

# Te Au Pūngao Launches Microgrants Programme to Remove Barriers for Marlborough Innovators

*Rolling applications now open for \$500-\$2,000 grants designed to help early-stage entrepreneurs test ideas.*

BLLENHEIM, MARLBOROUGH, NEW ZEALAND, February 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Te Au Pūngao, Marlborough](#)'s technology and innovation hub, today announced the launch of its [Microgrants](#) programme, a new funding initiative designed to support local innovators at the crucial idea-testing stage. Unlike traditional funding rounds, the programme operates on a rolling basis with applications reviewed every three weeks, removing the pressure of deadline-driven competitions.



The banner features a central geometric logo consisting of four interlocking L-shaped lines forming a square with a smaller square inside. To the right of the logo, the text reads: "Te Au Pūngao" in a small font, "Microgrant Applications" in a large, bold, white font, "Now Open" in a bold, dark font, and "Apply anytime | 3-week decisions" in a smaller, dark font. At the bottom, a dark bar contains the text "Te Au Pūngao — [teaupungao.com/microgrants](#)".

Marlborough entrepreneurs can now access early-stage funding without waiting for quarterly or annual funding rounds.

The programme addresses a critical gap in New Zealand's innovation ecosystem: more than 70% of founders cite access to initial capital as their biggest barrier to getting started. Te Au Pūngao Microgrants provide between \$500 and \$2,000 to help Marlborough-based startups take meaningful first steps without the burden of extensive business plans or prior entrepreneurial experience.

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Traditional startup advice of 'bootstrapping' and 'friends-and-family' funding assume privilege not everyone has. With our Microgrants you need an idea, not a trust fund.”

*Louisa Murray*

"Too many great ideas never get tested because the barriers to entry feel insurmountable," said Louisa Murray, Manager at Te Au Pūngao. "We've watched talented people with promising concepts hesitate for months or abandon

their ideas entirely because they thought they needed \$10,000 and a 40-page business plan just to get started. This programme changes that equation."

## What Makes Microgrants Different

The initiative stands out for its accessibility and speed. Applications take approximately 15 minutes to complete, with no requirement for formal business registration, detailed financial projections, or extensive market research. Decisions are made within three weeks of submission, and funding is transferred shortly after approval.

The programme supports innovation across all sectors, from agriculture and primary industries to creative projects, community solutions, and technology ventures. Eligible uses include product prototypes, service pilots, market validation research, materials and supplies, and professional services such as design or legal consultation.

"We're not looking for polished pitches or proven business models," Murray continued. "We're looking for clarity of thought, realistic scope, and genuine commitment to learning. Sometimes the most valuable outcome is discovering what doesn't work; that's still a successful use of a microgrant."

## Built for Marlborough's Innovation Ecosystem

The programme reflects Te Au Pūngao's broader mission to strengthen Marlborough's position as a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation. The region already hosts an active angel investor network with 107 members who have invested \$31 million across 82 startups, demonstrating strong local appetite for supporting new ventures.

Microgrants are designed to serve as an entry point into this ecosystem, helping early-stage innovators develop the proof-of-concept work that makes them competitive for larger funding opportunities.

Applications are open to any individual or team based in Marlborough with an idea worth testing. Priority consideration will be given to first-time entrepreneurs, Māori and Pasifika innovators, women and non-binary founders, young people aged 18-30, recent migrants, and people with disabilities.

## How to Apply

Interested applicants can visit [teaupungao.com/microgrants](https://teaupungao.com/microgrants) to complete the application form. There are no deadlines; applications are accepted and reviewed on a continuous basis.

For more information about Te Au Pūngao Microgrants, contact Louisa Murray at

louisa@whiringa.com.

## About Te Au Pūngao

Te Au Pūngao is Marlborough's technology and innovation hub, providing workspace, programmes, and support for entrepreneurs, startups, and innovators throughout the region. Te Au Pūngao works to strengthen Marlborough's innovation ecosystem through community building, mentorship, and access to resources that help good ideas become successful ventures.

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