



FEATURE FILM FINISHING GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

September 2026

If you have any accessibility requirements or require this information in a different format, please contact:
production@nzfilm.co.nz

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga, The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) invests in talented filmmakers and exciting New Zealand films to be enjoyed in Aotearoa New Zealand, and around the world.

The NZFC Feature Film Finishing Grant supports the resourcefulness and tenacity of New Zealand-based filmmakers who have made their feature film independently, and have a plan for reaching their intended audience. You can apply for a non-recoupable Feature Film Finishing Grant of up to \$60,000 (the **Grant**).

WHO CAN APPLY

You are eligible to apply for the Grant if:

- you are the director and/or producer of the feature film, and you (or your company) have all necessary rights to produce and distribute your feature film; **and**
- the individuals who hold the roles of director and producer of the feature film are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents; **and**
- your feature film has not received NZFC Production or Post-Production funding; and
- the feature film for which you are applying for the Grant:
 - *Distributor Pathway*: has a recognised distributor attached for a theatrical release in New Zealand; OR
 - *Festival Pathway*: has been invited to screen at:
 - the New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF), DocEdge, Rotorua Indigenous Film Festival, Māoriland, or Resene Architecture and Design Film Festival; OR
 - a prestigious international film festival (please see this [list](#) for an indication of these festivals, although this list is not exhaustive) and you have a pathway to a theatrical release in New Zealand **and**

- your feature film is a scripted film or unscripted/documentary that:
 - is between 75 and 110 minutes long; **and**
 - is at a late rough cut, fine cut or locked cut stage; **and**
 - has a total production budget of less than \$1,000,000; **and**
 - has significant New Zealand content (please read the New Zealand content information sheet for more detail); **and**
- you have no deliverables overdue to the NZFC.

Māori Content

If your project has significant [Māori content](#), you will need Māori involvement commensurate with the level of that content.

For Māori content queries, please email production@nzfilm.co.nz to arrange a discussion.

Please note that if your application is successful, the legal entity that is the rights holder for the feature film must be the contracting party to the grant agreement.

WHAT THIS GRANT CAN SUPPORT

You may apply to receive a grant of up to \$60,000 to finish your feature film.

If you require more than \$60,000 to finish your feature film, you may be eligible for Post-Production Funding instead of this Grant: see more information [here](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Contact the NZFC Funding Team for a pre-application hui

Before applying for the Grant, please contact the NZFC Funding Team to discuss your feature film and eligibility. Email production@nzfilm.co.nz to arrange a pre-application hui.

You may submit your application using the [NZFC's application portal](#) at any time after this hui.

Please note there is an estimated six-week turnaround for decisions from receipt of an eligible application.

WHAT MATERIALS YOU MUST SUBMIT

Your application must include the following materials:

- a working link for assessors to view the cut; **and**
- a logline, one-page synopsis and director's vision notes (up to 2 pages); **and**



- short biographies of the director, writer, and producer, and working links to prior work that demonstrate the team's ability to successfully finish this feature film; **and**
- producer notes addressing the ambitions for the feature film, a plan for reaching the intended audience, and any supporting notes from your New Zealand distributor (if applicable) with estimated box office figures; **and**
- if self-distributing, a comprehensive distribution plan; **and**
- a summary of the chain of title (note we may require you to provide chain of title documents); **and**
- if your feature film has significant social or cultural impact, include a summary of your consultation and/or consideration of the cultural or social elements portrayed in your feature film, and how these have been represented; **and**
- the full post-production budget; **and**
- the proposed overall post-production schedule.

Additionally, you must identify the most important ambition for your feature film, and include this in your application (select one or two of the below options):

- **Local audience appeal** – the potential to reach a large audience here in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Commercial** – the potential to be well supported by market with strong international sales and the ambition to reach international audiences as well as local.
- **Critical** – the potential for critical acclaim and film festival success, being a provocative or cathartic cinema experience, reliant on a unique voice, with cultural specificity and artistic excellence.
- **Innovation** – the potential to forge new pathways in film through technologies, methodologies, audience experiences and/or filmmaker talent.
- **Impact** – the potential to make a significant social, cultural or political impact.

Remember this Grant is contestable, so tell us what really excites you about your project, why you have made it now, and what you hope its impact will be.

HOW WE ASSESS YOUR APPLICATION

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

We give priority to strong feature films with a solid cut, and to teams who clearly articulate their ambitions for the feature film. As part of our assessment, we will consider how your feature film contributes to some or all of the NZFC's Strategic Objectives, being:

- **Creative excellence, commercial excellence** (or both, depending on your ambitions for the feature film).



- ***Authentic and diverse films*** that are ***uniquely of Aotearoa*** and ***maximise audiences*** for New Zealand films.
- ***Strategic collaboration*** to promote ***employment and productivity*** in the New Zealand film industry.
- ***Capability development*** with ***diversity, equity and inclusion*** at the core.

If your project has Māori content, we will also consider intellectual property ownership, benefit sharing, and capacity-building in line with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Ao Māori.

We assess each application taking into account these criteria, the materials provided, your team, the range of projects we are supporting across all funding programmes, and the funding availability at the time you apply.

How AI Use is Considered in Funding Applications. In your funding application, please outline any proposed use of AI. This will help inform our assessment. When AI use is proposed, we will be guided by our [AI Guiding Principles](#) in assessing your application. You should ensure that your materials address at least the following key factors:

- **Cultural authenticity** - Use of AI must respect te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, avoid misrepresentation, and include appropriate cultural consultation.
- **Creative integrity** - Use of AI should enhance - not replace - human creativity, supporting storytelling while preserving artistic vision.
- **Transparency** - It is essential that you disclose about how AI will be used in the project and consider its impact on audience (particularly for unscripted projects).
- **Ethical implications and industry impact** - It is your responsibility to ensure that the use of AI meets all relevant legal obligations. You should also consider how the use of AI affects the broader sector.

The assessment criteria we apply to your application may change from time to time in the NZFC's sole discretion, but all decisions will be consistent with the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978.

By submitting an application for this Grant you agree to these Guidelines and our [Code of Conduct](#).

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

If your application meets the eligibility criteria, the NZFC Funding Team and/or NZFC external assessors will assess your application, with at least two people viewing the cut.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, we will let you know as early as possible.

DECISIONS

- Decisions are made by the Head of Funding.
- Funding for a Grant is competitive, discretionary and all decisions are final.
- NZFC will notify applicants in writing of the outcome of their application.



- If your application is unsuccessful you (and your team) will not be able to reapply for this Grant in respect of your feature film (except in exceptional circumstances, at the NZFC's sole discretion).

BRANDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If your application is successful, you will be required to comply with the NZFC's [Style and Accreditation Guidelines](#) as part of your feature film's release (or as otherwise agreed by the NZFC).

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

We will use reasonable efforts to keep the information you provide confidential. Please note that any information you give to us can be requested under the Official Information Act 1982. If we get such a request, we can talk to you before responding.

The NZFC may publicly disclose the following information relating to a successful funding application: the production title, the producer(s), the director(s), the writer(s), the type of funding, and the amount.

Applicants must obtain consent from third parties before including their personal information in an application, as required by [NZFC's Privacy Policy](#). Applicants must also comply with the notification requirements for that personal information as described under the heading *How do we collect personal information?* (in the subsection *Notification if you provide us with personal information about another individual*).

You are encouraged to read these guidelines carefully as they are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible.

If you have any further questions, please email us at production@nzfilm.co.nz
Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice to strengthen your application.

CHANGE LOG: September 2026

Version	Section	What was changed
Sep 2026	Confidentiality and Privacy	• Updated wording.
May 2026	Who Can Apply	• Updated link to Film festival list
May 2026	How To Apply	• New AI use disclosure and assessment guidance. • Resource links updated.

