



directors and editors guild of aotearoa new zealand
ngā kaiwherawhera kiriata

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha, nei rā te reo mihi e whakamanawa nei i tēnei kaupapa o DEGANZ.

Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa. Tēnā tātou katoa.

I begin this report as the preliminary Election results are confirmed, and we look ahead to the next period under a new government. This has many implications for our screen industry, and it will be more important than ever to work strongly together as a Guild, and alongside our fellows Guilds and industry organisations, as we aim for a healthy and sustainable screen sector.

2023 has continued to see an increase in workload at DEGANZ for both staff and Board, with many industry changes, developments, and ongoing post-Covid turbulence locally and globally. Before I recap the year, I'd like to say a huge thank you to our hardworking DEGANZ staff - Tui, Maddie and Izzy. A particular shout out to Maddie who started in her role this year, and has picked up the baton and accelerated with it - organising a continuous line-up of workshops as we catch up from those unable to proceed during Covid restrictions. Heartfelt thanks too, to the DEGANZ Board. The unpaid mahi that everyone has put in is enormously valued, needed, and shouldn't ever be taken for granted. You juggle this on top of already full work schedules, and I'm extremely grateful for everyone's generous dedication. I want to particularly thank the absolutely irreplaceable Annie Collins, who steps down from a full Board role in the coming year - though fortunately for us will remain involved in an advisory capacity, and continue her work with Toi Mai. Over her many years serving on the Board, Annie has devoted an enormous amount of her time, energy, and expertise. We will miss Annie's passionate and reasoned voice at the table enormously.

This year the industry prepared to begin negotiations as part of the now-ratified Screen Industry Workers Act (SIWA), rode the waves of much change as the proposed TVNZ/RNZ merger was scrapped and international productions came and went, welcomed a new CEO at the New Zealand Film Commission, and weathered the changing winds of the platform & funding landscape. The coming year promises no less volatility. I look forward to working with you all as we advocate for Directors and Editors in whatever form this needs to take.

Mā whero, mā pango ka oti ai te mahi.

Following below is an outline of some of the major activities undertaken by DEGANZ since the last AGM. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

Screen Industry Workers Act (SIWA)

The Screen Industry Workers Bill passed its final reading to become an official Act. The intention of the Act is to introduce a "workplace relations framework that will provide clarity about the employment status of people doing screen production work, introduce a duty of good faith and mandatory terms for contracting relationships in the industry, allow collective bargaining at the occupation and enterprise levels, and create processes for resolving disputes arising from contracting relations or collective bargaining."

Its importance is self-explanatory, and preparation for negotiations have continued to be a major priority for DEGANZ in the past year. This has included work to engage members in the process, including establishing working groups to focus on key factors for different parts of our industry - from factual to narrative, feature to webseries. Sincere thanks to all our members who have been leading or feeding into those working groups. Your work is highly valuable and is greatly appreciated.

We have also continued to meet with and support emerging post-production guilds including Motion Designers, VFX and Screen Music and Sound Guild, as well as keep up communication with Equity, SPADA, NZWG, CTU and others, as well as taking legal advice and updating our constitution, and attending workshops, as the Act nears the negotiating phase. We were hoping (and scheduled) to have entered this phase by now, however the process has been delayed by SPADA who have not yet registered - the reason given being that they require more time for education. We expressed our disappointment, and our desire for this to happen as quickly as possible. SPADA re-confirmed their commitment to the process. However, it should be noted that the new government has clearly stated their opposition to this Act. The weeks and months ahead will require ongoing advocacy. Regardless of the outcome, the process of identifying key areas for baseline terms undertaken by the working groups will continue to be a valuable resource and guideline.

Screen Sector Investment Review

After a consultation process, The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage (MCH) announced that the New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG) would continue but with a change in name to NZSP Rebate (NZSPR), and deliver:

- access to funding body funding and NZSPR for all genres,
- reduce PDV threshold from \$500k to \$250k,
- set PDV rate to a flat 20 per cent,
- and redevelop the 5 % uplift.

In relation to the 5% uplift, all the Guilds and associations, including DEGANZ, emphasised strongly the need for the uplift criteria to be as clear and simple as possible, while benefiting production.

International Productions and Letters Of Non-Objection

We continue to engage with international TV drama productions, to encourage and promote the hiring of New Zealand directors and editors.

In August of this year, DEGANZ received an application for a Letter of Non-objection for a non-New Zealand director on The Canyon - a film applying as a New Zealand production.

This application was received 11 days prior to the already-arranged arrival of the director into the country. Quoted below is ED Tui Ruwhiu's letter outlining DEGANZ' consideration of this application:

"The request for a letter of Non-objection was declined by the board of DEGANZ for the following reasons, which were conveyed to the applicant:

- The Directors and Editors Guild of Aotearoa New Zealand works to ensure the creative, cultural and financial wellbeing of New Zealand directors and editors. The Canyon, which the applicant has informed us is a New Zealand film applying for the domestic New Zealand Screen Production Rebate, does not, as a New Zealand film with a non-New Zealand director, meet the Guild's purpose.

- Official co-productions, which allow for the mixing and matching of ATL and BTL personnel, including the director, are recognised by the Guild as a valid reason why a film may not have a New Zealand director. The Canyon is not an official co-production.

According to the New Zealand Film Commission's website, the purpose of the domestic New Zealand Screen Production Rebate is two-fold:

- To build the sustainability, scale and critical mass of the domestic film industry and support the development of New Zealand creatives.
- To provide cultural benefits to New Zealand by supporting the creation of New Zealand content and stories.

For a feature film, the director is the creative decision maker in a process of artistic collaboration who takes final responsibility for the aesthetic cohesion and artistic integrity of the work. With a non-New Zealand director, The Canyon does not support the development of the key New Zealand creative.

Repeated requests were made to the applicant to provide as much information as possible about the New Zealand project to give context and additional information to support the application. Little was provided beyond the application form requirements.

However, the applicant informed us at the time that they had not considered or approached any New Zealand directors to direct this New Zealand film.

While no story synopsis or outline was provided to DEGANZ for the film, we did find a synopsis on the website of the sales agent attached to this New Zealand film:

A woman, struggling to find courage in her troubled marriage, fights for survival, after a skydiving accident leaves her hanging from a 1000-foot-high ledge in the Grand Canyon.

This suggested to the board that its description as a New Zealand film was tenuous.

DEGANZ' method for determining what constitutes a New Zealand film also differs from the test for eligibility of the New Zealand Screen Production Rebate. Our position is that it should have a New Zealand director unless the film is being made as an official coproduction, when it may or may not have a New Zealand director. This position is driven by our purpose to ensure the creative, cultural and financial wellbeing of New Zealand directors and editors, who make up the membership of the guild.

The applicant clearly stated that The Canyon is being made as a New Zealand film. DEGANZ therefore treated it as such, and determined that without a New Zealand director, and not being an official co-production, the application would be declined.

The applicant later applied for and received a visa via Immigration New Zealand for their Director to enter the country despite this decline.

New Zealand Film Commission

In late 2022, several DEGANZ Board members including myself, and Executive Director Tui Ruwhiu, met with the then newly appointed NZFC Board Chair, Alastair Carruthers, and Interim NZFC CEO, Mladen Ivancic, to discuss our ongoing concerns about culture issues at NZFC, and a producer-centric model that is impacting negatively on creatives including Directors. Alongside this, a discussion regarding the importance and priority considerations of the then upcoming appointment of a new CEO.

In July 2023 we, alongside the rest of the industry, welcomed the appointment of new CEO Annie Murray. Discussions have continued with Annie about culture and the treatment of Directors, as well as the Documentary White Paper, Strategic Training, and other key issues. We look forward to ongoing constructive communication in the year ahead.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Toi Mai

Toi Mai is one of six industry-led Workforce Development Councils, established with the intention of giving industries greater leadership across relevant vocational education. Toi Mai is the WDC for the creative, cultural, recreation and technology sectors. Newly established, their kaupapa is to enhance vocational education and training to meet industry needs. Annie Collins is the DEGANZ Board member who represents our interests with Toi Mai - we continue to be extremely grateful for her mahi.

In her words:

DEGANZ, led by board member Annie Collins, has been working for more than two years with the Interim Screen Industry Training Roopu, which represents the wider screen industry, inputting into the Workforce Development Council Toi Mai, regarding the Reform of Vocational Education. The Roopu is made up of representatives from DEGANZ, the Screen Industry Guild of Aotearoa New Zealand, Ngā Aho Whakaari, the Screen Music and Sound Guild and independent producer and screen skills educator Marg Slater. Across this period with many consultations with Toi Mai, the Roopu has helped develop an introductory micro-credential going through its final phases of accreditation before being instituted around the country into the curriculum at educational institutions with screen industry programmes. As well, the Roopu has input into the Toi Mai workforce development plan Te Wai Nui o Toi, that will help guide the organisation in the work ahead for the screen sector.

The Roopu has at the same time been slowly developing plans for a permanent Screen Training Advisory Roopu (STAR) to take over it's work as the conduit between the screen industry and Toi Mai, in an ongoing advisory capacity. It is hoped that this entity will be up and running in 2024.

Workshops & Events

The following is a list of workshops & events organised and hosted by DEGANZ (some in collaboration with other Guilds/entities) over the past year:

16 October – Directing In the Intimate Zone – ROT

29 October – Rehearsal and Performance for Pasifika Actors – AKL

30 October - Rehearsal and Performance – CHC

2 November – Editors and Assistant Editors Gathering – AKL

3 November – Film Talk, Shut Eye – AKL

21 November – Incubator Workshop 5 – AKL

22 November - Editors and Assistant Editors Gathering – WTN

26 and 27 November Documentary Post Production Lab with Annie Collins - WTN

7 December – Guilds Xmas Party – AKL

8 December – Guilds Xmas Party – WTN

11 December - Rehearsal and Performance with Loren Taylor – WTN

12 December – Guilds Xmas Party – CHC

11 February – Directing Intimacy with Carrie Thiel – WTN

23 February – National Affiliates Council – WTN

28 Feb. – 1 March – Advocacy at The Table – WTN

23 March – Alumni BBQ – AKL

25 March – Creative Confidence Workshop with Dame Gaylene Preston - AKL

27 March – Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator – AKL

29 March – SIWA Hui – Advertising & Marketing Content – Editors – AKL and online

30 March – SIWA Hui – Advertising & Marketing Content – Directors

1 April – TABLE READS with NZWG, with Alex De Vries and project Pinky- Zoom

5 April – SIWA HUI – Directors, Editors and Assistant Editors in Advertising and Marketing Content – AKL and online

12 April – SCREENLINK with APA (NZAPG) – Finding Direction with Robyn Grace – AKL

13 April – SCREENLINK with SMSG – Bringing Editors and Directors Together with Screen Composers – WTN

19 April – SCREENLINK with WIFT – The Director, 1st AD, Producer Dynamic – AKL

22 April – SCREENLINK with SMSG – Bringing Editors and Directors Together with Screen Composers - CHC

27 April – SCREENLINK with SMSG – Bringing Editors and Directors Together with Screen Composers - AKL

29 & 30 April – DIRECTOR’S TOOLKIT with Top Of The South – Facilitated by Caroline Bell Booth – NSN

3 May – SIWA HUI– Directors, Editors and Assistant Editors in Scripted Content – AKL and online

8 May – Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator – AKL

13, 14 May – Tone Start to Finish, with Rob Sarkies and Annie Collins – AKL

28 May – Rehearsal Dynamics, with Jennifer Ward-Lealand – WTN

3 June – Table Reads with NZWG, participants tbc

7 June SIWA Hui – Feature Film – Narrative and Doco. – AKL and Online

10 June – Table Reads with NZWG, with Writer – Director Rafa Yam - Online

17 June – Rehearsal & Performance, with Chris Dudman – AKL

6 & 7 July – Director’s Toolkit for Māori Directors with Peter Burger - AKL

20 July – Screen Link with PASC – Roseanne Liang – AKL

22 July – Director’s Masterclass with Jocelyn Moorhouse – AKL

24 July – Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator – AKL

5 August – NZIFF Masterclass with Rolf de Heer – AKL

8 August - NZIFF Masterclass with Rolf de Heer – WTN

12 August – Rehearsal & Performance with Kathy McRae - WTN

19 August Table Reads with NZWG – ZOOM

August - Extraordinary General Meeting – AKL & Zoom

26 & 27 August – Director’s Toolkit with David Stubbs – WTN

2 & 3 September – Director’s Toolkit with Robyn Grace – CHCH

9 September – Director’s Masterclass with Jonathan Brough - AKL

Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator

ED Tui Ruwhiu contracted David Jowsey and Greer Simpkin of Bunya Productions to assess projects and have one-ones with participants as a close to our COVID-interrupted Incubator programme for 2022.

The incubator programme is now in its seventh year, with the intention of increasing the number of women and empowering those directing features and TV drama. It aims to connect producers, broadcasters, funders and other industry professionals with women directors with a view of getting stories from women’s perspectives into and through development, create networking opportunities for women directors to further their projects and careers, Inspire and encourage directors to passionately pursue feature film and drama directing careers through interaction with successful women who serve as role models, and improve directors’ understanding of the business of film and television drama.

For the 2023 Incubator, a selection panel of ED Tui Ruwhiu, board member Caroline Bell-Booth, filmmaker Sima Urale and producer and Incubator Facilitator Karin Williams selected final participants Jaya Beach-Robertson, Victoria Boultt (Ngāi Tahu), Ella Gilbert (Rongowhakaata/Ngāti Kahungunu), Isla Macleod, Harriet Maire, and Jaimee Poipoi (Ngāti Kahungunu/Ngāpuhi).

This year’s Incubator participants had their projects assessed and had one-on-one meetings with renowned Australian director Jocelyn Moorhouse.

The 2023 programme finishes with its final workshop, to be held in Wellington for the first time.

MEMBER SERVICES

Member Advice

DEGANZ Executive Director, Tui Ruwhiu, continues to engage with members and others over contractual and other issues affecting directors, including inquiries regarding career advice.

International Relations

DEGANZ 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

Executive Director, Tui Ruwhiu, participated in Best International Short selection, with Simona Meriggi and Simon Newall. Tui, Maddie, Izzy, myself and other Board members attended opening night and other screenings. DEGANZ continues to sponsor Best Director and Best Editor, the Industry Day, and facilitate Festivals panel discussion.

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 particular thanks goes to them, with their support for the DEGANZ through the Core Support Funding for 2023, and Strategic Training Funding for the 2023 – 2024 year. Thanks also to NZ on Air, and the Australian Screen Directors Authorship Collecting Society (ASDACS) who, along with NZFC, lend financial support to our professional development efforts. ASDACS also supports our efforts around education in regard to director's rights. Last but certainly not least, thank you to accounting firm VCFO Group, and also to Resene Paints, who both continue their sponsorship of the Guild. It is hugely appreciated.

Board

I'd like to again acknowledge the Guild's Board members. Their dedicated commitment is what helps maintain an effective organisation, and it's particularly valued at this crucial time when the workload is high. Special thanks to Phil Gore, our Treasurer, who handles our financials and accounts. Sadly, we are saying goodbye at this AGM to Caroline Bell-Booth, Sam Kelly, and Annie Collins. Thank you so much for your service. As mentioned, we're very happy that Annie will remain involved, albeit in a different capacity. We're looking forward to welcoming more new Board members following the AGM.

Nāku iti nei,

Robyn Paterson
President
Directors and Editors Guild of Aotearoa New Zealand