Irirangi Te Motu
NZ On Air



Music Diversity Report 2026

Mazbou Q

Photographer: Rapheal Recht

Contents

Introduction	2
New Music Single Key Findings	3
New Music Project Key Findings	4
Focused Rounds Key Findings	5
New Music Single	8
New Music Project	14
Focused Rounds	16
Methodology and Addendum	19

Introduction

Irirangi Te Motu | NZ On Air is tasked with reflecting and developing New Zealand's identity and culture. To do this, we seek to ensure the content we fund is an authentic reflection of the audience it serves. As a key funder of local music content, NZ On Air is in a unique position to be able to report trends within the local music sector. Previously, diversity within the music sector was reported as part of NZ On Air's wider Diversity Report. This is the fourth standalone NZ On Air Music Diversity Report.

This is also the tenth year of data collection on diversity in music funding. Initially the report solely monitored gender balance, but as of 2020, our reporting was expanded to also monitor ethnicity, genre and regional representation of the applicants and recipients of NZ On Air music funding. Applicants were able to self-select options from the following diversity headings – Gender, Ethnicity, Hometown and Genre – and were able to select multiple options for all but the Genre heading.

Funding applicants were split into the following gender categories based on the self-selected gender of the creative forces (e.g. singers/writers) involved in each work:

· Female – female solo artist or all-female group
· Male – male solo artist or all-male group
· Gender diverse – those that identified as gender diverse
· Mixed – mixed gender groups
· Other category – those with identities not captured in the prior options
· Rather Not Say – those that selected 'Rather Not Say'

Applicants were able to select any number of ethnicities that best represented their backgrounds and/or identities. For the analysis in this report, where artists identified with more than one ethnicity, they were counted in each applicable category.[1] In line with guidance from Statistics NZ, we primarily report on the following ethnic categories:

- European [2]
- Māori
- Asian [3]
- Pacific

NZ On Air provides funding for a number of focused rounds and initiatives outside of New Music Single and New Music Project, such as New Music Pasifika (for artists of Pacific descent) or Waiata Takitahi (songs that contain 25%+ te reo Māori lyrical content) and, as of 2023, New Music Pan-Asian. This report primarily focuses on New Music Single and New Music Project funding, which make up the bulk of music funding. However, in recognition of NZ On Air's efforts to support diverse audiences and artists, we are also providing an overview of the results of these three focused funding streams.

On the following pages, we show a comparison across New Music Single and New Music Project funding between 2024/25 and 2025/26. The data for New Music Single and New Music Project was collected to the end of the 2025/26 funding year.

1 This means that percentages will exceed 100 but it is necessary to accurately represent artists with two or more ethnicities

2 Includes NZ European

3 Includes Pan-Asian ethnicities

New Music Single Key Findings

766
applications

149
songs funded

20%
success rate

Artists who identified as Māori as either their sole or combined ethnicity accounted for **22**% of applications yet **28**% of funded recipients, indicating Māori applicants were funded at a higher rate than their share of demand.

Alternative/Indie was the strongest-performing genre by volume, generating **39%** of applications and securing the largest share of funded songs **(27%).**

Artists who identified as Pasifika were strongly represented among funded recipients, accounting for **30** of **149** recipients (**20%**), compared with **87** of **766** applications (**11%**).

Female applicants recorded the highest funded total in both years. Female applications declined only slightly, from **292** to **277**, while funded songs increased from **59** to **63.**

New Music Project Key Findings

87
applications

44
songs funded

51%
success rate

The longer-term trend shows that the funding success rate declined from approximately **64% in** 2022/23 to **51%** in 2025/26, however this is a byproduct of a significant increase in applications.

Male artists received **50%** of funding, compared with **27%** for female artists. This was broadly consistent with 2024/25, when male artists received **53%** of funding and female artists received **32%**; female representation therefore declined by five percentage points in 2025/26.

Māori artists represented **34%** of applicants and **34%** of total funded recipients.

Asian artists represented a small proportion of applicants, accounting for **7%** of applications and **5%** of recipients.

Focused Rounds Key Findings

Waiata Takitahi

25
applications

15
songs funded

60%
success rate

Gender representation among applicants was evenly split between male and female applicants (**28%** each), while mixed groups accounted for **20%** of applications and male groups **12%.**

Female applicants were the most successful cohort, receiving **40%** of all grants despite representing **28%** of applications, indicating a higher funding success rate relative to their application share.

Mixed groups and gender diverse applicants were less represented among recipients, each receiving **7%** of funded grants despite accounting for **20%** and **12%** of applications respectively.

Focused Rounds Key Findings

79
applications

20
songs funded

25%
success rate

New Music Pasifika

Samoan artists continued to make up most applications (**69%**) and funded recipients (**60%**), mirroring last year's results. In total, **22%** of Samoan applicants were successful in securing funding.

59% of applications were male artists, compared to **29%** of female applicants.

45% of the funding went to male artists, compared to **40%** of female artists.

Focused Rounds Key Findings

New Music Pan-Asian

77
applications

20
songs funded

26%
success rate

Demand increased, with applications rising from **65** in 2024/25 to **77** (**+18%**). However, like last year, funding remained consistent at **20** recipients contributing to a drop in the success rate from **31%** to **26%.**

Applications were dominated by male artists, seeing male artists representing **51%** of applications.

Despite female applications only representing **35%** of applications, they made up **40%** of successful recipients compared to only **35%** for male artists.

30% of applications were from artists with China as their main or shared ethnicity, receiving **35%** of the funding.

New Music Single

Applications and Funded Songs by Gender

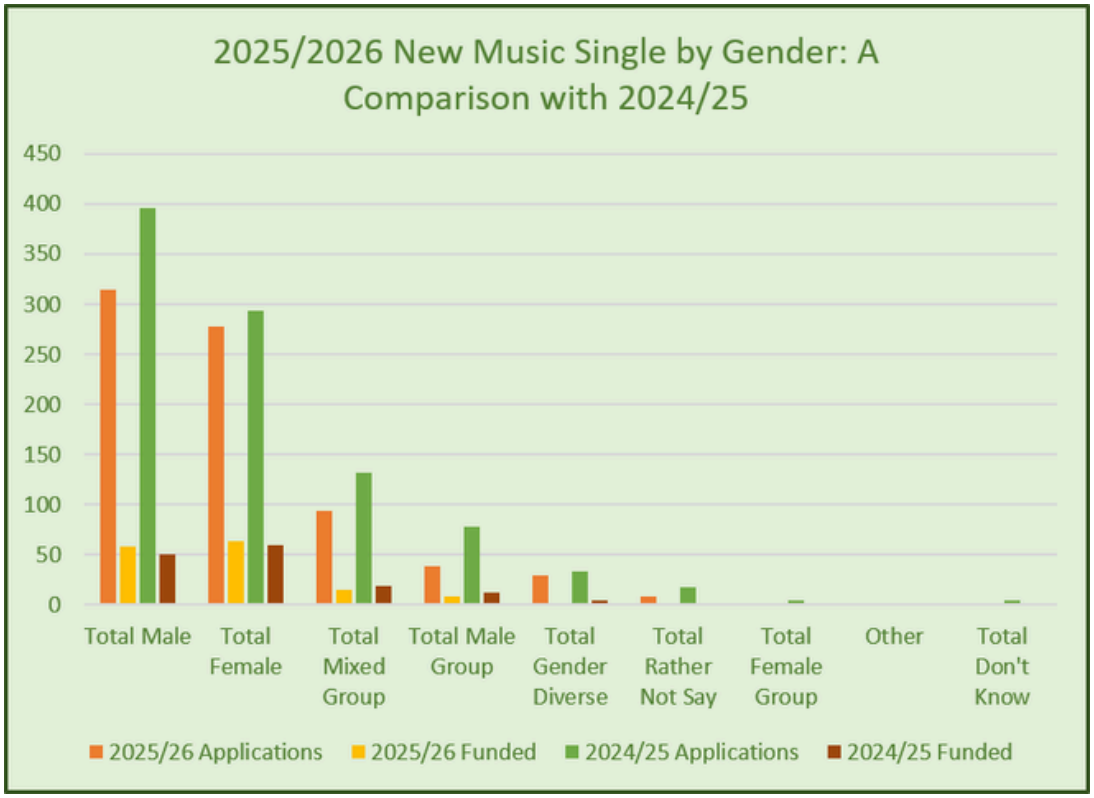
Male applicants remained the largest group, although applications fell from 396 to 315. The number funded increased from 51 to 58, lifting the success rate from approximately 13% to 18%.

The gap between male and female application numbers narrowed. There were 104 more male than female applications in 2024/25, compared with only 38 more in 2025/26. Despite receiving fewer applications, the female category received more funded songs in both years.

Gender Diverse outcomes declined. Applications decreased slightly from 33 to 29, but funded songs fell from five to two, resulting in a success-rate reduction from approximately 15% to 7%

Mixed Group applications and funded songs both declined, from 132 applications and 19 funded songs to 94 applications and 15 funded songs.

Male Group applications halved, falling from 78 to 39, while funded songs fell from 13 to 9. Because the reduction in funding was smaller than the reduction in applications, the success rate increased from approximately 17% to 23%. The small size of the category means this percentage should be interpreted cautiously.



New Music Single

Applications and Funded Songs by Ethnicity [4]

European:

Artists identifying as European represented 78% of applications in both 2025/26 and 2024/25. While European representation among applicants remained stable at 78%, their share of funded songs increased from 63% in 2024/25 to 74% in 2025/26. In 2025/26, 111 of the 597 applications involving European artists were funded, a 19% success rate.

Māori:

Artists identifying as Māori accounted for 22% of applications and 28% of funded songs in 2025/26, compared with 26% and 30% respectively in 2024/25. Although both shares declined, Māori representation remained higher among funded songs than applications. Māori artists achieved a 25% success rate, with 42 of 168 applications funded.

Pacific Peoples:

Pacific representation remained stable at 11% of applications, while the share of funded songs increased from 17% to 21%. Pacific artists therefore continued to receive a greater share of funding than their share of applications, with 30 of 87 applications funded, a 34% success rate.

Asian:

Asian artists continued to represent 11% of applications, but their share of funded songs fell from 13% in 2024/25 to 8% in 2025/26. Twelve of 84 applications involving Asian artists were funded, giving a 14% success rate. These figures exclude the separate New Music Pan-Asian stream.



Tusekah
Photographer: Frances Carter

4 Ethnicity is reported using the total-response method. Applicants who identified with more than one ethnicity are included in each applicable group. Percentages therefore overlap and do not total 100%.

New Music Single

Applications and Funded Songs by Genre

Alternative/Indie remained the most popular genre, accounting for 39% of applications and 27% of funded songs. Its application share was comparable with 2024/25, although its share of funded songs declined from 30% to 27%.

Hip Hop/RnB recorded the strongest positive funding shift, representing 13% of applications and 23% of funded songs. Its application share remained broadly stable, while its share of funded songs increased from 18% in 2024/25 to 23% in 2025/26.

Reggae/Roots had the lowest application and funding volumes, accounting for 4% of applications and 3% of funded songs. Its funded share declined from 8% in 2024/25, returning to its 2023/24 level of 3%.

Among the remaining genres, Rock/Metal accounted for 9% of funded songs, Dance/Electro for 8%, and Folk/Country for 6%. These results were broadly consistent with the previous year.

Pop was the second-largest genre, representing 21% of applications and 25% of funded songs. This was broadly consistent with 2024/25, when Pop accounted for 20% of applications and 22% of funded songs.

New Music Single

Applications and Funded Songs by Region[5]

Auckland continued to produce the largest proportion of applicants and funded artists, accounting for 42% of applications and 44% of funded songs.

Canterbury was the second most represented region, contributing 18% of applications and 17% of funded songs. Its share of applications remained consistent with 2024/25, while its funded share increased from 12% to 17%, indicating stronger representation among recipients this year.

Bay of Plenty accounts for 4% of applicants but 6% of funded recipients, one of the clearest positive differences in the regional data.

Wellington has the clearest gap among the three largest regions.
Wellington appears in 16% of applications but 13% of funded recipients, making its funded share about 3 percentage points lower than its application share.

5 Regional representation refers to an artist's hometown, region of birth or origin, rather than the artist's current geographic base.

New Music Project

Applications and Funded Songs by Gender

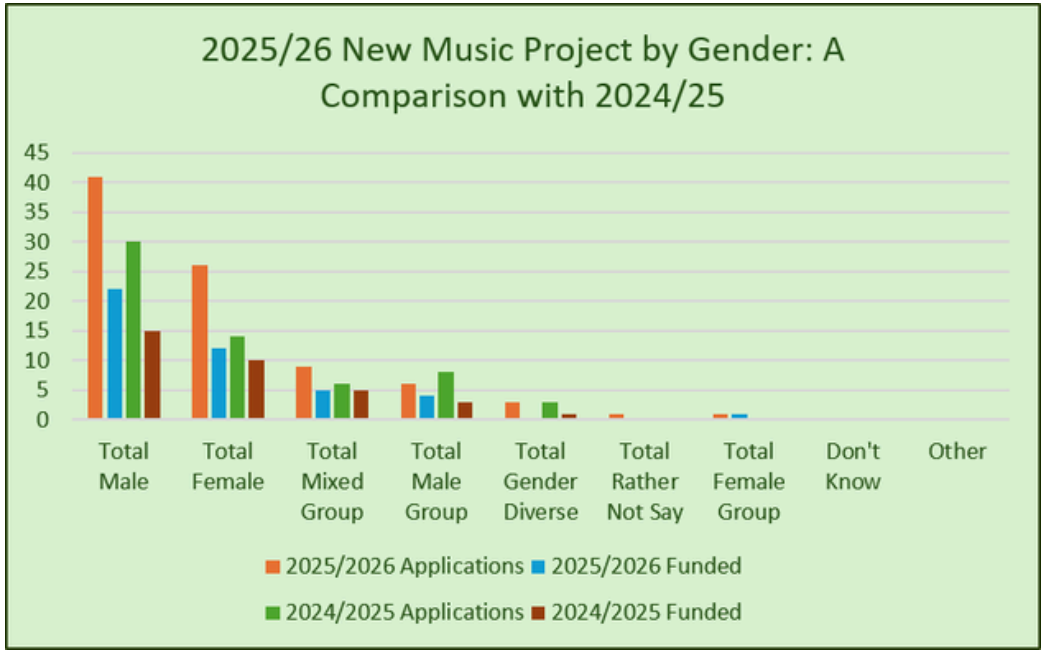
Male artists accounted for 47% of applications and received 50% of funding. This suggests male artists were slightly overrepresented among recipients compared with their share of applications. This is comparable to the statistics of 2024/25.

Female artists accounted 30% of applications and 27% of recipients. Their share of funding was therefore slightly lower than their share of applications, although the difference is small. This is comparable to 2024/25, but lower than the result in 2022/23 (34%) and 2021/22 (39%).

Mixed Groups represented 10% of applications and 11% of recipients, indicating funding outcomes were generally proportional to application levels.

Male Groups represented 7% of applications but 9% of recipients, suggesting a somewhat stronger funding outcome relative to application volume.

Gender Diverse artists made up 4% of applications but received no funding. However, the number of applications is very small, so this should be interpreted with caution.



New Music Project

Applications and Funded Songs by Ethnicity

Artists identifying as European as their main ethnicity, or one of their ethnic backgrounds, continue to make up most applications and recipients. Similar to last year, 61% of applications and 60% of successful artists were European either solely or in combination. Artists from European only backgrounds made up 39% of both total applications and recipients.

Artists identifying as Māori, either solely or in combination with another ethnicity, accounted for 34% of applications and 34% of funded recipients. Of the 30 Māori applications received, 15 were funded, resulting in a 50% success rate.

Pasifika artists made up the third biggest share of application and funding volume, accounting for 17% and 18% respectively. This means that they were slightly over-represented among recipients. This is a significant increase from the 8% of application and recipient representation in 2023/24.

Artists identifying as Asian accounted for 7% of applications and 5% of funded recipients in 2025/26, an improvement from 1% of applications and no funded recipients in the previous year. Artists from Middle Eastern and/or Latin American backgrounds also accounted for 5% of funded recipients.

Artists identifying with African backgrounds accounted for 2% of funded recipients, up from 1% in 2024/25, but remained below the 8% recorded in 2023/24.



CHAII

Photographer: Apela Bell

New Music Project

Applications and Funded Songs by Genre

Alternative/Indie remained the most popular genre, accounting for 39% of applications and 27% of funded songs. Its application share was comparable with 2024/25, although its share of funded songs declined from 30% to 27%.

Among the remaining genres, Rock/Metal accounted for 9% of funded songs, Dance/Electro for 8%, and Folk/Country for 6%. These results were broadly consistent with the previous year.

Reggae/Roots had the lowest application and funding volumes, accounting for 4% of applications and 3% of funded songs. Its funded share declined from 8% in 2024/25, returning to its 2023/24 level of 3%.

Pop was the second-largest genre, representing 21% of applications and 25% of funded songs. This was broadly consistent with 2024/25, when Pop accounted for 20% of applications and 23% of funded songs.

Hip Hop/RnB recorded the strongest positive funding shift, representing 13% of applications and 23% of funded songs. Its application share remained broadly stable, while its share of funded songs increased from 18% in 2024/25 to 23% in 2025/26.

New Music Project

Applications and Funded Songs by Region

Auckland continues to dominate both applications and funding outcomes, accounting for 38% of all applications and 43% of funded recipients.

Wellington was the second-largest contributor, representing 10% of applications and 14% of funded recipients. The higher proportion of recipients than applicants suggests Wellington artists performed comparatively well in the assessment process.

Christchurch generated the third-highest number of applications (14%) and received 11% of funded recipients. While Christchurch maintained a strong presence in the applicant pool, its share of funding was slightly lower than its share of applications.

Hamilton showed a particularly strong funding outcome, contributing only 5% of applications but receiving 7% of funded recipients. This suggests a relatively high success rate among Hamilton-based applicants.

Artists from several locations submitted applications but did not receive funding, including Mount Maunganui, Taupō, Cambridge, Queenstown and Invercargill. Most of these submitted only one or two applications though, making outcomes highly sensitive to small applicant numbers.



WHO SHOT SCOTT
Photographer: Conor Pritchard

Focused Rounds

New Music Pan-Asian

Male artists submitted just over half of all applications (51%) but received 35% of songs funded. This was a decrease from 2024/25, when male artists represented 45% of applicants and received 55% of the funding.

Female artists accounted for 35% of applications and 40% of recipients, receiving the largest share of funding by gender. 8 of the 27 female applicants were funded, giving a success rate of 30%.

Mixed-gender groups accounted for 9% of applications and 15% of recipients. Three of the seven mixed-group applications were funded, resulting in a 43% success rate. Artists who selected “Rather Not Say” and “Other” each received 5% of funded places, while neither of the two gender-diverse applicants was funded.

The largest individual ethnicity category was Chinese, representing 14% of applications and 20% of recipients. Applicants identifying with Chinese heritage across several combined categories received further funding.

The genre profile shifted substantially. Alternative/Indie became the largest funded genre, receiving 40% of funded places, up from 15% in the previous year. Dance/Electronic and Hip Hop/RnB each received 20%, while Pop accounted for 15% despite generating the highest application volume at 31%.

Auckland’s concentration increased to 73% of applications and 80% of recipients, compared with 60% of funded artists in 2024/25. Wellington remained the only other region with more than 10% of recipients, receiving 15% of funded place while Canterbury received the remaining 5%.



dān dān
Photographer: Flora Xie

Focused Rounds

New Music Pasifika

Solo male artists represented 59% of applications and 45% of recipients, while solo female artists accounted for 29% of applications and 40% of recipients. Female applicants achieved a higher success rate than male applicants, at 35% compared with 19%. Groups received the remaining 15% of songs funded.

Artists identifying solely as Samoan remained the largest group, accounting for 43% of applications and 50% of recipients. Across all recorded combinations, artists with Samoan heritage received 65% of songs funded, compared with 60% in 2024/25. Artists identifying solely as Tongan received a further 15%.

Hip Hop/RnB remained the leading genre, receiving 35% of songs funded, down from 40% in 2024/25. Alternative/Indie, Pop and Reggae/Roots each received 20%, creating a more even distribution across genres.

Auckland accounted for 77% of applications and 80% of the recipients recorded by region, up from 50% of recipients in 2024/25. Canterbury, Waikato, Wellington and the “Other” category each recorded one recipient.



LEAO
Photographer: Nicola Sandford

Focused Rounds

Waiata Takitahi

Male artists accounted for 28% of applications and 27% of funded recipients, down from 36% for both measures in 2024/25. However, their success rate remained broadly unchanged, increasing slightly from 56% to 57%.

Artists identifying solely as Māori received 53% of funded places, up from 43%, while artists identifying as both Māori and European received 33%, compared with 36% in the previous year.

The genre profile shifted considerably. Pop became the largest funded genre, increasing from 29% to 40% of recipients, while Dance/Electro rose from no funded recipients to 27%. Conversely, Hip Hop/RnB fell from 43% of funded recipients in 2024/25 to 13% in 2025/26.

Female representation improved significantly. Female artists continued to account for 28% of applications, but their share of funded recipients increased from 14% to 40%. Six of the seven female applicants were funded, resulting in an 86% success rate.

Outcomes for mixed-gender groups declined, accounting for 20% of applications and 7% of recipients, down from 28% and 36% respectively in 2024/25. Their success rate decreased from 71% to 20%. In contrast, all three male-group applications were funded, increasing their share of recipients from 7% to 20%.

Methodology

For the NZ On Air Music Diversity report, all applicants self-selected options under the following diversity headings – Gender, Ethnicity, Hometown and Genre. Applicants were able to select multiple options for all but the Genre heading.

Prior to 2020/21, the report offered only Male, Female and Mixed Gender options for Gender diversity. For the Mixed Gender option, however, this incorporated all artists/groups who had mixed gender group members, which included gender diverse artists. From 2020/21, to provide a more accurate picture, Gender Diverse artists were brought out into a separate Gender category.

For ethnicity, where an artist or applicant identified with more than one ethnicity, they were counted in each applicable group.
Regional representation refers to an artist's 'hometown', their region of birth and/or origin, rather than their current geographic base.

Appendum

For details on music diversity between 2016 and 2020, the past reports (where music diversity was included within the wider NZ On Air Diversity Report) can be accessed at the links below:

Diversity Report 2018
Diversity Report 2019
Diversity Report 2020
Music Diversity Report 2022
Music Diversity Report 2023
Music Diversity Report 2024
Music Diversity Report 2025