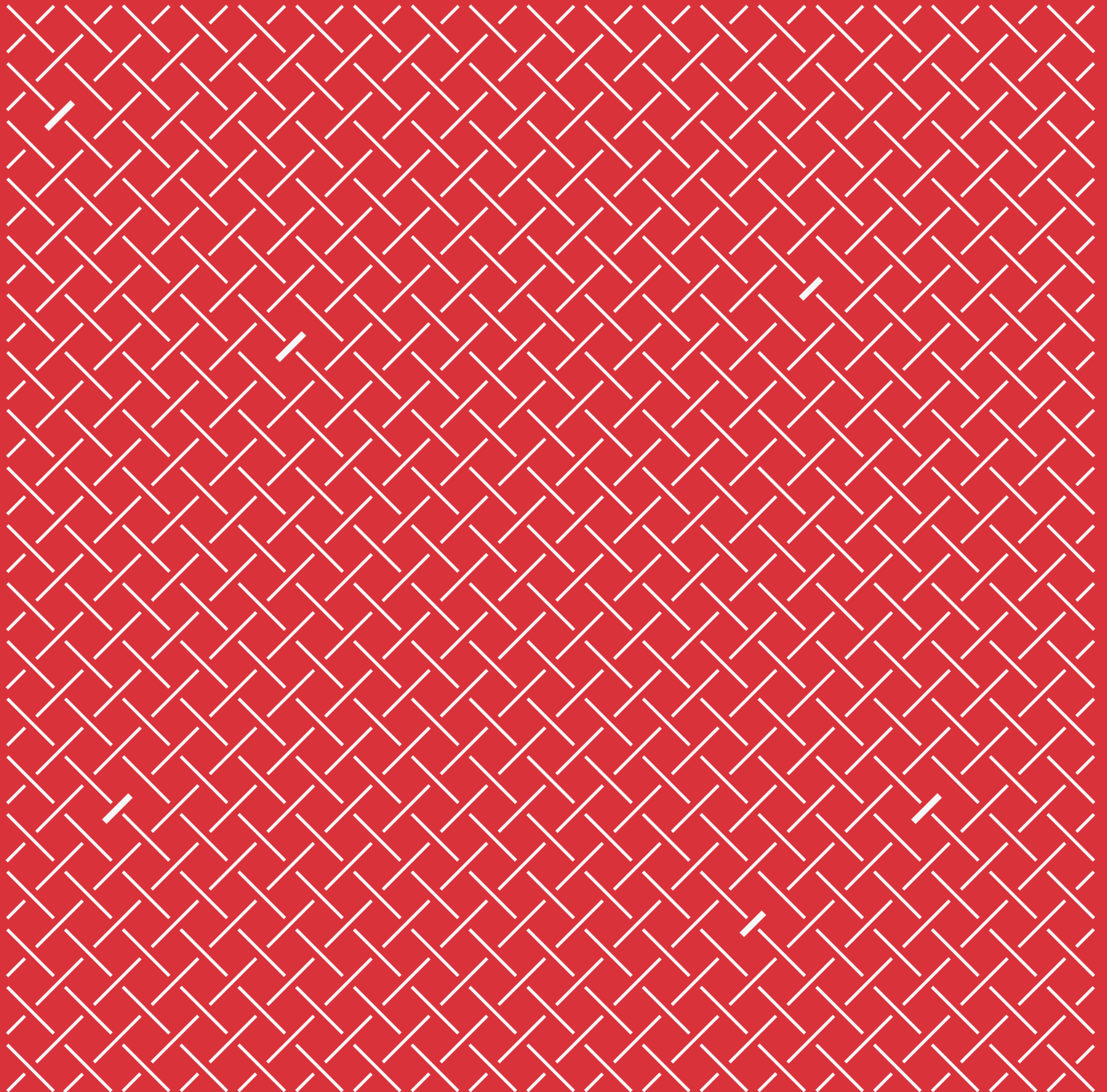


# POST TRIAL REPORT: VISIBLE ARTS AND CULTURE





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**Dancing demonstration outside Dead2b.**  
Photo by Maania Tealei.

## CONTEXT & PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Visible Arts and Culture trial including feedback, key findings and next steps.

There were four key objectives, relating to the four different audience groups.

1. For the local arts community, we hope to provide opportunities that lead to future work and more collaboration between artists, arts groups and businesses/sponsors. We want to increase the visibility of local arts both during the events and in the longer term. Long-term sustainability for the creative sector is the aim, so we are working to expand people's networks, create new opportunities for working together and make artistic interventions easier to achieve in Timaru.
2. For the local business community, we hope to grow interest in the arts and revive late night Friday shopping in the central city, helping to make it viable and appealing - and something that they might start choosing to do of their own accord.
3. For the general public, we want to provide a memorable and unique experience with art at its centre - to grow people's awareness and appreciation of the local arts scene and a sense of how the arts can and should be more prominent in the central city.
4. For the Council, we hope to demonstrate how an enabling approach, helping local artists to produce creative work in public, can be low risk and great for the city - and how a bit of 'seed funding' can leverage immense additional value when applied to the arts.

# TRIAL SUMMARY

At the beginning of the CityTown project, many people said that one of the keys to regenerating the city centre was more visible local arts and culture.

In order to explore this idea, we researched the current Timaru arts scene and Council's arts related policies and set up an informal advisory group, the members of which became the local First Fridays community organisers. Through extensive outreach, the team investigated interest from retailers and the creative community in a First Fridays event, and further developed the concept.

Once dates were set, online registration began. A creative workshop for participants was held in Timaru with artist and arts organiser Audrey Baldwin from Christchurch to highlight the potential for business/creative partnerships, using successful examples from Christchurch's First Thursdays event series as a case study.

Two late-night events were held on Friday 4 November and Friday 2 December, bringing together local shops, businesses, galleries, artists and performers.

Participating businesses extended their opening hours as nearby galleries, vacant spaces and public areas were activated with pop-up exhibitions, performances, live music, crafts and more.

In terms of registered participants, there were 161 individuals - 25 artists/creatives and 136 performers. Six community/arts organisations, 14 retail businesses and four food vendors also took part. More than

10 volunteers also helped out across both events and a number of other unregistered businesses stayed open for the event. Events spanned the city centre, including locations on Stafford Street, Strathallan Street, Church Street, Beswick Street, George Street, Royal Arcade, Sophia Street, Woollcombe Street and George Street.

The brand 'IGNITE Timaru' was established by the local team, including a locally administered Facebook page as an independent reflection of local art and culture that could live on for future community events after the trial.



**Bath bomb workshop at You're the Bomb.**  
Photo by Maania Tealei.

## WHY THIS TRIAL?

The aim of the Visible Arts and Culture trial was to investigate how we might begin to cultivate a strong cultural quarter within the urban centre, and foster a sense of cohesion and shared purpose within the arts community.

This trial links to Strategic Framework outcomes 'Loved Timaru' and 'Dynamic Timaru', fostering the local arts community in the urban centre of Timaru. Alongside providing performance and exhibition opportunities for artists, it aims to help build a resilient local economy ensuring long-lasting vibrancy and vitality of the city centre and support for local businesses.

As the event was the first of its kind locally, the trial took an exploratory approach seeking to understand and make visible the current creative community within Timaru. Initial outreach was broad and the goal was to find ways of working with all who were interested in participating so that the event reflected the broad make-up of local creatives and interested businesses. This was an inclusive approach as opposed to a more curated approach, which could evolve over time.



# FEEDBACK CHANNELS

The information in this report was collected through the following channels:

## **Feedback survey**

Feedback surveys were completed by business/shop owners, artist/performers and audience members (120 completed surveys).

## **Qualitative Highlights**

### **Focussed conversations with local event team**

- Kimble Henderson, Event Coordinator
- Maania Tealei, Social Media Coordinator and Event Photographer
- Mike Armstrong, local artist and informal artist/gallery coordinator
- Hamish Pettengell, Exhibitions Curator at the Aigantighe Art Gallery

### **Media channels**

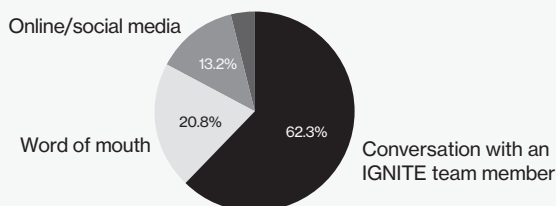
Media coverage, promotion and social media.

# FEEDBACK SURVEY

Artists/performers/creatives.  
53 respondents.

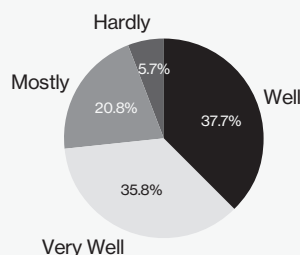
## Q1 How did you find out about IGNITE Timaru?

Conversation with an IGNITE team member (33), Online/social media (7), Word of mouth (11), Other (2): Found out through Nikki Hall, Organiser



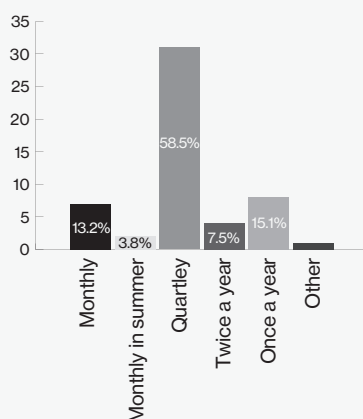
## Q2 How well did this event meet your objectives?

Hardly (3), Mostly (11), Very well (19), Well (20)



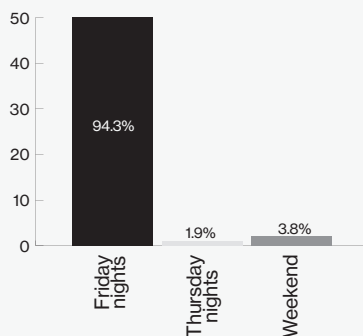
## Q3 How often should an IGNITE Timaru event take place to have the greatest impact for you?

Monthly (7), Once a year (8), Quartley (31), Twice a year (4), Monthly in summer (2), Other (1): I feel there are a number of options from regular and smaller to twice a year or a yearly 10 day arts festival



## Q4 What night is best to hold an IGNITE Timaru event?

Friday nights (50), Thursday nights (1), Weekend (2)



## Q5 Would you be likely to participate in a First Fridays IGNITE Timaru event in the future?

Yes (44), Don't know (8)

15.4% **don't know** **YES** 84.6%

# Business/shop owners. 13 respondents.

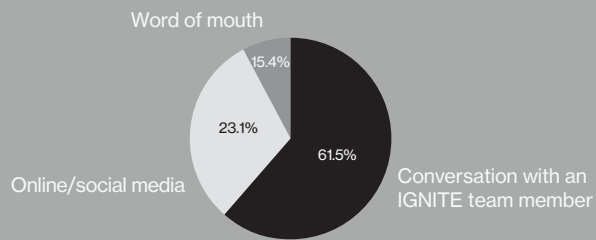
**Q1** Did the event bring in enough customers to make staying open worthwhile?

Other (2): We only left our lights on and did not host any activity or sales, we are open till 7pm on Fridays eitherway. I stayed in the shop till 8 but there were no customers after 7



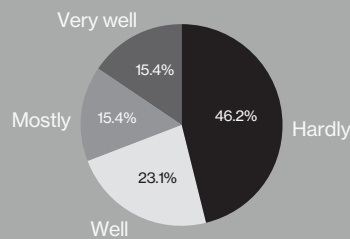
**Q2** How did you find out about IGNITE Timaru?

Conversation with an IGNITE team member (8), Online/social media (4), Word of mouth (1)



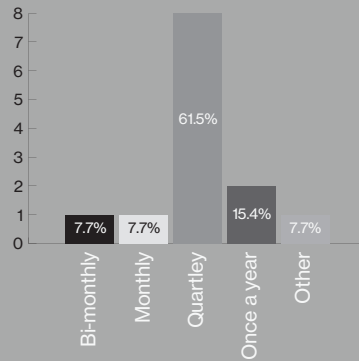
**Q3** How well did this event meet your objectives?

Hardly (6), Mostly (2), Very well (2), Well (3)



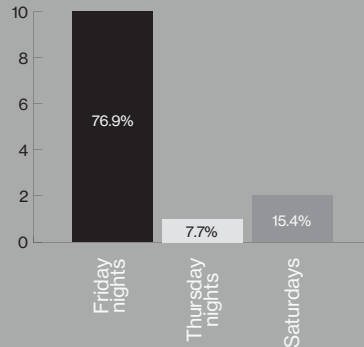
**Q4** How often should an IGNITE Timaru event take place to have the greatest impact for you?

Monthly (1), Once a year (2), Quartly (8), Bi monthly (1), Other (1): Depends on other businesses like night markets etc



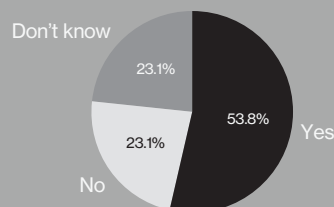
**Q5** What night is best to hold an IGNITE Timaru event?

Friday nights (10), Thursday nights (1), Saturday (2)



**Q6** Would you be likely to participate in a First Fridays IGNITE Timaru event in the future?

Yes (7), No (3), Don't know (3)

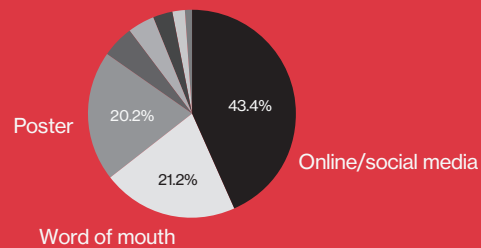


# FEEDBACK SURVEY

Audience members.  
**54 respondents.**

## Q1 How did you hear about IGNITE Timaru?

Online/social media (43), Word of mouth (21), Poster (20), Spotted performers/signage on the day (5), Radio (4), Local Business Association (2), Newspaper (1), Other (3): The day before from a friend, Involved in City/Town project, Being involved at Council

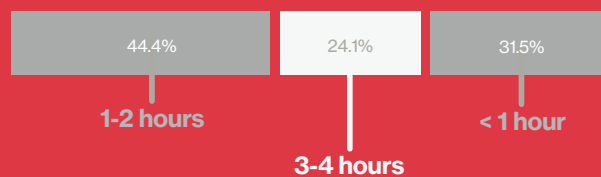


## Q2 What did you like about IGNITE Timaru?

Other (6): Free music class with Ceebee, Seeing things happening and the atmosphere - seeing people in the streets and chatting, The CBD came alive!, The dinosaur forest in the Arcade, The lighting display was ok but quite a bad tone and loud - was also too small. Not everyone likes Art and craft and preformed. We need to be catered for. More active thinks to do. One table tennis net isn't enough, thought it was very lack lustre - would not have known an event was on.... what is all this money going that is suppose to be for it?!?

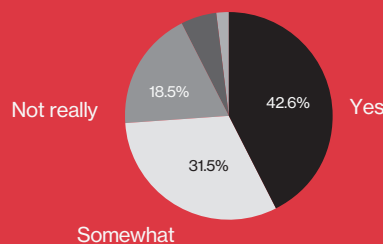


## Q3 How long did you stay at IGNITE Timaru?



## Q4 Did this event meet your expectations?

Yes (23), Somewhat (17), Not really (10), Not at all (3), Other (1): I wasn't sure what to expect



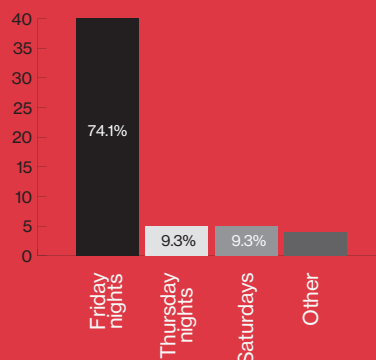
## Q5 How could this event be improved?

Other (9): Arts parade, More physical connection between the various offerings, Better wider advertising and more family appeal, Cluster performances/event in one location, Have it on a Saturday when the shops are open, Have things closer together, More consolidated and improved marketing so more people new about it, More interactive events, More street performance, support established businesses and help them- don't make completion that is funded by you/for free- that is actually supporting the community.... otherwise more businesses forced to close/loss of income



**Q6** What is the best night to hold an IGNITE Timaru event with late-night shopping?

Other (4): Have it when the shops are open so business owners don't incur extra staffing cost, I dont know, Not a weekend in busy December. The night market actually drew the crowds better, Not at night



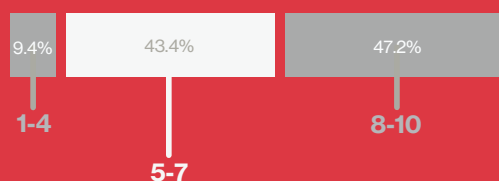
**Q7** Would you be likely to attend a First Fridays IGNITE Timaru event in the future?

Yes (43), No (1), Don't know (8), Other (2): I am open to a better event, Maybe depends

**79.6% said YES**

**Q8** Considering your overall experience, how likely are you to recommend IGNITE Timaru to others? (Very unlikely 1-10 Very likely)

10 (17), 9 (1), 8 (7), 7 (11), 6 (6), 5 (7), 4 (1), 3 (2), 1 (2)



# QUALITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

## Arts Community

What motivated or inspired you to get involved?

*Bringing live art to central Timaru! Also an excellent opportunity to test new work on a new audience!*

*More awareness, community involvement, exposure, making connections with other creatives and the community. Testing interest in other events I could run.*

*Timaru needs to experience culture at a community level, street art, public art, support for local creatives.*

What impact could a regular event like IGNITE Timaru have on your creative practice?

*Get more community awareness, to educate the public about the value of creativity.*

*It would really help build performance level, confidence, give me opportunities to network with creatives and businesses.*

*Would grow the visibility of the arts. Would build the community and potential collaboration between creatives and businesses. Opening up the vision of this town.*

What were the highlights of IGNITE Timaru for you?

*Connecting with fellow art practitioners.*

*Different forms of art. Loved that element.*

*Meeting other creatives, meeting the retailers and hospitality in the CBD, stimulating some cross fertilization of ideas, overall awareness of just how much (or how little) creative activity is possible in Timaru.*

*Seeing the different artistic disciplines, connecting with businesses I have not been into, getting a greater sense of community*

*Was wonderful seeing people enjoying themselves.*

### What could be done differently or better?

*Better publicity for creatives, and more appropriate locations for some performance types.*

*It was too spread out, should be more a street festival, close off street, have craft vendors, outdoor dining, more vibe.*

*It was great the only thing I would say is if you had a couple of food trucks would make it perfect as there are a lot of families around and kids that start getting hungry, restaurants are booked out or just not convenient to eat at. If you could eat while watching entertainment would be perfect.*

*The venue was a little difficult to set up, in terms of where to stand to perform due to sun, wind, and seating.*

*More shops could be involved. Stafford could be blocked up so that outdoor/street side things could happen more easily/add to the creative/different market kind of feel.*

### Do you have any ideas for other things that the Timaru District Council could do to enable more visible arts, culture and creativity in the city?

*Keep aside an area like Strathallan Corner for people or groups to perform.*

*Provide an outlet for people to view and sell their art.*

*Who in the council is responsible for the arts? They need to be present and advocating. If they don't have someone they need to appoint, and create a strategic plan including: artist in residence, businesses as galleries, public art projects led and completed by locals .... Acknowledge rich history of the arts in the region. Connect to rural sector.*

*Spend more on the creative sector, employ a creative events manager, accept and encourage the sector as part of the plan to revitalise the CBD, also because of the value to all.*

## **Business Community**

What motivated or inspired you to get involved?

*An opportunity to collaborate and bring people to the CBD.*

*As a creative business owner myself it allowed me to do something I have always wanted to do in the shop.*

*Attract new customers & gain exposure, hoping for increased sales.*

*I wanted to support the initiative to provide a brighter and more vibrant retail sector.*

What impact could a regular event like IGNITE Timaru have on your business?

*Could be good once the community is educated about the event and what it is about.*

*Create more vibrancy in the area. The local vibe is important to our business's success.*

*Of no advantage at all to us.*

What were the highlights of IGNITE Timaru for you?

*Getting to engage with a diverse range of people.*

*Seeing so many locals enjoying our city centre.*

*The great atmosphere and mindset people were in.*

What could be done differently or better?

*Have it when the shops are open.*

*Help some businesses that didn't take part think of ideas to participate.*

*Stafford Street is lengthy & obviously difficult to hold enough interesting events to create benefits for all businesses.*

*More artists etc. up the Bay Hill end. People were disappointed that not more shops were open. Not really many food options.*



Do you have any ideas for other things that the Timaru District Council could do to enable more visible arts, culture and creativity in the city?

*Do more advertising so everyone knows what's going on.*

*Get more life into Stafford Street. So many shops are closed and empty.*

*More public art, a dedicated outdoor stage for performance, a gallery in the town for local artists, regular art events, greater coordination of events in Timaru so shops can plan, more street art.*

## **Timaruvians**

What was your favourite part about IGNITE Timaru?

*That there was a specific area for kids.*

*Seeing and hearing live music while shopping and being able to support local artists.*

*Unsure it was sparse, road should have been closed off with markets from George to Church at least.*

*Going into an art gallery I normally wouldn't and a pop up local jewellery in a shop rather than market stall.*

*The sense of fun and being part of a thriving community.*

*The atmosphere. The enjoyment for all ages. The arcade installation was probably the most favourite but meeting new artists was a big highlight too.*

*I loved the fact that it drew attention to creatives.*

Was there anything you did not like about this event?

*Disappointed that more shops didn't stay open, especially your food vendors as people were wandering around looking for something quick to grab while listening to the music being played.*

*I'm a chamber member and I didn't see it promoted via Chamber nor did I recall seeing a lot via Venture Timaru and I would have thought Council would have Chamber promote to their business or even have them get retailers on board.*

*Confusing - bits of things happening in different places - felt disjointed.  
The dirty empty shops.*

*I would have liked to see more stores open and taking part.*

*Being toddler bound we were there quite early in the night, maybe 6-7 or so. We feel with it being quite spread out, the vibe was kind of sparse with pockets of activity, and stretches of street where it felt like not a lot was happening. I'm certain we missed a number of things because it wasn't clear to us that they were happening or where. I do appreciate though that it encourages exploration.*

*The time of day was over dinner time and all the food venues that were open were packed so getting the food order and eating took ages.*

In what ways do you think IGNITE Timaru benefits the community?

*Bringing people in and seeing businesses you don't know about. For those that don't often come into the CBD at least.*

*Brings us all together and it makes us proud of our trendy progressive little city.*

*Having something fun to do in our own town rather than going to another bigger town with more happening.*

*Get people outdoors and off devices!*

*It brings life to a part of town that generally closes at 5. I spent over \$50 during the evening - normally I wouldn't even go out. It showcases the breadth of art and talent and might just make both locals and visitors think "hmm, this is a cool place!"*

*It was good to see families and other groups, including groups of young people out and about and having fun in constructive ways.*

*Supports local talent and brings people together in an awesome atmosphere.*

Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

*Connection with the artisan farmers market and CBD group. Too many different groups.*

*I'm a creative & musician. Do less and do it really well in the right*

*environment. The Art Gallery garden with inside space better than linking with shops?*

*It was wonderful to see creatives being supported and bringing the many talented people we have in this community to the public eye. The length of Stafford St, I feel, makes it difficult for the event to feel cohesive.*

*Your idea of having seating out around Speights and street food while music played was a really good idea and people were drawn to this. Having a focal point like this is a really good idea.*

*Showed how vibrant Timaru could be.*



**Dance party held by The Portal.**

Photo by Maania Tealei.

# CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL EVENT TEAM

## Focussed conversation with local team organisers

The organising team formed as a cohesive and united crew who took strong local ownership of the event, investing significant time and personal resources to bring the community together, celebrate local arts and culture and push creative boundaries.

They noted that IGNITE marked the first time there's been an art scene on the main street bringing energy, positivity and community spirit back to the town to build on. The community atmosphere, and benefits of engaging with new people were acknowledged across the board.

Team organisers said that even though they were long-time residents of Timaru, they met many new local creatives and businesses. This highlights the opportunities created by an event like IGNITE to act as a catalyst for independently initiated collaborations between artists and business owners that would enliven the city centre.

Businesses generally took a tentative approach to participation and only 14 retailers registered despite focussed outreach. Post-COVID, many retailers were hesitant to open late and incur additional staff costs, and the team felt that more time was needed to support businesses to take a creative approach to the event and potentially match them to suitable artists or performers. Despite low participation from central city shops, interest grew after the first event and some businesses decided to keep their doors open during the event even if they did not register.

The team generally felt that this connection between artists/performers and local businesses would grow over time with more support and out-of-the-square thinking about how to collaborate. Creatives were generally keen to meet business owners and find ways of collaborating for mutual benefit.

Given the scale of the event, the team felt that more resources (both people and budget) were needed to adequately run the event and

support local businesses in a way that could be sustained. They noted the challenges of a relatively short lead-in time to organise the first event and the quick turnaround between the two events.

There were also challenges understanding current Council processes and a lack of clarity around who to speak to about various issues that arose including road closures, trading in public and local permission for art installations. Limited choice of suitable performance locations that could accommodate larger groups and amplification was also noted as was the need for centrally located amenities such as power, weather cover and suitable spaces for an audience to sit and view performances. Heritage Place was an excellent venue for the November event accommodating groups that ranged in size and lounging space for the audience, however it was unavailable for the December event.

The team also acknowledged the influence of bad weather, as turnout to the December event was low. Timing was important, as attendance was also affected by many other competing events through the Christmas period.



**Main Stage at Heritage Place.**

Photo by Maania Tealei.

# MEDIA COVERAGE

IGNITE received some great press coverage starting with a feature on RNZ's "[Standing Room Only](#)" with Lynn Freeman on Sunday 9 October. Lynn interviewed organisers Kimble Henderson and Mike Armstrong along with performer Lachi McBride, whose most recent single was sampled for the interview and subsequently debuted in full on RNZ a week or so later.

## First Friday to flood downtown Timaru with art and activity

Kellier MacDuff · 16:34, Nov 03 2022



JOHN BISSET/STUFF

Organisers Kimble Henderson and Maania Tealei putting the finishing touches on props that will form part of the Ignite Timaru First Friday event.

Artists, performers, musicians, retailers and hospitality operators will come together on Friday night to take over downtown Timaru for the inaugural Ignite Timaru First Friday event.

The first of two proposed Friday night events, the trial is part of CityTown, a council project dedicated to "reimagining and regenerating the city centre" with a budget of \$34.6m.

The first Fridays in November and December will see "a vibrant pulse of night-life" in the city centre, said Ignite Timaru event coordinator, theatre director Kimble Henderson.

"From each end of Stafford St, there will be creatives filling the streets," she said.

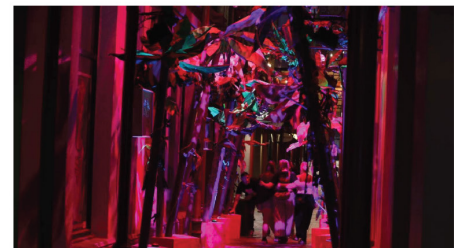
"There will also be exhibitions in various blank spaces around the city, a pop-up stage on George St, and a kidzone."

From jugglers to punk bands, theatre performances and pop up art galleries, four areas of the Timaru CBD – Creative Spark North, Creative Spark Central, George St Green Space and Creative Spark South – will host a variety of activities, exhibitions and performances from 5 to 9pm on Friday, November 4, and Friday, December 2.

Stuff. "[First Friday to flood downtown Timaru with art and activity.](#)" Nov 03 2022.

## Busy weekend of events across South Canterbury sees crowds out in force

Kellier MacDuff · 16:26, Nov 06 2022



JOHN BISSET/STUFF

Timaru's Royal Arcade got a jungle makeover as part of the First Friday event.

Ignite Timaru First Friday saw colour, movement and song flood Timaru's centre on Friday night, with different zones hosting creative performers, exhibitions, workshops and interactive displays.

Project co-ordinator Stephanie Symms said it was amazing to see how the community came out to support the inaugural event.



JOHN BISSET/STUFF

Idris Huddart, 11, and Judah Kenner, 13, take part in some open air games as part of First Friday.

Stuff. "[Busy weekend of events across South Canterbury sees crowds out in force.](#)"

Nov 06 2022.

She said making arts and culture more visible in the city had been a key proposal from residents when the company she works for, Gap Filler, and design agency Isthmus Group were brought on board the council's \$34.6m urban revitalisation effort, CityTown.

First Friday is one of a number of trials the project team are floating before committing to changes, with a second evening scheduled for December 2.



Feeling festive... There was dancing in the street at the previous First Fridays event in Timaru. PHOTO: MARK BALDWIN/STUFF

## First Fridays event gets a second outing

SHELLEY INON

Timaru will ignite once again with the second part of First Fridays.

The project, which is run by Ignite Timaru, explored ways in which Timaru could have a more lively and visible arts and culture scene. A more prominent arts scene was one of the top themes emerging from Timaru District Council's CityTown project. At the previous First Fridays event on November 4, more than 70 local creatives took part in a huge public showcase with

three stages, two pop-up art galleries in vacant shops, live mural making, a Kids Art Zone, shops and cafes organising their own art events, open studios, printmaking, dance, scrapbook and crafting workshops.

Artists were not the only ones benefiting from the initiative. At 'You're the Bomb' on the south end of Stafford St, where foot traffic is typically low, owner Luana Boninney held a creative workshop for the previous event where people could paint their own bath bomb for \$10. More than 70 bath bombs were painted in one

night and she is running the same event this Friday.

Project spokeswoman Stephanie Symms said local artist Wayne Patrick was not initially registered for First Fridays at last month's event, but he opened his studio and got such a great response with people coming through his gallery that he's now registered.

Localize on Stafford St owner Claudia Huerta showcased a dance exhibition in the car park in the front of her shop at the last event, but this time she is hosting a fashion show.

The Timaru Courier. "First Fridays event gets a second outing". Dec 01 2022.

## Downtown Timaru preparing for second Timaru First Fridays event

Rachael Comer • 14:09, Dec 01 2022



### First Friday



JOHN BISSET/STUFF

The inaugural Ignite Timaru First Friday event turned the downtown area into a lively arts precinct with music, dance, poetry, theatre and more on November 4.

Creatives are buzzing as they prepare for the second artistic takeover of downtown Timaru.

As part of a trial for CityTown, a council project dedicated to "reimagining and regenerating the city centre" with a budget of \$34.6m, the second First Fridays evening follows the success of November 4, when Timaru's CBD was packed with artists, performers, musicians, and retailers.

Ignite Timaru event co-ordinator and theatre director Kimble Henderson said organisers were looking forward to the second event, which would begin at 4pm on Friday with storytime at the town's library.

"We've taken feedback from the last Friday event and rejigged some things," Henderson said.

"There's quite a big lineup, and we're looking forward to it and hoping for good weather."

Stuff. "Downtown Timaru preparing for second Timaru First Fridays event." Dec 01 2022.

## DOWNTOWN TO BUZZ AGAIN



Preparing for Ignite Timaru tonight are, from left, Trish Okra, Maania Teale, Kimble Henderson, Helen Kerr (front) and Mike Armstrong. JOHN BISSET/STUFF

### Rachael Comer

Creatives are buzzing as they prepare for the second artistic takeover of downtown Timaru.

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Ignite Timaru event co-ordinator and theatre director Kimble Henderson said organisers were looking forward to the second event, which begins at 4pm today with storytime at the town's library.

"We've taken feedback from the last

Friday event and rejigged some things," Henderson said. "There's quite a big lineup, and we're looking forward to it and hoping for good weather."

As well as performers, pop-up stages, exhibitions, businesses staying open, and activities and visual art, Henderson said there would be a dark parade around the streets.

"They [parade participants] will have a map and be encouraging people to come round with them, singing songs and taking photos, and have fun," she said.

"We thought, we've got all the pretty stuff happening this weekend like Christmas

**TURN TO PAGE 2**

The Timaru Herald. "Downtown to Buzz Again." 2 Dec 2022.



CLAIRE ALLISON  
@timarucourier.co.nz

A Guinness World Record would be the icing on Millie Rose's cupcake. The Timaru cupcake designer drew a crowd outside her Stafford St boutique on Friday, who watched as she attempted to set a record for

the fastest time to decorate 100 cupcakes, the clock stopping at just 3 minutes and 18 seconds. The finished products disappeared equally quickly, with people offering a donation to Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand in exchange for a cupcake. The \$382.90 raised —

matched dollar for dollar by Mike Pero Real Estate Timaru to make \$765.60 — went to the St Andrew's Volunteer Fire Brigade's Firefighter Sky Tower Challenge fundraising efforts. Ms Rose's father is a member of the brigade.

Ready, set, go! Cupcake designer Millie Rose makes short work of icing 100 cupcakes in her Guinness World Record attempt on Friday.

Continued Page 2

The Timaru Courier. "No piece of cake" / "Icing on the cake" which was a part of the Ignite event. Dec 08 / Dec 09 2022.

## Chilly night dampened crowds, but Ignite trial deemed a success

Kailler MacDuff · 16:47, Dec 04 2022



ANGIE AMERIL MUNIER/STUFF  
Angie Foster, left, and Brent Campbell perform during the Ignite Timaru event on Friday.

Chilly weather may have curbed some of the turn-out for Ignite Timaru's First Friday event, but organisers were pleased with the evening nonetheless.

The second of two Friday night events held on the first Friday of November and December, the events are part of the Timaru District Council's \$34.6m CityTown project aimed at "reimagining and regenerating the city centre".

Everything from drumming circles to pole dancing demonstrations, workshops, exhibitions, poetry readings and chainsaw carving took place along Stafford St.

Ignite Timaru event co-ordinator Kimble Henderson said the evening went well given rain had threatened all day and the

Stuff. "Chilly night dampened crowds, but Ignite trial deemed a success." Dec 04 2022.

## Creative sector lends a hand as Timaru looks for ways to boost city centre

3:19 pm on 7 January 2023

Share this

Maree Mahony, Digital Journalist  
maree.mahony@rnz.co.nz



A cultural group perform at Ignite, an event that drew dozens of artists who performed on Timaru's main streets. Photo: Supplied / Maania Tealei Photography

Timaru is looking to the arts as one way to help revitalise its struggling city centre.

The council has adopted a CityTown strategy, put together by a design and urban planning agency Isthmus Group.

With a budget of \$34.6 million the council is looking ahead 10 to 15 years to try and ensure its residents find ways to use and enjoy their city centre, businesses prosper and ultimately more people will be attracted to settle in the city.

RNZ. "Creative sector lends a hand as Timaru looks for ways to boost city centre."

Jan 07 2023.



# PROMOTION

IGNITE was listed on EventFinda as well as the “What’s On” calendar for the South Canterbury District, managed by the South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce (over 8,000 visitors per month to the site). This was facilitated by Kimble Henderson as a local member of the Chamber.

The Chamber of Commerce were extremely supportive of the event, sharing a post on their Facebook page (3,700 followers) and sending event details to their 3,000 newsletter subscribers.

MyWay featured the event details in their October newsletter and placed an A4 poster inside the MyWay buses for the month of November.

Venture Timaru supported a digital billboard through GoMedia which went live for about 10 days prior to the November event.

A schedule of posts promoting IGNITE ran on the Timaru District Council Facebook page, and the CityTown web page was updated with information on participants and a downloadable programme. Council included event information in their weekly bulletin in the Timaru Courier which also featured full colour IGNITE advertisements in the lead up to each event.

In order to accommodate more frequent posting the local team started their own Facebook page for IGNITE Timaru. This was used to tag local community and interest groups and share posts from event participants with the intention of building a community hub for arts and culture events in the city. In the lead up to each First Fridays event the IGNITE Facebook page showed a daily reach of almost 8,000.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

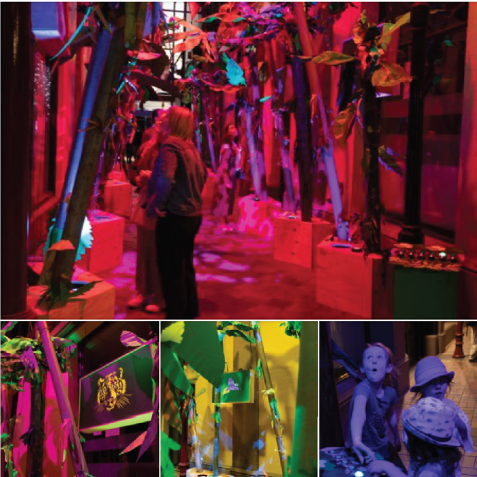
# Key snips.

**Vibrant NZ**  
8 November 2022

The Arcade Jungle lives on! Due to extremely popular demand with a capital D, the installation will remain in place until the late evening of Sunday 14th November! Come. Press the Buttons.

Massive props to the [Aigantighe Art Gallery](#) for supporting this project and [NB Architects](#) for providing the Power.

[Wuhootimaru](#) | [The Arcade Ballroom](#) | [Ignite Timaru](#) | [Timaru District Council](#) | [Timaru District Libraries](#) | [Alive Vibrant Timaru](#)



Ryan Reynolds and 28 others · 10 comments · 26 shares

Like Comment Share

All comments

Write a comment...

**Rache Hughes**  
Jessica Witika  
Like Reply 11 w

**Ash Ronald**  
Epic job!  
Like Reply 11 w

**Wuhootimaru** · Follow  
Wuhoooooo!  
Like Reply 11 w  
↳ Tash Johns replied · 3 replies

**Tash Johns**  
Is this still up?  
Thanks  
Like Reply 10 w  
↳ Wuhootimaru replied · 1 reply

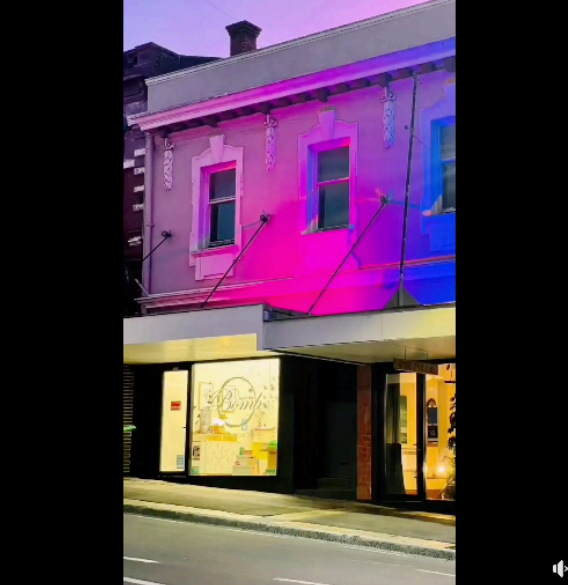
**Julie Layt**  
Tracey Layt they are extending it!  
Like Reply 11 w

**Blair Gunn**  
Amber Gunn  
Like Reply 11 w

Write a comment...

**You're The Bomb**  
November 5

This is something I have wanted to do for over two years!  
I had the MOST fabulous evening hosting my first Paint Your Own Bath Bomb workshop last night. I need to throw out a HUGE thank you to everyone who came along.  
And to my fantastic helper @kelsi\_lauren , I couldn't have done any of it without you! 🍷💛 See more



Isle of Green Nz, Aoraki Naturals and 40 others · 25 comments · 2 shares

Like Comment Share

Most relevant

Write a comment...

**Kyle Leslie**  
Top fan  
The kids had such a great time painting up there bath bombs. Yes we would love it if you could run it again  
Like Reply 5w

Both events were shared via many different businesses, groups and individual's facebook pages, gaining plenty of reach.

**Ignite TIMARU**



Art, performances, galleries, music, Kidz Art Zone and late night shopping in the CBD. **4 November & 2 December 5-9pm**

**Ignite Timaru**  
www.timarucitytown.co.nz/first-fridays

**Ignite Timaru**  
October 28

IGNITE TIMARU | 5-9pm Friday 4 Nov  
Please share... Only one week to go!

IGNITE Timaru is an arts and culture event that kicks off on Friday 4 November at 5pm with a fun-filled evening of in-store arts activities from workshops to performances, artist open studios, pop-up galleries and late night shopping. Nearby public areas come to life with live music and roving performers while families will love the Kidz Art Zone hosted by the Aigantighe Art Gallery. To see the Incred... See more

38 · 8 comments · 65 shares

Like Comment Share

Most relevant

**Ruth Low**  
loving this!  
Like Reply 6w

**Sandra Lindsay**  
Love the variety on offer!  
Like Reply 6w

**Felicity Markholm**  
NIKI DeLaway Ben Scarisbrick this is the one we're singing at!  
Like Reply 6w

**Bek-Jase Rae**  
Bugger working both nights  
Like Reply 6w

**Shirley Ashton**  
<https://www.timarucitytown.co.nz/>  
Like Reply 6w

**TIMARUCITYTOWN**  
November 4 — Timaru CityTown  
Like Reply 6w

Most Relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out.

Write a comment...



## KEY FINDINGS: RECURRING THEMES

Respondents from all of the audience groups were enthusiastic about the longer term benefits that a regular arts and culture event could offer and also highlighted some key areas for improvement.

Key sentiments included:

- Support for the educational benefits and importance of more visible arts and culture. Across the board people told us that there's broad community value to cultivating creativity in the city.
- Pleasure in seeing people out enjoying themselves. People loved the atmosphere and community spirit.
- A sense of pride in local talent.
- Enjoyment of the variety on offer at the event and the opportunity to engage with a diverse group of people.
- Disappointment that more shops weren't open, and related to this, a sense of disconnect between activities.
- Frustration that there was not enough promotion and that programming was unclear, making it difficult to plan what to see on the night with several comments that better wayfinding/signage was needed during the event.
- Disappointment at the lack of quick, to-go food options, pointing to the need for quick eats for families with young kids to eat whilst watching performances.
- Recognition that this was a great start to an event that could build over time.

## KEY FINDINGS: FEEDBACK BY AUDIENCE

### Arts Community

IGNITE offered an enormous boost to the local creative community and 73.5% of participants from the arts community felt that the event met their expectations well or very well.

Overwhelmingly the community selected Friday night as the best night to hold the event (94.3%) and most felt that it should be held quarterly (58.5%) while 22.6% felt it should be either once or twice a year.

Most participants said that they'd participate again (84.6%) whilst the remainder said they were unsure. None said no.

Many artists and performers enjoyed raising up the local art community and being part of the cultural revitalisation in Timaru, building a sense of pride and identity.

The benefits of a regular events most frequently cited were:

- Building community - connecting with other creatives that they didn't previously know and developing future opportunities for collaboration with other creatives and local businesses.
- Exposure to a wider audience which helped build confidence and incentive to create new works and build their profile potentially leading to more work opportunities, increased membership for arts organisations, and even transition from amateur to professional practitioner. This was reiterated for students/younger performers too.

- Showing the community value of creativity and building broad support for the arts in Timaru in an all-ages environment, reinforcing the value of arts with kids and providing a fun evening out for families.

Key outcomes for the arts community included: over 60 people per night attending printing workshops at Rach Winter's studio in the Tekapō Building which helped raise the profile of all the artists in the building; sold out November performances at the Aidan theatre; Lachi McBride, a local performer participated in an IGNITE radio feature on "Standing Room Only" with Lynn Freeman of RNZ and had his latest single played on the radio and has subsequently been featured on the cover of Rolling Stone AU/NZ as an upcoming Aotearoa artist; and artist Wayne Patrick who opened his studio during the November event saw significant visitor numbers and subsequently registered for the December event.

## **Business Community**

Many businesses were slow to participate despite significant outreach by the local team with 14 retail businesses and 4 food vendors registered across both events. Participating retail locations were spread from one end of Stafford to the other, leading to comments that the event didn't seem cohesive as there were long stretches where there was no event activity and no shops open.

Business respondents said they participated to attract new customers, try a new idea, collaborate and support a worthwhile creative event.

Businesses reported varying levels of success - only 3 out of 13 who responded said that the event brought in enough customers to warrant staying open. In conversation some business owners cited challenges like paying staff to open late amidst concerns of a limited payoff (especially south Stafford retailers), and limited staffing available.

Seven out of 13 respondents said they'd participate again, with 3 unsure.

Several of the businesses who put on a special event or activity around IGNITE and promoted it on their own channels had success. Spud Supreme had a sausage sizzle on the footpath, The Portal put on a dance party and a drum circle, You're the Bomb held a "paint a bath bomb" event (over 70 bombs painted in one evening) and Millie Rose boutique launched a Guinness World Record for cupcake icing that drew a major crowd to her store. However several participating businesses in south Stafford Street saw no or very few additional customers.

Sixty-two percent of respondents said that the event should happen quarterly and 77% said it should be on a Friday, although there were a few suggestions from this community and others that a Saturday when shops were already open could be more viable.

## Timaruvians

The main thing Timaruvians liked about IGNITE was the opportunity to support local artists and businesses. It was seen as a fun event with great performances and music that made people feel connected to the community and proud of Timaru.

Many enjoyed the activities for kids including the Kids Art Zone, library time and forest installation in the Royal Arcade as well as the variety of offerings.

Over 44% of respondents stayed 1-2 hours and 24% stayed 3-4 hours.

In terms of meeting expectations 43% said the event was what they expected, and 32% said it somewhat met expectations.

Feedback shows there's a need for programming to address how to make any future events feel more cohesive and connected in relation to the spread of activities, as well as find ways to promote the events and activities more widely to attract more people and help them plan their time when attending.

People didn't always understand what the event was about and many felt it was too spread out, not making the intended connection between linking the arts and local businesses.

Some people thought it would be like the night market and felt that there should be stalls for creative makers, although there was a comment that encountering a jeweller in the pop-up gallery at 181 Stafford was a



nice surprise. Overwhelmingly respondents wanted more art and craft stalls and more food options, followed by more retailers open and more performances. Many were disappointed that few local businesses stayed open and expressed an interest in being able to shop during the event.

Overall respondents felt that the event was something that they'd like to see more of with the understanding that it would improve over time.

## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

### **Aligning arts and culture with the business community**

A key idea being tested was whether an arts and culture event could support the local business community whilst simultaneously creating opportunities for creatives.

A free workshop was held with Audrey Baldwin who gave examples of creative collaborations, exhibitions and installations carried out as part of a successful run of "First Thursdays" events held for several years in Christchurch, with a view to showing the local community what could be achieved. This was well attended and opportunities for the business and creative communities to come together more would help build capacity for new relationships and innovative ways of working.

Low participation by retailers who were spread from one end of Stafford to the

other, left many people saying the event felt disjointed with pockets of activity in some places, and stretches where nothing was happening. This could be mitigated by more retailer participation with shops acting as wayfinding stops.

The success of the the creative workshop held by You're the Bomb located on south Stafford Street, the crowd gathered at the Guinness World Record attempt by Millie Rose for icing cupcakes and good attendance at the print workshops held at the Tekapō Building proves that creative ideas, well executed and promoted through independent channels, can turn even low traffic locations into a destination. However it's clear that it remains a challenge to attract pedestrian traffic to the south end of Stafford Street.

More work is needed to build capacity for new and creative ways of combining arts, culture and local business as well as how participants can build their own marketing and promotional channels. There's clear community appetite for a wide range of creativity and an event like IGNITE is most successful when retailers innovate - just keeping the doors open during the event is generally unlikely to draw more customers, so there's a need for creative mentorship and support for trying new things bearing in mind some of the barriers (like staffing and additional costs) for independent businesses. More time is needed to work with business chains who need to get head office permission to open late.

A regular event like IGNITE has the potential to act as a catalyst for locals to try new things, collaborate, network and take creative initiatives that then benefit the city as a whole in a way that grows over time. A small amount of Council support in the beginning can seed wider change and build independent community innovation in the long term.

## **Funding for creatives**

Funding support for artists and creatives is important. This trial uncovered a strong contingent of performers in Timaru, and to a lesser extent visual artists.

PJ Sisson was the only artist successful in applying to the one fund that was available at the time (the Minimal Donations Fund). However the grant had a major impact on his photography practice, allowing him to produce and show a series of street photographs that would have not been possible without the funding to cover hard costs.

These small amounts of money can seed exponential growth for local creatives as a way of building their creative practice and getting their work out into the community. Their success and the visibility of their work contributes to the community pride that makes a city a vital place to live, work and play and where young people want to stay.

One of the key issues for creatives is the difficulty in receiving financial recognition for their contribution to the local community.

This trial offered a nominal honorarium to performers in recognition of the costs they incurred to perform and in acknowledgement that their performances were central to the success of the event. Visual artists theoretically have an opportunity to sell their work, although practically this often requires considerable investment over a long period of time. More support is needed to scaffold artists' capacity and build their ability to confidently perform, exhibit and sell their work.

There are some major barriers to accessing Council funding, and improved application processes and focused support for creatives could create significant opportunities for the local creative community to grow in ways that meet CityTown's key outcomes.

## **Temporary Public Art**

The 4 November event coincided with a very successful independent mural event that was organised by local group Alive Vibrant. More support could be given by TDC to independent initiatives like this. It has been noted that the public art in Timaru is quite static, with infrequent new works; however, there is provision within the public art policy for temporary public art. Support for a variety of temporary public artworks would contribute to a dynamic streetlife and opportunities for both emerging and established artists in the District. Similarly, the Aigantighe installed the much-loved jungle installation in the Royal Arcade, which one community member suggested could be a recurring event.

## Food Vendors

Spud Supreme and Sweet Cloud had successful experiences, and it's clear that event-goers felt that there wasn't enough on offer in the way of food.

Mobile food vending is a source of tension with restaurants, however it was clear that during IGNITE there was an unmet customer demand for quick, takeaway options not fulfilled by local sit-down restaurants. The sausage sizzle on the footpath put on by Spud Supreme shows that there are opportunities for restaurants to take a mobile approach to food vending at events. The availability of quick food options is central to the success of a family-friendly event such as IGNITE especially if held over dinner time. If (as we believe) we want more events taking place in the central city, this will be an issue that requires some attention.



**Crowd gathers outside Millie Rose.**  
Photo by Maania Tealei.

## WHAT NEXT?

Feedback from IGNITE makes it clear that the arts play a major role in the social and economic wellbeing of Timaruvians. Arts and culture are a source of local pride, and a key contributor to the appeal of the city as a place to visit, live, work and play.

A key recommendation is to facilitate a community-led, strategic approach that will elevate the capacity and independent reach of creatives in Timaru for the benefit of the wider community. Supporting the ability of artists, arts groups and organisers to build their networks and undertake independent events is an effective and efficient way of making the arts more visible and accessible to the wider community.

Specific actions include:

- Create a single point of contact in Council to help the creative community navigate Council processes for local creatives looking to create arts experiences. This could be a Community Arts Coordinator role with the longer term vision of establishing a district Arts Council and developing and implementing a Timaru District Arts Strategy.
- Facilitate community conversations about the future of the IGNITE brand and possible funding and management options for a quarterly First Fridays event and/or annual arts festival.
- Support the community to continue building the IGNITE Facebook page as a community resource. An immediate option would be to fund a few hours a week for a local creative

to grow the IGNITE Facebook page as a vibrant hub showcasing the full range of creative happenings in Timaru and continuing to promote all local arts activity.

- Consider mechanisms for incentivising the temporary use of vacant shop spaces. Vacant shops detract from the appeal of the central city. Explore incentives for shop owners to allow pop-up/temporary leases especially as creative activations during events. Activating vacant spaces for events is an alternative to craft stalls and a way of creating new lower risk opportunities for independent vendors.
- Leverage the expertise and connections of the Aigantighe Art Gallery, which is already a major force in the community, to bolster opportunities for local creatives both in and beyond the gallery. The success of the Aigantighe’s jungle installation in Royal Arcade - extended for several additional days at the request of the community - is evidence of the value of this approach.
- Likewise leverage the skills and resources of the library and South Canterbury Museum to elevate and connect the great arts and culture work that is already happening through these organisations.
- Strengthen the connections between parksplanning and arts and culture planning and make linkages here to support funding for public art and installations.
- Support initiatives that involve mentoring young and emerging creatives, connecting them with local artists, performers and organisations and offering opportunities

for them to grow creatively. IGNITE showed that Timaru is home to a number of young and hopeful talents who respond positively to development opportunities and encouragement. This is important for the longer term retention of young creative people in the District.

- Create opportunities for artworks to be developed under the Public Art Policy, including local initiatives for temporary public art - this could include murals, street art and installations and incentivise and support central city building owners to participate.
- Consider Royal Arcade as a site for regular temporary public art installations and install more accessible power, rigging and other infrastructure to facilitate this.
- Identify current Council funding streams that would support the growth of the creative sector, and undertake outreach to the arts community about what's possible with the range of programmes currently available.
- Implement streamlined processes for funding applications using methods that lower barriers to access. In the near term, develop specific funding streams to support community-led arts events and installations - these should accommodate small low-risk grants to support individual art practices and opportunities for growth as well as grants to support local arts organisations develop their own programmes and events.
- Strengthen the connection between the arts and local businesses. Events support is already part of the Venture Timaru mandate

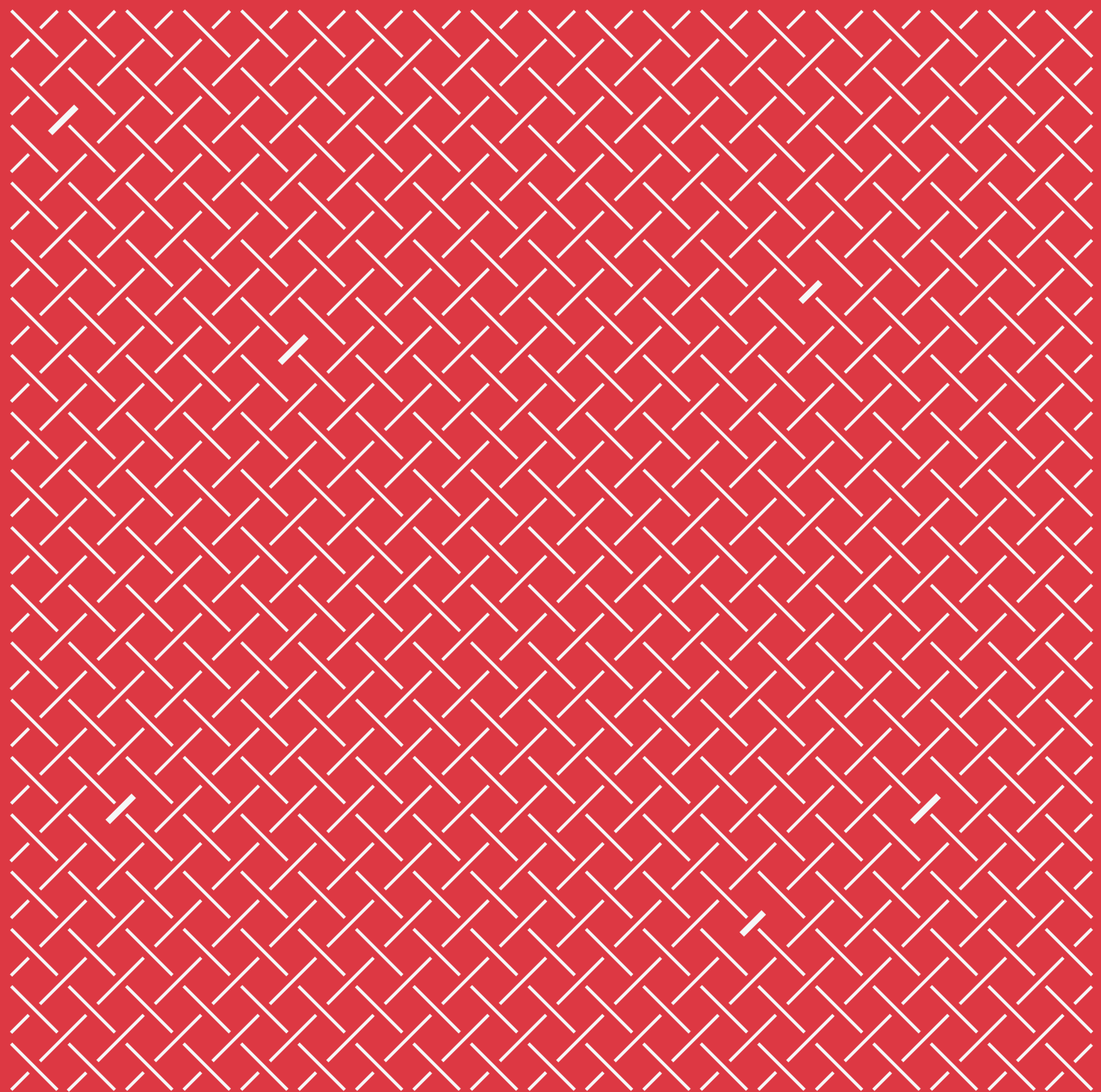


which could facilitate connections between business and the arts community in a mentorship capacity, supporting the growth of the creative sector. This could include, for example, coordination with other groups like SCOFF and the Artisan Market who already put on several large markets each year that include food vendors and craft stalls which were clearly missed at IGNITE. Venture Timaru could play a supporting role by contributing marketing expertise and facilitating business connections for creatives.

- Create more arts/cultural spaces - this could be a central community art space, possibly aligned with the Aigantighe. The local team advocated for a main street location focussed on community workshops, exhibitions and pop-ups that could function as a destination encouraging people into the city centre. The Kids Adventure Zone put on by the Aigantighe in the Preen space was popular and could also support gallery programming.
- Engage with restaurants and undertake a review around mobile food trading in the central city. This includes current food retailers with a permanent location who may want to explore mobile options during events.
- Develop appropriate civic space to accommodate diverse performances by large local cultural groups, bands and choirs as well individual performers with access to power, shelter and seating options. This could be done in a more temporary manner to begin with either at Strathallan Corner or Heritage Place and then longer-term become part of the city's infrastructure plan.



**Te Aitarakihi Kapa Haka Group.**  
Photo by Maania Tealei.



**TIMARU  
CITYTOWN**  
× TE HOKINGA KI TE NGĀKAU