

August 2026

NZFC NEWSLETTER



Funding issue

Kia ora,

As the New Zealand International Film Festival makes its way around the country, it's a timely reminder of the creativity, ambition and talent that exists across our Aotearoa. Funding team members Morgan Waru and Jo Smith recently spent a few days in Christchurch and Dunedin and greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet some of that South Island talent in person. Meeting you face to face helps us remain connected to the filmmaking community across the country and our conversations with you help inform our work. We're keen to continue the kōrero, below are details of our upcoming in-person morning teas.

Next month, Annie Murray, Philippa Mossman and I, and a cohort of New Zealand filmmakers will be heading to Toronto for the inaugural TIFF Market. The market runs alongside the Toronto International Film Festival, where we're excited to see New Zealand storytelling represented this year.

The Centrepiece programme will host the world premiere of God Bless You, Mr Kopu, the debut feature from writer-director Alex Liu and producer Roxi Bull. A New Zealand-Australian co-production, the project has already generated significant industry interest and reflects the exciting breadth of contemporary New Zealand filmmaking.

Also premiering at TIFF is Tenzing, an international production filmed in Nepal and New Zealand, including at Aoraki Mt Cook, The Remarkables and Mount Head. Supported through the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate - International and produced by local superstar Desray Armstrong, its selection further highlights New Zealand's contribution to globally significant screen storytelling and its appeal as a world-class production destination.

If you're planning to attend TIFF this year for either the Festival or the Market, please feel free to drop by the NZFC booth, and let us know you're going at marketing@nzfilm.co.nz.

And lastly, following the next He Kauahi Catalyst Short Film round, we'll be reintroducing a Short Film Pod initiative that reboots an Executive Producer-led funding model designed to support emerging filmmaking talent. Along with many of New Zealand's established producers, I ran one of these Pods (many moons ago). It's a great way to support a wide range of emerging filmmakers while giving more experienced producers the chance to mentor new talent and develop their own skills. More information and a call for Expressions of Interest will be released later this month.

Nāku iti nei,

Ainsley Gardiner *Head of Funding*

Funding deadlines

[Feature Film Production Investment \(November 2026\)](#) and [He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Production Investment](#)

- Application deadline: Monday 14 September, 1pm
- Board meeting: 24-25 November
- This calendar year, there will also be a mid-November deadline for consideration at our 16-17 February Board Meeting.

[He Kauahi - Catalyst Short Film Funding](#)

- Application deadline: Monday 12 October, 1pm

[Industry Development Fund – Strands 1 & 2](#)

- Application deadline: Monday 24 August, 1pm

Always Open

- [Feature Film Development Funding](#)
- [Feature Film Finishing Grant](#)
- [Filmmaker International Travel Grant](#)

NZFC x Berlinale EFM Toolbox

We're excited to be partnering with Berlinale EFM Toolbox to offer one New Zealand producer the opportunity to participate in this highly regarded international programme. Aimed at emerging producers from underrepresented communities, EFM Toolbox supports participants to grow their industry knowledge and accelerate their careers, culminating in an in-person workshop at Berlinale 2027. For more information, click [here](#).

[Deadline for Expressions of Interest](#): Wednesday 19 August

Singapore International Film Festival Pro Pitching Forum

We're exploring the possibility of supporting attendance at the Singapore International Film Festival's Pro Pitching Forum, led by acclaimed producer Séverine Tibi. Designed to foster international co-production opportunities, the forum brings together producers and industry decision-makers to discuss projects, strengthen pitching strategies and explore potential partnerships.

Taking place from **25-30 October 2026**, the programme is open to producers with feature film projects in development.

We're keen to gauge interest from established New Zealand producers. If you have a feature film in development and would be interested in participating, please get in touch at development@nzfilm.co.nz.

Click [here](#) for more information.

NZFC Wellington office update

We've now settled into our new office at 2–12 Allen Street. As the organisation has reduced in size over recent years, the larger office space we previously occupied was no longer the right fit for our needs. The move brings us into a smaller workplace that's better suited to how we work today, allowing the Pōneke team to stay focused on delivering NZFC's core functions and supporting filmmakers, stakeholders and the wider screen sector.

The new office provides a welcoming environment for meetings, workshops and day-to-day engagement with the screen sector.

If you're passing through Wellington, we'd love to welcome you in for a coffee and a chat.

Filmmaker Cuppa Teas

We're looking forward to catching up with filmmakers at our upcoming morning teas. Come along for a coffee, connect with the Funding team and fellow filmmakers, and share what's happening in your corner of the industry.

Wellington

4 September, 10.00am-12.00pm
NZ Film Commission, Level 1, 2-12 Allen Street, Te Aro

Auckland

11 September, 10.00am-12.00pm
Location TBC

To RSVP for either event, please click [here](#).

Other industry opportunities

Aho Shorts Development Lab – applications have opened. Deadline: Monday 7 September, 5pm. Head to [Caravan Carpark Film](#) for the full details.

[Animation Matchmaking Online Series](#) – this online series returns for 2026, bringing together writers, directors, producers, animators, studios, and emerging creators from Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world to spark new animation collaborations.

Delivered over one month through the Animation Matchmaking Online Web App, the programme features selected Tuesday evening and Saturday sessions with New Zealand and international speakers, roundtables and 1:1 speed networking. Accessible from your home or studio, wherever you are in the world. You don't need to attend every session but register by **17 August**.

Sustainability Manager Training and Placement Programme with Greenlit – click [here](#) for more information.

Te Puna Matarau | The Canterbury Screen Industry Association's [Waitaha Canterbury Script Accelerator 2027](#) – this programme supports emerging and mid-career screenwriters to progress their feature film projects towards the next stage of production. Through 1:1 mentorship and development of their feature film script, this programme supercharges their development and production journey. To be eligible, applicants must be based in the Waitaha Canterbury region. Applications open now, closing Friday 30 October.

Creating insights about the screen workforce



NZFC is proud to announce the launch of a new initiative in partnership with NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho to gather safe, accessible, accurate, and respectful data about the screen workforce.

Te Pae Matarau – The Everyone Project Aotearoa is a survey tool that monitors the make-up of the New Zealand screen sector workforce. Its objectives are to provide insightful data for and about those who participate in the sector to inform future policy, research and funding decisions.

With this tool we're aiming to address a significant knowledge gap – there's currently no consistent collection of screen workforce data across roles and productions. And data is a powerful tool for advocacy, strategy and decision-making.

The agencies, working with an experienced provider who has already rolled out a version of this project in Australia, have taken great care to ensure privacy is paramount. We'll also be publishing (de-identified) workforce insights, giving those who complete the survey access to valuable information about the screen sector workforce and the industry they help shape.

Te Pae can be understood as a gathering, group or collective of people. Matarau refers to something that is multi-faceted or many-sided. In this context, it reflects the diversity of people, roles, skills, experiences and data across the media sector. Together, Te Pae Matarau speaks to the collective view of many people who make up the sector – a way of seeing and understanding everyone more clearly.

Key information

Production companies will be required to register their project with *Te Pae Matarau* as a result of funding from any of the three participating agencies. In the future, screen sector workers who are not currently attached to a project will be able to create their own logins and complete individual surveys, but for now this feature is not currently available. Cast and crew will be invited to complete the survey when they are attached to a project that has registered with Te Pae Matarau.

To learn more, click [here](#). By participating in **Te Pae Matarau – The Everyone Project Aotearoa** you are contributing to important, ongoing data that will ultimately be used to benefit the sector.

Funding decisions

Feature Film Development Funding, May-July 2026

- *Blessed Are The Sinners*, Celestina Sumbly, Thomas Coppell
- *Camping*, Sophie Roberts, Tom Sainsbury, Chris Parker, Brynley Stent, Kura Forrester, Georgina Conder, Carthene Neal
- *Paradise*, Tanu Gago, Carthene Neal
- *Poor People With Money*, Michelle Savill
- *Refuge*, Arlo Green, Max Currie, Craig Gainsborough-Waring
- *Tandem*, Pennie Hunt, Alex Reed
- *Tautua*, Tuki Laumea, Cleo Fraser
- *The Rebirth of Barbara Luggate*, Alix Whittaker, Ilai Amar, Jackie van Beek
- *When the Goats Came*, Arthur Gay, Rali Chaouni, Ilai Amar, Alix Whittaker, Alex Polunin, Laura Ganotis
- *Where The River Runs*, Yamin Tun, Jodie Hillock, Sharlene George, Rouzie Hassanova, Rickylee Russell-Waipuka

Click [here](#) for past funding decisions and [here](#) for a link to the Application Portal.



New Zealand Film Commission
PO Box 11 456, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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