

AGENDA ITEM 2.14

PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM FUND: ROLES

FUNDING DECISIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That the Staff Investment Committee **approves up to:**

- **\$214,245** to Te Reo o Ngati Kahungunu Inc for *Ara Mai he tete kura* – two roles for one year [REDACTED]
- \$160,000 to Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto for *Te Reo Kahika* – two roles for one year [REDACTED]
- **\$362,520** to Indian Newslink for *Content producing roles* – two roles for two years [REDACTED]
- \$88,852 to Chinese Herald Digital Limited for *Exploring Issues Facing Chinese New Zealanders* – one role for one year [REDACTED]
- \$139,520 to Peter Newport for *Crux – Junior/Intermediate roles* – one role for two years [REDACTED]
- \$88,800 to BayBuzz Ltd for *Hawke's Bay Local Accountability Reporting* – two part-time roles for one year [REDACTED]
- \$159,340 to Newsroom NZ Ltd for a *Video Content Creator* – one role for two years [REDACTED]

and **declines** funding of:

- [REDACTED]

Seven applications recommended for total funding of up to \$1,213,277

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. This funding is administered by NZ On Air to support the production of public interest journalism including Māori and Iwi journalism that is relevant to and valued by New Zealanders.
2. [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. The [General Guidelines](#) were updated in March 2022.
3. The PIJF supports journalistic capability across three funding pillars: Projects, Roles and Industry Development.

OVERVIEW

1. The fourth round of the PIJF sought applications across all three pillars of the fund. NZ On Air earmarked \$5m for this funding round and received 39 applications with a total funding request of \$11,292,212.
2. Building on funding already distributed in the previous three rounds, the [Round 4 criteria](#) focused on funding that supports the sustainability, capability and capacity of public interest journalism in Aotearoa. Applicants were advised that given the number of roles funded in Round 2 and feedback from industry around shortages in the journalism workforce, Round 4 would prioritise Industry Development and projects that deliver to long term outcomes or support current sector shortfalls and underserved audiences.
3. Given the constrained pūtea, prior allocations and expected demand, media entities were able to make separate applications under each of the three pillars but the total number of proposals per applicant were limited to:
 - 1 Industry Development application
 - 1 Project application
 - Maximum of 2 Roles (across both Targeted and Content Creation role categories)
4. This SIC paper assesses Roles with recommended funding of up to \$1,213,277 from a total ask of \$2,828,966.

6. The two types of journalism roles eligible to apply for in this round are:
 - a. **Content Creation**– A role that produces content within an agreed PIJ reporting subject scope (aligned to the General Guidelines)
 - b. **Targeted**– A Role that either enhances the quality of public interest journalism (e.g., Craft roles such as Editors), enhances the sustainability of public interest journalism (e.g., Audience engagement experts), enhances organisational cultural capability (e.g., Kaupapa Māori Editor).
7. Content Creation roles could apply for up to two years funding and Targeted roles for up to one year only.
8. The assessment panel for Round 4 included:
 - a. [REDACTED]
 - b. [REDACTED]
 - c. [REDACTED]
 - d. **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.
 - e. **Gabriel Thomas**, Journalism Manager, NZ On Air. Former executive producer of *The Nation* and *Firstline*, producer *Newshub Live at 6*.
 - f. **Dr Fairooz Samy**, Journalism Funding Advisor, NZ On Air. Recently graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with a PhD in Media Studies.
9. Due to an increased number of Chinese media applications, [REDACTED] Otago University was commissioned to assess Chinese media applications only. [REDACTED] has a background in Culture and

Communication as well as Media, Film and Television. His assessments were shared with the assessment panel to further inform their decision making.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT & STAFF OPINION

Ara Mai he tete kura

Te Reo o Ngāti Kahungunu Inc

Requested \$417,133

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Synopsis

- This application from Te Reo o Ngāti Kahungunu is for two targeted roles to support its breakfast radio programme; a producer who would increase the number of interviews, and a digital content manager, who would repurpose content for a range of online platforms.

General Assessment

- Te Reo o Ngāti Kahungunu is based in Hastings and broadcasts from Wairoa to Masterton. Its output is bilingual, and it has te reo commitments linked to its Te Māngai Pāho funding. It is the only Māori language radio station in the region. The breakfast programme, which this application is focused on, is bilingual, but also relies on interviews with guests who may only speak English.

- Although these are primarily Targeted roles rather than Content Creation roles, the application does set out clear outputs, including the producer adding 2 x 7' interviews to the breakfast programme every weekday morning, and the digital content creator increasing content on the Whare Kōrero app and other platforms.

- There are wider targets and goals included in the application and linked to the roles, including an increase of 2% in audience and an increase of 2% in online followers. These are part of the wider long-term strategy, and these roles are mentioned as key to the goals being reached.

- Unusually for roles such as these, the application mentions a substantial training element, with the producer and the digital role eventually moving towards teaching other staff and rangatahi how to do the producing and digital jobs.

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED] The finalised budget asks for \$214,245 for two roles over one year, with a platform contribution of \$100,237, all in-kind (32% of the overall budget).

Staff Opinion

18. Assessors were very positive about this application, saying it could contribute substantially to Te Reo o Ngāti Kahungunu’s PIJ output.
19. The training aspect of the proposal was also praised, with assessors noting it would contribute to the sustainability of the station and provide opportunities for young people in the area.
20. The planned content outputs seem realistic, and staff believes it is good to have concrete measures for what are not primarily content creating roles.
21. The strong focus on digital platforms and the holistic approach to training show a strategic approach is being taken and that these roles could make a real difference to a small organisation and its audience.
22. On the budget, while the applicant cut this back, costs for training and travel are still relatively high. However, given the need for these roles to travel throughout the region, and training being a large component of these roles, staff feels, on balance, that these costs are reasonable.
23. These roles should enhance the quality and sustainability of the public interest journalism this organisation provides to an underserved audience. **Funding is recommended for up to \$214,245 for two roles for one year**

Te Reo Kahika

Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto

\$160,000

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Synopsis

24. This application is for two Content Creation roles for one year, for Te Reo Kahika, which is the news service for Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto.

General Assessment

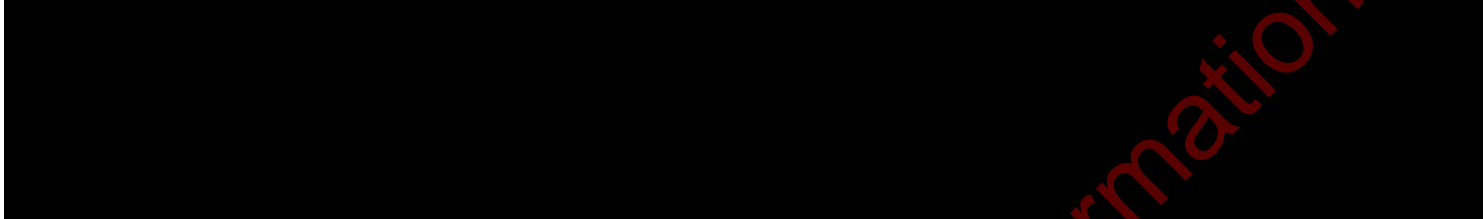
25. Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto has been operating as an iwi radio station for more than 30 years. It aims to deliver content in 75% te reo Māori (with English subtitles online). The application says its latest ratings showed listenership was 235,000.
26. Its dedicated news service, Te Reo Kahika, provides radio news bulletins and current affairs content, but is also strongly focused on online platforms, including the Whare Kōrero app and social media, particularly Facebook.
27. Current output on the Facebook page is at least one story per day, a mix of edited video pieces and radio pieces adapted for online.
28. The two proposed roles would work together to research, script, film and edit 3 x 5-7’ stories per week for online platforms. The stories will be in te reo Māori with English subtitles.

29. [REDACTED]

Staff Opinion

30. Assessors were strongly in favour of supporting iwi radio in general, as it provides unique local news content in te reo Māori and is often underfunded.
31. They were also positive about this application, praising Te Reo Kahika for its strong focus on online platforms, in response to its audience behaviour. This move is seen as a smart way to reach a younger audience. Their Facebook page features lots of posts, good local content, and strong engagement.

- 44. The PIJF is keen to support Asian news media outlets in New Zealand, given how underserved their audiences are by mainstream news media. Assessors felt that Indian Newslink has a strong track record of providing public interest journalism to its community and is a great candidate for such support.
- 45. It is clear Indian Newslink has the story ideas to produce significant additional content if supplied with the extra staffing. One assessor noted, *“It is high time the publication expands its resourcing and introduces more experience to its newsroom. It would be a justifiable and valuable contribution on the part of the Fund to invest in this way.”*
- 46. While staff is keen to fund these roles for two years, assessors felt that the topics proposed may not sustain two reporters for two years, and Indian Newslink should be encouraged to widen the news coverage brief.



- 48. Indian Newslink is a well-established outlet that knows its audience and is making moves to expand it. Assessors believe it is in a good position to do that and to provide public interest journalism to an underserved ethnic community. **Funding is recommended up to \$362,520 for two roles for two years** [redacted]

Exploring issues facing Chinese New Zealanders Chinese Herald Digital Ltd Requested \$355,409

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

Synopsis

- 49. The Chinese Herald is applying for two Content Creation roles for two years, to focus on two topics – Chinese New Zealanders’ mental wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and issues of identity facing Chinese youth in New Zealand.

General Assessment

- 50. The Chinese Herald was founded in 1994. The newspaper is free and has a local readership of around [redacted]. There is an accompanying website, also in Chinese, [redacted]. [redacted] The Chinese Herald has another [redacted] every month on its WeChat channel.
- 51. The organisation has a staff of [redacted] including experienced journalists.
- 52. [redacted]
- 53. This application is for two roles, for reporters covering two related but separate streams of content. The application states outputs of 100 articles and 10 short videos over two years.
- 54. All the content produced will be bilingual, in Chinese and English, to reach the widest possible audience. The application also says it would translate some content into te reo Māori.
- 55. [redacted]

Released under the Official Information Act

Staff Opinion

56. Chinese-Kiwi audiences are underserved by, and underrepresented in, mainstream news and media outlets. Because of this, and other cultural barriers, engagement with mainstream media is generally very low across Chinese-Kiwi communities, who prefer to consume news from Chinese-language sources, many of which originate from Mainland China and do not speak directly to a Chinese-kiwi experience. This claim is also supported by research conducted in NZ On Air's own Asian Media Use in Aotearoa NZ in 2021 Report.
57. The Chinese Herald is a major player in Chinese NZ media and produces a lot of content for a wide audience. Considering the PIJF strives to reach underserved ethnic communities, the assessors felt this outlet would be in a prime position to do that, with a significant reach into the Chinese NZ community.
58. Our Chinese cultural assessor [REDACTED] was supportive of this application, saying that the topics are timely and important to the community, that the Chinese Herald reaches a significant Chinese audience, and that the proposal meets the criteria of the PIJF.
59. Unlike many new applicants to the PIJF, the Chinese Herald has a well-established newsroom set-up, with other journalists well-placed to support new hires.
60. The story ideas covered in the application - about cross-cultural identity, loss of language, bullying, intergenerational conflict, etc - fit well with the definition of public interest journalism. There was however a feeling amongst the assessors that the two broad topics could easily be merged into one stream of content, so could be covered by one reporter.
61. Given that there would only be a finite number of stories within the two topics specified by the applicant, it was felt that the PIJF should fund this role for one year only at this stage. If the role is a success and the number of new stories grows, a further application could be made in the final round of the PIJF. A revised budget and deliverables will be required prior to contracting.
62. The outputs stated in the application are comparatively low and staff will encourage the applicant to increase them so that the reporter creates at least one story per week, plus short videos. Given the amount of content the Chinese Herald currently produces, this seems realistic.
63. [REDACTED]
64. [REDACTED]
65. The Chinese Herald is a well-established player, already reaching a large Chinese audience in NZ. This funding will help it reach more people with stories that fit the brief for public interest journalism. **Funding is recommended for one role for one year, up to \$88,852** [REDACTED]

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Synopsis

66. Crux is applying for two junior/intermediate reporters over two years, to increase its output of public interest journalism in the Southern Lakes and Central Otago districts.

General Assessment

67. The Crux website was launched by Managing Editor, [REDACTED] in 2018, aimed at bringing hyper-local public interest journalism to Central Otago and the Southern Lakes region. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

68. NZ On Air has funded Crux for the mini documentary series *Southern Lens* for two series, and its successor *Deep South*, which is currently in production.

69. In 2021 the PIJF also approved \$151,200 to fund a reporting role for two years. [REDACTED] joined the team in this role and Crux says her additional content has seen their audience size and engagement almost double.

70. This application states Crux intends to employ two journalists permanently, regardless of whether they get ongoing funding after this two-year period.

71. The reporters would produce on average one story per workday day, circa five per week.

72. There is also an emphasis on on-the-job training, with the reporters being mentored by both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Staff Opinion

73. Crux has a strong commitment to local news, and while the PIJF has already increased Crux’s funding, staff believes there is room to increase its funding further, particularly with local elections later this year.

74. The assessors felt clear that the previous PIJF funding was put to good use and has had good PIJ impact, and they are confident that Crux could maximise a further investment from the PIJF.

75. There is a stated commitment to the sustainability of the roles, given that Crux intends to employ them permanently. Crux also gives thought to its sustainability as an organisation, with a diverse funding model planned, which includes advertising, membership and subscriptions, donations, and grants.

76. Assessors appreciated the training element of this application, with two senior journalists available to mentor new staff. One assessor said this proposal is “a great opportunity for young reporters to get their first role with someone with [REDACTED] experience, passion and focus on strong, pugnacious regional journalism.”

77. [REDACTED]

78. The budget and salaries are reasonable in terms of industry standards, with no excessive costs.

79. Assessors were positive about this application, saying Crux has a proven track record of PIJ and clear plans to increase its outputs. **Funding is recommended up to \$139,520 for one role for two years** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Synopsis

80. BayBuzz is applying for funding for two senior part time reporters over one year, to increase its coverage of the environment and agribusiness, healthcare, and local government accountability.

General Assessment

81. BayBuzz has been established in the Hawkes Bay region for 13 years. The bi-monthly is published in hard copy and online. [REDACTED]

82. The magazine has a strong local focus. The latest edition had a cover story on problem gambling and pokies in Hawkes Bay, and features on local businesses and artists. There is a strong theme of environmental stories.

83. BayBuzz proposes hiring two experienced local senior part-time journalists it has already identified. They will focus on the areas of agribusiness, the environment, local government, and healthcare.

84. Each journalist will produce one feature story (2,500 - 3,000 words) and one interview (approximately 1,500 words) for each magazine. In addition, they will produce two stories each per week for the website and will contribute to two video stories each per month and podcasts produced by BayBuzz. All funded content will be available on the website and will be promoted on Facebook.

85. The budget is reasonable as the roles are part time - \$60,000 of the budget covers salaries and additional costs include videographer support for making video stories.

86. The application is supported by a thorough list of local politicians, iwi and business leaders. The application also outlines the relationship BayBuzz has with local iwi, and the importance of engaging with them.

87. [REDACTED]

Staff Opinion

88. The assessors were enthusiastic about BayBuzz, with one saying, "I found Bay Buzz a really impressive publication that takes a considered approach to complex issues facing the region", and another stating, "Given its small size, this magazine is creating impressive public-interest output for its region and clearly has local government support."

89. The fact that BayBuzz has already identified two local and experienced journalists strengthens this application.

90. This proposal is a cost-effective way to bring public interest journalism, focused on local government, to a local audience. The cost is reasonable for the outputs, and the outputs are well defined. There is a lot of content, and it is across a wide range of platforms.

91. The primary platform of the BayBuzz magazine is only available to paying subscribers, so an assurance will be sought that all funded content is made available simultaneously on the free access website, and the application makes it clear the content will also be promoted by including it in the newsletter and on Facebook.

92. This is a proven local outlet with a plan to bring more public interest journalism to its audience across a range of platforms. **Funding is recommended for two part-time roles for one year, up to \$88,800**

Video Content Creator

Newsroom NZ Ltd

\$159,340

Key personnel	Title/s	Relevant Past Work

Synopsis

93. Newsroom is applying for funding for a video content creator for two years, to work alongside existing journalists to visualise public interest stories, bringing them to a wider and more diverse audience.

General Assessment

94. Newsroom is an independent, New Zealand-based news and current affairs site. It has consistently produced high-quality public interest journalism since its launch in 2017.
95. Newsroom has received funding from the PIJF for *The Detail*, a cadet scheme, a Māori editor, a network of South Island reports, *Newsroom Investigates*, and a subeditor.
96. This application is for a video content producer who would create 4-5 videos per week, working alongside reporters to make video versions of their stories. Some would be straight video and some infographics.
97. Newsroom has already identified several candidates for this role and says it is keen to hire outside the ranks of experienced journalists, so as not to add to the pressures being felt in the industry.
98. As the applications states, Newsroom already has a video editor, and journalists who are capable of shooting video. This role would be more specialised towards creating video for social media, based on a desire to reach a younger audience.
99. The application particularly focuses on the ability of this role to highlight public interest journalism already being produced, particularly already funded content, such as that from the Māori issues editor, *Newsroom Investigates*, and *The Detail*.

Staff Opinion

100. Assessors were in full support of this application with one saying, “*Newsroom has been doing some excellent public-interest journalism and a video content creator as described would help gain cut-through with younger audiences.*”
101. Staff notes that Newsroom was one of the providers who gave early feedback about potential talent poaching across the sector with PIJF role-based funding, so it is a strength of this application that they are looking to mitigate this risk by recruiting outside of the immediate sector workforce.
102. Assessors believe Newsroom is a proven producer of PIJ and while it has received a significant amount of PIJF funding to date, this is a cost-effective proposal which could reach a wider audience with quality content.
103. The budget and salary are in line with industry standards, as are the suggested outputs.
104. The PIJF investment in Newsroom to date has seen some excellent public interest journalism produced, and the potential to appeal to a harder-to-reach youth audience with high quality PIJF content warrants further support. **Funding is recommended for one role for two years, up to \$159,340**

ATTACHMENTS

[Annex A: A list of all PIJF Roles applications submitted in this round](#)

Annex A: A list of all PIJF Roles applications submitted in this round

Project Name	Company	\$ Requested	\$ Recomm	Result
Ara Mai he tete kura	Te Reo o Ngati Kahungunu	\$417,133	\$214,245	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Te Reo Kahika	Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto	\$160,000	\$160,000	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Content Producing Roles	Indian Newslink	\$416,400	\$362,520	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Exploring Issues Facing Chinese NZers	Chinese Herald Digital Ltd	\$355,409	\$88,852	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Crux – Junior/Intermediate roles	Peter Newport	\$279,040	\$139,520	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Hawke’s Bay Local Accountability Reporting	BayBuzz Ltd	\$88,800	\$88,800	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Video Content Creator	Newsroom NZ Ltd	\$159,340	\$159,340	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval

