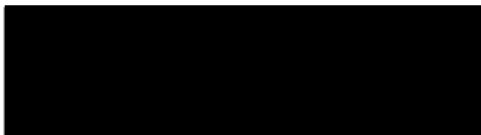




26 July 2021



Dear 

2 JULY 2021: OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

In your letter received 2 July 2021 you requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):


"I would like to request under the OIA all correspondence the New Zealand Film Commission has entered into or been engaged in, from any and all parties, regarding the film in development They Are Us."

Information in response to your request is set out at **Appendix 1**.

When there are earlier draft versions of documents, we have only provided the final version of that document. If a document has not been finalised and only exists in draft form, we have provided the draft version.

The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) has received three requests for information under the OIA in relation to the film *They Are Us*. Correspondence in relation to these requests fall within the timeframe of your request, however, as they do not relate specifically to the film and rather our internal processes on responding to the requests, we have not included this correspondence in our response.

The NZFC have engaged in email correspondence with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on drafting Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQ) in relation to the film *They Are Us*. We have not included some of this correspondence in this response as it does not relate specifically to the film and rather our internal processes. We further advise that answers to these WPQs are publicly available.



Information has been withheld where the documents or correspondence contain information outside the scope of the request or one of the withholding grounds under the OIA applies:

- Section 9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons;
- Section 9(2)(b)(ii): to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information;
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i): to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; and
- Section 9(2)(g)(i): to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty.


The following documents have been withheld in full:

- *Presentation* – attached to email sent from Stewart Till to Annabelle Sheehan on 8 May 2019. Withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.
- *They Are Us: Draft Script* received 4 March 2020. Withheld under 9(2)(b)(ii) and s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.
- *They Are Us: Draft Script* received 9 June 2021. Withheld under s9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA.
- *Email from Philippa Campbell to Chris Payne (NZFC), Philippa Mossman (NZFC), Leanne Saunders (NZFC), Jasmin McSweeney (NZFC)* dated 14 June 2021. Withheld under s 9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(ba)(i) and 9(2)(a) of the OIA.
- *Media list for public release – attachment in email sent from Philippa Campbell to Jasmin McSweeney (NZFC)* dated 14 June 2021. Withheld under s9(2)(a) of the OIA.

The NZFC initially advised MCH and MBIE – as the two Ministries to which the NZFC reports directly – that NZFC staff first engaged with the *They are Us* producing team when the team requested a meeting with the NZFC’s former CEO Annabelle Sheehan in March 2020.

Following a further review of our files, we have since determined that the NZFC had initial engagement with the producers of *They Are Us* in May 2019. This correspondence is included in **Appendix 1**. Neither of the NZFC staff involved in that correspondence and meeting - specifically Annabelle Sheehan and her Executive Assistant - continue to work for the NZFC, so they had not been involved in the NZFC’s provision of information in respect of the organisation’s engagement with *They Are Us*.





Please note that we will be publishing this letter (with your personal information removed) and **Appendix 1** on the NZFC website.

You have the right, by way of complaint to an Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, to seek an investigation and review of our response.

Yours sincerely



Tayla Hancock
Policy Advisor
New Zealand Film Commission



APPENDIX 1

Re: e-introducing

Annabelle Sheehan <annabelle.sheehan@nzfilm.co.nz>

Tue 7/05/2019 12:40 PM

To: Graeme Mason [REDACTED]

Cc: Stewart Till [REDACTED]




Hi Stewart

Do send me any information or questions you have. As Graeme says I will be in Cannes and so if you are not perhaps we can catch up by phone when I get back end of May. I have cc'd my EA.

REGARDS

Annabelle

Sent from my iPhone

 NZFC_Pr Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive
imary_Bloc **New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga**
k_with_Re Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
o [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz
 

On 7/05/2019, at 11:23 AM, Graeme Mason <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Annabelle and Stewart,

I wanted to e-introduce you.

Annabelle Stewart was my boss at PolyGram, and has for many years held a variety of top level positions & roles across the gamut of film and television enterprises (as well as charities and sports and film agencies and much else besides). He made the move some time back to relocate from London to LA and also to add to his various commitments with his own development & production slate. Of note for today is that he has one specific NZ themed project, for which very unusually for you and I he is not looking for \$ just input and especially thoughts on creative talent he and his partners might work with on it.

Stewart - Annabelle is as discussed the CEO of the New Zealand Film Commission. She, like I was, is an aussie doing the role. She has previously be in charge of two different State Agencies here in Oz, has had key roles in post-production, education and critically for you perhaps been the CEO at the major Talent Agency here in Australia. So to say she is across all aspects of the two countries and knows the talent in both is an understatement.

I leave to you two to liaise noting of course that Annabelle will be off later this week to make the journey to Cannes where she and I will be catching up.

Best

graeme

Graeme Mason | Chief Executive Officer


They Are Us

Stewart Till [REDACTED]

Wed 8/05/2019 4:42 PM

To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Graeme Mason [REDACTED]

 1 attachments (12 MB)

TheyAreUs.pptx;

Dear Annabelle,

Please find attached a presentation for a feature film based on the terrorist attacks at the two mosques in Christchurch.

The intention is to make a drama that honors the lives that were lost and focuses on the heroism and the humanity that so many people displayed.

We anticipate a budget of around [REDACTED]. I have access to all the necessary development and production financing that is required. So I am not looking for funding from you but, as we will obviously be shooting the film in New Zealand, your organization's support will be immensely valuable.

I would hope that both writer and director would be from New Zealand or Australia.

I understand that you are shortly off to Cannes but despite being at the market/festival many times in the past (frequently with Graeme) I am not attending this year. I would appreciate a call whenever convenient when you have had a chance to review the attachment.

Very best wishes,
Stewart
[REDACTED]

Subject: 7pm Call with Stewart Till, LA
Location: Call [REDACTED]
Start: Fri 17/05/2019 5:00 a.m.
End: Fri 17/05/2019 5:30 a.m.
Recurrence: (none)
Meeting Status: Meeting organizer
Organizer: Annabelle Sheehan
Required Attendees: Stewart Till

Dear Annabelle,

Please find attached a presentation for a feature film based on the terrorist attacks at the two mosques in Christchurch.

The intention is to make a drama that honors the lives that were lost and focuses on the heroism and the humanity that so many people displayed.

We anticipate a budget of around [REDACTED] I have access to all the necessary development and production financing that is required. So I am not looking for funding from you but, as we will obviously be shooting the film in New Zealand, your organization's support will be immensely valuable.

I would hope that both writer and director would be from New Zealand or Australia.

I understand that you are shortly off to Cannes but despite being at the market/festival many times in the past (frequently with Graeme) I am not attending this year. I would appreciate a call whenever convenient when you have had a chance to review the attachment.

Very best wishes,
Stewart

Re: Thank you.

Annabelle Sheehan <annabelle.sheehan@nzfilm.co.nz>

Fri 17/05/2019 8 23 PM

To: Stewart Till [REDACTED] >

Cc: [REDACTED]

Thanks Stewart. It was great to catch up and I look forward to speaking again

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

[REDACTED]

On 16/05/2019, at 8:13 PM, Stewart Till [REDACTED] wrote:

Annabelle,

I really enjoyed our call today. For me, at least, it was very constructive and useful.

I will call you again when you are back in the office, by which time hopefully the project will have developed a little further.

In the meantime I hope you have a successful and enjoyable Cannes.

Stewart

From: [Annabelle Sheehan](#)
To: [Stewart Till](#)
Cc: [Tim White](#); [REDACTED]; [Andrew Niccol](#)
Subject: RE: AFM meeting
Date: Thursday, 31 October 2019 5:13:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Dear Stewart,

Great. I am just juggling one other thing at that time and can let you know tomorrow. So perhaps lunch and if not would you be available at about 230pm Saturday and we could certainly meet somewhere where accreditation is not needed and there is privacy too.

So in short either 1pm or 230 – and I will know about the 1pm tomorrow

Thanks

Annabelle

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Stewart Till [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, 31 October 2019 4:23 a.m.
To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Tim White <[REDACTED]> Andrew Niccol
[REDACTED]
Subject: Re: AFM meeting

Annabelle,

Thank you for your note. Tim told me you have spoken so you know he isn't coming over for AFM but I will be joined by Andrew Niccol who is going to write and direct the film.

Saturday 9th is good for Andrew and I. We are happy to come to your office at the Loews (although we won't be accredited, but perhaps you have visitors passes we could 'borrow' for the meeting). Or if you like we could meet for lunch in Santa Monica, whichever is more convenient and likely to be more confidential.

Best,

Stewart

On Oct 29, 2019, at 5:58 PM, Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Dear Tim and Stewart,

Hi there. I gather Stewart that you may be at AFM. The NZFC will have a stand there on the 5th floor of the Loews. Overall I am there from the 7th to the 12th. I have meetings around LA on Thursday Friday/ Tuesday but depending on where and when there are times that we might be able to match up on across those days. Saturday and Sunday are much looser/more available and generally I will be at the AFM in Santa Monica across those 2 days.

Let me know some options that might suit you

Best wishes
Annabelle

[<image002.jpg>](#)Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

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[<image003.png>](#) [<image004.jpg>](#)

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

Subject: 2.30pm Stewart Till / Andrew Niccol / Annabelle Sheehan
Location: Pico Restaurant, Shutters on the Beach, 1 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90405
Start: Sun 10/11/2019 11:30 a.m.
End: Sun 10/11/2019 12:30 p.m.
Recurrence: (none)
Meeting Status: Meeting organizer
Organizer: Annabelle Sheehan
Required Attendees: [REDACTED]; NZFC_Staff_Market_Diary

Stewart Till: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Andrew Niccol: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Annabelle Sheehan: [REDACTED] E: annabelles@nzfilm.co.nz

From: stewart till [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 10 November 2019 1:20 p.m.
To: Annabelle Sheehan
Cc: Tim White; [REDACTED]; Andrew Niccol
Subject: Re: AFM meeting

Annabelle,

Thank you for a very enjoyable lunch/ tea.

More importantly thank you for your much valued support and your endorsement of the direction we are taking.

Best

Stewart

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Annabelle Sheehan](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020
Date: Friday, 28 February 2020 4:08:59 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

Hi

Not aware of that at all? But good to know.

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Chris Payne <Chris@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, 28 February 2020 8:04 a.m.
To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020

FYI re Consulate General event attendance.

Confirming you/[REDACTED] are in touch with him and Tim re separate meeting?

Chris Payne

Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission

e: chris@nzfilm.co.nz

m: [REDACTED]

iPhone. iTypos. iApologise.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
Date: 28 February 2020 at 04:26:13 NZDT
To: Chris Payne <Chris@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020

Hi Chris,

Yes, I'm confirmed to be there on the 12th.

I believe Annabelle was also arranging a separate meeting with Tim White and myself while she is in LA.

Very best,

Andrew

On Feb 26, 2020, at 7:13 PM, Chris Payne <Chris@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Andrew

A quick courtesy note to check if you received the **attached** invitation, and if you might be able to attend?

Annabelle mentioned earlier today that she'd love to see you at the event if you can make it! At this stage I won't be travelling up for it, but will let you know if I do, as it'd be great to meet in-person.

All best

CP

[!\[\]\(47734e4656765d20df4fdbd5b7aff048_img.jpg\)](#)Chris Payne | Head of International Relations

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[!\[\]\(41aea2746216b27a6939d696d8e035da_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(990e790e6efb89997a442ee76392bbf4_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(c06ed410b39a7d6adc0183dd719caa28_img.jpg\)](#)

[!\[\]\(7bc43b319a082987e20f7bf78f4bab80_img.jpg\)](#)

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Chris Payne

Sent: Tuesday, 11 February 2020 10:03 a.m.

To: Andrew Niccol <[\[REDACTED\]](#)>

Subject: RE: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020

[REDACTED]

[<image012.jpg>](#) Chris Payne | Head of International Relations

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Wellington 6142

[REDACTED]

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[<image003.png>](#) [<image004.jpg>](#) [<image014.jpg>](#)

[<image016.jpg>](#)

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, 11 February 2020 9:42 a.m.

To: Chris Payne <Chris@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Re: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand
Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020

Thanks. I was aware of the project announced at Cannes. What is the other one?

On Feb 10, 2020, at 12:38 PM, Chris Payne

<Chris@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Andrew

Certainly – we'll circle back shortly with a formal invitation and set date.

Project is very much under my hat – only Annabelle and I are aware of it. Annabelle may have mentioned it when you met, but for courtesy/completeness, we're aware of two other proposed features on the topic, including [this one announced at Cannes last year](#) (we understand both projects are in early stages of development).

Thanks Andrew

CP

[<image002.jpg>](#) Chris Payne | Head of International Relations

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<image003.png> <image004.jpg> <image006.jpg>

<image008.jpg>

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 11 February 2020 6:22 a.m.
To: Chris Payne <Chris@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: [Save the Date] Cocktail Reception – New Zealand Residence – Los Angeles – March 2020

Hello Chris,

Too soon to know where I'll be in March but if I'm in town I'll try to make it.

Please let me know closer to the date. And please keep the March 15 project under your hat.

Very best,

Andrew

On Feb 4, 2020, at 2:21 PM, Chris Payne
<Chris@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Andrew

Happy New Year! I hope 2020 has started very well for you.

We're looking to hold a couple of events in Los Angeles in early March including a cocktail reception hosted with the New Zealand Consul-General to connect LA production, creative and funding personnel with New Zealand and New Zealanders.

As an acclaimed New Zealand filmmaker, we'd love to invite you to this and celebrate

the outstanding role you play on the global stage.

We're looking at holding this cocktail reception early evening on **Thursday 5 March** (or alternatively the following week on Wednesday 11 or Thursday 12 March – the coronavirus is a factor in everyone's plans at the moment, hence everything is tentative including these dates).

It'd be wonderful to know in the next day or two:

- if you'll be in LA then; and if so
- your availability to attend an early evening event in Brentwood on 5, 11 or 12 March.

This will help inform our planning and a formal invitation will follow with the confirmed date and venue details.

We hope you can join us in early March!

All best

Chris

P.S. Annabelle has updated me on the meeting she took with you and your collaborators in LA re: your March 15 terrorist attacks project. If I can assist in any way, just let me know – for instance, we have an [International Co-Development Fund](#) for feature film official co-productions and series projects with market partners, which might be of interest for this and/or other projects you're developing.

[<image002.jpg>](#) Chris Payne | Head of
International Relations
**New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu
Whakaata Taonga**
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[<image003.png>](#) [<image004.jpg>](#) [<image006.jpg>](#)

From: [Annabelle Sheehan](#)
To: [Tim White](#)
Subject: RE: Meeting in LA
Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2020 6:28:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

AH yes I see it it is in my diary.
Do you prefer I call you ?
My mobile is best if you call me
[REDACTED]

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Tim White [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 10 March 2020 5:42 p.m.
To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Meeting in LA

As planned tomorrow at 2.30pm LA. 10.30 am NZ. I inadvertently cancelled conference call, but we will all be on my Aus mobile [REDACTED]. ie meeting together in Santa Monica.
Shall I just call the Film Com office?

Sent from my iPhone

On 9 Mar 2020, at 7:07 pm, Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Tim

What date/time is good for you while you are in LA with Andrew?

Regards

[<image002.jpg>](#)

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED]

[.nz](#)

[<image003.png>](#)

[<image004.jpg>](#)

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Timothy A White [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 6 March 2020 4:03 p.m.
To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Meeting in LA

Hello

Did you receive the first draft screenplay from Andrew? It is strictly for your eyes only.

The script is strong, although it will clearly evolve and be enriched over coming drafts. We are thinking of a 2021 production.

I'm meeting Andrew and Stewart next Tuesday (Wed NZ). I'm sure they'd like you have a general conversation with you, but it does not have to be that day.

NB: I have made it clear to them that you/Film Com cannot play a proactive role or be a strong advocate, however you will be able to give guidance and also perhaps some support re NZ costs (research/local scouting/budgeting etc). Importantly, everyone is sensitive to timelines: the imminent anniversary of event; the lead to the general election; and the trial that is do to start mid year. We do not want to rush into making any announcement on the project.

Let me know if you want to chat further,

Very best
Tim

On 4 Mar 2020, at 2:53 pm, Annabelle Sheehan
<AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Sure. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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[Street, Wellington 6142](#)



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On 4/03/2020, at 4:49 PM, Timothy A White

 wrote:

Ok ... I'll discuss. With Andrew, Are you interested to reading a script?

<AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Tim


Sincere apologies. We have only just concluded our position today and we will be sending out notifications today I believe that we have had to cancel.

Even though I can't be in La in person perhaps you and Andrew can Skype me when you are together?

Sent from my iPhone



Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive
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On 4/03/2020, at 4:20 PM, Timothy A White
[REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Annabelle

Lisa Chatfield informed me yesterday that Film Akld had cancelled the Q&A screening of THE LUMINARIES.

I assume NZFC is following a similar decision and you will not be travelling to LA. It would be good to know for certain.

I've booked non-refundable tickets and accommodation (Film Akld was not meeting my costs) so I've decided to go ahead to meet Andrew Niccol and do a bunch of other industry meetings. My schedule is so crammed with three projects in post, there is no other likely time to do such a trip. It also seems the travel situation may only get worse before it gets better.

Best
Tim

On 28 Feb 2020, at 3:53 pm,
Tim White

[REDACTED]
wrote:

Hello from Perth (it picture lock day on a film I shot here last year).

I'm very much looking forward to a catch up. I'm in LA March 9-15. Have Luminaries screening Tuesday afternoon/evening.

Could meet Tuesday morning or anytime Wednesday, Thursday (except of course that evening) or Friday.

Andrew seems fairly flexible as he is in writing mode.

Cheers

Tim

Sent from my iPhone

On 28 Feb 2020,
at 11:10 am,
Annabelle
Sheehan
<AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>
wrote:

Hi
Time – looking forward to seeing you in LA.
And I think you were going to suggest a specific catch up with Andrew Niccol as well ? Let me know your dates in LA and we can set a time if you like

Best
Annabelle

<[image002.jpg](#)>
Annabelle

From: [Annabelle Sheehan](#)
To: [Andrew Niccol](#)
Subject: RE:
Date: Friday, 6 March 2020 12:36:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image005.jpg](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)

Woops pressed send too quickly -thank you so much for sending it. Sorry I wont see you this coming week in person and I look forward to catching up via a skype or call instead

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Annabelle Sheehan

Sent: Friday, 6 March 2020 12:36 p.m.

To: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]

Subject: RE:

Thanks Yes Andrew apologies it has been a busy time

Annabelle Sheehan | Chief Executive

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, 6 March 2020 12:21 p.m.

To: Annabelle Sheehan <AnnabelleS@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Re:

Just checking you received this. Thanks.

On Mar 4, 2020, at 8:55 AM, Andrew Niccol [REDACTED] > wrote:

Hello Annabelle,

I'm sorry I won't be seeing you in person next week but quite understandable.

I attach an early draft of THEY ARE US.

Please keep this confidential. I look forward to discussing it with you.

Very best,

Andrew

<THEY ARE US Mar 4, 2020 - A. Sheehan.pdf>

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: [Project Headlines] They Are Us
Date: Monday, 6 April 2020 4:06:55 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image006.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)

From debrief with Annabelle Sheehan 2 April 2020, recalling a 11 March 2020 conversation with Andrew and Tim:

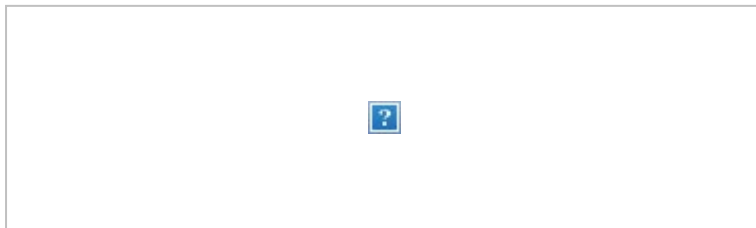
- 15 March terror attacks project by Andrew Niccol and Tim White.
- Working title is *They Are Us*.
- UAE producer [Ayman Jamal \(Barajoun Entertainment\)](#) is attached – bringing funding.
- Not set up as a co-production at this stage, but rather a solely NZ film with international finance.
- Wants the PM to read the project after the September 2020 election.
- Was planning to shoot late summer 2021 (Feb/Mar 2021?) but likely to slide due to CV-19.
- Potentially interested in NZFC dev funding – would want to do EDF/ADF but not have to apply i.e. CEOD.
- [REDACTED] (US\$ or NZ\$ TBC).

Chris Payne | Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142


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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: 
To: [Leanne Saunders](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: FW: International project - request for introductory call w/c 7 June
Date: Thursday, 3 June 2021 2:00:04 p.m.
Attachments: [image011.jpg](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.jpg](#)
[image017.png](#)
[image018.png](#)
[image019.png](#)
[image020.jpg](#)
[image021.png](#)
[image022.png](#)
[image023.png](#)
[image024.jpg](#)
[image025.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

Kia ora koutou,

Progress update – Philippa Campbell and I have been corresponding on this meeting request by the “They Are Us” project team (Philippa, Stewart Till and Andrew Nicoll) and have landed on the following date/time:

- Wed 9 Jun 8.30am NZ / [*Tue 8 Jun*] 4.30pm NY / 1.30pm LA.
- Philippa indicated that producer Ayman Jamal will be tentatively attending from Dubai at the delightful hour of 12.30am (I asked if it would be better to find a time less in the dead of night and she let me know that Ayman is fine with the original time).

I will send a HOLD to calendars shortly.

Cheers,



Ngā mihi

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 2 June 2021 4:14 p.m.

To: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]

Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: International project - request for introductory call w/c 7 June

Kia ora Philippa

Thanks very much for this email, and sorry to miss your call earlier today.

I'm aware of this project through earlier engagement with Andrew, and wondered where it was sitting, so great to get this update. From memory, Tim White was part of earlier engagement on this with Annabelle both here and in LA – is he no longer/still involved in any capacity?

I've looped in Mladen here in his Acting CEO capacity, too, for his awareness.

In terms of scheduling, Leanne's team member, [REDACTED] (cc'ed) can coordinate diaries on our side and come back to you ASAP with options and Teams link etc.

Look forward to hearing more next week, and confirming supplied information is received, and will be retained, in confidence.

Take care

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

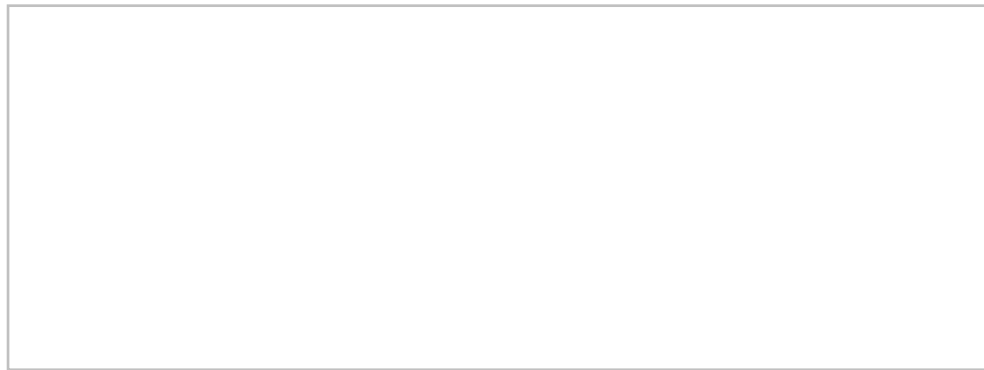
[REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 2 June 2021 9:44 a.m.
To: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>;
Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: International project - request for introductory call w/c 7 June

Kia ora koutou,

Some time ago Stewart Till met with Annabelle to introduce her to the feature project "They Are Us" written and to be directed by Andrew Nicoll. The film charts the key events of first week after the tragedy of the Christchurch terror attack exploring community stories and a political story of the government response.

We're very excited about recent progress with packaging and I would like to set up a call with Andrew, Stewart and myself next week to introduce the project to the NZFC in more detail prior to its announcement at Cannes.

We are in a number of time zones and it would be helpful for us if the call could be NZ morning Tues 8, Weds 9, Thurs 10 June. The timing of the announcement is Friday 11 June ie NZ Saturday. I know that it's a really busy time for you all and coordinating diaries is tricky but if you could get back to me with a couple of options I'll confirm with Andrew and Stewart.

I'm very pleased to be associated with the kaupapa of the film and look forward to discussing it with you in more detail.

We would appreciate it if you could keep this confidential. Many thanks and look forward to hearing back.

Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: FW: They Are Us Press Release Coverage #1
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 5:19:24 p.m.

Light reading!

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 at 10:29 AM
To: Glen Basner [REDACTED] >, Stewart Till [REDACTED]
Cc: Ayman Jamal [REDACTED], Philippa Campbell
[REDACTED] z>, Andrew Niccol [REDACTED], Heta Paarte
<[REDACTED]>, Cat Fisher [REDACTED] >
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Hi Everyone,

Please find below the initial coverage of today's announcement.

DEADLINE

By Diana Lodderhose

Rose Byrne To Star As New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern In 'They Are Us' About Response To 2019 Christchurch Attacks – Cannes Market

<https://deadline.com/2021/06/rose-byrne-new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-they-are-us-cannes-market-1234772989/>

VARIETY

By Brent Lang

Rose Byrne Starring in 'They Are Us' for Director Andrew Niccol

<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/>

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

By Alex Ritman

Rose Byrne to Play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in Andrew Niccol's 'They Are Us'

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/rose-byrne-jacinda-ardern-andrew-niccol-cannes-they-are-us-new-zealand-mosque-shooting-1234965908/>

SCREENDAILY

By Jeremy Kay

Rose Byrne to play NZ leader in Cannes package 'They Are Us' for FilmNation, CAA

<https://www.screendaily.com/news/rose-byrne-to-play-nz-leader-in-cannes-package-they-are->

[us-for-filmnation-cao/5160402.article](https://www.us-for-filmnation-cao/5160402.article)

THE WRAP

By Brian Welk

Rose Byrne to Star as New Zealand Prime Minister Who Banned Assault Rifles After Mosque Shootings

<https://www.thewrap.com/rose-byrne-they-are-us-film-jacinda-ardern-new-zealand-prime-minister/>

YAHOO! *Variety repost

By Brent Lang

Rose Byrne Starring in 'They Are Us' for Director Andrew Niccol

<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/>

NEW ZEALAND HERALD

By Staff

Christchurch mosque shootings: Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in new film 'They Are Us'

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/christchurch-mosque-shootings-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-new-film-they-are-us/WDOP6HCBWVQB5C4Y2V5HLT33FM/>

RZN

By Staff

Actress Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mosque attacks - report

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/444485/actress-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-film-based-on-christchurch-mosque-attacks-report>

SUFF.COM.NZ

By Darren Bevan

Rose Byrne to play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mosque shootings

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/125409871/rose-byrne-to-play-new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-in-film-based-on-christchurch-mosque-shootings>

NEWSHUB

By Jamie Ensor

Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in Christchurch terror attack film - report

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/entertainment/2021/06/rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-christchurch-terror-attack-film-report.html>

TVNZ

By Staff

Hollywood star Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in film about Christchurch mosque attacks

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/hollywood-star-rose-byrne-play-jacinda-ardern-in-film-christchurch-mosque-attacks>

INDEPENDENT

By Rachel Brodsky

Rose Byrne to play Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film about 2019 New Zealand mosque shooting

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/rose-byrne-new-zealand-jacinda-ardern-b1863751.html>

THE SPINOFF

By Stewart Sowman-Lund

Live updates, June 11: Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in new film

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/11-06-2021/live-updates-june-11-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-new-film/>

DARK HORIZONS

By Garth Franklin

Rose Byrne to Play NZ PM Jacinda Ardern

<https://www.darkhorizons.com/rose-byrne-to-play-nz-pm-jacinda-ardern/>

MSN *Repost from Independent

By Rachel Brodsky

Rose Byrne to play Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film about 2019 New Zealand mosque shooting

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/rose-byrne-new-zealand-jacinda-ardern-b1863751.html>

STAR NEWS

By Staff

Rose Byrne to play PM in film based on mosque attacks - report

<https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-lifestyle/star-entertainment/rose-byrne-play-pm-film-based-mosque-attacks-report>

JUST JARED

By Staff

Rose Byrne to Play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in New Film 'They Are Us'

<http://www.justjared.com/photo-gallery/4567541/rose-bryne-casting-prime-minister-04/>

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation Entertainment

 | www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011

Coming Soon: www.filmnation.com/coming-soon

This email and any attached files are confidential.

If this message was not intended for you, please inform the sender and delete the email.

From: Glen Basner [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 4:14 PM
To: Stewart Till [REDACTED], Carmen Irabien <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Ayman Jamal [REDACTED], Philippa Campbell
[REDACTED] Andrew Niccol [REDACTED], Heta Paarte
[REDACTED] Cat Fisher [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

We are off!

Glen Basner | CEO | **FilmNation Entertainment**
Direct: +[REDACTED] | www.filmnation.com
FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011

Coming Soon: www.filmnation.com/coming-soon

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From: Stewart Till [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 4:02 PM
To: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]
Cc: Ayman Jamal [REDACTED] Philippa Campbell
[REDACTED] Andrew Niccol [REDACTED], Heta Paarte
[REDACTED], Glen Basner [REDACTED], Cat Fisher
[REDACTED]
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Carmen,

I echo Ayman's message.

On Jun 10, 2021, at 3:07 PM, Ayman Jamal [REDACTED] > wrote:

Great news.
Thank you Carmen for all your efforts and filmnation team.

Regards,
Ayman

Sent from my iPhone

On 10 Jun 2021, at 23:04, Carmen Irabien
[REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Everyone,

The embargo just lifted and the trades have started to blast the news.
Below is a link to Deadlines coverage. I will compile all coverage and
send your way this afternoon.

<https://deadline.com/2021/06/rose-byrne-new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-they-are-us-cannes-market-1234772989/>

We're excited that the news is finally out!
Carmen

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation Entertainment

[REDACTED]

| www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor, New York,
NY 10011

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From: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 7:28 AM
To: stewart till [REDACTED]
Cc: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED], Andrew
Niccol [REDACTED] >, Ayman Jamal
[REDACTED] Heta Paarte
[REDACTED] >, Glen Basner
[REDACTED], Cat Fisher
[REDACTED]
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Hi Everyone,

We received final approval from Rose's team. Please find attached the final version of the release for your records. As discussed, we'll share with press this morning for a Noon PDT announcement.

Rose is in the middle of press for Peter Rabbit 2 and Physical so she unfortunately wasn't able to provide a quote – this is why the approval came later than expected.

I'll share the coverage with everyone on this chain today as it breaks.

All my best,
Carmen

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation Entertainment

[REDACTED]

| www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011

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From: stewart till [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 9:27 PM
To: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]
Cc: Philippa Campbell <[REDACTED]>, Andrew Niccol [REDACTED], Ayman Jamal [REDACTED], Heta Paarte [REDACTED], Glen Basner [REDACTED], Cat Fisher [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Carmen,

Thanks for update.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 9, 2021, at 21:20, Carmen Irabien

[REDACTED] > wrote:

Hi Everyone,

Quick update, we are waiting for final sign off from Rose's team, which we are expecting by tomorrow morning EDT. We'll still have enough time to share with press for the Noon PDT announcement. I'll share the final version of the release on this chain once it's ready.

All my best,
Carmen

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation
Entertainment

[REDACTED]
| www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor,
New York, NY 10011

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the sender and delete the email.

From: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]

Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 9:11 AM

To: Philippa Campbell

[REDACTED], Stewart Till

[REDACTED] >

Cc: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED],

Ayman Jamal [REDACTED] Heta Paarte

[REDACTED] >, Glen Basner

[REDACTED], Cat Fisher

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Thank you so much for flagging. Confirming this has been fixed.

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation
Entertainment

[REDACTED]
| www.filmnation.com

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New York, NY 10011

Coming Soon: www.filmnation.com/coming-soon

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the sender and delete the email.

From: Philippa Campbell

<[REDACTED]>

Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 11:06 PM

To: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]

stewart till [REDACTED]

Cc: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]

Ayman Jamal [REDACTED] Heta Paarte

[REDACTED] >, Glen Basner

[REDACTED] >, Cat Fisher

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Hello there,

Please could you correct the spelling of the NZ PM's
name in the release – it is *Ardern* not Arden.
Many thanks.

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]

Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 at 10:14 AM

To: stewart till [REDACTED]

Cc: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED],

Ayman Jamal [REDACTED], Philippa

Campbell [REDACTED] Heta
Paarte [REDACTED], Glen Basner
[REDACTED] Cat Fisher
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release

Thank you, Stewart. Confirming receipt. I'll share this version of the release with Rose's team for their approval.

*

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation
Entertainment

Direct: [REDACTED]

| www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor,
New York, NY 10011

Coming Soon: www.filmnation.com/coming-soon

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the sender and delete the email.

From: stewart till [REDACTED]
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:12 PM
To: Carmen Irabien [REDACTED]
Cc: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
Ayman Jamal [REDACTED] >, Philippa
Campbell [REDACTED] Heta
Paarte <[REDACTED]>, Glen Basner
[REDACTED] Cat Fisher
[REDACTED]

Subject: Fwd: They Are Us Press Release

Carmen,

Here is the approved release.

Please call me if any questions whatsoever!

And just to confirm it will go out at 12pm on
Thursday PST.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Andrew Niccol
[REDACTED] >
Date: June 8, 2021 at 10:30:16 EDT
To [REDACTED]
Subject: They Are Us Press Release

**Andrew
Niccol
to
Direct
Rose
Byrne
as
Jacinda
Arden
in
“They
Are
Us”,
FilmNation
and
CAA
Media
Finance
Group
Launching
Sales
at
Cannes
Virtual
Market**

New
York,
NY
&
Los
Angeles,
CA.

June
XX
2021

—

Rose
Byrne
(Mrs.
America,
Bridesmaids)
is
set
to
play
Jacinda
Arden
in
“They
Are
Us”
written
and
to
be
directed
by
Andrew
Niccol.
FilmNation
Entertainment
will
unveil
the
project
to
international
buyers
at
the
upcoming
Cannes
Virtual
Market
with
CAA
submitting
to
domestic
and

worldwide
distributors.

The
film,
which
takes
place
during
the
week
following
the
Christchurch
attacks
on
New
Zealand's
Muslim
community,
is
an
inspirational
story
about
the
young
leader's
response
to
the
tragic
events,
and
the
remarkable
achievements
of
her
government
and
citizens
who
rallied
behind
her
message
of

compassion
and
unity
to
ban
assault
rifles
in
New
Zealand.
“They
are
Us”
comes
from
Arden’s
powerful
speech
describing
the
victims
of
the
attack.
The
film
is
being
produced
by
Ayman
Jamal,
Stewart
Till,
Niccol,
and
Philippa
Campbell.
Production
will
take
place
in
New
Zealand.
The
script
was

developed
in
consultation
with
several
members
of
the
mosques
affected
by
the
tragedy.

"“They
Are
Us”
is
not
so
much
about
the
attack
but
the
response
to
the
attack.
How
an
unprecedented
act
of
hate
was
overcome
by
an
outpouring
of
love
and
support.
The
film
addresses

our
common
humanity
which
is
why
I
think
it
will
speak
to
people
around
the
world.
It is
an
example
of
how
we
should
respond
when
there's
an
attack
on
our
fellow
human
beings."
said
Andrew
Niccol
in a
statement.

ADD
ROSE
BYRNE
QUOTE
(FilmNation
in
touch
with
her

team
to
supply)

“We
are
thrilled
to
bring
to
market
this
inspiring
true
story
about
the
positive
impact,
even
in
the
darkest
of
moments,
a
strong
leader
can
have
on
their
constituents’
lives
when
they
work
from
a
place
of
compassion,
love,
and
an
unwavering
conviction
to

do
what
is
right.”
Said
FilmNation
CEO
Glen
Basner

CAA
Media
Finance
is
co-
representing
domestic
rights
with
FilmNation.

Both
Niccol
and
Byrne
are
repped
by
CAA.

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Philippa Mossman](#); [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: Re: Thanks "They Are Us"
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:26:36 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Thanks Chris.

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 at 11:34 AM
To: Philippa Campbell <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>, Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Hi Philippa

Thanks very much from us for a really great meeting, and confirming I've since received a copy of the screenplay directly from Andrew, in addition to your subsequently supplied embargoed briefing.

I'll come back on the group email now separately.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

cid:image006.jpg@01D75D21.F54717E0



From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:30 a.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman
<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Thanks "They Are Us"

Kia ora Koutou,

Many thanks for the welcome to my international colleagues, and to Andrew on the call just now to discuss 'They Are Us'. Please don't hesitate to follow up with additional questions, and I'll also be in touch from our perspective if things come up we would like clarified.
I'll send through the press release and a script for you to read this morning.


Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Cc: [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 3:21:50 p.m.
Attachments: [PRESS RELEASE Announcement June 21 v 1.docx](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.jpg](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image013.jpg](#)
[image015.jpg](#)
[image016.jpg](#)

Corrected release from Philippa C is attached.

Philippa Mossman
NZFC


From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 2:53 p.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>;
Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

All looks great! Tx Chris

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Hi Jas

Further to our chat (and for the benefit of others on this chain) confirming:

- I'll draft an overview briefing document for review by all on this chain, to then be reviewed and approved by Philippa Campbell, for supply to Anna Butler along with the embargoed (and corrected!) press release; and
- You and I will liaise with Philippa Campbell to confirm the NZFC's reactive statements.

Let me know if I've missed/misconstrued anything!

CP

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From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:59 p.m.

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Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Thanks Chris

We need reactive statements as to the NZFC's involvement in term of development, production and incentive funding. We need to have a timeline for media and Government. I would almost have preferred that we were advised of this production but there it is.

Who will lead on the reactivities please?

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
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Mladen – will come and see you.

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
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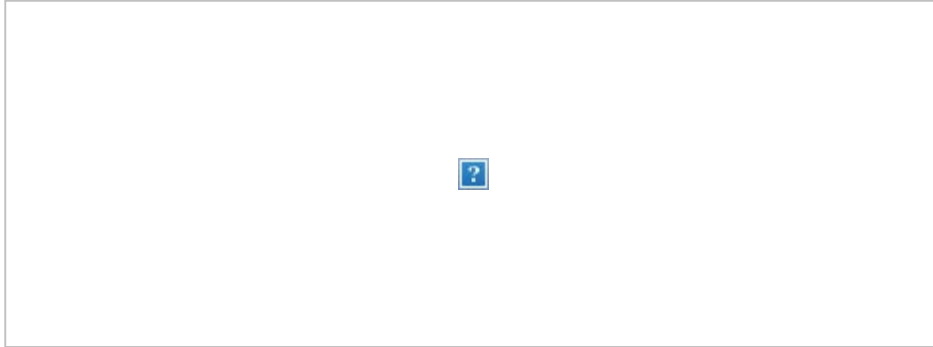
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<jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

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Sounds very good.

Thanks for the note.

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NZFC
[REDACTED]

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

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I've also provided Jasmin (cc'ed) with a verbal overview of the meeting this morning and our sequencing in terms of Government "no surprises" briefings. Jasmin has the contact details for the relevant person in the PMO we can engage with following briefing Anna Butler as/if required.

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Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Hi all

I have an external at 1030 so won't join for this but Chris and I have exchanged some thoughts and I will catch up with you all a bit later.

Philippa

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Subject: FW: Thanks "They Are Us"
Importance: High

Hi Mladen

Let's find a time today for a chat ASAP on this – we'll need to determine best approach to briefing Ministries/Ministers and PMO.

Cheers

CP

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I'll send through the press release and a script for you to read this morning.

Ngā mihi nui,

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Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Cc: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Leanne Saunders](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 2:04:19 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[They Are Us - Press Release \(Embargoed Until 7am 11 June 2021 NZT\).pdf](#)
[They Are Us - Backgrounder \(Confidential\).pdf](#)
[image005.jpg](#)
[image011.jpg](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image013.jpg](#)
Importance: High

Hi Mladen

As mentioned, revised backgrounder PDF **attached** – I just spotted a rogue gremlin. I've added the finalised press release here (which is the same as the previous one) so everything's captured/filed in a single email.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
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From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 1:56 p.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Importance: High

Hi Mladen

Please find **attached** finalised copies of the:

- production's embargoed press release; and
- backgrounder for MCH and PMO only.

Grateful if you could supply to Anna Butler and also to Kerry as discussed.

Jas and I will now engage with Philippa (Campbell) re: reactive messaging.

Thanks

CP

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations

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Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney

<jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

I have now given Anna Butler (MCH) a very brief overview of the project and the pending press

release.

Chris – she suggested putting together a written note setting out the project and key players that could be passed on to the PM, if and when needed.

M

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:05 p.m.
To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
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[REDACTED]

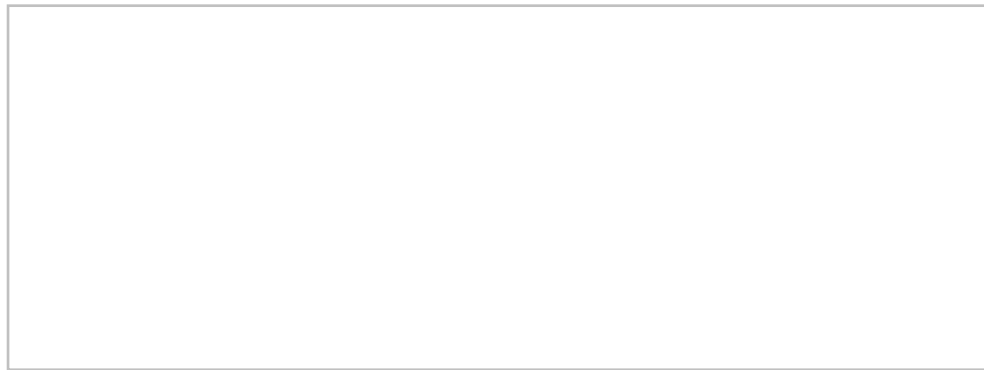
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Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: They Are Us - Call Notes
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:46:19 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.jpg](#)
[image007.jpg](#)

Andrew Niccol, Stewart Till, Philippa Campbell, CP, PM, LS (arrived late)

Stewart

FilmNation handling international sales with CAA (Roeg Sutherland – reps Andrew and Rose) for domestic, and looking for worldwide sale or streamer

Has read six drafts and still cries

Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern – to be announced in Cannes

Very distinct approach, very deliberate objective in terms of message to audience

Ayman Jamal went to Stewart with the idea, has to be created out of NZ, engaged Andrew as ideal choice as writer/director

Budget [REDACTED], shoot end of year but not yet scheduled

Andrew

Ayman has done interviews with the two mosques – Imams in Arabic, not naming names out of respect

Love letter to Jacinda and to the two mosques

Takes place over a week – Friday to Friday, prayer day to prayer day

Inspiring story of what Jacinda was able to achieve over that week

Mirror the approach that Jacinda took in real life – never show the gunman, livestream, don't say his name, don't show his manifesto – he's kept away just as the real events, mostly focuses on the heroism that happened during the attack, acts of sacrifice and what Jacinda was able to accomplish during that week, banning assault weapons in six days

Ayman

In the past 40 years I haven't seen conflict in the world handled in the way that Jacinda did
Conflict to unity

Whole community – Jews, Christians etc. came together

Humanity touched me

Hello Brother – not telling from victims' POV as best approach, best one is Jacinda

Met 12-14 from the victims and survivors' families, including the two Imams

Stewart

Leave the cinema feeling heartened and slightly joyous at even the most evil of times

About gun control and mankind coming together

Very accurate and truthful

Andrew

First inspiring film about a massacre?

Not so much about the attack but rather the response/reply

Act of hate overcome by love and support

Ayman

Not that it happened, but how could it happen in NZ?
Six weeks post at PRP

Stewart

Variety

Andrew

Ayman will contact the two mosques to let them know ahead of time
Jacinda won't support or oppose it – will probably stay neutral

Live early Thursday afternoon LA time – 2pm (embargoed until then)
Wouldn't film in either of the mosques, or exteriors (?)
NZSPG 40% and maybe Additional Grant – will have a better sense of financing structure after Cannes

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To: [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Cc: [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: RE: [FOR REVIEW] They Are Us - Backgrounder
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 11:11:00 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image017.png](#)
[image018.png](#)
[image019.png](#)
[image020.jpg](#)
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[image028.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)

I think it is important to add as media will alter the release to suit the tone of their publication so you can never guarantee that what is published will be as per the press release.

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
13, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 10:55 a.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: [FOR REVIEW] They Are Us - Backgrounder

Good note. I'm trying to avoid duplication in the press release ie people read the release first and then the backgrounder, but it would be prudent to include your note in case they don't read the press release (unlikely I know!) or if the backgrounder gets inadvertently orphaned.

Chris Payne
Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 10:51:20 AM
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: [FOR REVIEW] They Are Us - Backgrounder

It looks good, but what's missing is a sentence at the start that summarises the nature of the project. Something like – The producers intend to make a feature film focussing on the seven days following the Christchurch terrorist attack in 2019.

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 10:33 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: [FOR REVIEW] They Are Us - Backgrounder
Importance: High

Hi all

So here's a first pass at a backgrounder.

Any all feedback welcomed – feel free to track changes (slash and burn totally fine!) direct to doc.

Once we're happy with this will provide to Philippa Campbell ASAP today for review and suggest Teams/call with her on reactives for you and me, Jas.

Cheers

CP

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 2:53 p.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>;
Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

All looks great! Tx Chris

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 2:51 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Hi Jas

Further to our chat (and for the benefit of others on this chain) confirming:

- I'll draft an overview briefing document for review by all on this chain, to then be reviewed and approved by Philippa Campbell, for supply to Anna Butler along with the embargoed (and corrected!) press release; and
- You and I will liaise with Philippa Campbell to confirm the NZFC's reactive statements.

Let me know if I've missed/misconstrued anything!

CP

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

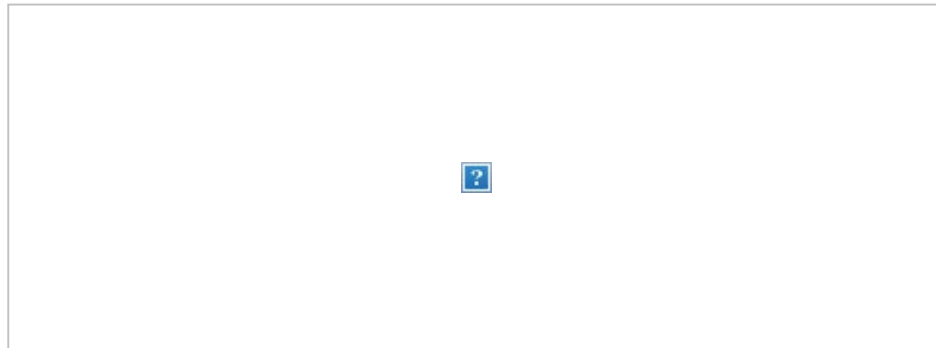
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From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:59 p.m.

To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>;
Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Thanks Chris

We need reactive statements as to the NZFC's involvement in term of development, production and incentive funding. We need to have a timeline for media and Government. I would almost have preferred that we were advised of this production but there it is.

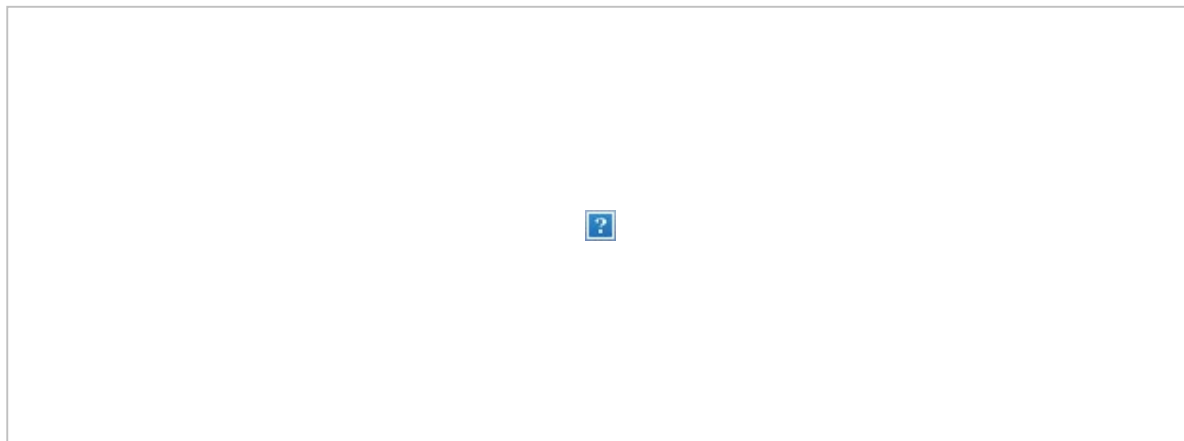
Who will lead on the reactivities please?

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:05 p.m.
To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Noting that we'll now need to move quicker than I indicated below, given their embargoed press release (Jas – **attached** FYI) is going out **7am this Friday 11 June NZT**.

Mladen – will come and see you.

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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[REDACTED] www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 11:59 a.m.


To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Sounds very good.

Thanks for the note.

Philippa Mossman
NZFC


From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 11:24 a.m.

To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Thanks P.

Noting here that I've briefed Mladen and he's engaging with Anna Butler to set an in-person briefing meeting at some point this week ideally (hopefully Friday afternoon).

Mladen will be seeing Kerry P on Friday morning, so can provide a verbal briefing to her at that time.

I've also provided Jasmin (cc'ed) with a verbal overview of the meeting this morning and our sequencing in terms of Government "no surprises" briefings. Jasmin has the contact details for the relevant person in the PMO we can engage with following briefing Anna Butler as/if required.

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

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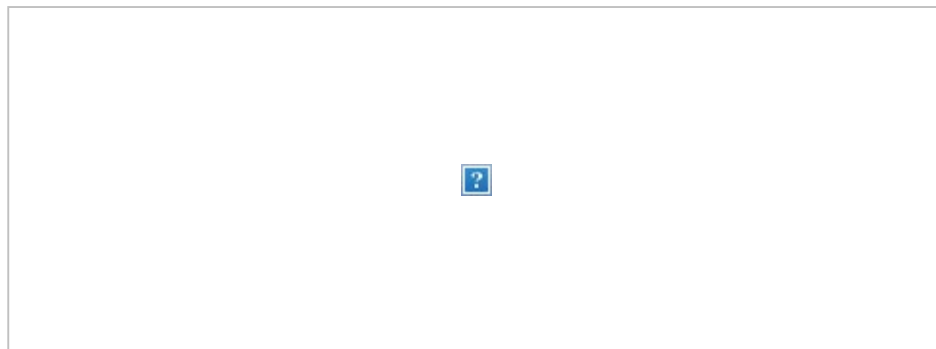
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From: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:53 a.m.

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>


Cc: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Hi all

I have an external at 1030 so won't join for this but Chris and I have exchanged some thoughts and I will catch up with you all a bit later.

Philippa

Philippa Mossman
NZFC


From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:51 a.m.

To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

I am free at 10.30am.

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:41 a.m.

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: FW: Thanks "They Are Us"

Importance: High

Hi Mladen

Let's find a time today for a chat ASAP on this – we'll need to determine best approach to briefing Ministries/Ministers and PMO.

Cheers

CP

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Campbell

Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:30 a.m.

To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Thanks "They Are Us"

Kia ora Koutou,

Many thanks for the welcome to my international colleagues, and to Andrew on the call just now to discuss 'They Are Us'. Please don't hesitate to follow up with additional questions, and I'll also be in touch from our perspective if things come up we would like clarified.

I'll send through the press release and a script for you to read this morning.

Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [stewart till](#); [Andrew Niccol](#); [Ayman Jamal](#); [Philippa Mossman](#); [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 12:29:19 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Hi Chris,

We look forward to talking further as you navigate the various communication channels. We very much appreciate the energy and care you are giving to the launch of the film In New Zealand.

Ngā mihi nui,
Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 at 11:54 AM
To: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Cc: stewart till [REDACTED], Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
Ayman Jamal [REDACTED], Philippa Mossman
<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>, Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed

Hi Philippa

Thanks to you, Andrew, Stewart and Ayman for an excellent meeting.

Confirming receipt of the press release and noting the embargo timeframe.

I have liaised with Mladen Ivancic (Acting CEO) on this, and we will brief the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) in the first instance and agree—jointly with MCH—on the most appropriate approach to briefing additional relevant NZ Inc parties including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) as appropriate.

Noting here your willingness for us to on-supply your and Stewart's mobile numbers – thank you.

We'll come back to you once we've confirmed most appropriate form of engagement/s.

Feel free to get in touch with any queries or comments at any time, and we'll be sure to do the same.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

cid:image006.jpg@01D75D25.3E382900



From: Philippa Campbell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 10:41 a.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Stewart till <[REDACTED]>; Andrew Niccol <[REDACTED]>; Ayman Jamal <[REDACTED]>
Subject: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed

Kia ora Koutou,

Attached is the embargoed press release as we discussed, to send through in your communications to Government about the upcoming film "They Are Us". We understand you will be consulting internally and look forward to hearing about what you think the best approach is, in particular to the Prime Minister's department.

Apologies for the lack of time you have to think this through, we regret the pressure of this but as is the way in our industry, momentum is a fine thing! Please note too that CAA have requested the embargo be brought forward by 2 hours, the timing is noted on the release.

Please feel free to pass on both Stewart's and my phone numbers to officials if they would like to follow up with us directly.

Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

Stewart Till: + [REDACTED]

Philippa Campbell: + [REDACTED]

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: Re: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 12:07:31 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Thanks Chris, and thanks for the engagement in the project at this delicate stage.
I'll get back to you as soon as I can, noting that deadline.

Best,
Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 at 12:03 PM
To: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>, Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed

Hi Philippa

Great to talk just now.

As mentioned, here's a draft backgrounder which we intend to supply with your revised embargoed press release. I've **attached** both documents here for completeness.

Once you've had a chance to review, grateful if Jas and I could speak with you about required modifications from you and the team, and also agree on key reactive messages for us to have on hand.

As noted, we're working to a tight turnaround for this, so would love to have this all finalised over the next 1-2 hours max.

Look forward to hearing from you when able – happy to set a Teams or call, whatever's best for you.

Cheers

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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cid:image006.jpg@01D75DEF.6D46EA90



From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 10:41 a.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Stewart Till <[REDACTED]>; Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]; Ayman Jamal [REDACTED]
Subject: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed

Kia ora Koutou,

Attached is the embargoed press release as we discussed, to send through in your communications to Government about the upcoming film "They Are Us". We understand you will be consulting internally and look forward to hearing about what you think the best approach is, in particular to the Prime Minister's department.

Apologies for the lack of time you have to think this through, we regret the pressure of this but as is the way in our industry, momentum is a fine thing! Please note too that CAA have requested the embargo be brought forward by 2 hours, the timing is noted on the release.

Please feel free to pass on both Stewart's and my phone numbers to officials if they would like to follow up with us directly.

Ngā mihi nui,

Philippa

Stewart Till: +[REDACTED]

Philippa Campbell: + [REDACTED]

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Leanne Saunders](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: Re: THEY ARE US
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 8:04:56 a.m.
Sensitivity: Confidential

Hi Chris

I read Andrew's script last night.

Will chat with you on a couple of thoughts when I am in the office after an external 830am, ie eta 935am.

Philippa

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 12:00:28 PM
To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: THEY ARE US

FYI in continuing confidence per below

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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-----Original Message-----

From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 11:47 a.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: THEY ARE US

Absolutely the others in your team should read. I just meant to keep it in house.

For instance, I wouldn't want the Prime Minister's office reading it.

> On Jun 8, 2021, at 4:38 PM, Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:
>
> Hi Andrew
>
> Likewise, thanks for a really great meeting.
>
> Excellent, too, to put a face to a name -- albeit virtually! -- after our emailing.
>
> Thanks for supplying -- very much looking forward to the read.
>
> For clarity, are you happy for Mladen Ivancic (Acting CEO), Leanne Saunders (Head of Development & Production) and/or Philippa Mossman (Head of International Screen Attraction) to also read, or would you prefer that only I read on behalf of the NZFC?
>
> All best
>
> Chris
>
>
> Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International
> Relations New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga Level
> 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street,
> Wellington 6142
> [REDACTED]
> www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz
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> Please consider the environment before printing this email.
>
>
>
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Andrew Niccol [REDACTED]
> Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 9:39 a.m.
> To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
> Subject: THEY ARE US
>
> Chris,
>
> Great speaking with you all.
>
> Attached is the latest draft. Please keep it between us for now.
>
> Best regards,
>
> Andrew
>

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Philippa Campbell](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: RE: They Are Us
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 2:07:18 p.m.
Attachments: [image006.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.jpg](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
[image017.jpg](#)
[They Are Us - Backgrounder \(Confidential\).pdf](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
Importance: High

Hi Philippa

Thanks very much for this – have incorporated all tweaks.

Attached for your records is the final supplied just now with your revised press release to MCH (which we understand will on-supply to the Prime Minister's Office) and to NZFC Chair, Dame Kerry Prendergast for her awareness.

How are you placed now onwards for a chat with Jas and me re: reactive messaging?

All best

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 1:36 p.m.
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: They Are Us

Hi Chris,

Here's a minimally amended background document.
Unfortunately because of the time difference I have not been able to raise Ayman, but will send on any comments which you may be able to use as additional context.

Best,
Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 at 1:09 PM
To: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>, Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: They Are Us

Fantastic – many thanks, Philippa.

Look forward to talking further soon.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Campbell <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 1:03 p.m.

To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: They Are Us

Brief update – have signoff from Andrew and Stewart, just chasing Aymon. Will revert at 1.15 pm.

Also, I have asked Andrew and Aymon to provide us with quotes which can be passed on to the NZ media in response to inquiries.

Talk soon.

Philippa

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Philippa Mossman](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Leanne Saunders](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: Re: "They Are Us"
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 7:43:02 p.m.
Attachments: [image007.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.jpg](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image013.jpg](#)

FilmNation have sent though all the media links so far. Can share on Monday.

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission
[REDACTED]

iSent this from my iPhone

From: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:10:31 PM
To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: "They Are Us"

Philippa Campbell quoted on One News story, which promo'd their piece with "tone deaf film".

Piece did include an interview w a survivor who is pro the film (as well as w a vocal detractor)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 5:35:24 PM
To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: "They Are Us"

Thanks – looping in Mladen and Jas here too for their awareness



Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



From: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 5:26 p.m.

To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: "They Are Us"

Thanks.

You've probably seen this:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/300330619/muslim-community-was-blindsided-by-news-of-upcoming-film-about-christchurch-mosque-attacks-members-say>

Bree Loverich from Screen Canterbury was approached by One News for an interview. After discussion with the ChristchurchNZ comms team she declined to be interviewed.

P

Philippa Mossman

NZFC



From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 5:11 p.m.

To: Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Fwd: "They Are Us"

FYI both — closing the loop for you on this

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: Hannah Newport-Watson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 5:00:17 PM
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Anna Butler <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: "They Are Us"

Hi Mladen,

Just fyi – this is the response the PM's office is sending to media queries regarding "They Are Us":

A spokesperson for the Prime Minister said the Prime Minister and the Government have no involvement with the film.

Wishing you a good weekend.

Hannah

From: Hannah Newport-Watson
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 2:30 PM
To: 'Mladen Ivancic' <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Anna Butler <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: "They Are Us"

Hi Mladen,

Safely received, with thanks. The backgrounder looks very helpful. I have shared both with the PM's Chief Press Secretary, and will be in touch if they come back with any queries for NZFC.

Best regards,
Hannah

Hannah Newport-Watson | Private Secretary – Arts, Culture and Heritage

[REDACTED]
Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni MP, Minister for Social Development & Employment, Minister for Disability Issues, Minister for ACC and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

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From: Mladen Ivancic [<mailto:mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>]

Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 2:18 PM

To: Anna Butler [REDACTED] Hannah Newport-Watson [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney
<jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: "They Are Us"

Importance: High

Hi Anna and Hannah

As per earlier conversations please find attached more details about the film project THEY ARE US.

Let us know if you have any follow up queries.

Regards

Mladen

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 1:56 p.m.

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders
<leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Thanks "They Are Us"

Importance: High

Hi Mladen

Please find **attached** finalised copies of the:

- production's embargoed press release; and
- backgrounder for MCH and PMO only.

Grateful if you could supply to Anna Butler and also to Kerry as discussed.

Jas and I will now engage with Philippa (Campbell) re: reactive messaging.

Thanks

THEY ARE US FEATURE FILM – BACKGROUNDER

This confidential document accompanies the embargoed press release for the *They Are Us* feature film project. The press release is embargoed until 7am Friday 11 June 2021 NZT. This document provides high level additional context on the project for MCH and the Prime Minister's Office and is not for wider distribution.

Project Outline:

They Are Us takes place during the week following the Christchurch attacks on New Zealand's Muslim community, and is an inspirational story about Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's response to the tragic events, and the remarkable achievements of her government and citizens who rallied behind her message of compassion and unity to ban assault rifles in New Zealand.

Key People:

Short biographies and links for each of the following are included at the end of this document.

- Andrew Niccol (writer/director/producer, New Zealander)
- Philippa Campbell (producer, New Zealander)
- Stewart Till, CBE (producer, British)
- Ayman Jamal (producer, Saudi)
- Rose Byrne (actor, Australian)

Project Genesis:

Ayman Jamal spent an extended period of time living and working in Wellington when his feature film, *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero* was being post-produced at Park Road Post Production. Following the attacks in Christchurch, he developed the idea for the film and, as part of his research, met with the Imams of each of the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre Mosque, as well as many of the survivors and family members of the victims.

Jamal advises that, as a Muslim himself, the way in which Prime Minister Ardern responded to this act of terrorism is what drew him to develop the project. He notes that in the past 40 years he has not seen conflict handled in the way Prime Minister Ardern did: An approach that moved swiftly from conflict to unity, shared humanity and the coming together of community.

Jamal then approached producer Stewart Till to collaborate on the project's development. Till determined from the outset that it was essential for the project to be created out of New Zealand in partnership with experienced New Zealand filmmakers. Andrew Niccol was invited on to the project and has since written more than six drafts of the screenplay. His narrative approach is to track the key events over the week after the attacks (i.e. Friday to Friday), closely following the actions of Prime Minister Ardern. Niccol's screenplay reflects his intention to neither show the gunman's face or name him, nor detail his livestream or manifesto. Philippa Campbell has joined the producing team as the New Zealand-based producer.

Key Themes:

Heroism, Sacrifice, Humanity, Community, Leadership, Gun Control.

New Zealand Government Support:

They Are Us has been developed independently of NZFC development funding structures. However, NZFC staff—including the NZFC's former CEO, Annabelle Sheehan and Head of International Relations, Chris Payne—have been kept updated by the producing team.

The producing team is still determining their preferred approach to production financing; this will be shaped in part by the level of pre-sales and market interest the project garners following its launch at the Cannes Film Market (6-15 July 2021). The team has yet to decide and advise NZFC whether it will seek contestable NZFC Production Financing; they do intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG), though whether this is the 40% grant or the 20% grant remains to be decided.

Production Contacts:

Philippa Campbell and Stewart Till are happy to be contacted directly by New Zealand Government officials at any time should additional information be required:

Philippa Campbell (Auckland)



Stewart Till, CBE (Los Angeles)



Key People – Biographies and Links:

Andrew Niccol is a Los Angeles-based New Zealand screenwriter, producer, and director. His credits as writer, director and/or producer include *Gattaca* (1997), *51m0ne* (2002), *Lord of War* (2005), *In Time* (2011), *The Host* (2013) and *Anon* (2018). He wrote and co-produced *The Truman Show* (1998), which earned him a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and won him the BAFTA Award in the same category.

<https://www.nzonscreen.com/profile/andrew-niccol>

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0629272/>

Philippa Campbell is an Auckland-based producer whose credits include Dame Jane Campion's acclaimed two-season TV mini-series *Top of the Lake* (2013 and 2017), winner of two Golden Globe Awards and an Emmy, among other accolades. Her feature films include Cannes selection *Rain* (2001), Sundance award winner *No. 2* (2005) and comedy horror hit *Black Sheep* (2006). As well as playing in A-list festivals, her films have been distributed in major international territories including the US. Philippa began her career in theatre as an actor and director and, prior to producing, worked in network television as script editor and writer of over 120 hours of drama across a range of genres.

<https://www.nzonscreen.com/profile/philippa-campbell>

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0132788/>

Stewart Till, CBE is a Los Angeles-based British producer and executive with extensive experience across the film industry. Till's prior roles include serving as Chairman and Chief Executive of United International Pictures, Deputy Managing Director of British Sky Broadcasting's movie channels, President of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment's international distribution arm, President of Universal Pictures International (UPI), Chairman of Icon Productions UK and CEO of Sonar Entertainment. In 1999 he was appointed Vice Chairman of the UK Film Council (the predecessor to the current British Film Institute) and then in 2004 was appointed Chair.

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0863264/>

Ayman Jamal is the Dubai-based founder of and a producer at Barajoun Entertainment, a leading animation and visual effects studio in the MENA region. His dream to tell and share the stories of forgotten heroes from time immemorial led him to initiate the formation of Barajoun Entertainment back in 2013. His passion for storytelling inspired him to direct his first full animation feature film, *Bilal*, which tells a story about faith, hope and courage.

Bilal drew enormous applause and gained recognition and awards worldwide since its release in 2016. The film won "Best Inspiring Movie" on Animation Day during Cannes Film Festival in 2016 and was an official selection at the Annecy Film Festival in the same year. Bilal was also nominated for Best Animated Feature Film at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), the region's highest accolade for film and was screened at the United Nations headquarters in New York in March 2017.

<https://www.barajoun.com/>

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm6336449/>

Rose Byrne is an Australian actress who made her screen debut in the film *Dallas Doll* (1994) and continued to act in Australian film and television throughout the 1990s. She obtained her first leading film role in *The Goddess of 1967* (2000), which brought her the Volpi Cup for Best Actress and made the transition to Hollywood in the small role of Dormé in *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (2002), followed by larger parts in *Troy* (2004), *28 Weeks Later* (2007), and *Knowing* (2009). Byrne appeared as Ellen Parsons in all 59 episodes of the legal thriller series *Damages* (2007–2012), which earned her two Golden Globe Awards nominations and two Primetime Emmy Award nominations. Recent credits include *Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway* (2021), *Mrs America* as Gloria Steinem (2020), *Irresistible* (2020) and *Like a Boss* (2020).

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0126284/>

10 June 2021

New Zealand Film Commission

PRESS RELEASE

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED TO NZT 7.00 am FRIDAY 11 JUNE/PST 12.00 pm
THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2021**

Andrew Niccol to Direct Rose Byrne as Jacinda Ardern in “They Are Us”, FilmNation and CAA Media Finance Group Launching Sales at Cannes Virtual Market

New York, NY & Los Angeles, CA. June 10 2021 – Rose Byrne (Mrs. America, Bridesmaids) is set to play Jacinda Ardern in “They Are Us” written and to be directed by Andrew Niccol. FilmNation Entertainment will unveil the project to international buyers at the upcoming Cannes Virtual Market with CAA submitting to domestic and worldwide distributors.

The film, which takes place during the week following the Christchurch attacks on New Zealand’s Muslim community, is an inspirational story about the young leader’s response to the tragic events, and the remarkable achievements of her government and citizens who rallied behind her message of compassion and unity to ban assault rifles in New Zealand. “They are Us” comes from Ardern’s powerful speech describing the victims of the attack. The film is being produced by Ayman Jamal, Stewart Till, Niccol, and Philippa Campbell. Production will take place in New Zealand. The script was developed in consultation with several members of the mosques affected by the tragedy.

““They Are Us” is not so much about the attack but the response to the attack. How an unprecedented act of hate was overcome by an outpouring of love and support. The film addresses our common humanity which is why I think it will speak to people around the world. It is an example of how we should respond when there’s an attack on our fellow human beings,” said Andrew Niccol in a statement.

“We are thrilled to bring to market this inspiring true story about the positive impact, even in the darkest of moments, a strong leader can have on their constituents’ lives when they work from a place of compassion, love, and an unwavering conviction to do what is right,” said FilmNation CEO Glen Basner.

CAA Media Finance is co-representing domestic rights with FilmNation.

Both Niccol and Byrne are repped by CAA.

From: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
To: [Kerry Prendergast](#)
Cc: [Chris Payne](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: "They Are Us"
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 2:29:37 p.m.
Attachments: [They Are Us - Press Release \(Embargoed Until 7am 11 June 2021 NZT\).pdf](#)
[They Are Us - Backgrounder \(Confidential\).pdf](#)
Importance: High

Hi Kerry

An interesting development.

A high budget independent feature film project with the PM featuring as a lead character will be announced tomorrow morning.

No indication yet that the project will seek NZFC funding.

Please find **attached** finalised copies of the:

- production's embargoed press release; and
- backgrounder prepared by NZFC staff for MCH and PMO only.

Jasmin and Chris will engage with local co-producer Philippa Campbell re: reactive messaging, if needed after the press release goes public.

Let us know if you need any additional information.

Mladen

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: Re: THEY ARE US - REACTIVE Q&A
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 6:13:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Hi Jas,

Thanks very much for the discussion this afternoon, and for the attached. We will keep you posted with developments from our perspective.

Ngā mihi,
Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021 at 5:33 PM
To: [REDACTED] Chris Payne
<chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>, Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: THEY ARE US - REACTIVE Q&A

Hi Philippa

Great to talk to you this afternoon. As promised, attached are my reactive Q&A – some with suggested answers and some still needing these added.

As discussed, any media enquiries will be sent to you for your response. Our general response to media at this stage will be that this project has been developed outside the NZFC's funding structure and we are unable to comment.

As well as seeking comment from the NZFC and the PMs office, media may also (depending on other news released that day) seek comment from the Muslim community and the NZ censor.

xxj

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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THEY ARE US ANNOUNCEMENT

REACTIVE STATEMENTS TO ANTICIPATED Q&As

- 1. What development funding has the film received from the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) or any other New Zealand Government agency?**

They Are Us has been developed independently of the NZFC's development funding structures, and other NZ government agencies which offers this type of funding to screen content.

- 2. What production funding from the NZFC or any other NZ Government agency will the film be eligible to receive?**

The production team has yet to decide and advise NZFC whether it will seek contestable NZFC Production Financing; we understand that they do intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) though.

- 3. When was the Prime Minister advised of the project and what communications has she had with the filmmakers?**

The Prime Minister was advised less than 24hours ahead of the announcement to media by the NZFC and has had no communications with the production team.

- 4. Why was an Australian actress selected for the role of Jacinda Ardern and not a New Zealand actress?**

xxx

- 5. What other New Zealand MPs or Government officials will feature in the film and who will be cast as them?**

xx

- 6. What level of engagement has the filmmakers had with the Muslim community in Christchurch either directly or indirectly involved with the Mosque shootings?**

xxx

- 7. When will filming begin and will the production be in Christchurch and is filming planned at the Mosques?**

xxx

- 8. How did Andrew Nicoll research the story for the film – was it from the public domain, from personal interviews with family members and people close to the Prime Minister?**

Research for the story was done from publicly available material.

9. In 2020, Netflix released a docu-drama *The Social Dilemma* which featured livestream footage from the Christchurch attack. Are you anticipating using such footage in *They Are Us* (for example as background news footage)?

10. When will the film release in New Zealand and who will be the distributor?

From: [Annabelle Sheehan](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: Re: They Are Us - Announced
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 10:11:37 a.m.

How great!

On 11/06/2021, at 5:46 AM, Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Hi Annabelle

Passing this on for courtesy given your engagement with this project.

<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/>

We've liaised with Andrew, Philippa, Stewart and Ayman in the lead-up to their press release being issued this morning, and briefed all appropriate parties in advance.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Bree Loverich](#)
Subject: They Are Us Press Release - Embargoed
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 6:17:00 a.m.
Attachments: [They Are Us - Press Release \(Embargoed Until 7am 11 June 2021 NZT\).pdf](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)

Dear Andrew and Pauline, and dear Bree

Andrew and Pauline, it was really good to meet and chat with you both on our recent visit to Christchurch. Bree, thank you for arranging these introductions and for an informative, useful and enjoyable itinerary for our time in Christchurch. I am impressed with the growing capability around screen in your region and it is very exciting.

I wanted to give you all a heads up about a feature film in development which has come across our radar in the last couple of days and which would be of particular significance to Christchurch. Please see attached a Press Release which is strictly embargoed until 7AM this morning. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Warm wishes,

Philippa

Philippa Mossman | Head of International Attraction (she/her)

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Upper Ground Floor, Kauri Timber Building, 29 Graham Street, Auckland 1010

PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

M: [REDACTED]

www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz




From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [AllStaff](#); [AllBoard](#)
Subject: Andrew Nicolls to direct Rose Byrne as Jacinda Ardern in They are Us
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 7:44:42 a.m.

Morena everyone

The below press release was sent out this morning by FilmNation, CAA, and the producers. There is no indication yet that the project will seek NZFC funding but we want to ensure you are all aware of the release as we expect there will be some media and industry interest. Please refer all enquiries about the project to me as per usual.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/rose-byrne-jacinda-ardern-andrew-niccol-cannes-they-are-us-new-zealand-mosque-shooting-1234965908/amp/>

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission


iSent this from my iPhone

From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: Re:
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 9:47:35 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Morena.

We felt it was important to be transparent about our intentions applying for SPIG to the NZFC but I'll leave navigating Kate to you good folk.

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 at 9:43 AM
To: [REDACTED] Chris Payne
<chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Re:

See below from Kate Rodger – I would prefer the quote say “The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC. However we do understand that the production does intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) though.

Do we add in the yellow section or just drop it for now? I think we should drop it...

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED]
[\[REDACTED\].co.nz](#)



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cid:image006.png@01D75EA63CBA3FA0

From: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 9:40 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re:

Hey doll are you OK I use this as a quote on this?

On Fri, 11 Jun 2021, 07:48 Jasmin McSweeney, <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Aware of it but the project has not been developed within the NZFC development structure and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek funding from the NZFC.

xj

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission
[REDACTED]

iSent this from my iPhone

From: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:38:41 AM
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Fwd:

Hey darling! Is this anything to do with you guys?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **KATE RODGER** [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 2021, 07:37
Subject:
To: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/rose-byrne-jacinda-ardern-andrew-niccol-cannes-they-are-us-new-zealand-mosque-shooting-1234965908/amp/>

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Andrew Cozens](#)
Subject: Re: They Are Us
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 9:26:20 a.m.
Attachments: [0.gif](#)
[1.gif](#)
[2.gif](#)
[3.gif](#)
[4.gif](#)

We are across but it has been developed outside the NZFC funding structure. At this stage there is no indication from the producers that they will come into the NZFC for equity funding. Aus and NZ are still available for this project!

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission
[REDACTED]

iSent this from my iPhone

From: Andrew Cozens [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 8:59:53 AM
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: They Are Us

Heya,

Is this a NZFC backed project? Never heard of it before now

https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/entertainment/2021/06/rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-christchurch-terror-attack-film-report.html?fbclid=IwAR3AZeceWSNP_bR3MDMK770vdva371TU_-x6vwGFlo29qHhWxpmSmiskIgM

Andrew Cozens (he, him)

Marketing Manager (NZ)

MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT NZ



Web: www.madman.co.nz

Mail: Unit A5, 1 Beresford Square, Newton, Auckland 1010

Madman NZ Anime and Films:    

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Kate Rodger](#)
Subject: RE: Re:
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 11:36:00 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)

Not so dumb more clever of you... they can shoot here without NZFC financial assistance but why would they... so adding to my comment:

While there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC, we do however understand that the production does intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) though.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 11:32 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Re:

hey excuse this dumbarse question.

is the NZFC the gateway to all and any government funding and rebates?
this project looks set to film here, what kind of approvals are required for that and can they shoot here without NZFC assistance. ie if they come here with full financing - do they still get the rebate I guess I'm asking - ha!

On Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 9:50 AM Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Can you adjust it a bit to say:

The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC.

Thanks

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 9:40 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re:

Hey doll are you OK I use this as a quote on this?

On Fri, 11 Jun 2021, 07:48 Jasmin McSweeney, <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Aware of it but the project has not been developed within the NZFC development structure and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek funding from the NZFC.

xj

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission
Tel: [REDACTED]

iSent this from my iPhone

From: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:38:41 AM
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Fwd:

Hey darling! Is this anything to do with you guys?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: KATE RODGER [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 2021, 07:37
Subject:
To: Kate Rodger [REDACTED]

https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/rose-byrne-jacinda-ardern-andrew-niccol-cannes-they-are-us-new-zealand-mosque-shooting-1234965908/amp/?__twitter_impression=true&s=09

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--

KATE RODGER ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR NEWSHUB

NEWS **DISCOVERY NZ** **MOBILE** [REDACTED] [DISCOVERYCORPORATE.CO.NZ](https://discoverycorporate.co.nz)



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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Request for information
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 11:04:00 a.m.

Dear [REDACTED]

The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
T: [REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz

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-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 10:16 a.m.
To: Info <Info@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Request for information

Please provide me with any information you hold about funding or other support for the proposed movie "They are us".

Thank you
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Philippa Campbell](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: RE: Simon Mercep
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 10:29:48 a.m.
Attachments: [image006.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

K – I will call him back and make the same statement we made to Kate.

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 10:28 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Simon Mercep

Thanks Jas. He's been in touch with me. I've declined any on air/camera interview and requested written questions.

He has my contacts.

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland

Aotearoa New Zealand

From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 at 10:26 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>, Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Simon Mercep

Morena Philippa

Simon Mercep (Natonal Radio) has asked me to call him re They Are Us. Are you happy for me to reach out to him and come back to you? Are you happy for me to pass on your contact details to him?

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Newshub Query
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 11:02:00 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Dear Lisette

The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Lisette Reymer [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 10:42 AM
To: NZSPG
Subject: Newshub Query

Hi there,

I am wondering if you could confirm whether or not the film 'They Are Us' - to be produced in New Zealand, about the March 15 tragedy, is eligible for funding?

Thank you,
Lisette

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Emily Brookes](#)
Subject: RE: NZFC statements re: Funding for They Are Us
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 1:27:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Hi Emily

The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and while there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC, we do however understand that the production does intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG).

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[\[REDACTED\]@nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: Emily Brookes [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 1:18 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: NZFC statements re: Funding for They Are Us

Jasmin

Hope this finds you well.

I see you guys have provided a couple of statements regarding funding for this movie to Kate Rodger,

are you able to share those with me? Then I may have some follow ups.

Many thanks

Emily

--

Emily Brookes

Senior Reporter, Entertainment and Lifestyle

TV - Film - Parenting - Food & Wine - Books

 _emily.brookes_



Spark Central, Level 7, 42-52 Willis St, Wellington, 6011, New Zealand



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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Philippa Mossman](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: Fwd: They Are Us Press Release Coverage #1
Date: Friday, 11 June 2021 7:48:56 p.m.

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission
Tel: [REDACTED]

iSent this from my iPhone

Hi Everyone,

Please find below the initial coverage of today's announcement.

DEADLINE

By Diana Lodderhose

Rose Byrne To Star As New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern In 'They Are Us' About Response To 2019 Christchurch Attacks – Cannes Market

<https://deadline.com/2021/06/rose-byrne-new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-they-are-us-cannes-market-1234772989/>

VARIETY

By Brent Lang

Rose Byrne Starring in 'They Are Us' for Director Andrew Niccol

<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/>

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

By Alex Ritman

Rose Byrne to Play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in Andrew Niccol's 'They Are Us'

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/rose-byrne-jacinda-ardern-andrew-niccol-cannes-they-are-us-new-zealand-mosque-shooting-1234965908/>

SCREENDAILY

By Jeremy Kay

Rose Byrne to play NZ leader in Cannes package 'They Are Us' for FilmNation, CAA

<https://www.screendaily.com/news/rose-byrne-to-play-nz-leader-in-cannes-package-they-are-us-for-filmnation-caa/5160402.article>

THE WRAP

By Brian Welk

Rose Byrne to Star as New Zealand Prime Minister Who Banned Assault Rifles After Mosque Shootings

<https://www.thewrap.com/rose-byrne-they-are-us-film-jacinda-ardern-new-zealand-prime-minister/>

YAHOO! *Variety repost

By Brent Lang

Rose Byrne Starring in 'They Are Us' for Director Andrew Niccol

<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/>

NEW ZEALAND HERALD

By Staff

Christchurch mosque shootings: Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in new film 'They Are Us'

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/christchurch-mosque-shootings-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-new-film-they-are-us/WDOP6HCBWVQB5C4Y2V5HLT33FM/>

RZN

By Staff

Actress Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mosque attacks - report

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/444485/actress-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-film-based-on-christchurch-mosque-attacks-report>

SUFF.COM.NZ

By Darren Bevan

Rose Byrne to play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mosque shootings

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/125409871/rose-byrne-to-play-new-zealand-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-in-film-based-on-christchurch-mosque-shootings>

NEWSHUB

By Jamie Ensor

Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in Christchurch terror attack film - report

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/entertainment/2021/06/rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-christchurch-terror-attack-film-report.html>

TVNZ

By Staff

Hollywood star Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in film about Christchurch mosque attacks

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/hollywood-star-rose-byrne-play-jacinda-ardern-in-film-christchurch-mosque-attacks>

INDEPENDENT

By Rachel Brodsky

Rose Byrne to play Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film about 2019 New Zealand mosque shooting

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/rose-byrne-new-zealand-jacinda-ardern-b1863751.html>

THE SPINOFF

By Stewart Sowman-Lund

Live updates, June 11: Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in new film

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/11-06-2021/live-updates-june-11-rose-byrne-to-play-jacinda-ardern-in-new-film/>

DARK HORIZONS

By Garth Franklin

Rose Byrne to Play NZ PM Jacinda Ardern

<https://www.darkhorizons.com/rose-byrne-to-play-nz-pm-jacinda-ardern/>

MSN *Repost from Independent

By Rachel Brodsky

Rose Byrne to play Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film about 2019 New Zealand mosque shooting

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/rose-byrne-new-zealand-jacinda-ardern-b1863751.html>

STAR NEWS

By Staff

Rose Byrne to play PM in film based on mosque attacks - report

<https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-lifestyle/star-entertainment/rose-byrne-play-pm-film-based-mosque-attacks-report>

JUST JARED

By Staff

Rose Byrne to Play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in New Film 'They Are Us'

<http://www.justjared.com/photo-gallery/4567541/rose-bryne-casting-prime-minister-04/>

Carmen Irabien | Manager, Publicity | FilmNation Entertainment

 | www.filmnation.com

FilmNation Entertainment | 150 West 22nd St, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011

Coming Soon: www.filmnation.com/coming-soon

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: FW: They Are Us Film
Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 4:48:21 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[\[REDACTED\]@nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 12:33 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: They Are Us Film

Kia ora Jasmin,

Really appreciate this message, and thank you for sharing that article. This message provided a lot of clarity for my concerns. Thank you for taking the time to reply!

Ngā mihi,

[REDACTED]

On 15/06/2021, at 11:35 AM, Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Kia ora [REDACTED]

I am in receipt of your email expressing concern about the funding of proposed film project *They Are Us*.

As indicated to media previously, the project has been developed independently of NZFC funding and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC. As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects that include New Zealand stories or elements, and this is the case with *They Are Us*.

Overnight we received from the *They Are Us* producers a joint media release by the Muslim Association of Canterbury (Al Noor Mosque) and *They Are Us* producer Ayman Jamal, addressing concerns surrounding the project. The Muslim Association of Canterbury issued this release to New Zealand media this morning and it has been picked up by major New Zealand news sites, such as Stuff - <https://i.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/300333148/they-are-us-producers-consulted-christchurch-imams-but-deeply-regret-not-doing-more>

Ngā mihi nui

[<image002.jpg>](#)

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

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[<image007.png>](#)

[<image008.png>](#)

[<image009.png>](#)

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 5:12 p.m.

To: Info <Info@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Re: They Are Us Film

Kia ora

I am emailing you today to respectfully request you exercising your discretion under the New Zealand Screen Production Grants scheme to reject any funding for the film *They Are Us*, which as you will be aware depicts the Government's response to, the Christchurch Mosque Shootings.

The release of this film would derail the nation's approach to the terrorist attack response in March 2019. It would do so by depicting the events through the lens of the Government, rather than the people who should be at the forefront of New Zealander's

minds - the victims and their families. The film is not what we need as a nation right now, after so much disaster has already hit our shores over the last years. In a time where minority communities are already being rejected from an inherently pakehā dominated society by separatist comments and anti-minority hate, this film only looks to further a white saviour and culturally myopic worldview which minorities experience every day, and further harm minority communities.

It also undermines our muslim whānau who have suffered so much trauma already. This film, in fact the very notion of its release, has understandably caused a lot of hurt in the community today - you will have seen that they were in fact 'blindsided' by this announcement.

Many thanks for your time, and I hope you are having an enjoyable start to the winter.

Ngā mihi,

[REDACTED]

From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: draft copy re NZSPG
Date: Saturday, 12 June 2021 2:48:36 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.png](#)

Hi Jas

I have come from the baseline angle that this would be an international production or are you wanting to cover every other potential base? The media so far has framed it as such:

International productions meeting the criteria may apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant at the conclusion of activity in New Zealand. This Grant offers 20% on qualifying expenditure. Criteria can be found [here](#). The purpose of the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) for International Productions is to incentivise the production of foreign and domestic large budget films, television and other format productions in New Zealand in order to provide economic and industry development benefits to New Zealand.

p

Philippa Mossman | Head of International Attraction (she/her)

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Upper Ground Floor, Kauri Timber Building, 29 Graham Street, Auckland 1010

PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142


[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: Re: Draft Comment
Date: Saturday, 12 June 2021 3:15:45 p.m.

So we keep on the overall project structure statement or remove it? And I will replace made with received.

They have decided to not go the media conf way but do four individual interviews.

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission


iSent this from my iPhone

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Saturday, June 12, 2021 3:14:01 PM
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Draft Comment

Minor tweak for clarity in my note below

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Saturday, June 12, 2021 15:12
To: Jasmin McSweeney; Mladen Ivancic; Philippa Mossman
Subject: Re: Draft Comment

I like it. I had a similar thought re approach after drafting the “given...” para as it felt like a good summary without the two ones prior.

Only minor tweaks in bold below but otherwise I think it’s good.

[@Mladen](#) [@Philippa](#) Thoughts?

[@Jasmin](#) confirming you’ll run by Philippa Campbell and **thereafter supply to** the journalist from here?

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Saturday, June 12, 2021 15:01

To: Chris Payne; Philippa Mossman

Cc: Mladen Ivancic

Subject: Re: Draft Comment

[REDACTED]

Given the producers have yet to determine their approach to financing the production of the film—and that its overall project structure more broadly is as yet unconfirmed—it is not possible for the NZFC to advise on the basis of information made available to it whether the project would be eligible for any specific discretionary NZFC funding programmes or **the New Zealand Government's screen incentives scheme, the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG).**

As commented yesterday, the NZFC staff understand the producers do intend to apply at some stage in the future for the **NZSPG** but no such application has been made.

Full criteria for the NZFC discretionary funding programmes and the NZSPG are available on the NZFC website.

Jasmin McSweeney (she/her)
Head of Marketing
New Zealand Film Commission

iSent this from my iPhone

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Saturday, June 12, 2021 2:50:12 PM

To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Draft Comment

The producers have yet to decide and advise the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) whether they intend to seek any discretionary NZFC funding, such as production finance, for **THEY ARE US**.

Separately to NZFC discretionary funding, staff understand the producers do intend to apply at some stage in the future for the New Zealand screen incentives programme, the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG). However, whether they apply for the NZSPG - New Zealand (40% grant) or the NZSPG - International (20% grant) remains to be decided and communicated to the NZFC.

Given the producers have yet to determine their approach to financing the production of the film—and that its overall project structure more broadly is as yet unconfirmed—it is not possible for the NZFC to advise on the basis of information made available

to it whether the project would be eligible for any specific discretionary NZFC funding programmes or the NZSPG.

Full criteria for the NZFC discretionary funding programmes and the NZSPG are available on the NZFC website.

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga



Saturday 13:54

Hi both. Free for a quick conf call on Jas's query?

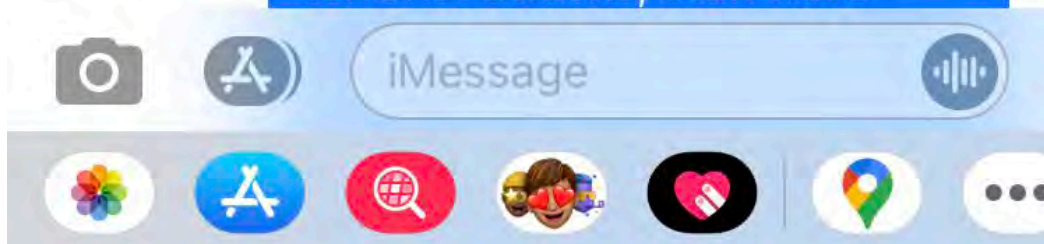
Jasmin McSweeney

Thanks Chris. I have shared the enquiry with Philippa and told her I have asked you to draft a response. I am still on Marae (learning a play in Te Reo at the moment

Ka pai. Break a waewae.

Monday 18:12

As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects. In the period since the March 15 terrorist attacks, staff have



VF Aotearoa

11:36

38%



JM

MI

2 People >

Monday 18:12

As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects. In the period since the March 15 terrorist attacks, staff have been approached by three international filmmaking teams with projects on the topic, one of which is THEY ARE US. As with that project, the NZFC is not involved with either of the other two projects — they have not applied for any New Zealand Government screen funding, whether NZFC development or production funding or the NZSPG.

Yesterday 18:18



iMessage





Mladen >

Saturday 12:42

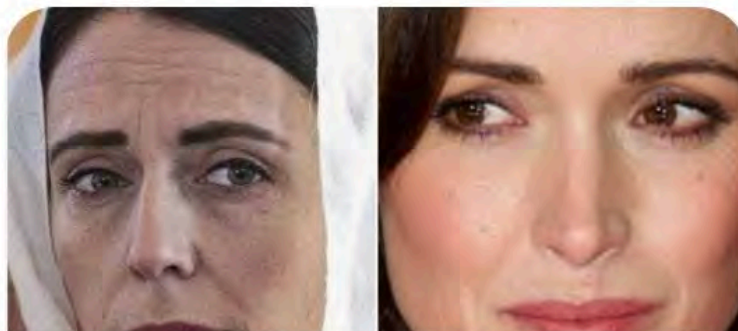


Shut Down 'They Are Us' Movie, which side-lines victims of the March 15th terrorist attack

19,485 have signed. Let's get to 25,000!



At 25,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the **top signed on** **Change.org!**



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:36

38%



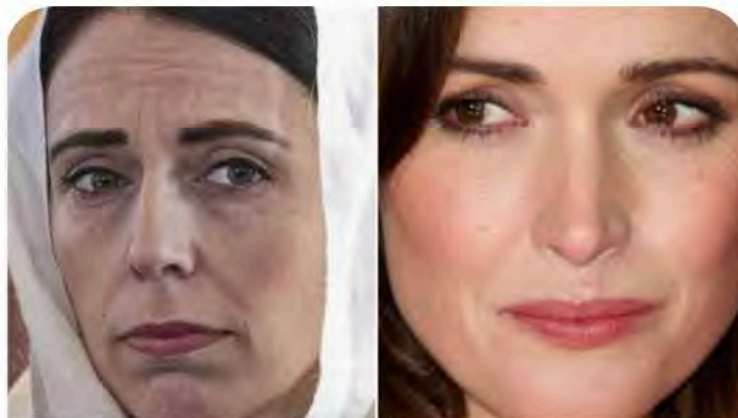
Mladen >

terrorist attack

19,485 have signed. Let's get to 25,000!



At 25,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the **top signed on Change.org!**



Sign the Petition

change.org

Delivered

Yesterday 06:52

Some further TAU developments overnight. Let's catch-up in person first thing.

Sent as Text Message



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:36

38%



3 People >

iMessage
Saturday 09:55

Jasmin McSweeney

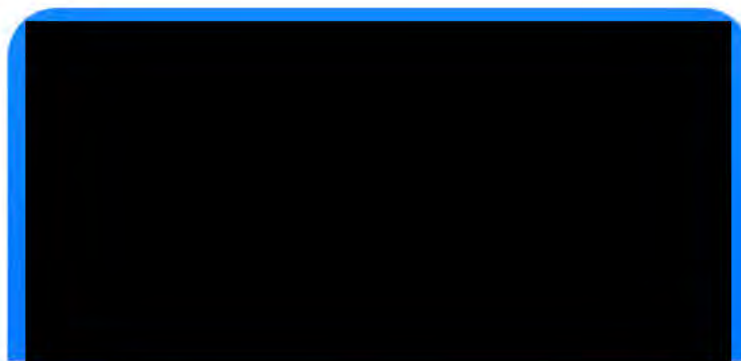
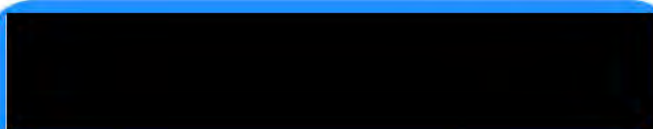
Just an update that Ayman Jamal has agreed to four interviews with media so just sorting that through now and talking with Anna Thomas to advise who from radio nz

JM

Philippa Mossman

Thanks for update - [REDACTED]

PM



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:37

38%

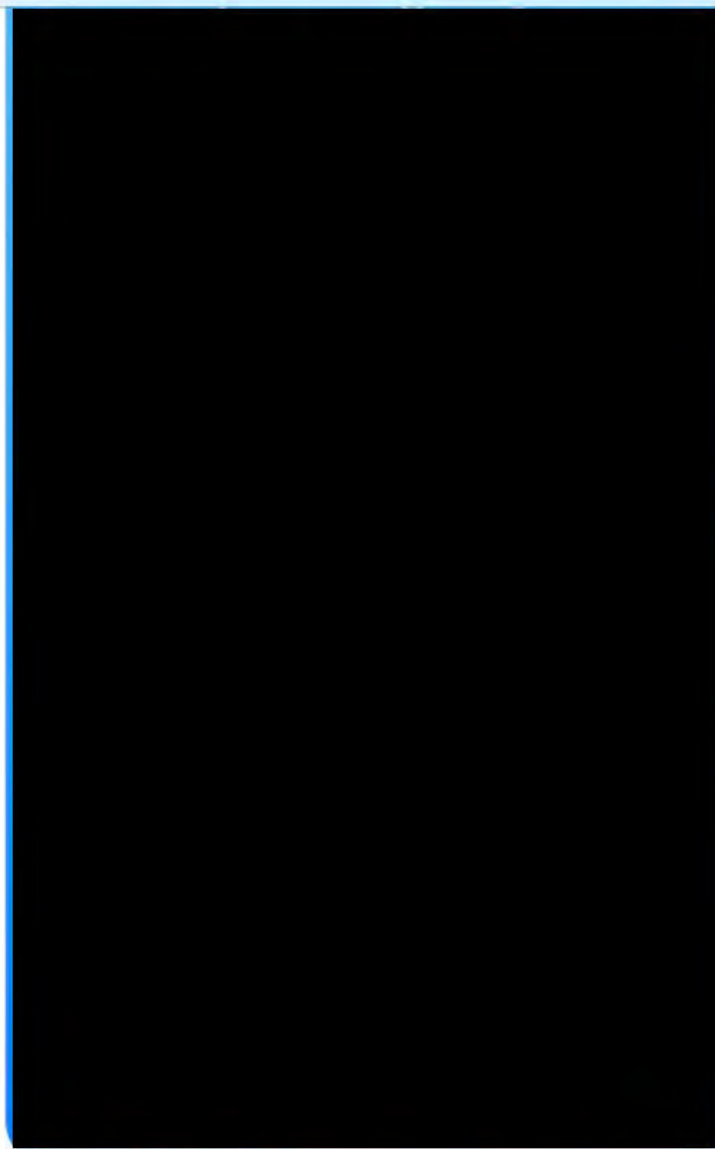


MI

JM

PM

3 People >



iMessage





MI

JM

PM

3 People >



**'Hello Brother': Film about
Christchurch mosque shootings
in works**

nzherald.co.nz



Jasmin McSweeney



We are thinking we may just
hold a media conf. Will let you
know

JM

Mladen Ivancic

MI

Who is we?



iMessage





3 People >

Jasmin McSweeney

We may need to assist with setting it up if via zoom. I am hoping they will go with an in person media conf in Dubai.

Philippa Campbell is checking with the producers.

JM

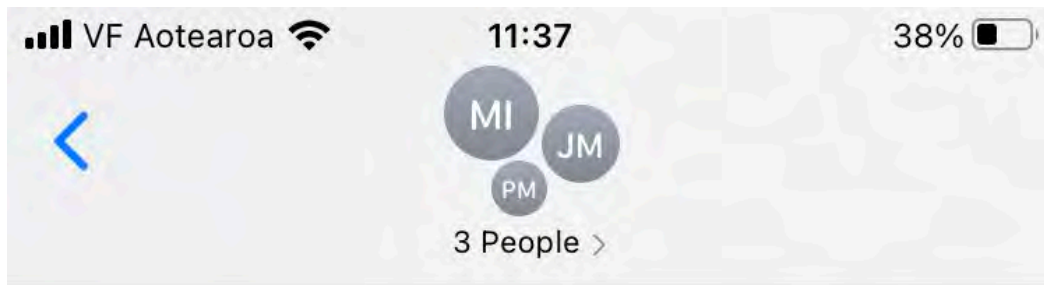
Philippa Mossman

Am available to assist w anything If required. I imagine there's nothing, but.



iMessage





PM
Am available to assist w anything If required. I imagine there's nothing, but.

Likewise — was going to say same (just finished the ballet run and shortly to commence the swimming one!)

Mladen Ivancic

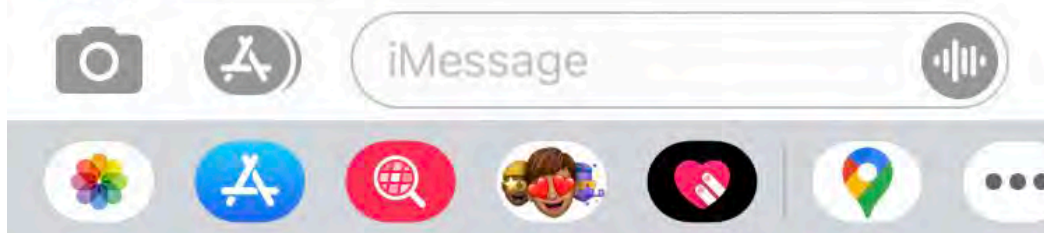
MI
Jasmin
Let me know if the media conference is confirmed
Time/date etc
M

Jasmin McSweeney

JM
I will. We are going to not be visible. Just giving guidance

Mladen Ivancic

MI
Perfect



VF Aotearoa

11:37

38%



3 People >

Saturday 13:49

Jasmin McSweeney

Kia ora Jasmin,

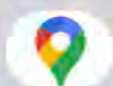
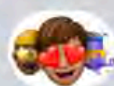
My name is Brittney Deguara and I'm a reporter from Stuff - I'm following up on a voicemail I left a moment ago.

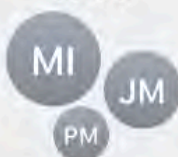
I'm looking to get some information and comment around whether the proposed They Are Us film would be eligible for the NZ Screen Production Grant, if it has already applied for it or is in the process of applying, and what other grants offered by the film commission it might be eligible for.

Any information you can provide would be greatly



iMessage





3 People >

appreciated.
Kind regards,
Brittney Deguara
Reporter

ENDS

so I know it hasn't applied for
any funding yet but there is an
intention to come in for the
incentives but what other
grants would it be eligible for?

JM

Can someone construct a
response for me please?

JM

Philippa Mossman

PM

I'll email you a first draft shortly

I've got one too — will email



iMessage





3 People >

Jasmin McSweeney

JM

Just replied to your email.

JM

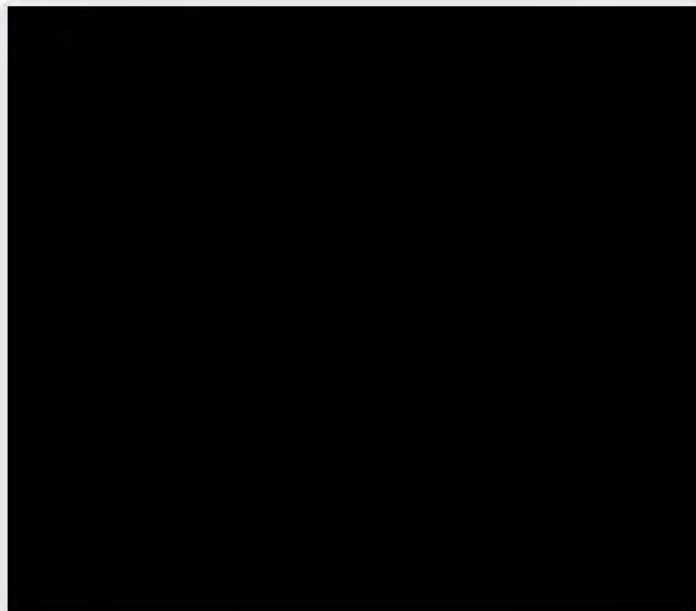
Maybe instead of has been made I say has been received. More arms length again.

Philippa Mossman

PM

Yes I agree better And your draft is good

PM



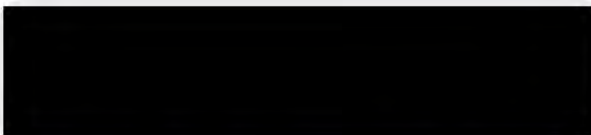
iMessage





3 People >

Jasmin McSweeney



JM

I think that's a good idea too.

So final comment would be:

Given the producers have yet to determine their approach to financing the production of the film, it is not possible for the NZFC to advise on the basis of information made available to it, whether the project would be eligible for any specific discretionary NZFC funding programmes or the NZSPG.

As commented yesterday, the



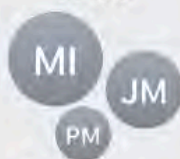
iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:37

38%



3 People >

As commented yesterday, the NZFC staff understand the producers do intend to apply at some stage in the future for the New Zealand screen incentives programme, the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) but no such application has been received.

Full criteria for the NZFC discretionary funding programmes and the NZSPG are available on the NZFC website.

JM

Ah — just catching up on txts here. Have emailed you Jas.

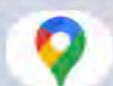
Jasmin McSweeney

Just replied to your email

I think PM is correct and we



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:37

38%



MI

JM

PM

3 People >

JM

remove the overall project comment



The main reason I have that expanded overall project bit is that we don't know the approach in terms of SPV, NZ spend, number of NZ creatives etc. etc. So I was adding an additional limb that gave us a bit more uncertainty than purely its as yet undetermined financial structure, in relation to viability for NZFC support

Jasmin McSweeney

JM

Ok get it

Happy to go with consensus though — [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
My only other comments were



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

11:38

38%



3 People >

Happy to go with consensus though — [REDACTED]

My only other comments were naming of NZSPG and as "scheme" ie mirroring the explanatory/defining text on our website

Jasmin McSweeney



JM

I think it's a good statement and Philippa is happy

Saturday 17:30

Mladen Ivancic



MI

Just back from football
Assume from texts that a response has been formulated?

Philippa Mossman

PM

Yes, and Jas had sent.

Sunday 13:03



iMessage





3 People >

Sunday 13:03

Jasmin McSweeney

Hi Mladen RNZ wants to interview you about the NZFCs grants and subsidies. I have responded the response we sent to Stuff yesterday ad also commented to his request to interview the NZFCs CEO:

"But to be clear the nzfc cannot comment on this project and it's eligibility or intentions around funding as we have no information from the production about this. Most of what you need to know about the grants etc is on our website."

The journalist is available all day for the interview and the story is for tomorrow morning.



iMessage





3 People >



JM

But up to you mladen - let me know what you want to do.

Mladen Ivancic

MI

I am not that interested in doing the interview
Same logic - we have nothing more to add to our existing comments
Also its not really one of our projects
M

Jasmin McSweeney

Agree I will tell him. They may report the nzfc declined to comment or were contact for comment but issued this



iMessage





3 People >

JM

comment but issued this statement but I am comfortable with that

Mladen Ivancic

MI

Likewise

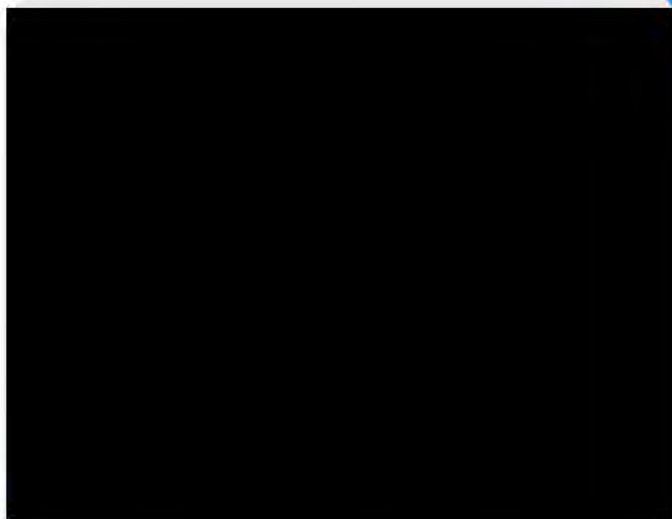
Jasmin McSweeney

JM

Done and he thanked us for considering and letting him know.

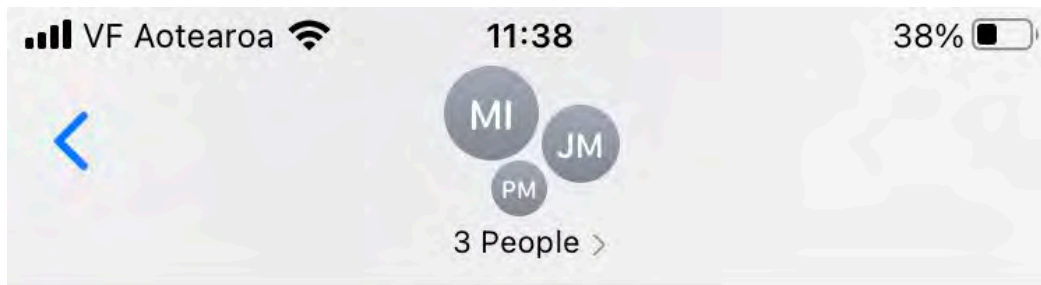


JM



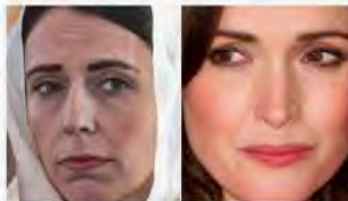
iMessage





Monday 07:13

Shut Down 'They Are Us' Movie, which side-lines victims of the March 15th terrorist attack



44,524 have signed. Let's get to 50,000

At 50,000 signatures, this petition becomes one of the top signed on Change.org

Quaid Meejigall 11 hours ago

Red Green (d) 11 hours ago

Amangrest Singh signed 2 hours ago

100% Positive

The National Islamic Youth Association started this petition to Filmstars Entertainment and 2 others

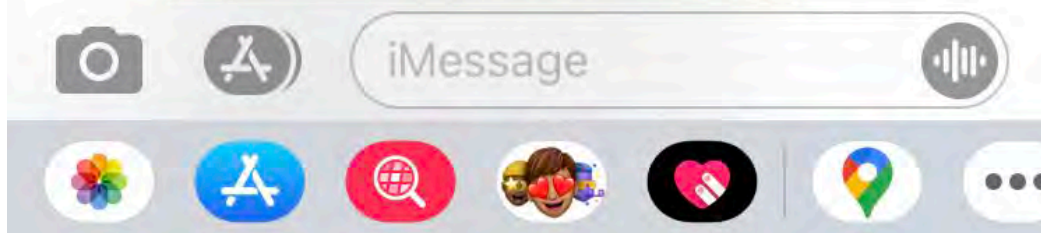
51 of our Muslim whānau were murdered by a white supremacist terrorist in Christchurch on 15 March 2019 – including Naeem Rashid, a father and a teacher from Pakistan; Hussein Al-Uman, a father and a teacher from Jordan; and 30 others.

Please share my name and email address with The National Islamic Youth Association, so that I can receive updates on this campaign and others.

Mosque attacks film: Movies about politicians should not be taxpayer-funded

stuff.co.nz

Philippa Mossman





MI

JM

PM

3 People >



PM

Cartoon in this morning's Herald, op ed pages.

Jasmin McSweeney

JM

Have you read your emails yet?

Mladen will you provide the embargoed release to Anna and Hannah for on-supply to PMO?

Mladen Ivancic

MI

Yes
Let's catch up when we are all in office
An interesting weekend



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:03

72%



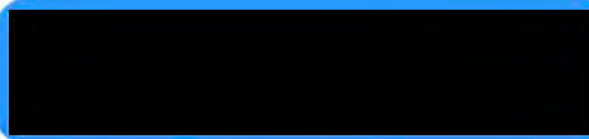
Jasmin >

🔍 they are us andrew nic...
google.com



FYI - big pickup already

HA
HA



Will you send rose Byrne link to
all staff and board?

Can you do it pls? Feels better
coming from you I think (given
you send these sort of
announcements regularly)



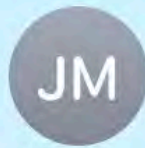
iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:03

72%



Jasmin >



Btw most of the trade articles
I've scanned note Andrew as a
Kiwi



Happy to do it. Will do it now

Any downside/issues you can
see with me sending this to AS
cc Mladen and you?

Hi Annabelle

Passing this on for courtesy
given your engagement with
this project.

[https://variety.com/2021/film/
news/rose-byrne-andrew-
niccol-christchurch-mosque-
shootings-1234993559/](https://variety.com/2021/film/news/rose-byrne-andrew-niccol-christchurch-mosque-shootings-1234993559/)



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:03

72%



Jasmin >

We've liaised with Andrew, Philippa, Stewart and Ayman in the lead-up to their press release being issued this morning, and briefed all appropriate parties in advance.

All best

Chris

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting)
& Head of International
Relations
New Zealand Film Commission |
Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga



I don't see any. I told her about Venice.

Friday 08:53



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:03

72%



Jasmin >

Friday 08:53



**Actress Rose Byrne to play
Jacinda Ardern in film based on
Christchurch mosque attacks...**

rnz.co.nz

RNZ pickup



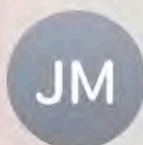
iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:04

72%

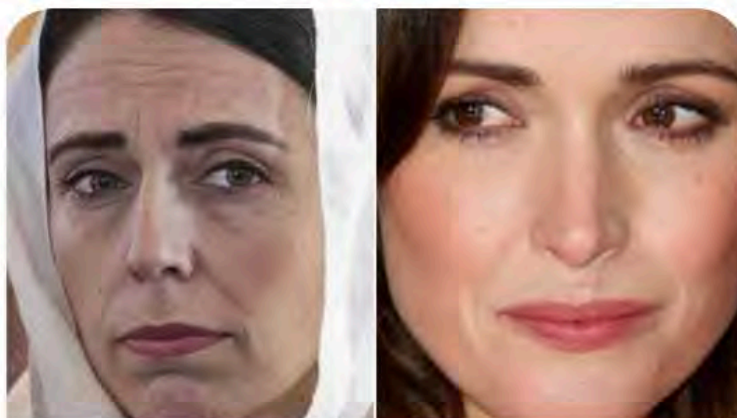


Jasmin >

Live updates, June 11: Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in new film

thespinoff.co.nz

First accent ref



Rose Byrne to play New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mo...

stuff.co.nz

A spokesperson for Jacinda Ardern said: "The Prime Minister and the Government have no involvement with the film."



iMessage



VF Aotearoa

16:04

72%



Jasmin >

A spokesperson for Jacinda Ardern said: "The Prime Minister and the Government have no involvement with the film."



I've just had kate Rodger ask me if we are involved and I have replied as per the reactive statements

Saturday 08:11

'How is it okay for others to profit off our pain?'

Opinion - The movie *They Are Us* should not focus on a white woman character and her role in the aftermath of a heinous tragedy, but the stories of the Muslim victims and survivors, **Saziah Bashir** writes.

Comment & Analysis 13 minutes ago

Related



iMessage





Jasmin >

'How is it okay for others to profit off our pain?'

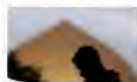
Opinion - The movie *They Are Us* should not focus on a white woman character and her role in the aftermath of a heinous tragedy, but the stories of the Muslim victims and survivors, **Saziah Bashir** writes.

Comment & Analysis 13 minutes ago

Related

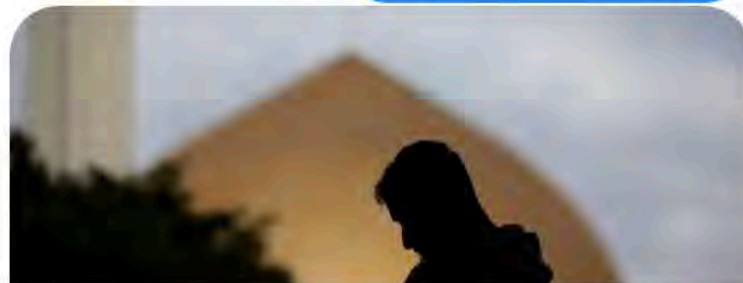
Actress Rose Byrne to play Jacinda Ardern in film based on Christchurch mosque attacks - report

They are not us and it hurts to be props in a Hollywood movie



Thousands sign petition denouncing mosque

[RNZ homepage](#)



iMessage





Jasmin >

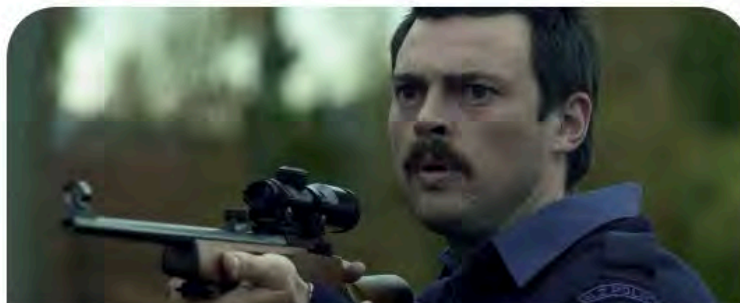


**Thousands sign petition
denouncing mosque attacks film**

rnz.co.nz

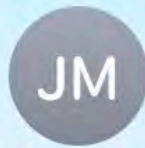
Thousands sign petition
denouncing mosque attacks
film | RNZ News

Saturday 20:27



iMessage





Jasmin >



'What people don't want is to be exploited': The people who've made films about Kiwi tragedies

stuff.co.nz

Sunday 07:25

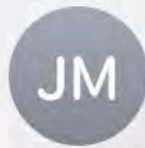


Riz Ahmed calls for urgent change in 'toxic portrayals' of



iMessage





Jasmin >



Riz Ahmed calls for urgent change in 'toxic portrayals' of Muslims on screen

theguardian.com

I've been following this thread (ie Riz's activism in this space) for a while. It'll be interesting to see whether he engages with the TAU response over the coming period, as that could extend the kōrero beyond local media and community comment (as it solely/largely seems to be currently) to an international and industrial level.

Delivered



iMessage



From: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: RE: Newstalk ZB Interview Request
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:32:51 a.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.jpg](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
[image017.jpg](#)

Yup

M

From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:32 a.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Newstalk ZB Interview Request
Importance: High

A request from yesterday. I think we don't respond and wait until 12noon.

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:30 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Newstalk ZB Interview Request

Importance: High

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.



From: Alexander Goldsmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 13 June 2021 4:47 p.m.
To: marketing <marketing@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Newstalk ZB Interview Request

Kia Ora Team,

Alexander from Early Edition on Newstalk ZB.

Hope you are well.

Just reaching out, was wondering if it was possible to arrange for someone from the NZ Film Commission to do a quick phone interview on Early Edition with Kate Hawkesby tomorrow morning?

We are wanting to discuss the recently announced movie They Are Us, a film about Jacinda Ardern and her response to the mosque shooting.

It would be great to know:

*What is the commission's stance on the proposed film

*Secondly we would want to talk more in general, about what care should be taken NZ stories, especially ones of national tragedies?

Should there be wider consultation with Whanau affected, in-depth research, and so forth?

Timing wise, we are an early show (on-air 5am-6am weekdays) but it would be a quick 3-4 minute phone interview, and we think it would be a great conversation.

Let me know if we can make this work.

Many Thanks,

ALEXANDER GOLDSMITH

Early Edition Producer



ME: My pronouns are he/him



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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: FW: FW: They Are Us
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 4:08:01 p.m.
Attachments: [image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

Hi Glenn

The NZFC, like other Government agencies, has a “no surprises” policy with the Government. We received the embargoed press release on June 9th announcing the project would be introduced to the Cannes Film Market. We forwarded the release on to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Office of the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage (Hon Carmel Sepuloni), with the understanding that they would provide the release to the Prime Minister’s Chief Press Secretary. We believe they did this on June 10th.

The embargo lifted on June 11th at 7am New Zealand time.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[\[REDACTED\]@nzfc.co.nz](#)



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From: Glenn McConnell [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 1:43 p.m.

To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Re: FW: They Are Us

Thanks Jasmin, so just to be clear - had the They Are Us production been in touch with NZ Film Commission? And, was it NZFC that let Ardern know about it - or just the ministry for culture?

Cheers,
Glenn

On Mon, Jun 14, 2021 at 12:06 PM Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Dear Glenn

The project has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC.

A statement has just been released by the NZ producer which you may have received at 12noon.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand@nzfilm.co.nz



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From: Glenn McConnell [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 8:05 a.m.
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: They Are Us

Kia ora, [REDACTED] - I'm not sure if we've emailed before. I report on showbiz and culture for Stuff, thought I'd cc in NZ Film Com to this - as ministers sometimes mention the ministry rather than agency... And obviously your agency is responsible for the NZSPG.

Has They Are Us applied for assistance from the NZ Film Commission?

Cheers,
Glenn

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Glenn McConnell** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, Jun 14, 2021 at 7:25 AM
Subject: They Are Us
To: media@mch.govt.nz <media@mch.govt.nz>

Mōrena,

On Breakfast this morning, the prime minister said she first heard of the film They Are Us from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

I was interested in how the ministry had heard They Are Us was underway. (Has it already applied for the NZ Screen Production Grant?)

Cheers, Glenn

--

Glenn McConnell

Kaikawe kōrero

Journalist - Stuff [Life](#) and [Culture](#), [Sunday Star-Times](#)

Columnist - [The Dominion Post](#), [The Press](#)

Presenter of [He'll Be Right](#)



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--

Glenn McConnell

Kaikawe kōrero

Journalist - Stuff [Life](#) and [Culture](#), [Sunday Star-Times](#)

Columnist - [The Dominion Post](#), [The Press](#)

Presenter of [He'll Be Right](#)



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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: FW: Terror attack movie - NZ Herald request
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:32:53 a.m.
Attachments: [Outlook-1wgnibwl.png](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image013.jpg](#)
Importance: High

Ditto to my email earlier.

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:32 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Terror attack movie - NZ Herald request
Importance: High

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED]
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From: Anna Leask [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 8:16 a.m.
To: marketing <marketing@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Terror attack movie - NZ Herald request

Hi there,

I hope this finds you well.

I just wanted to check in and see if there was any further comment about the proposed movie about the Christchurch terror attack, They Are Us.

Has the NZFC had any contact at this stage with the filmmakers regarding funding or assistance etc?

I appreciate comment may have been given earlier but I wanted to check in today and see if there was anything new to report from your perspective - and whether the petition, with more than 50,000 signatures, will have any bearing on future assistance from the Film Commission around this project?

Thanks so much,

Anna

Anna Leask
SENIOR JOURNALIST - CHRISTCHURCH

From: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
To: [Anna Butler](#); [Hannah Newport-Watson](#)
Cc: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: FW: They Are Us - embargoed to 12.00 pm Monday 14 June 2021
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:00:38 a.m.

Hi Anna/Hannah

See email below – note embargoed until 12.00.

Regards

Mladen

From: Philippa Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 8:49 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: They Are Us - embargoed to 12.00 pm Monday 14 June 2021

Statement from Philippa Campbell on ending involvement with *They Are Us* film

14 June 2021

Auckland-based film and television producer Philippa Campbell has withdrawn from the team working on the proposed film about the aftermath of the March 15, 2019 Christchurch terror attacks, *They Are Us*.

Campbell deeply regrets the shock and hurt the announcement of the film has led to throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

"I've listened to the concerns raised over recent days and I have heard the strength of people's views. I now agree that the events of March 15, 2019 are too raw for film at this time and do not wish to be involved with a project that is causing such distress," Campbell said.

"When I was approached to work on the film I was moved by the filmmakers' vision to pay respect to the victims, their families, and those who assisted them. This was reinforced by research interviews undertaken by producer Ayman Jamal with members of the Muslim community in Christchurch. I also hoped that telling the story of swift gun control action might resonate in America and other countries that have struggled to create political consensus to control guns."

"I deeply regret the shock and hurt the announcement of the film has caused throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. The announcement was focused on film business, and did not take enough account of the political and human context of the story in this country. It's the complexity of that context I've been reflecting on that has led me to this decision."

No further comment will be provided.

ENDS

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Catherine Bates](#)
Subject: FW: Google Alert - new zealand film commission
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:25:25 a.m.
Attachments: [~WRD0001.jpg](#)

An interesting opinion piece.

M

From: Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 9:20 a.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Google Alert - new zealand film commission



new zealand film commission

As-it-happens update · June 13, 2021

NEWS

[Mosque attacks film: Movies about politicians should not be taxpayer-funded](#)

Stuff.co.nz

But the **film** also opened a far less important, but still interesting, question about how **New Zealand's** film subsidy regime interacts with **New Zealand's** ...



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From: [Philippa Campbell](#)
To: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: Media contact list They Are Us release
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 11:55:26 a.m.
Attachments: [email media list for public release 14 June.docx](#)

Hi Jas,

Here's a list of the media who have been in contact with me over the weekend, and to whom I have sent the release about my withdrawal.

Abdigani Ali is the spokesperson for the Chch Muslim association and is working with Ayman on comms which are yet to be released by Ayman and Stewart. I sent it to him separately, prior to the general list.

[REDACTED]

Ngā mihi,

Philippa

Philippa Campbell
Escapade Pictures Ltd
Auckland
Aotearoa New Zealand

From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: FW: INQUIRY FROM ONE NEWS
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 5:44:46 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)

See question about any other films and the NZFC being approached. Chris can you please give me a sentence or two about this. Tx

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Simon Mercep [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 12:11 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: INQUIRY FROM ONE NEWS

Hi Jasmin

I'm Simon Mercep from One News in Auckland. We're working on a story today regarding the film project They Are Us, about the Christchurch mosque attacks.

The producers issued a statement on Friday that they were about to seek funding for the next stage of the project, which was the actual filming.

Can you tell us whether the NZ Film Commission has been approached to contribute funding for this?

If so, what has been the Film Commission's response?

Has the film commission been approached by any other film makers over a film on the Christchurch attacks? If so, what can you tell us about this?

And finally is there anyone from the Film Commission available today to cover these matters in a filmed interview?

Many thanks Jasmin

Simon Mercep

One News



From: Jasmin McSweeney
To: Mladen Ivancic; Chris Payne
Subject: RE: THEY ARE US
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 3:08:47 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)
[image009.jpg](#)

Hi Mladen

Will you reply to John and the Board and clarify that the NZFC did not send out the press release and that our consistent statement has been that it is not possible for the NZFC to comment on whether the project would be eligible for any specific discretionary NZFC funding programmes or any of the New Zealand Government's screen incentives scheme as we are not in receipt of any funding applications for this film. Full criteria for the NZFC discretionary funding programmes and the NZSPG are available on the NZFC website. And today we have added, "and you may have seen news stories this afternoon referencing the NZ producer's decision today to withdraw from the project."

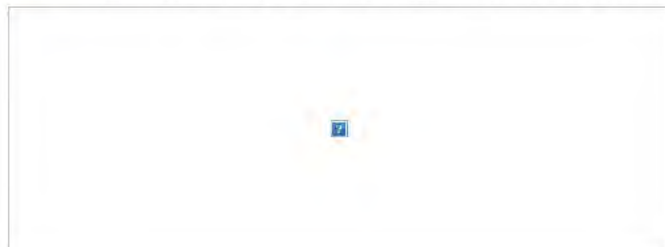
Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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[\[Redacted\]](#) [nz](#)



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From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 1:16 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: THEY ARE US

From: John McCay <[\[Redacted\]](#)>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 12:50 p.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: THEY ARE US

FYI

John McCay
Partner

[\[Redacted\]](#)

MinterEllisonRuddWatts
minterellison.co.nz | [LinkedIn](#)



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From: Ant Timpson <[\[Redacted\]](#)>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 12:44 PM
To: AllBoard <[\[Redacted\]](#)>
Subject: RE: THEY ARE US

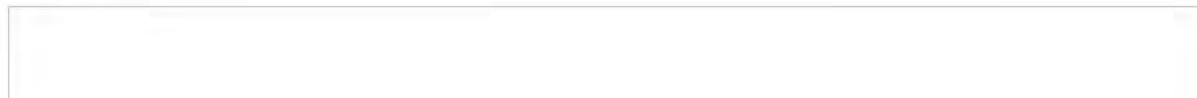
Kia ora Board,

I'm sure everyone was taken by surprise by the news of THEY ARE US

My only comment is about some ropey messaging going around that makes it look like we knew about this project etc - see attached

Will there be any NZFC comms response?

Best
Ant Timpson



12:38



Instagram



Liked by drhinemoa and 95 others

shaneellall Auckland-based producer Philippa Campbell withdraws from working on movie. In a statement on behalf of the Film Commission, producer Philippa Campbell said she deeply regrets the shock and hurt the announcement of the film has led to throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

When I said we need to dismantle They Are Us, I meant it. Philippa Campbell, the producer of They Are Us has pulled out from the movie and will no longer be working on it. Grassroots movements work. Sign the petition until it is fully canned.

@fullyrosebyrne here's your chance to exit! I'm letting you see, don't do it! Every



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Mail : Box 5653 Victoria St West, Auckland, New Zealand |

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From: [Catherine Bates](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE : WPOs [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 7:12:23 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.jpg](#)
[image015.jpg](#)
[image016.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image014.jpg](#)
[image017.jpg](#)
[image018.jpg](#)

All good - chat tomorrow.

Ngā mihi,

Catherine

Catherine Bates | Head of Incentives and International Promotions (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Ground Floor, Kauri Timber Building, 29 Graham Street or 104 Fanshawe Street, Auckland, 1010
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From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 6:32 p.m.
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman

<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Catherine – let's discuss ASAP tomorrow morning and respond to Jessica after that.

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

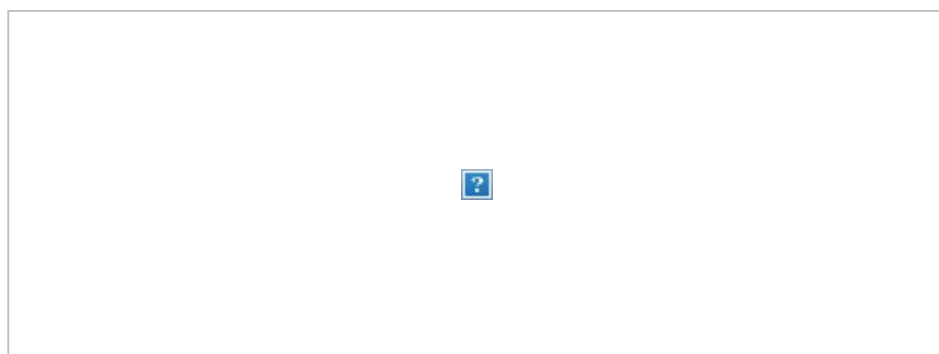
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From: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 5:31 p.m.

To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman

<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi – please see the follow up question below.

Ngā mihi,

Catherine

Catherine Bates | Head of Incentives and International Promotions (she/her)

New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

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From: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 5:29 p.m.
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Follow up question.

What was the specific approach made to NZFC? On they are us?

For example did a producer approach NZFC with an email a phone call, an interaction at a meeting? Have there been substantive discussions with the production at a working level. I note that all interactions (not just documents) are OIAble so keen to have as accurate a picture as possible on a no surprises basis.

Or was the approach just the press release you describe below?

Many thanks,

Jessica Allison-Batt

From: Jessica Allison-Batt
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 5:21 PM
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Catherine ☺ really appreciate this. Will inform Gina and Dean and draft a write up for the WPQs.

From: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 4:50 PM

To: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>; Philippa Mossman
<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Jessica - please find a draft response below. Happy to discuss.

As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects. In the period since the March 15 mosque attacks, staff have been approached by three international filmmaking teams with projects on the topic, one of which is *They Are Us*. As with that project, the NZFC is not involved with either of the other two projects – they have not applied for any New Zealand Government screen funding, whether NZFC development or production funding or the NZSPG.

The NZFC received an embargoed press release from the producers on June 9th announcing the project would be introduced at the Cannes Film Market. We forwarded the release and a summary of the project and filmmakers on June 10th to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Office of the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage (Hon Carmel Sepuloni), with the understanding that they would provide the release to the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary. We were advised that they did this on June 10th. The embargo lifted on June 11th at 7am New Zealand time.

For clarity - the project, *They Are Us*, has been developed independently of the NZFC development funding structures and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC. We do understand that the production does intend to apply for the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) however, we haven't received a SPG grant application and are therefore unable to comment on the likely level of Grant or even the project's eligibility.

Ngā mihi,

Catherine

Catherine Bates | Head of Incentives and International Promotions (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Ground Floor, Kauri Timber Building, 29 Graham Street or 104 Fanshawe Street, Auckland, 1010
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From: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 1:58 p.m.
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hey there- if this one is tomorrow no problem at all- will try to get it signed off by Gina afternoon of tomorrow.

From: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 1:57 PM
To: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Jessica

We'll come back to you as soon as possible.

Catherine

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From: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 1:39:35 PM
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hey there Catherine and Philippa,

Can I confirm whether NZFC has engaged with the 'They are us production?' I understand that the answer is likely no and will proceed to draft responses on this basis- but just want to double check

with NZFC.

Cheers,

Jessica Allison-Batt

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR

Industry Policy, Economic Development and Transitions Branch

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz | Mobile: [REDACTED]

15 Stout Street, Central Wellington, Wellington 6011

NZBN 9429000106078

From: Ayana Menorca <Ayana.Menorca@parliament.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 1:25 PM

To: Gina Williamson <Gina.Williamson@mbie.govt.nz>; Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>

Cc: Ministerial Services <MinisterialServices@mbie.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: WPQs

Hi both,

In addition to the below – could you include this one as well

Reply 24844 (2021) has been released

Portfolio: Economic and Regional Development (Hon Stuart Nash)

Due: 23 Jun 2021

Question: Has the Government had any discussions with the producers of forthcoming production 'They Are Us' and, if so, what level of NZ Screen Production Grant have the producers of the film indicated they will apply for?

[24844 \(2021\)](#)

The draft answer for the above can be submitted to the office on Monday, 21 June

Thank you,

Ayana



Ayana Menorca

Private Secretary – Economic Development and Tourism (Ministerial Services)

Office of Hon Stuart Nash

Minister for Economic and Regional Development | Minister for Small Business

Minister of Tourism | Minister of Forestry

M: [REDACTED]

Email: ayana.menorca@parliament.govt.nz

From: Ayana Menorca

Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 1:40 PM

To: Gina Williamson <Gina.Williamson@mbie.govt.nz>; Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>

Cc: Ministerial Services <MinisterialServices@mbie.govt.nz>

Subject: WPQs

Hi Gina and Jessica,

We received the below WPQs. We might get guidance from PMO, however could you please start working on answers

Reply 24487 (2021) has been released

Portfolio: Economic and Regional Development (Hon Stuart Nash)

Due: 22 Jun 2021

Question: Has any agency for which he is responsible been approached regarding funding or incentives for the proposed "They Are Us" film production, if so, what was the approach, and on what date(s) were agencies approached?

[24487 \(2021\)](#)

Reply 24486 (2021) has been released

Portfolio: Economic and Regional Development (Hon Stuart Nash)

Due: 22 Jun 2021

Question: Has any funding, or another incentive, been provided by any agency for which the Minister is responsible for the proposed production of the film "They are us", if so, what has been provided and on what date?

[24486 \(2021\)](#)

Could we please get the draft answers before or on **Friday, 18 June 2021**?

If I get further updates on office guidance, I will let you know

Thank you

Ayana



Ayana Menorca
Private Secretary – Economic Development and Tourism (Ministerial Services)

Office of Hon Stuart Nash

Minister for Economic and Regional Development | Minister for Small Business
Minister of Tourism | Minister of Forestry

M [REDACTED]
Email: ayana.menorca@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

www.govt.nz - your guide to finding and using New Zealand government services

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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: FW: Interview Request
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 3:05:16 p.m.
Attachments: [image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

Just FYI

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: Laura Beattie [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 3:04 p.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: Interview Request

Hi Jasmin, ok thanks for that.

Cheers
Laura

LAURA BEATTIE
Executive Producer Heather du Plessis-Allan
Drive | Newstalk ZB





From: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: 14 June 2021 15:02

To: Laura Beattie [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Interview Request

Dear Laura

Annabelle stepped down as CEO in May to return to Australia. Our new CEO will be announced this afternoon, but will not take up the role until July 12th.

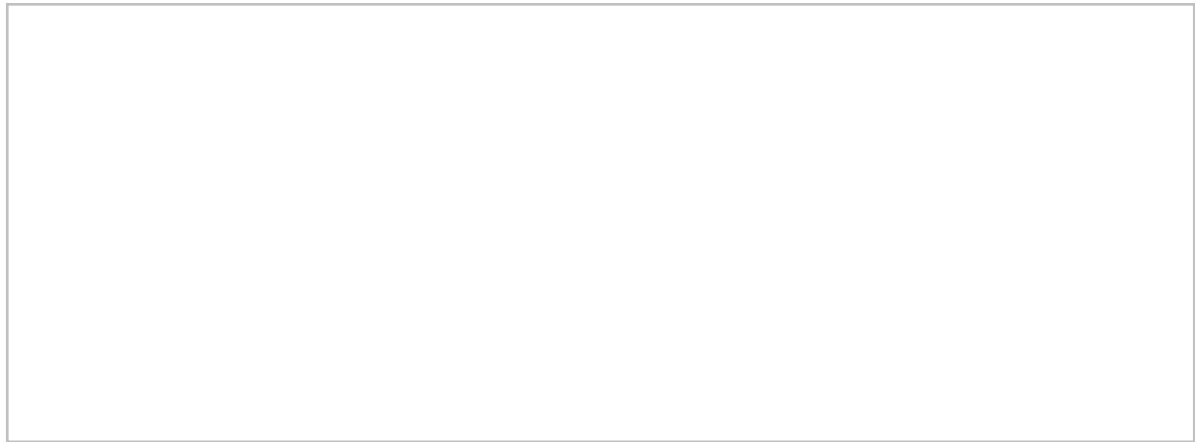
With regards to They are Us, it is not possible for the NZFC to comment on whether the project would be eligible for any specific discretionary NZFC funding programmes or any of the New Zealand Government's screen incentives scheme as we are not in receipt of any funding applications for this film. Full criteria for the NZFC discretionary funding programmes and the NZSPG are available on the NZFC website and you may have seen news stories this afternoon referencing the NZ producer's decision today to withdraw from the project.

Cheers

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
[REDACTED] nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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From: Laura Beattie [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 2:06 p.m.
To: marketing <marketing@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Interview Request

Hi there

I'm producing the Drive show at Newstalk ZB, wondering if Annabelle Sheehan might be available in an interview to talk about the They Are Us movie that's been announced by Kiwi directors and producers.

I wonder how the NZ Film Commission feels about this movie?

Ideally this would be for an interview later this afternoon, but please give me a call in the first instance so I can understand where the Commission stands on the issue.

Kind regards
Laura


LAURA BEATTIE

Executive Producer Heather du Plessis-Allan
Drive | Newstalk ZB



From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Leanne Saunders](#)
Subject: RE: They Are Us
Date: Monday, 14 June 2021 5:37:33 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.jpg](#)

Thanks Chris

Philippa Mossman
NZFC


From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 5:37 p.m.
To: Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>; Leanne Saunders <leanne.saunders@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: They Are Us

FYI

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Monday, 14 June 2021 5:34 p.m.

To: AllBoard [REDACTED]

Cc: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: They Are Us

Hi All

We are receiving a lot of media inquiries at the moment around this film project. Set out below is a response we provided to the media earlier today. Hopefully useful background.

The NZFC, like other Government agencies, has a “no surprises” policy with the Government. We received the embargoed press release from the producers on June 9th announcing the project would be introduced at the Cannes Film Market. We forwarded the release and a summary of the project and filmmakers on June 10th to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Office of the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage (Hon Carmel Sepuloni), with the understanding that they would provide the release to the Prime Minister’s Chief Press Secretary. We were advised that they did this on June 10th.

The embargo lifted on June 11th at 7am New Zealand time.

Regards

Mladen

From: [Philippa Mossman](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
Subject: further FYI
Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 8:10:02 a.m.

https://www.newsroom.co.nz/we-wont-stop-until-white-saviour-film-shut-down?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Newsroom&utm_campaign=b6a66af40b-Daily+Briefing+15.06.2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_71de5c4b35-b6a66af40b-88581321

Philippa Mossman
NZFC



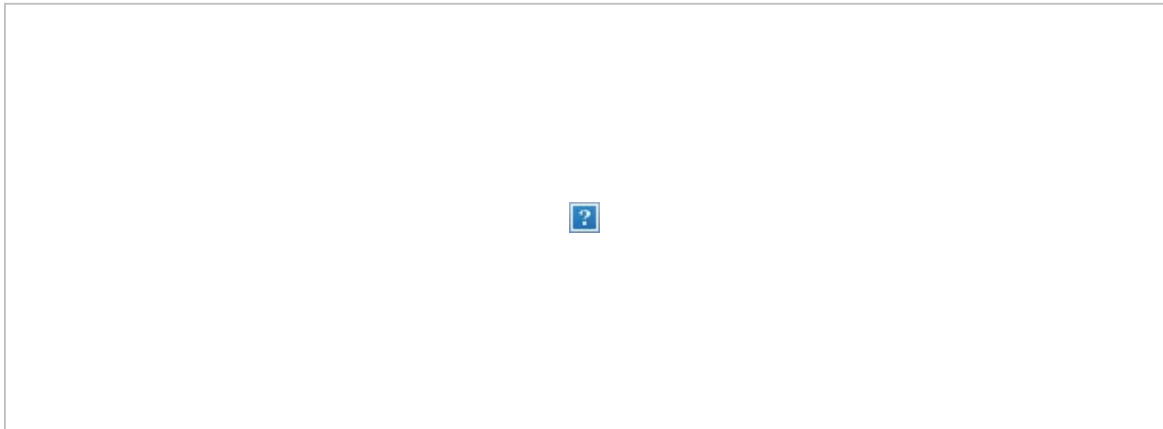
From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Reception - NZFC](#)
Subject: FW: THEY ARE US
Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 11:38:00 a.m.
Attachments: [image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

[\[REDACTED\]](#) | ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 11:37 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: THEY ARE US

Hi Jasmin

Thanks so much for your email [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I will pass your response on to those that I have been in contact with.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

On Tue, Jun 15, 2021 at 11:31 AM Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Kia ora

I am in receipt of your email address and verbal message to our front-of-desk person expressing concern about the funding of proposed film project *They Are Us*.

As indicated to media previously, the project has been developed independently of NZFC funding and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC. As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects that include New Zealand stories or elements, and this is the case with *They Are Us*.

Overnight we received from the *They Are Us* producers a joint media release by the Muslim Association of Canterbury (Al Noor Mosque) and *They Are Us* producer Ayman Jamal, addressing concerns surrounding the project. The Muslim Association of Canterbury issued this release to New Zealand media this morning and it has been picked up by major New Zealand news sites, such as Stuff - <https://i.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/300333148/they-are-us-producers-consulted-christchurch-imams-but-deeply-regret-not-doing-more>

Ngā mihi nui

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: [Mladen Ivancic](#)
To: [Anna Butler](#); [Gemma Robinson](#)
Cc: [Jasmin McSweeney](#); [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: They Are Us
Date: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 12:16:33 p.m.

Hi Anna/Gemma

FYI

We are receiving a number of requests from media and members of the public, including to-date one OIA, about our involvement with THEY ARE US.

We have crafted the following template response, which we will adapt according to the query.

Kia ora

I am in receipt of your email address and verbal message to our front-of-desk person expressing concern about the funding of proposed film project They Are Us.

As indicated to media previously, the project has been developed independently of NZFC funding and there is no indication at this stage if the production will seek contestable production financing from the NZFC. As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by international filmmakers with projects that include New Zealand stories or elements, and this is the case with They Are Us.

Overnight we received from the They Are Us producers a joint media release by the Muslim Association of Canterbury (Al Noor Mosque) and They Are Us producer Ayman Jamal, addressing concerns surrounding the project. The Muslim Association of Canterbury issued this release to New Zealand media this morning and it has been picked up by major New Zealand news sites, such as Stuff - <https://i.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/300333148/they-are-us-producers-consulted-christchurch-imams-but-deeply-regret-not-doing-more>

Ngā mihi nui

Regards

Mladen

From: Mladen Ivancic

Sent: Thursday, 17 June 2021 3:38 p.m.

To: Emma Spooner [REDACTED]

Cc: Anna Butler [REDACTED] Gemma Robinson
[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Emma

As promised please find below answers we provided to MBIE yesterday afternoon in respect of three PQs they had received earlier this week.

Let me know if you need any additional information.

Regards

Mladen

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Jessica Allison-Batt](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Catherine Bates](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: Re: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 17 June 2021 12:18:35 p.m.
Attachments: [image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.jpg](#)
[image014.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)

Hi Jessica

Thanks for this — all sounds good.

We imagined that your response would be distilled but we wished to provide a comprehensive chronology so you have the full picture, and as context to inform any subsequent/additional queries.

Look forward to receiving your proposed response in due course.

All best

Chris Payne
Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

From: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 10:41
To: Chris Payne
Cc: Mladen Ivancic; Catherine Bates; Philippa Mossman
Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks all,

This really helpful- I am likely to compress the proposed response down from the full overview provided- but this is really useful so that we can provide a clear response now and ensure the Minister is fully informed on a no surprises basis (The office may want the full information even if the written response is shorter).

I'll come back with proposed response that is going to the Minister's office for NZFC information.

Cheers,

Jessica Allison-Batt

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 16 June 2021 4:16 PM
To: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: FOR RESPONSE : WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Jessica

I'm replying on our behalf here.

For clarity, noting that our earlier reply was solely in relation to the first question, having not scrolled down to the bottom of the email chain to see there were two additional questions.

Addressing each question in chronological order:

Reply 24486 (2021):

- No funding, or another incentive, has been provided by the NZFC for the proposed production of the film, *They Are Us*.

Reply 24487 (2021) [and your separate email body text questions]

- Staff first engaged with the *They Are Us* producing team when the team requested a meeting with the NZFC's former CEO, Annabelle Sheehan in **March 2020**.
- Writer/Director/Producer, Andrew Niccol emailed Annabelle Sheehan an "early draft" of the screenplay on **4 March 2020**.
- The conference call was held **on 11 March 2020** involving Sheehan, Niccol, Stewart Till and Tim White (the NZ producer attached to the project prior to Philippa Campbell's involvement).
- The brief headlines from that meeting (provided verbally to one staff member by Sheehan on **2 April 2020**):
 - 15 March terror attacks project by Andrew Niccol and Tim White.
 - Working title is *They Are Us*.
 - UAE producer [Ayman Jamal \(Barajoun Entertainment\)](#) is attached – bringing funding.
 - Not set up as a co-production at this stage, but rather a solely NZ film with international finance.
 - Wants the PM to read the project after the September 2020 election.
 - Was planning to shoot late summer 2021 (February/March 2021?) but likely to slide due to COVID-19.
 - Potentially interested in NZFC development funding – would want to do EDF/ADF but not have to apply i.e. CEO Delegation [N.B. No funding application has been received by the NZFC.]
 - [REDACTED] budget (US\$ or NZ\$ TBC).
- Former CEO, Annabelle Sheehan left the NZFC on **21 May 2021**.
- Staff are unaware of any further engagement on the project until **2 June 2021**, when Philippa Campbell (replacing Tim White as the NZ producer) wrote to three NZFC staff requesting a meeting "next week to introduce the project to the NZFC in more detail prior to its announcement at Cannes."
- A Teams meeting was held involving Campbell, Niccol, Till and Jamal and three NZFC staff on **9 June 2021**, during which the producing team:
 - Outlined the genesis of the project and its development process to date, including their consultation with the Canterbury Muslim community.
 - Provided an overview of the narrative and their intentions in making the film.
 - Noted the attachment of Rose Byrne to play Prime Minister Ardern.
 - Specified an estimated budget for the film but stated their uncertainty as to how the project would be financed, as this would be determined in large part by the market/financial response to the project at/following Cannes.
 - Stated that they were uncertain as to whether they would apply for NZFC production funding, but that they would likely seek to apply for NZSPG in the future – though

- whether this would be the NZSPG – New Zealand (40% grant) or NZSPG – International (20% grant) remained to be determined.
- Advised that there had been no engagement on the part of the producing team with the Prime Minister or New Zealand Government.
- Following the meeting, on **9 June 2021** Campbell emailed staff with a copy of the embargoed press release, and Niccol separately emailed staff a copy of the sixth draft of the screenplay for optional reading, along with a brief explanatory email about one fictional character he created for narrative purposes.
- On **9 June 2021** staff verbally briefed the Deputy CEO of Ministry for Culture and Heritage on the meeting and that a press release would be issued by the producing team on 11 June 2021; staff were then asked to supply a written summary.
- On **10 June 2021** staff emailed the Deputy CEO of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Private Secretary to the Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage, Hon Carmel Sepuloni the embargoed press release and a backgrounder on the project and filmmakers prepared by staff.
- The Private Secretary to the Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage, Hon Carmel Sepuloni confirmed on **10 June 2021** that she had shared both to the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary.
- At **7am on 11 June 2021** the embargo was lifted on the press release.
- On **15 June 2021** staff were contacted by Till via email requesting a follow-up meeting and stating that a joint press release had been issued that day by the producers and the Muslim Association of Canterbury, with this press release included with his email to staff.
- Staff met with Till on **15 June 2021** via Teams, during which Till updated staff on the Christchurch community consultancy approach to be employed going forward, that the press release had been supplied to NZ media and would be supplied to Hollywood trade media, and that—at this point in time—the filmmaking team remains committed to making the film.

Reply 24844 (2021)

- Addressed in our 15 June 2021 email response below.

I trust this provides you with a comprehensive overview of NZFC engagement with this project.

Should you have any further queries, please let us know.

Noho ora mai

Chris



Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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From: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 5:29 p.m.
To: Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman
<philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: WPQs [UNCLASSIFIED]

Follow up question.

What was the specific approach made to NZFC? On they are us?

For example did a producer approach NZFC with an email a phone call, an interaction at a meeting?
Have there been substantive discussions with the production at a working level. I note that all interactions (not just documents) are OIAble so keen to have as accurate a picture as possible on a no surprises basis.

Or was the approach just the press release you describe below?

Many thanks,

Jessica Allison-Batt

From: [stewart till](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Cc: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: Re: Statement
Date: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 2:42:22 a.m.

12pm Is perfect.

Stewart

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jun 21, 2021, at 20:37, Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:
>
> Hi Stewart
>
> Sorry for the delayed reply -- Jas is in Auckland for a test screening and meetings, and I've been in meetings for much of today.
>
> We could both do tomorrow 12pm NZT if that works for you? For clarity, this would be:
>
> Wednesday 12pm NZT
> Tuesday 5pm PST
>
> All best
>
> Chris
>
>
> Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
> New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
> Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
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> Please consider the environment before printing this email.
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>
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Stewart Till [REDACTED]
> Sent: Tuesday, 22 June 2021 10:00 a.m.
> To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
> Cc: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
> Subject: Re: Statement
>
> Chris and Jasmin.
>
> I wondered if you were free for a quick call today; so I can update you on our current plans.
>
> Stewart
>
>> On Jun 14, 2021, at 3:36 PM, Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

>>
>> Hi Stewart
>>
>> My colleague, Jasmin McSweeney (Head of Marketing, cc'ed) and I are happy to speak today. We're free for the next half-hour if that works for you, alternatively we both have a window from 12-1:30pm NZT.
>>
>> I can provide a Teams link if easiest, or we can speak directly via phone.
>>
>> All best
>>
>> Chris
>>
>>
>> Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International
>> Relations New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga Level
>> 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street,
>> Wellington 6142
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>> Please consider the environment before printing this email.
>>
>>
>>
>>
>> -----Original Message-----
>> From: stewart till <[REDACTED]>
>> Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 4:17 a.m.
>> To: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
>> Subject: Statement
>>
>> Chris, As I am sure you know the following statement was sent out by The Muslim Association of Canterbury.
>>
>> Additionally, after Philippa's resignation, could I have a call with you and any of your colleagues to let you know what measures we are implementing to try to rectify the situation. I am in LA but happy to schedule a call at your earliest convenience.
>>
>> Very best
>>
>> Stewart
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone
>> <They Are Us Joint Media Release 15June2021.pdf>
>

15/06/2021

**Joint Media Release by Muslim Association of Canterbury (Al Noor Mosque) and 'They Are Us'
Producer Ayman Jamal**

Media Release addressing the concerns surrounding the 'They Are Us' movie.

**Abdigani Ali
Spokesperson
Muslim Association of Canterbury (Al Noor Mosque)**

"After the Muslim Association of Canterbury's media statement questioning the timing of the film and raising concerns on the focus of the film – the producers of the film have got in contact with MAC to clarify our concerns. After consultation, the producers have shared the synopsis of the movie and listened to our concerns."

"MAC acknowledges that the producers have contacted and spoken to both the Imams of Al Noor and Linwood Mosque and some of the victims of March 15th terrorist attack who came forward and shared their stories with film producers however we have come to an understanding that more consultation needs to be done with the victims of the March 15th terrorist attack which includes further dialogue with Linwood Islamic Centre and the different community groups that represent the victims such as the March 15th Victim Group, Sakinah Foundation and the other ethnic community groups that also represent victims from their ethnic communities such as the Somali, Pakistani and Bengali communities just to name a few of these community groups in Christchurch."

"We have agreed to work closely with the producers to facilitate this process of consultation and any victims of the March 15th terrorist attack who are the families of the victims, the survivors or witnesses can send their request for consultation to: theyareus@masjidannur.org.nz and rest assured you will be contacted as the producers have made a commitment to work with our community in an appropriate, authentic and sensitive manner."

**Ayman Jamal
Producer
They Are Us**

"First and foremost, we are devastated by the pain and concerns caused by the announcement of the film by the members of the New Zealand public, the Muslim community of New Zealand and in particular the victims directly impacted by events of March 15th 2019 in Christchurch. This was never our intention, and we believe we owe a clarification to those families who lost their loved ones, survivors and witnesses regarding the film, its purpose and intention."

"Over a year ago we have consulted with the local Muslim community of Christchurch which included Imam Gamal Fouda of Al Noor Mosque and Imam Alabi Lateef Zikrullah of Linwood Mosque and over 20

other victims of the March 15th attack. At the time the Christchurch Muslim community was going through a lot, and we were engaging only with those families who were ready to share their story with us at that time.”

THEY ARE US SYNOPSIS

THEY ARE US takes place over one remarkable week, from a Friday to a Friday. Jumu’ah to jumu’ah. From the Prayer Day when a gunman chose to murder Muslims in New Zealand to the following Prayer Day when the country chose to honour them.

In a mirror of New Zealand’s own approach, during the film the gunman is never shown and his name is never spoken.

Instead, during the attack we witness the acts of heroism and sacrifice. The worshippers who confronted the gunman at Masjid Al Noor and shielded their fellow worshippers. At Masjid Aroha - Linwood Islamic Centre – we witness the courage of the unarmed worshipper, Abdul Aziz, who chased the gunman away and in doing so saved so many lives.

The Imams of the two mosques, Fouda and Zikrullah, advocating for the families of the victims, including urging that the bodies be released in accordance with the Muslim faith.

We witness the Muslim surgeon who saved the life of a four year old girl wounded in the attack and the Christchurch residents who came to the aid of worshippers.

We depict worshipper, Farid Ahmed, who very publicly forgave his wife’s murderer. We depict how refugees, fleeing violence, were forced to come to terms with the cruel irony that violence claimed them in one of the safest places on earth.

And we witness the actions of Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, during this remarkable week. How, an hour after hearing of the attack, she instinctively penned those three simple but unforgettable words of love and solidarity, “They are us.” And in this week, she achieved in six days what countries like the United States have failed to do in decades - Banning assault rifles and all weapons of war used in the attack.

“This project was developed to share these and some of the other unique 20 plus stories that the victim families have shared with us who are the real inspiring stories and heroes with the whole world. That is why we called the movie “they are us” - we wanted their stories to be heard and to make it our obligation to tell these unique stories to the world.”

“There is no one hero in this film, collectively the New Zealand people from diverse backgrounds showed us, the rest of the world, that together they turned an horrific terrorist attack to unity, love and compassion by sticking together and affirming that they are all one and in this together.”

“We deeply regret that we did not reach all of the families of the victims, survivors and witnesses and we want to sincerely show that we are here to listen and consult with every last victim of this tragic event who wants to express their views irrespective of what the view is and that we are ready to hear the many more inspiring stories for those who would like to share them with us. We are opening a channel of communication through the Muslim Association of Canterbury for all the families of the victims, survivors, and witnesses to email in their views, requests for consultation, requests for meetings or those who would like to share their story with us and assure them we are here to listen. The email address is: theyareus@masjidannur.org.nz”

- END -

From: [Chris Payne](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#)
Subject: File Note - Teams Meeting Headlines (Stewart Till, JM, CP)
Date: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 12:28:51 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.jpg](#)

ST noted that our conversation is in confidence but that we are part of a government bubble.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Acknowledged lots of media discourse currently, including in relation to other films produced about massacres (Columbine, Norway).

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142

[www.nzfilm.co.nz](#) | [ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz](#)



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From: [Jessica Allison-Batt](#)
To: [Chris Payne](#); [Tom Frankish](#); [Gina Williamson](#)
Cc: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Catherine Bates](#); [Philippa Mossman](#)
Subject: RE: Google Alert - new zealand film commission [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 24 June 2021 1:55:50 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image014.jpg](#)
[image006.jpg](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image011.jpg](#)
[image012.jpg](#)

Thanks Chris forwarding to our media contact at MBIE

From: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 11:54 AM
To: Jessica Allison-Batt <Jessica.Allison-Batt@mbie.govt.nz>
Cc: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Catherine Bates <catherine.bates@nzfilm.co.nz>; Philippa Mossman <philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: FW: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

Hi Jessica

Passing on for your awareness, too.

All best

CP

Chris Payne | Chief Operating Officer (Acting) & Head of International Relations
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
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From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 11:44 a.m.

To: Emma Spooner [REDACTED] Hannah Newport-Watson
[REDACTED]

Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: FW: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

Hi Emma & Hannah

Just alerting you to this Stuff article (in case you haven't seen it).

You will note that Stuart Smith erroneously comments that "the PM has allowed the film to be partially funded through taxpayer money".

Regards

Mladen

From: Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com>

Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 12:32 a.m.

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Google Alert - new zealand film commission



new zealand film commission

As-it-happens update - June 23, 2021

NEWS

[For the families affected by the tragedy, this Hollywood film is a kick in the guts](#)

Stuff.co.nz

As for possible funding, the **New Zealand Film Commission** offers a range of support for New Zealand filmmakers and international productions, ...



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From: [Emma Spooner](#)
To: [Mladen Ivancic](#); [Hannah Newport-Watson](#)
Cc: [Chris Payne](#); [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
Subject: RE: Google Alert - new zealand film commission
Date: Thursday, 24 June 2021 1:49:56 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

[REDACTED] Happy to discuss though.

Emma

From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 1:03 PM
To: Hannah Newport-Watson [REDACTED]
Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Emma Spooner <[REDACTED]>
Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

We haven't made any contact with Stuff.
Let us know if you want us to.

M

From: Hannah Newport-Watson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 12:28 p.m.
To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>
Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>; Emma Spooner [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

Thanks Mladen, appreciate you alerting us to that.

Just so we are aware, has anyone been in contact with Stuff regarding the factually incorrect statement?

Thanks,
Hannah

Hannah Newport-Watson | Private Secretary – Arts, Culture and Heritage

[REDACTED]
Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni MP, Minister for Social Development & Employment, Minister for Disability Issues, Minister for ACC and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

From: Emma Spooner [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 11:56 AM

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>; Hannah Newport-Watson

Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: RE: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

Thanks for sending it through Mladen, I hadn't seen it, so really useful to know about.

The comment re Government funding is odd, given we've all been pretty consistent and clear that no funding has been applied for, considered or approved.

Emma

From: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 11:44 AM

To: Emma Spooner <[REDACTED]>; Hannah Newport-Watson

Cc: Chris Payne <chris.payne@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: FW: Google Alert - new zealand film commission

Hi Emma & Hannah

Just alerting you to this Stuff article (in case you haven't seen it).

You will note that Stuart Smith erroneously comments that "the PM has allowed the film to be partially funded through taxpayer money".

Regards

Mladen

From: Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com>

Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 12:32 a.m.

To: Mladen Ivancic <mladen.ivancic@nzfilm.co.nz>

Subject: Google Alert - new zealand film commission



new zealand film commission

As-it-happens update · June 23, 2021

NEWS

[For the families affected by the tragedy, this Hollywood film is a kick in the guts](#)

Stuff.co.nz

As for possible funding, the New Zealand Film Commission offers a range of support for New

Zealand filmmakers and international productions, ...



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From: [Jasmin McSweeney](#)
To: [Andre Chumko](#)
Subject: RE: MEDIA ENQUIRY - They Are Us
Date: Thursday, 1 July 2021 1:56:36 p.m.
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)

Hi Andre

Apologies for my delayed response.

Hello Brother is one of the projects that we are aware of. As the second project has not been publicly announced, we cannot comment on or announce the project ahead of the production company doing so. As has been advised previously, none of these three international projects has formally sought any form of New Zealand government screen funding, either NZFC discretionary development or production funding, or the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG).

Thank you for updating your story yesterday – however, I wanted to clarify that the first part of our response to your question below referred only to the March 2020 meeting. In March 2020, the NZFC was approached by the producers of *They Are Us* for an introductory meeting. It was at a very early stage of development and, like the hundreds of other mooted film projects we are advised about, we had no reason to know at that time whether or not the project would ultimately go into production in the future, and if it did, what—if any—New Zealand government funding it might apply for. I also would like to reiterate that at that time we were advised at a high level about the production, and that there were no formal, in-depth talks about the project's finance plan or otherwise with the producers.

I am not requiring the news item be corrected, I just wanted to clarify what I said in relation to what was reported, as I don't want my comment to be interpreted as misleading in any future reporting on this topic.

Regards

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
T: [REDACTED]
www.nzfilm.co.nz | ondemand@nzfilm.co.nz



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From: Andre Chumko [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 9:23 a.m.
To: Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz>; marketing <marketing@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: Re: MEDIA ENQUIRY - They Are Us

And can the commission confirm that this is one of the films which approached it? Or was it another one?

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/112730284/egyptian-filmmaker-announces-film-on-christchurch-mosque-shootings>

This one was called 'Hello Brother'

On Thu, Jul 1, 2021 at 8:45 AM Andre Chumko <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thanks Jasmin for your response! we added this in last night to our story.
Hey could you please give me any more detail about the other 2 films in the pipeline? Which production companies were behind these and when was the commission approached about them? What stages were those proposals/talks at and is the commission still in contact with any of the producers?
Thank you,
Andre

On Wed, Jun 30, 2021 at 5:22 PM Jasmin McSweeney <jasmin.mcsweeney@nzfilm.co.nz> wrote:

Dear Andre

Thank you for your email.

Regarding the first meeting in March 2020 and not advising the Ministry or Minister:

As part of its function as New Zealand's national film agency, the NZFC is regularly approached by local and international filmmakers with film ideas. The NZFC at any point in time is aware of hundreds of local and international mooted film projects. Most of these projects will never move into production and in March 2020 when this project first came to our attention it was at a very early stage of development and we had no reason to believe at that time that the project would go into production.

In the period since the March 15 mosque attacks, staff have been approached by three

international filmmaking teams with projects on the topic, once of which is *They Are Us*. As with that project, the NZFC is not involved with either of the other two projects – they have not applied for any New Zealand Government screen funding, whether NZFC development or production funding or the NZSPG.

The NZFC is an Autonomous Crown Entity of the New Zealand Government, and whilst we have regard to Government policy, our decisions are at arms-length from Government.

Kind regards

Jasmin McSweeney | Head of Marketing (she/her)
New Zealand Film Commission | Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
Level 3, 119 Ghuznee St, Wellington 6011 | PO Box 11546, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
T: [REDACTED]
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From: Andre Chumko [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 12:10 p.m.
To: marketing <marketing@nzfilm.co.nz>
Subject: They Are Us

Hey guys/Jasmin

They Are Us was raised in select committee today with Arts Minister Carmel Sepuloni fronting questions. What was raised as a question was why the Film Commission did not, even as a courtesy, raise the matter with the Minister (who was associate then), or the actual minister, or ministry given a Royal Commission of Inquiry was ongoing at the time when a first meeting was held about it, which was said to be March 2020.

What would the commission say about the above? Did it make the Government or ministry/minister aware of it at all? And would it be supportive of re-looking at its policies in this regard, if not? Why/why not?

How would the commission respond to the concerns raised that it's too removed from Government, and therefore may not be accountable?

Also can I please have an update with what is happening with the film currently with regard to the commission's involvement? (if any?)

Please get back to me ASAP, and my best,
andre

--

Andre Chumko (he/him)
Arts and culture reporter