

MILLENNIUM ART GALLERY

1 May 2023

Mayor Taylor and Marlborough District Councillors
Annual Plan Consultation 2023-2024
Marlborough District Council
P O Box 443
BLENHEIM 7240
Email: annualplan@marlborough.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa, Mayor
Taylor and Marlborough District Councillors

Submission to the Marlborough District Council's 2023-2024 Annual Plan Consultation Document

In winter 2023, Marlborough's first purpose-built public art gallery, co-located with the library opens in central Blenheim. For more than a decade, the Marlborough District Council (MDC) and the Millennium Public Art Gallery Trust (the Trust) have been committed to this investment in the community's social, cultural and economic well-being. The new purpose-built building addresses the current gallery's inadequate collection storage and exhibition space, limited education and programme facilities and poor disability access.

"Bringing the library and art gallery together is complementary for both facilities. The library will bring its users to the gallery and the gallery will attract visitors who can make use of the library facilities. Both will benefit from the shared community facilities available in the building." Growing Marlborough, Blenheim Town Centre Strategy

What sort of facilities will we see?

The new gallery provides environmental and operational facilities to the highest professional standards for museums / public art galleries in New Zealand and overseas. All collection storage and exhibition spaces will have full climate control. These spaces will realise the gallery's exhibition, public programme, and collection management potential.

The new spaces will enable:

- A gallery where collection-based exhibitions will be presented continuously.
- Exhibitions of rare and valuable works to be brought into the region – (these were previously unable to be exhibited in Marlborough due to inability to meet facilities requirements).
- Professional display, storage and management of Marlborough's two public art collections - the Gallery's and the Council's
- A stimulating environment for art and book-related public and educational programmes.

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wymen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E maripublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marlboroughart.org.nz

To meet the operational potential of the new public art gallery, the Trust requests the Marlborough District Council reviews and increases the Gallery's operational grant.

Background

- The Millennium Public Art Gallery (MPAG) has been operating from the old library building on the corner of Seymour and Alfred Street since December 1999. It is operated by the MPAG Trust, a Charitable Trust who employ a professionally trained manager.
- The MPAG was converted from the old library building / MDC office building as part of the Millennium Projects in Marlborough for the year 2000 celebrations.
- The MDC has provided operating grants of up to \$160,500 annually with the balance of the MPAG costs being met by donations, grants from other organisations, proceeds from fundraisers and volunteers / in kind support. The MDC funding level was last adjusted in 2017.
- The gallery has operated an extremely lean and efficient model. The current budget is inadequate for current and future operations.
- Covid reduced the ability of the MPAG to raise extra funds due to the limits on the ability to hold functions plus many of our volunteers are older adults and therefore at risk.
- The Gallery currently has 1.8FTE staff and is heavily reliant on volunteers to support staff operations (front of house, fundraising and governance). We require a minimum of two staff at all times in the new gallery, otherwise safety, security and opening hours will be limited.
- The combined nature of the new Marlborough District Library / Art Gallery will allow some economies of scale for both facilities in terms of their base operating costs. The new Library operating costs have been included in the Council budgets. We understand a review can be undertaken of the actual costs and allocations between the organisations once the building has been operating for 12 months.
- On 30 June, when the library and art gallery building is officially opened by local iwi, central and local government officials, the building will be gifted a name by mana whenua which embodies its location and purpose. Inside this name, the new library and art gallery will be operating as Marlborough Library and Marlborough Art Gallery. The change of operational names reflects the partnership between the Trust and the Council as we work together in a shared facility.

Summary

- Council staff have been working closely with the MPAG to review and update the operating costs associated with the MPAG in relation to the new facility.
- The MPAG will have increased operating costs in the new facility due to the increase in footprint occupied by the gallery and the modern climate control systems required to maintain art works on public display and in storage. The gallery has specialist requirements for the management of art works. Areas where increased costs are expected include security, insurance, and operation of a fully integrated air conditioning system.
- The MPAG would like to increase their opening hours to better meet standard Aotearoa New Zealand public art gallery/ museum opening hours and to better match the opening hours of the Marlborough Library.

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wynen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E marpublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marboroughart.org.nz

MILLENNIUM ART GALLERY

- There has also been a need identified for extra staffing resources to manage the public space, exhibitions, and the collection.
- Extra staff are required to ensure public safety and collection security.
- The public art gallery was co-located with the new library development so that both facilities could take advantage of increased visitor numbers that these facilities will attract.

To be eligible for funding from external funding bodies for major projects, the Trust needs evidence of sustainable operational funding from our local body.

Marlborough District Council's Marlborough Collection

1. The Council's Marlborough Art Collection consists of c.100 items of various media.
2. The items are stored at multiple sites; MPAG, Council offices, Marlborough Library and items on loan to various organisations in Marlborough. This collection and the collection held by the MPAG are growing and may increase significantly once the new gallery has been completed via donation of works.
3. Part of the design of the new Art Gallery incorporates climate-controlled storage and work rooms to enable the management and professional care of art works. Council intended that the Marlborough Art Collection would be stored, managed and maintained as part of the new art gallery development.
4. These elements have been discussed and a range of collection management projects undertaken for the Council by gallery staff, but Council needs to provide an ongoing budget to maintain this collection.

Gallery Staffing

1. The new art gallery building presents opportunities and the Trust is requesting consideration of funding for more staff resources due to:
 - a. A much larger display area to manage and operate.
 - b. Roles that are unsuitable for volunteers to carry out such as sole front of house positions which raise health and safety, security and compliance issues. A staff member needs to be present at the larger, new gallery's reception (with volunteer support.)
 - c. Projected increase in visitors requires higher health and safety, security and insurance requirements for staff and additional insurance for the art collection.
 - d. New types of spaces to activate.
 - e. The need for more professionally skilled staff for the management and care of the collection and installation / management of exhibitions.

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wynen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E marlpublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marlboroughart.org.nz

- f. The desire to increase opening hours.
- g. Co-location with the library provides shared learning, experience and programming opportunities

This will affect how the gallery team:

- Spends their time
- Interacts with customers
- Manage behaviours of a public that might not have been to a gallery before
- Implement new processes and procedures
- Build partnerships and relationships with the library team, relevant community and business groups.

2. It has been identified that an additional 2 permanent FTE staff will be required at the new gallery. This number is based on the recommended minimum number of hours required to ensure health and safety and security requirements are met, other gallery duties are carried out and volunteers are managed. In 2018, Accounting Plus 2009 Limited was engaged by MDC to inform on fit-out costs and any potential change to ongoing annual operational costs for the combined Library/Art Gallery project. This report estimated the future art gallery would require a staffing increase of 2FTE. The brief for the new art gallery was developed by Tim Walker Associates (TWA), a museum and art gallery consultant experienced in the development and redevelopment of gallery services and buildings. TWA identified the future gallery staffing requirements as 5FTE.
3. MPAG was benchmarked against other public art galleries using data taken from the 2022 Museums Aotearoa members statistics. MPAG has the lowest local government operational funding compared to the other regions throughout Aotearoa/ New Zealand. The status quo compromises service levels, security and health and safety required in the new facility.
4. An increase in operational funding would move MPAG closer to other public art gallery service staff levels.

Advantages

- The increase in FTE will enable staff to support the community by increasing services and programmes across the district and meet the minimum recommended health and safety and security requirements to operate in the new facility.
- The increase in FTE moves MPAG staffing closer to other museum/ public art gallery service staff levels.
- An increase will allow for annual leave, sick leave, training and flexibility in rosters. Our current operational hours are limited, reflecting limited staffing levels.
- The new facility, services and additional opening hours will bring additional foot traffic to the area which will have a positive impact for surrounding businesses.
- The potential to provide the social benefits of improving community education and well-being.

Disadvantages

- Increase in operating budget per annum required.

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wynen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
 P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E marpublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marboroughart.org.nz

MILLENNIUM ART GALLERY

Risks

- The investment is significant but the costs of not investing are also significant. There is reputational risk and a loss of potential economic and social benefits which include:
 - A degradation in the level of customer service as staff would be spread thinly.
 - Security may be compromised.
 - Inability to support the new services, programmes and events and core collection work as staff are required to defer this work to support floor rosters.
 - A drop off over time from disappointed users who expected more from a modern art gallery.
 - Negative public perception as the potential of the new facility is minimised.
 - Health and safety issues with limited staff leave cover.

Next steps

- Revise budgets to provide for increased operating costs included in the remainder of 2022/23 and 2023/24 Annual Plan budgets.

Assessment

- The opportunities presented in the new gallery building are:
 - A much larger space to manage and operate.
 - New types of spaces to activate.
 - More opportunity for programmes and events
 - Co-location with the Library providing shared learning, experience and programming opportunities.

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wynnen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E marpublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marlboroughart.org.nz

This will affect how the Gallery team:

- Spend their time.
- Interact with customers.
- Manage behaviours of a public that might not have been to a gallery before or for a while.
- Implement new processes and procedures.

- The design of the new building anticipated an increase in service levels which will have the following impacts:

	Current	Projected
Number of entry/exit points	One	One
Service points	One	Two
Increase in dedicated gallery floor space	294m2	575m2
Increase in community spaces/meeting rooms	No dedicated meeting rooms Open space meeting areas only	Co-use of Library spaces
Increase exhibitions/programmes	Two exhibition galleries – maximum of 2 exhibitions at a time. Programmes 12 plus per annum	Up to four exhibitions running concurrently. (Flexible exhibition space) Programmes 24 plus per annum plus partnership programmes with Library
Increase in visitors – depends on opening hours	18,000 per annum – average	30,000 + per annum - average
Weekly floor rostered hours (volunteers)	30	40 (mix staff volunteers)
Weekly floor rostered hours (staff)	20	45.5
Increase in operating hours	M-F : 10.30 to 4.30 S/S : 1pm to 4pm (MPAG hours)	M-F : 10.00 to 4.00 (same as Library) S/S : 10.00 to 4.00 (same as Library)

MILLENNIUM ART GALLERY

We are requesting that the MDC considers the following to enable the public art gallery to operate with adequate resources and meet the new building's potential. The MPAG is seeking:

1. **An increase to the operating costs grant by \$60,000 per annum from July 2023.**
2. **Funding of MPAG staffing increases by an extra \$120,000 per annum from the 2023/24 financial year (CPI adjusted)**
3. **Funding for the storage, maintenance and conservation of the Marlborough Collection subject to a separate contract for service being negotiated and funded up to \$50,000 per annum.**
4. **That all operating funding be CPI adjusted on an annual basis.**

We look forward to speaking to our submission at your June Annual Plan hearings.

Yours sincerely



Rick Wilson
Chair, Millennium Art Gallery Board of Trustees

Marlborough's Public Art Gallery

PO Box 692 • 1 Wynen Street • Blenheim • Marlborough
P (03) 579 2001 F (03) 579 2162 E marlpublicart@xtra.co.nz www.marlboroughart.org.nz