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Screen production industry in New Zealand

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Overview

- New Zealand's gateway to its screen production industry: [Just Add New Zealanders](#)

Screen production (feature films, television series, television commercials, visual effects, animation and movies of the week) is a major growth industry for New Zealand. Following on from the phenomenal box office and Oscar®-winning success of films such as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *King Kong* and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, New Zealand continues to host many other international feature film, TV and TV commercial productions from around the world. New Zealand talent is in demand globally, and the country's film production infrastructure has been built up to world-class standards.

The industry has grown rapidly in the last few decades. While most recent attention has focused on feature films, New Zealand also has a fine reputation for TV commercial production and TV drama and documentary production.

While New Zealand's scenery has long made it a popular shooting location, its key competitive edge is the creativity, innovation and experience of the people working in screen production. New Zealand crews are world-renowned for their professionalism and inventiveness. New Zealand actors, directors and producers are working around the world. And New Zealand companies have emerged as leading suppliers of special effects and CGI to productions around the world.

New Zealand's international successes are built on a strong domestic production sector. With Government support, it has a proud history of feature film-making. Recent films include *Out of the Blue*, *Black Sheep*, *50 Ways of Saying Fabulous*, *The World's Fastest Indian*, *River Queen*, *Once Were Warriors* and *Whale Rider*. Several New Zealand companies also



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have long track records of producing outstanding TV commercials for international clients.

Government support has now been extended to international screen productions, through its [Large Budget Screen Production Grants](#).

Industry facts

From the Statistics New Zealand report *Screen Industry in New Zealand 2005*:

- For the 2005 financial year the New Zealand screen industry recorded total gross revenue of NZ\$2,602 million.
- Production and post-production services was the most significant sector, accounting for NZ\$1,294 million (or 50 percent) of gross revenue.
- The television broadcasting, film and video distribution, and film exhibition sectors contributed NZ\$1,005 million, NZ\$179 million and NZ\$125 million, respectively.
- The feature film and short film sub-sector recorded the highest level of gross revenue, earning NZ\$699 million.
- The largest international contributor to gross revenue for the New Zealand screen industry was the United States, with NZ\$521 million (or 88 percent) of all international revenue. The United Kingdom and Australia were the next largest contributors to gross revenue.

Major markets for screen production

- North America
- Europe
- Asia
- Australia

Key strengths

Creative talent

New Zealand has Oscar[®]-winning directors, actors, scriptwriters, special effects artists, digital animators, and costume designers, all with their work in demand worldwide. New Zealand crews are known for their professionalism, lack of demarcation, and “can-do” approaches.

Technology

New Zealand has cutting-edge special effects and digital animation houses that produce award winning results for clients around the world.

Locations

New Zealand has been positioned as “the world in one country” because of the stunning range of scenery on offer, almost all within 1 or 2 hours’ flying time of a major city.



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Organisation

The Lord of the Rings (LOTR) and other large multi-million dollar productions have displayed New Zealand's proficiency at managing major screen productions. The LOTR trilogy was the biggest and most ambitious feature project in film history, with more than 120 locations and thousands of special effects shots over the three films.

Infrastructure

New Zealand has excellent transport and communications networks including high-capacity broadband connections allowing real-time collaboration between New Zealand shoots and directors and editors in other countries. New Zealand has also developed studio and post-production facilities.

Nationwide support

In New Zealand, everyone is behind the screen production industry from national Government agencies to local government and communities where production takes place.

Significant products

Feature films

- *King Kong*
- *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
- *The Lord of the Rings trilogy*
- *The Last Samurai*
- *Out of The Blue*
- *Black Sheep*
- *River Queen*
- *World's Fastest Indian*
- *50 Ways of Saying Fabulous*
- *Sylvia*
- *Without a Paddle*
- *Whale Rider*
- *Perfect Strangers*
- *Boogeyman*
- *Spooked*
- *The Locals*
- *Rain*
- *Toy Love*
- *In My Father's Den*
- *Perfect Creature*
- *Fracture*
- *The Maori Merchant of Venice*

TV series and movies

- *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*
- *Xena: Warrior Princess*
- *Lucy: The Lucille Ball Story*
- *Murder in Greenwich*



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- *Maiden Voyage*
- *Ike: Countdown to D-Day*
- *Kidnapped*
- *Power Rangers*

Advertising

New Zealand companies have produced many TV commercials for international companies including Audi, Jaguar, BMW, Mitsubishi Motors, Sony, Mars bars, Vodafone, Coca Cola and Burger King.

Production and post-production services

New Zealand companies offer a full range of production and post-production services both for New Zealand-based and overseas productions.

There are many other companies with significant international track records in digital effects and TVC production. Contact details are available from Film New Zealand, The Screen Production and Development Association or The Communication Agencies Association of New Zealand.

Screen production infrastructure and technology

With the New Zealand screen industry in growth mode, the country is also developing new production and post-production facilities to meet international demand. New Zealand's film friendly capital city Wellington has the renowned Stone Street Studios (soundstage) which is one of the largest screen production facilities in the world. Next door is the cutting edge Park Road Post postproduction facility developed for New Zealand and international film-makers. New Zealand's commercial hub, Auckland, also has extensive studio facilities including Henderson Valley Studios most recently used for *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Industry sector structure

New Zealand's screen production industry is largely made up of small to medium-sized production companies and service suppliers. The industry is highly flexible. Suppliers often work on feature films one week and TV productions or commercials the next. Some production companies have their own in-house digital effects and post-production divisions which also provide services to the industry at large. Screen productions shot in New Zealand might be made by:

- New Zealand production companies
- New Zealand-overseas joint production companies
- Overseas production companies
- New Zealand TV companies.

The feature film industry is dominated by overseas-financed productions, while TV production is dominated by New Zealand financing. TV commercials are about 60 percent New Zealand-financed and 40 percent



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overseas-financed. New Zealand television also includes a fully funded Maori television station which aims to support Maori language and culture.

Locations

New Zealand's stunning natural beauty continues to be displayed on cinema screens around the world in a variety of movies shot here recently.

The country is often described as "the world in one country" encapsulating the stunning range of scenery on offer, almost all within 1 or 2 hours' flying time of a major city.

Filming takes place from one end of New Zealand to the other – mountains and fiords, rainforests and lush farmland, magnificent lakes and bubbling mud pools, sandy beaches, diverse urban landscapes and craggy coastlines are all easily accessible. New Zealand has doubled for the United States, Canada, India, Africa, Japan, Asia, Antarctica, ancient Greece – as well as Middle Earth and the land of Narnia.

With the country's vast variety of locations, the largest cities – Auckland and Wellington – remain the major centres for studio-based production and for post-production. However, New Zealand's sophisticated screen production infrastructure and highly experienced crews encourages production throughout the country.

Government support

The New Zealand government – through Investment New Zealand, in conjunction with the New Zealand Film Commission and the national locations office Film New Zealand – is working hard to market New Zealand as a location for filming.

[The New Zealand Film Commission](#) is a key investor in many New Zealand features and the main support for local talent developing feature projects. It aims to expand support for local films, leverage large-budget, high profile local productions and position New Zealand to attract productions from offshore. The agency also administers the Large Budget Screen Production Grants, which offer a 12.5 percent rebate on New Zealand production spending over NZ\$15 million, adding to the attractiveness of New Zealand as a screen production location.

[Film New Zealand](#), the national locations office, facilitates access both nationally and internationally to New Zealand's production destinations. Independent and industry-led, it provides information on New Zealand's screen production environment, locations, services and facilities, as well as introductions and support for international filmmakers. It is a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). There is a nationwide commitment to being "Film Friendly", through Film New Zealand's network of regional film offices and the 27 local and district councils that have adopted "Film Friendly" policies.

This information was prepared by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. Visit newzealand.com/business for more information about New Zealand and its export industries.



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[Investment New Zealand](#), New Zealand's investment promotion agency, acts as a link between New Zealand businesses and international investors. Through its offshore offices (which include offices in Los Angeles, London and Singapore), it works with international screen production companies and independent producers to identify and explore opportunities in New Zealand, providing vital introduction, coordination and communication services.

[The New Zealand Immigration Service](#), Immigration New Zealand provides support and assistance to help skilled and experienced people across a variety of global industries move to and settle in New Zealand.

Industry contacts

[NZ On Screen](#)

An online showcase of New Zealand television and film.

[New Zealand Trade and Enterprise](#)

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) is the New Zealand government's economic development agency and works with the screen industry to build its capability and increase its international connections.