

1 March 2022

Wendy McGuinness  
Chief Executive, The McGuinness Institute – Te Hononga Waka  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe Wendy

I refer to your request that was partially transferred from NZ On Air to Manatū Taonga on 31 January 2021, which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), for information relating to the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF), particularly regarding:

*“checks and balances that have been put in place and whether the proposed benefits have eventuated and/or whether existing (or new) risks have been increased (or identified).”*

The following questions were transferred to Manatū Taonga (1, 3, 15 and 19), our answers are below:

**Q1: Was a risk assessment completed to identify risks to Aotearoa New Zealand’s current democracy? If yes, can you please provide a copy?**

A risk assessment focused on identifying risks to Aotearoa New Zealand’s current democracy has not been undertaken by Manatū Taonga.

**Q3: How is the PIJF designed to help create new commercial media models?**

The PIJF is administered by NZ On Air at arm's length from government. NZ On Air established three pillars for the fund, one of these is industry development, which includes cross-industry cadetships and targeted upskilling initiatives. So far, 11 training programmes are set to reach more than 600 people with training across a range of skills from world class photojournalism to cultural and disability awareness. Cross-industry initiatives will help New Zealand media entities develop new ways of operating, through collaboration.

**Q15: Can you clarify the relationship between COVID-19 and the establishment of the PIJF?**

***Note: Given that COVID-19 is ‘the dominant story’ in the news and the government’s response to COVID-19 has and will continue to be the key electoral issue, linking the two, in our view, creates an unnecessary political risk. This is particularly the case given that the problem the PIJF is trying to solve was amplified by COVID-19 –not generated by COVID-19. Our view is that any investment in journalism should be ring-fenced and managed by the House (not by the Crown); in other words, a non-partisan view should be sought, heard, acted upon, and independently reviewed.***

The PIJF was designed to preserve and enhance public interest journalism that will otherwise be at risk or lost due to the impact of COVID-19 on newsrooms. The Cabinet paper is available on the Manatū Taonga website, see [here](#).

**Q19: Are there any other situations where the government directly funds specific journalists? If yes, please advise the name of the fund (or other means), how much is funded, and what funds have been provided to what journalists?**

The PIJF is administered by NZ On Air at arm's length from government. The fund includes role-based funding, not the direct funding of specific journalists.

I trust this information is helpful. If you have any further questions about the PIJF, you can direct these to Carl Olive, Manager | Media Policy by email at [carl.olive@mch.govt.nz](mailto:carl.olive@mch.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of Manatū Taonga's response to your request under the OIA. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we do not intend to publish our response to your request.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emily Fabling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Fabling  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Policy and Sector Performance**