

***Māui & Elvis* brings Māori and Métis/Cree indigenous storytellers together in new international co-production**

Recently announced at World Indigenous Broadcasters Network Conference in Sápmi



Camille Beaudoin



Maria Barlow



Mike Omelus



Janine Morrell-Gunn



Shane Taurima



Monika Ille

AOTEAROA New Zealand—September 3, 2026 — Māori broadcaster [Whakaata Māori](#) in Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada's [APT](#)^N, the world's first national Indigenous broadcaster, have announced a new international Indigenous co-production partnership to bring ***Māui & Elvis***, an adventure sci-fi comedy series for children and families, to audiences in Aotearoa, Canada and around the world.

The announcement was made at the **World Indigenous Broadcasters Network** (WIBN) Conference in Sápmi, Norway, demonstrating the opportunities that emerge when Indigenous broadcasters work across borders to create ambitious, culturally authentic content for global audiences.

Māui & Elvis is a collaboration between Māori and Métis/Cree storytellers, producers and broadcasters across Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada. It demonstrates what becomes possible when Indigenous broadcasters and creatives work together to develop, finance and bring Indigenous stories to audiences beyond their own shores.

Created for children and families (tamariki and whānau) in Aotearoa, Indigenous Canada and internationally, ***Māui & Elvis*** follows two best friends - Māori Māui from Aotearoa and Métis Elvis from

Canada - who must save Māui's beloved Nan after an evil, salt-lusting alien bent on destroying the world takes up residence in her body.

Set primarily in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as Vancouver, *Māui & Elvis* features the extraordinary Canterbury landscapes where mountains meet the sea, whales rise close to shore and the famous mystery of the Kaikōura Lights provides a fitting backdrop for this adventure.

Métis/Cree Series Co-Producer **Camille Beaudoin** says the series draws on the shared values and humour of its Indigenous characters and communities; *"At its heart, Māui & Elvis is a story that celebrates the power of friendship, culture and found family through our shared values and sense of humour. Our two young leads demonstrate the courage, resilience and ingenuity of their Indigenous ancestors as they protect their loved ones from an extra-terrestrial threat."*

Indigenous languages at the heart of the story

For Whakaata Māori, the series is an opportunity to create ambitious and entertaining family content where te reo Māori (the Māori language) and tikanga Māori (Māori cultural values and practices) are integral to the story and the world inhabited by its characters. At least 30% of the dialogue in *Māui & Elvis* will be in te reo Māori, ensuring the language is heard naturally throughout the series and is central to the characters, humour and storytelling.

Maria Barlow, Kaiurungi Pāpāho | Director of Content and Audience Engagement at Whakaata Māori, says; *"For Māori families, seeing and hearing te reo Māori in the stories they love matters. We want our tamariki to see themselves, hear their language and see their culture reflected in bold, imaginative and world-class storytelling. Māui & Elvis is exactly the kind of distinctive, reo-rich content we want to bring to our audiences, while creating opportunities for Māori stories and talent to reach audiences internationally."*

Mike Omelus, Executive Director of Content and Programming Strategy at APTN, says the series demonstrates the creative possibilities that emerge when Indigenous storytellers from different nations work together. *"What makes Māui & Elvis so exciting is that it never asks young audiences to choose between entertainment and culture. It's a big, funny, imaginative adventure filled with aliens, friendship and heart, but it's also deeply grounded in Māori and Métis ways of seeing the world. The series creates space for Indigenous kids to see themselves as the heroes of an epic story while inviting audiences everywhere to come along for the ride."*

Aotearoa Series Co-Producer **Janine Morrell-Gunn** (Ngāti Kahungunu) says the kaupapa (purpose) is to create a series that families can enjoy together. *"Our kaupapa is to produce a whānau viewing series where te reo Māori, tikanga Māori and Métis culture flow naturally, the voices of our tamariki and rangatahi are amplified, and our audiences are inspired and entertained."*

Indigenous broadcasters creating together

The partnership between Whakaata Māori and APTN, both members of the World Indigenous Broadcasters Network, is central to the project.

Through WIBN, Indigenous broadcasters are increasingly exploring how their relationships can extend beyond knowledge and content exchange into co-development, co-production and new international pathways for Indigenous stories, talent and languages.

Māui & Elvis is an example of that opportunity in action. Māori and Métis/Cree perspectives, languages, humour and cultural values are embedded throughout the creative process, while collaboration between broadcasters and production partners provides a pathway for the series to reach audiences across Indigenous territories and internationally.

Shane Taurima, Chair of the World Indigenous Broadcasters Network and Chief Executive of Whakaata Māori, says; *"At the heart of WIBN is a belief that we are stronger when we work together. Māui & Elvis shows what that can look like in practice - Māori and Métis/Cree storytellers, producers and broadcasters bringing our languages, cultures and creativity together to create something for our children and families. It is exciting to think about what more we can create together and where Indigenous stories can travel when we combine our strengths."*

Monika Ille, Chief Executive Officer of APTN, says the project demonstrates the power of Indigenous broadcasters moving beyond content exchange to true international collaboration. *"Māui & Elvis represents exactly the kind of collaboration we envisioned when Indigenous broadcasters came together through the World Indigenous Broadcasters Network. This project demonstrates that Indigenous stories are not confined by borders. By partnering with Whakaata Māori, we're connecting cultures, languages and creative talent across oceans to build something larger than any one broadcaster could achieve alone. It's a powerful example of Indigenous-led storytelling that is rooted in community, driven by authenticity and created with global audiences in mind."*

An international production partnership

Māui & Elvis brings together Aotearoa New Zealand production company Whitebait Media and Canadian production company Mosaic Entertainment. Lead producers Janine Morrell-Gunn and Camille Beaudoin first connected through the WIFT NZ/Canada Co-Production Summit in 2024.

Morrell-Gunn says the collaboration has created an opportunity to bring together Indigenous creatives, broadcasters and audiences across both countries. *"We are extremely grateful for the commitment from our broadcasters Whakaata Māori and APTN. This partnership allows us to celebrate Māori and Métis lands, storytelling, humour and culture, and build a bridge between Indigenous storytellers, content makers, broadcasters and audiences across Aotearoa and Indigenous Canada."*

The production is supported in Aotearoa New Zealand by NZ On Air, the New Zealand Film Commission, Screen Canterbury and Whakaata Māori, with Canadian partners and supporters including APTN, the Indigenous Screen Office, Creative BC, Telefilm Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Canada Media Fund, the Canadian Media Producers Association and Blue Ant International as Distributors.

Casting is underway in Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada, with production scheduled to begin in November 2026 ahead of the series' planned premiere in 2027.

About Whakaata Māori

Whakaata Māori is the national indigenous media organisation of Aotearoa. We are the waka carrying the Māori language and Māori storytelling forward, strengthening identity, belonging and cultural confidence. MĀORI+ is the digital gateway to the Māori world of storytelling, connecting families with language rich storytelling, news, kapa haka and entertainment across devices.

For more visit whakaatamaori.co.nz.

About APTN

APTN, launched in Canada in 1999, is the first national Indigenous broadcaster in the world. The network is a global leader in programming that celebrates the rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples at home and abroad. A respected non-profit media company, APTN inspires audiences by sharing bold and authentic stories. APTN's programming is available across multiple platforms: APTN (English and French channel), APTN Languages (Indigenous language channel), APTN+ (streaming service), APTN Beyond (FAST channel) and the APTN YouTube channel. For more, visit [APTN.org](https://aptn.org).

About WIBN

Established in 2008, the World Indigenous Broadcasters Network brings together Indigenous broadcasters and media organisations from around the world to strengthen collaboration, share knowledge and advance Indigenous voices, languages and storytelling.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Cynthia Monardez

818 // Head of Screen

cynthia@818.co.nz

+64 27 212 0717

Rafe Macdonald

818 // Lead Publicist - Screen

rafe@818.co.nz

+641 127 0205