



Janey Hughes <janey@intouchtalent.nz>

NZFC Newsletter December 2025

1 message

New Zealand Film Commission Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
<communications@nzfilm.co.nz>
Reply-To: communications@nzfilm.co.nz
To: Janey Hughes <janey@intouchtalent.nz>

12 December 2025 at 02:51

No images? [Click here](#)

December 2025

NZFC NEWSLETTER



From the CEO

Kia ora,

There's no doubt it's been a big year for the screen sector – on one hand, we celebrated the record-breaking success of *Tinā*; on the other, we faced a noticeable slowdown in international production. Navigating these ups and downs has been key to our mahi.

Since debuting in February, *Tinā* has become the fifth highest-grossing New Zealand film of all time, bringing audiences together across Aotearoa and beyond. With releases in Australia and the United States – and special screenings by NZ diplomatic posts worldwide – the Samoan-led drama has shown how New Zealand stories resonate globally.

Our industry's creative and technical strengths were also recognised internationally. A *Minecraft Movie* was a standout, creating more than 1,000 jobs and employing a crew that was 89% New Zealanders, while contributing over \$194 million to the local economy.

Our filmmakers and projects were celebrated at major festivals, with Craig Gainsborough from Greenlit and the Māoriland Charitable Trust winning at the Global Production Awards in Cannes, Dame Jane Campion receiving a special tribute and A Wave in the Ocean film school projects showcased at the Venice International Film Festival, five NZFC-supported



titles featuring at the Sydney Film Festival including the world premiere of *Pike River*, and *Mārama* making its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Of course, it hasn't all been straightforward. The global downturn in international production has brought challenges. Connecting New Zealand with the world has been front and centre for us this year. We kicked off our biggest international push yet – the NZFC Global Trade Mission – focusing on key markets like the US, UK, Ireland, and France, and emerging new markets for New Zealand such as India and Saudi Arabia.

At home, we've ramped up project and career development support, helping creative ideas stand out and creating new pathways and offshore opportunities through placements for New Zealand filmmakers.

There are also green shoots appearing. Recent changes to the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate – International have strengthened New Zealand's competitive position in an increasingly dynamic global industry. Excitement is building for the premiere of *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. This landmark production is the result of a 20-year partnership and stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved. With a workforce well over 90% local, *Avatar* champions the skill, creativity, and dedication of our industry – something New Zealand should be very proud of.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this remarkable year – your dedication and hard work are what make New Zealand film so special.

Ngā mihi o te wā,

Annie
CEO, New Zealand Film Commission

Lights, Camera, Impact: The role of screen production in shaping New Zealand's economy and culture

The New Zealand Film Commission, NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho commissioned NZIER and Verian to analyse the role of screen production in shaping New Zealand's economy and culture. This work forms part of Mahi Tahī, an initiative by the three agencies to strengthen and grow the screen sector in Aotearoa through shared insight and collaboration.

The research covered three areas: economic activity in New Zealand screen production, the cultural impact on NZ screen production, and how our screen content influences global perceptions of New Zealand.

Key findings:

Economic impact:

- \$3 billion total output from the screen sector.
- 26,960 overall screen industry workforce (both employees and contractors).

- NZSPR data shows that qualifying NZ production expenditure for international productions in 2024/25 was \$647.1M.
- \$2.7 billion estimated tourism expenditure linked to screen content.
- 15.9% of visitors quote screen influences in their decision to visit NZ.

Cultural impact:

- Nearly 8 in 10 international viewers say NZ content sparks curiosity and 72% considered visiting as a result.
- 73% of New Zealanders agree NZ-made content shapes national identity.
- 87% of international viewers say Māori stories help them value indigenous storytelling more broadly.
- 83% of international viewers agree NZ content gives New Zealand a distinctive voice in global film and television.

The key findings of this research highlight three critical outcomes for the future of the screen industry:

Cultural value as our superpower – the research demonstrated that locally made content not only contributes to national identity and belonging but also positions New Zealand as a leader in indigenous national storytelling and cultural authenticity on a global stage.

Dependence on incentives and the need for sustainability – the report reveals that the screen sector remains heavily reliant on incentives to attract and retain productions.

Persistent data gaps – the research process has underscored significant data gaps in the screen industry.

These outcomes provide a clear roadmap for action, guiding investment in better data, fostering collaboration to build a more sustainable industry, and championing the unique cultural strengths that set New Zealand's screen industry apart.

[Click here for the full report](#), which has also been published on all three agencies' websites.

NZFC welcomes updates to International Screen Production Rebate

In November, the Government announced updates to the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate – International: the minimum spend for feature films is now NZ\$4m, the 5% Uplift threshold has dropped to NZ\$20m, and above-the-line caps have been removed. Post-production also benefits, with PDV-only projects now eligible for the 5% Uplift. These changes (due to come into effect for productions starting Principal Photography or PDV work on or after 1 January 2026) follow consultation with the sector, discussions we were pleased to contribute to, and signal a commitment to keeping New Zealand competitive as an international production and post-production destination.

Focus on Asia



In November, NZFC proudly led 12 Aotearoa filmmakers to India – the biggest NZ screen industry delegation yet – focused on building creative and commercial connections.

Starting off in Mumbai, NZFC delivered a programme that included touring DNEG, Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari (Film City) and Yash Raj Studios; holding a roundtable meeting with the Producers Guild of India (PGI); meetings with Yash Raj Films, Dharma Productions, Applause Entertainment, and other leading Mumbai production companies; and hosting a B2B networking reception and private screening of the upcoming acclaimed gothic thriller, *Mārama*.

Travelling to Goa for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) and Waves Film Bazaar, the NZ Country Pavilion served as a hub for collaboration and conversation. Rob Sarkies introduced *Pike River* at its Asian premiere in IFFI's Cinema of the World programme, and NZFC reconnected with key industry figures, including acclaimed filmmaker and IFFI Director, Shekhar Kapur, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and National Film Development Corporation. We were delighted to have Liam Finnigan, Head of Trade and Economic Section at the New Zealand High Commission in New Delhi, join us in Goa, providing valuable NZ Inc support during key meetings and events.

As part of the Waves Film Bazaar Knowledge Series, NZFC hosted *Beyond Borders: The Economics of Filming in New Zealand*, featuring Annie Murray, Chris Payne, Philippa Mossman, and Te O Kahurangi Waaka. The session highlighted New Zealand as a world-class production and co-production partner, sparking discussion and reinforcing opportunities for collaboration.

At this month's Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF), Esther Cahill-Chiaroni represented NZFC at the SGIFF Industry Days Film Commissioners Roundtable, where she contributed to discussions on sustainable structures for Asian co-productions, funding objectives, and project evaluation. Esther also co-hosted a NZ/Singapore networking session with the Association of Independent Producers, Singapore (AIPRO) at the Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF), convened an industry meeting with New Zealand's High Commissioner to Singapore, and supported NZ participants across key events including the SGIFF Asian Producers Network, ATF x TTB Animation Lab & Pitch, the Asian Academy Creative Awards, and the launch of Doc Edge Singapore.

International Placements

Designed for emerging to mid-career writers, directors, and producers from Aotearoa New Zealand, NZFC's International Placements offer the opportunity to develop overseas industry networks, learn and refine filmmaking skills, and gain work experience within selected global film companies.

Hope Papali'i is the latest recipient to be selected for a three-month placement with Sydney based Brouhaha Entertainment and Kismet Distribution. This year, Hope produced *First Place* with Eileen Lee, a feature film written by Mario Faumui.

On securing the placement, Hope said, "I'm so deeply grateful for this opportunity. Troy's producing, executive producing and distribution work is so extensive and impactful, and it honestly feels quite full circle for me. I studied *Mao's Last Dancer* in English back in high school, so getting the chance to work with him now feels incredibly special. I think it's important to also note that the Executive Producer on some of our greatest works of this side of the globe is PASIFIKA. Troy is the GOAT."

Brouhaha Entertainment and Kismet Distribution's Troy Lum is equally excited to be part of NZFC's International Placements line up and about Hope joining the team.

"We are so excited to be part of the program. One of our aims here is to get closer to the grassroots of the NZ film community. Hope is a great candidate, already displaying her strong potential. We can't wait to be part of her journey."

We're also delighted to announce a new six-month placement with Picking Scabs – a bold co-venture between See-Saw Films and acclaimed showrunner Samantha Strauss, based in Sydney. This is a unique opportunity to work hands-on across a diverse slate of TV and film projects, collaborate with industry leaders including Liz Watts (Head of Film & TV Australia, See-Saw Films) and Shay Spencer (Executive Producer, Picking Scabs), and build your skills in all areas of development and production.

Applications close **Monday, 12 January at 1pm** – [click here to apply](#).

Industry Development programmes

The NZFC has funded seven initiatives designed to strengthen Aotearoa's screen sector and help filmmakers develop their craft.

In the first funding round, 18 applications requested nearly \$3.9 million. From these, seven programmes were approved with a total allocation of \$1.42 million. These will roll out over the coming months, offering opportunities to participate across the motu.

For the list of programmes, [click here](#).

A dedicated funding newsletter will be issued before the end of the year with more news from the Funding team.

Co-Productions: An In-Depth Dive with NZFC Co-Production and Incentives and Funding teams

NZFC recently delivered an in-depth session on international co-productions for WIFT NZ and Ngā Aho Whakaari. The Auckland workshop on 12 November explored New Zealand's 18 official co-production agreements, outlining how filmmakers can leverage these partnerships to access funding, talent, and incentives. The discussion covered the practical differences between official and unofficial co-productions, eligibility requirements, and pathways to NZFC development and production support—including how co-productions can unlock the 40% New Zealand Screen Production Rebate.

A virtual edition of the workshop followed on 4 December, with 1:1 project and structuring consultations with NZFC co-production executives offered to all participants in the Auckland and online workshops.

Spada Conference

Our team was on the ground sharing insights and supporting kōrero across the screen sector at this milestone event. Highlights included Crossing Borders, Building Worlds, a co-production panel moderated by NZFC Senior Co-Production Executive, Jennifer Wilton, and the Lights, Action, Impact plenary, which explored the cultural and economic value of our industry with NZFC's Tayla Hancock (Senior Advisor, Policy and Performance) alongside NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho.

Show Me Shorts

[Apply Now: Show Me Shorts Short Film Lab 2026](#)

Applications are open for the @showmeshorts Short Film Lab! Eight screenwriters will have the chance to develop their scripts, gain industry insights, and build career advancing connections. The programme offers mentorship from acclaimed local screenwriters, hands on script development, and includes \$40,000 in production funding for two participants. It's a proven launchpad for some of New Zealand's most notable short films—don't miss this opportunity to take your project to the next level.

Annual Report 2024/25

For the full NZFC Annual Report, [click here](#), and for a summary of the Year in Review, [click here](#).





New Zealand Film Commission

119 Ghuznee Street, Te Aro, Wellington 6011

Level 1, 14-16 Maidstone Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland 1021

You're receiving this email because you signed up to our NZFC Newsletter list.

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)