



New Zealand
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Our Year in Review

2024–25

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● Cover image: Anapela Polataivao (Mareta Percival) with the school choir ensemble in Tinā (2025). (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)



Tinā is the most successful New Zealand film since *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* and has become the fifth-highest grossing New Zealand film of all time.

- (L–R) Antonia Robinson (Sophie) and Anapela Polataivao (Mareta Percival) in *Tinā* (2025). (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)

FOREWORD

The past year has been marked by remarkable achievements across New Zealand's screen sector, with local stories captivating audiences at home and abroad, and our creative talent continuing to shine on the global stage. These successes reflect the strength, innovation, and resilience of our industry. We acknowledge the challenges faced in the screen sector both domestically and internationally and continue to focus on amplifying New Zealand's unique voices, supporting a robust and innovative industry ecosystem, and advancing our cultural identity on the global stage.



The opening week of *Tinā* was the third biggest in local film history, and its 24-week uninterrupted theatrical run is a testament to its enduring impact.

- (L-R) Dan Higgins, Annie Murray, Miki Magasiva, Rosemary Banks, Josh Rubin, Beulah Koale, and Zac O'Meagher at the *Tinā* special screening, co-hosted by the NZ Film Commission and NZ Embassy, Washington, D.C. (September 2025). (Photo: Evie Mackay)



After the Party received Best International Drama at the Edinburgh TV Festival Awards and received nine awards at the 2024 New Zealand Television Awards, including Best Drama.

- Peter Mullan (Philip) and Robyn Malcolm (Penny) in *After the Party* (2023). (© After the Party Productions Ltd)

Celebrating Aotearoa on Screen

Our work is fundamentally driven by a passion to showcase New Zealand storytelling, including our steadfast support for a rich tapestry of voices, including in te reo Māori, that capture our nation's multifaceted identity.

This year has been marked by the success of *Tinā*. In a landmark achievement for New Zealand cinema, *Tinā* is the most successful New Zealand film since *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* and has become the fifth-highest grossing New Zealand film of all time. The heartfelt Samoan-led local drama has captivated audiences across Aotearoa and the Pacific, with screenings in 132 locations spanning New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Samoa, making it the widest Pacific release in New Zealand film history. Its opening week was the third biggest in local film history, and its 24-week uninterrupted theatrical run is a testament to its enduring impact. The film's success has crossed cultural and generational lines with releases in Australia and the United States proving that deeply local stories can achieve global reach.

We have continued to demonstrate our commitment to supporting stories that reflect the experiences and aspirations of New Zealanders, with research showing 92% of local audiences agree New Zealand screen stories are important. 88% per cent of New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) financed long-form screen stories met our cultural significance criteria over a three-year measurement period.

Projects supported under Te Puna Kairangi Premium Production Fund continue to make a powerful mark on the global stage, reaching audiences across cinemas, television, and streaming services. *After the Party* received Best International Drama at the Edinburgh TV Festival Awards, earned a BAFTA nomination in the Best International TV series category and won a record-breaking nine awards at the New Zealand Television Awards. *Madam* has also garnered prestigious accolades, including Best Comedy Drama Series at the Content London C21 International Drama Awards, Best Comedy at the Asian Academy Creative Awards, and the Golden Nymph Award for Best Creation at the Monte Carlo TV Festival. These achievements reflect the exceptional quality and global appeal of New Zealand screen storytelling.

The Economic and Cultural Power of Screen

As the lead government agency representing New Zealand's screen sector internationally, the NZFC is pivotal in developing and maintaining global partnerships, showcasing the sector's creativity and innovation, and promoting our world-renowned talent. Both the NZFC and the broader screen sector are vital assets in enhancing New Zealand's soft power, elevating the country's reputation as a creative, technologically advanced, and innovative nation. Screen production significantly contributes to the wider New Zealand economy—not only through direct production expenditure and job creation, but also through positive spill-over effects into other industries. To better understand these

economic and cultural impacts, the NZFC partnered with NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho to undertake comprehensive research on the screen sector's cultural and economic contribution to the nation. Amidst a challenging global climate for the industry, this research will be crucial in shaping strategies to support the long-term sustainability of New Zealand's screen sector.

The global screen sector is currently navigating significant challenges, with production levels worldwide falling in response to cost-cutting, tighter budgets, the lingering impacts of COVID-19, and ongoing repercussions from the writers' and actors' strikes in the United States. Additionally, shifts in commissioning strategies have added further uncertainty. Despite these headwinds, the NZFC remains proactive, continuing to position New Zealand as a premier destination for screen production and continuing to monitor and review screen rebate policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

A prime example of New Zealand's capability is *A Minecraft Movie*, filmed entirely in New Zealand. The production injected over \$194M into the local economy and created more than 1,000 jobs, with New Zealanders making up 89% of the crew. Director Jared Hess praised the experience as "one of the best production experiences of my life," highlighting the skill of local crews and the country's diverse locations. Notably, a partnership with Tourism New Zealand saw New Zealand become the first fully playable real-world destination in *Minecraft*, an initiative designed to grow year-round visitation and developed in collaboration with 11 mana whenua

● ● ●

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groups, the tourism sector, Warner Bros, and Mojang Studios. With Minecraft being the world's best-selling video game, the project presents enormous potential to reach New Zealand's key tourism markets. In fact, 70M members of the Minecraft audience are actively considering visiting New Zealand – an unprecedented opportunity for the country.

During 2024/25, 14 major international projects began principal photography in New Zealand, demonstrating ongoing sector resilience. However, intense global competition, amplified by more generous incentives elsewhere, means maintaining New Zealand's attractiveness as a filming destination is an ongoing challenge. Continued enhancement of the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate, strong government backing, and our internationally respected production capability remain essential in attracting high-quality international productions and ensuring the long-term vitality of the screen sector.

Strategic Global Partnerships

International engagement initiatives have been designed not only to benefit screen creators and producers but also to elevate New Zealand's global reputation, supporting wider national goals in tourism, trade, and innovation. This year saw the launch of our most ambitious international strategy yet: the NZFC Global Trade Mission, which targeted key markets in the United States, India, United Kingdom, Ireland, and France. This targeted approach reflects our belief that success in the global screen industry enhances opportunities for the entire sector, while delivering broader advantages for the country.

Following New Zealand's largest-ever trade mission to India, our participation in India's World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai has established new avenues for collaboration with the world's most prolific film industry. Similarly, our strong presence at the Cannes Film Market, the

leading global marketplace for film finance and distribution, has further strengthened partnerships integral to future productions. Each year, Cannes facilitates over US\$1B in deals and investments for film content and creators, underscoring the strategic importance of these relationships. Through decades of NZFC involvement, New Zealand filmmakers have gained credibility and access on the world stage that would be difficult to obtain independently.

At the Annecy International Animation Film Festival's marketplace (Mifa), we debuted our first national booth, providing a collaborative space for our 30-member delegation and actively profiling New Zealand's animation industry – a sector with huge growth potential.

Investing in Our Industry and Talent

This year, our refreshed strategy places greater emphasis on growing the quality of films at the outset, with a particular focus on script development.



The *A Minecraft Movie* production injected over \$194M into the local economy and created more than 1,000 jobs, with New Zealanders making up 89% of the crew.

● *A Minecraft Movie* Poster (© 2025 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

As a result, fewer films have received production funding, with resources instead being strategically directed towards developing stronger scripts and creative concepts. While this approach means we are not on track to meet some of our previously set KPIs, it is a deliberate move to strengthen the creative foundations of projects and better position New Zealand films to attract financing and stand out in an increasingly competitive global market.

Increased development funding domestically is strengthening the creative pipeline. Notably, 30 filmmakers with NZFC-funded long-form projects have previously received NZFC talent development support, illustrating the success of our pathway approach to nurturing emerging talent and ensuring industry renewal.

We have continued to champion New Zealand filmmakers' participation in renowned international film labs such as Rotterdam's IFFR Pro, the Sundance Institute's Feature Film Programme, and Toronto International Film Festival's Directors' Lab, with the goal of equipping emerging and mid-career filmmakers with world-class mentorship from notable leaders, including Oscar®-winners Spike Lee and Asghar Farhadi.

The International Placement Initiative is another cornerstone, supporting filmmakers to gain experiences with top production companies in Ireland, the UK, Australia, and here at home. Through these efforts, we are fostering a diverse, globally connected talent base that will drive New Zealand's screen sector into the future.

Navigating a Complex Global Industry Landscape

This has been a transformative year for the NZFC, following an organisational restructure in 2024. We have continued to adapt to the changing landscape of the screen sector – both locally and globally – positioning ourselves to seize emerging opportunities while maintaining our fundamental commitment to fostering world-class storytelling.

Looking ahead, we are embracing innovation and agility, with a renewed focus on animation and the empowerment of the next generation of visionary filmmakers. By providing enhanced pathways and international opportunities, we are paving the way for new talent to succeed in an increasingly interconnected market. At the same time, we are committed to improving organisational productivity and the stakeholder experience, including the strategic integration of secure and effective Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions across the NZFC.

Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2025, the NZFC achieved a surplus of \$4.03M, compared with a budgeted deficit of \$4.15M. This surplus primarily reflects a slowdown in the number of production-ready projects during the fiscal year, alongside a one-off funding boost from higher-than-predicted Lottery Grants Board profits (\$3.1M), increased film royalty income, and reduced operational expenditure as we continue to optimise our resources.

FY24/25 and FY25/26 are transitional years as we modernise and enhance performance across the agency. Importantly, NZFC is actively using this surplus and our reserves to benefit the sector by supporting strategic initiatives and targeted investments such as intensive script and talent development, international industry engagement, and capacity-building projects that lay the groundwork for a stronger and more resilient screen sector. Over the next three years, these funds will be leveraged to promote, encourage, and participate in the creation of outstanding New Zealand films, ensuring long-term growth and sustainability for the industry.

Ngā manaakitanga,



Graeme Mason

Chair
New Zealand Film Commission



Annie Murray

Chief Executive
New Zealand Film Commission

HIGHLIGHTS

CREATIVE AND COMMERCIAL SUCCESS



Tinā surpassed \$1M in its opening weekend, has reached a cumulative box office total over \$6M and is the fifth highest-grossing New Zealand film of all time



668,160 admissions at the New Zealand box office



Supported by the NZSPR–International, *A Minecraft Movie* became a global box office hit, earning over US\$954 million worldwide



Moana 2 Reo Māori was the first indigenous language film to premiere globally in cinemas alongside its English counterpart



Short film *Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue* screened at 15 international film festivals winning four awards



Dame Jane Campion's *A Wave in the Ocean* was honoured with a tribute at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival

INDUSTRY INVESTMENT



\$16.6M was invested into film development and production, including finishing grants



NZFC boosted New Zealand's animation profile with \$500K for animated short films and a return to the world's top animation market, Annecy



Productions accessing the International Rebate generated \$647M in qualifying New Zealand spend, with live action productions engaging over 2,900 New Zealand cast and crew

GLOBAL PRESENCE



65 NZFC-funded feature and short films screened at 53 film festivals globally



14 international productions started shooting in New Zealand



11 New Zealand producers received funding to attend the 2025 Cannes Marché du Film, with 15,000 participants from 140 countries



Kia Ora LA 2024 connected New Zealand producers, screen service companies, and regional film offices with key LA-based decision-makers, promoting Aotearoa as a world-class screen production partner



We delivered two strategic engagements in India – Goa's NFDC Film Bazaar and the inaugural WAVES summit in Mumbai



The International Placement Initiative was launched, providing filmmakers with global internships

INDUSTRY INVESTMENT



41 interim and final applications were approved for the NZSPR – New Zealand, generating \$143.3M in QNZPE



We launched *Lights, Camera, Kōrero*, a podcast series sharing practical insights and industry expertise to strengthen collective knowledge and support sector-wide growth



Seven Provisional Co-Production certificates were issued with Canada, Australia and Germany

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Aronga | Purpose

He hāpai ake i te tuku ihotanga o te kounga i te ao waihanga kiriata i Aotearoa nei, e eke ai te auahatanga ki ōna taumata.

To build on New Zealand's legacy of excellence in filmmaking and unleash exceptional creativity.

Te ara | Way

Mā te tautoko i te taha auaha, kia rite tonu te whakaputa i te kounga ka mau tonu ki roto ki ngā whakatipuranga.

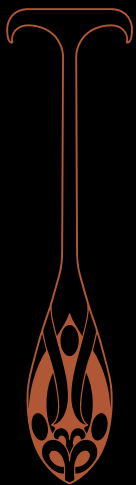
By investing in creativity and consistently delivering quality that lasts generations.

Putanga | Impact

Ko ngā kiriata o Aotearoa ka whakahihiri ake i te pohewatanga o ngā kaimātakitaki puta noa i te ao.

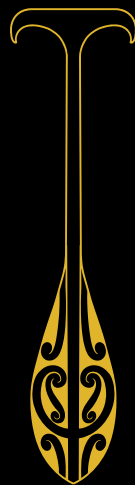
New Zealand films will capture the imaginations of audiences in Aotearoa and around the world.





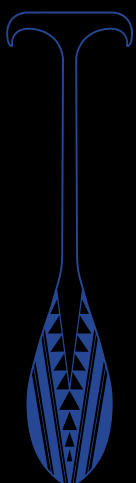
Hāpai ake i te rerenga tonutanga o te auaha me te kounga o te taha arumoni i te ao waihanga kiriata.

Build consistent creative and commercial excellence in filmmaking.



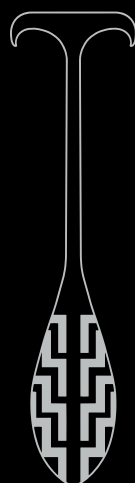
Kia whakamanā, kia kōkiritia rā ngā kiriata kanorau e ngākau pono ana, e mau ana hoki ki te rongomaiwhiti o Aotearoa, me te whakawhānui ake i te hunga mātakitaki i ngā kiriata o Aotearoa.

Empower and champion authentic and diverse films that are uniquely of Aotearoa and maximise audiences for New Zealand films.



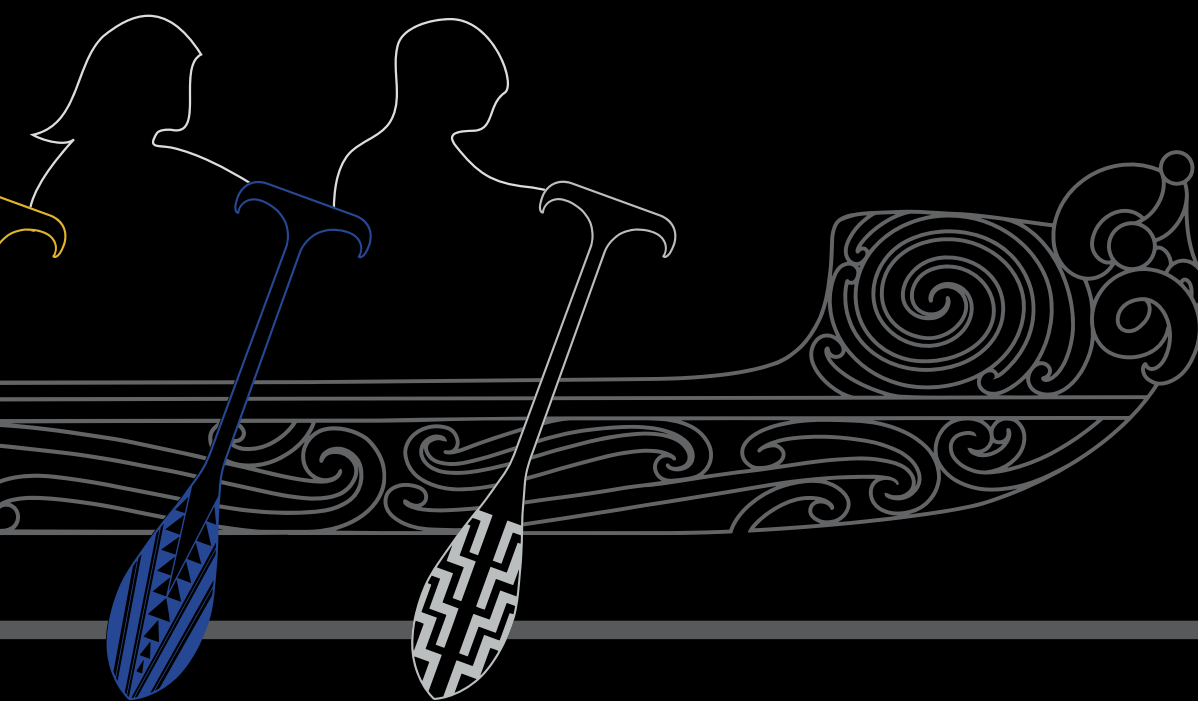
Kia whai rautaki mahi tahi e whakatairangatia ai te taha whiwhi mahi me te tōnuitanga o ngā mahi i te ao hanga kiriata i Aotearoa.

Collaborate strategically to promote employment and productivity in the New Zealand film industry.



Kia āki i ngā kaiwhakaari mā te tautoko i te whanaketanga o ō rātou āheinga, ā, mātāmua mai ko te kanorautanga, ko te mana ōritetanga me te noho ngākau tapatahi.

Invest in talent by supporting capability development with diversity, equity and inclusion at its core.



1. OUR YEAR



**Build consistent
creative and
commercial
excellence in
filmmaking**



The NZFC is committed to fostering both creative and commercial excellence in the national film industry. A great New Zealand film may achieve success through cultural impact, critical acclaim, international recognition, or strong audience engagement. Recognising that commercial performance now extends beyond traditional box office metrics, we evaluate success through a range of indicators including box office, viewership across platforms and selection for premiere film festivals.

International Recognition and Festival Success

During the 2024/25 financial year, we delivered on our commitment to champion filmmaking that balances creative ambition with commercial viability and through purposeful investment, the NZFC supported a strong portfolio of films.

Six NZFC-supported films secured international theatrical releases across diverse markets this year: *Tinā*, *The Rule of Jenny Pen*, *Marlon Williams – Ngā Ao E Rua Two Worlds*, *Alien Weaponry: Kua Tupa Te Ara*, *The Haka Party Incident*, and *Kōkā*.

We Were Dangerous screened in US cinemas, marking important milestones in North American market penetration and *Ka Whawhai Tonu – Struggle Without End* achieved US cinema release in June through Indican Pictures.

The reach of New Zealand films extended strategically across the Pacific through partnerships that

recognise cultural connections and shared heritage. *Kōkā* screened at Paradise Cinemas in Port Moresby during June (facilitated by Studiocanal and the New Zealand High Commission in Papua New Guinea). *Tinā* secured US distribution after a special screening in Los Angeles for distributors with guests including New Zealand's Consul General, demonstrating the diplomatic and cultural value of New Zealand films in strengthening regional relationships.

Psychological thriller *The Rule of Jenny Pen* screened at six international film festivals across Europe and America, earning critical acclaim and multiple awards including Best Director for James Ashcroft (Fantastic Fest, Austin) and Best Actor for Geoffrey Rush (Fantastic Fest, Austin and Taormina Film Festival in Sicily). Stephen King has named the film in his top 10 films of the 21st century, calling out its bold take on modern horror.

The 2025 Sydney Film Festival served as a powerful showcase for New Zealand talent, featuring five NZFC-supported titles. The festival's programming reflected the range of our local storytelling, from the world premiere of *Pike River* to the Australian premiere of the New Zealand-Australia official co-production *Went Up the Hill*. This trans-Tasman collaboration exemplifies our approach to international partnerships, leveraging shared cultural connections to expand market reach. The festival's First Nations Award competition featured three entries from Aotearoa: *Marlon Williams – Ngā Ao E Rua Two Worlds*, which captures the bicultural journey of one of our most celebrated musicians; *The Haka Party Incident*, offering a nuanced examination of cultural appropriation and identity; and short film *Womb*, which was supported by our Kōpere Hou – Fresh Shorts development programme.



Marlon Williams – Ngā Ao E Rua Two Worlds was one of three entries from Aotearoa in the 2025 Sydney Film Festival's First Nations Award competition. The film released in New Zealand cinemas in May 2025.

- Marlon Williams in *Marlon Williams – Ngā Ao e Rua Two Worlds* (2025). (Photo: Steven Marr)



- John Lithgow (Dave Crealy) in *The Rule of Jenny Pen*. (Photo: Stan Alley)



Psychological thriller *The Rule of Jenny Pen* screened at six international film festivals across Europe and America, earning critical acclaim and multiple awards including Best Director for James Ashcroft (Fantastic Fest, Austin) and Best Actor for John Lithgow & Geoffrey Rush (Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival, Catalonia).



Kōkā received the People's Choice Award for Best Drama at the Māoriland Film Festival.

- Hinetu Dell (Hamo) in *Kōkā*. (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)



- Director Ant Timpson and crew on the set of *Bookworm*. (Photo: Dean Mackenzie)



- Director Kath Akuhata Brown and crew on the set of *Kōkā*. (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)



At the 2025 Global Production Awards in Cannes, Māoriland Charitable Trust's Economic and Social Impact Award acknowledged its groundbreaking work in creating the world's largest indigenous film festival, while Greenlit's Craig Gainsborough received the Impact Leadership Award for his expertise in environmentally sustainable production practices.

- (L–R) Libby Hakaraia, Madeleine Hakaraia de Young, Annie Murray, Philippa Mossman, and Craig Gainsborough at the Global Production Awards (May 2025).



Bookworm was one of a number of New Zealand productions made available on Apple TV, Prime Video Store, and Neon during the financial year.

- (L-R) Elijah Wood (Strawn) and Nell Fisher (Mildred) in *Bookworm*. (Photo: Daniel Katz)



- *Pike River* Poster (© 2025 31 Films Limited)



Pike River had its world premiere at the 2025 Sydney Film Festival.



These festivals are so important, especially for smaller nations like New Zealand. It's a real chance to put our own work on the world stage, but also for it to be in conversation with work that's from all different sides of the globe. It's also of an internationally recognised standard. The greatest thing about film festivals is the sense of discovery – audiences having the option to pick up a brochure of a curated selection and find your work in an ever-speeding digital age. There's just not really a lot of places like that anymore.

● Samuel Van Grinsven, director, *Went Up the Hill*

The 49th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) served as a crucial North American gateway for New Zealand cinema, with three films making their regional debuts. *Went Up the Hill*, *The Mountain*, and *Ka Whawhai Tonu – Struggle Without End* secured places in the official programme, and benefited from comprehensive promotional support, including filmmaker and cast participation in post-screening Q&As.

Digital Distribution and Global Reach

Viewership of New Zealand films on streaming platforms not only expands global reach and audience engagement but also demonstrates the commercial viability and market competitiveness of local filmmaking.

Supported by the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate – New Zealand, documentary *The Lie* became the most

viewed film across both New Zealand and Australia upon its release on Netflix in September 2024, marking the first time a New Zealand film has simultaneously topped the charts in both countries.

Tinā, *Ka Whawhai Tonu*, *The Rule of Jenny Pen*, *Bookworm* and *A Mistake* were all made available on Apple TV, Prime Video Store, and Neon during the financial year.

These successes highlight the growing impact of streaming platforms in amplifying New Zealand stories and talent on the world stage.

Global Industry Recognition

The 2025 Global Production Awards in Cannes recognised New Zealand's comprehensive approach to screen industry development. The NZFC was nominated for Film Commission of the Year, reflecting global recognition of our strategic

leadership and innovative support for local and international productions. Two significant wins for New Zealand highlighted the sector's commitment to meaningful impact. Māoriland Charitable Trust's Economic and Social Impact Award acknowledged its groundbreaking work in creating the world's largest indigenous film festival, while Greenlit's Craig Gainsborough received the Impact Leadership Award for his expertise in environmentally sustainable production practices. Both Māoriland Charitable Trust and Greenlit have been recipients of NZFC funding, which has empowered the industry-leading work of these organisations.

Industry Innovation and Knowledge Sharing

NZFC's development of comprehensive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guiding Principles illustrates our proactive approach to emerging technologies and their impact



on creative industries. These principles, grounded in a people-first philosophy, ensure that AI adoption enhances rather than replaces human creativity. They also lay clear the importance of maintaining cultural integrity and promoting transparent practices. This forward-thinking guide positions New Zealand's screen sector as a leader in responsible technology adoption.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, KŌRERO

Recognising the importance of knowledge sharing within the screen sector, we launched Lights, Camera, Kōrero, a podcast series designed for industry colleagues and a wider audience. This initiative addresses a need for accessible, high-quality professional development content that explores the complexities of contemporary filmmaking. The podcast's focus on practical insights (from navigating international co-productions to celebrating homegrown talent) reflects our understanding that industry success depends on collective knowledge and shared expertise. By facilitating these conversations, we strengthen the entire sector's capacity for innovation and growth.



Went Up the Hill received the Audience Award at the Luxembourg City Film Festival.

- (L-R) Dacre Montgomery (Jack) and Vicky Krieps (Jill) in *Went Up the Hill*. (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)



Alien Weaponry: Kua Tupa Te Ara secured international release this year and released in New Zealand cinemas in February 2025.

- (L-R) Lewis and Henry in *Alien Weaponry: Kua Tupa Te Ara*. (Photo: Kent Belcher)

**Empower and
champion authentic
and diverse films
that are uniquely
of Aotearoa and
maximise audiences
for New Zealand films**



New Zealand cinema has long expressed our distinct identity and cultural richness, with Māori language and storytelling a defining element positioned to stand out in a globalised industry. Recognising that audiences engage with local films across diverse platforms, the NZFC remains committed to feature film as a vital storytelling form, working closely with partners to maximise reach and audience connection both at home and internationally.

Celebrating *Tinā*

BOX OFFICE

Surpassed \$1M on its opening weekend and exceeded \$6M cumulative box office.

AUDIENCE

Over 400,000 cinema admits.

NEW ZEALAND SUCCESS

Is now the fifth highest-grossing New Zealand film of all time.

PACIFIC WIDE

Established benchmarks for authentic Pacific storytelling, setting a record with 128 locations across Aotearoa and the Pacific.

OPENING WEEK

Recorded the third-biggest local opening week ever.

Internationally, *Tinā*'s cultural and commercial resonance was clear. After its premiere at the Hawai'i International Film Festival, *Tinā* won the Best Narrative Feature Audience Award at Palm Springs International Film Festival (January 2025) and the Golden Space Needle Award for Best Film at the Seattle International Film Festival (May 2025). The film also screened at the LA Asian Pacific Film Festival and Shanghai International Film Festival, further elevating the film's global profile. Strategic industry screenings, such as the NZFC-facilitated Los Angeles event with the New Zealand Consulate General, provided significant exposure to US sector leaders and distributors.



Our Investment

In 2024/25, \$16.6M was invested into feature film development and production, including finishing grants. Recognising the critical gap between project conception and production readiness, we prioritised comprehensive support for advanced script refinement and director preparation, ensuring strong creative foundations for future projects.

A balanced investment strategy funded 12 new feature films and awarded feature film finishing grants to seven projects. A new project-based fund was introduced, specifically supporting filmmakers with recent box office or festival successes – allowing proven creative talent to accelerate new project development without delay.

Supporting Diverse Stories

A diverse range of genres, cultural perspectives, and storytelling styles were represented in NZFC-backed films released to cinemas in 2024/25, including *We Were Dangerous*, *The Haka Party Incident*, *Alien Weaponry: Kua Tupu Te Ara*, *The Rule of Jenny Pen*, *project fiftyone*, *Marlon Williams – Ngā Ao E Rua Two Worlds*, and *Kōkā*.

The reversioning of animated films into te reo Māori has continued to see success. The world premiere of *Shrek Katakahi te Korokē* at Māoriland Film Festival – the first DreamWorks film reversioned into an indigenous language – marked a landmark for te reo Māori filmmaking. Strong support from DreamWorks signals exciting future opportunities for language and talent development and international cultural exchange.

Moana 2 Reo Māori made history as the first indigenous language film to premiere globally alongside its English-language counterpart, releasing in New Zealand cinemas in November and becoming the highest-grossing Disney reo Māori film on its opening day at the box office. Now streaming on Disney+, the film's performance demonstrates the power of global platforms to elevate and celebrate te reo Māori.

Domestic Festival Excellence

The 2024 Whānau Mārama New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) celebrated local achievements, including the opening night selection of *We Were Dangerous*, the screening of nine NZFC-funded films and a special 30th anniversary retrospective of *Heavenly Creatures*. Short films *Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue* won the Patrons Award for Best Film; *First Horse* took the Auckland Live Spirit of the Civic Award; *Rochelle* received both the CNZ Emerging Talent Award and the Panavision Audience Award. These milestones reflect both the evolution and continued vibrancy of New Zealand cinema.

Our support of the 2025 Māoriland Film Festival in Ōtaki reinforced a commitment to authentic indigenous storytelling, with 130 works from 86 nations and an array of industry development programmes and panels addressing sector challenges and fostering essential networks. The premieres of *Kōkā* and *Shrek Katakahi te Korokē* highlighted the vitality and creative growth of te reo Māori storytelling, with *Kōkā* receiving the People's Choice Award for Best Drama.

The 20th Doc Edge Festival showcased the strength of the documentary sector with two NZFC-supported features—*No Tears on the Field* and *Three Days in February*. Doc Edge is an AMPAS-recognised festival in which award winners may qualify for the Academy Awards. NZFC's grant for the June 2025 edition further demonstrates our commitment to documentary film as a powerful vehicle for cultural preservation and social commentary.



Moana 2 Reo Māori made history as the first indigenous language film to premiere globally alongside its English-language counterpart.

● *Moana 2 Reo Māori*
(© Disney)



● L–R: Manaia Hall (Daisy), Erana James (Nellie), and Nathalie Morris (Lou) in *We Were Dangerous*.
(Photo: Kirsty Griffin)

The 2024 Whānau Mārama New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) celebrated local achievements, including the opening night selection of *We Were Dangerous*.



Opening night of Doc Edge Festival 2025. The 20th anniversary of the festival showcased the strength of the documentary sector.

- Doc Edge founders and team at the 2025 Opening Night Gala media wall. (Photo: Doc Edge)



We Were Dangerous won a number of international awards, including the Fair Play Award at the Schlingel International Film Festival for Children and Young Audience, in Chemnitz, Germany; the HIFF Pasifika Award for Best Feature Film at the 44th Hawai'i International Film Festival, the Best Narrative Feature award at the Kerry International Film Festival, the Best Women Film Series award at the San Diego International Film Festival and the imagineNATIVE Moon Jury Dramatic Feature Award, in recognition of an outstanding dramatic/narrative feature-length film.

- L–R: Nathalie Morris (Lou), Erana James (Nellie), and Manaia Hall (Daisy) in *We Were Dangerous*. (Photo: Hōhua Kurene)



- Elizabeth Banks (Elizabeth Taylor), Mickey Sumner (Robin), and Richard Crouchley (Richard Whitehead) in surgery in *A Mistake*. (Photo: Nicola Dove)

A Mistake was one of a number of New Zealand productions made available on Apple TV, Prime Video Store, and Neon during the financial year.



- (L-R) Director Miki Magasiva and Anapela Polataivao (Mareta) behind the scenes of *Tinā*. (Photo: Kirsty Griffin)

**Collaborate
strategically to
promote employment
and productivity in
the New Zealand
film industry**



The NZFC's administration of the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate (NZSPR), alongside a carefully considered global engagement strategy aims to position Aotearoa as a premier destination for international productions, while simultaneously nurturing domestic talent and intellectual property. The NZSPR continues to play a pivotal role in attracting inward investment, stimulating job growth, and supporting high-quality local projects with global export potential.

Although the global downturn impacted overall screen production activity in 2024/25, the administration of the NZSPR remained highly active and in response to changing market conditions, we are engaging closely with government on future Rebate settings, aiming to ensure New Zealand continues to compete on the world stage.

Delivering Economic Impact

In 2024/25, the Rebate Panel met 16 times, approving 120 applications in total. Qualifying New Zealand Production Expenditure (QNZPE) approved for Interim and Final applications (for both domestic and international productions) totalled \$781.4M, resulting in rebates totalling approximately \$180.8M.



We approved three Interim and eight Final International applications, and 27 Final Post, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV) Rebate applications, generating over \$647.1M in (QNZPE), largely financed by foreign investment, resulting in rebates of approximately \$127.1M.



We assessed and approved five Provisional 5% Uplift applications.



13 Interim and 28 Final New Zealand applications were approved creating \$134.3M in QNZPE and delivering \$53.7M in rebates.



Time Bandits released globally on Apple TV+. 91% of the cast and crew were New Zealanders.

- (L-R) Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi behind the scenes of *Time Bandits*. (© 2024 Apple TV+. All Rights Reserved.)



Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie released on Netflix in August 2024. The film utilised the Post, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV) Rebate, with music created for the film by New Zealand's own The Phoenix Foundation and Tami Neilson.

- *Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie*. (© 2024 Netflix. All Rights Reserved.)



US Horror *Heart Eyes*, filmed in New Zealand, released in cinemas on 13 February 2025. The film was a collaboration between US-based Spyglass Media and New Zealand's Ground Control NZ, utilising 96% local crew, with approximately 435 New Zealand crew members.

- *Heart Eyes*.
(© 2025 Spyglass Media Group, LLC and CBS Studios Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

M3GAN 2.0 released in cinemas in June and was filmed entirely in New Zealand.

- (L-R) Director Gerard Johnstone and Amie Donald (*M3GAN*) behind the scenes of *M3GAN 2.0*.
(© 2025 Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.)



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International productions filmed in New Zealand underpinned sector employment, skill development, and technology transfer in 2024/25 and demonstrated New Zealand's capacity to mobilise the whole production ecosystem.

Growing Employment and Skills

International productions filmed in New Zealand in the year were *M3GAN 2.0*, *Badlands*, *The Wrecking Crew*, *East of Eden*, *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, *War Machine*, *Down to Earth*, *Noel's Kiwi Kingdom*, *Heart of the Beast*, *Apex*, *Tenzing*, *Klara and the Sun* and *Chief of War*.

These projects underpinned sector employment, skill development, and technology transfer in 2024/25 and demonstrated New Zealand's capacity to mobilise the whole production ecosystem.

Live action productions accessing the International Rebate in 2024/25 engaged over 2,900 New Zealand cast and crew.

Time Bandits released globally on Apple TV+ in July 2024. The film utilised the NZSPR-International and filming took place in Wellington. The team of key creatives included New Zealanders Taika Waititi, Jemaine Clement and production designer Ra Vincent who created 120 sets over 100 production days with his team. The project had 1129 cast and crew – 91% of this total were New Zealanders.

Saving Bikini Bottom: The Sandy Cheeks Movie released on Netflix in August 2024. The film utilised the Post, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV) Rebate, with music created for the film by New Zealand's own The Phoenix Foundation and Tami Neilson.

Blumhouse horror *Wolf Man*, filmed entirely in the South Island, released in cinemas on 16 January 2025.

US Horror *Heart Eyes*, filmed in New Zealand, released in cinemas on 13 February 2025. The film was a collaboration between US-based Spyglass Media and New Zealand's Ground Control NZ, utilising 96% local crew, with approximately 435 New Zealand crew members.

A Minecraft Movie, shot entirely in New Zealand and supported by the NZSPR-International premiered in April 2025, bringing in \$954.4M globally. The film was the biggest to launch in the US since *Deadpool & Wolverine* in July 2024.

Directed by New Zealander Gerard Johnstone, Blumhouse feature *M3GAN 2.0* released in cinemas in June.

Global Engagement and Sector Leadership

The 2025 NZFC global trade mission exemplified a proactive approach to market development and relationship building, with Cannes and Mumbai anchoring a strategic push into core international markets.

Cannes Film Market participation included high-profile speaking engagements and networking, further raising New Zealand's profile among decision-makers. In India, after groundwork at Goa's NFDC Film Bazaar and coordination with government trade missions, the inaugural World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai opened new pathways for NZ-India co-productions and production partnerships, leveraging over 100 Indian films shot in New Zealand during the 1990s and early 2000s. The NZ-India Co-Production Treaty (2011) provides filmmakers in both countries access to each other's funding, incentives, and markets – creating valuable opportunities for collaboration and export.

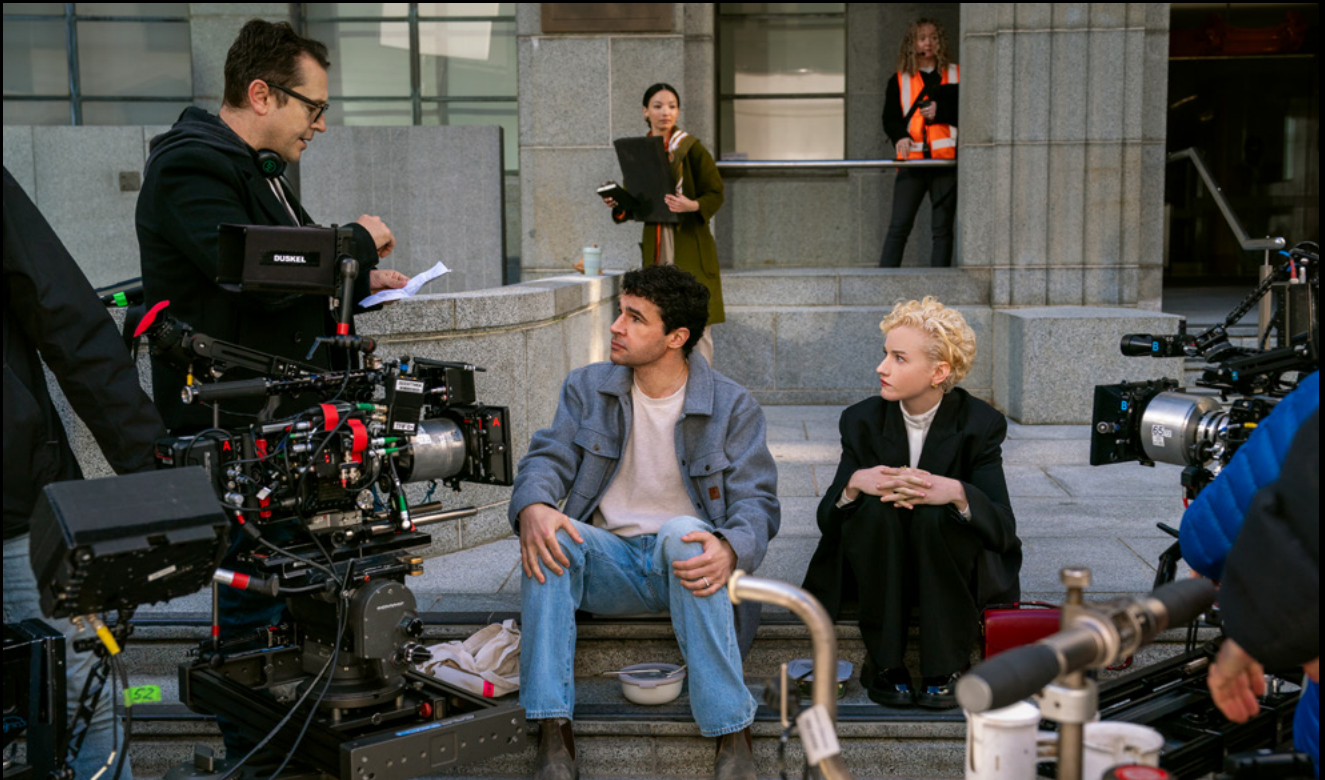


Recognising animation as a growth sector, NZFC's largest-ever presence at Annecy International Animation Film Festival and Market (Mifa) in June 2025 signalled our commitment to, and investment in, this expanding sector globally, providing unprecedented visibility and sector engagement.

Formalising Collaboration

International relationship-building remains foundational to sector growth. NZFC's outreach in Los Angeles, Cannes, and Mumbai included systematic engagement with studios, decision-makers, and streaming platforms, as well as the Kia Ora LA showcase, a targeted event featuring sector networking, skills development, and talent promotion.

This year, seven provisional co-production certificates were issued with Canada, Australia, and Germany including films *Went Up the Hill*, *Holy Days*, *Crowded House*, *The Tacoma Exorcism*, and TV series *Tralala*, *The Lost Continent*, and *Mr Hugo's Little Library*, demonstrating New Zealand's capability to participate in and deliver internationally-scaled productions.



Wolf Man filmed entirely in the South Island and released globally in January 2025.

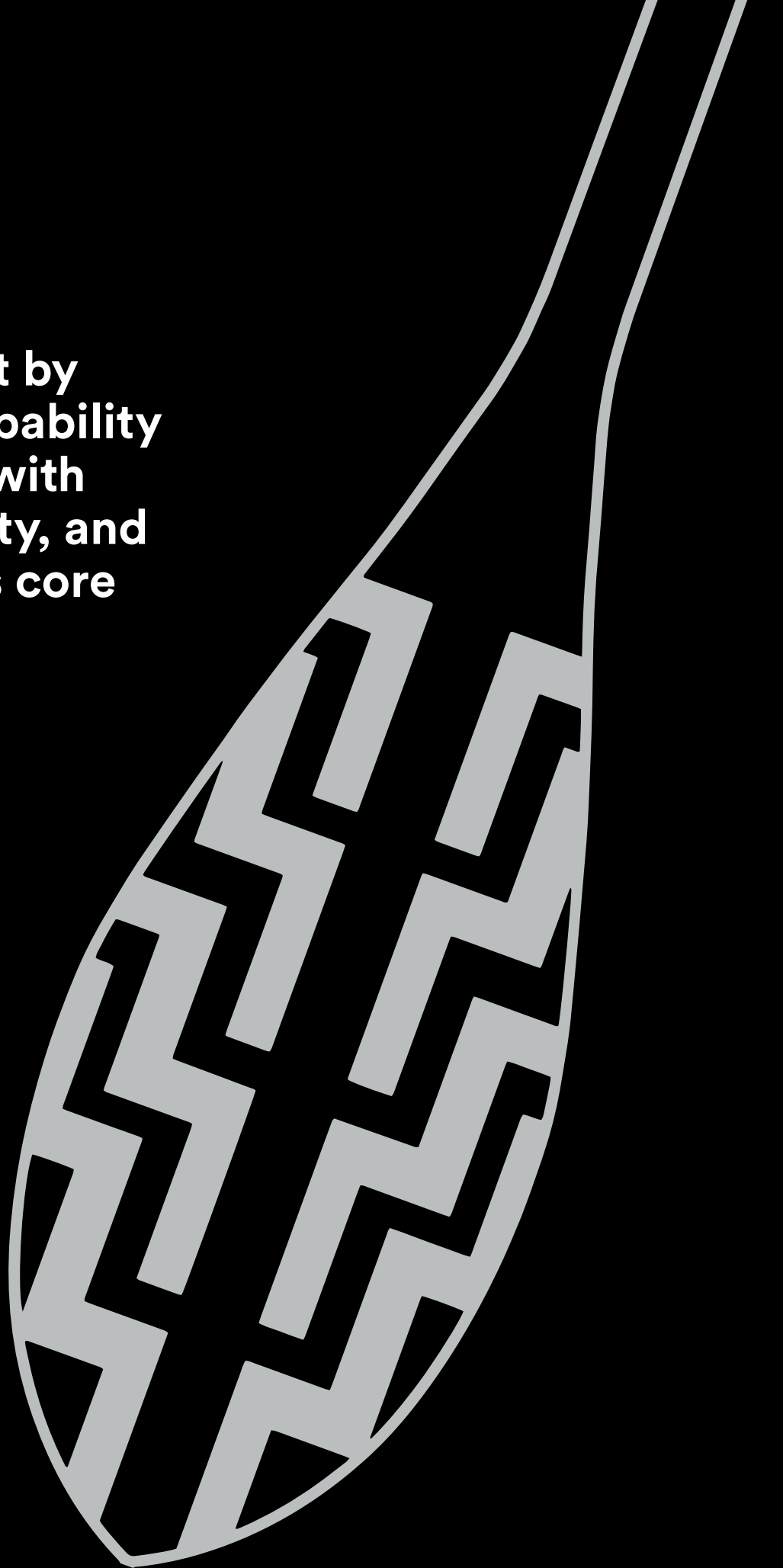
- L-R: Director Leigh Whannell, Christopher Abbott (Blake), Julia Garner (Charlotte) behind the scenes of *Wolf Man*.
(© 2025 Universal Pictures. All Rights Reserved.)



A Minecraft Movie, shot entirely in New Zealand and supported by the NZSPR-International, premiered in April 2025, bringing in \$954.4M globally.

- Emma Myers (Natalie) in *A Minecraft Movie*.
(© 2025 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

**Invest in talent by
supporting capability
development with
diversity, equity, and
inclusion at its core**



The NZFC is committed to supporting filmmakers at every career stage—helping them develop creative ideas, build global relationships, and access international markets. Diversity, equity, and inclusion remain central to our professional development investments, ensuring that both the stories we tell and the people who bring them to life reflect the richness and diversity of Aotearoa, creating space for a broad range of stories and voices to be told.



Strengthening Indigenous Storytelling

Two significant initiatives this year advanced Māori voices on screen. The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab, funded through the new NZFC Industry Led Talent Development Fund and led by Libby Hakaraia and Tainui Stephens, paired mid-level and senior Māori filmmakers with international mentors and producers. Their work culminated in pitch presentations at the Māoriland Film Festival and the 25th ImagineNATIVE Film Festival in Toronto. In parallel, our Te Reo Story Wānanga, designed to nurture screenwriting in te reo Māori, supported emerging and established Māori writers with immersive workshops blending screenwriting craft and indigenous cultural learning, embedding authenticity and cultural integrity in new works.

Curated International Opportunities

The International Placement Initiative was launched at the end of 2024/25, providing emerging and mid-career filmmakers with internships at leading film companies in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and Ireland. Julia Parnell will undertake a six-month placement at Misfits Entertainment (London), Ashleigh Roworth at Keeper Pictures (Dublin), Joyce Wong at Good Chaos (London), Litia Tuiburelevu at Protagonist Pictures (UK), and Eva Trebilco at STUDIOCANAL (NZ), gaining hands-on experience with international best practice, markets, and creative collaboration. The outcomes of these placements will emerge throughout 2025/26.

Career Advancement and International Recognition

NZFC's International Travel Grant programme enabled filmmakers to attend major festivals, supporting career growth and connecting New Zealand creatives with global audiences. Notable outcomes this year included:

- Samuel Van Grinsven supported for the world premiere of *Went Up the Hill* at TIFF.
- Rachel House attended the North American premiere of her feature directorial debut, *The Mountain*, at TIFF.
- James Ashcroft, director of *The Rule of Jenny Pen*, attended Fantastic Fest and Sitges—specialised markets for genre filmmakers.

Such engagements foster future co-productions, distribution, and creative partnerships, and ensure New Zealand's presence at the heart of international film conversations.

Nurturing Talent Through Short Films

Short films continue to serve as a vital pathway to feature filmmaking within our screen ecosystem, and we are a key funder and partner in initiatives helping emerging filmmakers to grow creatively and professionally. Our funding supports creative experimentation and technical excellence while highlighting stories from across New Zealand's communities.

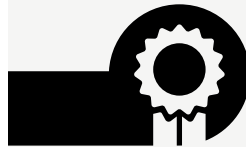
Dame Jane Campion's *A Wave in the Ocean Deep Dive* represents major investment in high-level talent development. Supported through the Industry Led Talent Development initiative, the 15-week film school focuses on writing and directing skills, with students mentored by Dame Jane Campion and Philippa Campbell to make an original short film.

A Wave in the Ocean was honoured with a tribute at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival of La Biennale di Venezia, with the screening of short films by seven of its students. In addition, short film *Lion Rock*, produced by Prisca Bouchet and Nick Mayow was selected to compete in the prestigious Orizzonti Short Films section.

In 2024/25, NZFC short film support included devolved schemes such as Ngā Aho Whakaari – Aho Shorts and the relaunch of He Kauahi Catalyst Fund, with \$500,000 ringfenced specifically for animation.

Emerging Talent Recognition

NZFC's development initiatives continued to identify and nurture exceptional talent, with filmmakers achieving significant international recognition for short films.



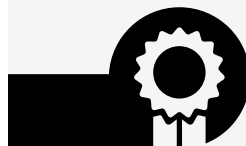
FRESH SHORTS INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue developed through the Kōpere Hou – Fresh Shorts program screened at 19 international film festivals, earning eight awards including First Nations Award at the Palm Springs International Shorts Fest, Best Short Film at the Pacific Island Film Festival in New York City and Special Jury Mention at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.



FRESH SHORTS INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Also funded through Fresh Shorts, *Womb*, premiered at the notable Tribeca Festival.



SPECIAL JURY PRIZE

Help, I'm Alien Pregnant screened at BIFAN Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, receiving the Special Jury Prize in the Bucheon Choice section.



INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Chrysanthemum, supported by He Kauahi Catalyst, premiered at Palm Springs International Shortfest.

These achievements validate our investment in emerging filmmakers and demonstrate the effectiveness of our structured development pathways. By providing targeted support at crucial career stages, we ensure a pipeline of talent capable of competing on the international stage.



Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue developed through the Kōpere Hou – Fresh Shorts program screened at 15 international film festivals, earning four awards including Best Short Film at the Pacific Island Film Festival in New York City and Best Film at the Show Me Shorts Film Festival.

● *Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue* (2024), directed by Veia Mafile'o.



Womb premiered at the notable Tribeca Festival.

● *Womb* (2025), directed by Ira Hetaraka.

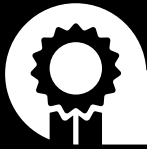


Chrysanthemum, supported by He Kauahi Catalyst, premiered at Palm Springs International Shortfest.

- *Chrysanthemum* (2024), directed by Jolin Lee.

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INDUSTRY ACCOLADES



FEATURE FILM SUCCESS

We Were Dangerous

- Fair Play Award at the Schlingel International Film Festival for Children and Young Audience, in Chemnitz, Germany
- HIFF Pasifika Award for Best Feature Film at the 44th Hawai'i International Film Festival
- Best Narrative Feature award at the Kerry International Film Festival
- Best Women Film Series award at the San Diego International Film Festival
- imagineNATIVE Dramatic Feature Award, in recognition of an outstanding dramatic/narrative feature-length film

The Mountain

- CIFEJ Award at the Schlingel International Film Festival for Children and Young Audience, in Chemnitz, Germany
- Centre International du Film Pour L'Enfance et la Jeunesse (CIFEJ) Prize, and the Hellenic Parliament Human Values Award at the Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People, in Greece
- Barnfonden Prize at the BUFF Malmö Film Festival

Tinā

- Best Narrative Feature Audience Award at Palm Springs International Film Festival
- Golden Space Needle Award for Best Film at the Seattle International Film Festival
- Audience Award at Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival

The Moon is Upside Down

- Special Jury Award for Narrative Feature at Santa Fe International Film Festival
- Chosen as one of ten international films for the Best Non-U.S. Release at the Online Film Critics Society Awards

Maurice and I

- Received Best Feature Film at the ARQ Architecture Film Festival Santiago

FEATURE FILM SUCCESS



Went Up the Hill

- Received the Audience Award at the Luxembourg City Film Festival

Kōkā

- Received the People's Choice Award for Best Drama at the Māoriland Film Festival

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers

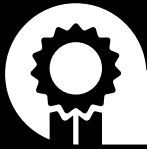
- Received the San Francisco Women Film Festival Feature Documentary Award

Red, White and Brass

- Awarded Best Feature at the Pacific Island Film Festival New York City

Dame Valerie Adams – More Than Gold

- Received Gold in the Specialised and Second Unit category of the 7th NZCS New Zealand Cinematographers Awards



SHORT FILM SUCCESS

Lea Tupu'anga/Mother Tongue

- NZIFF Patrons Award for Best Film at the New Zealand International Film Festival
- Best Short Film at the Pacific Island Film Festival New York City
- Best Indigenous Short at the Bend Film Festival Oregon
- Department of Post Best New Zealand Film at Show Me Shorts Film Festival

First Horse

- Auckland Live Spirit of the Civic Award at the New Zealand International Film Festival
- Jury Award for Best Short by an Indigenous Director at the Santa Fe International Film Festival

Rochelle

- CNZ Emerging Talent Award & Panavision Audience Award at the New Zealand International Film Festival
- Best Cinematographer Award at Show Me Shorts Festival

Help, I'm Alien Pregnant

- Special Jury Prize in the Bucheon Choice section at BIFAN Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival
- Le Prix Canal + Award – International Short Film Competition at Les Utopiales International Science-Fiction Film Festival

Pack Rat

- Received the Australian Cinematographers Society Gold Award for Victoria & Tasmania
- Best Screenplay at Show Me Shorts Festival

Rapido

- Received the Live Action Short Award at imagineNATIVE

I See You

- Audience Award at Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia



Dame Jane Campion

Received the Pardo d'Onore Manor Award at Locarno Film Festival



James Ashcroft

Awarded Best Director Main Competition for *The Rule of Jenny Pen* at Fantastic Fest, Austin



John Lithgow & Geoffrey Rush

Awarded Best Actor at Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival, for *The Rule of Jenny Pen*



Geoffrey Rush

Awarded Best Actor Main Competition at Fantastic Fest, Austin, and the Excellence Award and Best Actor Award at the Taormina Film Festival in Sicily for his role in *The Rule of Jenny Pen*



Cliff Curtis

Won the prestigious FIAPF Award, determined by APSA founding partner FIAPF–International Federation of Film Producers Associations, and awarded for outstanding achievement in film in the Asia Pacific region



Taika Waititi

Received the Norman Lear Award at the Producers Guild Awards for Exceptional Contributions to Television Producing



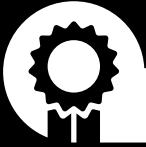
Katie Wolfe

Director of *The Haka Party Incident*, received the Human Rights Award at LA Independent Women Film Awards



Linda Niccol

Awarded Best Screenplay for *Poppy* at the 3rd Down Syndrome International Film Festival in Palm Springs



2024 NEW ZEALAND TELEVISION AWARDS

After the Party

- NZ On Air Best Drama
- Best Script: Drama
- Best Cinematography
- Best Editing: Drama and Comedy
- Best Director: Drama (Peter Salmon)
- Best Actor (Peter Mullan)
- Best Actress (Robyn Malcolm)
- Best Supporting Actress (Tara Canton)
- Best Supporting Actor (Elz Carrad)

Escaping Utopia

- Best Factual Series
- Best Editing: Documentary
- Best Original Score

Kiri and Lou

- Best Children's Programme

Dark City – The Cleaner

- Best Production Design

Far North

- Best Costume Design

New Zealand
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

nzfilm.co.nz