

PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM FUND: ROLES

FUNDING DECISIONS

RECOMMENDATION

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

- \$128,784 to Radio Ngāti Porou Charitable Trust for Nga Kopara – two roles for one year [REDACTED]
- \$207,461 to The National Pacific Radio Trust for News roles – two roles for one year [REDACTED]
- \$186,992 to Indian Newslink for Non-content roles – two roles for one year [REDACTED]
- \$55,854 to Migrant News for Migrant Communities – one role for one year [REDACTED]
- \$388,700 to Hawke’s Bay App for Content Producing Roles – two roles for two years [REDACTED]
- \$101,400 to Inland App Company for Local Democracy Reporter – one role for two years [REDACTED]
- \$20,316 to Metro Media Group Limited for Sub-editor – one part-time role for one year [REDACTED]
- \$85,600 to Consumer NZ Incorporated for Community-based Reporting – one role for one year [REDACTED]

and **declines** funding of:

- [REDACTED]

Eight applications recommended for total funding of up to \$1,175,107

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

4. The fifth 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 \$6,814,069.
5. Building on funding already distributed in the previous four rounds, the [Round 5 criteria](#) focused on funding that supports the sustainability, capability and capacity of public interest journalism in Aotearoa.
6. 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)
7. This SIC paper assesses Roles with recommended funding of up to \$1,175,107 from a total ask of \$3,073,704.
8. The two types of journalism roles eligible for application in this round are:
 - a. **Content Creation**– A role that produces content within an agreed PIJ reporting subject scope (aligned to the General Guidelines) for up to two years.
 - 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), or enhances organisational cultural capability (e.g., Kaupapa Māori Editor). Contracts for up to one year.
9. The assessment panel for Round 5 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 Fairouz Samy, Journalism Funding Advisor, NZ On Air. Recently graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with a PhD in Media Studies.
 - g. Due to an increased number of Chinese media applications, [REDACTED], was commissioned to assess Chinese media applications only. He reported back verbally to staff and his comments were shared with the assessment panel to further inform their decision making.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT & STAFF OPINION

Ngā Kopara

Ngāti Porou Charitable Trust

\$128,724

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

Synopsis

- Radio Ngāti Porou is applying to fund two roles for one year. The roles will make up the "Ngā Kopara" project, which aims to create audio visual online content from Radio Ngāti Porou's daily radio content and share that content on various digital and social platforms.

General Assessment

- Radio Ngāti Porou is based in Ruatoria and broadcasts to an area with a population of almost 44-thousand people, about 20-thousand of whom are Māori.
- The radio station is a mix of music and talk, focused on local issues. Radio Ngāti Porou describes itself as a key source, and sometimes the only source, of local information for its iwi community, and sees this information as important public interest journalism for the niche audience. The organisation also appears to be involved in many local projects like encouraging te reo classes and it is currently running a series of 'meet the candidate hui' ahead of the local elections.
- Ngāti Porou Charitable Trust has been broadcasting since 1987 and now also has a website and social media channels. The radio service receives government funding, but these digital-focused roles would be incremental. The digital side of the operation does not receive funding and the applicant says the sustainability of providing a digital service has been difficult because of this.
- The Digital Content Designer and Digital Producer would be focused on improving online content, as the organisation increases its focus on digital platforms where it believes it can reach a wider audience.
- Between them, the two roles will produce at least three posts a day based on existing radio content, one including video from the studio, one bilingual and one in te reo. They will also create at least two posts per week - one video and one audio - focused on encouraging listeners to use te reo, and one post per week profiling a local business, kaupapa or person.
- [REDACTED]

Staff Opinion

- The assessors described Radio Ngāti Porou as a "highly credible and trusted community media outlet, committed to the revitalisation of te reo Māori and the development of their community".
- Staff sees repurposing iwi radio content and repacking it to create enhanced and incremental content outputs both broadens its audience reach and is a good way to enhance current TMP funded content. The proposed roles would improve Radio Ngāti Porou's sustainability, by reaching a wider audience with more content, and thus contribute to the Māori media journalism sector in general.
- [REDACTED]
- These roles will help Radio Ngāti Porou bring its content to a wider audience, a positive for the community and for Māori media. **Funding is recommended for up to \$128,724 for two roles for one year,** [REDACTED]

News Roles

The National Pacific Radio Trust

Requested [REDACTED]

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

Synopsis

22. The National Pacific Radio Trust (Pacific Media Network) is applying for two targeted roles for one year – a Chief of Staff and a newsreader.

General Assessment

23. The initial application from Pacific Media Network (PMN) for this round was for a newsreader and three cadets, enlisted from the Te Rito cohort. However, due to timeframes and fairness, we are expecting the Te Rito media partners to apply for funding to further employ these cadets in the next round. [REDACTED]
24. The proposal described the PMN newsroom [REDACTED], and says reporters are too busy to do all the stories they would like to do. They produce stories for bulletins from 6am to 6pm and don't have a dedicated COS or sub-editor. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] The COS role would coordinate the team and sub-edit stories, as well as provide critical leadership and advice.
25. The need for a dedicated newsreader appears to be because that role is currently being filled by people who have other jobs to focus on – programme hosts and a senior journalist. The aim is to have a newsreader focus solely on newsreading, to free others up for their own primary work. There is also a desire to have a journalist reading the news, as opposed to a presenter. They have approached [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to discuss this job, but don't have anyone committed to the role.
26. In discussions with staff, PMN has expressed the importance of having credible, specialist newsreaders to ensure it can build a trusted brand with audiences. They commented that the best stories in the world will be less credible with audiences, if they are read by inexperienced or unskilled newsreaders.
27. The PMN proposal speaks about an organisation in a phase of growth and change, expanding to focus more on digital channels and attempting to reach a younger audience. [REDACTED]
28. The revised budget for the two roles requests \$207,461. This includes salaries for one year, overheads and some travel and training costs.
29. PMN received PIJF funding in 2022 for three other roles – a Wellington/political reporter, a current affairs producer, and a digital video editor and these are ongoing.

Staff Opinion

31. Staff believes that PMN is providing a trusted and valuable news service to a Pasifika audience. One assessor noted, "*Pasifika voices and perspectives are rare in the overall media sector of Aotearoa. The platforms are proven, and the voices are trusted.*"
32. The benefits of a dedicated COS role seem very clear [REDACTED]
- Having someone with the time and journalistic experience to run the newsroom will no doubt increase the quality of the output. It is also a great benefit to this application that they have already identified someone for the role, given the difficulties some organisations have had hiring in recent times.
33. While a newsreading position could be argued to be a less vital public interest journalism role than others funded under the PIJF, assessors felt PMN provided a strong rationale and staff saw the addition of a dedicated newsreader as important for the maturity and credibility of PMN as a news platform. It would also free other staff up to focus on their own news roles thereby enhancing the overall quality of PIJ being delivered by PMN.

34. Staff believes these two roles can make a big difference to an organisation that is striving to increase the quality and reach of a valued news product to a target NZ On Air audience. **Funding is recommended for up to \$207,461 for two roles for one year** [REDACTED]

Non-Content Roles

Indian Newslink

Requested [REDACTED]

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

Synopsis

35. Indian Newslink is applying for two targeted roles – a Digital Graphic Designer and an Audience Engagement Expert, for one year – to build on the content created by its previously PIJF funded content roles.

General Assessment

36. Indian Newslink was established in 1999. It publishes a newspaper and has a website that includes an e-version of the newspaper, and additional stories. The content includes stories from its own newsroom, plus RNZ content, as part of a content sharing agreement. [REDACTED]

37. Indian Newslink was approved funding in the last round for two content roles – a reporter in Hamilton and a reporter in Wellington to increase their coverage in the regions. They have recruited these roles and are in the process of contracting. The newsroom currently produces an average of six stories a day, which is expected to rise to 10 stories a day with the two new reporters.

38. The proposed Graphic Designer role aims to improve the design and layout of the website and add graphic elements to online and in print stories.

39. The Audience Engagement role would work through social media channels to connect with a wider audience within Indian Newslink communities, in particular a younger audience. Indian Newslink currently has a Facebook page which is updated regularly, but no other social media channels.

Staff Opinion

40. The Asian community is underserved by news media in New Zealand, and this is an established and well-respected provider. It has a demonstrated commitment to public interest journalism, and this is reflected in the newspaper and website content.

41. There is hope that these roles – particularly the Audience Engagement one – will grow audience acquisition and support the sustainability of Indian Newslink by boosting its visibility and discoverability.

42. There was some concern that the organisation doesn't appear to have a wider digital strategy to place these roles within, but it may be that without having the right staff in place previously, it didn't have the expertise to create this. The creation of such a strategy should be a required outcome within the drawdown schedule of the contract.

43. [REDACTED] These roles would be a useful addition to a newsroom that's producing good public interest journalism for an underserved audience. **Funding is recommended for up to \$186,992 for two roles for one year** [REDACTED]

Migrant Communities

Migrant News

Requested [REDACTED]

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

Synopsis

44. [REDACTED]

General Assessment

45. Migrant News is applying on behalf of four titles who commonly share content and cover intersecting audiences – Migrant News, Filipino News, Pinoy NZ Life, and Asian News. All are online news sites, plus Migrant News and Filipino News have print versions and Facebook pages.

46. [REDACTED]

47. Each role is expected to produce one news item per week, which would run across the four outlets.

48. The budget is reasonable, with low overheads and travel costs included.

Staff Opinion

49. Supporting the ethnic news sector is an important focus for the PIJF, and this group of titles reaches an important and underserved niche audience within that sector.

50. The topics already covered – which focus on the experiences of migrants coming to New Zealand, information new migrants need, and the stories of migrants living here – were seen by the assessors as essential stories for audiences. One assessor noted, *“I see this as a valuable contribution to social cohesion at a time when it’s really needed.”*

51. [REDACTED]

52. The case for a reporter was clear however, with a small staff trying to produce more original content than it has been able to do in the past.

53. The stated outputs for the reporter of one story per week are lower than we would expect for mainstream media outlets. But given the small scale of this operation, the fact that the content will be purely original and therefore take more work, and that the reporter will be junior, staff believes it is acceptable. Staff will point out to the applicant that the target is a minimum and going over and above it would be encouraged.

54. This role will provide increased targeted content to an underrepresented audience who are not being well served by mainstream media. The outlet has the links to that audience and knows its content needs. **Funding is recommended for up to \$55,854 for one role for one year** [REDACTED]

Content Producing Roles **Hawkes Bay App** **\$388,700**

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

Synopsis

55. Hawke’s Bay App is applying for two content producing roles for two years – a Contributing Editor/Presenter and a Video Journalist.

General Assessment

56. Hawke's Bay App is a local-focused news outlet. It launched in 2018 and has so far had more than 30,000 downloads and produced thousands of articles. It also posts on its website and social media channels.
57. [REDACTED]
58. The proposal highlights the problem of not enough local news being produced for what is a significant regional population. The PIJF has funded several roles in Hawke's Bay – a Local Focus reporter and an Open Justice reporter, as well as roles at Bay Buzz and Te Reo o Ngāti Kahungunu – but sees there is still room for more local reporting.
59. The Hawke's Bay App currently has one full time and two part time staff. The proposal says it has increased the number of PIJ stories it is producing, and it is keen to do more original journalism. To that end it is proposing two new content roles.
60. The contributing editor/presenter will set up and conduct interviews, and write stories, but they will also offer editorial oversight for the team. The applicant has already identified someone for this role - [REDACTED] who is a very experienced local journalist, with significant contacts in the region.
61. Hawke's Bay App has considerable contacts with video companies and expertise, and it plans to increase its original video news content. The Video Journalist would film and edit, with an aim of increasing video engagement rates across the app, website, and social media channels.
62. The two roles between them would produce two video interviews, three written stories and five video stories every week.
63. The budget includes significant platform contribution, comprising video equipment and studio space. [REDACTED]
64. The application included a large number of letters of support, including one from the Napier Mayor, who says Hawke's Bay App plays a vital role in the community.

Staff Opinion

65. There was unanimous support for this application from assessors, who thought it was a strong proposition from an enthusiastic and viable local media platform with the ability to deliver quality PIJ to its community.
66. The letters of support show how well-respected this team already is, and that there is a need in the community for more of their coverage.
- [REDACTED]

68. Overall, this is seen as a platform that has a strong audience and a commitment to PIJ and needs these journalists to take the content to the next level. **Funding is recommended for up to \$388,700 for two roles for two years** [REDACTED]

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

Synopsis

69. The Central App is applying to continue its reporting role funded in Round 2 of the PIJF, with increased hours, for two years.

General Assessment

70. Central App is a local news outlet focused on Central Otago, with output on a phone app, website, and social media channels. They have had more than 42,000 downloads and the app is opened an average 39,000 times per week by 12,000 unique users.

71. Central App was approved funding for a reporter to focus on local government reporting, for one year, in 2021. That contract ends in October 2022.

72. Central App says the funded role has been very successful and it is keen to continue for another two years. The applicant would also like to extend the number of hours per week from 10 to 15, to increase outputs. The reporter would produce at least four stories per week.

73. The proposal says having this funded role has allowed Central App to establish a media presence at local government and community board meetings which would otherwise have not been covered by any media. But it says with only 10 funded hours per week, it has had to mainly focus on the Central Otago District Council, at the expense of other smaller meetings. Clear increased outcomes are provided in the proposal.



75. The proposal highlights the impact of the role with a changed relationship with local government. There is now an expectation of media coverage, and local politicians now communicate better with the media, leading to more transparency for local readers.

76. [REDACTED] its current budget is used to cover community interest stories as opposed to local democracy ones, but it remains committed to providing both.

77. The daily rate in the budget remains the same as last year, and all overhead costs are included, making it very reasonable for the outputs.

Staff Opinion

78. Assessors described this as an example of PIJF funding being used well to produce results for local and isolated communities.

79. It was noted that this funded role has contributed to the app's downloads increasing, and the local council becoming more engaged with local journalism.

80. The stories currently being provided by the reporter were praised for being fair and not politically biased, and the panel is very happy to support hyper-local news.

81. This role is seen as a success by the applicant and staff, and assessors were happy to see it continued. **Funding is recommended for up to \$101,400 for one part-time role for two years,** [REDACTED]

Released under the Official Information Act

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

Synopsis

82. Metro magazine is applying for incremental hours for its existing sub-editor to work for 60 hours per quarterly issue, for one year.

General Assessment

83. Metro is a current affairs magazine focused on Auckland. It has been published since 1981, and after closing temporarily because of the effects of COVID-19 and the shutdowns, it has resumed publishing under new ownership. It is now a quarterly magazine, and there is increased focus on the website and social media channels.

84. Metro has a small team of three full-time staff [REDACTED] and one part-time te ao Māori editor (funded by the PIJF).

85. [REDACTED]

86. Metro says being able to significantly increase sub-editing hours will increase the team's overall capacity to produce quality journalism and improve the sustainability of the outlet. It will also help Metro maintain trust with the audience, furthering the reach and impact of its public interest journalism. The proposal points out that a long-lead print magazine has the most need for a sub-editor, as any mistakes can't be corrected in the way they can online.

87. As well as proof reading copy for the magazine and digital channels, the sub-editor would fact-check work and do additional research where necessary.

88. The Public Interest Journalism Fund has previously funded sub-editors for Newsroom, The Spinoff and 95bFM.

Staff Opinion

89. All assessors were immediately supportive of this application, citing a relatively small budget request for a role that is critical for magazine/print journalism.

90. One assessor noted the existing sub-editor who would be retained for these extra hours is experienced and respected.

91. Metro has shown itself to be innovative and creative and is worth supporting as long as it can show reasonable results.

92. Because the hours are low, the overheads are comparatively high, but the overall budget is very reasonable for the outcomes.

93. This is a cost-effective way to improve the quality of public interest journalism content already being produced, with a talented practitioner supporting a proven team. **Funding is recommended for up to \$20,316 for one role for one year Me.**

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

Synopsis

[REDACTED]

General Assessment

95. Consumer NZ is a non-profit organisation which produces Consumer magazine and features content on its website. Consumer has been known particularly for its product reviews but is branching out and now carries a lot more investigative content, both in the magazine and on its digital channels.

96. Consumer received funding until 1986 from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. In 1989 it became an incorporated society and since then it has predominantly been funded by magazine subscriptions. [REDACTED]

97. The cost of living has become a key issue for all news media in New Zealand and Consumer sees itself as well placed to produce stories that help readers to cope with financial difficulties. The applicant describes itself as “an advocacy group with a media arm rather than a news media company”. While this could put Consumer and its content outside of what some would consider public interest journalism, it has a clear intention to provide content that does meet the PIJF’s definition, by explaining complex institutions or issues.

98. The proposed Community-based reporter would cover consumer issues with a focus on non-Pākehā and lower socio-economic groups. They would work with other advocacy groups to look into consumption habits of those groups in particular. Story examples given in the proposal include [REDACTED] The applicant already has someone identified for this role, a Māori journalist who is currently on a contract doing research work for Consumer and has an interest in the issues.

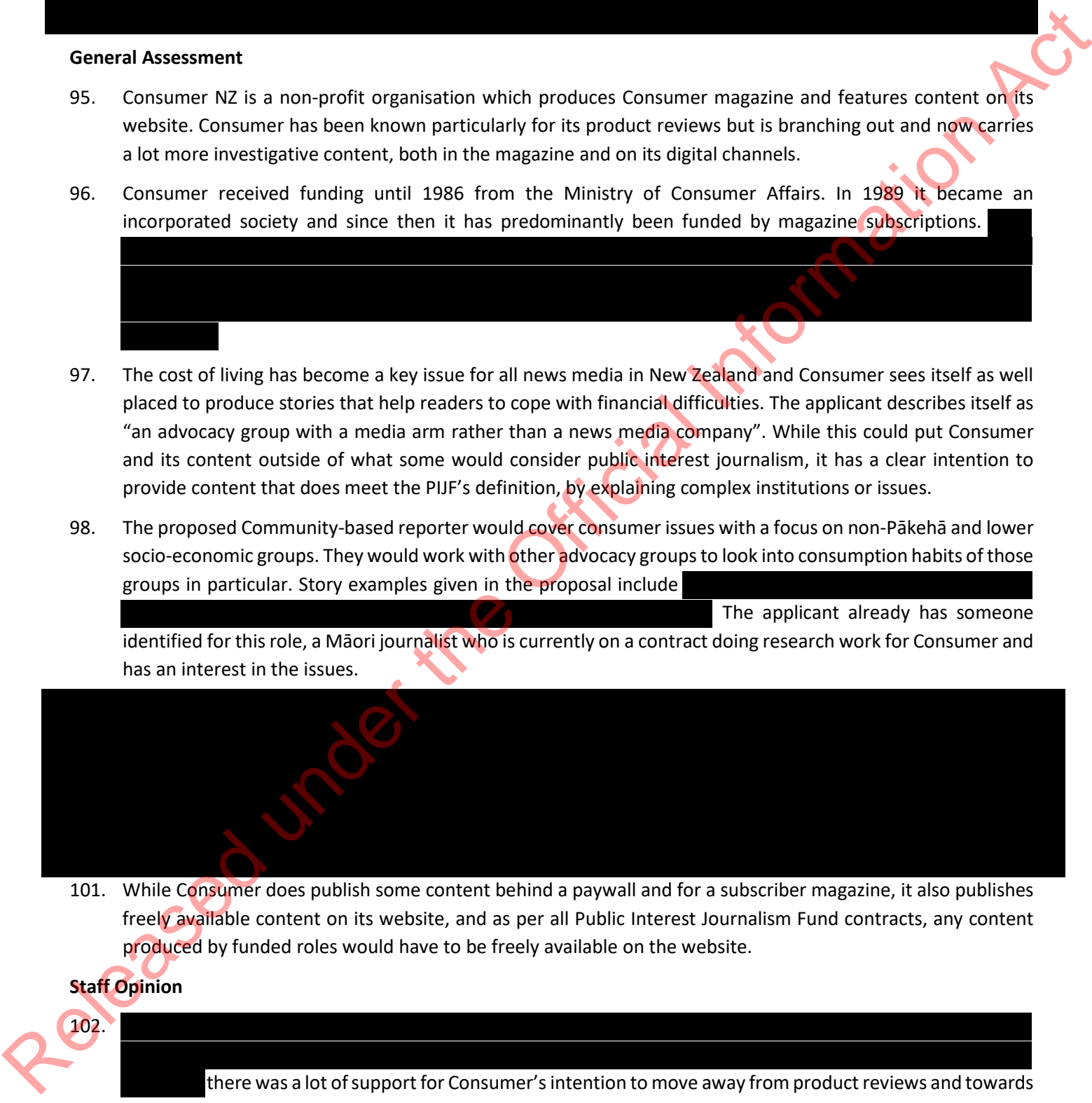
[REDACTED]

101. While Consumer does publish some content behind a paywall and for a subscriber magazine, it also publishes freely available content on its website, and as per all Public Interest Journalism Fund contracts, any content produced by funded roles would have to be freely available on the website.

Staff Opinion

102. [REDACTED] there was a lot of support for Consumer’s intention to move away from product reviews and towards more public interest journalism content, in particular with the community-based reporter role.

103. Assessors felt this role could connect with s36(c) audiences, and that it would broaden the voices within Consumer’s content. The story ideas provided were praised by the panel and the fact that Consumer already has someone identified for this role is a plus.



104. There was still some concern about how Consumer will reconcile this new direction with its subscription model, the fact its readership is generally affluent, and how discoverable the funded content will be on a website that has traditionally been paywalled. But staff is satisfied that Consumer is also aware of these issues and will work to mitigate them.

106. This is a well-respected organisation looking to take a more public interest journalism approach with a specific role that could have a great impact. **Funding is recommended for up to \$85,600 for the Community-based reporter role for one year**

ANNEX A: PIJF APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED THIS ROUND

Project Name	Company	\$ Requested	\$ Recomm	Result
Nga Kopara	Radio Ngāti Porou Charitable Trust	128,784	128,784	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
News roles	The National Pacific Radio Trust	323,354	207,461	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Non-content roles	Indian Newslink	194,192	186,992	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Migrant Communities	Migrant News	190,424	55,854	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Content Producing Roles	Hawke’s Bay App	388,700	388,700	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Local Democracy Reporter	Inland App Company	101,400	101,400	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Sub-editor	Metro Media Group Limited	20,316	20,316	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval
Community-based reporting	Consumer NZ Incorporated	178,128	85,600	Approved – Panel recommends funding approval