

Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab 2025/2026

Maiangitia Te Mana Ataata Towards Indigenous Screen Success

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab (MICL) is a Māori-led advanced development programme designed to accelerate Indigenous feature film projects. It supports Māori and Indigenous filmmakers to strengthen their creative vision, develop financing-ready materials, and produce proof-of-concept films through a uniquely Indigenous, globally connected process.

Delivered by the Māoriland Charitable Trust and supported by the New Zealand Film Commission, Minderoo Pictures and the Indigenous Screen Office, the MICL harnesses cultural frameworks, industry mentorship, and international collaboration to prepare Indigenous stories for the global screen stage.

The MICL is for creative teams - writer, director & producer, from Aotearoa NZ, Western Australia and Canada. The writer and director must be Indigenous. It is structured around three connected pou (pillars):

PHASE 1: WRITERS LAB (POU TUATAHI)

- Eight-week paid writers residency at the Māoriland Hub.
- Writers work intensively with advisors and international Indigenous mentors.
- Directors and producers participate in some workshops and script refinement.

Outcome: Advanced draft feature film script.

PHASE 2: PITCH PACKAGING (POU TUARUA)

- Teams refine scripts, sharpen pitching skills, and develop visual and creative materials.
- Graphic design and producing support ensure each project has a compelling, professional package.

Outcome: Polished pitch deck and budget.

PHASE 3: DIRECTORS LAB (POU TUATORU)

- Ten-day immersive directing lab in Ōtaki.
- Directors and creative teams rehearse, shoot, and edit a proof-of-concept scene with professional crew.
- Supported by acclaimed Indigenous filmmakers and advisors.

Outcome: Proof-of-concept short film/scene.



Impact & Outcomes

By the end of the programme, each selected team will have:

- An advanced draft of their feature film script.
- A complete professional pitch package including deck, look book, and budget.
- A proof-of-concept scene to showcase creative vision and attract investment.

Wider impact includes:

- Strengthened capability of Indigenous producers, writers, and directors.
- Increased opportunities for cross-border collaboration between Aotearoa, Canada, and Australia.
- Development of future leaders through teina (less experienced person) observer roles.

Why Māoriland?

Māoriland is uniquely positioned to deliver this kaupapa:

- Global Indigenous networks built over a decade of international collaborations.
- A proven track record in talent development, supporting 10,000+ creatives and rangatahi through programmes such as Ngā Pakiaka and the Māoriland Tech Creative Hub (M.A.T.C.H).
- Award-winning production, programming, and festival delivery experience recognised internationally (Global Screen Award for Social & Economic Impact, Cannes 2025).

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab is a pathway for Indigenous storytellers to create films of cultural depth and international impact. Grounded in a Māori community, strengthened by global Indigenous collaboration, and focused on practical industry outcomes, MICL delivers the tools, networks, and confidence for Indigenous filmmakers to bring their stories to the world.

Ko te pou i whiria
Ko te pou i mārāma
Tiaho mai i roto
Mārāma mai i roto
Tēnei te pou ka ū
Tēnei te pou ka eke
Tēnei te pou ka māia
Ko te pou o tēnei kaupapa
Hui te ora
Hui te mārāma
Hui e ...
Taiki e!

Join us
Guide us
May we shine within
May we understand within
We are all pillars of our house
We each have a role,
However big or small
The task compels us
Let there be life
Let there be clarity
Bind us ...
It is done!



PROGRAM DETAIL

Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab is structured around three pou:

POU TUATAHI: MĀORILAND INDIGENOUS SCRIPT ACCELERATOR (MISA)

May 18 - July 10 2026

Pou Tuatahi is an 8-week full-time, paid residency designed to strengthen and elevate feature film scripts. The primary focus is on the writer, who will work intensively in residency with expert advisors and senior Indigenous filmmakers to develop their script to an advanced draft.

While the writer leads the development process, producers and directors will be actively engaged throughout the residency. They will have opportunities to observe and participate in wānanga (workshops) in person and remotely, contribute to story refinement and deepen their understanding of the kaupapa and creative foundations of the project.

POU TUARUA: PITCH PACKAGING

June - August 2026

In Pou Tuarua, each team will develop pitching skills while working together to produce the creative materials that will form the pitch package for their film.

Writers will refine their second-draft scripts with feedback from their MISA peers and mentors. The creative teams will then take part in a pitch packaging wānanga, led by expert facilitators, where they'll be supported to clearly express their story and creative vision. Graphic design support will be provided to ensure each pitch package is polished.

POU TUATORU: DIRECTOR'S LAB

3 - 12 August 2026

Teams will take part in a 10-day immersive directing lab, working with actors and professional crew to rehearse, shoot and edit a key scene from their project.

By the conclusion of the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab, each team will have:

- An advanced draft script
- A complete, professional pitch package
- A proof-of-concept scene ready for industry engagement

PROGRAM DETAIL

POU TUATAHI: MĀORILAND INDIGENOUS SCRIPT ACCELERATOR

Pou Tuatahi is an eight-week writers' residency with guest-advisor wānanga (recorded for teams and observers), one-on-one mentoring, and focused writing time. Writers are based at the Māoriland Hub throughout, while producers and directors will attend in weeks one and eight, staying connected via weekly hui and Zoom.

APRIL
2026

WEEK ONE: WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA

Introduction to Puritia: Māoriland Framework for the Screen Sector
Guest Advisor #1: How whakapapa informs who you are & the story you want to tell.

WEEK TWO: WORLD BUILDING

The World of the Story; Step into your story, Brave storytelling
Guest Advisor #2: Native People Global Stories

WEEK THREE: WHAKAPAPA

Character backstory
Guest Advisor #3: The strong connections between Indigenous nations and characters

MAY
2026

WEEK FOUR: EMOTIONAL LOGIC

Teams participate in one-on-one zooms with guest advisor 4.
Guest Advisor #4: Authentic characters come from your gut

WEEK FIVE: WEAVING SOUND AND LIGHT

Writers explore how they communicate their story using visual, aural and thematic aids
Guest Advisor #5: A cinematographer explores the worlds in the scripts

JUNE
2026

WEEK SIX: WRITING

WEEK SEVEN: WRITING

WEEK EIGHT: TABLE READS

PROGRAM DETAIL

POU TUARUA: PITCH PACKAGING

Pou Tuarua will be delivered from the Māoriland Hub & remotely and will include regular check-ins with the creative teams. Verbal pitching will take place throughout.

JUNE
-
JULY
2026

SCRIPT REVISION BASED ON TABLE READ FEEDBACK

PITCH DECK MASTERCLASS

SCRIPT FEEDBACK FROM MENTORS

COMPLETE "1ST" DRAFT

PRODUCE PITCH DECK

POU TUATORU: DIRECTOR'S LAB

Pou Tuatoru is a 10-day director's lab to be hosted in Ōtaki. Select wānanga (sessions) will be made available to observers via Zoom.

AUG
3 - 12
2026

DIRECTOR'S LAB:

10 DAY LAB WITH ACCOMPLISHED INDIGENOUS DIRECTORS AS ADVISORS + PROFESSIONAL CREW.

This intensive Director's Lab will provide support for teams to workshop scenes, collaborate with actors, and explore visual language for their film — all in a lab where experimentation and risk-taking is encouraged.

Participants & Selection

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab (MICL) is for **Indigenous key creative teams** - a writer, director, and producer with a feature film project that has already had some development and, is ready to move into advanced development. The MICL aims to support these teams to produce a new draft, hone a clear creative vision, build a high-quality pitch package, and produce a proof-of-concept scene intended to strengthen the opportunities for financing and production of the feature film.

Eligibility Criteria

- Teams must consist of a writer, a director and a producer. Participants may hold multiple roles.

You are eligible to apply to the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab if:

- You are developing a feature film that has undergone some development prior to this application AND
- The writer AND director strongly identify as Indigenous from the following nations: Māori, Pasifika AND reside in New Zealand OR
- The writer AND director strongly identify as Indigenous from Western Australia OR
- The writer AND director are Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) from Canada
- you are the owner of the rights in the project or have an option to acquire those rights AND
- A writer, director and/or producer who has 80-minutes of cumulative produced scripted content, or has had a short film accepted into one of these listed international festivals, the NZ International Film Festival, Māoriland, Rotorua Indigenous Film Festival or Show Me Shorts, OR a reputable international film festival.

Selection Process

Applicants must submit an application form via Type Form.

Applications will be assessed by the MICL Kāhui, a leadership group of representatives from the NZFC, the Indigenous Screen Office, Australia and Māoriland. Short-listed applicants may be invited to interview as part of the application process.

Assessment will consider:

- The creative strength and originality of the project
- The readiness and capability of the team
- Alignment with kaupapa Māori or/and/or Indigenous storytelling worldview
- The potential for the project to be realised as a feature film

Tuakana Teina

The program is grounded in a tuakana-teina model of learning, where more experienced practitioners (tuakana) support and guide those who are earlier in their creative journey (teina). This approach reflects Māori ways of sharing knowledge through relationships, reciprocity, and collective growth, rather than through competition or hierarchy.

Up to three teina groups will be selected to participate in the program as observers in wānanga and script read sessions. Through observation, kōrero, and relationship-building, teina can learn directly from the creative process, gain insight into professional development pathways, and build confidence to advance their own projects in future iterations of the Co-Lab. This also strengthens intergenerational and peer networks across the Indigenous screen sector, supporting long-term capability building rather than one-off training outcomes.

Application Form

Section 1: Project Details

1. Project Title
2. Logline
3. Synopsis
4. Introduce your team, tell us why you're making this film.
5. How far along are you in developing this project? Please describe what work has been done to date, including any programs you have been part of.
6. Upload Draft Script
7. Pitch video : max 3 mins
 - Who are you, Why are you interested in this program? What's your story?

Section 2: Key Creative Team

Funding is available for up to three participants per project: one writer, one director, and one producer.

If a project has multiple creatives in any role, please nominate one person per role to be the funded participant for this opportunity.

1. Writer
2. Director
3. Producer

4. Writer Details

- a. Full Legal Name
- b. Nickname (If relevant)
- c. Pronouns
- d. Email Address
- e. Phone Number
- f. Home Address
- g. Gender Identity
- h. Ethnicity
- i. Indigenous Affiliation
- j. Statement of Indigenous Identity: Please describe your lived experience and relationship to your Indigenous nation/s, community, culture/s. For example, what nation or community you come from, and who your family is. How does this context inform your work as an Indigenous storyteller?
- k. Bio
 - l. Relevant Experience
- m. Disability Identity
- n. Rainbow Identity
- o. Pou Tuatahi of the MICL is an 8 week writers residency. By applying to the MICL you confirm your availability to stay in Ōtaki from April 27 -June 19, 2026. Accommodation and a stipend will be provided: Yes/ No

Application Form

5. Director Details

- a. Full Legal Name
- b. Nickname (If relevant)
- c. Pronouns
- d. Email Address
- e. Phone Number
- f. Home Address
- g. Gender Identity
- h. Ethnicity
- i. Indigenous Affiliation
- j. Bio
- k. Relevant Experience
- l. Disability Identity
- m. Rainbow Identity
- n. Pou Tuatoru of the MICL is a 10 day Directors Lab in Ōtaki. By applying to the MICL you agree to attend this lab from 3 - 12 August 2026: Yes/ No

6. Director Details

- a. Full Legal Name
- b. Nickname (If relevant)
- c. Pronouns
- d. Email Address
- e. Phone Number
- f. Home Address
- g. Gender Identity
- h. Ethnicity
- i. Indigenous Affiliation
- j. Statement of Indigenous Identity: Please describe your lived experience and relationship to your Indigenous nation/s, community, culture/s. For example, what nation or community you come from, and who your family is. How does this context inform your work as an Indigenous storyteller?
- k. Bio
- l. Relevant Experience
- m. Disability Identity
- n. Rainbow Identity

Application Form

Māoriland and its online hub, Puritia, acknowledge:

- Each Indigenous film or production brings together leading experts, who each have expertise in their respective field or fields;
- Each contributor to the Indigenous film or production is a holder of a wealth of knowledge and expertise, and in particular, each contributor brings that knowledge and expertise to the Indigenous Film or production;
- An Indigenous film or production shares and communicates Indigenous stories, worldviews, protocols, and cultures, and
- Each contributor has rights and interests in their own knowledge and expertise, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, culture, and their stories and those rights and interests are retained by the contributor.

NGĀ TIKANGA O TE MĀTAURANGA – INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following principles will inform the management of knowledge and expertise, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, culture, and Indigenous stories:

- (a) Rangatiratanga – self-determination;
- (b) Ngākau Tapatahi – working towards a common purpose
- (c) Matawhānui – openness and transparency; and
- (d) Manaaki – active protection.

NGĀ TIKANGA O TE ROOPŪ – RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following principles will inform the relationship between the parties who wish to engage with Māoriland kaupapa:

- a) Mana Ōrite – Respective views will be heard, considered, and afforded equal explanatory power and respect.
- b) Whanaungatanga – The relationship between Māoriland and any contributor is strong and built upon mutual respect, shared values, and a shared vision aimed toward ensuring knowledge and expertise, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, culture, and Indigenous stories are acknowledged, respected, and protected.
- c) Kōtahitanga – Māoriland and any contributor will work together to achieve the aspirations of the Declaration of Indigenous Cinema.
- d) Rangatiratanga – An understanding that Māoriland and any contributor will work collectively, but each Party has their own mana and standing.
- e) Whakamana – Inclusiveness, acknowledging the respective value and roles of Māoriland and the contributors.
- f) Kaitiakitanga – A shared respect and acknowledgement of the knowledge and expertise, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, culture, and Indigenous stories included in the curation, storage, and sharing of any Indigenous film or production.

Terms & Conditions

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab (MICL) is a Māori-led advanced development programme for Indigenous feature film projects that are ready to move into advanced development.

The programme supports Indigenous creative teams to:

- Strengthen a feature film script
- Clarify and articulate creative vision
- Develop a high-quality pitch package
- Produce a proof-of-concept scene in preparation for financing and production

The MICL is delivered by Māoriland Charitable Trust and is structured across three interconnected phases:

- Pou Tuatahi – Māoriland Indigenous Script Accelerator (MISA)
- Pou Tuarua – Pitch Packaging
- Pou Tuatoru – Director's Lab

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Apply as a key creative team, consisting of at least:
 - One writer
 - One director
 - One producer
 - (Participants may hold multiple roles.)
- The writer and director are Indigenous including Māori, Pasifika (New Zealand), First Nations, Métis or Inuit (Canada), First Nations (Western Australia).
- Participants must reside in New Zealand, Western Australia, or Canada.
- Submit a feature film draft script.
- Each team member must have at least one screen credit (short or long form) that has screened at a film festival.
- The project must have already had some development and be ready for advanced development.
- All participants must be able to commit to the required programme dates and participation requirements.

Terms & Conditions

3. Selection Process

Applications will be assessed by the MICL Kāhui, comprising representatives from Māoriland and partner screen agencies in Aotearoa and Australia.

The MICL kāhui will review applications and produce a shortlist of candidates for interview by the panel and Māoriland team members (subject to availability). The MICL kāhui will make the final selection based on application materials and interviews.

Selection decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

4. Programme Participation & Commitment

Selected participants are required to:

- Participate fully and in good faith across all phases of the programme
- Attend wānanga, mentoring sessions, script reads, and Labs as scheduled
- Engage respectfully with advisors, mentors, fellow participants, and Māoriland staff
- Uphold tikanga Māori and the values outlined in the Puritia Framework

Failure to participate meaningfully or adhere to programme expectations may result in withdrawal from the programme.

5. Stipend, Fees & Support

Pou Tuatahi – Writers Lab (MISA)

- Writers selected for Pou Tuatahi will participate in an 8-week full-time paid residency at the Māoriland Hub in Ōtaki.
- Writers will receive a weekly stipend (amount confirmed in offer letters), subject to attendance and participation.
- Accommodation in Ōtaki will be provided for the duration of the residency.
- Producers and directors will attend key weeks in person and participate remotely at other times.

Pou Tuarua & Pou Tuatoru

- Participation in Pitch Packaging and the Director's Lab is supported through programme delivery, mentoring, and production resources.

No additional stipends are guaranteed beyond those explicitly stated in participant agreements.

Terms & Conditions

6. Intellectual Property & Puritia Framework

Participant Intellectual Property

- All intellectual property, including story, script, characters, and Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP), remains with the creators.
- Participation in the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab does not transfer ownership, option, or control of participant projects to Māoriland.

Māoriland Intellectual Property

- All programme materials, resources, recordings, toolkits, and frameworks (including Puritia materials) remain the intellectual property of Māoriland Charitable Trust.
- Participants may use programme materials for their own professional development but may not reproduce or distribute them commercially without permission.

Puritia Commitments

The MICL operates under the Puritia Framework, which recognises that:

- Indigenous creators retain rights and interests in their own knowledge, culture, and stories
- ICIP must be respected, protected, and upheld
- Collaboration occurs without diminishing the mana, rangatiratanga, or authorship of any contributor

7. Promotional Use

Participants grant Māoriland Charitable Trust permission to:

- Refer to the project and participation in the MICL for reporting, advocacy, and promotional purposes
- Use non-confidential excerpts, stills, or descriptions of the project with appropriate attribution

No commercial exploitation of participant projects will occur without separate written agreement.

8. Confidentiality

- All scripts, project materials, discussions, and feedback shared within the MICL are considered confidential.

Participants must not disclose confidential information outside the programme without consent.

Terms & Conditions

- Participants may be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) prior to commencement.

9. Policies & Conduct

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab operates in accordance with Māoriland Charitable Trust policies, including but not limited to:

- Kaimahi Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Tikanga
- Te Hohou Rongo – Complaints and Disputes Policy

Participants agree to comply with all relevant policies throughout the programme.

10. Amendments

Māoriland Charitable Trust reserves the right to amend these Terms and Conditions where necessary to ensure the safe, effective, and culturally grounded delivery of the programme. Participants will be notified of any material changes.

11. Acceptance

By applying to participate in the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab, applicants confirm that they:

- Have read and understood these Terms and Conditions
- Agree to participate in accordance with them
- Acknowledge that selection is competitive and not guaranteed

Puritia Framework

The MICL is informed by Puritia, a kaupapa Māori framework for the screen and creative sectors.

Māoriland has developed Puritia to give Indigenous creatives practical tools to embed and uphold Indigenous values within a structured approach to talent development and production, ensuring potential is recognised and nurtured.

Participants in the Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab will receive the Puritia toolkit, including practical legal and cultural resources.

Māoriland recognises that every Indigenous film or production:

- Brings together leaders and experts, each holding knowledge in their respective fields
- Shares Indigenous stories, worldviews, protocols, and cultures
- Respects that each contributor has rights and interests in their own knowledge, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP), culture, and stories — and that these rights remain with the contributor

Ngā Tikanga o te Mātauranga – Indigenous Knowledge Principles and Values

- **Rangatiratanga** – Mana in leadership
- **Ngākau Tapatahi** – Working towards a common purpose
- **Matawhānui** – Openness and transparency
- **Manaaki** – Active protection

Ngā Tikanga o te Roopū – Relationship Principles and Values

- **Mana Ōrite** – All views are heard, respected, and valued equally
- **Whanaungatanga** – Strong, respectful relationships built on shared values and vision
- **Kōtahitanga** – Working together towards the aspirations of the Declaration of Indigenous Cinema
- **Rangatiratanga** – Collective work while retaining the mana and standing of each party
- **Whakamana** – Inclusiveness, acknowledging the value and roles of all contributors
- **Kaitiakitanga** – Respect and protection of knowledge, ICIP, culture, and stories in the curation, storage, and sharing of Indigenous films and productions.



From L - R: Rising Stories, Standing Above the Clouds

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab is built on longstanding relationships across the Indigenous screen world.

OBJECTIVES

Advance 6 Indigenous-led feature film projects to a financing-ready stage through intensive development, mentorship, and proof-of-concept production.

Support 15+ Indigenous key creatives (writers, directors, producers, and teina observers) with targeted training in creative, producing, and market-readiness skills.

Embed Indigenous producing practices across all projects, ensuring creative and legal processes protect and strengthen Indigenous storytelling.

Facilitate cross-border Indigenous collaboration between Aotearoa, Canada, and Australia, building pathways for co-production and shared cultural exchange.

Develop confident, industry-ready Indigenous filmmakers able to operate successfully within both kaupapa Māori and Western production frameworks.

Foster intergenerational growth through teina observer positions, cultivating the next wave of Indigenous filmmakers.

Equip participants with advanced pitching skills for both Indigenous and mainstream film markets.

Champion Indigenous-led screen success through high-quality film development.

THE MĀORILAND INDIGENOUS CO-LAB WILL RESULT IN

Creative Outputs

Six advanced draft feature scripts developed through MISA, an 8-week culturally grounded residency supported by Indigenous mentors and wānanga.

Six full pitch packages, including budget, look book, synopsis, and key visual materials.

Six professionally produced proof-of-concept scenes, showcasing directorial vision and supporting market engagement.

Capacity Building

Writers leave with advanced drafts shaped through a sustained, Indigenous-led development process.

Directors gain practical experience directing proof-of-concept scenes, strengthening their creative vision and readiness for their first or second feature.

Producers are equipped to lead Indigenous projects from development through to delivery, gaining hands-on experience in creative producing, pitching, and cross-cultural production strategies.

Collaboration and Leadership

Strong collaborative bonds are fostered through the tuakana-teina model and wānanga, resulting in ongoing professional and creative partnerships across the cohort.

Teina (less experienced Māori and Indigenous storytellers) gain the tools, networks, and confidence to progress their own projects, either through future Co-Labs or independently.

Sector Impact

Cross-cultural co-production opportunities between Aotearoa, Canada, and Australia, with at least two projects advancing to early-stage discussions.

An Indigenous IP toolkit developed during the programme, providing practical cultural and legal resources for participants and the wider Indigenous screen sector.

Evidence of sustained collaboration and project progression 12 months after programme completion.

Māoriland Charitable Trust

WITH OVER A DECADE OF EXPERIENCE IN DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS SCREEN INITIATIVES, MĀORILAND IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO LEAD THE MĀORILAND INDIGENOUS CO-LAB.

As presenters of the Māoriland Film Festival we have built a global platform for Indigenous cinema that connects thousands of creatives, audiences and industry leaders each year.

Our extensive talent development programmes - including the award-winning M.A.T.C.H tech hub, Ngā Pakiaka youth leadership program, and international Indigenous exchanges - have supported the creative growth of over 20,000 rangatahi and filmmakers across Aotearoa and globally.

Māoriland has a strong record of producing and platforming Indigenous stories, with 12 award-winning short films, multiple co-productions and curated showcases at major international festivals and markets. In recognition of our impact, Māoriland received a Global Screen Award for Social and Economic Impact at Cannes in 2025, affirming our leadership in Indigenous screen development on the world stage.

This proposal builds on the success of the inaugural Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab, delivered in 2024–2025. That first iteration supported eight feature film teams from Aotearoa, resulting in significant creative progress, strengthened international networks, and a powerful foundation for long-term collaboration.

We are trusted collaborators across the Indigenous screen sector, with long-standing partnerships in Canada, Australia, Sápmi, the USA, and the Pacific.

The Māoriland Indigenous Co-Lab draws on this deep foundation, offering a structured, culturally grounded pathway for Indigenous feature film projects to flourish and reach the world.

maorilandfilm.co.nz



INDIGENOUS SCREEN OFFICE
BUREAU DE L'ÉCRAN AUTOCHTONE

**MINDEROO
PICTURES**

