

TE PUNA WHAKATONGAREWA
PUBLIC INTEREST
JOURNALISM FUND



INTERIM REPORT

2021 – 2023



OVERVIEW

The Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF) was a \$55m Government initiative designed to provide targeted, short-to-medium-term support for public interest journalism in the wake of COVID-19. Administered by NZ On Air, the PIJF allocated funding across 26 months from May 2021 to June 2023.

The final allocations of the PIJF provide a useful moment to reflect on the impacts of this unique initiative so far. While allocation of the \$55m PIJF was completed in June 2023, the outputs of the funding will continue through until early 2026. This Interim Report is designed to catalogue the establishment of the fund and discuss its outputs from January 2021 until June 2023. It will not assess the relative success or otherwise of the Fund given that it would be an incomplete assessment at this time, with content still being delivered.

As was noted in the 2021 PIJF Stakeholder Consultation and Recommendations Report, *“The PIJF will invest more per year than either the UK or the Canadian PIJ schemes, in a country a fraction the size. The potential impact is big, and the scheme has an opportunity to set the global standard in terms of PIJ reinvention. It is not an exaggeration to say that for anyone convinced of the value of news, the initiative represents a crucial test.”*

As a globally unique initiative, the PIJF has provided valuable insights. This report aims to share these findings, with the hope of assisting New Zealand and other countries facing the challenge of mitigating the significant decline of public interest journalism.

This report has been collated by the NZ On Air Journalism team.



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BY THE NUMBERS



TOTAL APPROVED
\$66,167,017*


APPROVED APPLICATIONS
195

*this includes additional NZ On Air baseline funding

445 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR A TOTAL ASK OF **\$169,590,485**




PROJECTS
\$30,676,194



ROLES
\$28,063,158




INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT
\$7,427,665



MĀORI
\$22,678,497



PACIFIC
\$9,220,942



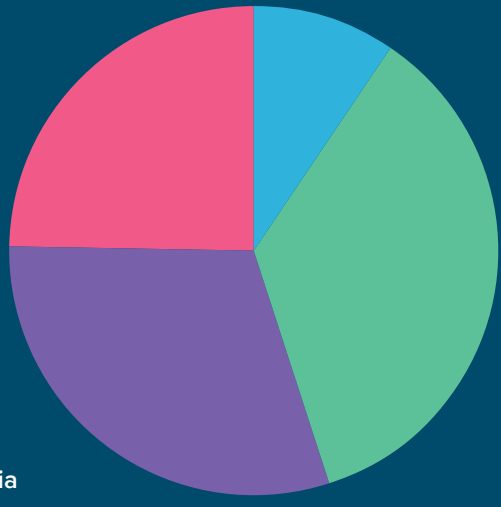
DIVERSE VOICES
\$7,581,041

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT
TOTAL 669

CADETS/ TRAINEES
50

TRAINING FOR CURRENT JOURNALISTS
619

PROJECTS
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECTS 73



- Regional audience
- National audience
- Targeted audiences
- Māori audience/media



166 MILLION TOTAL CONTENT VIEWS ACROSS
MORE THAN 72,000 PIECES OF CONTENT
30 JUNE 2023

OUTCOMES

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The outcomes of the PIJF can be measured both in how it delivered public interest journalism to audiences and how it supported the news media sector. First let's look at how audiences responded to the PIJF content created.

DID AUDIENCES ENGAGE WITH THE CONTENT?

In order to understand whether audiences were reading, watching or listening to PIJF content, a new automated method of measuring audience engagement had to be created. We needed a way to compare data from every application no matter how big or small. A proprietary measurement system using Google Analytics digital tracking tags on each piece of funded content was piloted by the PIJF. Now called VIEW, the system will become standard practise for all digital NZ On Air content.

The confidential VIEW dashboard provides top line data including the number of funded pieces of content, total content views, view through rates, and allows us to monitor trends over time.

By 30 June 2023, 72,200 total pieces of PIJF content have been tracked online, across 44 publishers, attracting a total of 166 million views.

In a typical week, PIJF content was seen by 1.25 million users (up 212% on our target of 400K), with an engagement of 1 minute 26 seconds (up 43% on our target of 1 minute).

Based on the average reading speed of 238 words per minute, a total of 24.6 million words have been read via PIJF over the course of the fund.

While the numbers look significant, VIEW provides a conservative picture of the amount of content provided thus far. This is due to the fact that:

- VIEW was initiated in August 2021 and tracking progressively came online as individual applicants joined.
- It only measures online digital content – not print, audio, video, apps or podcasts.
- It took almost a year for the majority of publishers to join the system.
- Google Universal Analytics was phased out by Google after the PIJF tracking began, necessitating a switch to the Google Analytics 4 system. To ensure consistency, where possible data across both systems has been combined and duplication minimised.

WHAT AUDIENCES DID THE FUNDING TARGET?

NZ On Air's primary job is to 'reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture' and this was also a major aim of the PIJF. This meant a particular focus on under-served audiences. From the total approved funding amount of \$66,167,017, the

following amounts have gone to Māori and Pasifika content outcomes and other Broadcasting Act audiences (see below for how the money was allocated).

**MĀORI
MEDIA**

16,258,689

**MĀORI
CONTENT**

6,419,808

**PASIFIKA
MEDIA/CONTENT**

9,220,942

**ETHNIC
MEDIA/CONTENT**

3,681,099

**YOUTH/
TAMARIKI**

3,069,852

**FEMALE
AUDIENCE**

482,352

DISABILITIES

347,738

ARTS

524,972

RURAL

911,513

HOW MUCH MONEY WAS ALLOCATED?

NOTE

The allocated funding amounts in each round may differ from the eventual actual payments made. This variation can be attributed to several factors mostly because, by the time of contract, many budgets had reduced. This was often because of recruitment challenges or, on a couple of occasions, where projects did not proceed. Many completed projects also came in under budget. In cases where there were underspent funds, we made efforts to reallocate those funds in subsequent rounds. Additionally, further underspends throughout the duration of the contracts resulted in decreased final payment amounts in certain instances. This is why, while the funding provided was \$64m, the funds allocated was a little more than \$66m. The final PIJF spend will not be known until all projects and roles are completed in 2026.

AVAILABLE FUNDING BREAKDOWN

\$55M

**ONE-OFF
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING**

~\$9M

**TRANSFER FROM
NZ ON AIR BASELINE
FUNDING TO COVER
VARIOUS LEGACY
JOURNALISM
PROJECTS¹**

\$64M

**PIJF FUNDS
AVAILABLE**

\$1.9M

**LESS TOTAL
ADMINISTRATION
NZ ON AIR AND
MINISTRY FOR
CULTURE AND
HERITAGE**

\$66,167,017

**THE TOTAL
AMOUNT
ALLOCATED**

ROUND	ALLOCATED	CONTRACTED
1	\$11,229,645	\$10,325,639
2	\$19,185,847	\$16,506,834
3	\$9,254,433	\$9,032,324
4	\$4,172,872	\$4,081,785
5	\$3,994,956	\$3,716,933
6	\$11,922,561	Maximum of \$11,813,911*
7	\$3,293,787	Maximum of \$3,292,350*
TMP co-fund	\$3,000,000	Maximum of \$3,000,000*
Emergency resilience fund	\$112,916	Maximum of \$106,535*
Total	\$66,167,017	Maximum of \$61,876,311*

* Some rounds have not yet been fully contracted, so the final contracted amount is not yet known.

¹ A decision was made during the stakeholder consultation phase to not shift existing news projects funded by NZ On Air to the PIJF without a corresponding increase in the funding budget of the PIJF. There were a number of journalism and current affairs projects annually or previously funded from NZ On Air's baseline funding. All these projects had to apply for funding via the PIJF in order to run a fully contestable process and they were assessed and approved funding under the same eligibility and assessment criteria as similar journalism applications.

WHO RECEIVED FUNDING?

After each round, successful applications were publicly announced via media releases and the NZ On Air website where the funding decisions included the name of the applicant, a synopsis of the proposal and the amount funded.

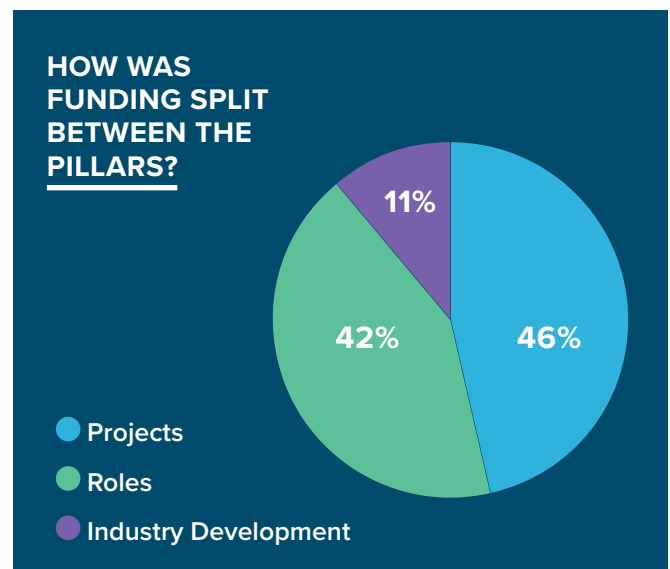
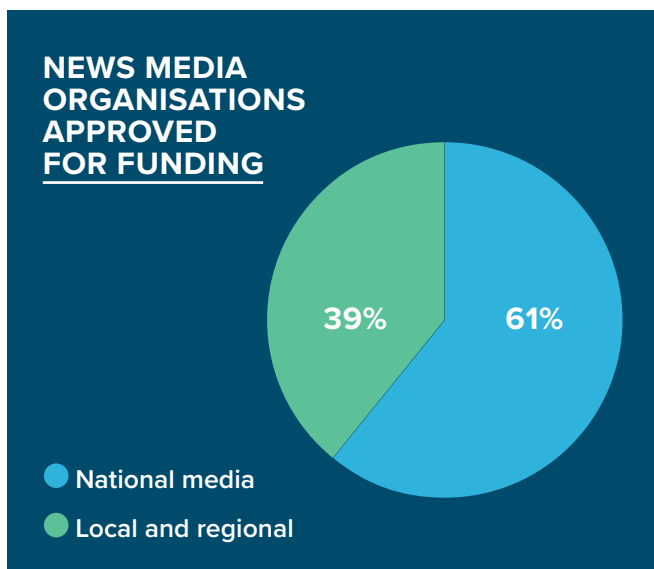
70 different media outlets and content producers have been funded by the PIJF. A full list of recipients and the amount of funding they received can be found under [Funding Decisions](#) on our website.

HOW SUCCESSFUL WERE APPLICATIONS?

A large majority of applications were for Projects, but these applications had the lowest approval rate.

	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	APPROVED	APPROVAL RATE
Projects	235	82	35%
Roles	167	91	54%
IDF	43	22	51%
Total	445	195	44%

WHAT WAS THE SPLIT BETWEEN NATIONAL, LOCAL AND REGIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATIONS?



NOTE

While the majority of funding went to national media organisations, it should be noted that the country's two biggest media entities, Stuff and NZME, both have significant numbers of regional and local publications, and funding was targeted to provide improved coverage in the regions.

ROLES FUNDING

WHERE DID THE ROLES FUNDING GO?

219 roles were approved for funding over the course of the PIJF. A full list of funded roles can be found [here](#).

TOTAL ROLES APPROVED – 219, INCLUDING:

OPEN JUSTICE

15 ROLES, PLUS THREE RELATED ALLIED COURT REPORTER ROLES

LDR

20 ROLES

TE RITO GRADUATES

10 FUNDED ROLES APPROVED

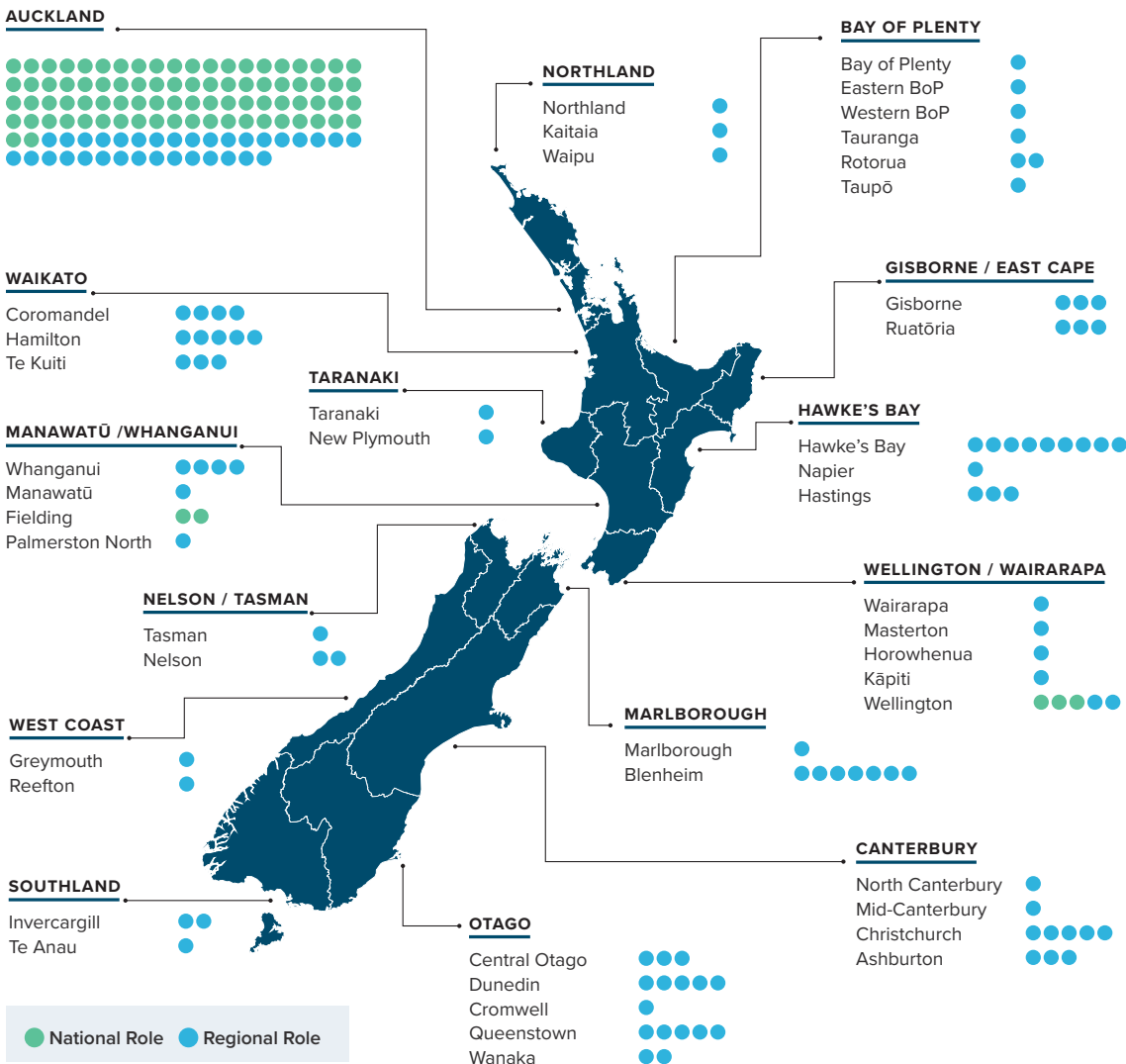


KELLEY TANTAU, ALICE PARMINTER AND TERESA RAMSEY FROM 'THE VALLEY PROFILE'

The PIJF prioritised supporting regional and local journalism. One such example was [The Valley Profile](#).

Roles funding allowed newsrooms to hire additional staff to provide increased public interest journalism. In exceptional circumstances, where it could be demonstrated that roles were in imminent risk of being lost, publishers could apply

for non-incremental role funding. Two such applications were approved, to NZME for eight roles on eight regional community newspapers and Stuff for five roles on one regional publication.





WINNER 2022 VOYAGER AWARDS BEST REPORTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FELIX DESMARAIS) AND COMMUNITY JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR (JUSTIN LATIF)

LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTING SCHEME

[The Local Democracy Reporting scheme](#) (LDR), administered by RNZ, is a nationwide programme providing local government reporting, mostly in regional Aotearoa. The LDR was established in 2019 as a \$1m initiative from the one-off RNZ/NZ On Air Innovation Fund and was run in association with the News Publishers Association (NPA). A second year of funding was provided by NZ On Air in 2020 and for the past two years, the LDR has been funded via the PIJF.

Local democracy reporting is vital for holding local authorities to account and ensuring local communities are informed and engaged. However, the rising costs of journalism have seen declining reporter numbers in this field. The Scheme has funded journalists throughout the motu who publish stories online to 30 LDR members, including: RNZ, TVNZ, Stuff, NZME/NZ Herald, Newsroom, The Spinoff, Otago Daily Times/Allied Press, Gisborne Herald, Wairarapa Times-Age, Ashburton Guardian,



PROPOSED LDR LOCATIONS FOR 2022 AND 2023 – CONTINUING (RED) AND ADDITIONAL (BLUE)

Greymouth Star/Kaikoura Star, Westport News, Nelson Weekly/Marlborough Weekly, Blenheim Sun, Ruapehu Bulletin, Whakatane Beacon/Opotiki News, Akaroa Mail/Kaiapoi Advocate, Radio BOP, Pacific Media Network, Awa FM, Te Korimako o Taranaki, Wairarapa TV, NZ Doctor, Sun Media, Scoop, Southland app, Tagata Pasifika, Asia Pacific Report, Gulf News and What's On Invers. The scope of the scheme and the breadth of its reach have produced a huge number of local governance stories for audiences throughout Aotearoa.

In 2020, media consultant Dr Gavin Ellis ONZM MA PhD was commissioned to review the LDR and recommended it be continued. In the wake of the PIJF funding, Dr Ellis was again asked to review the scheme and its impact. Once again Dr Ellis found the scheme was worthy of continued support and his report and recommendations can be found [here](#).

OPEN JUSTICE



OPEN JUSTICE

Another large-scale Role scheme supported by the PIJF was Open Justice – Te Pātiti (NZME). This national multimedia service of 15 journalists covers court and justice issues out of regions where court reporting has drastically diminished. Local justice reporting is an essential part of maintaining an informed public but has been steadily declining because of budget constraints and a lack of resources, particularly in regional newsrooms.

Open Justice provided a much-needed network of reporters across the North and South Islands, covering Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Hawke's Bay, Whanganui, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch. Dr Ellis also reviewed the Open Justice – Te Pātiti scheme and his comments and recommendations can be found [here](#).

PROJECTS FUNDING

Projects funding gave applicants the chance to create content they otherwise would not be able to afford in terms of time or money.

Out of this came a large variety of content – a full list of funded projects can be found [here](#) but a few examples of the breadth of subject matter includes:



WHAKATUPURIA TE MOANA A TOI PROJECT FOR RADIO BAY OF PLENTY

BEING TEEN

A YEARLONG STUDY ABOUT BEING A TEENAGE NEW ZEALANDER IN 2022.

[CLICK HERE](#)

FAULTLINES

A MULTIMEDIA PROJECT LOOKING AT THE GEOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF A POTENTIAL EARTHQUAKE ALONG THE ALPINE FAULT.

[CLICK HERE](#)

KĀHU KI ROTORUA

A BILINGUAL SUPPLEMENT FOR THE ROTORUA DAILY POST.

[CLICK HERE](#)

THE QUARTER MILLION

A YOUTH FOCUSED EXPLORATION OF THE ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

[CLICK HERE](#)

THE PUBLIC SECTOR PROJECT

WHICH ASKED THE QUESTION, HOW GOOD ARE OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS?

[CLICK HERE](#)

Projects also provided an opportunity for content creation for under-served audiences such as ethnic communities and youth audiences.

RNZ ASIA UNIT

A SPECIALIST UNIT OFFERING CHINESE LANGUAGE AND INDIAN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS.

[CLICK HERE](#)

MENTAL HEALTH IN ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

A SERIES FOR AND BY INDO-PACIFIC NEW ZEALANDERS THAT UNPACKED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND PROVIDED CULTURALLY RELEVANT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

[CLICK HERE](#)

XIN XI LAN

A SERIES EXPLORING THE HISTORY, IMPACT AND LEGACY OF CHINESE NEW ZEALANDERS.

[CLICK HERE](#)

INSIDE CHILD POVERTY- REVISITED

A DOCUMENTARY FOCUSED ON WHAT HAS OR HASN'T BEEN DONE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S CHILDREN IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.

[CLICK HERE](#)

ICYMI

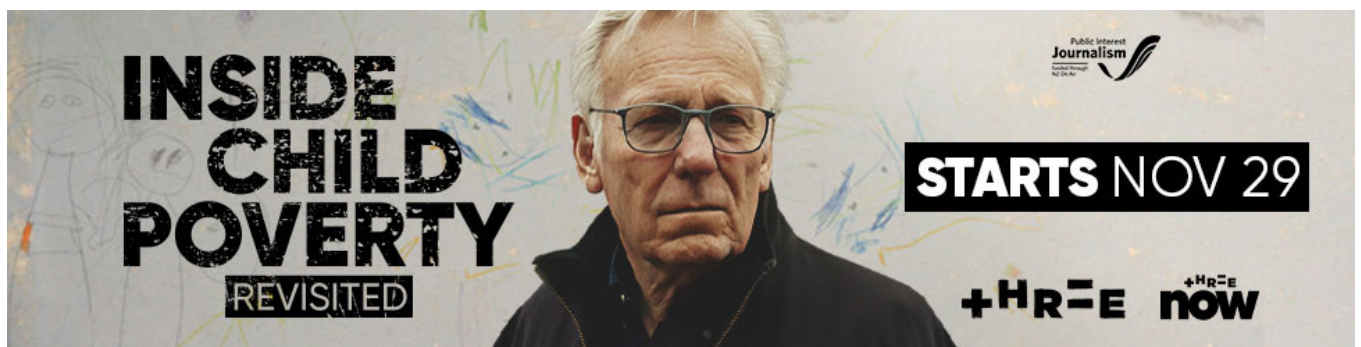
A WEEKLY NEWS SHOW FOR TAMARIKI BOTH ON SCREEN AND PODCAST.

[CLICK HERE](#)

TEINA 2 TUĀKANA

A UNIQUE INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER MĀORI AND PACIFIC RANGATAHI TO TELL THEIR OWN STORIES.

[CLICK HERE](#)



INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING (IDF)

Industry Development covered a range of training projects from full cadetships for new journalists to upskilling programmes for current reporters. A full list of the 21 training projects can be found [here](#). Many of the projects have produced resources that will provide a lasting legacy from the PIJF. The following are a few examples:

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT – TOTAL 669

**CADETS/
TRAINEES**
50

**TRAINING
FOR CURRENT
JOURNALISTS**
619

TE RITO

The largest scale IDF project was the Te Rito Journalism Cadetship Project, an unprecedented collaboration between four of the biggest media organisations in Aotearoa (NZME, Newshub, Pacific Media Network and Whakaata Māori) to address the lack of diversity in newsrooms by training and mentoring cadets from diverse (particularly Māori and Pasifika) backgrounds. The project won the International News Media Association (INMA) award in New York for Best Innovation in Newsroom Transformation and graduated 23 journalists in the first year with a further 12 undergoing training at the time of this report. In its first year not only did the project provide a substantial injection of new blood into Māori journalism, but the cadets also produced more than 285 news stories which have been viewed more than 1,495,662 times. The Te Rito partners have kindly shared their final report for 2022 which provides a comprehensive overview of the programme's first year and can be found in [here](#).

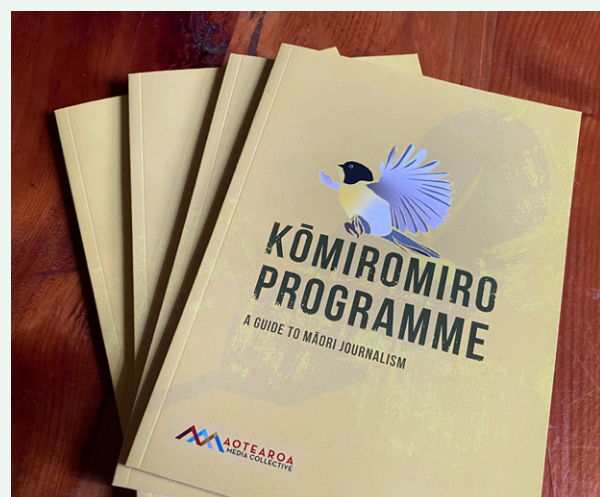
To build on the success of the first Te Rito cohort, a special category of funding was made available to transition graduates into the workforce. Details of this are outlined below ([skip to link](#))



A GROUP OF THE FIRST TE RITO JOURNALISM CADETSHIP GRADUATES

KŌMIROMIRO

The Kōmiromiro project by the Aotearoa Media Collective grew out of an original proposal to provide Māori journalism wānanga for iwi radio stations around the motu. However, COVID lockdowns saw the team pivot to an online programme which has further evolved into the first guide designed for Māori journalism to provide ongoing training into the future.



TE MATARAU (MUTI-LENS JOURNALISM)

The Stuff Multi-Lens Journalism project is an online cultural competency course designed for Stuff's own staff, but to be shared across the sector. It will have modules that cover reporting best practice around disability, ageism, LGBTQIA+ communities, te ao Māori, and race and racism, and has been developed in collaboration with the education and advocacy sectors. Stuff ran an industry wide wānanga in August to discuss how to improve representation of Māori and marginalised groups.



DISABILITY: OUR VOICES AND DISABILITY ROADSHOW

This project provided newsrooms around the country with the tools to accurately and inclusively report on disability issues. It also enabled two interns with the lived experience of disability to learn the basics of news and storytelling with journalism mentors at Attitude Pictures. One of the cadets, Will Sangster who is of Tongan descent, lives with cerebral palsy and is non-verbal. Despite receiving a Communications Degree from AUT in 2019, the Attitude internship was the first opportunity he'd been given to use his education and share his unique perspective within the media space. Will says the project was life changing for him.

“As a person living with a disability, my favourite part of the role has been giving other disabled people a platform. This enables them to share their journey, achievements and dreams. It’s a privilege to be able to write articles that really matter. The stories I’ve covered so far have inspired me to keep writing.”

Will has now gone on to join the 2023 Te Rito programme.



Te Puna Whakatongarewa

kua Utua e
Irirangi Te Motu



ROIMATA MIHINUI, EDITOR KĀHUI KI ROTORUA

HOW DID THE PIJF SERVE MĀORI?

Inequity of Māori representation both within the country's newsrooms and in the content they create is well documented. The PIJF created an opportunity to help redress the balance and encourage systematic change.

PIJF data distinguishes between content created by Māori media (owned by and for Māori) and Māori content created by non-Māori media entities.

Of \$66,167,017 approved funding, \$22,678,497 was allocated to Māori outcomes which was 34%. That comprised funding to Māori media (\$16,258,689) and funding to non-Māori media for Māori content.

The full list of PIJF funding for Māori outcomes can be found [here](#).

ROLES

OF ALL
219 ROLES
FUNDED,
34%
WERE FOR
MĀORI
OUTCOMES.

38
ROLES WERE APPROVED
FOR MĀORI MEDIA AND
A FURTHER 36 MĀORI
CONTENT ROLES WERE
FUNDED FOR NON-
MĀORI MEDIA.



HAUKĀINGA – TE HIKU MEDIA

TE TIRITI AND THE PIJF

Initial Māori Media feedback (see [Te Amokura Report](#)) sought for Te Tiriti to be reflected in how the Fund was set up and operated, and that it should be a 'priority consideration' when assessing PIJF eligibility.

In response to this, the PIJF General Guidelines and Criteria included Te Tiriti in eligibility considerations.

Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to Māori as a Te Tiriti partner

Applicants can show a clear and obvious commitment, or intent for commitment, to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including a commitment to te reo Māori. This commitment will enhance public interest journalism, resulting in stronger Māori representation and greater bi-cultural collaboration within the wider journalism sector.

An evidence-based resource for media wanting to explore their own Te Tiriti relationships, was commissioned by NZ On Air and research academics group, Kupu Taea, created [Te Tiriti o Waitangi News Media Framework](#). This document was offered online as an optional resource to guide applicants' thinking but did not require adherence as a condition of funding.

Upon the completion of the PIJF, Te Amokura Consultants were once again engaged to gather independent feedback from Māori stakeholders, assessing the direct impact of the

PIJF on Māori journalism outcomes. It should be noted that Te Amokura Consultants took a comprehensive approach, considering the entire Māori Media sector. While evaluating the impact of the PIJF on Māori – acknowledging a consensus view that the PIJF had a positive impact for Māori – the feedback also includes recommendations beyond the scope of the PIJF's impact. It is also important to note that the views expressed in the report are those of stakeholders and Te Amokura Consultants and not NZ On Air. The stakeholder feedback can be accessed [here](#).

HOW DID THE FUND SERVE PASIFIKA?

Pasifika audiences were another identified as under-served, and the PIJF aimed to address this in funding applications large and small from Pasifika-run outlets, as well as those that focused on telling Pasifika stories for general audiences.

Of \$66,167,017 approved funding, \$9,220,942 was allocated to Pasifika outcomes, which was 14%. That comprised funding to Pasifika-owned and run media and to general media to make Pasifika-focused content.

ROLES

OF ALL 219 ROLES FUNDED,
24 WERE FOR PASIFIKA
OUTCOMES

The full list of PIJF Pasifika focused projects and roles approved can be found [here](#).



TAGATA PASIFIKA PRESENTERS MARAMA T POLE AND JOHN PULU

WHAT WAS THE QUALITY OF CONTENT PRODUCED?

The PIJF resulted in the production of over 72,000 content pieces (as at 30 June 2023), spanning from documentaries to individual news articles. Due to the vast quantity, the Fund couldn't assess the quality of reporting for all the content.

Nonetheless, numerous funded projects and series received recognition through national and international journalism awards, highlighting their excellence.

VOYAGER MEDIA AWARDS 2023

BROADCAST REPORTER OF THE YEAR – NEWS Tova O'Brien (in part for her PIJF-funded interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy)	BEST INNOVATION IN DIGITAL STORYTELLING Faultlines: Preparing for the rupture – Vanishing Point Studio with North & South	BEST ORIGINAL PODCAST EPISODIC (JOINT WINNER) The Detail – newsroom.co.nz and RNZ	BEST DOCUMENTARY Fire and Fury – Stuff
BEST EDITORIAL CAMPAIGN The Whole Truth: Te Māramatanga – Stuff	BEST JUNIOR REPORTER D'Angelo Martin – The Hui/ GSTV and Newshub	TE TOHU KAIRANGI AWARD Mihingarangi Forbes – The Hui/GSTV and Newshub	BEST REPORTING Melanie Reid – Newsroom Investigates, Newsroom

INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA ASSOCIATION (INMA) 2023

BEST INNOVATION IN NEWSROOM TRANSFORMATION First Place Te Rito – NZME, Whakaata Māori, Newshub, PMN	BEST NEW VIDEO PRODUCT OF FEATURE Second Place Fire and Fury, Stuff Circuit, Stuff	BEST USE OF VIDEO Third Place Deleted, Stuff Circuit, Stuff
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NEW YORK FESTIVALS, FILM AND TV AWARDS 2023

DOCUMENTARY – SOCIAL ISSUES (SILVER AWARD) Inside Child Poverty Revisited, Red Sky Film & Television Ltd
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THE NEW ZEALAND RADIO AWARDS 2023

BEST FACTUAL PODCAST – EPISODIC The Detail – RNZ (Joint Winner with 'Our Changing World', RNZ)	LOCAL STATION OF THE YEAR Radio 1XX
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VOYAGER MEDIA AWARDS 2022

BEST INNOVATION IN DIGITAL STORYTELLING Deleted – Stuff Circuit, Stuff	BEST NEWS VIDEO OR FEATURE Second Place Fire and Fury, Stuff Circuit, Stuff	BEST USE OF VIDEO Third Place Deleted, Stuff Circuit, Stuff
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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER AWARDS 2022

BEST SENIOR NEWS JOURNALIST Kelley Tantau, The Valley Profile

BACKGROUND

HISTORIC CONTEXT

News media publishers around the world have been in decline since the early 2000s as audiences migrated away from print and linear journalism publishers to online and social media platforms. There have been drastic reductions in the number of news outlets and journalists, with an estimate that between 2008 and 2016 the journalism workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand had halved. Coupled with this was a global decline in public trust of media. In 2019, London-based, Kiwi journalism academic Mel Bunce warned that journalism was in critical need of support. She drew parallels to Government bail outs of financial institutions saying “...rather than being too big to fail, journalism is too important. Its failure would be disastrous for the wider political system on which everything else is built”. (*The Broken Estate. Journalism and Democracy in a Post-Truth World*)

She could have not foreseen that by the end of 2019, the media would face an even greater threat in the COVID-19 global pandemic. During the height of the ‘level 4 lockdown’, (April 2020), the NZ advertising spend dropped 37.9% and pandemic-induced economic decline looked certain to push the sector to breaking point.

AUT’s 2020 New Zealand Media Ownership Report estimated 637 jobs were lost in that year alone in the media industry. The closure of Bauer Media’s New Zealand operation in April 2020, which saw 237 staff from seven iconic publications made redundant, sent shock waves through the sector. The rocky nature of news media was further underlined a month later when one of the country’s largest media entities, Stuff, was sold to Stuff management for \$1 by its owner Nine Entertainment.

INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC MEDIA

The Government in Aotearoa New Zealand has for many years supported public media through RNZ, Whakaata Māori, Iwi Radio and through its ownership of TVNZ, and via the funding agency NZ On Air providing for content across both public and independent media. However, prior to the PIJF, targeted assistance for journalism had not been provided by Government. According to a 2022 article by the [Nieman Foundation](#) of Harvard University, the country’s public spending per capita of \$26.86 put Aotearoa New Zealand towards the bottom of OECD countries behind Australia’s spend of \$35.78 and the top spender Norway on \$110.73 but well ahead of the USA on \$3.16.

PIJF ESTABLISHMENT

These pressures, coupled with a heightened acknowledgement of the media’s role in combating the rise of disinformation during the pandemic, saw the Government step in. On 26 January 2021, the then Minister of Broadcasting and Media, Hon Kris Faafoi, secured Cabinet approval to spend \$55m from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund for a new initiative to provide targeted short to medium-term support for public interest journalism. The *Investing in Sustainable Journalism* initiative was to be administered by NZ On Air over three years: \$10 million in the remainder of 2020/21; \$25 million in 2021/22; and \$20 million in 2022/23.

The time-limited initiative was to provide transitional support while other Government media sustainability work programmes took a longer-term view, such as the Strong Public Media programme and the Māori Media Sector Review.

INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE JOURNALISM – THE CABINET PAPER

PURPOSE OF THE FUND – MINISTRY FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE – MĀNATU TAONGA

The Journalism Fund will preserve and enhance public interest journalism that will otherwise be at risk or lost due to the impact of COVID-19 on newsrooms. It will support the production of journalistic content that is critical to an open, progressive democracy, and to protect jobs at a local, regional and national level.

The design of the fund was informed by the principles set out in the [Cabinet paper](#) which established a range of goals making clear that, while the funding had been initiated in response to the impacts of COVID-19, the overarching aim was to support the provision of at-risk public interest journalism:

- (26) – *The overarching outcome sought is to preserve and enhance public interest journalism that will otherwise be at risk or lost due to the impact of COVID-19 on newsrooms.*
- (27) – *The initiative will support the production of journalistic content that is critical to an open, progressive democracy, and to protect jobs at a local, regional and national level. The fund purpose is not to subsidise the general operations of media organisations or to help individual companies survive the crisis. It is intended to serve as transitional funding while longer-term work is underway to support the sector to move towards more sustainable business models.*

The Cabinet paper also gave a wide definition of ‘public interest journalism’ as being:

- “...journalism that contributes to a person’s ability to function as a valued and informed member of the communities in which they live and/or work.”

Eligibility for funding was framed across a range of content that could include (but not be confined to) at-risk journalism that:

- (32.1) seeks to inform and engage the general public about important issues of the day,
- (32.2) investigates, reports on and explains public policy or matters of public significance, engages citizens in public debate, or informs democratic decision-making,
- (32.3) holds power (in its various forms) to account, or
- (32.4) covers matters of interest to a range of New Zealanders, including (but not limited to) matters relating to cultural, ethnic, and artistic expression; sports; science and health

Content was required to be made freely accessible and criteria were to favour (but not mandate) applications that supported wider distribution via collaboration to maximise its audience reach.

PIJF DESIGN

NZ On Air, under the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, was given the job of designing, setting up and running the fund with the first \$10m to be out the door before the end of FY2020-2021, just six months after the Cabinet decision.

Given the tight timeframes, the first step for NZ On Air was to consult with the sector. This was led by Hal Crawford of Crawford Media Consulting and Te Amokura Consultants who led the Māori Media consultation. NZ On Air also collaborated with Te Māngai Pāho on the design and delivery of the fund.

While NZ On Air is eminently experienced, having funded content for more than 30 years, the design of the PIJF was unique in the world and had to step beyond NZ On Air’s traditional funding processes and models.

Stakeholder feedback from Hal Crawford’s [Stakeholder Consultation Report](#) and [Te Amokura Māori and Iwi Journalism Sector Recommendations](#) led to a fund design which was released in the [Public Interest Journalism Overview](#) in April 2021.

The PIJF would provide targeted funding over seven rounds aligned to the NZ On Air Media Fund rounds. Applications could be made under three pillars – Projects, Roles and Industry Development.

Footnote 8 in the Cabinet paper noted that:

- “NZ On Air must deliver this initiative consistently with its statutory funding obligations (for example, it must consider the size of the audience likely to benefit from the investment, and the extent to which the content would help NZ On Air meet its objectives, including to reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture).

It went further, pointing to the agency’s Broadcasting Act 1989 requirement to promote Māori language and culture, and requiring Māori stakeholder consultation. Given that Crown owned and funded public media were already supported to deliver public interest journalism, the paper recommended that they only be eligible for PIJF funding if the content was additional to current funding, didn’t duplicate other funded proposals or was in partnership with independent producers.

The Cabinet paper included a specific section on the Local Democracy Reporting pilot launched in 2019 as a partnership between NZ On Air, Radio New Zealand and the Newspaper Publishers Association. It confirmed that LDR content would fall within the scope of the funding scheme.

The Cabinet paper was the only instrument of instruction given by Government to the establishment and operation of the PIJF. To ensure its complete independence from Government control, no other communication from the Minister of Broadcasting was received during the set up or operation of the scheme.



Criteria for funding were established in the General Guidelines also released in April 2021. By the end of that month, the first round was opened for applications. Full details of the seven funding rounds can be found below. [skip link](#)

To ensure transparency, all funded content was required to carry appropriate accreditation and bilingual logos were designed to provide easy identification of PIJF stories.



PIJF INDUSTRY ADVISORY PANEL

In December 2021, NZ On Air established an industry advisory panel to ensure the industry could contribute to the continuous refinement and targeting of the \$55 million fund. The panel met five times throughout the fund.

THE PANEL MEMBERS WERE:

Hal Crawford – Independent Chair

Erana Reedy – Māori Co-Chair

Barry Stewart – Allied Press Group

David MacKenzie – New Zealand Community Newspapers Association

James Frankham – Magazine Publishers Association NZ

James Hollings – Journalism Education Association of New Zealand (JEANZ)

John Utanga – Moana Media sector representative

Maramena Roderick/Wena Harawira – Whakaata Maori (Maori Television)

Mark Jennings – Mid-scale digital only media representative

Mark Stevens – Stuff

Nevak Rogers – Te Reo Tātaki (TVNZ)

Sarah Bristow – Warner Bros Discovery (Newshub)

Shannon Haunui-Thompson – RNZ

Shayne Currie – NZME

Tamati Tiananga – Kawea te Rongo (Māori Journalism Association)

Raewyn Rasch – Irirangi Te Motu (NZ On Air)

Amie Mills – Irirangi Te Motu (NZ On Air)

Blake Ihimaera – Te Māngai Pāho.

ESTABLISHMENT TIMELINE

JANUARY 2021 Cabinet agree to \$55m fund

MARCH 2021 Stakeholder Consultation Report released

APRIL 2021 Fund overview released

APRIL 2021 General Guidelines published

APRIL 30 2021 Round 1 opened (2-step process)

MAY 2021 Head of Journalism appointed to run the PIJF

JUNE 3 2021 Round 1 Full proposal deadline

JUNE 9 2021 PIJF Summit for sector engagement

JUNE 25 2021 Collaboration between NZ On Air and TMP formalised with an MOU

JULY 15 2021 Round 1 decisions announced

DECEMBER 2021 Industry Advisory Panel established

APRIL 17 2023 Final Round 7 decisions announced

OPERATION

HOW DID THE PIJF WORK?

GUIDELINES, DEFINITIONS, CRITERIA AND ELIGIBILITY

The PIJF was a ring-fenced stream within the NZ Media Fund (administered by NZ On Air) designed to provide targeted, short-to-medium-term support for public interest journalism. Information on the fund, eligibility, the funding streams on offer and the application and assessment processes were covered in the [General Guidelines](#).

WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM?

Broadly speaking, public interest journalism (PIJ) is journalism that informs and engages the public about issues that affect a person's right to flourish within our society and impacts on society's ability to fully support its citizens.

Examples of PIJ coverage can include content that:

- Investigates, reports on, critiques, and explains, public policy or matters of public significance.
- Meets the definition of Māori and Iwi journalism (detail on this below).
- Explains complex institutions, or issues.
- Reports from perspectives including Pacific, Pan-Asian, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, other ethnic communities.
- Engages citizens in informed public debate.
- Informs democratic decision-making.
- Holds power (in its various forms) to account.
- Covers issues and sectors of society not currently being provided.

WHAT PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM IS NOT

NZ On Air sought guidance on what subject matter sat outside of the fund's definition of 'public interest journalism'. This exercise posed challenges when trying to compare mainstream journalism with journalism that is culturally specific. The indicative list below of 'what PIJ is not' is guided by the context of mainstream media outlets and sector feedback that advised these types of stories below are usually well-served to national and local audiences and are often stories that sell themselves.

Applicants could make the case for funded coverage of these issues on a culturally specific basis and with a clear rationale as to how they would not be covered in the normal course of events.

- Match reports of national sporting codes
- National political coverage*
- Reporting on international entertainment content
- Opinion
- High-profile crime
- Celebrity news
- International news
- Sponsored content**
- Lifestyle content with minimal connection to recent events

In addition to these exclusions, PIJF funding was not to be paid to subjects for interviews.

* National political coverage is widely provided by mainstream news media outlets across Aotearoa and was generally excluded under the PIJF. Exceptions would be considered in cases where national political coverage is delivered via formats that provide investigative, in-depth or longer-form analyses (such as current affairs programmes) which are more difficult to fund commercially.

** Sponsored content is content specifically marked as "sponsored", "in association with", "brought to you by", "advertorial" etc, and relates to news content where the advertiser has editorial input including the right of editorial veto.

THE PIJF OFFERED FUNDING UNDER THREE PILLARS:

Project funding – for tightly-defined projects delivered to a deadline. Projects tended to focus on content goals over a set period and could include investigative pieces, coverage of a particular issue or content for an under-served audience, such as tamariki.

Role-based funding – supporting newsrooms for the employment of reporters and roles which were necessary to improve the quality and/or sustainability of public interest journalism.

There were two types of Role funding available: Content Producing and Targeted. Targeted roles were introduced in Round Three in recognition of an un-met need.

- The main goal of *Content Producing Roles* was to have journalistic outputs. These were story-producing roles where outlets were able to estimate how much content would be produced and then demonstrate the delivery of stories.
- The main goal of *Targeted Roles* (one year only) was to support the sustainability, quality, engagement and reach of public interest journalism. Roles that met these criteria could include sub-editors and directors, and craft roles such as editors or audience engagement experts. PIJF funding covered time-limited salaries and there are minimum annual content outputs attached to these roles.
- **Non-incremental role funding** was provided in exceptional circumstances where loss of staff was demonstrably imminent and such applications required full financial information and a separate and more in-depth assessment process.

Industry Development Funding (IDF) – including cross-industry cadetships and targeted upskilling initiatives. Industry development was primarily focused on training outcomes. It was not unusual for these initiatives to have some content outcomes as a secondary part of training/upskilling/education. However, the primary difference between IDF and Projects was the main goal of staff or organisational skills development (rather than content outputs).

WHO WAS IT FOR?

The fund was open to all NZ media entities, that met the eligibility criteria, from large organisations through to small, local entities, and Māori, Pacific and ethnic media. Organisations needed to show that their applications filled a public interest service and would otherwise be at risk or not produced without the fund's support. This included (but was not limited to) investigative journalism, data journalism and photojournalism.

MĀORI AND IWI JOURNALISM

Māori and Iwi journalism is defined as content made by, for and about Māori that prioritises the perspectives, issues, needs and interests of Māori. Māori and Iwi journalism create a space and platform to give voice and representation to Māori, Iwi, hapū and hau kāinga; Māori content, language, and perspectives on all issues deemed relevant locally, nationally and internationally.

This spectrum of reporting is integral to the protection of te ao Māori under article two of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and includes (but is not limited to) focus areas such as;

- Te reo Māori and tikanga
- Political matters***
- Historical accounts
- Profile-based reporting
- Tangihanga
- Māori interest
- Sports (Ki O Rahi, Waka Ama, Touch Nationals etc.)
- Civil Emergencies.

The [General Guidelines](#) provided a starting point for applicants who wanted to understand the fund, their eligibility, the types of funding streams on offer, and the application and assessment processes. They covered:

- The background of the PIJF and its goals
- What may constitute PIJ and what is excluded from PIJF funding
- Eligibility criteria, including for Crown-owned and funded public media organisations
- Digital reporting requirements and data provision
- The assessment criteria
- The requirements for, and process of, applying for funding
- The assessment process

***Māori and Iwi journalism and reporting is innately political in nature. This is especially true in the context of iwi, hapū and whānau politics as well as ensuring a plurality of voice for Māori within a national political sphere is heard.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to receive PIJF funding, platforms had to meet the following criteria:

Commitment to Public Interest Journalism (PIJ)	Applicants should have a demonstrated commitment to PIJ, and in most cases, a history of broadcasting or publishing journalism. In rare cases, applicants without this history may be considered if they can demonstrate access and capability to provide PIJ to a currently underserved priority audience.
Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to Māori as a Te Tiriti partner	Applicants can show a clear and obvious commitment, or intent for commitment, to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including a commitment to te reo Māori. This commitment will enhance public interest journalism, resulting in stronger Māori representation and greater bi-cultural collaboration within the wider journalism sector. In response to requests for more information, NZ On Air commissioned research by expert group Kupu Taea that provided a resource for those wanting to develop their own Te Tiriti strategy in ways that suit their contexts. The Framework was offered for guidance but was not prescriptive and applicants were free to articulate their own Te Tiriti response in their applications. (More guidance on this is provided below).
Data provision	Applicants must commit to use of common metrics where possible and the provision of other audience engagement, output and financial data as required. (More details in later sections).
NZ commitment	Applicants needed to show a track record of, or plan for, a sustained commitment to NZ content. Funding was restricted to applicants who generated content that was focused on the New Zealand market (or a regional or local market in New Zealand), who employed journalists in New Zealand, had an operational presence in New Zealand, and paid tax in New Zealand. PIJF did not support overseas-domiciled organisations that may report on New Zealand affairs from time to time.
Freely available, simultaneous online distribution	All funded content must be broadcast or published in an acceptable form online (i.e., publishing a PDF online does not meet accessibility standards and therefore was not considered acceptable under the PIJF). Funded content must be available to the NZ public free of charge. If behind a paywall or in a magazine with a cover price, funded content must also be available free of charge, as close to simultaneously as possible, in a readily available online location.
Media Standards	Applicants were required to be subject to a relevant standards regime (the NZ Media Council or the Broadcasting Standards Authority).
PIJF acknowledgement	In the interests of transparency, content was required to be clearly signalled as funded by the PIJF. Guidelines on PIJF acknowledgement were provided with the funding contract and were a condition of the contract.
Capability	Applicants must demonstrate they had the capability to deliver (or a plan for how they will intend to deliver) the proposed scope of work.
Admin/Capability/HR capacity	Applicants must have had the ability to handle payroll, overheads, holiday cover, sick leave etc. Individual journalists may not apply for funding. For role-based funding, the capacity to manage performance, ability to provide support, and exercise a duty of care, was required.

FUNDING ROUND DETAILS

The following provides detailed outlines along with links to the Round Criteria for each funding round, and demonstrates the iterative nature of the fund as the PIJF team responded to industry feedback to make changes over time.

ROUND ONE

OPENED 30 APRIL 2021	CLOSED 13 MAY	ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE 15 JULY
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Round One was limited to the Industry Development and Project pillars, with the rationale that Roles should be the sole focus of Round Two.

Project considerations

These were the project outlines for Round One and served as the broad guidelines for projects going forward:

National

Projects with a national audience focus that targeted content areas that were not being fulfilled, were substantially unfulfilled or at imminent risk.

Specific round assessment considerations included:

- Applicants were expected to provide a strong (ideally evidence-based) cases for this 'at-risk or missing' PIJ
- The extent to which applications had any co-investment* as part of their finance plan
- The scale and size of projected audience reach.

Local/Regional

Projects with a local/regional audience focus that targeted content areas specific to local and regional communities that were currently not being fulfilled, were substantially unfulfilled or at imminent risk.

Specific round assessment considerations included:

- Applicants were expected to provide a strong (ideally evidence-based) cases for this 'at-risk or missing' PIJ
- Funding levels were likely be commensurate to platform/publication and audience size.

Industry Development considerations

During consultation, stakeholders agreed that funded training and cadetship programmes under the PIJF would go some way to developing and injecting new talent into journalism.

Stakeholders had also expressed that training and development was a priority for Māori and Iwi journalism, as well as the Pacific, Pan-Asian and wider ethnic communities' journalism sector. As such, Round One invited applications across these Industry Development categories:

- Cross-sector training/cadetship collaboration between media entities
- Training that supports the PIJF goals of encouraging Te Tiriti partnership and education
- Training/cadetship collaboration between media entities and journalism courses
- Internal training/cadetships specific to a single media entity
- Funding for small-scale, targeted initiatives focused on sustainability / innovation.

The following were the Industry Development guidelines that would form the basis of criteria in later rounds:

Training for new journalists Shortfalls in the journalism workforce and the provision of on-the-job training for journalists were issues that the sector, alongside tertiary education providers and organisations such as Toi Mai and the Workforce Development Council, looked to develop solutions to. In the meantime, PIJF responded to demand from the industry to support training programmes that met immediate and specific needs, especially in the provision of Māori, Pacific and diverse voice journalists, where there are few (if any) alternative training paths, such as:

- Cadetship/intern training programmes
- Journalism graduate cadetship programmes
- Specialist training programmes

Training for existing journalists (Professional Development) There was an acknowledgement that in-house training had disappeared to a large degree and needed support. Training applications for a single media entity would need to demonstrate a structured approach with measurable outcomes and a rationale for why the training could not be self-funded. Examples of possible training proposals include:

- An in-house journalism training programme
- Contracted training programmes that encourage innovation in how journalism is carried out e.g., visual, and online storytelling or new technology
- **Mentorship programmes** (including mentor training)
- Collaborative online Master Class projects

Assessors wanted to see:

- Articulation of why this work could not be delivered without PIJF funding
- Demonstration of how it would help develop the goals of the PIJF
- A detailed plan on how training would be effectively delivered in-house
- Collaborations with other media groups to maximise the funding reach
- Demonstration that the sustainability of the project, beyond PIJF funding, had been factored or considered

Training that supported the PIJF goals of encouraging Te Tiriti partnership and education We were interested to see education projects that increased the cultural capacity, Te Tiriti understanding and te reo Māori proficiency within the media workforce. This round encouraged projects that enhanced the ability of news organisations to better reflect te ao Māori and serve Māori audiences. For instance, short term consultancies or contract roles may be useful in developing rautaki Māori strategies organisations. For example:

- Cultural advisor/consultant
- Te Reo Māori consultant
- Iwi engagement consultant

Specific assessment considerations included:

- The quality of the training programmes being proposed and ability to measure outcomes
- The ability to encourage the uptake of training within a workforce
- An assessment of current baseline capabilities within an organisation

A resource for entities wanting to develop their own Te Tiriti strategies was developed in response to demand from the sector – the *Te Tiriti Framework for News Media* which can be [found here](#). The Framework was **offered for guidance** but **was not prescriptive** and applicants were free to articulate their own Te Tiriti response in their applications.

- * Co-investment could take one or more of the following forms:
- Platform/publisher cash contribution to the production budget. This was our preferred option.
 - ‘In kind’ or non-cash platform/publisher contribution to the production budget. This type of contribution could also have been considered as co-investment if it was a genuine contribution to the production budget by providing necessary resources or services that were appropriately costed.

Round One summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
125	\$50,704,226	34	\$11,229,645		102	23

ROUND TWO

OPENED
1 JULY 2021

CLOSED
22 JULY

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
22 SEPTEMBER

Round Two was limited to the Roles pillar which aimed to address the immediate need for qualified journalists and the lack of necessary news coverage for PIJ topics. The initial [Stakeholder Consultation Report](#) mentioned the ideal of funding a minimum of 100 roles across the sector. This was not a target but an indication of the possible scale of the Role-based funding, which was achieved after the funding decisions were announced for this round.

It was acknowledged that the limited nature of the PIJF and the usual NZ On Air limit of one year funding could make recruitment and retention of experienced staff challenging. This made a case for exceptional circumstances under which applicants would be able to apply for up to two years' worth of funding for a content creation role (subject to performance review monitoring at key stages to ensure targets were being met before a second year of funding was renewed.)

Qualifying criteria for Roles were:

- Produces content within an agreed reporting subject scope (aligned to the General Guidelines)
- Accredited to the PIJF
- Included in PIJF metrics reporting
- PIJF roles would not be permitted to contribute to general reporting unless this is within the subject scope and credited.

Round Two summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
63	\$46,393,934	26	\$19,185,847	122		

ROUND THREE

OPENED
9 SEPTEMBER 2021

CLOSED
1 OCTOBER

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
2 DECEMBER

There were multiple journalism and current affairs projects that were annually funded from NZ On Air baseline Factual funding, before the existence of PIJF. Some were long-running legacy projects, others were relatively new, and some originated in the two to three years prior from one-off additional funding from the Government. All of these projects needed to apply for funding via the PIJF in order to run a fully contestable process and ensure they were assessed under the same eligibility and assessment criteria as similar journalism applications. Adding circa \$5m from NZ On Air baseline Factual funding would accommodate for this and all applicants that fit under this banner were individually contacted by PIJF staff to explain the situation and their need to apply via PIJF and not the NZMF Factual funding stream.

The introduction of the Partnership Editor scheme

At the 2021 PIJF summit, Stacey Morrison and Mihingarangi Forbes, of the Aotearoa Media Collective (AMC), presented a concept to create new roles to sit alongside editors and bring a kaupapa Māori framework to newsrooms and to stories from the outset. Their presentation can be found [here](#). AMC proposed working with individual organisations to identify strengths and weaknesses and help to create a bespoke role description for a Partnership Editor for that organisation. Expressions of interest for the Partnership Editor scheme were first invited in this round and NZ On Air and AMC worked with applicants to provide feedback prior to submission.

Given the limited funding available and expected demand, the number of applications each media entity was able to submit were restricted to:

- Up to three project applications.
- Up to three targeted roles.

The Industry Development pillar was excluded because of the sizable number of large-scale training and cadetship initiatives funded in Round One which, at that time, raised concerns about the potential distortionary impact the PIJF could unintentionally have on the wider journalism education ecosystem. These concerns would be discussed at the PIJF Journalism Conference held in January 2022 which would inform later Round guidelines. However, areas that were not explored fully within Round One were the professional development of existing journalists and those could be considered within the two available pillars.

Of particular focus for the Projects pillar were:

News and Current Affairs Projects – including children and youth news

- New current affairs and news applications that were demonstrably different to commercial news/current affairs shows and would likely contribute to civic discourse.
- Existing current affairs projects currently funded from the NZ On Air baseline Factual funding stream.

Children (6-12) and Youth News (13+)

Children and/or youth news initiatives that provide PIJ to younger audiences. Children and youth should be encouraged and enabled to engage with news and current affairs as they prepare to engage in the democratic process. Applicants needed to demonstrate:

- A clear plan to engage with and deliver PIJ to children and youth audiences (ideally applicants would already be able to demonstrate existing engagement with the target audience/s).
- A cost-effective project that could be sustainable beyond the PIJF timeframe (end of the 2022-23 financial year).
- A strong cultural inclusivity plan and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Investigative Journalism Projects

Projects that researched important subjects, gave opportunities to provide informed analysis, or investigated complex events. Due to the limited funding, priority was given to smaller-scale projects that demonstrated clear content outputs and cost effectiveness.

Projects that improve the quality of PIJ

Projects demonstrating defined outputs and targets that support the professional development and upskilling of newsroom staff, such as, but not limited to: Masterclasses in specific subject areas, for example media and privacy, te reo, media ethics, cultural capability etc. It was expected that these resources would be made available across the sector and to local journalism education providers.

Because of the success of Round Two in approving more than 100 Content-Producing Roles, and following industry feedback, Content-Producing Roles were excluded and Targeted Roles were introduced for the first time. Targeted Roles support the production and sustainability of high-quality public interest journalism. Round Three encouraged the following applications:

Roles that improved the overall quality of PIJ

Roles that would increase the quality of journalism being produced by newsrooms, such as, but not limited to:

- Sub-editors and Directors
- Craft roles such as Editors
- Digital and Graphic Designers

Roles that enhance organisational cultural competency.

Partnership Editors

*See above

Roles that improved the provision and sustainability of PIJ

Roles demonstrating defined outputs and targets that improve the sustainability, cost-effectiveness, reach, distribution, adaptation and production of PIJ through developing new models and audience delivery methods, such as, but not limited to:

- Developers working as part of a wider project supporting sustainable local journalism.
- Audience engagement experts.

There would be a focus on role funding that could unearth new, viable business models and critical assessment. Criteria for funding this type of role included:

- Whether it contributed in an easily identifiable way to a project that has PIJ at its core.
- If it was part of a project that the publisher is substantially contributing to (and is heavily invested in).
- If it was part of a project that had clear outputs on a clear schedule (either beta products or pilots).

Additional role costs

The PIJF was not intended to fund capital expenditure (CAPEX). In general, costs associated with a role, such as an office, computer, phone etc, were encouraged as a platform contribution. If these costs were not able to be met by the applicant, they needed to make a case for the lease of these necessary items with a CAPEX cost of no more than 10% of the total role funding request. This figure was arrived at by analysing and slightly upweighting the average overhead costs applied for in the previous roles funding which was 7.2%.

Baseline costs

Salary
KiwiSaver

Overhead costs could include the following:

Office expenses
Phone/computer/equipment hire
Recruitment costs
Legal/admin costs

Additional costs that may be considered

Travel (applicants could make a case for car lease where travel was necessary to role)
Training (where specific training would be required for the role)

Round Three summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
82	\$29,135,469	35	\$9,254,433	18	20	

ROUND FOUR

OPENED
31 MARCH 2022

CLOSED
28 APRIL

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
11 JULY

Applications from all three pillars were allowed, but due to the limited funding, previous allocations and expected demand, the number of applications per entity were limited to:

- 1 Industry Development application
- 1 Project application
- 2 Roles (Targeted or Content Creation)

Funding for small-scale, targeted initiatives focused on sustainability/innovation:

In this round, we were interested in one-off targeted initiatives seeking innovation funding to pilot/develop sustainable business models, new media platforms, new technology solutions to content creation and sharing. These initiatives were required to have targeted public interest journalism production. PIJF was not looking to fund infrastructure projects with ongoing costs attached. To apply for this funding, applicants needed to contact the Head of Journalism to seek approval prior to submission.

Roles

Content creation role *Contracts up to 2 years*

As demand for Māori journalists had increased, provision of Māori journalism roles were prioritised to Māori Media organisations.
PIJF roles were not permitted to contribute to general reporting unless this was within the approved application subject scope and accredited accordingly.

Targeted roles (Non-content creation roles) *Contracts up to 1 year*

Roles that enhanced the quality of public interest journalism, such as, but not limited to:

- Sub-editors and Directors
- Craft roles such as Editors
- Digital and Graphic Designers

Roles demonstrating defined outputs and targets that improved the sustainability, cost-effectiveness, reach, distribution, adaptation and production of PIJ through developing new models and audience delivery methods such as but not limited to:

- Developers working as part of a wider project supporting sustainable local journalism
- Audience engagement experts.

There was a focus on Role funding that could unearth new, viable business models. Critical assessment criteria for funding this type of role included:

- Whether it contributed in an easily identifiable way to a project that had PIJ at its core.
- If it was part of a project that the publisher was substantially contributing to (and was heavily invested in).
- If it was part of a project that had clear outputs on a clear schedule (either beta products or pilots).

Roles that enhanced organisational cultural capability

PIJF encouraged authentic Te Tiriti relationships between the media and tangata whenua. This round was interested in applications that wanted to build these relationships across their public interest journalism functions by funding a range of roles, such as, but not limited to:

- Te Reo Māori translator
- Kaupapa Māori Editor
- Iwi engagement/Tikanga Māori role

Applicants needed to demonstrate not only a need for the role but also a commitment to ensuring the role would be fully supported and enabled to succeed.

Priority was given to applicants who could show how the role would be integrated across a newsroom or organisation, the impact it would have on editorial decision making, and how the role would be culturally supported. Assessors also wanted to see what changes, outcomes or KPI's a role might be expected to produce. Given the shortage of experienced Māori journalists and advisors, priority was also given to applicants who had at least had discussions with potential candidates and believed they could genuinely fill the role.

Round Four summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
39	\$11,292,212	15	\$4,172,872	9	6	3

ROUND FIVE

OPENED
23 JUNE 2022

CLOSED
21 JULY

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
26 SEPTEMBER

Much like in Round Four, the number of applications per entity were limited to:

- 1 IDF application
- 1 Project application
- 2 Roles applications (across both Targeted and Content Creation categories)

Priorities for this round included journalism training for new and existing journalists, small-scale initiatives that focused on sustainability, projects with a national or local scope, and roles that supported PIJ.

The sector had communicated the pressures on the journalism workforce and the difficulty in attracting suitable candidates to PIJF roles. In recognition of this feedback, and to avoid potential poaching of staff between organisations, Round Five gave priority to applicants who were able to demonstrate that they were proactively looking to bring new staff into the sector.

The request for small-scale initiatives that focused on innovation or sustainability was introduced in this round as a way to acknowledge the unique opportunity that PIJF had to fund useful solutions for some of the issues facing the industry. The fund encouraged one-off, targeted initiatives seeking funding to pilot or develop sustainable business models, new media platforms, or new technology solutions for content creation and sharing. Any initiatives were required to be targeted at public interest journalism production and could not be infrastructure projects with ongoing attached costs.

Round Five summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
41	\$7,112,309	24	\$3,994,956	13	9	6

ROUND SIX

OPENED
1 SEPTEMBER 2022

CLOSED
29 SEPTEMBER

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
5 DECEMBER

Following input from the PIJF Industry Advisory Panel and the expected demand for new and returning projects, applications were again limited to:

- 1 Industry Development application (new or previously funded)
- 1 Project application (new or previously funded)
- 2 Roles across both Targeted and Content Creation categories (not including Te Rito graduates)

Previously funded projects or roles:

PIJF recognised the merit of building on and extending roles or projects that had demonstrated success. Completed projects or one-year roles funded in previous PIJF rounds were eligible to apply for funding in this round but needed to have demonstrated the following:

- How well the role or project delivered on intended outcomes
- Why the role or project deserved further funding
- Why the applicant was unable to financially sustain the role or project
- How further funding would increase the role or project's sustainability.

NB Two-year role contracts that were not due to finish until mid-to-late 2023 were not eligible to reapply in this round.

Before successful roles funding could be contracted and accessed, recruitment of those roles needed to have been completed, with employment agreements in place. Applicants then had four months to arrange recruitment or risk the rescinding of funding.

Round Six summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
59	\$17,833,071	28	\$11,922,561	21	13	1

Te Rito

To build on the success of the Te Rito Journalism Cadetship Project, those who wished to apply for funding to employ up to four graduates from the 2022 programme were able to do so, over and above the two-role application limit. Each one-year funded role proposed for a Te Rito graduate needed to be incremental and meet the criteria for PIJF roles.

While applicants were encouraged to employ the graduates on an appropriate pay scale to the role offered, the PIJF had set a per annum salary funding cap of \$55,000 for each Te Rito graduate role, and an additional \$5,000 cap for salary overheads such as laptops, phone costs and office expenses. Any additional expenses or salary costs would be the responsibility of the applicant to cover.

PIJF prioritised applications from:

- Te Rito Journalism Cadetship Project partners
- Māori, Pacific and ethnic media
- Applicants who could demonstrate a supportive environment for the continued training of graduates
- Applicants who could demonstrate that they had engaged with the graduates and had a reasonable expectation of attracting one or more into roles.

ROUND SEVEN

OPENED
12 JANUARY 2023

CLOSED
9 FEBRUARY

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE
17 APRIL

For the final round of the PIJF, NZ On Air took into consideration the consensus of the PIJF Industry Advisory Panel, which felt remaining funding should be allocated to the greatest need. The Panel recommended that maintaining previously funded roles and new or returning IDF projects would be the most useful way of supporting the long-term sustainability of the sector. As such, projects and new roles funding were not prioritised in this round. Returning applicants had the following quotas:

- 1 IDF application (new or previously funded) and/or
- Up to 5 previously PIJF approved/funded roles across both Targeted or Content Creation categories

Round Seven summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL REQUESTED	APPLICATIONS APPROVED	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED	ROLES	PROJECTS	IDF
27	\$3,936,646	24	\$3,994,956	36		3

EMERGENCY RESILIENCE FUND

In February 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle caused widespread communications disruption and many media in the Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti region struggled to continue day-to-day operations during the Civil Defence Emergency.

The PIJF recognised that funded entities could be prevented from providing vital public interest journalism as required by their contracts, if they were unable to publish or broadcast.

NZ On Air invited eight organisations receiving PIJF funding in flood affected areas to apply for additional one-off special [Emergency Resilience Funding](#) to ensure they were better prepared to operate in a Civil Defence Emergency.

Five of those eight organisations applied for funding and were granted one-off additional funding, to a total of \$112,916. This funding was made possible due to underspent projects and roles returning funding to the PIJF pool. The recipients were:

- Gisborne Herald, up to \$12,324
- Hawkes Bay App, up to \$21,429
- Te Reo Irirangi o Ngāti Kahungunu/ Radio Kahungunu, up to \$29,663
- Te Reo Irirangi o Ngāti Porou/Radio Ngāti Porou, up to \$30,000
- BayBuzz, up to \$19,500

Extending previously funded Roles

Previously funded roles were considered for one-year extensions on the basis of the following priorities:

- Roles due to end in 2023
- Roles that contribute to long term sustainability
- Roles that support regional and local journalism
- Roles that deliver content not provided elsewhere.

TMP-PIJF CO-FUND

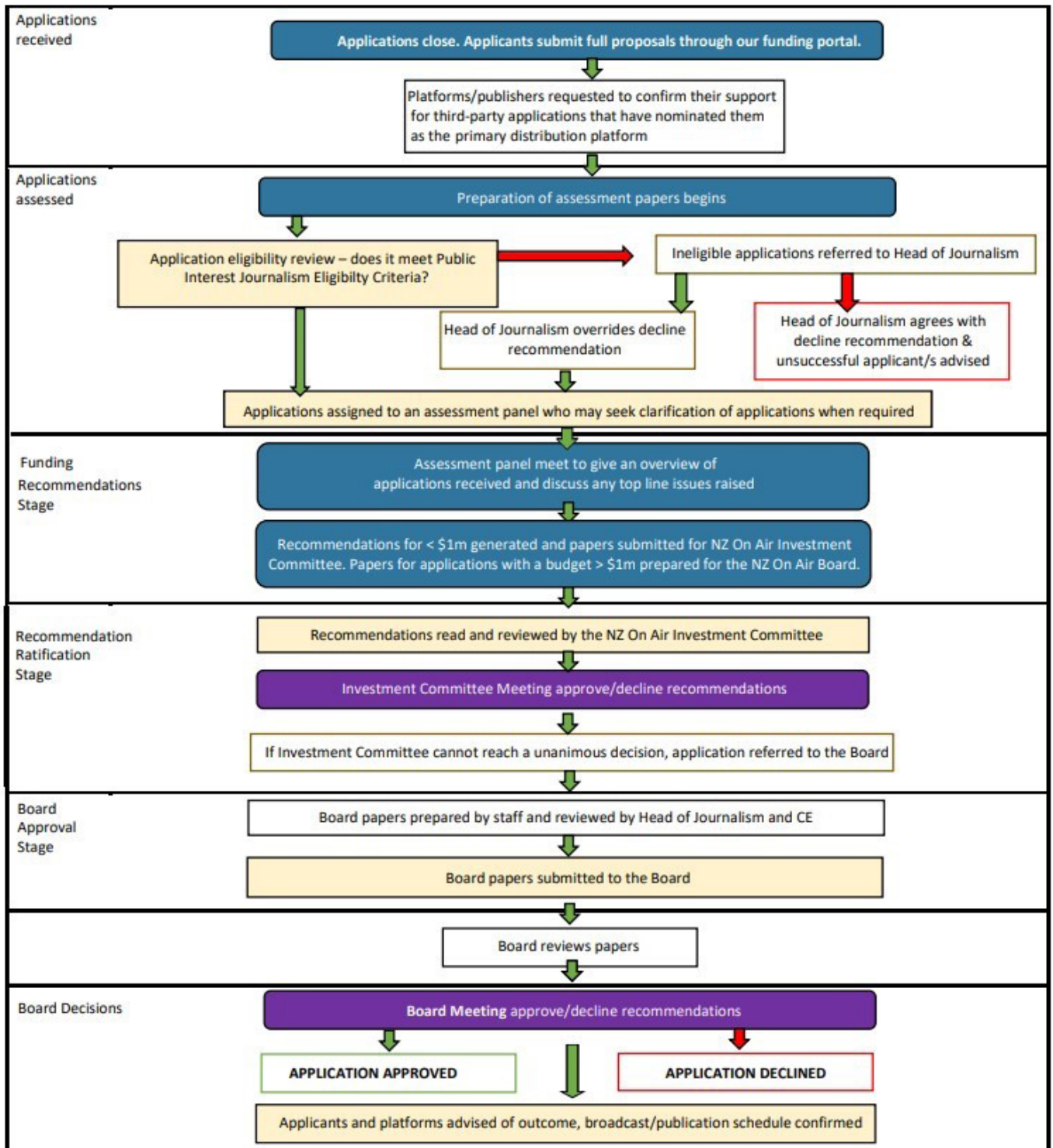
The PIJF worked closely with TMP throughout the Fund's administration and developed a co-fund to support the continuation of an Iwi Radio Regional News Initiative established by TMP in 2020. The Initiative funded four Iwi Radio hubs to provide a collaborative news service across 11 Iwi radio stations. The Regional News Hub initiative marked a significant surge forward but there was ongoing concern from Māori media stakeholders that this progress would be undermined if funding was not continued. \$3m was assigned from the PIJF in July 2023 to support the [TMP programme 2023-24](#) providing a proportion of funding towards the four current hubs. The recipients were:

- \$999,416 to Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated (trading as Tainui Live) for *AUKAHA Te Tai Pūkōrero*
- \$981,819 to Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (trading as Tahu FM) for *Tahu News*
- \$341,128 to Te Reo Irirangi o Tūranganui-a-Kiwa for *Kapu Tairāwhiti*
- \$677,637 to Te Reo Irirangi o Taranaki Charitable Trust for *Te Reo o Te Uru Regional News*

THE APPLICATION PROCESSES

Round criteria were published 5-6 weeks before each round closed and where possible changes to rounds were signalled in advance so applicants could be prepared. Applications were made via the NZ On Air online funding portal with applicants required to provide a detailed proposal and budget. The first three rounds used a two-stage process where five-page applications were assessed, and then shortlisted applicants were given the chance to present a more fulsome proposal. The remaining rounds moved to a simplified one step process. Given the large number of applicants applying to NZ On Air for the first time, the PIJF team made every effort to support applicants through the process.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Assessment panels, including external assessors, PIJF and NZ On Air staff and a representative of TMP were set up for each round. Each panel included an external Māori assessor and aimed to reflect a breadth of experience across the media sector (in iwi radio, mainstream media, print and multimedia journalism, and regional/national news) and to achieve balance across gender and ethnic representation. The [full list of assessors](#) was published after each round and is available in the [PIJF Archive](#).

The general assessment criteria panelists were asked to assess against were:

Upholds PIJ	Meets the goals and definition of PIJ as outlined in Section 3 of the General Guidelines.
Māori and Iwi journalism	Supports and promotes Māori and Iwi journalism that is made by Māori about Māori perspectives, issues and interests prioritising the needs of Māori.
Targeted audiences	Targets content areas and communities (local, regional, national) that are currently not being fulfilled in particular: Pasifika, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic communities (with a focus on Pan-Asian communities).
Discoverability	A clear and convincing plan to reach the target audience/s.
Collaboration	Content distribution agreements, aggregation by platforms/publishers, sharing resources or co-producing content furthers the interests of the industry and audience.
Sustainability	Applicants should consider how their proposal might be sustainable beyond PIJF funding or how it might contribute to sustainable outcomes.
*Lockdown contingency	Applicants should demonstrate they have plans in place to, where possible, continue broadcast or publication should the country be placed under Alert Level 4 lockdown. * This requirement was removed after the government announcement that lockdowns would no longer be instituted as a response to COVID-19.

There were additional criteria for role-specific applications:

Supporting environment	Focused, relevant, costed and delivered by dedicated, qualified people. Consideration will be given to the employment environment within the funded organisation. Platforms/publishers must show how they will support funded roles materially, legally, culturally and emotionally, and highlight pathways for journalists' development. Clear editorial direction for employed roles is essential to ensure quality output.
Internal placements	Where a funded role is filled by an existing staff member or series of internal placements, the applicant must demonstrate incremental backfilling has occurred. i.e. the hiring of an additional staff member. An exception to the requirement for incremental staffing will be considered where the role/roles in question already rely on funding from NZ On Air or Te Māngai Pāho.
Non-incremental Role funding	Barring exceptional circumstances, funded roles should be <i>additional</i> to the existing workforce of a funded organisation with a view to their ongoing sustainability. In cases where loss of staff is demonstrably imminent, non-incremental roles may be funded. In this instance, applicants must be prepared to provide financial information (including potentially commercial sensitive information) on a confidential basis to be reviewed by an appropriate independent assessor. Guidelines that expand on the submission requirements for a full proposal application for non-incremental roles under the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF) were provided.

In some cases, specialised cultural assessments were sought for applications from ethnic media providers that required particular linguistic and cultural contexts. If NZ On Air did not have staff with the requisite cultural knowledge, cultural assessors were sought to provide assessments for those specific applications. Their comments would be shared with the other external assessors prior to the completion of the relevant assessments.

The Contracting and Post-Contracting Processes

Once an application had received approval, a robust process of contracting and reporting was initiated to ensure the project or role was delivered as per the approved proposal. Funding could only be accessed once contracting had been completed. Contracts included reporting requirements around cost reports, health and safety, and outputs specific to each application e.g. the number of stories to be produced. The contract also included a drawdown schedule which outlined the number and timing of funding instalments. Examples of contracting forms are available in the [PIJF Archive](#).

Check-In Process

Although recipients provided regular reports as a condition of accessing their drawdowns, the PIJF team conducted additional spot checks to gauge if applicants were meeting their reporting and output requirements. Staff checked the following:

- Correct accreditation requirements were being met.
- Contracted amounts and types of content outputs were being produced (e.g. that sports stories were not being produced by a funded Court Reporter).
- Bespoke contractual requirements were met.
- Online content data measurement requirements were set up and tracking.

Applicants were provided with the results of the check-in along with a snapshot of their content tracking dashboard. These check-ins were not reviews of content quality and did not interfere in any way with the editorial independence of applicants. Due to commercial sensitivity, these check-ins were confidential. PIJF staff were always available to provide information or answer questions via informal hui, phone calls or emails. This 'open door' policy helped staff to cultivate good working relationships with the sector and build trust and transparency.

RESOURCES

A range of guidance documents were made available on the website to help applicants apply to the Fund. Guides and templates remain available in the [PIJF Archive](#).

Additionally, the PIJF team commissioned experienced journalism educator Jim Tucker to develop [Journalism Mentoring, A Programme for New Zealand](#) to assist those wanting to set up newsroom mentoring programmes or undertake journalism mentoring.

PIJF funding was explicitly not to be used to publish opinion. To give funded applicants further clarification, the PIJF team provided an [Opinion V Analysis Guideline](#), citing the NZ Media Council principles, that helped to distinguish the differences between opinion, analysis, commentary and fact.

TRANSPARENCY

To ensure New Zealanders had clear visibility of any and all content funded, logos were designed and all funded content was required to carry PIJF accreditation. Accreditation Guidelines are available in the [PIJF Archive](#).

All successful applications were published after each round on the NZ On Air website and these can also be viewed in the [PIJF Archive](#).

Weekly Facebook and LinkedIn posts highlighted a varied selection of the funded content as well as the number of articles that had been published over the previous week. This provided further visibility of the volume and reach of PIJF-funded content.

GOALS OF THE PIJF

WHAT WAS IT REQUIRED TO DO?

While it is too early to fully assess whether the PIJF met its goals, it is important to note that the scheme was tasked with delivering to the goals of a number of stakeholders.

The Government requirements contained in the establishing Cabinet paper were to:

- (29.1) retain quality journalism,
- (29.2) ensure a diversity of topics, perspectives and analysis from and within a range of different media organisations,
- (29.3) support the provision of relevant public interest journalism at a national, regional and local level,
- (29.4) ensure continued production of content featuring local stories and perspectives, and
- (29.5) reach diverse audiences across a range of platforms (for example, digital, television, radio and print media with an online presence).

NZ On Air has agreed performance measures (with its monitoring agency, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage). The measures for the PIJF were:

	TARGET	OUTCOME AS AT 30/6/23
New Zealanders believe that NZ On Air supports journalism that is important to New Zealanders	75%	74%
Funding from the PIJF (Factual) stream for targeted audiences, as defined by the Broadcasting Act	50%	57.8%
PIJF content reaches a minimum of 400,000 weekly Unique Browsers online	Achieve	1.25m
Time spent consuming PIJF content via online platforms is one minute or greater	Achieve	1:26

PIJF STATED GOALS:

1. Seek to inform and engage the public about issues that affect a person's right to flourish within our society and impact on society's ability to fully support its citizens (as per the definition above).
2. Provide accurate, accountable and fair coverage that reflects and empowers all sectors of the community, upholding the public's right to know.
3. Actively promote the principles of Partnership, Participation and Active Protection under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, acknowledging Māori as a Te Tiriti partner.
4. Reflect the cultural diversity of New Zealand.
5. Encourage a robust and sustainable media sector.

SUMMARY

The PIJF was a unique fund that was established, designed and initiated in the space of four months to respond to an immediate COVID-19 crisis fuelled by longstanding pressures on the entire news media sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The investment of \$55m of taxpayer funding has resulted in an injection of journalists and journalism and a move towards greater diversity across the sector.

Audience engagement has surpassed expectations, reviving areas like court and local democracy reporting that had been dwindling in many regions. While the complete outcomes and impacts of the fund will only be fully known after PIJF content concludes in 2026, the data available suggests that, overall, the PIJF has successfully achieved its objectives.

Born out of a crisis, into a world-wide retrenchment of journalism, it was perhaps unrealistic to expect the PIJF to comprehensively resolve the sector's numerous challenges within 26 months. Nevertheless, NZ On Air is confident that the fund's support for a wide range of journalism and journalists has made a compelling case for ongoing subsidies to safeguard at-risk public interest journalism and sustainably contribute to the future of the fourth estate.