

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021

DEGNZ – 25 SEPTEMBER 2021

The last two years have been exceptionally busy years for the Guild. Apart from our usual Professional Development events and Membership Services, we have been heavily involved in Lobbying and Advocacy on behalf of our members. And, of course, working to assist members hit by Covid.

ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

NZFC Culture and Creatives

Late last year a group of directors (the Roopu) approached the Guild with serious concerns about the way the NZFC treats directors throughout the entire process of engagement, from Early Development Funding through to delivery of their films.

DEGNZ and the Roopu believe this is in large part attributable to the producer-oriented culture of NZFC. This culture, which has recently become more entrenched, consistently marginalises and disempowers the screen storytellers who are the lifeblood of the industry.

The issues were first high-lighted back in 2010 by the Peter Jackson-David Court Report which pointed out that the Commission's producer-centric focus was detrimental to the development of film-making talent. In the decade since the Report some areas were addressed and improved. With hindsight, some systemic and cultural shortcomings have arguably become worse.

The Guild and the Roopu are working together to address the issues raised. After preliminary meetings, in February this year the NZFC Board, senior Commission management, the DEGNZ Board and the Roopu attended a day-long hui to discuss the issues. During the day a number of directors shared their personal stories and asked for specific changes to the way the Commission treats creatives. It was a very emotional day. Tears were shed and the Board promised to address the issues and make real changes.

Since then, CEO Annabel Sheehan has resigned and been replaced by David Strong. We welcome David to the role, and we are helping him get his head around the issues. He is constructively engaged, and the conversation is on-going.

The Hobbit Law Review

The Film Industry Working Group has continued working with Government to refine the proposed legislation, entitled The Screen Industry Worker Bill.

Background: the forthcoming Act will enshrine a new set of principles governing how film industry workers fit in industrial relations law. The proposed recommendations allow contractors to collectively bargain at occupation and enterprise levels within the screen industry. Any resulting collective contracts would apply to all contract work in that

occupation or enterprise. The right to strike would be given up in return for both parties in a negotiation agreeing to bargain in good faith. The collective bargaining process would be supported by a dispute resolution system.

Progress: The negotiations this past year have been around both Occupational and Enterprise-level bargaining, definitions and technical issues. It is expected that the Bill will go to its second reading in the House by the end of the year. Once the Bill is passed, the real work will start – negotiating minimum terms and conditions with SPADA. As there will be many guilds seeking to meet with only one engager—SPADA—we are currently looking at the order of negotiation.

Copyright

MBIE has largely put work on the Copyright Review on hold. We are waiting for MBIE to crank it up again. Once it's back on the agenda, we expect it will be a major focus of the Guild.

Union Activity

DEGNZ has been a union and affiliate of the Council of Trade Unions since 2019. DEGNZ's ED has participated in two National Affiliate Conferences and regularly engages with the CTU over matters including the proposed Screen Industry Worker Bill and Fair Pay Agreements. As a union we benefit from a closer relationship not only with the CTU but also with the other two screen industry unions, the NZ Writers Guild and Equity NZ. This closer relationship leads to benefits such as the joint Know Your Rights Workshops that we ran jointly with them.

SINZ

DEGNZ was a founding member of the loose association of NZWG, WIFT, SPADA, Ngā Aho Whakaari, Equity NZ and SIGANZ (Techos), under the umbrella of Screen Industry NZ (SINZ). Following the Screen Industry Strategy 2030 and the demise of the Facilitation Group whose responsibility it was to drive the work of the strategy, SINZ stepped up help set up the establishment of the pan-sector body that the Strategy calls for. It was necessary to widen the participants in SINZ to all of the industry guilds and associations, while the core founding group acted as the steering committee and initiated the funding and the work to research a model for the pan-sector body. DEGNZ was one of 18 organisations who contributed \$1k each to SINZ as start-up finding. A researcher has been appointed to look at different models that the pan-sector body could be based on. This research work will be completed in October and made available to the wider industry for feedback.

COVID & the Premium Fund

Once more Covid had a big influence on the year for the Guild. Executive Director Tui Ruwhiu has continued to work with the other guilds and associations, NZFC and the CTU. 2021 saw the introduction of the 50-million-dollar Premium Production Fund from Government to kickstart production after the first lockdown. The first allocations have been made and the second tranche is planned for early next year. A first round of Premium Development Funding (\$2 million of the \$50 million) has also gone through with another expected soon. However, an underspend of the first allocation of \$8.4 million has resulted

in an Interim Round being hastily implemented. The DEGNZ along with some of the other Guilds lobbied to extend the criteria slightly and this happened. We also input into the criteria for the Premium Development Fund.

ASDACS

ASDACS - the Australian Screen Directors Authorship Collecting Society - collects and distributes royalties to Australian and NZ directors that has come from overseas territories that recognize directors' authorship. Ex Guild board member Grant Campbell sits on the ASDACS Board representing our Guild. He is doing a sterling job on our behalf.

The big change this year: ASDACS asks that directors assign their retransmission rights to ASDACS. This is to pre-emptively stop the common practice of producers contracting directors to assign these rights to the producer, and so hijacking the income legitimately earmarked for directors.

In other words, when a producer presents you, the director, with a contract that signs away your retransmission rights, you can say, sorry, they have already been assigned to ASDACS who will collect them on your behalf.

The fight to stop this piracy happening, and to get directors the Screenrights royalties legislated to them by the Australian government has been a long and costly endeavour, but with the recent shake-up at Screenrights, we have turned the corner.

International Productions

We continue to engage with international TV drama productions encouraging the hiring of New Zealand directors and editors. There is little advancement with this on the directing side as many Kiwi directors are hindered by not having US TV drama credits. DEGNZ member Robyn Grace did however direct an episode of Sweet Tooth, while NYC-based NZ-Can director Alison McLean directed an episode of The Wilds. NZ editors have been more fortunate with 6 editors and five assistant editors finding roles on the Lord of the Rings TV series, formally known as the Untitled Amazon Project.

Our Letters of Non-objection provide a means to vet international directors and editors coming to NZ to work on international projects, and a small but steady revenue stream.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RoVE – Director and Editor Pathways into the Industry

Training in the industry has been haphazard and fragmented. Film Schools and Universities turn out graduates who are not work-ready and we have known for some time that we need on-the-job training. The government is increasing apprenticeships and training across all NZ industries through RoVE – Reform of Vocational Education. It's an emerging space with several bodies having different functions – 6 Workforce Development Councils (ours is Toi Mai, the Creative, Cultural, Recreation & Technology Workforce Development Council), Te Pukenga (encompassing Polytechnics) and NZQA. The purpose of the Reform is to ensure skills training is done on the job thus raising skill levels, not in off-the-job institutions.

The screen industry has its own voice in the conversation – the Screen Advisory Body. Board member Annie Collins is the point person on the Screen Advisory Body for both the DEGNZ and other industry guilds – SPADA, the Writers Guild, Screen Industry Guild & the Music & Sound Guild. The other members of the planning group are Tui Ruwhiu, Ness Simons (SPADA), Kelly Lucas (SIG), Rene Le Bas (NZWG) and John McKay (SMSG).

The new Reform states that **only** an industry may write the training curriculum it wishes delivered. It also gives that industry the opportunity to monitor how that is delivered. That means **we** will be in control of training standards (via input to Toi Mai).

We are working on Pathways for Editors and Directors. They may involve

- Attachments to specific productions or production companies, and
- Micro-credentials - short courses on specific skills.

There is a lot of work to be done before the final shape is clear. Last year Annie devoted enormous amounts of time to creating the very practical and useful Post Production Best Practice Guide. This year she is devoting similar amounts of energy and time to this training work. Annie, the Guild and the industry owe you heaps.

Know Your Rights Workshops

Funded by MBIE, these have happened all over the country. The workshops sessions covered

- Legal presentation - delivered by HGM (legal firm)
- The Hobbit Law
- Screen Industry Workers Bill
- Collective Bargaining
- Business Essentials
- Director, Editor, Writer and Actor breakout sessions on
 - Authorship
 - Copyright Review and our Copyright Campaign
 - ASDACS
 - Contracts – Variable terms, editors' requirements
 - Short film – rights
 - • SPV

- Film Backend Flow
- Pay Rates
- Lead Producer

These workshops were incredibly useful and hopefully will be repeated over coming years.

Director Attachments

We continued with our TV Drama Director Attachment programme with support from NZ On Air. Tim Worrall and Cian Elyse White have completed attachments to directors Mike Smith and Kiel McNaughton respectively on the Greenstone drama *Vegas*.

Editor Attachments

- Editor Betsy Bauer has completed an attachment to Jonno Woodford-Robinson on Linda Niccol's feature *Poppy*.
- Chia Hsu has completed an attachment to Editor Dan Kircher on *Millie Lies Low*.
- Brendon Chan has completed an attachment with Peter Roberts on Matthew Saville's *Juniper*.

Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator

2021 was our fifth year of the Incubator thanks to the ongoing support of the New Zealand Film Commission. This year the focus is Women of Colour. Philippa Campbell/Karen Williams facilitated this over the year for the seven participants: Matasila Freshwater, Ghazaleh Golbakhsh, Niva Kay, Nahyeon Lee, Hweiling Ow, Cian Elyse White and Zoey Zhao.

Rehearsal & Performance

The Guild ran three Rehearsal & Performance workshops

- Caroline Bell-Booth (Ak)
- Danny Mulheron (Ak & Wgtn)

Rehearsal Dynamics

- With Miranda Harcourt (Ak)

Directors Toolkit

- With Rob Sarkies (South Island - Chc and online)

Tone Workshops

- With Rob Sarkies (Wgtn & Ak)
- With Leanne Pooley (Ak)

Editors

- Two-Day Māori Editors Workshop – Annie Collins & Te Rurehe Paki (Ak)
- One-Day Film Editing Workshop for Māori Rangatahi (Ak)
- Editors & Assistant Editors Gathering (Ak & Online)

Directing Intimacy Workshop

- With Jennifer Ward Lealand (Wgtn)

Panel Discussions

We continue to run panel discussions in association with other guilds. E.g.

- PASC – Zia Mandviwalla (Ak)
- PASC – Roseanne Liang (Ak)
- PASC – Rajneel Singh (Ak)
- PASC – Gaysorn Thavat (Ak)
- PASC – Kyle McNaughton (Ak)
- We partnered with WIFT - The Director-Editor Relationship (Ak & Wgtn)

Film Talks

We also continue to run Q & A sessions after film screenings of NZ films:

- *The Man On the Island* with Simon Mark Brown, facilitated by George Andrews.
- *The Turn of the Screw* with Alex Galvin, Ed Sampson, Greer Phillips and Emma Beale, facilitated by Ian Hughes.
- *Rūrangi* with Cole Meyers and Craig Gainsborough, facilitated by Kate McGill.
- *Poppy* with Linda Niccol and Libby Hunsdale, facilitated by Peter Bell.
- *James & Isey* with Florian Habicht, facilitated by Zoe McIntosh.
- *The Justice of Bunny King* with Gaysorn Thavat, facilitated by Lucy Wigmore.
- *Coming Home in the Dark* with James Ashcroft, Miriama McDowell and Eric Thompson, facilitated by Hweiling Ow.

DEGNZ Selects

With Australian director Michael Gracey (*The Greatest Showman*) (Wgtn)

Table Reads

Another popular programme allowing directors and writers to hear their scripts read by actors in a virtual table read:

- 14 November 2020 - writer/director Fiona McKenzie (*Caroline*)
- 15 May 2021 - writer/director Tim Tsiklauri (*Tamada*)
- 3 July 2021 - writer Daryl Belbin and director Anton Steel (*Escape*)

Direct South: Short Film Workshops

For South Islanders:

- With Jackie van Beek (Chch)
- With Zia Mandviwalla (Chch)
- With Michelle Saville (Dn)

MEMBER SERVICES

Member Advice

Our DEGNZ Executive Director continues to engage with members and others over contractual and other issues affecting directors. A number of inquiries each year continue to come in around career advice.

International Relations

DEGNZ continues its strong relationship with the Australian Directors Guild, and ongoing contact with the Directors Guild of America, Directors Guild of Canada, Screen Directors Guild of Ireland and Directors UK. We are members of, and continue to work with, AAPA (Asia Pacific Alliance of writers and directors' guilds) and with the international authors bodies CISAC and W & DWW (Writers & Directors Worldwide).

Show Me Shorts

The Guild continues to sponsor two awards: Show Me Shorts Best Editor and Best Director.

Guild Staff

I'd like to extend now a big thanks to our Guild staff—Caroline Harrow, our Accounts Manager, and Tema Pua, our Events and Marketing Manager, who continues to take the pressure off Tui. And I would like to personally thank Tui for the outstanding job he has done over the last year, not least his insightful fortnightly View from the Top editorial. Thank you, Tui.

Funders/Sponsors

I would like to say a big thank you to our funders. The New Zealand Film Commission is a major supporter of the guild and a very special thank you goes to them. Thanks also to NZ on Air, and the Australian Screen Directors Authorship Collecting Society who, along with NZFC, lend financial support to our professional development efforts. Last but not least, a thanks to our sponsors Resene Paints, and particularly the accounting firm of VCFO Group, who are continuing the sponsorship of the Guild. Thanks to you all.

Board

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Guild's Board members without whose dedicated commitment we wouldn't have an effective organisation. As I said at the start, this year has been exceptionally busy, and everyone has stepped up to the plate.

During the year we said goodbye to Roseanne Liang and Michael Duignan. They both did sterling work while on the Board. We welcomed new Board members Stallone Vaiaoga-loasa, Steven Chow, Josh Frizzell and Renae Maihi. They have been getting their respective heads around the amount of work the Guild does.

I want to make a special acknowledgement here to Phil Gore as Treasurer, who keeps an eagle eye on our financials and accounts. It's an unpaid position and requires a significant amount of time. We do appreciate it, Phil.

Finally I would like to announce that I'm stepping down from today. I've been on the Board since we set up the Guild in 1996 – 25 years. I have been President for the last five years and I think it's time I went gracefully. I would like to think I am leaving the Guild in good heart.

E noho ra

Howard Taylor

President