

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission

NGĀ ĀHUATANGA O TE TIRITI

SMALL-MEDIUM ORGANISATION WINNER



THE STORY

Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu. With feathers, the bird will fly.

In recent decades the increasing presence of Māori in the film industry has been evident and undeniable. With this new interest came the call from Māori for the industry to ensure their cultural integrity would be nurtured, maintained and protected.

It was a call Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission heeded, leading to the development of its Te Rautaki Māori Strategy released in 2018 and designed to champion Māori film and filmmakers, in partnership with the Māori screen industry.

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission is an Autonomous Crown Entity operating under the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978. It supports a diverse range of New Zealand and international screen stories from development to distribution.

Te Rautaki Māori strategy has specific objectives around representation of Māori filmmakers and films, developing protocols around engagement with Māori creatives, increasing connection with

the Māori film industry and building cultural awareness and capability at the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC), says Tayla Hancock, Senior Advisor, Policy and Performance.

In traditional cloak weaving, the first woven line of a garment is known as ‘te aho tapu’. It’s this line that sets the rest of the pattern.

In its development of Te Rautaki, Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga made sure its first line was tika (straight) and pono (true), engaging kanohi ki te kanohi with Māori stakeholders including Ngā Aho Whakaari Māori in Film and television, The Stream Box Collective and Māoriland.

“The strategy was directly informed by our filmmaking tupuna and rangatira whose footprints and wisdom provided the legacy kōrero for us and the screen industry to follow. These were people like Ramai Hayward, Barry Barclay, Don Selwyn and Merata Mita,” states Chief Advisor Māori Te O Kahurangi Waaka, Manukura.

During this process, feedback also highlighted that the strategy has made a difference to Māori filmmakers with better access to Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga and funding. Māori stakeholders also noted an increase in use of te reo Māori within the organisation.

Following the launch of the Te Rautaki, a Pouwhakahaere was appointed, joining the Senior Leadership Team with equivalent decision-making powers. The appointment has provided the organisation with te reo expertise, help with recruitment, and in-house support for Māori staff. According to stakeholders, it is a role that ‘has mana and credibility.’

Te Rautaki Māori Strategy is now part of the overarching organisational strategy to 2028.

The many and varied initiatives implemented under Te Rautaki have provided the ‘manu’ with many feathers, including the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative to increase the number of films in te reo and partnering with Matewa Media to reversion several Disney classics in te reo.

Many more feathers also adorn the cloak started by the Commission in those early hui with Māori stakeholders. Launched in 2021 the Commission’s Māori Language Plan is an example. He Taonga te reo Māori supports the ongoing revitalisation of Māori language as an enduring taonga of Aotearoa.

Te O Kahurangi says Te Rautaki Māori has influenced all aspects of the organisation, decision-making, operational models and approaches.

“It is not just a document, it is about bringing the aspirations and understanding to how we work as an organisation.”

THE CHALLENGE

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission wanted to increase its connection with the Māori film industry, build internal cultural awareness and increase Māori representation within its own workforce.

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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Appointment of a Pouwhakahaere as part of the Senior Leadership Team
- Karakia and waiata resources available for staff
- Formal te reo Māori classes available for staff during work hours delivered by external providers
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi training for staff
- Promoting authentic representation of Māori characters, stories, places, history and culture in NZFC funded films
- Introducing specific funding initiatives for Māori films and filmmakers
- Working in partnership with other Māori film groups and stakeholders
- Te Rautaki part of overarching organisational strategy 2024-2028.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Growing level of confidence and use of te reo by staff, improved pronunciation of kupu Māori, use of karakia and waiata
- Around 70% of staff have completed te reo courses
- Percentage of Māori staff at NZFC has increased from 6% to 22%.
- The Tautoko Tāngata Māori Talent Development fund has supported 63 organisations and practitioners
- Twenty Māori or Pasifika filmmaking teams or companies have been supported through He Ara Development Fund
- The percentage of feature film projects receiving funding with at least two Māori key creatives has increased from 20% in 2018 to 25% in 2023
- The number of films in te reo Māori receiving NZFC development and/or production funding has increased from three in 2018 to 10 in 2023
- Te Rautaki talent development initiatives have supported 16 Māori practitioners in 2023 (against a target of five)



KEY LEARNING

Engaging kanohi ki te kanohi with Māori stakeholders and harnessing their wisdom is essential when developing a strategy to engage Māori in your sector and protect and nurture their cultural taonga.