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18 November 2024

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information request and response

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act ("OIA") dated 19 October 2024.

You have requested information on the following:

1. *How the work of Murray Jones and Heaven's Helpline project was selected for funding by NZ On Air*
2. *Criteria for funding from NZ on Air and how it aligns with this project*
3. *How NZ on Air defines 'investigative journalism' and any standards or expectations for this*
4. *The amount of funding from NZ On Air that was provided for this project, and all funding to the NZ Herald between 2020-2024*
5. *Information provided to NZ on Air about the project including the credentials of Murray Jones and others working on it, and any reporting by NZ Herald about use of funding*
6. *What requirements NZ On Air has for responsible reporting when its funding is used for projects that cause harm and may breach broadcasting standards*
7. *Any other information held by NZ on Air about this project*

Please see our response below:

1. Please note that *Heaven's Helpline* was formerly known as *Riches of Heaven*. As per our usual funding process, this project was assessed using the nine investment principles set out in our [Investment Strategy](#). Our [Assessment Process Information](#) document explains how NZ On Air assesses and approves funding for Scripted and Non-Fiction applications.

I have attached a copy of the funding recommendation paper submitted to the NZ On Air Staff Investment Committee in respect of the project in March 2024 – please note, there is an error in the paper where it states that "atmospheric audio...has been recorded in Mormon temples". To clarify, no audio has been recorded inside any temples for the podcast. We have decided to withhold some information in relation to budget details under Section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA.

2. Please see response at 1.
3. Journalism projects (including podcasts) sit under our Non-Fiction contestable funding. Please find attached a copy of our Round Guidelines for Round Toru 2023/24, which was the funding

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round *Heaven's Helpline* applied to. In this round we prioritised Non-Fiction projects that require significant research and/or high production values.

4. The amount and date NZ On Air funding was approved for all funded projects, including content produced by the NZ Herald (also known as NZME Publishing/NZME Holdings), is [searchable](#) on our website. We decline this part of your request under section 18(d) on the grounds that the information requested is publicly available.
5. I have attached the information that we are able to release:
 - The project's application form
 - Project proposal
 - Letter from NZME confirming legal oversight for the project
 - Duty of care plan
 - Producer reports received to date – to clarify, the producer has yet to draw down the full funding amount. All production funding agreements include a drawdown schedule under which our funding is distributed with reporting requirements required for most instalments. Of the instalments that have been paid out, we have received two producer reports.

The following redactions in these documents have been made:

- Details of personal information under section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons
- Details of budget information under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA on grounds that making available of the information would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information.

We have withheld in full:

- the production budget, marketing plan and cost reports we have received to date under section 9(2)(b)(ii).
6. Please refer to our [Standard Funding Agreement](#) template where all funded content must meet the standards in section 4(1) of the Broadcasting Act 1989. This includes maintaining standards that are consistent with the observance of good taste and decency, the maintenance of law and order, the privacy of the individual, and [any approved code of broadcasting practice](#). We decline this part of your request under Section 18(d) as the information requested is publicly available.
 7. I have attached other information related to *Heaven's Helpline* we are able to release:
 - The Letter of Offer
 - The NZ On Air funding agreement for this project.

The following redactions in these documents have been made:

- Details of personal information under section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons
- Details of budget information under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA on grounds the making available of the information would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information

For your information, funding provided by NZ On Air for all successful projects is [searchable](#) on our website. You can also [sign up](#) to receive our regular industry newsletter via our website.

You have the right to refer this response to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with it. More information on how to do this is [here](#). NZ On Air proactively releases information in accordance with the Government's commitment to the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. This includes publishing responses to requests for information under the OIA. Please note that this response (with your name removed) will be published on the NZ On Air website shortly and will remain on our website for 12 months.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Ngā manaakitanga,



Raewyn Rasch

HEAD OF OPERATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS AND CULTURE

KAIHAUTŪ NGĀ WHAKAHAERE, NGĀ RANGIPŪ MAHITAHĪ ME TE AHUREA

Attachments:

1. An excerpt of the funding recommendation paper submitted to the NZ On Air Staff Investment Committee in March 2024
2. A copy of NZ On Air's Round Toru 2024 guidelines
3. A copy of the application form for *Heaven's Helpline*
4. A copy of the *Heaven's Helpline* funding proposal
5. A copy of the letter from NZME confirming legal oversight for the *Heaven's Helpline*
6. A copy of the duty of care plan for *Heaven's Helpline*
7. A copy of the producer reports we have received for *Heaven's Helpline* to date
8. A copy of the letter of offer for *Heaven's Helpline*
9. A copy of the funding agreement for *Heaven's Helpline*