

## PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM FUND

### FUNDING DECISIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Board **approves** funding up to:

First year Funding Recommended	Second year Funding Recommended	Applicant	Scope	Roles	Subject to
\$1,777,000	\$1,777,000	RNZ for 26 publications and platforms	Local Democracy Reporter scheme	20	[REDACTED]
\$1,394,620	\$1,394,620	Stuff for a variety of Stuff publications	Community and Pou Tiaki reporters	20	[REDACTED]
\$1,497,851	\$1,497,851	NZME for the Open Justice - Te Pātiti scheme across 11 publications	Open Justice Project – nationwide Court Reporting Scheme	15	[REDACTED]
\$796,500	\$796,500	Māori Television Service for Māori Television	News and Current Affairs roles	7	[REDACTED]
<b>Total roles recommended for funding</b>				<b>62</b>	

**4 shortlisted applications for 62 roles recommended with a total funding of up to \$10,931,942**

[Annex A: All applications to the PIJF roles round](#)

### BACKGROUND

1. In January 2021 Cabinet agreed to draw down \$55 million over three years (2021 - 2023) from the tagged contingency set aside by Cabinet for broadcasting initiatives. [General Guidelines for the PIJF](#) were published in April 2021. The principles set out in [the Cabinet paper](#) have informed the design of the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF). NZ On Air collaborated with Te Māngai Pāho on the design and delivery of the fund.
2. The PIJF is structured to support journalistic capability across three funding pillars: Projects, Roles and Industry Development.

### ROUND OVERVIEW

3. This second round of the PIJF sought applications to the Roles pillar of the fund only, addressing one of the most fundamental issues facing the sector; the drastic reduction of the journalism workforce. Census figures show journalism jobs halved between 2006 and 2018.
4. In the initial PIJF stakeholder consultation report, Hal Crawford outlined that the role-based part of the PIJF, should look to employ 100 reporters as a minimum (page 12). This number was based on the relative scale of similar international programmes. Staff notes that if the recommendations in front of the Board are ratified, then the total number of roles recommended for funding in the round will be 110 journalism roles.

5. Below is a snapshot of the current planning for the round priorities and allocations for the three years of the PIJF.

[REDACTED]			
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]			
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. The [guidelines](#) for the round outlined the assessment criteria and funding priorities to applicants including:
- This funding is intended to assist media entities cover areas of public interest journalism that have become increasingly at-risk due to lack of staff.
  - This funding is not intended to cover current positions or general news positions (unless in exceptional circumstances.) 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.
  - The intent of this fund is to increase the quantity and quality of public interest journalism. Qualifying criteria for a funded role are:
    - Produces content within an agreed reporting subject scope (aligned to the General Guidelines)
    - Accredited to the PIJF
    - Included in PIJF metrics reporting
    - PIJF roles will not be permitted to contribute to general reporting unless this is within the subject scope and credited.
    - Content must be freely accessible and, if behind a paywall or in a magazine with a cover price, funded content must also be available free of charge online as close to simultaneously as possible.
    - Content output expectations for the role should be established which can be monitored and reviewed.

7. The assessment panel included:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- **Raewyn Rasch (Ngāi Tahu)** - NZ On Air Head of Journalism. Former General Manager Māori and Pacific programmes at TVNZ, executive producer of Seven Sharp, producer of Fair Go and Marae Investigates, TV and radio journalist.

8. Conflicts of Interests (COI) are outlined as below. In this instance, the assessor did not assess these applications, and were not involved in the funding decisions for these applications.

- [REDACTED] did not assess these applications.
- [REDACTED] did not assess these applications.

9. Additional external assessors were commissioned to undertake further assessment; [REDACTED]

10. [REDACTED]

11. Applicants were asked to submit initial five-page proposals by 22 July that outlined the number, type, and cost of all roles they wanted to apply for. See [Annex A](#) for a list of all PIJF: Roles Development applications submitted over the two-stage process.

12. Applicants could apply for up to two years' worth of funding for a role, subject to performance review monitoring at key stages to ensure targets are being met before a second year of funding is renewed. Staff received strong feedback from industry that offering one-year contracts would not provide sufficient security to enable recruitment and retention especially of experienced journalists.

13. Staff is aware of the distortionary impact that a significant level of funding could have on the journalism employment market and the potential for a 'talent-poaching war' to occur if PIJF salary rates inflate market rates arbitrarily. To mitigate this and align the broad range of PIJF salary funding requests with industry pay rates, staff calculated the average full-time base salaries (minus Kiwisaver, sick pay, etc) across bands (junior, intermediate, and senior) for all roles submitted to full proposal stage. Staff then compared the resulting 'mid-points' to industry-standard journalism base-pay rates sourced from the E Tū Union.

Banding	PIJF % Requests	PIJF Average	Industry Average
Junior	5%	\$45,785	\$47,000
Intermediate	60%	\$71,193	\$60,000 - \$65,000*
Senior	35%	\$89,039	\$72,000 - \$100,000**

\* Television Journalist average pay is \$80,000

\*\* Television Journalist average pay is \$82,000 - \$123,000

14. In line with these figures, some funding recommendations will be less than the requested amounts and hence why most recommendations are subject to a 'confirmed revised budget'.
15. All funding offers in this round will be contingent on the provision of signed employment contracts to ensure roles have been fulfilled and if role recruitment cannot be confirmed by January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, then any unutilised funding will be returned to the PIJF and reapplied in the final funding round of the financial year.
16. In order to manage this process from a contracting perspective, successful applicants will have the option of two potential contract initiation deadlines. Applicants who are in a position to fulfil roles shortly after funding decisions are announced will be able to initiate their contracts for those confirmed roles, with any remaining roles that require a longer recruitment period having until that final January 14<sup>th</sup> cut-off date to be finalised.
17. There were a wide variety of associated costs against roles in most proposals. Staff isolated costs for each proposal to establish average bands across the entire round to ensure equity across all proposals and alerted assessors where costs exceeded these averages.
18. A total of 63 applicants applied for 311 roles to a total value of \$46,786,343 and given the large funding request, the assessment panel sought to prioritise roles to those areas of public interest journalism most affected by retrenchment: those of regional and local news which have faced the most attrition over recent years and to Māori, Pacific and Asian reporting where lack of equity and increased demand remains a critical issue.
19. Assessors met on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July and 31 applicants were invited to submit full proposals by 17 August.
20. 31 submissions for 162 roles with a total funding request of \$25,910,651 were submitted for final assessment.
21. 26 applications sought <\$1m. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Four applications are recommended for funding are recommended for funding over \$1m and are in front of the Board for consideration.
22. SIC approved funding for 48 roles totalling \$6,788,417.
23. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
24. Staff is confident the range of roles recommended for funding covers a wide variety of media both in size and nature and addresses the key gaps and at-risk elements of public interest journalism. Two national schemes, RNZ *Local Democracy Reporting Scheme* and NZME *Open Justice* deliver directly on two critical areas of PIJ – local government reporting and courts and justice reporting. Also of note are the number of roles to support South Island coverage both at a local level and nationally which should see an increased visibility of South Island issues and views. The significant number of Māori reporter roles will also likely have a major impact both in the capacity of the Māori Journalism sector and in the number of Māori reporters in mainstream media.
25. Staff believes the quality and experience of the assessment panel as former editors and journalists and their detailed knowledge of schemes such as the LDR and court reporting provided excellent assessment and advice providing good industry oversight.
26. There are several unknowns going into this round that could only be answered through the application process:

- How many roles the sector requires to meet the needs of public interest journalism?
- How much this additional workforce might cost?
- How many journalists are available for recruitment into such roles if funded by the PIJF?

27. As noted above - the recruitment deadline built into this round will help us assess the available journalist pool when we assess in January how many approved roles have been recruited and will receive funding to meet the needs of audiences especially regional, local, Māori, Pasifika and Asian.

## GENERAL ASSESSMENT & STAFF OPINION

Local Democracy Reporting

RNZ

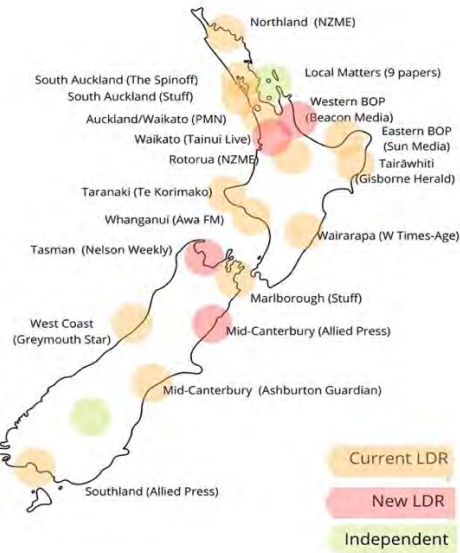
Requested \$3,554,000

### Synopsis

28. Radio New Zealand /Local Democracy Reporting scheme is requesting funding for 20 roles, to expand and continue the Local Democracy Reporting scheme.

Role	Salary p.a.	Est. associated costs p.a.
LDR Manager (RNZ)		
LDR Editor (RNZ)		
LDR Northland (NZME)		
LDR Auckland/Waikato (PMN)		
LDR South Auckland (The Spinoff)		
LDR South Auckland (Stuff)		
LDR Waikato (Tainui FM)		
LDR Eastern BOP (Beacon Media)		
LDR Western BOP (Sun Media)		
LDR Rotorua (NZME)		
LDR Tairāwhiti (Gisborne Herald)		
LDR Taranaki (Te Korimako)		
LDR Whanganui (Awa FM)		
LDR Wairarapa (Wairarapa Times-Age)		
LDR Tasman (Nelson Weekly)		
LDR Marlborough (Stuff)		
LDR North Canterbury (Allied)		
LDR Mid Canterbury (Ashburton Guardian)		
LDR West Coast (Greymouth Star)		
LDR Southland (Allied)		
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Platform Contribution p.a.</b>		

**Local Government Reporter roles requested**



**General Assessment**

29. The Local Democracy Reporting programme is managed by RNZ and with LDR reporters based in newsrooms around the country. All LDR content is published by newsrooms and made available simultaneously online to 30 LDR members (media entities deemed eligible to publish LDR content): RNZ, TVNZ, Stuff, NZME/NZ Herald, Newsroom, The Spinoff, Otago Daily Times/Allied Press, Gisborne Herald, Wairarapa Times-Age, Ashburton Guardian, 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.

30. RNZ has agreements with each LDR host newsroom (the newsroom that houses an LDR reporter) [REDACTED]

31. [REDACTED]

32. The LDR programme was set up in 2018/19 via a one-off allocation of Crown funding as part of the RNZ Joint Innovation Fund. Its purpose is to bolster public interest journalism and fill gaps in local government coverage, mostly in regional New Zealand, brought about by declining reporter numbers in traditional media.

33. [REDACTED] undertook a review of the LDR pilot programme for NZ On Air in October 2020 and determined that the scheme is doing its job, saying it was “producing stories that would not otherwise have been written and which assist the audience to understand the decisions and actions done in its name.”

34. Salaries and costs are in line with averages across the round and are the same as previously funded for the LDR.

35. [REDACTED]

**Staff Opinion**

36. The assessment panel was enthusiastic about expanding and continuing the programme and believes the two-year contracts available in this round will provide important stability and assist regional recruitment.

37. Assessors noted that the strengths of the LDR programme is the oversight provided by RNZ and the outcomes from the LDR programme so far have reflected the goals of the PIJF, specifically focusing on local issues, local government and underserved local communities.
38. It was also noted that the LDR system itself "has been refined over time and provides good oversight and support" for reporters and media partners. The LDR website encourages new media partners to express an interest in signing up, which could see content shared even more widely in the future.
39. RNZ has also made significant investment in the scheme and continues to do so in self-funding aspects of the scheme such as the new content management system.
40. [REDACTED]
41. Staff noted that under the PIJF eligibility and assessment criteria, the LDR faces greater requirements to articulate a Te Tiriti strategy. Guidance on this requirement has been provided to the sector in the [PIJF FAQ](#) (Page 2-3). [REDACTED] However, Staff also noted that the scheme has made efforts to include more Māori and Pasifika host newsrooms and now includes three iwi stations and PMN. The inclusion of PMN in the scheme is an exciting step that should help provide the large Auckland Pasifika population with better oversight of the decision making around their communities and hopefully boost engagement in local democracy. Staff also note that Māori stories and issues regularly feature on the daily list of stories covered by LDR and the management team have indicated they are making real efforts to improve the amount of Māori coverage.
42. Assessors noted that should the LDR not be funded, there would be a real risk that members would not be able to sustain coverage, and most would be curtailed creating a serious deficit especially in regional local government reporting. [REDACTED]
43. While there was some debate amongst the assessors about the relative merits of adding some regions over others, on balance, assessors agreed with the proposed spread of additional regions and there was unanimous support for the programme and no objection to its proposed expansion.
44. **Funding is recommended up to \$3,554,000** [REDACTED]

**Stuff Reporters** **Stuff Ltd** **Requested** [REDACTED]

**Synopsis**

45. Stuff is requesting funding for 20 new reporting roles – 11 Auckland community reporters to boost local reporting around Auckland and 9 reporters for its Pou Tiaki section, which reports specifically on te ao Māori. [REDACTED]

Role	Outputs	Salary p.a.	Est. associated costs p.a.
Community reporter (Auckland) x 11	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Pou Tiaki reporter x 9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Total p.a.</b>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Platform Contribution p.a.</b>		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

**General Assessment**

46. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The final application was for the roles outlined in the table above, at a cost of [REDACTED]

47. [REDACTED] Stuff focused on two areas for incremental roles – Auckland community reporters and its Pou Tiaki section.

48. Its application points out that as newspaper readership and income declines, many local communities around Auckland now miss out on local news coverage.

49. [REDACTED]

50. The 11 proposed reporters would be overseen by Stuff’s Auckland Editor and News Directors. Their stories would run on Stuff as well as in 11 local newspapers around Auckland.

51. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The Pou Tiaki section of the website aims to cover te ao Māori from a number of angles, including Māori views of the main story of the day, and business and sport stories.

52. This application proposes 11 new Pou Tiaki reporters, based around the country [REDACTED]

53. Their content, which would focus on multimedia stories (and therefore have a lower target of stories per week than the other proposed roles) would run on Stuff as well as in Stuff newspapers including the Dominion Post, Sunday Star Times and The Press. [REDACTED]

54. Salaries in this proposal are well within the averages we see across all applications in this round. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[Redacted]

**Staff Opinion**

59. [Redacted].  
While there was some concern about duplication with the LDR, the panel felt convinced that this was more a geographic overlap and in fact these extra reporters would be able to contribute to stronger journalism at a community level in areas the LDR is not able to e.g. school communities, local sports, general news, crime and health reporting.

60. [Redacted]

61. Assessors said there has been an evident commitment to Te Tiriti principles at Stuff over recent years, including Te Tiriti principles being included in the company charter, greater use of te reo in stories and a commitment to cover more Māori stories and stories with a Māori lens. Assessors believed that increasing the number of Pou Tiaki reporters was “a useful extension” to Stuff’s endeavours to accurately reflect Te Ao Māori.

62. [Redacted]

63. [Redacted]

64. [Redacted]

65. Overall staff see the remaining incremental roles in this application as having significant merit and the backing of a capable established outlet. **Funding is recommended up to \$2,789,240** [Redacted]

**Open Justice – Te Pātiti**

**NZME**

**Requested \$2,995,702**

**Synopsis**

66. Open Justice – Te Pātiti is a national multimedia service aiming to cover court and legal affairs out of regions that currently receive little or no in-depth coverage. [Redacted]

<b>Role</b>	<b>Salary p.a.</b>	<b>Est. costs</b>
Editor		
Deputy Editor/Multimedia Journalist ChCh		
Multimedia Journalist - Whangarei		
Multimedia Journalist – Auckland (Nth and West)		
Multimedia Journalist - Auckland (Sth)		
Multimedia Journalist - Hamilton		
Multimedia Journalist - Tauranga		
Multimedia Journalist - Rotorua		
Multimedia Journalist – New Plymouth		
Multimedia Journalist – Hawke's Bay		
Multimedia Journalist - Whanganui		
Multimedia Journalist – Palmerston North		
Multimedia Journalist – Wellington		
Multimedia Journalist - Nelson		
Coordinator 0.5 FTE		
<b>Total</b>		



**General Assessment**

67. NZME’s proposal provides a comprehensive plan for ongoing court and justice reporting across the country to support this at-risk journalism.

[Redacted text block]

68. *Open Justice* meets several of aims of the PIJF, with a particular focus on discoverability, collaboration, and sustainability. The requested roles would be in 12 locations across the North and South Islands, these being Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Hawke’s Bay, Whanganui, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson, and Christchurch.

69. [Redacted text block]

70. [Redacted text block]

71. The project shows a commitment to te Tiriti with a raft of measures by proposing that all funded roles attend an initial pōwhiri and noho marae to discuss the potential for racial bias and mitigations. Monthly workshops run by [Redacted] will upskill reports

in te reo, tikanga Māori, and most importantly Te Tiriti principles. This will be supplemented by regular in-house sessions led by [REDACTED]

### Staff Opinion

72. Assessors were enthusiastic about this project's scope and purpose, noting that it was a strong proposal that would help to address coverage issues in areas with little-to-no justice reporting while creating work and training opportunities for multimedia journalists in regional newsrooms. They also felt the project demonstrates great collaboration within the sector in terms of content sharing agreements and partnerships.
73. The kinds of partnerships proposed by Open Justice would strengthen the wider media eco-system and maximise the audience for content created by PIJF-funded journalism.
74. The project shows a commitment to te Tiriti by proposing that all funded roles attend monthly workshops to learn about te ao Māori, basic Reo, te tiriti principles, and Māori protocols.
75. Assessor [REDACTED] stated that the project "*addresses a very real weakness in what should be a vital pillar of our democracy - that of open justice. This has the potential to create a nationwide network of court and legal reporting, along with coverage, analysis and explanation of many of the associated social, racial and cultural issues*".
76. A strength of the proposal was its broad subject matter. 'Open Justice' was named to signify the importance of local justice journalism beyond simply court reporting. Its mandate across various types of legal proceedings (such as tribunals and civil cases) and its nationwide scope means that national trends around injustice, inequality, crime, and other significant topics, can be identified, investigated, and widely circulated.
77. This collaboration ensures greater discoverability of local justice reporting over a **nationwide** platform. It also allows for knowledge-sharing between larger newsrooms and less-experienced newsrooms, as well as career development for the journalists appointed to the new roles. Staff noted Court reporting requires skilled staff and the level of support proposed by this scheme, the management roles associated with it, and the large scale of the scheme should provide a significant improvement in court reporting capability.
78. Staff raised concerns about the project's potential to contribute to the bias against Māori individuals and communities that historically exists within mainstream justice reporting. However, the proposal demonstrates that NZME has taken active steps to avoid this bias by ensuring the entire team is trained in cultural competency. It's hoped this education approach could encourage more engagement with Māori justice issues.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
79. Associated costs were considered in line with market rates. Dispensations were made for reasonable costs that enhanced the project's journalistic quality and rautaki Māori such as cultural competency workshops for journalists and a legal budget.
80. **Funding is recommended up to \$2,995,702** [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Māori Television

Māori Television/Whakaata

Requested \$1,593,000

### Synopsis

81. Māori Television is seeking funding for seven, full-time, content-producing incremental roles over two years. Four roles are for Pou Kawe Kōrero (Reporter /Mentors) and three are for Pou Matarau (Digital Producers).



92. [Redacted]

93. [Redacted]

94. Staff and Assessors felt it was important to prioritise Māori reporter roles to Māori organisations and along with the provision of 7 roles to UMA Broadcasting for *Radio Waatea* and 4 roles to Mana Trust for *E-Tangata* approved by SIC, this round will see the most significant provision for Māori journalism since Māori Television was established.

95. [Redacted]

96. Funding is recommended up to 1,593,000 [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
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