



NZ ON AIR DOCUMENTARY FUNDING POLICY

DISCUSSION PAPER

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Summary

NZ On Air regularly reviews funding and operations so that we remain responsive to change and open to new ways of serving audiences. This review assesses our funding strategies for television documentary and factual programming.

As a broadcast funding agency we invest around \$16 million each year into a broad range of documentary and factual programming aimed at both mainstream and special interest television audiences. This funding will not increase significantly for some time, given the current economic climate.

The big issues around broadcast and documentary/factual production have changed little over the years even though the environment for their screening has. In part this is why documentary was designated a statutory priority for NZ On Air in the Broadcasting Act 1989.

There have always been competing tensions at play for this important genre which include:

- Prime time scheduling requirements significantly shape the type and style of funded documentary (fast, colourful storytelling that grabs and holds a sizeable audience in a fiercely competitive environment)
- Some stories benefit from being more told in a more thoughtful, discursive or analytical way
- Some documentary makers want to tell their story in a different way and at a different pace than required by television programmers
- Channel strategies rarely prioritise documentary, per se
- Audience numbers are bigger for popular factual than documentary
- The ability to attract larger audiences is one of the strengths of the television medium
- Ratings are not the only measure of success, but critical success is harder to quantify
- Online and transmedia options are there but New Zealand audiences on these channels remain relatively small

As always, NZ On Air needs good partnerships with broadcasters, channel operators, the production industry and other investors to achieve the best outcomes for New Zealand broadcast audiences.

This paper canvasses the current state of play and proposes some ideas to change funding policy and practice. It is not intended as an exhaustive study but is a simply short survey of how we arrived at the status quo. It seeks feedback to tell us anything important that we have missed and views on what improvements we might be able to consider.

We ask six broad questions and we welcome comments on any other important issue related to New Zealand broadcast documentary making that we should consider.

Questions

1. Are there important points omitted in the brief environmental scan for broadcast documentary in Parts One and Two that need to be considered? If so, what are they?
2. Or have we included points that are not sufficiently relevant or which have been given too much weight? If so, what are they?
3. Do you agree the goals framed in para. 55 in Part Three are the right ones to underpin NZ On Air's documentary and factual programme funding policy?
4. If not, what do you suggest?
5. Are there ideas discussed in paragraphs 56-59 in Part Three that you strongly agree or disagree with? Why?
6. Are there other ideas to encourage change that we should consider?

Please respond to Fiona@nzonair.govt.nz by 24 August 2012.

NZ On Air
June 2012

Part One: The story so far

Background

1. As signalled in the 2012-2015 Statement of Intent, NZ On Air is reviewing its documentary funding policy.
2. NZ On Air has been involved in funding many types of television documentary programming since its inception. This important genre is specifically cited in the Broadcasting Act 1989 (s37(c)) as requiring special attention.
3. The definition of documentary is traditionally widely debated. In his 2011 book *Documentary: Witness and Self-Revelation* John Ellis, British producer and media academic from the University of London, says –

Documentary is easy to identify but difficult to define. Anyone can tell that a particular film or TV programme is a documentary, but the range of documentary styles is vast. A film like An Inconvenient Truth argues passionately for a particular view; Primary is content to observe without comment; Chris Marker's Sunless knits together seemingly unconnected thoughts into a highly personal essay; yet all of these films are called documentaries. Some filmmakers are rigorous in their belief in simply letting events unroll in front of their cameras; others will organise full-scale reconstructions of events or see no problem in directing their subjects to behave in particular ways. Both methods have resulted in films that are called 'documentaries'. Uniting all these approaches is a need to get at 'facts'; to translate the realities of the world onto the screen; to portray the world as it is and – usually – to offer it up for critical scrutiny or to look at it anew. Documentaries insist 'these are the facts'; 'this is how things are'; 'this is what happened'; 'this is what I believe'; 'this is how they behave and why'. At the heart of documentary film and programme making lies an urgency to communicate. Documentary is about showing and telling.

4. Australian regulator ACMA defines a documentary as *a programme that is a creative treatment of actuality other than a news, current affairs, sports coverage, magazine, infotainment or light entertainment programme.*
5. For the purpose of this paper we do not need to enter the definition debate. Here, we simply mean documentary and factual programming intended for broadcast¹ that is not regular news or current affairs and which may include some dramatisation. Discussion later in this paper will cover some different types of television documentary and factual programming which have been supported by NZ On Air.
6. Television documentary production in New Zealand flourished in the 1990s then began to wane as audiences became harder to attract. Environmental changes in the last decade or so include the arrival of Maori Television and Prime; the introduction, then

¹ By 'broadcast' we mean transmission to television audiences who may also access the content through online channels

removal, of the TVNZ Charter; the rise of specialist documentary pay channels; the rise of Web 2.0 and improved broadband; the arrival and departure of TVNZ7. During this period, NZ On Air has extended funding opportunities: projects can now be submitted with backing from Prime TV, FOUR and Maori Television, as well as TVNZ and TV3.

7. Mainstream broadcast scheduling practice has also changed. At the millennium an 8.30pm documentary hour was the norm; in 2012 a 9.30pm slot is usually the earliest available for one-hour programmes and early evening half-hour programmes are often preferred by broadcasters.

NZ On Air funding policy

8. The principles we follow when considering whether to invest in a project are:

Investment principles	Description
Capability	Invest in projects and organisations run by capable partners
Performance	Invest in personnel and organisations that have a strong performance record - or a clear potential - to deliver successful content or services
Priority	Prioritise investment in content, both mainstream and special interest, for audiences emphasised in the Broadcasting Act
Return/impact	Invest in content and organisations that are valued by their audiences
Value for money	Focus on projects and organisations that use funding effectively and efficiently to achieve NZ On Air's desired outcomes
Avoiding duplication	Invest in the types of projects and organisations not seen or heard elsewhere and which the market alone cannot support
Partnership leverage	Prioritise projects and organisations that attract other investment and can leverage the value of NZ On Air's investment
Evidence of effectiveness	Review investment effectiveness through robust monitoring and evaluation
Risk	Encourage creative risk in funded content; observing uptake of new platform opportunities more slowly so the market takes the primary risk

9. Our current documentary funding objectives are:

- *To maintain and, where possible, improve audience satisfaction with the programmes funded on their behalf.*
- *To achieve a diversity of documentary styles and storytelling aimed at different audiences*
- *To work with the industry to achieve a strong documentary programming sector, delivering consistently high-standard, popular and innovative programmes.*

10. We expect the following outcomes from funding documentary programmes:

- *There will be a strongly visible presence of diverse New Zealand documentary programming across a range of broadcasters representing good value for New Zealand taxpayer dollars.*
- *Locally produced documentary programmes and broadcasts will be well received by their intended audience, and will be seen to be “world class”.*
- *New Zealand audience satisfaction levels with television documentary programmes will be maintained or increased.*
- *Broadcasters will be encouraged to take more risks with documentary programmes made with NZ On Air funding.*
- *Creative and innovative documentary programming, including programming that reflects our bicultural base, our multi-cultural society and our place as a South Pacific nation, will contribute to a stronger sense of New Zealand identity.*

NZ On Air documentary funding output

11. For NZ On Air, diversity means different programmes for different audiences. Thus we invest in programming that ranges from long-form discursive pieces, to one-hour programmes which collectively feature many points of view, to half-hour factual series. Recently this has meant support for programming as diverse as the long-form *Brother Number One*, *Strongman*, *Billy – Te Movie* and *Shackleton’s Captain* to the one-hour *Inside Child Poverty* and *Henare O’Keefe* to the half-hour series *Country Calendar*, *What’s Really In Our Food?* *Shearing Gang*, *The GC* and *Songs From The Inside*.

12. Documentary funding forms a significant part of the total NZ On Air television spend.

NZ On Air documentary funding commitments 2002 - 2012

Year	Hours	Doco commit. \$m	Total TV commit. \$m
11/12	122	16.0	81.9
+Platinum Fund hrs	16		
10/11	111	14.8	83.7
+Platinum Fund hrs	23		
9/10	121	16.0	80.6
+ Platinum Fund hrs	11		
08/09	99	9.2	90.9
incl. TVNZ Charter \$ but not hours			
07/08	123	12.0	74.3
06/07	104	10.0	70.5
05/06	127	11.8	72.7
04/05	104	9.08	62.5
03/04	134	9.38	60.7
02/03	109	8.7	59.0
01/02	91	8.76	58.6

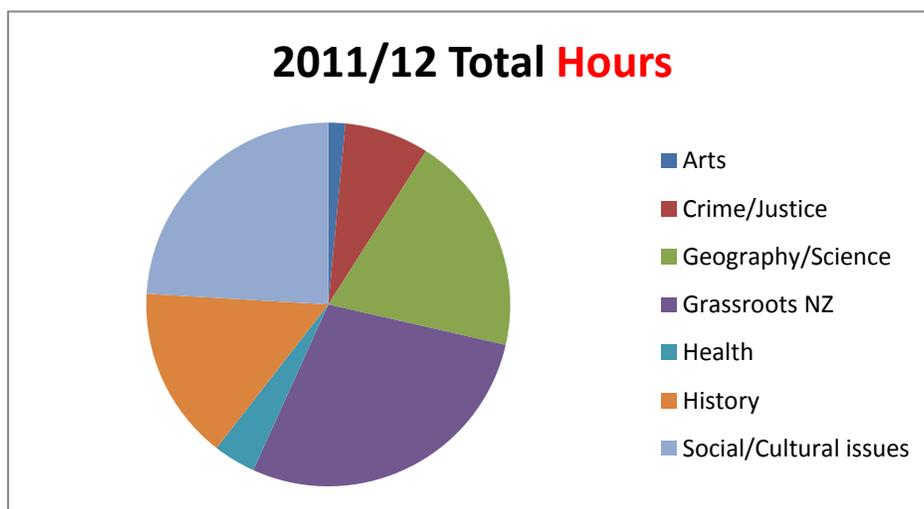
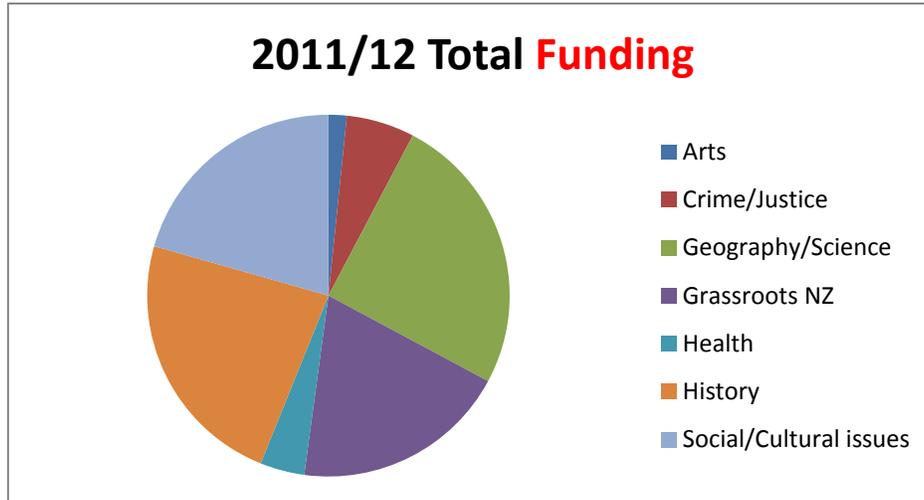
Source: NZ On Air Annual Reports

13. There are also projects funded from other budgets which are documentary in nature such as arts/ culture and special interest (eg. *The Secret Lives Of Dancers*) or drama (*Votes For Women* and *Waitangi: What Really Happened?*)
14. Spend is comparable to documentary spend by Screen Australia but New Zealand output is higher. In 2011 Screen Australia invested around A\$16.5m in around 95 hours of film and television documentary. Australia's lower output generally reflects the higher production budgets. Comparatively little of this material screens on commercial networks.
15. Considering NZ On Air funding in another way, projects can be divided like this:

NZ On Air documentary output by type 2011 - 2012

Doco type	Output	No. x Broadcaster	Audience	Total funding
Platinum ('blue chip')	16 hours	3 x TV One 2 x Prime	Large Medium	\$4,567,263
Series (mostly half hours, some one hours)	90 hours	7 x TV One 6 x TV3 2 x Prime 1 x Maori TV	Large Large Medium Small	\$8,413,412
One-offs (one hours)	32 hours	Up to 8 x TV One 2 x TV3 3 x Prime 10 x Maori TV	Large Large Medium Small	\$3,201,408

16. Categorising NZ On Air-funded documentary by subject is arbitrary but can also reveal patterns. Broad categories of funded programmes can be grouped as follows (NB: This is a post-facto analysis; these categories are not funding criteria or targets).
 - Arts
 - Crime/Justice
 - Geography/Science
 - Grassroots NZ
 - Health
 - History
 - Social/Cultural
17. Annex A groups all funded titles from the last three years using these categories. As noted above this does not include projects funded from other budget lines.
18. The charts below provide a quantitative perspective of hours and spend in the current financial year, and are roughly proportionate across these categories. Arts programmes comprise the lowest funded category as has always been the case; on the other hand there are fewer funded crime/justice stories than is sometimes thought.

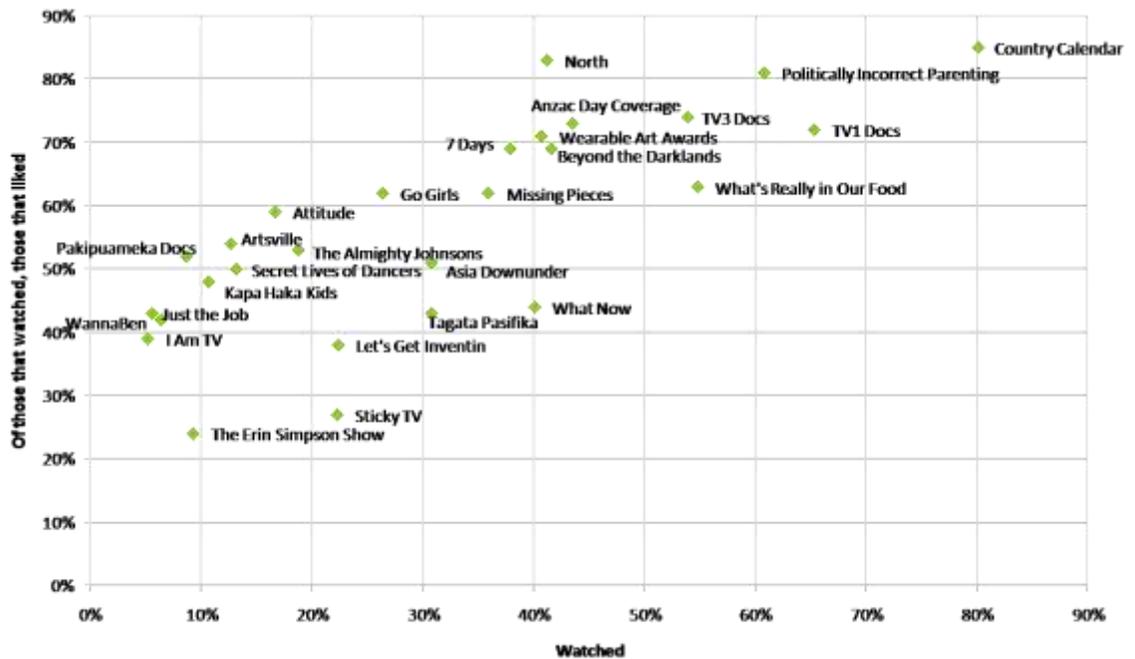


19. Similar graphs for two previous years are included in Annex A. Reflecting what is working for broadcasters, funding is currently weighted towards grassroots, geography, social/cultural issues and history.

What audiences like

20. The *Public Perceptions* research in 2011 shows that factual programming of all shapes and sizes features strongly in audience preferences for **NZ On Air-funded** content. This sample of 500 respondents (the sample skewed older) was asked whether they had watched specific titles; then if they had, whether they liked them.

Audience preferences for NZ On Air-funded programming



21. The top 20 documentaries that screened in 2011 are mainly series. New Zealand-made programmes feature well (NZ On Air-funded in **bold**). Using 5+ ratings (namely, total eyeballs) means results skew heavily to TV One.

Top 20 documentaries on New Zealand television 2011

	Channel	Programme	# of eps	Country of origin	Day	Start time	Average 5+ Audience 000s	Average 5+ Audience %
1	TVOne	North	10	NZ	Sunday	7.00pm	683,824	16.86%
2	TVOne	Hyundai Country Calendar	26	NZ	Saturday	7.00pm	638,004	15.73%
3	TVOne	Global Radar	8	NZ	Sunday	7.00pm	635,730	15.67%
4	TVOne	Fair Go	36	NZ	Wednesday	7.30pm	590,839	14.57%
5	TVOne	Coastwatch	10	NZ	Monday	7.30pm	585,284	14.43%
6	TVOne	Animal Rescue	10	Australia	Wednesday	8.00pm	556,611	13.72%
7	TVOne	SPCA Rescue	1	NZ	Wednesday	8.00pm	546,325	13.47%
8	TVOne	Islands of Britain	3	British	Sunday	7.30pm	529,654	13.06%
9	TVOne	Martin Clunes' Horsepower	2	British	Sunday	7.30pm	503,036	12.41%
10	TVOne	Animal Rescue	7	Australia	Sunday	7.00pm	496,394	12.24%
11	TVOne	Nigel Latta's After The Quake	1	NZ	Wednesday	8.00pm	481,348	11.87%
12	TVOne	Intrepid Journeys	7	NZ	Thursday	8.30pm	465,689	11.48%
13	TVOne	Joanna Lumley Catwoman	2	British	Sunday	7.30pm	436,292	10.76%
14	TVOne	5 Days in the Red Zone	1	NZ	Wednesday	9.30pm	423,699	10.45%
15	TVOne	Coastwatch	3	NZ	Tuesday	7.30pm	422,899	10.43%

16	TVOne	North (R)	3	NZ	Sunday	7.00pm	415,364	10.24%
17	TVOne	Joanna Lumley's Nile	1	British	Sunday	7.30pm	406,617	10.03%
18	TVOne	Nature's Miracle Babies	3	British	Sunday	7.30pm	392,500	9.68%
19	TVOne	How The Other Half Lives	2	NZ	Monday	8.00pm	389,886	9.62%
20	TV One	Greatest Plastic Surgery Shockers	2	British	Thursday	9.30pm	388,352	9.58%

Source: A C Neilsen

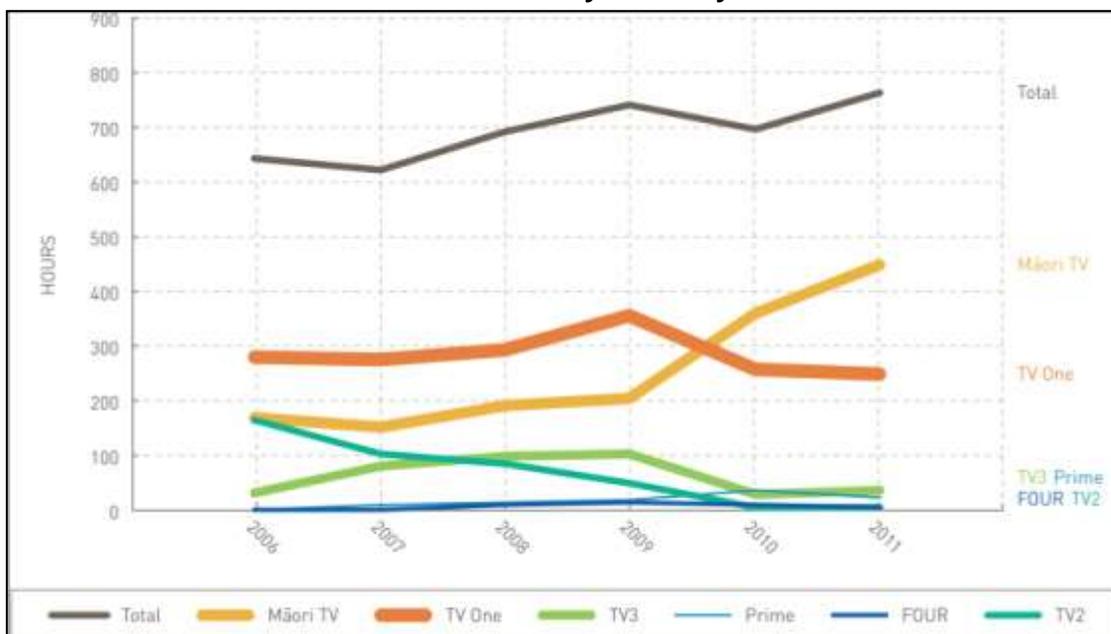
22. The charts above clearly indicate that, for mainstream audiences, factual series perform better from a quantitative perspective.

23. One-offs are rare in prime time these days. The 'harder' end of documentary generally screens on smaller channels, or off peak, and attracts fewer viewers. This does not mean these programmes are less worthwhile, simply that additional factors should be taken into account when considering funding. The creation of the Platinum Fund with specific priorities has stimulated broadcaster interest in historical work in particular.

Who broadcasts New Zealand documentary?

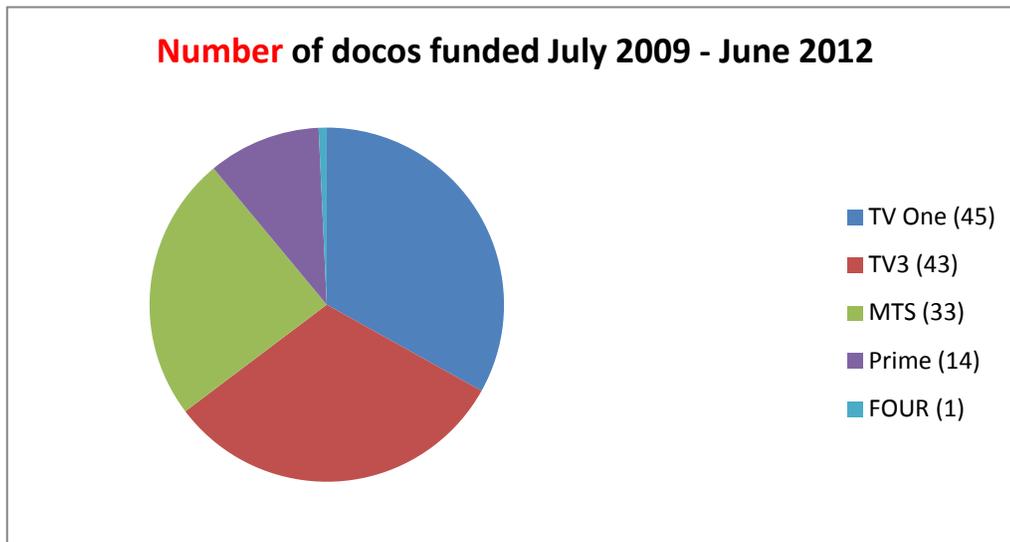
24. The **volume** of local documentary programming screened in 2011, by channel, is pictured below. Maori Television and TV One screen by far the most New Zealand documentary content. Again, data should be interpreted carefully due to methodological differences: not all hours are funded by NZ On Air and documentary-style programmes are also included in other categories of the *Local Content Report*.

New Zealand free to air documentary hours by channel 2011

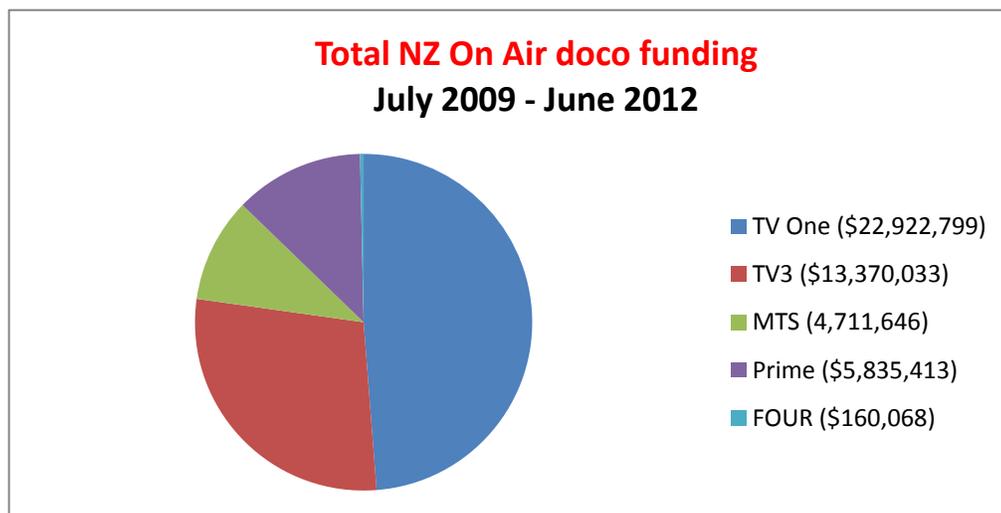


(Source: Local Content Report 2011. NZ On Air)

25. The **number** of NZ On Air-funded projects is broadly similar across TV One, TV3 and Maori Television. Three years of data is combined to reduce the impact of any high-scale or low-scale projects.



26. When the **amount of funding** is considered, a much stronger weighting to projects supported for TV One and TV3 is revealed. This means that more expensive projects were supported for the Tier 1 channels, reflecting the larger size of potential audiences.



27. Several pay channels also screen documentaries. The majority are foreign programmes: local documentary content on these channels is mostly material that has first screened on a free to air channel. Currently NZ On Air will not fund programmes intended for pay channels but is happy if further screenings on a pay channel extend the viewing life of a programme.

28. NZ On Screen now has over 400 documentary titles permanently online, with more added regularly. Broadcaster on-demand sites also carry them post-broadcast for a period. NZ On Screen focuses on clearing existing work, not commissioning new work.
29. Other effective online opportunities are rare. There are no dedicated New Zealand sites for new documentary work and such sites would probably have difficulty securing sufficient user numbers to warrant major investment. Slow broadband has not helped uptake to date as the viewing environment for audiovisual content is comparatively poor. The advent of ultrafast broadband (UFB) will assist for some regions.
30. Simply uploading content on global sites such as YouTube is rarely effective without a comprehensive marketing and promotions strategy.

Who makes New Zealand documentary?

31. Almost all output is by independent programme makers. Documentary makers tend to divide into three very broad groups:
 - those that own or work for companies regularly making programming for broadcast
 - those who wish to, but who often have trouble getting through the gates in a crowded funding landscape (some of whom are very experienced; others less so)
 - those who make or aspire to make documentary of a more specialist, 'alternative', political or experimental style that is usually more suited to festivals or other forums.
32. The latter group has always had trouble securing funding, and broadcast of such content is rare. Such documentaries can be of irregular duration, with content that might challenge broadcast standards, or of a type that appeals to niche audiences. Digital technology has driven down production cost for some types of documentary and self-funded and user-generated content is now more possible than it was two decades ago. Nonetheless professionally researched, shot and edited content still requires a comparatively high level of investment.
33. All groups will attest to the problems that come from a limited funding pool. The views from a production perspective were quite clear in 2008 research commissioned by Creative New Zealand and the NZFC.² A summary is appended as Annex B. Some options mooted remain outside NZ On Air's statutory brief; some have since been implemented; and funding has improved thanks to the Platinum Fund. Other options could now be considered to take account of further environmental changes.
34. Since that report was issued it is notable that some documentary makers have begun accessing funds through crowdsourcing; also that New Zealand's first 3D cinema documentary *Yake!* has been released. That was fully funded by an international distributor: the (first-time) documentary maker saw a market opportunity and went for it.

² *Research Into New Zealand's Independent Documentary Sector*
http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/paperclip/publication_documents/documents/36/original/research-into-new-zealand-80s-documentary-sector.pdf?1322079822

Part Two: The situation today

35. NZ On Air's over-arching values are **innovation, diversity** and **value for money**. Considering funded output in this way, there is no doubt that documentary production in New Zealand provides **value for money**.
- Budgets have not moved significantly for some time: production technology changes have managed to compensate for general cost increases. We estimate the cost of making documentary, compared with our nearest neighbour, Australia, is around 20% cheaper.
 - Constrained budgets restrict the type of documentary made, the amount of research and filming that can be undertaken, and the location of the subject. These factors, in turn, can impact on innovation and diversity. As well, in a static funding environment, the higher the budgets, the fewer projects are funded.
 - In part this is why we included provision for high-end documentary projects in the Platinum Fund criteria.
 - We require a broadcaster licence fee as co-investment in funded work. If we 100% funded some types we might stimulate more demand; conversely the value-for-money case might reduce.
36. It remains a challenge to get genuine documentary **diversity** on the Tier 1 channels (TV One, TV2, TV3). Their strength is delivering mainstream content for larger audiences: funders and programme makers are usually reliant on the passion of individual commissioners to secure support for riskier or less populist projects. The recent success of half hour series may have contributed to waning interest in the longer-form projects that help diversity of output and storytelling.
37. That is not to say diversity on Tier 1 channels does not exist: in the same period recently, TV3 screened both the long-form *Strongman* and controversial genre-bending half-hour series *The GC*. TV One's interest in docudrama, assisted by the advent of the Platinum Fund, is also a recent positive trend that adds to its successful half hour series. In addition -
- Our recent policy of encouraging Prime and Maori Television ('Tier 2' channels with smaller audiences) to help us with our diversity goal has been useful.
 - Maori Television gives us an excellent result: the funded projects are clearly of a type that would not be picked up by another channel and are well-made. Despite this, awareness of the programming remains limited and audiences relatively low
 - Prime is often more enthusiastic about mainstream fare but that channel still has potential to help achieve our diversity goal for a wider range of

funded documentary. Prime's 5+ ratings have improved to the extent that, for example, a well-received prime time series can rate at an equivalent level (around 5%) to a fringe peak slot on a Tier 1 channel

38. **Innovation** in the genre may have become rarer, in part because of narrowing range in prime time. This can be debated (for example, one person's innovation is another's derogation of the genre). In television documentary, innovation can be of style, of technique or of subject matter. It seems evident that chances for genuinely innovative documentary are diminishing on mainstream channels as fiscal pressures intensify.

- In previous years we could partly address this by funding off peak programming: such intentional scheduling can allow a greater level of production creativity, a more specialist subject and also a chance for less 'commercial' or less experienced programme makers to tell their stories. The advent of online on-demand viewing means such scheduling should become less of an impediment for some projects
- In recent years Tier 1 channels have been reluctant to support this type of material even for off peak slots. In part this is because of lower ratings, in part because they are not short of cheaper international inventory, and in part because they prefer to see NZ On Air funding supporting their prime time content.
- NZ On Air's recent focus has also been on prime time. This is partly because we wished to correct an imbalance, apparent by 2007, of too much funding going to projects in offpeak low-rating slots; and partly to attract good-sized audiences as a value-for-money goal. However the trade-offs to secure prime time on Tier 1 channels can be controversial if the storytelling style is seen as overly populist.
- In itself this may not always be a bad thing but it can prove difficult if the range overall is narrowing. This is where prime time on Prime TV and Maori Television becomes valuable – both are able to consider a broader palette of options.

Competing tensions

39. The loss of the 30+-episode strands of *Inside New Zealand* and a TV One permanent strand, in particular, as well as niche umbrella strands like *Artsville*, *Work Of Art* and *First Hand*, indicates that the range of television documentary production opportunities has lessened on mainstream television in recent years.

40. Having said that, a paper written by Roger Horrocks³ nearly a decade ago reported similar tensions. As already noted there are also types of documentary that have

³ Horrocks, R. *The Documentary on Television* (2003) NZ On Air.

always found it difficult to secure a television slot, often being more suited to specialist (or non-commercial) outlets.

41. Other points to consider include –

- Worldwide, broadcasters, both public and commercial, have moved away from one-off documentary and have a clear preference for episodic factual programming (audience numbers are usually higher and promotion opportunities are enhanced). This may simply be a trend as often happens with genre preferences but, if so, change does not seem imminent
- It was often said that, towards the end of the ‘boom years’ of the TV One and TV3 strands, which created a volume of successful one-off documentary production unparalleled in any other broadcast market, the types of programming was becoming formulaic, was probably somewhat underfunded, and compelling new stories were becoming harder to find
- Many half-hour series currently on air are achieving excellent audience levels. Of the top 20 rating documentaries or documentary series screened in 2011
 - 12 were NZ made (six were British; two Australian)
 - The top five were all NZ-made
 - The top three were all funded by NZ On Air. These three (*North*, *Country Calendar* and *Global Radar* all on TV One) all averaged a very high 15-17% 5+ rating meaning weekly audiences in excess of 600,000 people
- NZ On Air has created fresh New Zealand opportunities through initiatives like Maori Television’s *Pakipumeka* strand, and the Platinum Fund’s focus on high end and well-researched projects such as *Rivers*, *Shackelton’s Journey*, *What Really Happened?*, *Strongman* and *Primeval New Zealand*
- A prior cinema release can help drive audiences to television (*When A City Falls*, *Topp Twins*) despite broadcaster dislike of this practice. Cinema distribution for documentary tends to be difficult to secure outside of specialist festivals and audience numbers overall are low compared to television
- NZ On Air agreed in 2012 to different minimum licence fee levels for factual series and high-end documentary programmes to try to improve the broadcaster business case for the latter
- Assistance for documentary makers was a consideration when NZ On Air altered the terms of trade with producers in 2008. We now do not take an investment position for funded projects receiving under \$200,000 (which covers most one-off factual programmes) to make it worthwhile for programme makers to pursue programme sales. We have no information how this has made a difference

- NZ On Air will also consider contributing post-production funding if a documentary maker has shot a project and can secure broadcaster interest in a programme based on the footage. Despite the cost of filming reducing in recent years, few documentary makers have achieved broadcaster support at the post-production stage.

42. The final paragraph in the chapter on documentary in the recently-published history of NZ On Air sums up the tensions well:

There is no doubt that the range of what NZ On Air will fund under the documentary banner has broadened, principally to include a sub-genre of reality programmes, as noted above, But the issue is how to sustain a balance between the various sub-genres and between the blue-chip and the populist. This issue must continue to exercise NZ On Air. A few high-profile and well-resourced projects under the Platinum Fund are most commendable, but the testing ground must be the choice of topics and styles for the annual documentary round...⁴

Questions

1. Are there important points omitted in this brief environmental scan for broadcast documentary that need to be considered? If so, what are they?
2. Or have we included points that are not sufficiently relevant or which have been given too much weight? If so, what are they?

⁴ NZ On Air: An Evaluative Study 1989 – 2011. Norris, P and Pauling, B. p67

Part Three: Looking ahead

43. NZ On Air’s job is to encourage a wider range and diversity of programmes than would be commissioned by broadcasters alone. This is done by balancing the competing tensions described above, creating appropriate initiatives, and being realistic that every funded programme will be enjoyed by some, and not by others.
44. A simple SWOT framework looking at our documentary investment environment might look like this:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Strong audience appetite/appreciation Good practitioners Multiple FTA broadcast clients No shortage of stories	Disconnect between some practitioners and broadcaster needs Declining range on mainstream Some broadcasters lack a clear doco strategy Declining interest in one-offs
Opportunities	Threats
Platinum Fund Passionate practitioners and commissioners Other/additional platforms and transmedia	Funding constraints Waning mainstream broadcaster support / desire to take risks Desire for only populist approaches Audience fragmentation

45. The three largest ‘Tier 1’ free to air channels deliver the biggest audiences and will generally demonstrate value for money fairly easily (assuming the programme is well-made, scheduled appropriately, and has audience appeal). However Tier 1 channels are constrained in the range they can support. In addition, the topics in which they show the most interest need to be assessed carefully, both to ensure a funding subsidy is necessary and also to ensure public funding does not over-balance towards the more populist.
46. The smaller-reach ‘Tier 2’ channels can help us deliver more diverse content but must work hard on promotion to maximise audience awareness of the programme.
47. Online is an option if the right platform and promotion can be used effectively. Audiences here remain small, at present, compared to broadcast audiences.
48. The core strategic question in a static funding environment is whether NZ On Air should aim to improve diversity by -
- funding more hours at a lower cost (wider range of broadcasters, more well-received factual series, perhaps some specific online projects)
 - funding fewer hours at a higher cost (probably a Tier 1 broadcaster focus, higher quality of research and production values, more ambitious ideas)
 - funding roughly the same number of hours but with a more clearly delineated mix.

49. One way of delineating the mix might be to consider output by characteristic: for example ‘blue chip’, ‘popular’, ‘special interest’, ‘experimental’. We could set targets for programming using some or all of these groupings.
50. Another might be by focusing more on duration: for example, setting out priorities for 30’, 60’ and 90’ programmes. Duration tends to dictate depth and style. As discussed above most broadcasters are currently preferring half-hour series; the number of one-hour programmes and series has diminished; and 90’ programmes remain rare. If one considers online options, the opportunity for ‘micro documentary’ content of 5’-10’ stories is also there.
51. In brief the pros and cons look something like this (all debateable):

More hours, fewer \$		Fewer hours, more \$		Delineated by characteristic		Same \$	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
More prodn opps	Less in-depth	Higher prodn standards	Lower output	Clearer guidelines	Targets too rigid		
Larger audiences	Fewer blue chip	Likely acclaim	Lower ratings	Clear targets for hard-to-get	Reduced funding flexibility within target		
Increased online opps			Older skew				

52. Desire by documentary makers to create content not primarily designed for television or significant online audiences is not a high priority for NZ On Air and is mainly outside our statutory brief. However there may be an opportunity to develop a more coherent strategy with the NZ Film Commission, in particular, to assist with the creation of works by experienced personnel that are more likely to find a broadcast home (or significant online presence) after theatrical screenings. Cinema documentary success remains rare despite good support by various film festivals.
53. Content not likely to secure either broadcast or a significant place online will remain outside our brief, as will stories that do not have a clear onscreen link to New Zealand, even if made by New Zealanders. The Broadcasting Act requires us to *reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture* so we must seek a clear New Zealand relevance and perspective in our funded projects.

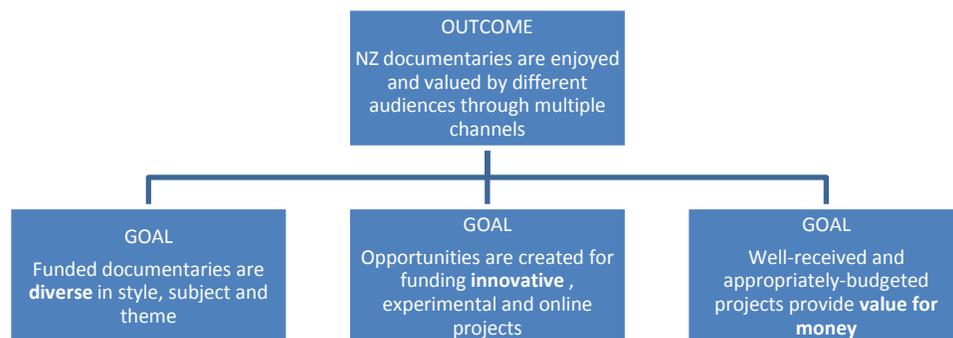
A refreshed policy

54. It is suggested that NZ On Air’s documentary principles should be refreshed. They also need to mesh, where relevant, with other policies such as the Rautaki Maori, the upcoming Pacific strategy and our digital strategy. In the current fiscal climate we are unlikely to be able to secure a meaningful increase in current investment levels.
55. A possible outcomes-based approach is set out below. First, NZ On Air’s documentary goals must align to our values. We propose expressing our documentary and factual funding principles like this:

NZ On Air will -

- Seek **diverse** documentary programming to provide for different audiences and tastes: programming that reflects New Zealand stories and perspectives, our bi-cultural base, our multi-cultural society or our place as a Pacific nation

- Encourage **innovation** by supporting broadcasters to take more risks in backing a wider range of documentary programmes and programme makers; and also by considering other platforms
- Maintain **value for money** for taxpayers by ensuring documentary programming is appropriately budgeted and well-received; and ensuring funded content is available on at least two platforms



Questions:

3. Do you agree these are the right goals to underpin NZ On Air's documentary and factual programme funding policy?

4. If not, what do you suggest?

Possible actions to stimulate change

56. We can consider changing some funding practices (and maintaining some existing ones) to stimulate change. Some ideas include:

57. Diversity

- Establish priorities by characteristic: for example, annual funding targets set for 'blue chip', 'popular', 'special interest' and 'experimental'
- Focus on documentary and factual programmes that are clearly different to network-funded programmes
- Only accept projects backed by Tier 2 broadcasters that are demonstrably different to Tier 1
- Issue one specialist RFP every two years aimed at target audiences that have been under-served in the preceding two years
- Consider creating a documentary fund in partnership with the NZ Film Commission for longer-form work
- Publish a documentary diversity assessment by channel in each NZ On Air annual report to assist analysis

58. Innovation

- Investigate possible online outlets or options (using the core principles set out in NZ On Air's digital strategy⁵) for specialist documentary and seek funding and platform partnerships. The target audiences in our digital strategy are children, youth, ethnic and other minorities in the community, arts and Maori
- Consider whether a documentary fellowship partnership can be reintroduced with other funding agency partners and a broadcaster or online outlet
- Investigate if, in return for funding a certain number of popular factual series, a broadcaster should be expected to co-invest in a specialist documentary initiative
- Maintain a policy of a maximum of four series for popular factual programmes to make room for new ideas (cap introduced in 2012)
- Consider if, and in what circumstances, NZ On Air might be prepared to invest 100% of a documentary's production budget provided a strong broadcast commitment was secured
- Review our policy of not funding retrospectively. For example, if a documentary maker shot a story or part of a story of one hour or more, and then attracted a suitable broadcaster investment and prime time covenant, NZ On Air might contribute some production funding (as well as the post-production funding it would have offered) to reward successful risk taking. Post-facto investment would probably need to be capped.

⁵ See <http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/NewMedia/NewMediaStrategy.aspx>

59. Value for money

- Use a variety of success indicators such as ratings performance, awards, prizes, festival invitations, public feedback and research where it exists and require producers to report on this
- Continue avoiding funding programmes likely to be made without the need for public funding
- Assess budgets carefully to ensure they are adequate to tell the story well, yet are cost-effective within the expenditure proposed
- Require online catch-up for a period to maximise viewing opportunities
- Require a permanent home online (acknowledging that some sensitive subject matter may require editing)
- Work with Government, broadcasters, other agencies and stakeholders to increase the amount of funding for documentary programming over the longer-term and to encourage joint ventures

Questions

5. Are there ideas above that you strongly agree or disagree with? Why?
6. Are there other ideas to encourage change that we should consider?

Summary of questions

1. Are there important points omitted in the brief environmental scan for broadcast documentary in Parts One and Two that need to be considered? If so, what are they?
2. Or have we included points that are not sufficiently relevant or which have been given too much weight? If so, what are they?
3. Do you agree the goals framed in para. 55 in Part Three are the right ones to underpin NZ On Air's documentary and factual programme funding policy?
4. If not, what do you suggest?
5. Are there ideas discussed in paragraphs 56-59 in Part Three that you strongly agree or disagree with? Why?
6. Are there other ideas to encourage change that we should consider?

Please respond to Fiona@nzonair.govt.nz by 24 August 2012.

Annex A: NZ On Air funded documentaries in the past three financial years

	Channel	Total NZOA Funding	Total Hours	NZOA Cost per hour
2011/12		16,182,083	138.00	117,261.47
Platinum Fund in bold				
Arts		255,542	2.00	127,771.00
Sex and Agriculture	Prime	119,988	1.00	119,988.00
The Road To The Globe	Maori TV	135,554	1.00	135,554.00
Crime/Justice		957,276	10.00	95,727.60
Beyond The Darklands 5	TV One	706,272	8.00	88,284.00
Restoring Hope	Maori TV	125,992	1.00	125,992.00
The Confessions Of Prisoner T	Maori TV	125,012	1.00	125,012.00
Grassroots NZ		3,034,955	37.50	80,932.13
Coasters 2	TV One	512,542	5.00	102,508.40
Country Calendar 2012	TV One	361,311	13.00	27,793.15
Missing Pieces 4	TV3	813,748	6.50	125,192.00
NZ Story	TV One	923,509	8.00	115,438.62
Shearing Gang 2	Prime	423,845	5.00	84,769.00
History		3,663,904	20.50	178,727.02
Blakey	TV One	85,000	2.00	42,500.00
Charlie Shelford: Rebel Hero	Maori TV	116,107	1.00	116,107.00
First Crossings	TV One	591,268	5.00	118,253.60
He Toki Huna	Maori TV	133,709	1.00	133,709.00
Nga Tamatoa: 40 Years On	Maori TV	124,970	1.00	124,970.00
Operation Hurricane	Prime TV	146,850	1.00	146,850.00
The Forgotten General	Prime TV	179,971	1.00	179,971.00
The Helen Clark Story	TV3	274,505	2.00	137,252.50
The Prophets	Maori TV	211,524	3.50	60,435.43
TVNZ Historical Docu Drama Strand 2011 (2 titles: not yet confirmed)	TV One	1,800,000	3.00	600,000.00
Social/Cultural		3,237,616	32.00	101,175.50
Aftermath	Prime	393,285	2.00	196,642.25
Inside Report	TV3	365,000	2.00	182,500.00
Living In The Dreamtime	Maori TV	124,988	1.00	124,988.00
Logan's Run	Maori TV	125,685	1.00	125,685.00
Media3	TV3	491,324	10.00	49,132.40
Prison Families	TV3	549,878	5.00	109,975.60
The Breakdown Of A Race	Maori TV	113,048	1.00	113,048.00
The GC	TV3	419,408	4.00	104,852.00
The Politically Incorrect Guide To Grownups	TV One	540,000	4.00	135,000.00
When A City Falls	TV3	115,000	2.00	57,500.00

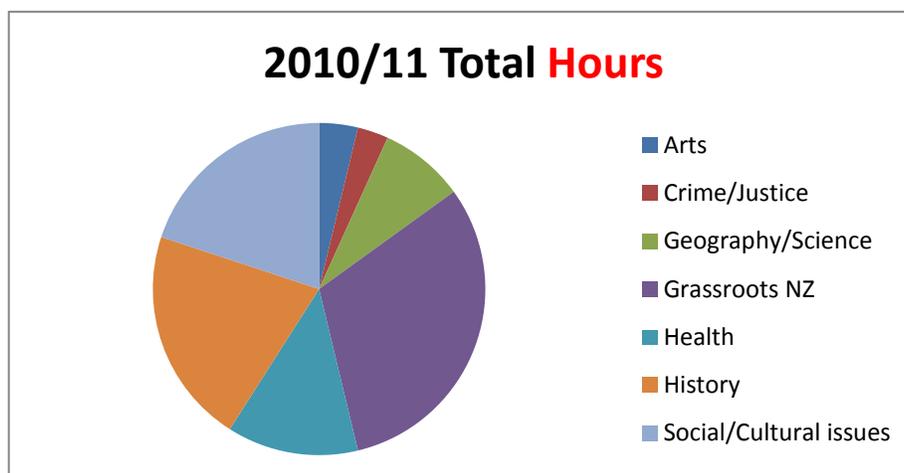
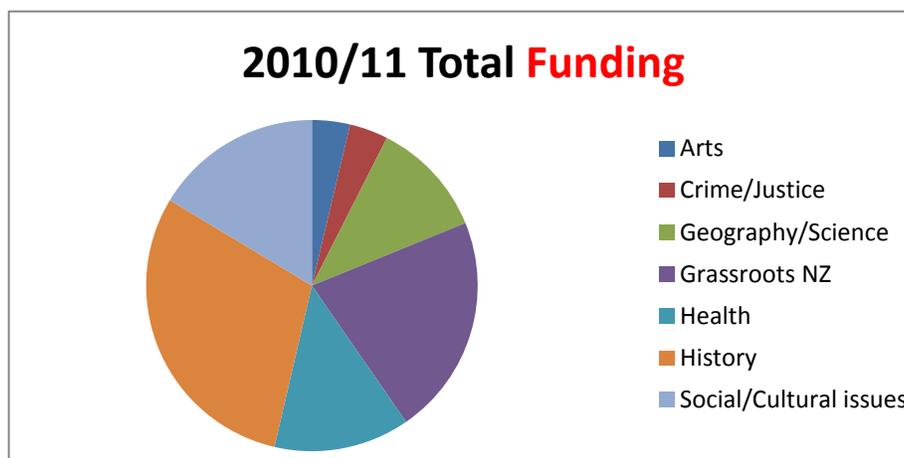
Health		623,324	5.00	124,664.80
What's Really In Our Food? 4	TV3	623,324	5.00	124,664.80
Geography/Science		3,949,415	26.00	151,900.58
Global Radar 2	TV One	487,174	4.00	121,793.50
Keeping It Pure	Prime	1,123,962	6.00	187,327.00
New Zealand Journeys	TV One	570,001	6.00	95,000.17
Saving Tuna	Maori TV	115,000	1.00	115,000.00
The Last Ocean	Prime TV	80,000	2.00	40,000.00
The Year Of The Elephant	TV One	109,948	1.00	109,948.00
Wild At Heart	TV One	1,463,330	6.00	243,888.33

*TV One Docs Strand 2011 - an additional \$460,051 for 5 hours was committed but titles are not yet confirmed

Pie charts at Para 18 above.

	Channel	Total NZOA Funding	Total Hours	NZOA Cost per hour
2010/11		14,732,960	133.00	110,774.13
Platinum Fund in bold				
Arts		545,925	5.00	109,185.00
Allan Baldwin - In Frame	Maori TV	126,682	1.00	126,682.00
Billy T - Te Movie	TV3	199,999	2.00	99,999.50
Ihimaera	Maori TV	98,700	1.00	98,700.00
Rhodes - Actor Singer	Maori TV	120,544	1.00	120,544.00
Crime/Justice		554,796	4.00	138,699.00
Justice Hunter	TV 3	114,996	1.00	114,996.00
Scales Of Justice	TV 3	94,760	1.00	94,760.00
The Banker, The Escorts & The \$18 Million	TV3	140,000	1.00	140,000.00
The Investigator Special - Who Killed The Crewes?	TV One	205,040	1.00	205,040.00
Grassroots NZ		3,174,137	41.50	76,485.23
Chef On A Mission	TV One	452,371	6.00	75,395.17
Country Calendar 2011	TV One	361,311	13.00	27,793.15
Get Fresh With Al Brown	TV One	498,740	5.00	99,748.00
Missing Pieces 3	TV3	897,257	6.50	138,039.54
Shearing Gang	Prime TV	443,845	5.00	88,769.00
The Family Beansprout	TV3	105,288	1.00	105,288.00
Unsung Heroes	TV One	415,325	5.00	83,065.00
History		4,418,079	28.00	157,788.52
Descent From Disaster	TV One	1,229,974	6.00	204,995.67
God Defend New Zealand	TV3	107,298	1.00	107,298.00
History Under The Hammer	Prime TV	597,105	6.50	91,862.31
Ka Mate The Haka The Legend	Maori TV	167,000	1.00	167,000.00
Last Men Standing	TV3	129,152	1.00	129,151.58
Rocked The Nation 3: 100 Greatest NZ Sporting Moments	TV3	679,430	6.00	113,238.33
Sons From Afar	Maori TV	131,809	1.00	131,809.00
Strongman	TV3	884,782	1.50	589,854.67
The Russians Are Coming	Maori TV	124,800	1.00	124,800.00
The Wait Of The Nation	Maori TV	124,967	1.00	124,967.00
Tupaia's Endeavour	Maori TV	118,762	1.00	118,762.00
Year Of The Dragon	TV3	123,000	1.00	123,000.00
Social/Cultural		2,412,703	26.50	91,045.40
A Bit Mental	TV3	26,038	1.00	26,038
A Shocking Reminder	Prime TV	315,562	2.00	157,781.00
Breaking The Cycle	Maori TV	531,924	6.00	88,654.00
Henare O'Keefe: Te Tuatangata	Maori TV	111,567	1.00	111,567.03

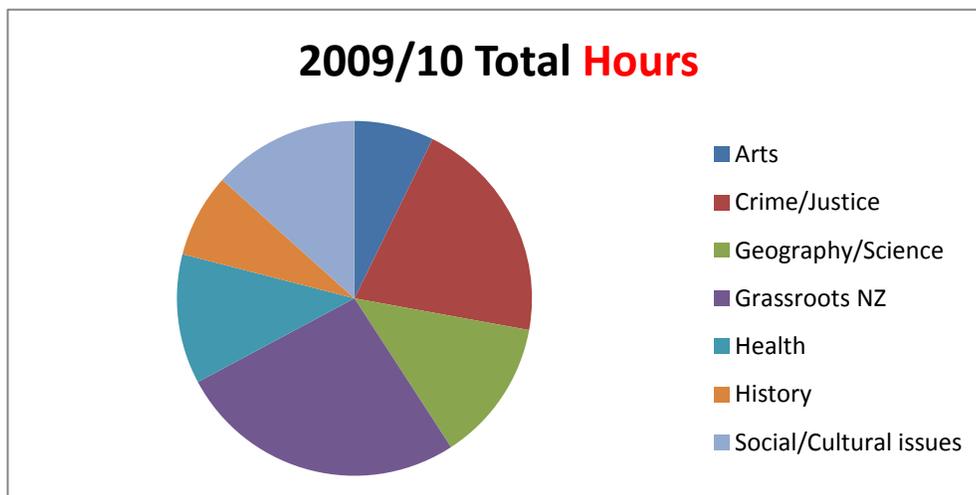
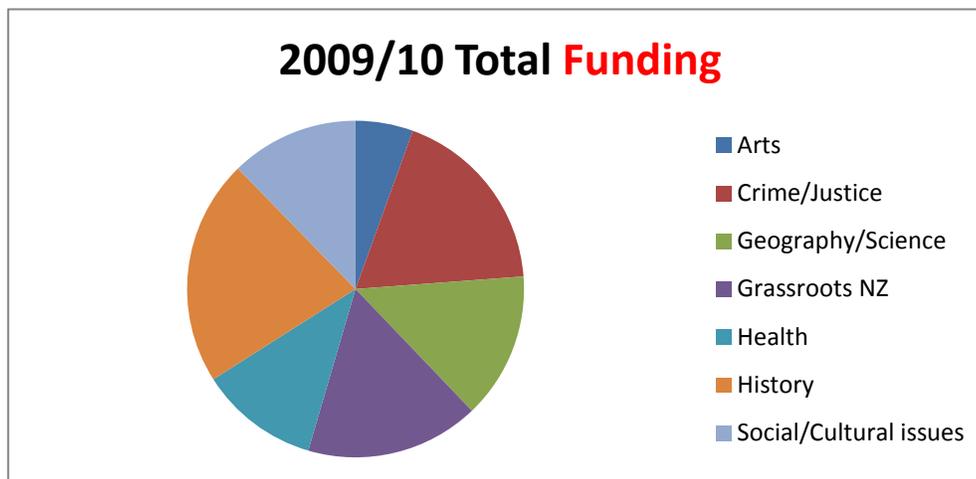
High School	TV3	274,963	2.00	137,481.50
Inside Tattooing	TV3	90,578	1.00	90,578.00
Mind the Gap	TV3	160,890	1.00	160,890.00
One 16 th	TV3	95,865	1.00	95,865.00
Songs From The Inside	Maori TV	130,000	6.50	20,000.00
The Green Chain	Maori TV	125,000	1.00	125,000.00
The Story Strand (one project not yet committed)	TV3	275,316	2.00	137,658.00
Whanau Ora	TV3	275,000	1.00	275,000.00
Health		1,952,987	17.00	114,881.59
Baby Charlotte	TV3	120,000	1.00	120,000.00
Inside Child Poverty - A Special Report	TV3	105,400	1.00	105,400.00
Keep Calm And Carry On	TV One	266,646	3.00	88,882.00
Surviving Modern Medicine	TV One	501,726	5.00	100,345.20
The Health Story	TV3	274,721	2.00	137,360.50
What's Really In Our Food? 3	TV3	684,494	5.00	136,898.80
Geography/Science		1,674,333	11.00	152,212.09
Global Radar	TV One	479,779	4.00	119,944.75
Primeval New Zealand - Where Wild Meets Weird	TV One	270,554	1.00	270,554.00
The Hunt For The Pink And White Terraces	Prime TV	130,000	1.00	130,000.00
Wild Coasts	Prime TV	794,000	5.00	158,800.00



	Channel	Total NZOA Funding	Total Hours	NZOA Cost per hour
2009/10		16,084,916	133.00	1
Platinum Fund in bold				
Arts		875,559	9.50	92,164.13
Beautiful Machine	FOUR	160,068	2.00	80,034.00
Chris Bailey: A Carver's Story	Maori TV	65,491	1.00	65,491.20
Whare Maori	Maori TV	650,000	6.50	100,000.00
Crime/Justice		2,897,589	27.00	107,318.11
24 Hours Police	TV3	261,461	3.00	87,153.67
Beyond The Darklands 4	TV One	583,929	6.00	97,321.50
NZ Detectives 2 (The Evolution Of Crime fighting)	TV One	366,000	3.00	122,000.00
Siege: The Interviews	TV One	32,437	1.00	32,437.00
The Investigator 3	TV One	758,850	6.00	126,475.00
The Missing 2	TV One	894,912	8.00	111,864.00
Grassroots NZ		2,641,187	34.50	76,556.16
Coasters	TV One	384,138	3.50	109,753.71
Country Calendar 2010	TV One	361,588	13.00	27,814.46
Finding Moko	TV3	112,420	1.00	112,420.00
North	TV One	735,157	5.00	147,031.44
The Black Shears - Dare To Dream	Maori TV	126,309	1.00	126,309.00
The Kitchen Job 2	TV3	795,385	10.00	79,538.50
Weekend Warriors	Maori TV	126,190	1.00	126,190.20
History		3,440,893	10.00	344,089.30
Bring Back Buck	Maori TV	156,734	1.00	156,734.00
Cancerman: The Milan Brych Affair	TV One	700,842	1.50	467,228.00
Lines In The Sand	Maori TV	124,988	1.00	124,988.00
Polynesian Panthers	Maori TV	124,497	1.00	124,497.00
Shackleton's Captain	TV One	802,500	1.50	535,000.00
The Golden Hour	TV One	702,417	1.50	468,278.00
The Scotsman And The Maori	Maori TV	124,674	1.00	124,674.00
TVNZ Historical Docu Drama Strand 2010 (one project not committed)	TVOne	704,241	1.50	469,494
Social/Cultural Issues		1,948,590	17.50	111,348.01
A Drunken State	TV3	131,512	1.00	131,512.43
Five Days In The Red Zone	TV One	62,192	1.00	62,192.00
How The Other Half Lives 2	TV One	453,759	4.00	113,439.70
Karli Thomas vs The Tuna Fleets	TV One	94,958	1.00	94,958.00
Maori Boy Genius	Maori TV	155,000	1.00	155,000.00
Powhiri: Welcome Or Not?	Maori TV	126,343	1.00	126,343.00
Saving Grace	Maori TV	100,000	1.50	66,666.67

The Grand Plan	Prime TV	325,000	3.00	108,333.33
The Politically Incorrect Guide To Teenagers	TV One	499,826	4.00	124,956.51
Health		1,816,376	15.50	117,185.52
Bringing My Brother Back To Life	TV3	101,913	1.00	101,913.20
Clinical Years	TV3	125,070	1.00	125,070.00
Dying For A Smoke	TV3	121,752	1.00	121,752.00
High Time	TV3	124,340	1.00	124,340.39
Is Your Cellphone Killing You?	TV3	122,790	1.00	122,790.00
Situation Critical	TV One	321,170	3.50	91,762.86
The Day My Legs Stopped Working	TV One	117,832	1.00	117,832.00
The Nip Tuck Trip	TV3	119,628	1.00	119,628.00
What's Really In Our...?	TV3	661,880	5.00	132,376.00
Geography/Science		2,227,378	17.00	131,022.24
Bigger, Better, Faster, Stronger	TV3	648,543	5.00	129,708.60
Radar's Patch	TV One	500,203	4.00	125,050.75
Radar Across The Pacific	TV One	316,632	3.00	105,544.00
Rivers	Prime TV	762,000	5.00	152,400.00

*TV One Docs Strand 2009 – a further \$237,344 for 2 hours was committed but titles are not yet confirmed



Annex B: 2008 Documentary Research – Summary

Excerpt from Creative NZ / NZ Film Commission paper (full report on www.creativenz.govt.nz)

1. Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

Concerns have been expressed by New Zealand documentary makers about a perceived lack of opportunity for them to practise their craft. Commissioned by the New Zealand Film Commission and Creative New Zealand, this research surveyed the views of documentary makers, industry organisations, broadcasters and distributors/exhibitors.

As well as identifying current barriers and opportunities, this report presents the views of documentary makers on ways to support the career paths of those in the sector and enhance documentary making opportunities in New Zealand.

1.2 Context

New Zealand broadcasting was deregulated in 1989. Since then, four government funding agencies (NZ On Air, Te Mangai Paho, the New Zealand Film Commission and Creative New Zealand) have supported documentaries to differing degrees and according to their legislative mandates.

Formerly a public service broadcaster but still reliant on commercial revenue, TVNZ was transformed into a State Owned Enterprise in 1989 and required to return a dividend to the government.

The government set up NZ On Air in 1989 to “reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture”. This included fostering and funding drama and documentary, and ensuring the production of New Zealand programmes that would not otherwise be made in a commercial market.

Every year, NZ On Air funds more than 100 hours of documentary programming, investing on average approximately \$9 million a year.

Overall government funding for television has increased 162 per cent since 2000/01. In 2003, TVNZ became a Crown Owned Company with a charter, requiring it to balance commercial return with public broadcasting objectives. In 2004, the Maori Television Service was established to play a significant role in the revitalisation of Maori language and culture.

During the 1990s, the number of documentary makers grew, many of them sole operators or small companies who responded to the call for more one-off documentaries. It could be argued there are now too many documentary makers competing in a small market with a finite public subsidy.

The New Zealand Film Commission has funded a number of documentaries for theatrical release since the early 1980s. In partnership with Creative New Zealand, it also supports

low-budget, innovative and experimental moving image projects through the Screen Innovation Production Fund.⁶

Despite new media opportunities, New Zealand television is still the primary market for documentaries that tell local stories and deal with local issues.

However, television has specific documentary content requirements and neither NZ On Air nor Te Mangai Paho will support a project without a broadcaster commitment to screen it.

In addition to government policy changes, new television channels have emerged and theatrical opportunities have expanded.

The growing need to meet multi-platform delivery requirements, including online possibilities, is a new challenge for documentary makers. However, the potential for new revenue streams is still uncertain.

1.4 The barriers

New Zealand has a small population and there are many producers competing in a small market. Along with the size of the local market, documentary makers interviewed saw a number of other challenges. These included:

- NZ On Air's legislative remit "to reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture"
- limited opportunities for television content
- concern that the commissioning process appears to favour bigger companies and series over one-offs
- gaps in professional development opportunities
- limited access to NZFC funding mechanisms
- high archival footage costs at The Film Archive and Archives New Zealand
- the difficulty of sustaining a business due to dependence on government subsidy and the high number of practitioners, compared to the size of the industry.

1.5 The opportunities

Documentary makers acknowledge a number of opportunities available to them, including:

- government recognition of the value of documentary and its continuing support
- professional development opportunities
- significant audiences outside mainstream television for documentaries: e.g. film festivals, pay television, arthouse and regional cinemas
- NZFC support for post-production if a documentary is accepted for a major Festival
- international pitching forums to access overseas investment, and international markets for sales
- Māori Television's flexibility in allowing documentary makers to enjoy a

⁶ This Fund no longer exists. Creative NZ now only funds experimental or arts-based work.

- level of creative freedom
- DVDs, multi-platform delivery, online possibilities
 - the Screen Innovation Production Fund, which fulfils an important function in the sector by encouraging innovation and experimentation in moving-image projects, including documentary.
 - Since this research was conducted, NZ On Air has announced a new recoupment policy that benefits producers. NZ On Air will not retain any back-end equity position for one off programmes, including documentary, made for less than \$200,000.

1.6 A way forward

Documentary makers taking part in this research offered a number of solutions to filling some of the gaps (e.g. fostering the long-term careers of documentary makers) that they see in the sector. Their suggestions include:

- NZ On Air may wish to consider looking beyond mainstream television to include commissions from pay television and a cluster of smaller channels; funding for programmes that go directly online; and increasing its allocation to Maori Television.
- A specific documentary fund with contributions from funding partners would help to boost areas where there are gaps: low-cost and community projects; feature documentaries; the development and pitching of ideas with international partnership or investment potential.
- A documentary fellowship for exceptional documentary makers would provide financial support for experienced documentary makers to practise their skills over a sustained period of time. This could be coupled with mentoring/learning opportunities, helping to address criticism of the poor writing and story structure capabilities of emerging documentary makers.
- Strong, well-crafted documentaries of significant social and cultural value have a long life through DVD sales, educational resource material, repeat screenings on satellite and smaller channels, and international sales. Education authorities, in particular, could be encouraged to take advantage of the wealth of material generated by New Zealand's best documentary makers and establish a process for institutions to access the material.
- Online opportunities cannot be ignored. Internationally, there is an emerging trend for filmmakers to go straight to the web for distribution (in the UK, cinema admissions have declined for the second year in a row). The need to reformat material to meet multi-platform requirements is rapidly becoming an essential part of the documentary maker's business.