



Brian Gaynor Initiatives

23 September 2024

SEEKING BOLD, AMBITIOUS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

BRIAN GAYNOR BUSINESS JOURNALISM INITIATIVES OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

New Zealand's most generously endowed initiative to promote investigative business journalism and skills is [open for applications](#) for 2025.

Now in its second year, the Brian Gaynor Business Journalism Initiative is seeking bold, ambitious projects that newsrooms would typically find difficult to fund or commit to because of the risks associated with their scope, resource intensity, and potential to require long term commitment.

The deadline for applications is Saturday, November 30, 2024. Funding decisions will be announced prior to Christmas 2024.

The Initiative also funds, at a smaller scale, well-considered applications that would allow a working New Zealand journalist to gain business journalism skills where lessons learnt can be shared with colleagues and competitors.

Guidance for Applicants

“Our threshold for funding is high,” says the chair of the selection committee, Anna Gibbons, wife of the late Brian Gaynor. Anna established the initiative in Brian's memory after his untimely death in May 2022.

“We are most likely to fund ambitious investigative proposals that clearly demonstrate the potential to break a major business news story or stories.

“Based on our experience as a selection committee last year, we are more likely to fund an application with a clear news outcome than applications where there is an intent to become better informed or undertake a general review of an issue.

“We are also more likely to fund applications with a fully costed budget.

“For applicants who work for a news organisation, we are more likely to look favourably on their project if there is financial commitment from the employer - particularly if the budget is in excess of \$30,000. In addition, it would be good to see a statement of commitment from an employer, should a project require the journalist to take time away from normal duties.”

Applications from freelance journalists need to be sufficiently detailed in budget, scope and output.

In the case of educational/professional development opportunities, we are more likely to fund a request that is able to demonstrate the capacity to contribute to stronger business journalism in Aotearoa New Zealand.

With investigative journalism projects, while the identity of successful applicants will be announced by the selection committee, the subject of the projects will not be disclosed, until the funded investigation is published.

In the case of funding for educational or professional development applications, the journalist or journalists and their intended activity will be disclosed when successful applications are announced.

Purpose of the Initiative

The Brian Gaynor Business Journalism Initiative seeks to strengthen and promote the quality and appeal of New Zealand business and economic journalism.

The Brian Gaynor Business Journalism Initiative both honours and gives expression to the late Brian Gaynor’s passion for his adopted home, Aotearoa New Zealand, and his contribution to business, financial and economic commentary and writing over more than four decades.

“This initiative is the best practical expression I can think of to honour Brian’s life and his devotion to the news media, to high quality information being available to the public about the New Zealand economy and its capital markets, and to the role of business journalists in providing that information,” says Anna Gibbons.

“Brian believed deeply in how important it is for investors to have trust in their financial markets, in the importance of public disclosure to help achieve that. Brian’s forthright weekly business columns - written over more than 20 years - proved the role and the power of high-quality analysis of business and financial affairs in keeping the markets honest.”

The Milford Foundation, the charitable arm of Milford Asset Management, of which Brian Gaynor was a founder, has kindly agreed to manage the administration of the Initiative, which means that all the earnings of the fund will be available for distribution.

A selection committee comprising Anna Gibbons, BusinessDesk founding editor Patrick Smellie, award-winning former senior business writer Nikki Mandow, and former journalist

and financial market communications professional Geoff Senescall oversees the selection process and allocation of funds.

Brian Gaynor Business Journalism Initiative – The Details

Aim: To foster high quality and informed business writing and journalism in New Zealand.

Eligibility: Journalists, writers and editors, both staff and freelance, as well as news organisations. Applicants in all forms of media can be considered – text, audio, video, online, electronic and print media. Applicants need not be working in business reporting, but the proposal must be related to economic, financial or business issues.

Applications: Applications considered annually.

This will be a contestable fund, to which applicants can apply with bespoke news projects, educational initiatives or with investigative and research proposals.

Possible examples:

- Funding for an investigation requiring deep research, travel, or sufficient time or additional resource to bring to a landing.
- To undertake short course study, either overseas or within NZ.
- Attendance at a business investigative journalism conference or other domestic or international in-work upskilling.
- Partial or full funding for a bespoke business journalism project such as a book, documentary, or other major journalistic output.
- Creation of a reusable, business journalism training resource that would focus on young, working journalists starting out in business journalism (possibly, but not necessarily, involving a journalism school in NZ).

In addition, an annual award has been established for tertiary level journalism students, diploma, undergraduate or post-graduate, who produce outstanding work demonstrating significant business journalism skills.

For further information, applicants are encouraged to contact selection panel members:

Patrick Smellie – patrick@businessdesk.co.nz

Nikki Mandow – nikki.mandow@auckland.ac.nz

Geoff Senescall – senescall@senescallakers.co.nz