



# UNLEASHING NEW ZEALAND'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Yoobee Colleges and UP Education recommendations  
for a post-COVID world

**YOOBEE**  
COLLEGES

POWERED BY  
**UP EDUCATION**



## YOOBEE COLLEGES

Yoobee Colleges is New Zealand's largest specialist creative and technology college, helping prepare students of today for opportunities of tomorrow.

For over 30 years, Yoobee Colleges has been fuelling the creative sector with talented animators, filmmakers, designers, and game developers.

Yoobee Colleges understands that the fast-changing nature of the creative industry means tertiary education institutions and training colleges need to be adaptable and flexible, providing both students and industry with the right skills and solutions to excel in an evolving world.

As New Zealand's leading creative education institution, Yoobee Colleges offers students a clear pathway, not only to world-class qualifications, but also to rewarding careers, preparing graduates to be the future leaders and champions of the knowledge economy.

## UP EDUCATION

UP Education is Australasia's leading dual-sector education provider delivering vocational, pathway, and higher education across both New Zealand and Australia.

UP Education is committed to equipping its 14,500 students with the right skills and attitudes to excel in the modern world. Through a diverse network of private colleges, UP Education delivers bachelor's degrees, diplomas, and certificates in Tourism, Trades, Early Childhood Education, Hospitality, Web & Graphic Design, Film & Animation, and more.

As a top-three Australasian pathway provider, UP Education also provides international students with the necessary foundation skills to transition and succeed at Australasia's world-leading universities. UP Education has more than 30 campuses across 10 cities in New Zealand and Australia.

This paper was released on 10 March 2021.



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## METHODOLOGY

This white paper is informed by a range of existing research and analysis, as well as interviews with industry leaders across the breadth of the creative industries.

# THE POTENTIAL OF NEW ZEALAND'S EVOLVING CREATIVE ECONOMY

Now's the time to look forward.

During 2020, our creative industries demonstrated their resilience, as well as their ability to collaborate and adapt at pace.

Looking to 2021 and beyond, the creative industries can – and need to – play a pivotal role in our economic future. But as this paper shows, this will require a collaborative approach across industry, the education sector, and government.

Doing nothing is not an option. If we do nothing, we risk losing a significant opportunity to rebuild stronger, smarter, and with more diversification and resilience.

While the first tranche of New Zealand's economic recovery focussed on traditional infrastructure spending, we now need to move beyond 19th century thinking and implement 21st century solutions.

The creative sector is bursting at the seams with talent and commercial opportunity, providing pathways for Kiwis to put their creative energy into professional pursuits, start businesses, innovate, and grow our economy.

And the sector is evolving at pace. We are seeing first-hand the nexus of technology and creativity. Our creative industries are now informing large swathes of New Zealand businesses. The reality is that if you are in business and not thinking about how the creative technology sector can inform what you do, then you risk being left behind.

In fact, latest data from NZIER<sup>1</sup> shows New Zealand's creative sector already adds \$17.5 billion to our annual GDP, and this will only continue to grow. In time, the creative economy has the

potential to rival our pre-COVID tourism sector in terms of economic importance.

The creative economy's value is determined by the new ideas we collectively create and build. Together, we must build a creative industry where good ideas, irrespective of where they come from, rise to the surface. And we need to have the ecosystems in place that allow these ideas to be funded to commercialisation.

The creative economy is currently evolving, so alongside the need for diversity and clear pathways to commercialisation, we also need to rethink how our education system can better support the development of a creative and innovative workforce.

This is not only about setting students up to be job-ready graduates, but also about supporting life-long learning, enabling people to continue to upskill and train through micro-credentials while they continue to work.

It's also about how we educate Kiwis right from early childhood. STEM subjects have never been more important. Teaching our youth to harness computational thinking and embrace their creativity into adulthood is what will result in our biggest advance.

The future is bright for the creative economy. Now is the time to question everything we've taken for granted. This white paper outlines what we need to question, focus on and do. By working together, the creative economy can play a central role in New Zealand's economic rebuild.

**MARK RUSHWORTH**  
Group CEO of UP Education



# GROWING AOTEAROA'S CREATIVE WORKFORCE

I'm forever amazed by the sectors and jobs our Yoobee Colleges graduates go into. It serves as a constant reminder that the creative industry is much bigger than most people think. In fact, our graduates' creative skills are sought after in every type of business – not just those associated with creative industries – because those with creative skills are our innovators and our problem-solvers.

The creative sector already supports 131,000 jobs in New Zealand, and our industry partners keep telling us they need more people, and they need them now.

Such is the demand that in 2020 Yoobee Colleges launched a series of new courses to meet the immediate needs of Aotearoa's creative industry. But as this white paper demonstrates, the sector has plenty of untapped potential, and as the industry continues to grow and evolve in the years to come, it will require increasing numbers of graduates.

And while how we work will continue to change, the job prospects for creative thinkers will remain strong and, as this report demonstrates, the future can be even brighter. But to realise the full potential of the creative sector, we need to have the right policy settings in place.

Creating job-ready graduates is what Yoobee Colleges focuses on every day, so it's not surprising to hear our industry partners talk about this as being one of the key determinants of success that will define the future of New Zealand's creative sector.

But creating job-ready graduates isn't just about what happens after school.

Our ability to teach creative and computational thinking skills at all levels is vital to the future of the creative industries. We need to get our children excited about STEM subjects. And, even if people don't end up working directly in the creative industries, the teaching of creative skills benefits us all. Given some of the broader cognitive and practical skills creative people have, creative graduates add value wherever they end up working.

We need to arm our high school leavers with the knowledge needed to make the right decisions about where they want to work. In order to attract people into the sector, we need to build an understanding, and a love, for creativity and technology at school level. We also need to increase the awareness of the opportunities within the creative economy, so people can make well-informed decisions about tertiary education.

The sector's output already permeates most facets of our lives, but it is increasingly expanding into non-traditional spaces as the value of creative thinking is understood more and more.

From clothing brands making virtual models like @Imma.gran and @shudu.gram, through to bricks-and-mortar retail realising the importance of best-practice online stores, the fusion of creativity and technology is informing all sectors of business.

This paper outlines the key levers we have to grow and improve the industry.

It's an exciting time, and despite the challenges, COVID creates opportunities for the sector to leverage. Now is the time to be making the most of what's in front of us as we continue to evolve at pace.



**ANA MARIA RIVERA**  
CEO Yoobee Colleges

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adding \$17.5 billion to our GDP and supporting 131,000 jobs<sup>1</sup>, the creative sector plays an important role in the New Zealand economy. But in many ways, our creative sector is still in its infancy. By unleashing its potential, we can drive economic growth and add significant diversification to our economy.

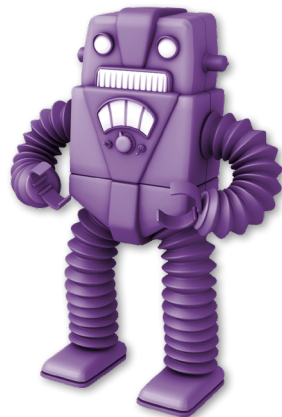
The convergence of technology and creativity is providing an immense opportunity. But realising this opportunity requires a complete rethink of how we view and embed creativity within our communities, our businesses, and government.

The cultural and societal impact of the creative sector is immense. Just think about your own lockdown experience. Now consider it without television, books, music, games, or art. Similarly think about your experience living in Aotearoa without the opportunity to experience uniquely New Zealand stories. In many ways, it is the creative sector that helps us define who we are as Kiwis.

But the economic opportunity is also immense. As we focus on rebuilding our economy in the wake of COVID, the creative economy has the potential to help drive economic growth and reach similar levels as the tourism sector had pre-COVID, providing versatility and diversification.

While change is a constant, and will only continue to accelerate, one thing is clear – the creative industries present an opportunity to form an indelible part of New Zealand's economy. Our creative sector can help drive export growth as we sell New Zealand creativity and innovation to the world.

But this will not happen on its own. We need to take action.



## INDUSTRY WIDE PLANNING TO BREAK DOWN FACTIONS

Collaboration is required to better align the creative industry with broader government policy and strategy.

By viewing our creative industries through an economic development lens, and in a similar way to how we view our primary and tourism industries, we can unleash the potential of our creative sector by ensuring we have the right policies and settings in place to grow the sector's economic contribution.

WeCreate, an alliance of New Zealand's creative industries, has a vision of growing Aotearoa's creative sector to \$25 billion over five years. Yoobee Colleges shares this vision and believes achieving it is possible, but only with a coordinated action plan and government support.

A broader, formal process is also needed to ensure there is consistency and clarity amongst stakeholders – government, industry, tertiary education institutions, schools, and most importantly, the students themselves. To enable this, a Creative Sector Accord should be developed as an avenue for creating a concrete roadmap for constructive change.

An example of such an accord is the recently signed Construction Sector Accord, which was met with enthusiasm from industry stakeholders, and signalled a joint commitment by the construction sector to provide better outcomes for New Zealand. This Accord offers a useful starting point for thinking about how best to tackle the challenges facing the creative sector through a more joined-up approach.

Creative accords have been successfully implemented internationally. For example, in 2018 the Government of the United Kingdom signalled its commitment to help drive economic growth through the creative sector by implementing a Creative Industries Sector Deal. This Sector Deal has resulted in significant and multi-pronged investment with the aim of growing exports to £150 billion by 2023, and creating 600,000 new jobs along the way<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Evolution of Innovation' – The NZ Institute of Economic Research, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Creative Industries Sector Deal, 2018. [Gov.UK]



### FUNDING TO ACCELERATE CREATIVE GROWTH

The United Kingdom is not alone in looking to its creative industry as an economic driver.

Finland, a country with a population of 5.5 million people and a GDP of US\$277 billion (which compares to New Zealand's population of 5 million and GDP of US\$205 billion) is a world leader in interactive media. They have achieved this through smart government planning and funding, investing over €75 million between 1995 and 2017, growing the sector to €2.1 billion by 2018<sup>1</sup>. For comparison, New Zealand's interactive media industry was worth only \$143 million (€84 million) in 2018<sup>2</sup>.

Closer to home, Victoria's Creative State Strategy launched in April 2016, following extensive sector and public consultation. This four-year strategy is backed by \$115 million of new funding, and contains 40 targeted actions – providing an integrated growth plan for the creative and cultural economy. This strategy is providing significantly more opportunities for Victorians to embark on creative careers and enjoy creative experiences, and is positioning Victoria as a globally recognised creative state<sup>3</sup>.

In the past, our government has shown that it has a willingness to invest to support economic development. In recent years, this funding has focussed on large and visible shovel-ready projects through the Provincial Growth Fund. Shifting some of this funding towards growing our creative sector would be a game changer and would shift Aotearoa's economic recovery strategy from infrastructure solutions to 21st century thinking through a focus on growing a knowledge economy.

### WHATEVER THE LEVEL OF INVESTMENT, WE BELIEVE THE ACTION PLAN NEEDS TO ENCOMPASS THE FOLLOWING THEMES, WHICH ARE OUTLINED IN THIS PAPER:

- Create job-ready and world-leading graduates that support creative businesses to stay and grow in New Zealand with the support of a talented workforce.
- Build a truly diverse workforce that reflects who we are as a country.
- Focus on telling more of our local stories internationally, to maximise export revenue through the value-add chain.
- Encourage businesses not working in the creative sector to embrace creative skills to drive business excellence.
- Support and celebrate entrepreneurial spirit and support the development of a new pipeline of businesses.
- Provide policy certainty and parity, so the sector can plan for the future.
- Assist our existing film and TV sector to take advantage of the opportunities offered during the pandemic to enable a quick economic boost.
- Focussed funding for the animation and gaming sector to support growth in the sector and boost exports in the medium term.
- Embed generalist creative and technology skills into our education system to create a digitally and creatively literate workforce.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Finnish Games Industry Report 2018.

<sup>2</sup> 'Interactive Aotearoa – DRIVING GROWTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH INTERACTIVE MEDIA'. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> 'Creative State 2016–2020' – Creative Victoria ([creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state/introduction](http://creative.vic.gov.au/creative-state/introduction)).



# OUR CREATIVE ECONOMY

## BREADTH OF NEW ZEALAND'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Every day we benefit from the work of the creative sector. In our homes, at our workplaces, while we are shopping, and while we relax, the creative sector impacts almost every facet of our lives, most of the time without us even realising.

Traditionally, the creative sector has been defined as artistic creation – film, gaming, art, graphic design, and music.

However, the growth of technology and the changing nature of work has seen creative professionals play an increasingly important role in traditional economic sectors. Businesses across the economy are understanding the benefits of the

creative sector, investing in creative skills, and employing staff with creative skills to support innovation and to help shape the development of the products and experiences of tomorrow.

This means the creative sector is becoming a more difficult industry to define, as traditional boundaries blur and new, hybrid fields emerge at a rapid pace.

However you define the creative sector, it is growing strongly and this is presenting new opportunities, both locally and internationally, for New Zealanders.





## CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN A COVID WORLD

COVID halted New Zealand's economy in the first half of 2020, and this had a significant impact on our creative sector. Border closures, lockdown, and crowd restrictions saw many parts of the creative sector struggle.

But by the end of the year many parts of our creative industry were experiencing a rapid recovery as the country's successful management of COVID presented not only new opportunities, but new ways of working together.

"We had a record month of activity in September. Every single production that either had been filming when COVID-19 hit or was planning on filming sometime this year - students, the big international projects, the New Zealand projects - absolutely everybody restarted production. So our team had a 200% increase in permit applications and inquiries compared to the year before."

**- Jasmine Millet, Manager, Screen Auckland**

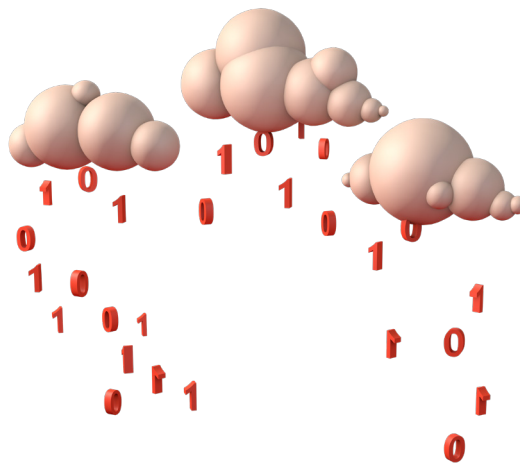
"Digital and interactive media really proved its resilience during COVID-19. We could continue producing games and do it working from home. A lot of businesses suddenly wanted to pivot to interactive media."

**- Stephen Knightly,  
Chief Operating Officer, RocketWerkz**

## ACCELERATING

The second half of 2020 saw many parts of the creative sector rebound, and at times surpass, pre-COVID levels.

New Zealand now finds itself in the enviable position of having very limited rates of local transmission and a well-managed process for controlling new outbreaks. This has allowed large parts of the creative sector to get back to business quickly, while the rest of the world is still grappling with significant restrictions. The question we now need to ask is how do we use this comparative advantage to springboard the creative economy in a post-COVID world?



## RESILIENCE AND MANAAKITANGA

New Zealand's creative industries came together at all levels during the pandemic to focus on how they could support one another and work safely in a COVID environment.

"Pastoral care and mental health support are massive with students and staff. When you look at 2020, I think the students have been amazingly resilient. They have all been chucked in the deep end and they've done really, really well."

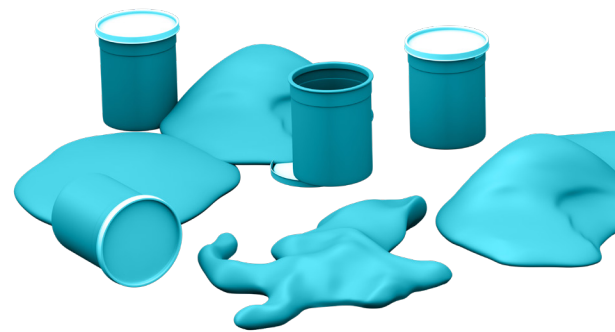
**- Jon Kirk, Head of Faculty at Yoobee South Seas**

"It's a really high level of production at the moment, a great tribute to our crews and what we offer here in New Zealand. At the moment we've got a mix of studios and streamers shooting here, whether it be Disney, Netflix, Warners, Amazon, Sony, we've got a whole range. All of those companies are pivoting to manage the changing circumstances, so I think we'll see them all come to New Zealand over time."

**- Annabelle Sheehan, NZ Film Commission  
Chief Executive**

## COLLABORATION AND ADAPTATION


While filming and other in-person activities were temporarily forced to halt, the industry was able to pivot and adapt to a new world order.



# UNLEASHING NEW ZEALAND'S CREATIVE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

New Zealand has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to use New Zealand's creative industries as an economic driver to help build a knowledgeable and creative economy that benefits and enriches the nation.

The industry leaders interviewed as part of this white paper identified nine key themes that will determine the future prospects of Aotearoa's creative industries.



If you thought this tree was real, think again.  
It's a 3D recreation made by Joshua Oxley in the Diploma of Advanced 3D Animation.



### CREATING JOB-READY AND WORLD-LEADING GRADUATES

Accessing high-quality graduates with the necessary skills remains a key industry challenge. Not addressing this challenge will be an impediment to growth for the sector. Initiatives such as internships, mentoring programmes, and amateur project funding through grants are critical because they align prospective employees with existing businesses, providing guidance and crucial early career experience.

A lack of job-ready graduates is a business constraint and, long term, means businesses may look to relocate offshore, putting jobs in New Zealand at risk.

We need to gear our education system towards helping children embrace their creativity, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. These are the transferable skills that will be in the highest demand by future employers. In addition, STEM subjects have never been more important.

“It’s time for modern education to change. Traditionally, students would read textbooks, study for exams and aim to achieve NCEA Level Three or University Entrance. But that isn’t enough anymore, and there are plenty of other options out there for students to consider.

We need to teach our students to make creativity a habit, to change the way people think about creativity in everyday jobs. You can’t just be a robot, because robots are replaceable. The modern school curriculum gives lots of opportunities for creative learning and for students to take charge of their own development.”

– **Russell Brooke, College Principal Saint Kentigern College**

In ensuring the creative sector has a ready supply of job-ready graduates, it is also important we are training not only for the skill demands of today, but for the likely demands of tomorrow. That is why it is important students are provided with a wide range of transferable skills. Instead of students only becoming very specialised in one specific creative skill or tool, the combination of a number of complementary skills will increasingly grow in importance.

“A lot of the jobs of the future aren’t even here yet. They will be hybrid jobs. If you know Unreal engine, 3D design and some architectural visualisation software – then you’re creating entirely new types of jobs. It’s about determining what skills and software go together that will allow you to transcend a lot of different industries.”

– **Alwyn Hunt, Co-founder, The Rookies**

## **BUILDING A TRULY DIVERSE WORKFORCE THAT REFLECTS WHO WE ARE AS A COUNTRY**

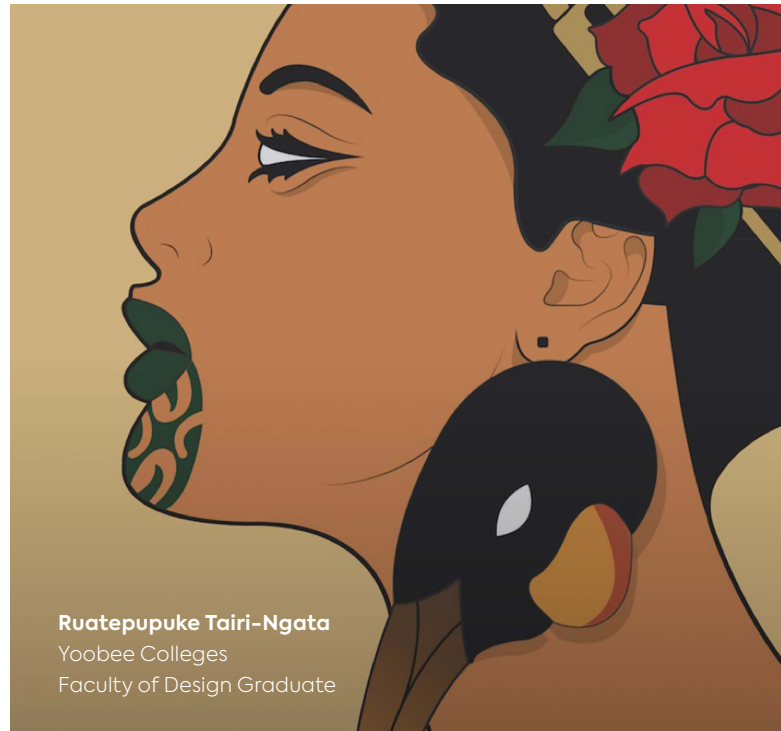
New Zealand is one of the most diverse countries in the world. People from more than 200 ethnic or cultural groups make up Aotearoa's demographic landscape, with 25% of the population born overseas.

The country's diversity is a source of strength in the creative sector, but how do we ensure all voices have the ability to rise to the surface?

New and alternative ideas, as well as different viewpoints, are the lifeblood of the creative economy. New Zealand is lucky in that it has a vast tapestry of lived experience to draw inspiration from, enabling rich, unique stories to flourish in film, on television, in print, and in digital media.

The broader economy also benefits significantly from the fresh perspectives and experiences a diverse workforce brings. Beyond more direct, localised benefits, such as being able to draw from a wider, skilled talent pool, it also empowers New Zealand businesses and professionals to export their products, skills and services to the world.

In our post-COVID economic recovery, it will be crucial to ensure the diversity present in New Zealand is reflected and leveraged through our creative sector and to our advantage. That's how we will create uniquely innovative stories and products that deliver value.



**Ruatepupuke Tairi-Ngata**  
Yoobee Colleges  
Faculty of Design Graduate

“Set in other-worldly landscapes and inspired by magnificent night skies with remarkable heroes and heroines, the stories we've created over the last 1000 years living in small islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean are embedded in our DNA. Over the past century, our film and creative industries have been building the skills and technology to bring these stories to life. With a global appetite for Indigenous stories growing, Māori storytellers are ready to lead partnerships in Aotearoa to bring our unique storied landscape to the world.”

– **Libby Hakaraia, Māoriland Charitable Trust**

## TELLING MORE LOCAL STORIES INTERNATIONALLY

Alongside creating a truly diverse workforce, we need to harness the potential of our uniquely New Zealand stories.

New Zealand is already highly regarded internationally as an attractive destination for film and television production, owing to our highly developed economy, wide variety of natural landscapes, and widespread digital connectivity.

Attracting large-scale productions to New Zealand's shores has been vital in building a broad, robust creative sector and will continue to be so. But this has seen most international productions produced in New Zealand telling stories developed elsewhere. As we emerge into a post-COVID world, we need to accelerate the number of creative productions, across all mediums, telling unique New Zealand stories to the world.

There is clear evidence that New Zealand stories can be successful on the world stage, with demand growing from international audiences for different types of stories. New viewing platforms, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, also assist more niche stories to reach growing audiences. If we are successful in selling New Zealand stories internationally, we also diversify and grow our export revenue by increasing the value chain.

Beyond film and television, interactive media like gaming or educational technology also offers viable export-focused potential. The global market for both is expanding rapidly, and New Zealand has the necessary ingredients to become a global leader, especially with the unique cultural vibrancy that we have to offer.



**Kate Efimova & Rebecca Bell**  
Yoobee Colleges  
Faculty of Design Graduates

“Look at Moana – It gave the outside world a bit of a connection to New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. They loved it! That’s our opportunity. We need to look inwards to be able to look out. People are interested in these stories because it’s so different from what they’re used to. But it doesn’t matter whether you identify as Māori or Pacifica, or a boy or girl, whatever – these stories connect all of us. We need to be proud of it and tell these stories.”

– **Simon Boxall, Faculty Team Leader,  
School of Animation**

## ENABLING CREATIVE SKILLS TO DRIVE NON-CREATIVE BUSINESSES

It's becoming increasingly clear that creative skills, both cognitive and practical, are vital to businesses operating across all sectors.

Whether it's an insurance company, an airline, a bank, or a government agency, creative thinkers are the innovators and problem-solvers that help companies compete and thrive in the modern global economy.

The creative workforce, who are our thinkers and innovators, are also immune to automation.

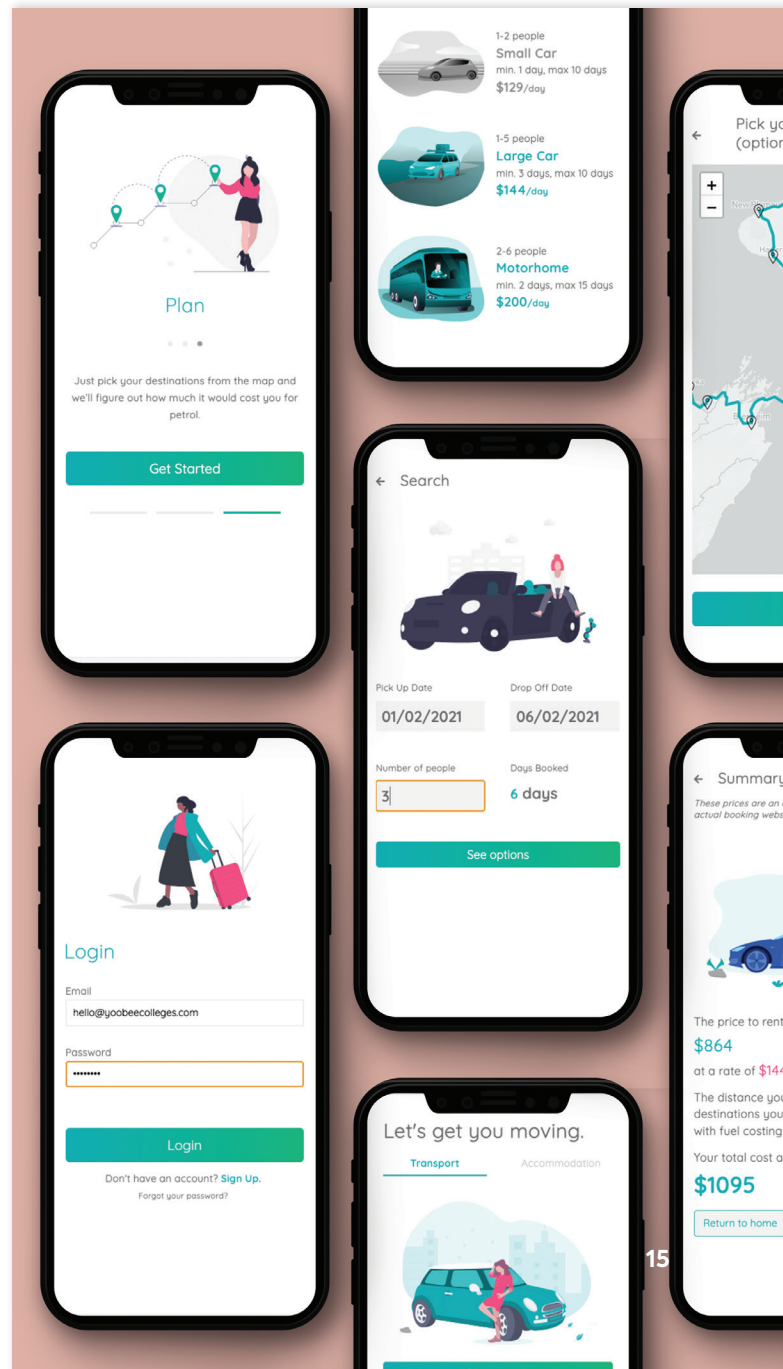
Add to this the growth in technological fields like machine learning, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and cloud computing, and the opportunities presented by those who embrace their creativity are boundless.

This means that while our creative industries are important centres of employment and growth in themselves, the creative workforce can drive growth in other industries.

“Creative technologies present a whole new pathway of employment and education, if we can crank that sector up. It's not all about algorithms. If we understand the value of creativity enough and that it needs to be deployed into the technological element of enabling other sectors, then you can think of the spillover into retail, manufacturing, tourism, hospitality and law. All these things constantly need better user interfaces and better human experience around it. You're not going to get there with programmers. You're going to get it from creative people.”

– **Graeme Muller, Chief Executive, NZTech**

**Ming Lo**  
Yoobee Colleges  
Faculty of Design Graduate



## ENABLING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

With around one-third of New Zealand's creative professionals being self-employed, the creative sector already has a well-established culture of charting your own course.

But in a post-COVID world, the challenge is how to translate this culture from freelancing on projects to creating and selling new creative ideas and products. Success in achieving this will result in a pipeline of self-sufficient creators producing ideas of both cultural and economic value for decades to come. Don't forget Sir Peter Jackson started by making splatter films in the 1980s.

The proliferation of interactive media on the internet has empowered young creatives all over the world to build profiles and even careers online. In the age of Twitch and YouTube streamers, TikTok and Instagram influencers, and

digital artists with online portfolios, new digital tools can empower creative people to go beyond the conventional limitations and grasp opportunities all over the world while still being in New Zealand.

But for creative entrepreneurs, traditional business challenges still exist, making key skills vital for growing a successful creative business. For example, providing financial management, business, and strategic planning advice are essential to creating more stable and viable businesses.

It is also important that we create the right environment to allow creative businesses to thrive. A strong New Zealand creative economy gives people the confidence to create their own businesses and projects, but these must be supported by the appropriate policy levers encouraging and supporting people as they start their own ventures.

“Equity of access is vital for new businesses in the creative sector. Access to opportunities, capital and information needs to be accelerated to be able to grow these businesses. Many of the up and coming creative professionals work in small businesses or are sole traders, so they often need support with things like business planning, financial management and marketing.”

– **Michael Brook, Creative Industries Manager, Auckland Unlimited**

**Jacinta van Gerwen**  
Yoobee Colleges  
Faculty of Design Graduate





## PROVIDING POLICY CERTAINTY AND PARITY

Above all else, the creative economy requires vision that is backed by policy certainty and parity.

In the words of WeCreate: “We need a plan that embraces our whole creative ecosystem and recognises its growing fusion with technology and impact on other sectors”.

By crafting a vision and roadmap for the sector, the government will help give confidence to investors, as well as young entrepreneurs and students who want to help grow the sector and talent base.



### Small Trash Sculpture of COVID-19 Press Conference

Scott Savage and Colleen Pugh  
Tutors at Yoobee Colleges

“There are a finite number of border exemptions and no one’s quite sure how they work. Some films get in, and others have issues. Being able to clearly articulate how this works will give more companies confidence to invest in New Zealand productions.”

– **Jasmine Millet, Manager, Screen Auckland**

We have an opportunity to replicate the historic support given to the film and television industry across the full breadth of the creative sector. The disparity in funding and tax incentives for film versus gaming or creative technology is just one example of a lack of parity across the sector. While we have built an economic ecosystem off the back of our investment in the film and television industry, now’s the time to pick winners from across the wider creative sector.

New Zealand’s immigration policy and border policy also requires adjustment and clarity to support long-term growth in the creative sector, given the heavy reliance on international talent<sup>1</sup>. For example, 66% of gaming studios report that skills shortages are hampering their growth.

“There is very little funding for creative technology. It’s ridiculous really. And the funds that are available are coming from sister industry organisations. For example, the Film Commission opens up a few hundred thousand dollars annually which it gives out in \$25,000–\$50,000 lots. It’s not their key space and, while it’s a great initiative and gesture on their part, those funds barely scrape the surface of a true gaming or experiential project. Our only real option is to try and attract overseas funding for our new venture and ultimately that means the profits from our projects won’t all stay in New Zealand.”

– **Sam Ramlu, Managing Director/Co-Founder, Method**



### ACCELERATE OUR EXISTING FILM & TV SECTOR

New Zealand's robust film and television sector provides an ideal platform to leverage for growth in the wider creative economy. In many regards, New Zealand has the opportunity to be the world's sound stage given many traditional filming locations internationally are facing strict COVID restrictions.

In order to continue to grow the film and television sector, the government needs to continue prioritising visa

and managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) pathways for new productions, as well as assisting global industry leaders who wish to enter the country in order to do reconnaissance trips to New Zealand. Robust criteria will need to be created in partnership with the industry to help facilitate this process and to ensure it aligns with the government's wider COVID-19 Elimination Strategy.

### PICK THE ANIMATION AND GAMING SECTOR AS OUR NEXT WINNER

The growth of New Zealand's film and television industry is testament to focussed government support through programmes like the Screen Production Grant, which has netted substantial economic benefits.

A similar investment in interactive media would likely generate substantial economic benefit given the size and growth in the international creative economy. In fact, New Zealand's interactive gaming sector exports reached over \$300m in 2020<sup>1</sup>, demonstrating a clear growth trajectory that can be accelerated.

The global digital economy has few of the practical limitations that are experienced when exporting physical

products, allowing New Zealand's creative businesses to easily market their products and services worldwide. Delivery can often happen just as fast, regardless of whether the client is based in Sweden, the Philippines, or simply at the other end of New Zealand.

The United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, and Finland, as well as other countries, have implemented generous programmes and incentives to help accelerate and expand their interactive media industries. Through initiatives such as funding grants, tax credits, and loans, they are supporting the growth of a major new economic industry.

If New Zealand is to seize the same opportunity, we need to:

- Put in place a policy framework to support the viability of technological entrepreneurs to take risks and create new businesses.
- Use existing support programmes, such as NZ On Air, to model the creation of a dedicated agency to promote and support the growth of New Zealand's interactive media, both domestically and internationally.
- Provide competitive funding, through grants or loans, to support the production of new creative intellectual property, especially with export potential.

## **EMBED GENERALIST CREATIVE AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS INTO OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The types of jobs that are emerging don't always strictly line up with traditional education systems. In practice, this is true for a number of industries, but the fast-changing nature of the creative world highlights the importance of being adaptable and flexible.

New Zealand needs a digitally and creatively literate workforce if we want to dominate on the world stage. This needs to encompass everything from creative thinking skills right through to cybersecurity skills.

Prioritising this in the coming years will require bringing everyone involved in education along on the journey, as it will involve teachers, parents, and the wider education community.

Until we address our poor performance in technology and other STEM subjects at school, and teach them as exciting, modern-day subjects, we will forever have a skills gap.

While it is encouraging that New Zealand has introduced a digital technology curriculum across every year in the

school system, the number of people studying NCEA-level technology courses continues to decrease. According to NZ Tech, only 400 of New Zealand's 35,000 teachers can teach digital skills in New Zealand.

This speaks to the need for New Zealand to undergo a deep overhaul with a focus on teaching and embedding the skills of tomorrow into our education system. As a country, we will not succeed if we focus solely on gearing our kids up to work in today's environment – we need to think beyond this.

That is why Yoobee Colleges is looking to launch a range of innovative high school programmes to give students a taster of technology via subjects they can relate to, such as eSports, streaming, YouTubing, Minecraft Servers, remote control robotics, game design, and chatbots. We are also making it easier for students to adapt their coursework to incorporate additional modules, providing very fast adaptation to a shifting industry landscape.

But in order for New Zealand to have a creatively empowered workforce, these changes need to ripple down to start from early childhood.



**Dante Bidois Kelly**  
Yoobee Colleges  
Diploma in Specialised Animation



# HOW TO ENABLE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

## KEY CHANGES NEEDED FOR A MORE ROBUST CREATIVE ECONOMY

New Zealand's creative sector is primed for growth with the right support. There are opportunities to deliver economic growth in 2021, but in order to achieve exponential growth we must set up our creative economy for the medium and long term.

### INDUSTRY SUPPORT

- **Recommendation One:** Introduce a new Ministerial position, supported by a dedicated government agency, focussed on the economic development and growth of the wider creative industry. Currently the creative industry deals with in excess of six ministries, rather than a place of central oversight. The new Minister, and associated agency, would act as a channel for all-of-government resources aimed at supporting the growth and potential of all New Zealand's creative sectors.
- **Recommendation Two:** Critically review all existing support programmes, such as NZ on Air, with a focus on removing any constraints, to enable the funding and development of a new generation of creative productions in various formats.
- **Recommendation Three:** Introduce new dedicated competitive funds and grants to support the production of new creative intellectual property, especially those products with strong export potential.
- **Recommendation Four:** Partner with the industry to support the development of world class creative infrastructure that draws international expertise to Aotearoa.

### FORMAL GOVERNMENT-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP (ACCORD)

- **Recommendation Five:** Develop and implement a Creative Sector Accord that would form the basis of an ongoing partnership between government and the industry to support the development of the New Zealand creative economy.
- **Recommendation Six:** The Accord should focus on creating a long-term roadmap for the industry, with clear targets and tangible results. The Construction Sector Accord serves as a useful blueprint for such an accord.
- **Recommendation Seven:** Introduce an all-of-sector forum, representative of the wider creative industry, where key challenges and roadblocks can be worked through systematically.

### TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

- **Recommendation Eight:** Review our teacher training and better support teachers to teach students STEM subjects and creativity in a manner that excites young people and encourages them to apply creativity to all parts of their lives.
- **Recommendation Nine:** Embed generalist creativity and technology into the curriculum at all levels of our education system.
- **Recommendation Ten:** Focus on reversing New Zealand's declining reading, mathematics, and science achievement levels.

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