

October 2026

NZFC NEWSLETTER

Kia ora,

Welcome to the latest from NZFC, with news from our screen sector at home and overseas.

Congratulations to producers Alix Whittaker and Angela Cudd, who have been selected for SGIFF Pro, the Singapore International Film Festival's industry programme, later this month. More on that below.

Ghazaleh Gol and Max Currie have been working with Lantern Pictures through our Company Placements initiative. Max says he's come home "sharper and hungrier to write", while Ghazaleh describes learning from showrunner Sarah Lambert as "absolutely invaluable". A new placement opportunity with Madman opens for applications shortly. Details are on our [website](#).

New Zealand stories have also been recognised internationally. Rebecca Tansley's *Tenor: My Name Is Pati* won the Grand Prix at the 63rd Golden Prague International Television Festival, and *Let's Settle This!* has been named a National Winner for Best Short Form at the 2026 Asian Academy Creative Awards.

And finally, we want to acknowledge the announcement made last week about NZFC's Core Funding Programme. The programme, which provides ongoing operational funding to 10 screen organisations and guilds, will conclude when current contracts finish on 30 June 2027.

We recognise the affected organisations have contributed greatly to the sector over many years and the significance of this change. The Core Funding Programme has existed in different forms for more than two decades. In that time,

the screen sector has evolved and its needs have changed.

The future aspirations of our industry are best imagined by the whole sector. To support that, NZFC has offered to fund independently facilitated, sector-led discussions about future opportunities for coordination, collaboration and collective advocacy.

You can read the full media release [here](#).

“Mai i te puna whakaaro, ka koropupū ake te oranga o te iwi.”

From a spring of collective thinking and shared knowledge flow opportunities for wellbeing.



Big Girls Don't Cry in cinemas now

Paloma Schneideman's debut feature, *Big Girls Don't Cry*, is in cinemas now and follows 14-year-old Sid over one transformative summer.

The film had its world premiere in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at the Sundance Film Festival. It has also screened at SXSW, where it was named a Festival Favourite, BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival and TIFF Next Wave. In June, it won the Grand Prix at the Nouvelles Vagues International Film Festival in Biarritz, France. Presenting the award, jury president, Kristen Stewart said she loved the film “with my whole heart.”

Big Girls Don't Cry is the first feature film to emerge from Jane Campion's *A Wave in the Ocean* programme, the

initiative created by the two-time Academy Award-winning filmmaker to support emerging New Zealand directors. Campion also serves as an executive producer on the film, which was supported by NZFC through script development funding and feature film production investment.

Screen attraction

NZFC hosted *KIA ORA LA*, a programme of activity in Los Angeles to promote New Zealand's screen industry to Hollywood decision-makers. Twenty-two New Zealand screen businesses took part in a series of hosted networking events and screenings with key Hollywood executives, producers and LA-based New Zealanders working in the industry.

Recent changes to the international rebate have been very well received, with the first independent film under the new criteria now on the ground in Auckland in pre-production. Two larger-budget productions have also been greenlit for early 2027, bringing a large number of jobs and career opportunities to New Zealand's industry. Aotearoa is also in strong contention for several other projects currently, with more news on this expected soon.

New Zealand talent in focus

New Zealand producers Alix Whittaker and Angela Cudd have been selected to participate in the Singapore International Film Festival's Industry Pro programme later this month.

With NZFC support, Alix will join 12 producers from across the Asia-Pacific region for the Asian Producers' Network, a six-day intensive for independent producers led by acclaimed producer Fran Borgia.

Also attending with NZFC support, Angela is one of just eight producers from around the world selected for the Pitching Forum International Strand. Led by Séverine Tibi, the programme includes curated one-on-one meetings with international market partners.

Meanwhile, the 17th CNEX Chinese Doc Forum has wrapped with New Zealand documentary *Every Body Speaks* winning China's Best (IFG Third Prize) and US\$5,000. The project, which received the CNEX Award at this year's Doc Edge Festival, was selected to participate in the forum. Producer Paula Whetu Jones attended the event and was also selected for the CNEX Academy's Producer Lab.

A milestone for *Mārama*



Mārama has been selected as New Zealand's Official Submission for Best International Feature Film for the 99th Oscars®.

Directed by Taratoa Stappard in his feature debut, the film continues its international journey following screenings at major festivals this year.

Singapore opens funding call for feature film co-productions

Applications are now open for the Singapore Infocomm Media Development Authority's (IMDA) 2026 Feature Film Call-for-Proposals.

New Zealand producers with a Singapore co-production partner may be eligible to apply through the Asia Co-Productions and Global Co-Productions streams.

Share your short film success

Has your NZFC-funded short film screened at festivals in Aotearoa or overseas? We'd love to hear about it.

We're building a better picture of where NZFC-funded shorts travel, so we can understand their reach and share filmmakers' successes with the wider screen community.

If your short has screened at festivals in recent years, please email the details to nacoya.anderson@nzfilm.co.nz

Subject: *Short Film Festival Journey: [Film Title]*

Please include:

- Film title
- Festival screening date (month/year)
- Festival name
- Festival programme or section
- Any awards received

If your film has screened at more than one festival, please list each one.

New Zealand and India ratify Free Trade Agreement

New Zealand and India have formally ratified their Free Trade Agreement, which takes effect on 20 October 2026. India is one of New Zealand's official film co-production partners, and the strengthened relationship between the two countries creates new opportunities to deepen connections between our screen industries and support future collaboration.

Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision

When your NZFC-funded feature is delivered to us, our Funding Team will now also check in with you about your plans for lodging it with Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, the audiovisual archive of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We're developing a guide and a formal process to make this easier, and we'll share them once they're ready. In the meantime, it's worth starting to think about archiving as part of your delivery planning.

Ngā Taonga holds more than 800,000 items, preserving the taonga of today for tomorrow.



Funding decisions

[Industry Development Funding](#), 2026/27 financial year to date

Strand 1:

- **Understory 2027** Immersive Story Development. A process for creative teams to see, feel and step into the living story material of their screenplay. Led by Brita McVeigh.
- **Directors Workshop with Niki Caro** A five-day intensive workshop with Niki Caro focused on craft, communication, collaboration and leadership for debut feature filmmakers in advanced development.
- **The Approach 2027** Helping our most promising short filmmakers chart tangible pathways from shorts to their first feature. Led by Rob Sarkies.
- **MIFF Accelerator Lab and Express 2027** This supports New Zealand filmmakers to attend the Accelerator Lab - an acclaimed talent 'hothouse' for emerging short film directors to hone their skills, craft and contacts as part of their transition to feature filmmaking. Facilitated and supported by DEGANZ.
- **First Market II** A professional development initiative supporting and mentoring up to five emerging New Zealand film producers to attend their first international financing market, centred on the 37

South Film Market at the Melbourne International Film Festival. Led by Vicky Pope.

- **Show Me Shorts Short Film Lab 2027** The Short Film Lab is an intensive script development workshop for short filmmakers, with ongoing mentoring for all eight participants and the opportunity to fund the production of two of the films.
- **Doc Edge Pitch Programme** This programme invites creators of compelling factual screen projects to pitch their ideas to local and international industry decision-makers. Selected teams receive mentoring, industry access, and networking opportunities during the annual Doc Edge Festival.
- **Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab** A kaupapa Māori-led development programme that empowers Māori and Indigenous filmmaking teams to strengthen their projects and prepare for financing.

Strand 2:

- **PISA Block Battle** A practical directing programme that gives Pacific directors a rare opportunity to refine their director's voice using the fundamental craft of blocking - strengthening how they interpret a script, communicate with actors and camera, and translate creative intention to screen through repeated practice, peer comparison and direct industry feedback.
- **Toward Authenticity: Wonder, Risk, Story** Petra Brett-Kelly and the Critics deliver a programme steered by the logline of their film *Crocodile*, 'Dreaming is Our Rebellion'. It captures the energy, enthusiasm and can-do spirit they hope to bring to storytellers across Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Private Investment Summit** WIFT NZ presents Private Investment Summit – In Practice, a three-day intensive programme for established New Zealand producers focused on unlocking private capital for screen production.

Feature Film Development Funding, August 2026 – September 2026

- *Aroha (FKA Forget Me Not)*, Katie Wolfe, Rachel Jean, Tim Balme
- *Crooks*, Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu, Carthew Neal
- *Finding Eden (working title)*, Rebecca Tansley, Catherine Madigan, Sue Marshall
- *Holes*, Kingi Rummler
- *Hūkerikeri*, Tainui Tukiwaho, Alix Whittaker, Kahukore Bell
- *I'm Not Alone Anymore*, Chris Dudman, Bridget Hackshaw

- *Man Alone*, Esteban Jaramillo-Ulloa, Simon London, Emma Mortimer, John Sibanda
- *Ovlov*, Tom Furniss, Luke Sharpe
- *Painmaker*, Judah Finnigan, Rachel Forman, Olivia Shanks
- *The Desert Road*, Ella Gilbert, Vicky Pope, Poppy Serano
- *The Offing*, Amy Roberts, Jessica Hobbs, Carthew Neal, Charlotte Walls
- *Tiny Ghosts*, Paloma Schneidmann

[Feature Film Production and Post-Production Investment](#), 2026/27 financial year to date

- *When The Goats Came*, Arthur Gay, Rali Chaouni, Ilai Amar, Alix Whittaker, Alex Polunin, Laura Ganotis
- *The Power of Two*, Arani Cuthbert, Felicity Morgan-Rhind

Funding deadlines

[He Kauahi Catalyst Short Film Funding](#)

- Deadline: Monday 12 October, 1pm

[Feature Film Production Investment](#) and [He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Production Investment](#)

- Deadline: Monday 9 November, 1pm
- Board dates: 16 and 17 February 2027

[Company Placement – Madman](#)

- Open for applications: Monday 19 October
- Deadline: Monday 9 November, 1pm

Always Open

- [Feature Film Development Funding](#)
- [Feature Film Finishing Grant](#)
- [Filmmaker International Travel Grant](#)
- [Expression of Interest: Project-Based Placements](#)

Key Updates

[Filmmaker International Travel Grant – European Film Market \(EFM\)](#)

- Open for applications: Monday 2 November
- Deadline: Monday 16 November, 1pm
- Decisions will be announced on Friday 27 November

Funding resources

- [Browse past funding decisions](#)
- [Apply for NZFC funding](#)

Kōrero mai Let's talk

Get in touch →



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