and understood.

**Request of Council**

We urge Councillors to:

* **Reject this current Budget proposal** – specifically, the cuts proposed to Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, Regional Services, Eke Panuku, Local Board Initiatives and Contestable Grants.
* **Reconsider the proposed approach to addressing the current shortfall.** I request that Council considers a different mix of financial levers other than decimating community investment (such as targeted rates increases, borrowing and/or asset sales) when preparing a revised budget.
* **Undertake robust analysis** of the impact that any revised proposal will have on the long-term prosperity and prospects of all Aucklanders.

**A city is more than its infrastructure – and now is the time to invest in the recovery, and future resilience and prosperity of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and its people.**

As is reflected in Council’s own *Toi Whīkiti* *- Auckland’s Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan* - 88% of Aucklanders believe that the arts are good for you, 86% agree the arts help to improve society and 90% agree that they learn about different cultures through the arts. Music is the most accessible of all artforms, able to be enjoyed almost anywhere by anyone at any time - and it plays a vital part in nearly all arts & cultural events and initiatives.

* **Music Boosts the local economy**.
* **Music Supports education and creativity.**
* **Music Enhances Auckland's identity**.
* **Music Fosters community**.
* **Music Improves wellbeing and quality of life.**

Music helps make a city live, and be liveable.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]