



Aotea Quarter Action Plan

2010 – 2015

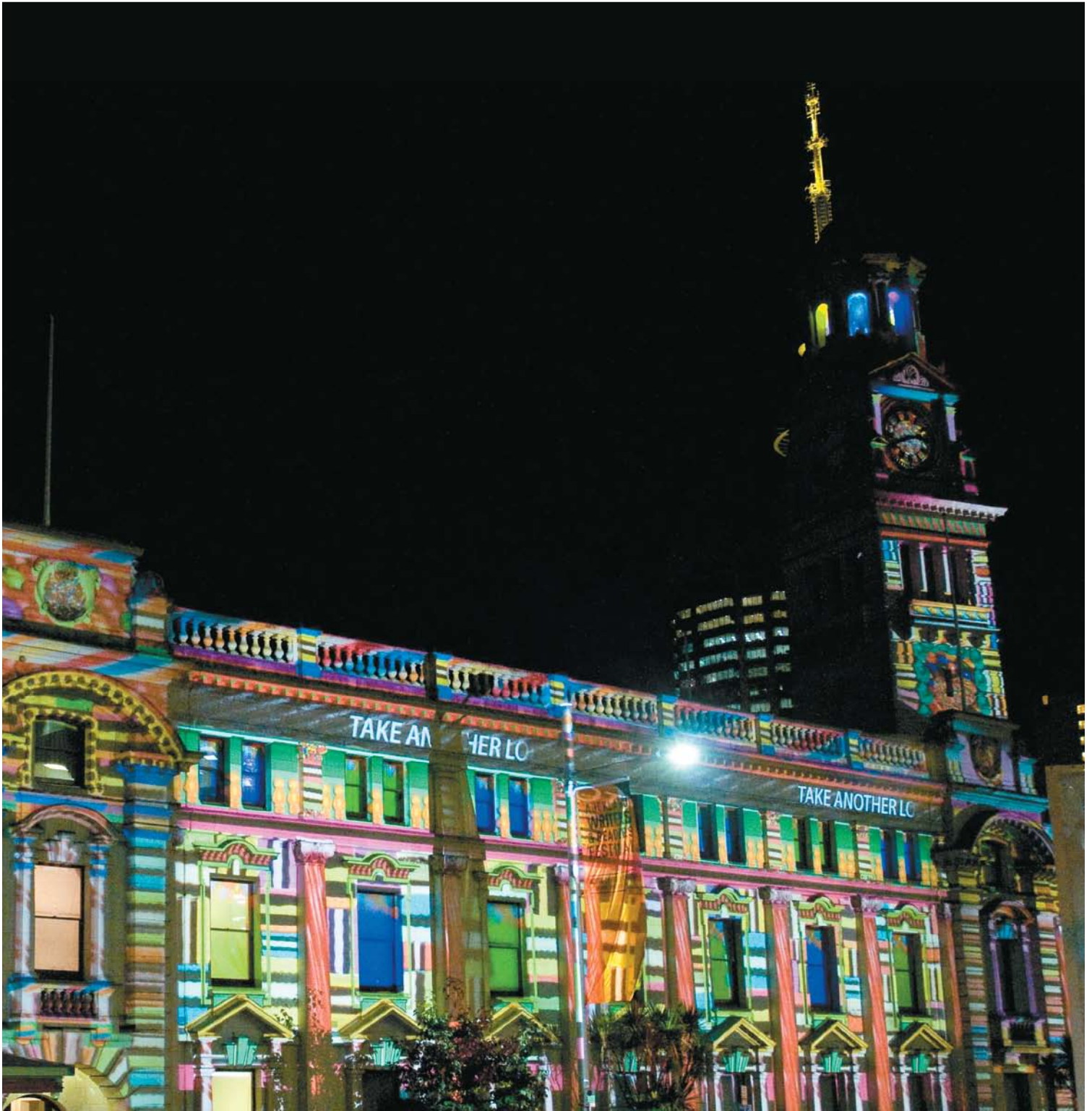
Auckland's Civic Core and Cultural Heart

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Aotea Quarter – Auckland’s civic core and cultural heart

The Aotea Quarter plan was adopted in 2005. It is part of Auckland City Council’s CBD into the Future strategy to create an urban centre with a vibrant mix of business, residential and cultural activity – one that offers world-class experiences and lifestyles with a distinctive Auckland flavour.

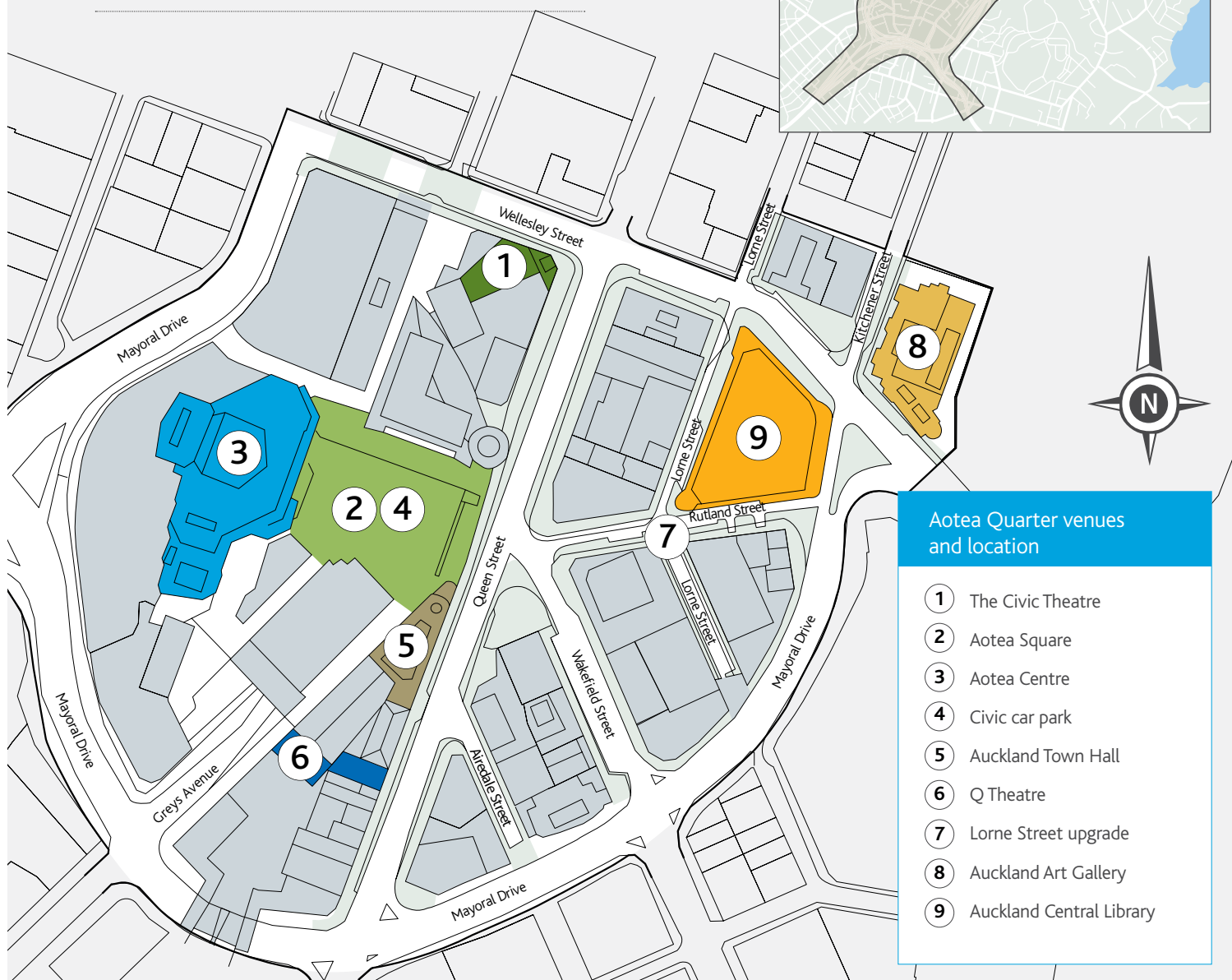


Aotea Quarter 'The Vision'

Aotea Quarter, the city's civic core and cultural heart, and arts and entertainment hub: a vibrant centre where senses are indulged, creativity expressed, events enjoyed and civic life participated in.

Located in the Queen Street valley and bounded by Mayoral Drive, Wellesley Street, Lorne Street and Khartoum Place, the Aotea Quarter lies in the centre of the CBD.

The quarter is recognised for its cluster of cultural facilities and as the centre of local government, making it an important area to develop and revitalise.



Aotea Quarter venues and location

- 1 The Civic Theatre
- 2 Aotea Square
- 3 Aotea Centre
- 4 Civic car park
- 5 Auckland Town Hall
- 6 Q Theatre
- 7 Lorne Street upgrade
- 8 Auckland Art Gallery
- 9 Auckland Central Library

Achievements to date

Since 2005, the council has been working in partnership with key stakeholders to help make the Aotea Quarter the cultural heart of the city – a place where people know they can come to experience arts and entertainment.

Significant progress has been made since the 10-year plan was first adopted. Key achievements include:

Aotea Square

To help develop a sense of place, the council began construction on a comprehensive redevelopment of the Aotea Square area, including the upgrade of Aotea Square, repairs to the Civic car park roof and changes to the Aotea Centre frontage. To address safety issues we have worked with Safer Auckland in applying Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles to the landscape design.

Q Theatre

The council has worked to retain existing and develop new cultural infrastructure and activities in a number of ways. Significant progress has been made towards the development of Q Theatre, a 350-seat flexi form theatre. The council has also encouraged the retention of non-council owned performance venues in Aotea Quarter by supporting The Classic Comedy Club and The Basement.

Venue Study

A venue study was carried out to identify gaps in theatre provision and recommend how best to meet them.

Street and open space upgrades

The award winning Queen Street upgrade was completed as well as the first stage upgrades of Khartoum Place and Lorne Street.

Enhancing the quarter

In conjunction with our partners, we delivered a quality programme of activity in the quarter's public spaces.

The Aotea Quarter Urban Design strategy was incorporated into street and open space upgrade designs. The CBD sign strategy has also been applied to individual projects in the quarter, such as the Aotea Square redevelopment.

A transport strategy was developed for the quarter and initiatives such as pedestrian countdown clocks at the intersection of Queen and Wellesley streets and real time bus information have been realised.

The Central Library café was also completed.



On any given day, 22,000 people visit the Aotea Quarter for work, recreation, education and leisure

Actions that have not progressed

Funding decisions have had an impact on some actions in the 2005 Aotea Quarter plan. The Town Hall Arts Precinct has been deferred, as has the small square upgrade at the Airedale Street and Mayoral Drive intersection and the upgrades of Airedale and Wakefield streets. A decision is still to be made about a convention centre site and the potential for the area behind the Aotea Centre.

Action plan 2010-2015

The 2010-2015 Aotea Quarter action plan is divided into three sections that detail what council and other stakeholders will do to help to achieve the Aotea Quarter vision. The first section lists actions to focus on delivering in 2010. The second section has actions to achieve by 2015. The third section identifies stakeholder and council aspirations to consider for the next action plan.



Renewed commitment

Five years on, the plan has been reviewed and updated with the council signatories reconfirming their commitments. Stakeholder engagement and international best practice for the management of cultural precincts has informed a placemaking approach to the development and management of the quarter from 2010-2015.

Placemaking aims to create active, vibrant public places by recognising the needs of the community, businesses and the environment. It considers urban design, community involvement, local economic development, and cultural values. A place-based approach to development will ensure the quarter is a lively and vibrant place, with events and activities, improved connections, access, safety and transport.

2010

Activate the Aotea Quarter

Work with others to make Aotea Quarter a lively place with lots of events and activities by

- attracting, developing and delivering an annual calendar of high calibre cultural performances, programming and civic activity for Aotea Square and Aotea Quarter
- installing a big screen in Aotea Square and developing management protocols that reflect the vision for Aotea Quarter
- investigating appropriate uses for activating the lower Greys Avenue development site and Mayoral Drive underpass, in time for the opening of Q Theatre
- working in partnership with others to activate the Aotea Quarter
- actively working with Ngati Whatua to deliver Maori cultural events in the quarter.

Promote the Aotea Quarter and raise its profile

Work with others to raise the profile of the quarter and promote it in an integrated way by

- developing and implementing a marketing plan for Aotea Quarter that enables activities to be promoted in a coordinated way. Channels and tools to consider may include:
 - developing a visual identity for the quarter
 - setting up and maintaining a website for the quarter
 - incorporating internet social networking
 - promoting the quarter as part of the Big Little City campaign
- working in partnership with Tourism Auckland to educate visitors and create packages for the quarter.

Provide leadership by

- advocating for dedicated resource for communications and place management
- working with landowners and commercial tenants in Aotea Quarter on any redevelopment plans they may have to enhance the place.

Create an attractive mix of retail and tenancies

Ensure the quarter has the right mix of tenancies and is bustling with activity by

- developing and implementing a retail plan for the quarter that considers food and beverage as part of the retail offer
- developing and implementing a tenancy plan for the Aotea Quarter to encourage tenancies that support the vision
- advocating for controls within the district plan to encourage building to the street edge and street activity.

Develop Aotea Quarter's destinations and venues

Retain existing and develop new cultural infrastructure and activities by

- working with Q Theatre to facilitate the completion of the 350-seat flexi form theatre
- encouraging the integration of public art within the quarter by delivering the Aotea art axis
- working to complete the Art Gallery development
- completing the Aotea Square redevelopment project.

Make accessing Aotea Quarter easy

Improve connections, access, safety and transport in and around the quarter by

- integrating the Aotea Quarter plan with K' Road, the Learning Quarter and Victoria Quarter plans
- developing a master plan for the upgrade to the Bledisloe walkway (including the Bledisloe canopy and the Bledisloe/Wellesley Street pocket square upgrade)
- relocating the Novaloo to the Bledisloe pocket park
- improving pedestrian access at the Mayoral Drive/Wakefield Street intersection
- advocating for improved public transport connections from Britomart to K' Road and satellite precincts such as Newmarket and Ponsonby
- investigating ways to address parking needs to make accessing Aotea Quarter easier
- providing effective signage to link destinations within the Aotea Quarter and the CBD.

By 2015 we will

Develop Aotea Quarter's destinations and venues

Retain existing and develop new cultural and infrastructure activities by

- providing ongoing support to Q Theatre
- delivering the capital works and streetscape upgrade programmes as part of Auckland's CBD into the Future Strategy, as budgeted for in the 2009-2019 Long Term Council Community Plan. For example:
 - Auckland Art Gallery development
 - Kitchener Street improvements
 - Lorne Street and Mayoral Drive intersection small square upgrade
 - Lorne Street upgrade stage two (Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive).

Make accessing Aotea Quarter easy

Improve connections, access, safety and transport in and around the quarter by

- improving pedestrian access at the Mayoral Drive/ Lorne Street intersection.

Provide leadership by

- undertaking a review of the Aotea Quarter action plan by 2015 with a view to benchmarking progress and ensuring ongoing enhancements of the quarter.



Photo credit: Black Grace's "Gathering clouds" ©John McDermont. Auckland Festival 2009

Long - Term

Our long-term aspirations

Provide leadership

Implement the action plan by

- investigating options for sustainable governance models to deliver the vision for the Aotea Quarter.

Develop Aotea Quarter's destinations and venues

Retain existing and develop new cultural infrastructure and activities by

- encouraging the development and integration of public art within the quarter
- investigating the possible use for the land bank behind the Aotea Centre. Options to consider include a covered drive in and drop off entrance from Mayoral Drive, a drama theatre, a convention centre
- facilitating the restoration and re-opening of the St James Theatre.

Make accessing Aotea Quarter easy

Improve connections, access, safety and transport in and around the quarter by

- enhancing 'gateways' to Aotea Quarter
- creating visual markers and connections for the quarter through innovative lighting
- improving pedestrian access at the Mayoral Drive/ Vincent Street intersection
- advocating for a passenger transport hub within Aotea Quarter, for example on the West Bledisloe site
- facilitating pedestrian improvements between Lorne Street and Governor Fitzroy Place
- improving the provision of public toilets in the quarter.





Photo credit: Eastern Art, Michael Bradley



Partner commitments

Together the council and stakeholders will work collaboratively to achieve the vision for Aotea Quarter. Eleven stakeholders have renewed their commitment to the plan and three new stakeholders have come on board – The Basement, Scenic Hotel and The University of Auckland – making a total of 14 signatories in the Aotea Quarter partnership.



Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra



As Auckland's premier orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia is keenly interested in the city's arts and cultural development, and specifically the performing arts. We believe the development of the Aotea Quarter is crucial in helping create an arts hub that will attract arts practitioners such as ourselves, our consumers, and the greater public.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- continue to perform in the quarter, contributing vibrancy and vitality to the quarter's cultural experience
- continue to perform and rehearse in the Town Hall and Aotea Centre as the city's flagship performing arts venues.



NBR New Zealand Opera



The NBR New Zealand Opera is currently located in Aotea Quarter. We are keenly interested in the future developments that are signalled in the action plan and believe the city, through the Aotea Quarter, has the potential to 'ping' as the arts capital of New Zealand.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- make every effort to remain located within the quarter
- have all our main stage performances taking place within the quarter
- use Aotea Square for lunchtime concerts by emerging artists or visiting guest artists
- work with the council, in whatever way we are able, to bring about the restoration of the St James Theatre as an alternative venue for our performances.



The University of Auckland



The University of Auckland has major teaching, research and administrative facilities near Aotea Quarter. It has links with AUT and a network of partners through the quarter. The university's creative focus on art, design, planning and culture compliments the flavour and function of the area. Aotea Square and venues in the quarter are also popular destinations for its students. The university encourages making the most of the precinct and the unique opportunities it presents to organisations which are both physically close to it, and who participate actively in the area.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter's vision we will:

- work in collaboration with the council to enhance and accommodate graduation ceremonies so they contribute to the experience and fabric of the city
- contribute to a vibrant and engaging public activity programme in the quarter
- seek opportunities to display the creative work of students in the quarter.



AUT University



AUT's relationship with the Aotea Quarter is important. We have teaching, research and administrative facilities located in the area and strong links to a network of partners. Our creative focus on art, design and culture compliments the flavour and function of the quarter. Aotea Square is also a popular destination for our students. We want to make the most of the area and the unique opportunities it presents.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- work with the council to enhance graduation ceremonies so they contribute to the experience and fabric of the city
- contribute to a vibrant and engaging public activity programme in the quarter
- promote the links between AUT and Auckland Art Gallery activities
- seek opportunities to display the creative work of students in the quarter.



Committee for Auckland



Committee for Auckland is very interested in the creative and economic development of the CBD and the Aotea Quarter. We are also keen to promote the positive contribution that universities can make to the CBD.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- continue to work with the universities and council to strengthen and connect the Learning, Victoria and Aotea Quarters
- act as a sounding board, and contribute international experience of, and information about, cultural quarters.

Methodist Mission Northern – Lifewise



The Methodist Mission Northern has had a presence within the quarter for 150 years and contributes to community wellbeing in the quarter and wider CBD through the provision of social and community services.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- consult with other individuals, groups and the council, to help provide a spiritual and social hub for the community by offering practical and collaborative support and advocacy for older people, children and families, and homeless and marginalised people
- work with other organisations to improve safety in the quarter
- work with city stakeholders to develop the Aotea Chapel as a vibrant resource for the CBD and Aotea Quarter.

Ngati Whatua O' Orakei



NGATI WHATUA O ORAKEI

As ahikaa of the Auckland city isthmus, we are deeply committed to the city, the CBD and its development. The Aotea Quarter, as an arts and entertainment hub, provides many opportunities to reflect and integrate things Maori through art, performance, design and historical reference.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- provide a 'sense of place' and historical advice for the city's streetscape and open space developments so that more than 1000 years of vibrant Maori and Pacific heritage and tradition is recognised and celebrated
- explore opportunities through our work on the Arts Agenda for showcasing Maori visual and performing arts in the quarter
- continue to work with Safer Auckland City to improve safety in the CBD generally and in the Aotea quarter specifically.





Tourism Auckland



Tourism Auckland recognises the important role heritage, iconic events, and the performing and visual arts play in attracting and retaining international visitors, in growing Aucklanders pride in their city and in engaging Aucklanders as advocates for Auckland.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- work with the council to investigate how best to provide tourist information and visitor services within the quarter
- explore opportunities for promoting and funding activities in the quarter
- assist with promoting events and activities within the quarter, in partnership with others.

Scenic Hotel



Scenic Hotel Auckland is conveniently located in Auckland's arts and cultural precinct. It welcomes guests to enjoy stylish, spacious inner-city accommodation. The renovation of our heritage building blends its fabulous art deco architecture with a contemporary feel and modern comforts.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- provide accommodation within easy walking distance to the quarter's many fabulous venues and destinations
- present an enjoyable street-side restaurant and bar, offering quality dining day and night
- seek opportunities to undertake joint promotional activities with other stakeholders in Aotea Quarter and the CBD.

Metro Centre

The striking Metro Centre building provides a diverse range of entertainment, which contributes to Aotea Quarter's vision: movie-goers, shoppers, diners all add to the buzz and atmosphere of the place.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- work towards attaining a mix of tenancies that contributes to the vision of the quarter as a vibrant cultural and entertainment hub
- enliven and activate the edges of Bledisloe Lane to enhance and maintain a greater level of retail activity
- collaborate with the council on enhancements to the southern side of the property to better integrate the centre into Aotea Square
- work together with the council and other Aotea Quarter stakeholders to promote activities in the quarter
- continue to participate fully in the Aotea Alcohol Accord.





THE EDGE®



The Aotea Centre, The Civic Theatre, Auckland Town Hall, and Aotea Square are four distinctive venues in the civic core and cultural heart of the CBD. Presenting arts, culture, entertainment, meetings, conventions and exhibitions at these venues, draws people into the quarter, and creates interest, atmosphere and enjoyment.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- attract and programme events and activities in the quarter and Aotea Square that contribute to it being a safe and vibrant place
- operate a café that is bustling with activity that spills into Aotea Square
- wherever possible, attain a mix of tenancies that contribute to the vision for the quarter as a vibrant cultural and entertainment hub
- with the support of the council, deliver New Zealand's most comprehensive performing arts and entertainment programme
- collaborate with local and overseas organisations to bring world-class musical theatre, international arts presentations and major conventions to Auckland
- support opportunities to develop a full range of theatres for Auckland.

Q Theatre



Q Theatre's 350-seat theatre will deliver entertainment experiences in dance, theatre and the performing arts that inspire and connect Auckland's diverse audiences.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- build and manage the theatre, enhancing the quarter's mix of performing arts venues
- develop a strong base for artists and practitioners working in the performing arts sector
- add to the life and vitality of the quarter by providing an interesting venue where established and emerging artists can present innovative works
- work in partnership to activate Aotea Square and support a vibrant life in the quarter.





The Classic Comedy Club

the CLASSIC

The Classic is an independently operated and funded performance venue in the Aotea Quarter. Having produced over 2500 live performances, The Classic is known as “the home of live comedy”. We are passionate about the future of the quarter and are heartened by the vision of the proposed plan.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- continue to produce live comedy performances in the quarter and work to develop the comedy sector
- work with the council to strengthen the Aotea Quarter as the cultural heart and entertainment hub of the CBD.

Heart of the City



As a CBD business association, Heart of the City is interested in retail and economic development in the CBD. We believe the Aotea Quarter has a valuable contribution to make.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- continue to participate fully in the Aotea Quarter alcohol accord
- participate in developing and carrying out the CBD retail action plan in the Aotea Quarter
- work with the council to develop and carry out a programme of activity in Aotea Quarter’s public spaces.



The Basement



The Basement is an entertainment venue that exists to cultivate the work of Auckland’s emerging independent practitioners, providing a platform for the development of their craft and of an audience who desire unexpected performance experiences.

To help achieve the Aotea Quarter vision we will:

- showcase and develop the talent of emerging practitioners and independent companies
- provide support and extend pathways for creative practitioners in the early stages of their career
- maintain diverse programming that builds a broad audience base of non-traditional theatre-goers

- encourage a new generation of performance that develops a younger audience interested in the arts
- present contemporary, provocative and exciting work that contributes to the culture of Auckland
- participate fully in the Aotea Quarter alcohol accord.



TM