Te Māngai Pāho

Request For Proposals
19 October 2026

2026/27 Waiata Tuarea

Mon 19 Oct 2026	RFP Published, Round Opens
Thu 29 Oct 2026, 11:00am	Info Session
Fri 13 Nov 2026, 5:00pm	Deadline
Fri 11 Dec 2026	Decisions Notified

Queries:
content@tmp.govt.nz

Hei Whakataki

Introduction

Context

Te Māngai Pāho is a contributor to the outcomes of the Maihi Karauna, the Crown's strategy for **Māori language revitalisation**. This includes ensuring New Zealanders value te reo Māori as an essential part of their national identity.

The Crown's strategy for Māori language revitalisation has three audacious goals for 2040:

- **Goal 1: more than** 85% of New Zealanders will value te reo Māori as a key part of national identity;
- **Goal 2: more than** 1,000,000 New Zealanders will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori;
- **Goal 3: more than** 150,000 Māori aged 15 and over will use te reo Māori as much as English by 2040.

Normalisation plays a part in language revitalisation strategies worldwide, and media is one of the strongest tools at its disposal because it shapes what people see, hear, and expect.

Investment

Te Māngai Pāho investment decisions consider three connected focus areas: Te Reo Māori, Content and Audiences. Our approach is grounded in the belief that te reo Māori is a living taonga, to be used confidently, creatively and meaningfully. It is not only something to be protected, but to be actively embraced and normalised across the media landscape. Underpinning this are our Investment Goals, which are **Authentic**, **Discoverable**, and **Impactful**. These goals contribute to how we deliver outcomes for te reo Māori and Māori media.

Insights

NZ On Air's *Where Are The Māori Audiences 2026* research shows that streaming music is a well-established part of Māori audiences' media habits. It sits behind television (linear and on-demand), but ahead of radio and gaming. Māori audiences stream music for about 71 minutes a day, primarily on Spotify and YouTube Music. These platforms enable waiata to be discovered, replayed, shared and woven into everyday life.
Investing in high-quality music production responds directly to this audience behaviour while building a sustained, discoverable supply of contemporary te reo Māori content.

Indication

As an indication of the genre of music we have funded previously, and are likely to consider in future (though not exclusively), 95% of music content funded over the past 18 months has fallen within the following genres:

- Electro, dance;
- R&B, urban;
- Pop;
- Reggae and roots;
- Kapa haka and iwi waiata.

Te Pūtake

Purpose

Through this RFP process, Te Māngai Pāho aims to identify reo Māori content projects that are aligned to our Investment Goals - **Authentic**, **Discoverable**, and **Impactful**. We also require assurances that the project is ready for production and that the applicant can deliver what is proposed.

The **Waiata Tuarea** funding round supports the creation of high-quality waiata reo Māori recording projects for diverse audience interests. Eligible projects include EPs, albums and other multi-song projects containing at least four waiata. The funded songs will help build a sustained pipeline of waiata reo Māori for digital music platforms and radio airplay, contributing to the normalisation and wellbeing of te reo Māori.

Te Māngai Pāho expects to allocate up to $300,000 (plus GST) but reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to distribute a higher or lesser amount in this funding round. Projects may apply for up to $75,000 (plus GST if applicable).

Priority is given to content for **fluent audiences**, with 70–100% reo Māori across the project, that also identifies a clear **target audience** demographic. Each waiata must still meet the minimum requirement of 50% te reo Māori.

The following applicant and project eligibility requirements apply to this funding round.
Eligible applicants are companies, trusts, organisations and individuals (sole traders) who are GST registered.
Individuals and sole traders who are not GST registered are not eligible to receive funding. In addition, the following types of content and projects are ineligible:

- Music without reo eg. film scores, orchestral pieces
- Spoken word
- Projects already supported by other New Zealand funding agencies such as NZ On Air and Creative NZ

Ineligible always:

- Gaming content
- Educational content, lessons and resources
- Advertising content
- Content for non-media websites and apps

Ngā Kawatau

Expectations

1. Te Māngai Pāho expects to receive access to relevant data, analytics and insights Spotify and YouTube Music to enable effective evaluation of the investment and its impact on te reo Māori.
2. Projects must consist of at least four waiata.

3. Each waiata in the project must contain a minimum 50% te reo Māori.
4. At least two waiata reo Māori in the project must be designated as feature songs. Each feature song must be supported by music video assets and promotional activity.
5. Waiata must be released via Spotify and YouTube Music as a minimum, with lyrics.
6. Applicants must deliver final lyric sheets to Te Māngai Pāho.
7. Applicants must complete contract milestones within 12 months of contracting.
8. Applicants must also deliver publicity assets and release materials to support promotion of the project.

Expectations of Artists

1. Artists must already have a distributor who can release the project on digital music platforms. (e.g., Spotify, YouTube Music)
2. Artists must have a social media profile, or clear publicity or marketing opportunities, to leverage for promotion to audience.

Wātaka

Dates and Deadlines

Mon 19 Oct 2026	RFP Published, Round Opens
Thu 29 Oct 2026, 11:00am	Info Session
Fri 13 Nov 2026, 5:00pm	Deadline
Fri 11 Dec 2026	Decisions Notified

Te Māngai Pāho reserves the right to vary any of the above dates as it deems necessary. Late submissions will only be accepted at the discretion of the Kaihautū.

He Hui Whakamārama

Information Session

Our Kaihāpai (advisors) will be available to provide clarity on priorities, processes and criteria; and to answer questions at an online session at 11:00am on Thursday 29 October 2026. The link to join the session is here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82174470834

Te Tono

Proposal

Applicants may submit a **maximum of two proposals**, provided each proposal is for a different artist. For each project, applicants must complete a separate application form, attach a proposal document and at least four demo recordings of waiata that will appear on the project.

Each proposal must use the following sections so that assessors can locate information easily and evaluate it consistently against the assessment criteria.

- Creative Concept
- Te Reo Māori
- Audience Strategy
- Schedule and Budget
- Applicant and Key Personnel

While there is no limit on the number of pages you may submit, for the benefit of clarity and assessment, we expect applicants to be discerning with the volume of their proposals.

The proposal should demonstrate that the project can be delivered to the stated scope, quality, schedule and budget. Te Māngai Pāho may seek clarification, but applicants should not rely on being able to add substantial information or materially change the project after the deadline. If funding is offered, any significant change to the approved scope, personnel, schedule, budget, platform or intended outcomes will require prior written approval from Te Māngai Pāho.

Aromatawai

Proposal Assessment

Applications and proposals will be considered by a panel of assessors including Te Māngai Pāho staff and external professionals. Following individual assessments, the panel will convene to discuss the scoring of proposals, agree on whether any scores require moderation, and confirm which proposals should be recommended to receive offers of funding (including whether any proposals should be recommended subject to conditions).

When considering which proposals to recommend for offers of funding, the assessment panel will be guided by the ranking of proposals but may depart from this for any reason, including but not limited to; addressing priorities; urgency; available funding; and duplication of content.

The assessment panel's recommendations will be provided to the Board of Te Māngai Pāho, which will decide which proposals are to receive an offer of funding and whether or not any should be made subject to conditions. The Board is the decision maker, and its decisions may differ from the assessment panel's recommendations.

Assessment Criteria Weighting

Te Auahatanga | Creative (25%)

- Originality
- Musical appeal
- Lyrics and vocals are of high quality
- Waiata have potential to right-shift audiences
- Content feels relatable or reflective of Māori music interests.

Te Reo Māori | Māori Language (25%)

- Rautaki Reo demonstrates a clear approach to delivering te reo Māori in waiata
- Te reo Māori is genuine, natural, acceptable use of the language

- Te whakatakoto provides good demonstration of the language
- Te whakahua – sounds natural, in line with community expectation

Te Rautaki Pāho | Audience Strategy (20%)

- Evidence of a digital distributor
- Evidence that the artist has an engaged audience on a relevant digital service platform
- Demonstrates a realistic and relevant marketing and promotion strategy to engage with the target audience

Te Wātaka me Te Tahua | Schedule and Budget (15%)

- Clear correlation between budget and proposal and is within industry standards
- The budget and production schedule are realistic for the proposal
- The budget and proposed language outcomes represent good value

Te Kaitono | Applicant (15%)

- Evidence of artist's public profile and audience
- Applicant demonstrates experience, skill, success and capacity to deliver
- An appropriately skilled mātanga reo or pou tiaki reo is involved
- Key creatives and talent are confirmed and aligned to deliver the proposed reo, themes and content
- Evidence of health and safety considerations

Te Tono ā-Ipurangi

Applying Online

To apply, you must first register with Te Pūahatanga, the online application system operated by Te Māngai Pāho. Registrations can take up to three days to process so we encourage producers to register well in advance of the funding deadline. Applicants will not be able to submit applications until all required fields are completed. You can save your application at any time throughout the process and come back to edit right up to the deadline. Only applications submitted in Te Pūahatanga will be assessed.

Ngā Tikanga me ngā Herenga

Rights, Terms and Conditions

- You must bear all your own costs in preparing and submitting your proposal.
- You represent and warrant that all information provided to us is complete and accurate.
- We may rely upon all statements made in your proposal.
- We may amend, suspend, cancel and/or re-issue the RFP at any time.
- We may change the RFP (including dates) but will give all submitters a reasonable time to respond to any change.
- We may accept late proposals and may waive any irregularities or informalities in the RFP process.
- We may seek clarification of any proposal and meet with any submitter(s).
- We are not bound to accept the lowest priced conforming proposal(s), or any proposal.

He Kupu Āwhina

Advice to Applicants

Advice provided in this section is current at the date of publication. Applicants are not limited to this advice and may seek additional advice from a Kaihāpai (advisor). Te Māngai Pāho reserves the right to update this advice.

Content for General Audiences

1. Proposals should demonstrate that content is suitable for general consumption regardless of age, background, or familiarity with the topic.

2. Content, however, should be pitched toward a specific segment of the general audience of Aotearoa for engagement and reo Māori impact.

Considerations for Rangatahi Audiences

1. Applicants and producers are reminded to keep the safety and wellbeing of rangatahi at the forefront of their mind – the talent in the production as well as the audience. Consider them in your production health and safety plan, and when selecting an appropriate platform for the content.

2. Any applicant who proposes to host the proposed content on social media channels (including YouTube) must be able to demonstrate that, in addition to other platform obligations, they can operate those platforms safely and responsibly for young audiences.

Standards

1. All proposed content must comply with the Broadcasting Act 1989, in particular, the programme standards specified in section 4(1) of the Broadcasting Act 1989 and all other television standards, codes of practice, rules, statutes, and regulations applicable to the broadcast of the Programme and to the Platform, including but not limited to:
    (i) Films, Videos and Publications Classification Act 1993
    (ii) YouTube Community Guidelines

Creative

1. Proposals must contain a clear creative description of the content. Consider genre, themes, tone.

2. Demo recordings should be as well-produced as possible to give assessors the best insight into your creativity and capability.

3. Lyrics are an important part of your application. Provide the reo Māori and English interpretations together to demonstrate capability in lyric writing and te reo Māori.

Te Reo Māori

1. All proposals require a project-specific rautaki reo that clearly articulates how the project will have impact for te reo Māori and how it will be seen, heard and delivered within content.

2. It should also outline the alignment and responsibilities of the Poutiaki Reo and other reo personnel, and what processes will be followed to ensure quality assurance.

3. Include an explainer about how your project will contribute to the Te Māngai Pāho goals of right-shifting the population along the KoPA continuum. This includes how your content might contribute to the status, normalisation and acquisition of te reo Māori by your audience.

Audience Strategy

1. Proposals must contain a clear audience strategy for the content.

2. The strategy should demonstrate an understanding of the target audience, how that audience will be reached, and how the proposed activity is expected to create impact for te reo Māori.

3. Evidence of a distributor agreement, or a support letter from them, will provide assurances of access to release on Spotify and other major streaming platforms.

4. Further, provide details of your marketing, promotional, and/or publicity strategy that will enhance discoverability and bring attention and audience to the content.

Schedule

1. Proposals must contain a clear production schedule.

2. The schedule must show total weeks of production and include milestone dates for the production and funding contract.

3. Detail when certain phases of the production will occur and include relevant dates to the project such as (but not exclusively) writing sessions, studio bookings, asset delivery to distributor and release dates.

4. Ensure there is time allowed for reo quality assurance checks and improvements.

Budget

1. Proposals must contain a clear and detailed budget.

2. Budgets should align with production schedules and demonstrate appropriate resourcing to deliver the proposed creative.

3. Budgets should reflect real costs only.

4. For transparency, each cost line must be presented in clear unit amounts.

5. Provide a narrative to explain the rates, costs and especially any notably high costs.

Applicant and Key Personnel

1. Proposals must contain a clear applicant and key personnel section.

2. Provide a business profile and bios for key personnel to validate relevant experience and ability to deliver the proposed project.

3. Provide evidence of talent's suitability and commitment to the project.

4. Include a health and safety plan relevant to the production.

5. Companies, trust and organisations are eligible to apply.

6. Individuals (sole traders) who are GST registered are eligible to apply.

7. Individuals (sole traders) who are not GST registered are ineligible to receive funding in this round.

8. The legal entity that submits the application must be the same legal entity that enters into the funding agreement with Te Māngai Pāho if funding is approved.

Production Readiness

1. Production readiness is demonstrated throughout the proposal and is an outcome of assessment.