



directors & editors guild of nz  
ngā kaiwherawhera kiriata

PO Box 47-294, Ponsonby  
66 Surrey Crescent  
Grey Lynn  
Auckland  
New Zealand

+64 (0) 9 360 2102

[degnz.co.nz](http://degnz.co.nz)

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020

## DEGNZ AGM – 14 November 2020

Last year was an incredibly busy year for the Guild. This year has been just as busy. 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, hit by Covid.

## BECOMING A UNION

At our last AGM we voted to implement the new constitution and registered so we are now an official union, affiliated with the CTU.

## ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

### The Hobbit Law Review

The Film Industry Working Group presented to government its recommendations encompassing a new set of principles governing how film industry workers fit in industrial relations law. The recommendations proposed allowing 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.

The final recommendation was that the new model apply to all screen production work including film and television, since workers often move between the two. The Hobbit Law just applies to film – not television.

The Department of Workplace Relations was clearly impressed with the Film Industry Working Group's report and accepted it all – apart from one clause. The coverage of the new law would be restricted to film, TV drama series, commercials and video games. We pushed back and government agreed to widen coverage to include documentary, factual programmes, tele-features and branded content.

However, we understand that other Unions are not happy that in the proposed legislation we would give up the right to strike, a basic tenet of all labour-employer relations. There is a way to go yet before the legislation is passed into law and a lot could change between now and then.

## Copyright

The government's Copyright Review is racing like a tortoise to some far-off finishing line. Last year Executive Director Tui Ruwhiu and I attended the CISAC (the combined association of Collecting Societies) and Writers & Directors World-Wide conferences in Tokyo and as a result, in December CISAC Director General Gadi Oron and CISAC Regional Director Benjamin Ng flew to NZ to help us promote authors' copyright. We held meetings with officials from MBI, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, the National Party Caucus and Minister of Broadcasting and Digital Media, Kris Faafoi. Following the Faafoi meeting the DEGNZ and Kris Faafoi hosted a function at Parliament for Gadi. It was attended by the heads of our funding bodies, government officials, parliamentarians and some of our member-directors.

It was, we felt, a very effective opening to our campaign. We thank CISAC for its financial assistance. Since then we have met several times with the MBI officials running the Review. Recently we mailed out the 'Do the Right Thing' brochure to all our members.

## **COVID**

Covid dominated the year for the Guild, interfering with many of our planned events. Tui worked extremely hard during lockdown as part of the pan-Screen Sector Covid 19 Action Group and the CTU. As a result, NZ On Air and NZFC received funding to support the industry both during lockdown and to assist productions get up and running as soon as possible. Health and Safety was front and centre with plans for safe working environments for productions when lockdown lifted.

Tui also attended CTU meetings focused on getting the wage subsidy and protecting workers' rights.

We offered struggling members an amnesty on membership fees and both our Executive Director Tui and Events and Marketing Manager Tema cut their wages – while, I might add, working similar, or even longer, hours to keep our membership services going. It was a voluntary sacrifice which we appreciate.

Concerned about the mental health of directors and editors, we held well-attended zoom support meetings (DEGNZ Connect) for members and ran a weekly make-a-lockdown-video page online.

One upside of Covid is the large increase in our membership – something all unions have reported.

## **Screen Sector 10 Year Strategy**

The Screen Sector Strategy Facilitation Group presented its strategy to the government answering the questions:

1. What is the industry's vision for the NZ screen sector in 2030?
2. What can the industry do to support its vision?
3. What role is sought from government?

We hosted a well-attended (200) online forum on the draft Screen Strategy with panel members Bayley Mackey, Mel Turner, Julia Parnell, Duncan Grieve, Philly de Lacy and Stephen Knightly, and moderated by Rod Oram.

Michael Duignan was our representative in the Facilitation Group and I would like to say a special thank you to Michael for his work, particularly in moving the focus from international serviced production to developing and growing domestic production.

Tui is now working with some of the other guild reps to help set up the pan sector body.

## **Directors Concerns**

A group of directors approached the Guild with concerns about the way the NZFC treats directors.

DEGNZ raised the issue with the Commission and discussions are continuing with a view to improving the overall relationship and approach NZFC takes with filmmakers.

## ASDACS

ASDACS is the Society that collects and disburses revenue 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.

## Gender Equity

This year we continued our Emerging Women Filmmakers initiative to get more female directors into drama and feature film directing. Our Board continues to be evenly split along gender lines.

## Immigration

All the Guilds became concerned about the relaxation of MBIE/Immigration's rules around exemptions at the border for essential talent and crew. We expressed our concerns to the Dept of Immigration and Kris Faafoi, Minister of Immigration.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Best Practice Guide for Post-Production

The Guild has recently launched the Best Practice Guide for Post-Production. It arose from complaints from Post houses about the standard of deliverables they were receiving from productions. Board member and editor Annie Collins put a huge amount of work into creating the Guide – thank you Annie. She was very ably assisted by our Events and Marketing Manager Tema Pua. A special thanks to Tema also. Designed for producers and editorial teams, its practical, technical, easy to read and will, I believe, make a big impact on editing standards and the relationships between productions and post-houses.

## Editor training

Covid interrupted our Editor training programme but in September Annie Collins ran an Assistant & Solo Editors Workshop - four days over four weeks in Auckland. It was facilitated by Dan Best, Dion Chard, Anu Webster, Ben Sinclair, Dan Kircher and Tristan Simpson.

## Emerging Women Filmmakers Incubator

2020 was our fourth year of the Incubator and we carried on without funding from Vista Foundation, thanks to the ongoing support of the New Zealand Film Commission. Philippa Campbell facilitated this over the year for the eight participants: Michelle Ang, Charlotte Evans, Penny Hunt, Stella Reid, Rachel Ross, Jessica Smith and Kathleen Winter.

## Director Attachments

We continued with our TV Drama Director Attachment programme with support from NZ ON Air. This year we placed Tim Worrall and Cian Elyse White on the Greenstone drama Vegas.

## Editor Attachments

- Editor Betsy Bauer has been attached to Jonno Woodford-Robinson on Linda Niccol's feature *Poppy*.
- Brendon Chan has been with Peter Roberts on Matthew Saville's *Juniper*.
- Chia Chi Hsu will be with Dan Kircher on Michelle Saville's *Millie Lies Low* when it get back up and running later this month.

## Rehearsal & Performance

The Guild ran five Rehearsal & Performance workshops – two in Auckland and three in Wellington. Facilitators were Lucy Wigmore (Ak & Wgtn) Ian Hughes (Ak & Wgtn) Aidee Walker (Ak & Wgtn).

## Director's Toolkit

- A two-day workshop with Peter Burger (Ak & online)
- A two-day workshop with Charlie Haskell (Wgtn)

## Directing Actors

- Directing actors - Miranda Harcourt (online)

## Comedy Directing

- Directing Comedy – Jonathan Brough (online)

## Young Creators

Where we reach out to young filmmakers who aren't necessarily members (yet):

- The makers of Web series Flat Three (Ak)
- Think Outside the Box – the Chillbox Collective (Online).

## Directing Intimacy Workshop

Board member Louise Leitch ran this in Christchurch.

## Screenlink

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

- The Editor – A Composer's Friend or Foe with Annie Collins, Jonno Woodford Robinson, in association with the Screen Composers Guild of NZ (Online)
- Inside Mortal Engines with Dan Best together with WIFT (Ak)
- Making Kiri & Lou, the Claymation hit with Harry Sinclair and Fiona Copland.

## Film Talks

We also continue to run Q & A sessions after film screenings of NZ films such as Births, Deaths & Marriages with Bea Joblin, Reunion with Jake Mahaffy, and We Need to Talk About AI with Leanne Pooley.

## DEGNZ Selects

A Q & A with Tom Eagles, facilitated by Jackie Van Beek

## Table Reads

- Another popular programme allowing directors and writers to hear their scripts read by actors. E.g.
- Nic Ward & Kath Akuhata-Brown
- Alex Lodge
- Fiona Mackenzie

## MEMBER SERVICES

### 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, and Directors UK. As mentioned above, we have forged an alliance in Asia with the directors and writer's guilds there as well as with the international authors bodies CISAC and W & DWW.

### 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 fortnightly View from the Top editorial. Thank you, Tui.

### Board

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.

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.

### Funders/Sponsors

Finally, 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 Authorship Collection 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.

Howard Taylor  
President