

1 August 2023

## 7 JULY 2023: OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

In your email dated 7 July 2023 you requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

1. *Please send me a .zip archive of all Stage One applications submitted for 2022/2023 Kōpere Hou – Fresh Shorts, which successfully received funding-- (as submitted through the <https://freshshorts.nzfilm.co.nz> application portal). The projects I am interested in are:*

*Beast Mode (Chye-ling Huang and Joyce Wong) Grassroots (Aaron Ly and Isaiah Tour) Invisible Dragons (Victoria Boulton, Madison Henry-Ryan, Mikaela Ruuegg) Josephine (Stef Harris, Patsy Burke) Mirumiru (Allan George, Jason Taylor) Tall Hours (Sophie Black, Esther Leilua)*


2. *For each project, I would like to see:*

- Team Video Link
- Genre
- Logline
- Script
- Director's summary
- Director's visual inspiration images
- Producer's summary
- Authentic representation of Tangata whenua and diversity summary -Championing diversity and inclusion summary -Short bio & filmography for each team member

3. *I would also like to know the names of the external industry assessors who made the shortlist, an explanation of the process the assessors are told to follow in order to decide which Fresh Shorts submissions projects get shortlisted and invited for Stage Two applications, and any written judgements made by the assessors for the above projects-- i.e. why these projects were chosen to receive Fresh Shorts funding.*

4. *I would also like to know the completion status of these projects.*

The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) is refusing **parts one** and **two** of your request under section 18(a) of the OIA, that there is a good reason for withholding the information. The information requested is being withheld in full under 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.



Regarding **part three** of your request, external industry assessors for Fresh Shorts are contracted by Script to Screen, and under this contract, the identity of assessors is not made publicly available. We are therefore withholding the names of the external industry assessors under section 9 (2)(a) of the OIA on the basis that withholding the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons.

The NZFC is working towards making available on our website a comprehensive aggregated list of the names of all assessors that the NZFC engages across all funding initiatives. As you can appreciate, this process will require a substantial amount of work and take some time to complete – for example, we will need to consult with each individual assessor and seek their consent to be included on the publicly available list.

The NZFC is withholding the written judgements made by the assessors for the projects mentioned under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA, 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.

Please find attached at **Appendix 1**, the Fresh Shorts Assessor Guide which outlines the process assessors are to follow when assessing applications to the fund.

In response to **part four** of your request, all the projects are currently in the contracting stage.

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

Please be aware that you have the right, by way of complaint to an Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review of our response.

Yours sincerely

*Tayla Hancock*

Tayla Hancock  
**Senior Policy Advisor**  
**New Zealand Film Commission**





## Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Assessor Guide

### Whiringa Tuatahi - Stage One Application

**Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts identifies and nurtures the next generation of New Zealand filmmakers.**

To make it easier 'up front' for teams to apply we have changed the application structure to a two-stage application process. This reading and assessment guide is for **Whiringa Tuatahi - Stage One**

#### **Whiringa Tuatahi - Stage One:**

Assessment of a Team video, a written script and a short application with some summaries, no more than 3-4 pages in total. The application provides an overall picture of story, vision and team *and* helps the shortlisting assessors to get to know the filmmakers. A shortlist of 18 teams are recommended and invited to submit a detailed **Whiringa Tuarua - Stage Two** application.

#### **Whiringa Tuarua - Stage Two:**

Assessment of a written script and detailed application about story, vision and team to help assess scope and feasibility of projects. Up to six projects will be funded \$15,000. The six teams will be matched with an experienced practitioner, attend one day workshops and be mentored for six weeks to ensure they are 'shoot ready'.

**The assessment criteria are the same for both stages of the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts application.**

Applications are for short narrative films which can be live action, animation or documentary with a duration of 4 – 25 minutes. The purpose of the reading and assessing of **Whiringa Tuatahi - Stage One** is to identify and agree a shortlist of 18 teams. The teams will be invited to complete **Whiringa Tuarua - Stage Two** of the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts application.

The focus of assessment is on applicants' talent and their stories. The specific projects are important, too, but the people are our focus. This process is the start of an ongoing relationship with Script to Screen and the New Zealand Film Commission for all who participate.

Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts funding takes a developmental approach. The 18 Shortlisted teams will receive feedback, attend online Q&A sessions and be able to ask the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator questions about their application before submission.

Funded teams will receive feedback, be matched with an experienced practitioner, attend a two-day workshop and be mentored for six weeks to support development of their projects to a level where they are 'shoot' ready.

The NZFC endeavours to support a diverse range of project types, styles and scales.

## Te Rautaki Māori

The NZFC's commitment to Tangata Whenua under our Te Rautaki is to work in partnership with Māori to better support the development and progression of Māori talent.

## Diversity, inclusion and equality

The NZFC is committed to providing opportunities and support for women and those from a diverse and/or underrepresented community.

Funding decisions through Kōpere Hau - Kōpere Hau - Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts will reflect these commitments.

Assessors play a crucial role in this process. **Thank you.**

## Dates

Application deadline	Day Date Month 1pm
Assessor portal opens	Day Date Month 1pm
Assessments due	Day Date Month 9am
Selection panel meets	Day Date Month 12:30pm – 5pm (we will let you know what time we need you closer to the date)
Funding announced	by Day Date Month 202?
Mentorign begins	

## Instructions

Applications, assessment forms, reading/writing guides and all other material can be found online at the [Script to Screen Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts portal](#).

Before starting your assessments you will need to:

- sign the Letter of Agreement and Confidentiality Agreement
- receive an email inviting you to the assessment portal, click the link and create a password
- read this document containing the Assessor Guide, Language Guide and Conflict of Interest Guide.

## What we are looking for

- fresh directorial voices with distinctive, original styles;
- fresh ideas not seen before in short film, or new and original takes on familiar ideas;
- big screen potential – story and visual ideas that will work in cinematic release;
- narrative films with impact. They could be emotional, humorous or political, or designed to scare an audience. You should aim to reach audiences and move them;
- films that take risks, provoke and challenge audiences; and
- films that have something to say

## **Assessment Criteria**

- **quality of the script;**
- **the idea and strength of the project;**
- **point of difference;**
- **director's voice/vision;**
- **filmmaking talent involved; and**
- **ability to deliver the project.**

We encourage assessors to refer to this criteria list throughout reading and assessment and reconnect to it prior to the shortlist recommendation panel.

## **Assessing**

### **Each assessor will:**

- Watch and score the team videos
- Read the scripts and complete the score sheet
- Read and score all summaries
- Write two summary sentence feedback notes about assigned applications
- After reading all assigned applications create a 'Top 20' or Top project recommendation list
- Discuss projects at the shortlist panel meeting and make recommendations

Please read, assess and score every script and proposal you are assigned, whether you recommend it for the shortlist or not. You can read the applications online or download a PDF of each application. However, all assessment scores, feedback and Top recommendation lists must be completed in the online portal.

Projects are eligible to apply for Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts up to three times if the applicants have made significant changes. Previous feedback letters about these projects will be supplied so you can assess their progress.

### **Recommended process for each application you assess:**

1. Watch the Video and read the application materials in the order they appear in the application and complete all scoring for each section as you go.
2. Make rough offline notes (if required).
3. Write the two sentence feedback about the application.

## SCORING GUIDE

Section	Content	Score
<b>VIDEO</b>	One shot video with the full team answering. The video gives insight into the heart of the story, why the team want to tell this story and their connection to it. Gives an insight into the team and how they will work together to make the proposed film. <b>4 minutes (max) Vimeo link</b>	<b>1-30</b> <b>(1 being lowest, 30 being highest)</b>
<b>GENRE</b>	Genre: Identifiable types, categories, classifications. The genre(s) chosen are appropriate for the proposed film script. <b>2 (max) from the list provided.</b>	<b>No Score</b>
<b>LOGLINE</b>	The logline statement reflects the narrative 'hook', premise or essential dramatic dilemma inherent in the proposed film script. <b>35 words (max)</b>	<b>1-5</b>
<b>SCRIPT</b>	The script is a correctly formatted screenplay outlining what a reader and audience will see and hear. Uses visual imagery, character behaviour, dialogue and sound creating a distinctive, original, compelling story of a duration between 4-25 minutes.	<b>10 section script assessment scoresheet: Score 1,2 or 3. Lowest Total score 10. Highest Total Score 30. (See page 5)</b>
<b>TANGATA WHENUA, DIVERSITY, REPRESENTATION &amp; CONSULTATION SUMMARY</b>	A written summary indicating how this application will enhance diversity. And if the project involves Māori or those from an under-represented community including ethnically diverse, gender diverse, LGBTQIA+, those with a disability or those from a diverse background how the team will collaborate. Indicates how the project promotes the authentic representation of characters, stories, places, history and culture. And indicates meaningful and appropriate consultation has taking place or is planned. <b>300 words (max)</b>	<b>1-5</b>
<b>DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY</b>	A written summary of the director's treatment techniques indicating how they intend to bring this script or story to life as an original, unique cinematic film. And indicates who they will work with to achieve this. <b>300 words (max)</b>	<b>1-5</b>
<b>DIRECTOR'S VISUAL INSPIRATION IMAGES</b>	5 landscape format (composed horizontally) A4 high res images representing beginning, middle and end of the film. These may be found images or may be created by the director. Indicating the tone, mood, or atmosphere of the film the director intends to make. Gives a sense of the director's visual aesthetic, or visual 'voice' and helps imagine the film the director intends to make. <b>5 images in one PDF</b>	<b>1-10</b>
<b>PRODUCER'S SUMMARY</b>	Written summary of how the producer proposes to realise this film and the challenges. It shows intentions, plans and contingency for production and budget. If the film has been previously submitted the producer indicates how the team have further developed the story since the last application. <b>300 words (max)</b>	<b>1-5</b>
<b>BIO AND FILMOGRAPHY FOR EACH TEAM MEMBER</b>	Short Bio for each team member indicating skills that assist in the making of the project & list of films, music videos, TVCs (or plays) etc. they have made – if they have previous projects. <b>Bios 250 words (max)</b>	<b>1-10</b> <b>Given as an overall score for team.</b>
	Total possible score	<b>100</b>

### Script assessment score sheet

Scripts will be assessed across the following sections and each section scored between 1 and 3  
1 lowest, 3 highest = Total 30 points max

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Genre          | Does the story's meaning succeed within the genre stated?                  |
| 2. Premise        | Is it an original and authentic idea?                                      |
| 3. Conflict       | Is there enough dramatic conflict <i>for the world of the story</i> *?     |
| 4. Structure      | Does the story create a strong dramatic narrative?                         |
| 5. Character      | Is there a clear character journey?  |
| 6. Stakes         | Are the stakes high enough <i>for the world of the story</i> *?            |
| 7. Dialogue       | Does the dialogue create the illusion of reality?                          |
| 8. Visual Grammar | Is the story written visually, invokes visual imagery in the readers mind? |
| 9. Pace           | Does script demonstrate tension & effectively modulate pace & mood?        |
| 10. Development   | Does the story have potential for further development?                     |

\**World of the story* – some films are nuanced and very subtle. Dramatic tension, conflict and stakes might be finely-drawn, or less obvious but relevant to the story being told. Sometimes these films do not read dramatically on the page but can be realised through the director's treatment of the material.

### Notes and considerations

Your role is to write about what you observe and experience, then describe that observation ensuring that your tone and language are positive and constructive. Refer to the [Language Guide](#) when writing comments. Online notes are public documents that can be retrieved as part of an Official Information Act request.

Be aware of your own biases (gender or cultural) and taste preferences. If a script, project or genre doesn't appeal to you personally that doesn't necessarily mean it's not a good project or proposal.

Your notes may be incorporated into feedback letters *or* form the basis for feedback conversations conducted by the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator with the shortlisted teams.

Don't be concerned if two sentences seems 'too short'. Remember all readers are writing these so collectively they give the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator a sense of commonalities. It is helpful that you write a full sentence not just a couple of words.

#### Write two summary sentences:

- 1. On Target:** Could cover aspects of the script and proposal that are working well and what you like about the script/story, proposal and team.
- 2. Develop Further:** Could cover parts of the script and proposal that are unclear or could benefit from further development? Or what aspects of the application create questions in your mind? Or the skills the team could develop.

Although you are only required to write two summary feedback notes much thinking will inform your recommendations for shortlisting and your Top 20. When reading it can be useful to think about the considerations below.

#### Considerations

- Do the team have a clear connection to the story they want to tell? Have they worked together before? Does the team appear to know how they will realise this film together?
- Does the genre(s) indicated match the story in the script? Does the logline reflect the story?
- Is the story fresh and original? What is the unique point of difference? Does the story take risks? Have a clear POV? Is the script emotionally engaging? Is it visually written so you can imagine it?

- Does the teams Tangata whenua, diversity, representation and consultation summary show how their project will enhance diversity? Is there an indication of how the team are collaborating and consulting to ensure authentic representation? Have the team endeavoured to undertake appropriate consultation about their story, characters and their approach? Or show their plans and intentions.
- Does the Director's Summary provide a sense of how they intend to realise the story e.g. what it will look like, sound like and feel like? And how might they work with others?
- Does the Directors' Inspiration Imagery give a sense of style and aesthetic of the story they intend to tell? Does it help imagine the story? Is there a *cohesion* or sense of visual 'voice' in the choice of imagery? A consistency of style?
- Does the Producer's Summary outline how this film can be made for the budget? Does it indicate how they intend to address challenges? Are appropriate plans and contingencies stated?
- Do the Team Bios indicate they have the level of experience to realise the film they are putting forward for funding?

## Tips

**Enter notes as you go.** Some assessors like to jot uncensored notes on paper first and then enter more refined comments in the online form. We suggest you do offline notes and then complete the refined online notes *immediately afterwards*.

Don't leave entering more refined versions of your notes until later as a 'batch'. Fatigue will inevitably set in and it's likely you won't get back to them. Achieve completion – not perfection.

**Complete all work on a single application** before going on to the next one. If you skip between applications it can get really confusing!

**Plan your reading.** As much as you can allow yourself regular time to read and complete assessments. It is very hard to cram reading and assessment due to concentration fatigue. Do a few and see how long it takes you, then do a realistic estimate. If you do fall behind please let the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator know so they can assign reading to other readers. There is no judgement!

**Get some feedback on your assessment process.** If you're new to reading and assessment, read a few and then discuss your process with the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator and make sure you're confident about what you're doing. The FSF is there to support you.

## Ranking - top choices for shortlisting

You may want to re-read the assessment criteria before you make your recommendation list.

And you may want to collate this list as you go and then recalibrate and adjust at the end of your reading. Or you may want to do it once you've completed reading all applications.

Which ever way you choose, prepare a ranked list of your Top 20 projects prior to the shortlisting panel meeting. One being the highest ranking and 20 being the lowest.

If you are reading a specific smaller group of projects rank those projects by top choices of projects from one to the total number of projects e.g. 1-9. One being the highest



The list is to be collected by the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator on **the Day Date of Month time**.

This ranking will be done by evaluating your assessment of the script, the summaries and the and the team and their ability to deliver the project as indicated in the **assessment criteria guidelines**.

This is not an exact science. Call on your experience and right brain thinking; bring in your intuition. There may be teams that do not score hugely on script but are talented 'diamonds in the rough'. Remember not all films can be funded.

## Catch Ups

The Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator is there to support you. We'll check in from time to time to see how you're doing. Please call if you have questions. If you're falling behind let us know so we can help.

Miriam Smith 64 9 360 5400 | +64 **xxxxxxxx**

## LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

Language is especially important in written feedback, particularly for new and emerging filmmakers who may not be used to receiving critiques of their work.

Some of your notes may be seen by the applicant, so we ask that you write in a positive or neutral, objective style that communicates your points concisely and avoids giving advice.

When writing your feedback please follow these general rules:

- Maintain an objective tone by using the third person. Avoid using "I" and don't address the writer as "you". It's generally more helpful to refer to team members by their roles (writer, producer, director) than by their names.
- Refrain from being prescriptive or offering specific advice about how the writer, director or producer should fix a problem. Allow them to find their own solutions.
- Asking open questions can be a useful way to point out areas that need work by asking *what, how, where* or *who*. For example: "What would happen if the story was explored from the child's POV?" or "How could the writer increase tension and suspense?".
- Use positive and constructive language where possible. Try to avoid adverbs like *extremely, very, poorly* or judgmental words like *boring, weak, dull*. "The opening could more active and exciting," is likely to be received better than, "The opening is boring."
- Avoid the use of words such as *needs to, must, should, ought, and has to*. Instead use alternatives such as *could, might* and *perhaps* e.g. "the writer could explore how to increase dramatic conflict in the story" – leaving it as a choice for the recipient of the feedback.
- Write in the present tense – the script and proposal is a work-in-progress and the present tense keeps the process alive.
- Proof read your notes to check for spelling mistakes, typos and grammatical errors, and spell place names and characters correctly if they are used.
- Remember that witticism and sarcasm, though sometimes hard to resist, are not useful and may tend to make the recipient defensive!

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the integrity and consistency of an open and transparent assessment process by defining conflict of interest and providing guidance in identifying actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest for Script to Screen readers, assessors and selectors (Panel Member).

Generally, a conflict of interest is a situation in which a Panel Member has a competing personal, professional or financial interest that could have an actual, potential or perceived effect on that person's ability to fulfil his or her responsibilities in an objective and independent manner.

Script to Screen Panel Members are required to be independent, impartial experts with the responsibility for providing rigorous, independent assessment of the applications.

In the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Application Portal, Panel Members must declare if there is a Conflict of Interest before being able to access each application.

To establish if you have any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest answer the following questions with **Yes, Potentially** or **No**:

- Do you have a personal interest in the project or filmmaker, or stand to gain in any way if the application is successful?
- Do you have any personal obligations, loyalties or bias that could influence your evaluation of the application?
- Are you aware of anything that could give the appearance that you might be biased towards a project or filmmaker?

If you have answered **Yes** to any of the above questions you cannot assess the application or take part in deliberations including decision-making in relation to the application with the conflict of interest.

If you have answered **Potentially** to any of the above questions, please provide details to the Kōpere Hou - Fresh Shorts Facilitator so the Facilitator can make a decision about the conflict of interest and if it precludes you from assessing the application.

If you have answered **No** to the above questions you can assess the application.