



Press Release: Screening the Top 18 films and Best School Film from the 2026 Vista Foundation 48Hours.

**The Vista Foundation 48Hours Grand Finals
7.30pm, October 17th, 2026
Embassy Theatre, Wellington.**

Buy tickets here:

<https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2026/vista-foundation-48hours-grand-finals-2026/wellington>

48Hours 2026 Grand Finals Shortlist Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wo78smbm-no>

National Awards and Prizes:

<https://www.48hours.co.nz/city-info-1/prizes-and-awards/>

The annual 48Hours filmmaking competition has once again captured the creative spirit of Aotearoa, with thousands of filmmakers across the motu writing, shooting, and editing short films in just two days. Now, as the nation looks ahead to the Grand Finals, anticipation is building for which team will be crowned the Vista Foundation 48Hours 2026 Grand National Champion, with the top prize of \$15,000 cash from WingNut Films.

This year's competition has shown an increase of teams signing up, with a wide range of films showcasing the innovation, humour, and ingenuity of New Zealand's filmmaking community. In its 23rd year, the competition offers an exhilarating platform for both emerging and established filmmakers and is NZ's largest guerrilla filmmaking event. Teams from all corners of New Zealand are tasked with writing, shooting, and editing a short film within a 48-hour window on 31st July to 2nd August, 2026.

In 2026, we had 594 teams register for the competition and 529 eligible films submitted. Nationwide there were 194 School Teams and 105 Tertiary Teams signed up!

All will come to a head when filmmakers are acknowledged for their efforts and compete for the prestigious title of Grand National Champion at a spectacular Grand Finals event, which will be held at the Embassy Theatre in Wellington on 17th October.

The top eighteen films will screen alongside the 3 Sir Peter Jackson Wildcards. The awards will go out to the teams who stood out among the rest and shone at a national level. Tickets for this fun and thrilling evening are available on the Eventfinda website or via the 48Hours website.

The 2026 National Judging Panel features an extraordinary lineup of filmmakers, actors, and producers from New Zealand and around the world, including: Sir Peter Jackson, Cliff Curtis, Jen Yamamoto, Ben Wheatley, Lorcan Finnegan, Jarod Neece, Adam Reynolds, Chris Callus, Chelsie Preston Crayford, Andy Starke, and Amy Nicholson.

Dame Gaylene Preston is judging the National WIFT Outstanding Female/Gender Diverse Filmmaker Award. Wētā FX Animation Supervisor Anneka Fris is judging the Best Animation films.

National Finalists:

An Evening With - A Product of My Imagination
Busby Films - Plan B
Enormous Head LLC - EAR WORM.
Froblin - Mother of all Heists
Glitter Swarm - The Last Train to Pound Town
Glowtime - Hiccupocalypse - Sir Peter Jackson Wildcard
Inclusive Performance Academy - Hacked Off
Lukewarm Lunch - Headspace
MO3PEPS™ - The Dap
Peaked in Film School - RUIN
Permanently Confused - Twin Flame - Sir Peter Jackson Wildcard
Pikitia Rangihaeata - Koera - Sir Peter Jackson Wildcard
rip focus: Tokyo Drift - love you, baby
Sealami - Nudity - Sir Peter Jackson Wildcard
Taste of Kiwi - NAN!
The Horny Owls - RaveYard
Twotors & Co. - Defiance
Typhoid Films - The Apparishioners - Sir Peter Jackson Wildcard

Grand National Champion 2026 - Supported by WingNut Films

- The Grand National Champion APEE

- \$15,000 cash prize from WingNut Films
- \$20,000 worth of post production services from [Park Road Post Production](#)
- \$15,000 worth of gear hire from [Portsmouth Film Equipment Rental](#)
- An exclusive pitch opportunity for the VF48Hours Level Up Grant (\$25,000) with Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga / New Zealand Film Commission.
- x1 year [Digital Pigeon](#) Freelancer subscription

Grand National Runner Up - Supported by WingNut Films

- \$5000 cash prize from [Portsmouth Film Equipment Rental](#)
- x1 year [Digital Pigeon](#) Freelancer subscription

MEDIA/PHOTOS/LINKS

Grand Final Graphics - [LINK](#)

Auckland Regional Finals - [LINK](#)

Wellington Regional Finals - [LINK](#)

Christchurch Regional Finals - [LINK](#)

Across Aotearoa Winners - [Gisborne film-makers win competition's Across Aotearoa regional final](#)

Ticket link: <https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/user/48HoursNZ>

The Vista Foundation 48Hours is presented by The Vista Foundation, in association with Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga / New Zealand Film Commission. We are grateful for the support of these industry giants, along with the WingNut Group and many other generous sponsors.

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