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3 August 2023

Adam

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Tēnā koe Adam

### **Official Information request and response**

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act (“OIA”) dated 9 July 2023.

You have requested:

- 1. A funding breakdown of all organisations that have received funding from the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF) to date.*
- 2. A list of all online news articles that have received funding from the PIJF, how much funding was applied for, and how much funding each specific article has received.*
- 3. A list of all projects that have received funding from the PIJF, how much funding was applied for, and how much each specific project has received.*
- 4. A list of all organisations who have applied for, but were denied funding under the PIJF. Please also provide the funding sought.*
- 5. A list of all organisations who have applied for, and successfully received funding under the PIJF. Please also provide the funding granted.*
- 6. Please release all successful funding applications made by organisations to the PIJF, and their reasons for why their nominated projects fulfil a public interest service that would otherwise have been at risk.*

Please find our response below:

1. All PIJF funding decisions are made public and can be found via our [website](#).

Funding decisions were made public at the completion of each round and the media releases for each include the following:

- [PIJF Round 1 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 2 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 3 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 4 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 5 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 6 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Round 7 Media Release](#)
- [PIJF Emergency Resiliency Funding Media Release](#)

We decline this part of your request under Section 18(d) of the OIA as the information you have requested is publicly available.

2. Funding is for public interest journalism roles and projects, as opposed to specific articles and as such there is no document containing all online news articles and how much funding a specific article has received or how much a specific article cost.

This is also in part due to our data set not being complete for a number of reasons:

- Data measurement of digital content was initiated in August 2021 and tracking progressively came online as individual applicants gradually joined.
- 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 data tracking began necessitating a switch to the Google Analytics 4 system.

We decline this part of your request based on [Section 18\(e\)](#) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

However, while we are unable to meet your request in full due to this data set not being complete, we can provide:

- a spreadsheet that details online PIJF-funded articles that have been tracked as part of our monitoring system from the first date an article was tracked up until 30 June 2023.

This spreadsheet details the title of each tracked online article and its respective host website. As noted above, this is an incomplete data set and does not currently capture all online content funded under the PIJF. It should also be noted this spreadsheet does not cover print, app, social media, linear television, and radio content and therefore does not give a full picture of the amount of content produced by funded roles and projects. We decline to release information regarding readership figures as they relate to each article under the Section 9(2)(b)(i) of the OIA.

Further to this, we can also provide the following attached document:

- A spreadsheet detailing each successful PIJ funding application, their contracted content outcomes and respective publishing platform (where applicable).

Please note that all funded content is also required to follow our [accreditation guidelines](#).

## Connecting and reflecting Aotearoa

3. Please refer to the answer at Paragraph 1.
4. NZ On Air does not release detail on declined applications due to the intellectual property contained and the commercial sensitivity of projects. This is for several reasons, such as enabling applicants to continue to develop and 'shop' their project, preventing projects from being copied, and enabling projects to apply for funding to other organisations without the stigma of a decline from NZ On Air. We decline this part of your request under Section 9(2)(b)(i) of the OIA.
5. Please refer to the answer above in Paragraph 1.
6. You have requested copies of "all successful funding applications made by organisations to the PIJF, and their reasons for why their nominated projects fulfil a public interest service that would otherwise have been at risk".

The documentation that falls under this part of your request is the applications themselves (of which there are approximately 180) and the funding recommendation papers submitted to the NZ On Air Staff Investment Committee and Board in respect of these applications (of which there are 25).

In the interests of meeting the aims of your request in a timely manner, we believe the key information from each application is distilled in these funding recommendation papers and outlines the reasons as to why applications were considered and funded by NZ On Air. Considering this and the further information we have outlined below, you will note that we have asked you to confirm whether you would accept receiving copies of these funding papers in lieu of the full proposals for successful PIJF applications.

Should you narrow your request to this level of documentation, we will aim to provide copies of these papers (with any necessary redactions made as per the OIA) to you within 30 working days of the response of this date. The reason for this delay is to compile this information, review it and consult with (or attempt to consult with) all affected third parties who have been successful in obtaining funding through the PIJF.

#### Charging

As noted above, there have been numerous successful PIJF funding applications (approximately 180 applications) and should you wish to access this level of documentation we intend to charge for this work as per the [Official Charging Guidelines for the OIA](#).

We have made the decision to charge for this work due to the amount of documentation that has been requested. There are approximately 180 applications of various sizes/pages that you have requested and for each proposal, we will be required to locate each application, read and review it, and prepare it for release. Such preparation will include assessing whether any information in individual applications may be subject to the withholding grounds under the OIA.

We estimate that such labour will take 15 minutes per successful application, which means a total of 45 hours of work.

As per the guidelines above of charging \$38 per chargeable half hour (after a first hour of no cost), the maximum amount we anticipate charging is \$3,344 for this level for work. Due to the

level of labour required, we will require a 10% deposit of \$344 to be paid to NZ On Air before this work is undertaken.

Any unused component of this charge will be refunded to you.

Considering the amount we anticipate charging for this work, we propose the following options and seek your confirmation on which option you choose to pursue:

1. Confirmation and agreement from you that you will accept this charge and pay payment of the deposit, with the balance of \$3,000 to be paid on release of the information. Should you accept this option by 5pm Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August we will endeavour to provide this information to you by 29 September 2023. Should you provide this confirmation after this prescribed timeframe, we may reasonably extend our delivery date for this documentation.

We will provide you with the relevant banking details should you notify us you wish to pursue this option.

2. Confirmation that you accept receiving a representative sample of successful PIJF applications (10) within the 30-working daytime period specified above in relation to the release of Staff Investment Committee or Board papers. This will incur a maximum charge of \$114 which we will require you to pay on release of this information.

We will provide you with the relevant banking details should you notify us you wish to pursue this option.

3. Limiting your request to the funding recommendation papers as discussed above. This will not incur a charge.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us or provide confirmation of which above option you seek to pursue, please contact Conall Aird ([conall@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:conall@nzonair.govt.nz)), who will be able to assist you should you wish to change or refine your request in order to reduce or remove the need to charge.

For your information, funding provided by NZ On Air for all successful projects is [searchable](#) on our website. You can also [sign up](#) to receive our regular industry newsletter via our website.

You have the right to refer this response, or our decision to charge, to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with it. More information on how to do this is [here](#). NZ On Air proactively releases information in accordance with the Government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. This includes publishing responses to requests for information under the OIA. Please note that this response (with your name removed) will be published on the NZ On Air website shortly and will remain on our website for 12 months.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Kerry  
**HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES**