Ginny is awarded – Waka reports

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Back in the middle of 2013, I was the editor chosen to relaunch the legendary (dare I say ‘iconic’?) ONFILM magazine. For reasons, none of which to do with the film industry and everything to do with the state of independent publishing in NZ, it was a short-lived exercise but I enjoyed that brief period burying myself behind-the-scenes.

I’m stoked that Karla has asked me to edit this issue (while Graeme has been busy with multiple projects and international travel). There’s something very special about Kiwi crews and – as I’m a reviewer of the finished product – you can usually see that specialness on the screen. It’s been a pleasure to reacquaint myself with the business and the issues that concern you.

In this issue, you will find Waka’s vivid pen-portrait of the NZCS awards, a further step forward in publicly celebrating the quality of those behind the camera; Kimberley Hikaka reminding us that some people have bigger things to worry about than shooting film and that production skills learned on set can change people’s lives in war-torn or disaster-struck locations; and Aliesha Staples’ article about the next generation of virtual reality gear reminded me of that famous phrase from hockey player Wayne Gretzky: “Don’t skate to where the puck is, skate to where the puck will be.”

And there are two articles on the business side of contracting – insurance and dispute resolution – that should be required reading for any industry where contractors work long and stressful hours.

It’s been a pleasure to be back with you.

Dan Slevin, interim editor
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Erratum

In the spring issue of NZTECHO (#70) some errors crept in to the photographic credits on Helen Bollinger’s article about film families. The Uenuku and the Mist Maiden photo from 1973 was inadvertently credited to Bret Saunders who wouldn’t have even been born when it was taken. We don’t know who did take it but if you do, let us know.

Liz Earth and Helen are mistakenly inverted in the caption which should read, From left: Helen Bollinger (Solomon in tummy), sound; Liz Earth (formerly Sanderson), costumes; Geoff Murphy cuddling Linus, director; Alun Bollinger, camera.

The picture below, of Saoirse, Bella and Jimmy was taken by Kristen Seth. We’re glad we can set the record straight.
Kia ora all. Well, as we head towards the end of 2016, it’s time to start tidying up loose ends, getting into ship-shape for hopefully smooth sailing into 2017.

On 26 October, the Guild had its 2016 AGM. Following the meeting there were a few changes to our branch and executive committees. So, as issue 71 is the last issue of NZTECHO for the year it seems sensible to introduce you to your elected executive and branch representatives for the coming year.

Before I introduce you to the line-up I thought we should revisit how the Guild operates (for those unfamiliar with the Guild structure). We published something similar some years ago but with a changing membership – and for those who need to be reminded how it all fits together – here is a re-cap of ‘Techos’ Guild 101’. It might make for slightly dry reading but what we do is serious business so take a breath and read on.

The organisation is – in essence – you, its members! Within the wider screen industry, the Guild is a highly respected organisation with unanimous support from many organisations to encourage Guild membership.

We comprise a National Executive (the ‘Board’) and three regional branch committees in Auckland, Wellington and Queenstown. Each branch having its own chair and branch secretary. We have a president and vice president nominated and voted for by you, the members, and a national treasurer, also nominated by the members but ratified by the executive committee. On a day-to-day basis we operate through the executive officer (moi) and an accounts officer (the lovely Jane Scott).

The national executive and branch committees are made up of people just like you, industry colleagues who have volunteered to be on the committees. Unlike many other industry organisations all our executive and committee representatives have worked in the screen industry, on the coal face so to speak, so they call from experience in their fields of expertise when it comes to decision making on behalf of the wider membership.

The national executive looks at how best to guide the Guild into the future and lays out the parameters for the successful operation of the organisation and is responsible for calling the AGMs in liaison with the executive officer.

The branch committees are there on a ‘close-to-home’ basis. The branch committee is responsible to call branch meetings but, moreover, this is instigated by the branch chair. Ideally each branch should have around 5-6 meetings per year. Branch meetings are a great opportunity to address or clarify issues members are having within the industry and finding solutions. The branch meetings also offer the opportunity to have a drink, socialise and network with fellow technicians away from the job. Both the executive and branch committees may also organise local events and get-togethers such as family outings, speaking to film schools or assisting the EO with workshops, benefit and membership drives.

We also have smaller committees (or individuals) who are tasked with specific purposes such as The Blue Book reviews, the Guild name change, the formation of ScreenSafe and most recently the proposal of a Technicians Welfare Fund. Behind the scenes there is always constant work being done in an effort to improve life in the screen industry.

Then of course there is myself as executive officer. I am charged with the day-to-day running of the Guild which includes dealing with Immigration NZ, ensuring we employ suitable NZ citizens before overseas workers, membership and membership concerns, the publishing of NZTECHO, government liaison, publicity, general enquiries, arbitration of disputes and more.

So there you have it and, without further ado, I introduce to you on page 14 your Guild representatives.
Christmas is nearly here, where did the year go?
It seems it’s been a fairly busy year for most people working in our industry. The new financial incentives for large-budget off-shore productions coming here to shoot have definitely had a positive effect on the amount of production activity, thereby increasing the amount of work for many (if not most) of us who work in screen production.

This is all good; or is it?
It does concern me that we give financial incentives to off-shore productions without also giving them a clear set of guidelines as to how we do things here in Aotearoa.

It seems that hours of work in the United States of North America are out of control (that’s certainly how it appears to me from a distance when I hear they’re trying to get their shooting days down to 12 hours).

American companies coming here to shoot talk about a blend of US and Kiwi ways of working. I have no objection at all to a blend of our ways of working, that’s almost inevitable if we’re working alongside each other. But I have no wish to see us moving towards longer shooting days and weeks. For one thing I think it’s generally less efficient, and for another I believe that regardless of how people earn their income, they deserve to have a life outside of their work. Sure, for many – if not most – of us in this biz we’re in it for the stimulation of the work, not just for the money. But we shouldn’t have to exhaust ourselves completely for the sake of the work. It does tend to take away from the joy of creativity which filmmaking can bring.

I know it’s not just off-shore productions pushing past the limits of sensible and acceptable working hours. Weta Digital has a reputation for working longer and longer hours as a project approaches its delivery date. Those longer hours add up over the weeks until people appear to be walking zombies. I don’t know how that benefits anyone. It must become less and less efficient and less cost effective for the production.

There’s always the lure of the money when people are asked to work long hours. More hours generally means more money, especially if there are overtime penalty payments involved. But, after a long and arduous production schedule that lure of money can come at considerable cost in personal terms: near death experiences, relationship breakdowns, drug rehabilitation.

I’m sounding like a cynical old codger, I know, but the thought of the threat of longer hours becoming the norm in our working world does bother me. Recently I’ve bumped into a couple of techos who have – or are planning to move out of Auckland, and I wonder if this might become a trend given the outrageous property and rental prices in that city. Several colleagues and myself moved out of the city to live in the country back in the 1970s. We were finding it too hard to survive financially in the city with young families and slim pickings when it came to film work.

The industry is of course much busier these days but then the cost of living in the city has increased enormously, so it may well again be a practical option to get out of the city.

Having lived away from cities for most of my working life I have found it a distinct advantage in many ways. For one thing, it’s easier to afford to buy a house. It’s cheaper to live in between jobs, and anyway you never know where your next job might take you. You may live in Auckland and find your next job is in Wellington. Or China for that matter.

Mind you, I don’t get as many offers of work these days but there is so much young talent around doing what I do – and doing it well– and the likelihood is they don’t live in the sticks like me.

Right, I’ve had my rant.

May you all have a very pleasant and restful summer break. And may you all have plenty of interesting work come your way in the coming year, without having to work ridiculous hours for the sake of making a living.

Albol
Alternative dispute resolution

Mick Sinclair from Auckland law firm Sinclair Black suggests some contractual clauses that can help when things break down.

Most independent contractors will have come across a clause in an agreement under this heading, which includes words along the lines of:

In the event of a dispute, the parties shall use their best endeavours to resolve the issue informally, but if no resolution is achieved within (x) days, the parties agree to submit the dispute to [arbitration/mediation/conciliation/determination by industry expert].

These recognised dispute resolution procedures are increasingly taken up by parties to agreements in the entertainment/media industries as an alternative to litigation. By agreeing to ADR parties to a contract are precluded from issuing court proceedings, unless they cannot agree a process or person to conduct the process.

The reason that alternatives to litigation are becoming more popular will be obvious to those of you who have been caught up in a court case. It is frequently a lengthy, stressful and expensive process, often resulting in decisions that bear little resemblance to prevailing industry practices. And not nearly as sexy or dramatic as the courtroom scenes in Boston Legal, Suits or Rake make courtroom justice seem…

On the basis that any party negotiating an agreement can suggest clauses they wish to include; what do these various processes mean, and which situations are they best equipped to resolve? In the following paragraphs I will briefly define and compare each method, and then make suggestions as to what might be included in an ADR clause depending on what kind of dispute is likely to arise.

Arbitration/Expert Determination

Arbitration has been a traditional alternative to litigation for centuries. It diverts commercial disputes away from the legal system into a private process in which an independent ‘arbiter’ chosen by the parties makes an award to. Although the process can be without regard to legal technicalities and can apply existing law and industry standards; there are very limited grounds to review an award – the Court’s view being that the parties have agreed on a quicker and (usually) less expensive process before a person familiar with the industry, so it is only if the process was blatantly flawed that an award could be overturned.

Studies of the use of arbitration in the entertainment industries in the USA illustrate an interesting fact – the major producers i.e. studios and networks do not use arbitration clauses, but the guilds and unions do prefer these are included in agreements. The reason for this, according to the Directors’ Guild, was that arbitration was “less adversarial” and therefore “maintained relationships.” The process of arbitration (and mediation) proved particularly effective when disputes arose mid-term of a contract, and also allowed for parties to devise tailor-made resolutions to the specific issues that can arise in the entertainment industry.

Where the dispute concerns narrow issues of industry practice, the parties may be able to limit matters for determination to the point where an agreed industry expert, acting in much the same way as an arbiter, can be appointed to make a ruling.

Mediation/Conciliation

The difference between mediation and arbitration is that mediation involves assisting parties in dispute to reach an agreement which resolves the matter, whereas arbitration is a process where the parties agree on an independent party to make the decision that resolves the matter. Despite this, some mediators (particularly with a legal background) take a more active part in the process by expressing an opinion, whereas some refrain from personal views or suggesting compromises. The latter, more passive form of mediation, is sometimes termed conciliation.

In the same USA industry studies, mediation was seen as a process well-suited to maintaining relationships in a collaborative industry. It “allows participants to formulate a resolution that is mutually agreeable” and contains useful elements such as “a focus on confidentiality, speed and efficiency of implementation, and ability to solve problems creatively at relatively low cost…”

While researching this topic, I also came across methods of alternative dispute resolution rejoicing in names such as mini-trials, neutral evaluation, Med-Arb (where a mediator becomes an arbitrator if the mediation fails), even ‘duelling experts’ (where experts debate an issue in front of a neutral party)!

However, the most common processes used in the entertainment industry are arbitration and mediation – both of which can incorporate elements from other methods because the parties can agree and set their own guidelines.

What to look for in ADR clauses

Aside from ensuring that the most appropriate method of Alternative Dispute Resolution is chosen, then the important features of an ADR clause are choice of adjudicator and the extent to which the process of dispute resolution is defined. On the latter point – I often define what constitutes a dispute covered by the clause, and usually draft an initial section to the clause requiring both parties to attempt to resolve the matter informally, including at least one meeting in person between people with appropriate authority. If the dispute cannot be resolved informally (within a stated time) then the next section of this clause needs to consider which of mediation or arbitration is the most appropriate method. In many cases, parties might agree to mediate their differences, but then go on to agree either arbitration or litigation if mediation fails.

The question of the person best suited to resolve the dispute may depend on the type of dispute:

- If it relates to the interpretation of a contract – either a judge or someone with a legal background.
- If it relates to industry standards or duties of care – someone with industry experience.
- If it relates to compliance with technical specifications – someone with significant technical expertise.

The NZ film and television industry is characterized by a small number of people working collaboratively. There is obvious sense in attempting to resolve disputes informally in order to preserve relationships. But the relatively small size of the industry limits the number of people with the requisite skill (and independence) to conduct a professional ADR procedure. The fallback position seems to be to submit the dispute to organisations such as LEADR or AMINZ, which are almost entirely composed of lawyers. And we all know how that is going to end…
So you think you’re insured?

Jennifer Butcher reports on insurance cover and extended hours at work.

A couple of months ago I was having dinner with a lawyer friend who works for a large international insurance company. We started talking about the implementation of the new Health & Safety Act within the film industry. We got on to talking about extended hours at work and how fatigue is becoming more and more of a problem. I mentioned that it was now not uncommon for film crews to work beyond 14 hours in a day and over 70 hours in a week.

My legal-eagle friend replied, “You do realize you’re probably not insured?”

I asked for further clarification. He replied that if I had a “Reasonable Care” or “Negligence” clause in any of my insurance policies, that if I worked beyond 14 hours and had, or caused, an accident or incident due to fatigue, then I could be in breach of my policy agreement, and therefore have a claim declined. A couple of weeks later I ended up discussing this issue with another lawyer friend who pointed out that if you work more than 60 hours per week, this too could be a reason for an insurance company to challenge your cover. Crikey!

As I thought back through all the long days and weeks I had worked, particularly on line productions, I started to feel slightly sick and realized how lucky I had been to avoid accident or incident. I am not one to keep relying on luck however, so I decided to read all my insurance policies thoroughly (and phone all my insurance providers) to check my cover in relation to extended hours of work and fatigue.

I had some interesting discussions (and email exchanges) with insurance brokers, customer service representatives, case managers and underwriters for Crombie Lockwood (Public & Statutory Liability Insurance), AA Insurance (Car & Contents) and Sovereign Assurance (Income Protection Insurance).

I asked all of them the following question: “Can you please find out for me if there are any exclusions regarding hours at work within and across days regarding my insurance? For example, if I have worked a 15- or 16-hour day on set, or a 70-plus-hour week, will I still be covered? Or is it possible that a “Negligence Clause” or “Reasonable Care Clause” could be used as a way of not paying out should an incident happen?”

Over the phone, none of them answered with a blanket “Yes, you will still be covered”. In all cases, the agents wanted to check my policies, and speak to either their legal team, and/or their underwriters. Fair enough.

The closest to a “yes” was my Income Protection insurer who referred me back to my original application, where I had stated that I could work up to 70 hours per week. My policy and premium was approved for this amount of hours. “Please find attached the proposal that you completed with Sovereign in 2002. You told us at that time that you could be working up to 70 hours per week at peak time whilst on shoot, your policy was issued to you with standard rates. There would be no issues in regards to the hours that you work if you were to lodge a claim” – Sovereign Case Manager.

However, “If I was to work more than the 70 hours per week, that I had disclosed at time of application, then the insurance company would need to assess my potential claim on an individual consideration basis and in the context of all relevant risk factors i.e. medical, financial and occupational. This assessment would determine whether the increase in work hours, above the 70 hours disclosed, was material and whether terms would need to be altered accordingly” – Sovereign Case Manager.

My Public Liability & Statutory Liability Insurance is through the Techos’ Guild group deal with Crombie Lockwood. Their response was more circumspect, as their underwriter replied: “Broadly speaking the policies are triggered from unintentional and unexpected acts, omissions and events. Given the below circumstances, however, I can see how this could be contended through litigation come the time of a claim. Especially around repetitive long hours, lack of breaks and holidays, etc. As usual policy response depends around the full circumstances of a claim...”

My initial call with a customer service representative for AA Insurance garnered this response regarding my car and contents policies: “If I had worked a 15-plus-hour shift, have trouble staying awake at work, but still decide to drive home and have an accident due to falling asleep, a number of factors would need to be considered. However, it is unlikely your claim would be covered in this instance as reasonable care was not taken – we would suggest to mitigate this issue that a person has a sleep before driving or organizes a ride via a friend or family member/taxi/bus”.

Simon Hobbs, Head of Claims and Underwriting at AA Insurance, added: “In my experience, we have never yet declined a claim for an accident resulting from fatigue, and it would only be in the most extreme of circumstances that we would ever contemplate doing so. However, in evaluating a claim the critical question would not be whether you fell asleep at the wheel after working long hours, but whether, having been awake for a long period and recognising that you felt sleepy, you failed to take reasonable care. If, without considering your own safety or that of other road users, you got behind the wheel, fell asleep and caused an accident, we’d certainly take a close look at whether you behaved with reasonable care or were consciously negligent”.

I was sobered by these replies, and decided to have a chat with good friend of mine, Seti Masoud-Ansari, barrister specialising in public law. I wanted to talk with her about some other Health & Safety Act issues as well. She had this to say about insurance company disputes: “Insurance companies may look for reasons to challenge your cover if a work week exceeds 60 hours, aggregated over a 48-week year”. She went on to say that most of these types of cases are eventually settled out of court with confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements, which is why we don’t hear or read about them very often. All this new information made me wonder about insurances at the production company level i.e. Public Liability, Data Insurance (the old Neg Insurance), and policies for hero vehicles, production vehicles, camera, stunts, etc. It would be prudent for production managers and producers to check with their providers if they are still covered if fatigue, due to extended hours, is found to be a factor in an incident or accident.

I would recommend to you all, that you check the wording of all your relevant insurance policies. Look for “Reasonable Care” and “Negligence” clauses. Check that any time frames you may have volunteered on your initial application forms for Income Protection, Life, Health and Medical insurances are still accurate. If these policies were initiated some time ago, check that they are still relevant for the hours you are working today.

If you are still in doubt as to whether you are covered or not, phone your insurance provider and ask them the questions I asked above. If you find, as I did, that extended hours of work might mean you are uninsured at worst, and facing possible litigation to resolve a claim at best, then consider seriously whether accepting a booking, which requires you to work extended hours, is really worth the risk.
In a world...

Waka Attewell NZCS attends this year’s first ever NZCS Awards ceremony in Auckland and finds much to celebrate.

Go on, do the voice.
In a world… of too much rain, too much darkness … and not enough smoke (damn it, art department). In a world of endless three-quarter backlight and moody shadows, god rays and rainbows.
Cut to: men gathering to feast and bellow their pride. Oh heck, not another awards show?
The weekend starts with cinematographer Tom Stern ASC, AFC, describing himself as a failed electrician. The guy that can name drop Conrad Hall and Clint in the same sentence. Yeah, that Clint. Regaling us with shaggy tales from the Hollywood front line, spiritual endeavours from the Russian tundra and art projects with heart and soul with European connections.
A man who lives in France and works in Hollywood… we immediately like him for his sensible choices. The chat conducted by Simon Riera NZCS is well mic’ed, well attended and most appreciated for the insights to the movie shooting process where Tom, beautifully, describes craft as a way of life.

I wonder what life would be like doing two Eastwood movies back to back? He speaks of luck and hard work. The lighting technician who got the call from Clint to tell him that he was shooting his next picture; a guy who hadn’t thought of being a DP. It pays to turn up early and pay attention to the details, eh? Opportunity – she’s our petulant mistress.
The men dispersed into the forest to gather their finery for the forthcoming feasting. A few of the rabble head next door and kick the tyres of the new 8K box from RED. Awe and wonderment and the question on everyone’s lips – 8k? When will enough be enough? At first, the men crowded down the end with the camera and then someone found the free beer and the decibel levels climbed – thank you Claude Dasan of Portsmouth.

Headcount: 84 plus 170 (plus or minus) entries to the awards. It must be official. There are now more cinematographers in Auckland than there are train drivers. Partly due to this fact, and housing prices in the north, newly accredited James Cowley NZCS has even moved out of Auckland. Lookout Hawke’s Bay.
What could be more invigorating than being trapped in a room for nine hours with a bunch of men talking about themselves? I head into the fading light to find my suit and prepare.

It’s the inaugural awards for the Cinematographers Society. Suits aplenty and pomp ensues. Look at that — they all got dressed (up) for the occasion. It’s amazing what the threat of a photo opportunity will do. We jam into the lifts and make our way to the back corner of the hotel. Kubrick’s *The Shining* springs to mind. The music builds, the lights dim, the spotlight finds… finds… finds. Aw heck! What’s this? Who invited her? Did someone bring his sister?

Luckily, Antonia Prebble is a great MC. The men finally grunt their appreciation as they tear at the food and guzzle the wine. If any fighting broke out it wasn’t around my fire… mainly due to the fact that the grips had fallen for the old trick of ‘you wait for us at the Shakespeare and we’ll pick you up in the bus as we swing by’. Could’ve been the wine, could’ve been the company, probably the testosterone — whatever — the appreciation rose to a mini-climax as show time is made up and the main feasting occurs as scheduled. Old rule, always feed the crew on time. The concept of the bronze and silver with the occasional gold (and occasional speech) sort of takes the urgency off the proceedings. I like this format for an awards show a lot. Peter Parnham finally looks a little more settled and has stopped jumping from foot to foot.

Top: The Grand Tea Room at Auckland’s Heritage Hotel, filled the brim with cinematographic talent and their partners and supporters.

Above: James Cowley receives his NZCS accreditation certificate from MC Antonia Prebble and Richard Bluck NZCS President.

Credit: Guy Quartermain.
to foot. The evening progresses seamlessly. Thanks Peter and the NZCS organising committee – no small task indeed.

The room glows with appreciation, filling the stomach and corners of the venue… an appreciation of a three-hour lighting set up of a car TVC, or that burger with the right amount of appetite appeal; the backlit music clip, documentary, TV drama, full on respect for that shot of the albatross that would’ve taken three months, possibly three years to get… An evening of respect and celebration.

Esteemed guests speak from across the Tasman. You know, the usual – underarm bowling joke, All Blacks, and sheep shagging innuendo – gosh, is that the time already? … and then love fills the clearing, Weta Digital and a tribute to the late Andrew Lesnie (ACS, ASC). A hush falls across the place. What respect. I love this business. I love these people.

A room full of egos, over-inflated importance and stories bold and sometimes true. A room full of plumbers and builders we are not; rumour had it there are Christians, Buddhists and even Freemasons present, bureaucrats and managers from the corporate world. What is this great backdrop trick that Rosco has done with the Murray Milne NZCS stills of Auckland? SoftDrop is amazing. Tom Swartz from Rosco was present, a great product folks.

Around about pudding time I am surprised by a great man hug from Lee Tamahori (Mahana, Once Were Warriors) and an even better man-hug from Louise Baker. We share banter about lesbians and cross-dressing… oh yeah, you had to have been there.

Tom Stern gives the second best speech of the evening. He warns of the technology: holding up a 4K Hero in one hand a cell phone in the other. Yeah, I feel sick. Size is a relative thing – I mean what could go wrong? Everyone with a cell phone is now a cinematographer. As I said, 8K? When is enough, enough?

It was about now it occurred to me ‘was it still illegal to yell FIRE in a crowded cinema?’ But then the show kicks off again.

And the winner of the prestige, whoa, all-in-winner-takes-all award goes to New Zealand Cinematographer of the Year … drum roll … Ginny Loane. Oh no, a bloody girl!

How did that happen?

The men grunt their approval… but a standing ovation? Now, that’s just going too far!

Here’s the best speech of the evening:

Gin’s Speech (abridged):

It’s a privilege to accept this award. I want to thank the wonderful Lee Tamahori for giving me the opportunity to work on Mahana.
I also want to acknowledge the wonderful actors and crew who made the film a total pleasure to work on.

As a woman cinematographer I have been lucky. I’ve had support and encouragement from some wonderful men in this room and I’m grateful for that. I’m just one woman DP of only a handful in this country. It’s a problem … We need to do more.

If we want our industry to be more interesting and diverse, to reflect the actual society that we live in, then we have to make room for it.

It’s up to those of us in positions of privilege to take the risks and reach in and pull forward those people who may not fit the preconception of what a cinematographer looks like.

If we want more diversity, we DP’s have to start giving space to people who don’t remind us of ourselves. We have to challenge our own thinking and choices and take risks.

It starts here in this room.

(Shout of applause!)

I, and hopefully many other women, will take it as encouragement. Thank you.

(More applause!)

Above: Ginny Loane speaking after receiving the inaugural NZCS Trophy for Cinematographer of the Year. Credit: Guy Quartermain.

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Health and Safety for the Screen Industry
Helping create safe workplaces
Briefly describe your career path
I never had my heart set on a particular line of work, but I guess I wanted to do something with a sense of purpose. I always loved cinema and storytelling but it wasn’t until I’d worked on my first short film at university that I knew I wanted to work in the industry.

Like many before me I started out on a few low-budget films in NZ then went over to the UK. Within a short space of time I was working for the drama production company Carnival Films, originally in production and business affairs and then as Head of Production.

How did you end up on the production side?
I think we’re all wired differently, and it appears my natural settings lean towards strong organisation, communication, ability to multitask and think laterally. So, when we were cutting our teeth on short films and low-budget features, I would just turn up, work hard and get things done. And that’s generally what you need in production. I also really enjoy bringing someone’s creative vision to life.

What does a Head of Production actually do?
Essentially it’s logistics: You need to ensure productions come in on time and on budget. Behind the scenes you’re dealing with selecting the team, scheduling, budgeting, health and safety, contracts, facilities and more. Then you have problem solving on the floor – working around actors’ availabilities, which cameras to use, securing locations, what to feed everyone… Your role is essentially to oversee the team to make sure everything runs without a hitch. Often easier said than done.

After many years of successful shows like Downton Abbey, you threw yourself in to work with the international medical aid organisation Médecins Sans
From film set to front line

Top and above: Kimberley Hikaka at the sharp end of the aid business in Papua New Guinea. Why?

I became acutely aware of how fortunate I am in my life – I have a wonderful family, wonderful friends, friendly passports, a huge amount of opportunity. I realised I have a freedom of choice that not many people have and that I had a responsibility to do something with that. MSF seemed to be an organisation doing a lot of good work and I was particularly interested in its emergency-based work. The premise of medical care for everyone regardless of ethnicity, religion, politics or gender is something that resonates with me.

How were you able to transfer your professional production skills to the delivery of medical aid?

These are both sectors where you’re working with large teams made up of individuals with different skill sets, and they all need to work together to achieve a desired outcome. It’s that kind of team work, and the logistical framework around it (budget, stock, human resources, location, transport) that are comparable. Both in the field and on set you need exemplary planning, the ability to bring people together, and the calm, creativity and perseverance to problem solve on the spot when things don’t go to plan – which to be honest is most of the time! But if you’ve set yourselves up well, you are able to deal with the changing needs whilst still being able to attain the final vision.

Can you describe the application of your project management skills in the field, and how it contributes to MSF’s life-saving work?

I think a good example is in the movement...
of people and goods. MSF is distinguished by its ability to quickly get teams, medicine and equipment to inaccessible locations. You need to be as efficient as possible with both time and money, which demands skilful management and coordination. This is comparable to filming when you have a large number of people and equipment in multiple locations, with no time or money to be late. Planning movements in high security contexts, as I was doing for MSF in Libya, is actually not too dissimilar to what you’d do on a production.

While working on the cholera outbreak in Malawi I drew on my experience of running small filming units on location. You needed to quickly source accommodation, local staff, locations (in this instance health centres rather than scenery for filming!) and move people and equipment efficiently. I had to forecast and track costs in the same way, as ultimately you’re just as accountable to donors as you would be to the studio – even more so!

Since then you have worked in Yemen, Libya and now you are in Papua New Guinea. How do you balance a demanding career in the field with work back home?

I’ve come to the realisation that I want to spend my time wisely, and for me that means either making programmes with content I really care about or working in humanitarian aid. I believe both storytelling and humanitarian work are very valuable ways to engage with humanity – to connect with what makes us human, to bring perspective and empathy. I have no doubt I will produce in film/TV again but for the moment MSF is where I should be. With MSF, the cameras don’t stop rolling, you can’t call cut, there is no way to save it in the edit – it’s immediate. What you do every day, when you do it and how you do it matters. And you are constantly humbled – by the amazing brilliance of your colleagues, by the resilience and spirit of the diverse communities you work amongst and the opportunity you have to give something back. Filmmaking has the ability to do this too, but in a different way. Fortunately, the project-based nature of the work means it should be possible to do both: You can have the best of both worlds.

About Médecins Sans Frontières:
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) – also known as Doctors Without Borders – is the world’s leading independent organisation for medical humanitarian aid. Médecins Sans Frontières is a worldwide movement with 28 offices, including one in Australia. In 2015, 204 field positions were held by Australians and New Zealanders in 38 countries. For more information about working for MSF visit the Médecins Sans Frontières website: www.msf.org
Virtual reality not just for gamers

Aliesha Staples from Staples Rentals encourages us to investigate the newest imaging technologies.

Virtual technology has been around for decades but in the last 18 months it has grown from a bespoke media format to something in much higher demand with the release of consumer-friendly devices such as the Samsung Gear VR and the likes of Facebook and YouTube adopting 360 VR players for their media.

My first introduction to VR was at the NAB show in 2014 with a small contingency of VR tech companies situated at the far back of one of the enormous halls. With our company building itself on the back of new and emerging technology rentals for the film industry, such as handheld gimbals and drones, VR was a real interest of ours but the idea that it would turn into our main product was far from a reality in 2014.

Before I get too far into the tech side of things I think it’s important to explain what the difference is between ‘VR’ (Virtual Reality) and ‘360 video’, otherwise known as spherical video.

360 Video is the creation of a 360-degree environment which the viewer can explore by moving their head around, this gives you a fly-on-the-wall type view of an environment, if the viewer was to walk forward while viewing the 360 video, the video itself wouldn’t move in relation to your actions. In other words, the camera position is predetermined.

True VR, as the purists like to call it, is the creation of a 360-degree environment that you can then interact with (i.e. if you were to walk forwards in the VR world, the environment would move in relation to your movement). This is a more immersive experience as you can really explore the virtual environment but is also limited by current technology. You need to be tethered to a computer using a system such as a HTC Vive or an Oculus Rift.

OK, so where can you watch it, what content is available and how do you produce it?

Where to watch – or ‘the delivery platform’ – is one of the first questions we ask our clients when developing their VR 360 concept. Currently, there are several ways to view VR 360 content from a desktop computer using players such as YouTube, Facebook, SamsungVR, GoProVR, etc.

Then the next, more immersive, way of viewing is with Google cardboard-style headsets. These have a starting price point of around $10. If you’re looking for something more high end, the Samsung Gear VR – which works with their phones – is a great option with headsets retailing at $199. Higher-end systems from the likes of Oculus and HTC Vive are most popular for installations such as expos or permanent displays, as they retail for over $1000 and require a gaming computer to run.

Secondly, what content is available? Personally, I think content is what is letting the new medium down. Where is the high quality content? Where are the episodic series, etc.?

The good news is, it is coming and it’s coming in a big way. Studios such as Warner Brothers/DC are already making VR experiences to be released alongside their films (Suicide Squad VR was released at ComicCon this year). TV studios like HBO and Netflix are also hot on the heels with Mr Robot and The Walking Dead recently releasing a VR experience alongside episodes of the show.

Content outside the cinematic world is also being created at an amazing rate. Advertising, medical and training are all fields currently dipping their toes into the 360 world.

The broad topic of VR is a hard thing to introduce in such a short time so I will finish with some thoughts on how to produce or create the content. There are currently a huge variety of VR camera systems on the market, from the entry-level Samsung 360 camera (which retails for $650) to multi-camera rigs built out of GoPros, Sony AS7, Blackmagic, etc. The list goes on.

The really interesting systems are coming from companies that traditionally haven’t focused on camera manufacturing like Nokia (the OZO is a US$60,000 camera system which shoots stereoscopic 3D VR video) or the new brands such as Jaunt One, a stereoscopic VR system for high-end capture and Lytro with their Immerge camera.

Something that we are really interested in at Staples Rentals are custom solutions for specific job requirements like our fireproof VR system built for the New Zealand Fire Service or underwater and POV systems currently in development. We have also been thinking about how you creatively move a VR camera. We have built custom cable cam solutions and remote control cars, all for adding a little something extra to a VR shoot.

While this only touches on the amount of information out there currently about the topic of VR, hopefully it gives you a brief insight into this rapidly growing industry. If you would like to find out more, we run monthly workshops where we talk about everything VR.
We represent you!

Introducing your Guild representatives. They represent you on national and regional committees. All these roles call for voluntary time and commitment and are given by your fellow Guild member to ensure we not only have a Guild but we work in unity to uphold the terms and conditions we work to ensuring we have a professional and structured industry.

Alun Bollinger (AlBol)
past-president NZFVTG | national executive
Albol's first job in the industry was as a cine-camera trainee with television in 1966. He left television in 1968 and has been freelancing since. He has worked in almost all areas of production over the years but mainly as a DOP and/or camera operator. He was a member of the various industry organisations that led up to the formation of the Techos’ Guild. As a long-standing Guild member he believes we need the united voice which the Guild provides, a voice for clear communication among crew and between crew and producers and directors.

Sioux Macdonald (nee Ferguson)
vice president NZFVTG | Auckland branch committee | national executive
Sioux began her career in the film industry at the tender age of 16 as a facilities assistant. The following eight years found Sioux working throughout the North Island for numerous post and production facilities before buying crew booking services company Filmcrews. Two decades on, Sioux still runs Filmcrews and enjoys watching her crew progress their careers, she is renowned for orientating new crew in the industry. Sioux has been a member of the Techos’ Guild for 17 years. She has been closely involved in updating The Blue Book with a specific focus on crew safety and on-set working conditions.

Nick Treacy
Auckland branch committee (current chair) | national executive
Nick has over 20 years’ experience as a freelancer in sound. Working on live acts in stadiums and pubs early in his career proved to be a great training ground for the rough and tumble of the film and television industry. Currently a field sound recordist on documentary and broadcast TV, Nick’s passion for sound continues. Nick joined the Techos’ Guild as he saw it as a positive way to bring together a cohesive voice in the screen production sector and wanted to play a part in building a strong, healthy and safe working environment for crew.

Brendon Durey
Auckland branch committee (current chair) | national executive
Brendon began in the NZ film industry in 1986 as a stunt double on The Navigator. He now manages Film Effects, Auckland’s largest mechanical physical effects company. He has worked in TV, film, large-scale live shows and events over the years, mainly in NZ but also in many other countries. Brendon joined the Techos’ Guild early in his career and in recent years has served on the executive in order to contribute to a fair and safe working environment in the industry and to also help give a voice to film industry workers.

Murray Milne
Auckland branch committee | national executive
Murray started in Wellington in the 70s as a camera assistant when early NZ movies like Goodbye Pork Pie were being made. Freelancing from 1981 doing focus pulling on films, TVCs and docos. He progressed to a cinematographer, shooting several early NZ films such as Braindead before moving to Auckland in the early 90s. He has been a Techos’ Guild member since his Wellington days and has been involved in helping write The Blue Book since its inception. Murray believes the Guild has always been, and always will be, a very important group allowing all crew to talk through issues including working terms and conditions and safety.

Lou Taylor
Auckland branch committee | national executive
Lou Taylor is a special effects, lighting and pyrotechnics expert. Her start was through the union in the United States before coming here and joining the Techos’ Guild. Lou is active in the Guild because she believes in what it stands for and aims to do for industry contractors.
Ben Vandepool  
**Auckland branch committee**

Ben is a freelance sound recordist based in Auckland. He joined the Techos’ Guild primarily because of its work in the past and also for the future creation protocols and guidelines by which individual contractors can structure their work. He recognised that without this framework, the voices of individuals and small groups would get lost in the world of freelance. Also the power of this larger group could help influence decisions, or at least give voice to grievances, on a Government level that could affect us all. It is also a way to meet fellow workers, share stories, organise events and learn from others experience beyond the on-set environment. On a purely pragmatic level the Guild offers bloody good discounts too.

Sean O’Neill  
**Auckland branch committee**

Sean has worked in the NZ film industry for nearly 30 years and in that time has seen many changes. As a new member of the executive, he is looking forward to contributing to a team of like-minded professionals with a goal of making the industry a safe, sustainable and equitable environment for all parties involved. He believes that the open forum communication, participation and involvement of the Guild between all the groups associated with the industry (as witnessed recently with the incentive initiative) indicates an extremely positive step forward and hopefully the beginning of a new era.

Mike Lougheed  
**Auckland branch committee**

Mike has been part of the film lighting scene for 19 years. During that time he has worked on a huge range of projects both in NZ and overseas. Over the years he has been part of the crew on countless commercials as well as local drama, tele-features and international films. Most recently he has made a niche for himself as an off-set best boy, working on several large features in Auckland. Mike joined the Techos’ Guild to help strengthen the voice of the NZ film techo. He believes that the Guild lends valuable support to the contractors in our industry and provides cohesion between all crew nationwide.

Rewa Harre  
**Auckland branch committee | national executive**

Rewa left school 33 years ago with a passion to become a cameraman working in the film industry. His particular area of interest and fascination was the art and mechanics of using a camera and lighting to help tell stories. Since starting that journey, Rewa has worked on many interesting projects with many fantastic people. Rewa points out that the film industry is a collaborative process, therefore he believes strongly that we have and support a collective industry body such as the NZ Technicians’ Guild. As a longstanding technician, Rewa respectfully recognises that the guild was established and moved forward by a number of dedicated film and television technicians many years ago. There hard work and dedication to create a professional and solid industry lead to the establishment of The Blue Book, a document which is fundamental to the film industry framework and serves as the base for all those working environment.

Steve King  
**Auckland branch committee (current branch secretary)**

Steve is a producer and director predominantly in the corporate media domain, but is also managing director of Prompt Service, NZ’s number 1 autocue crew. He has been a Techos’ Guild member since starting as freelancer in the video production industry over 25 years ago. The Guild has acted not only as a source of professional support and advice but also fellowship. Steve values and enjoys being connected to the rest of his peers and associates through more than just the current job he is working on.

Zara Hayden  
**Auckland branch committee**

Zara Hayden started in the industry 16 years ago and works primarily in Auckland on TVCs as a production manager. She counts herself lucky and privileged to work in this industry. Zara particularly looks forward to those early morning call times which allow the pleasure of driving to location and seeing the sunrise. She is grateful to the early Techos’ Guild members who wrote *The Blue Book*. Without *The Blue Book*, Zara fears we would have a lot less protection than we currently do. Her passion is to see our industry become more environmentally conscious and sees the industry’s growing awareness of the need to be resource aware.

Axel Paton  
**National executive**

Axel started working in the sound department in 1985 as a boom operator, which he did for 10 years, before shifting to the AD department and he continues this as an 1st AD. He has always found *The Blue Book* provides a very valuable set of guidelines for the industry and is keen to help maintain the working environment for crews.

Richard Bluck  
**President NZFVTG | national executive**

Richard is a cinematographer based in Wellington. He has been in the film industry for 35 years as a cinematographer, camera/Steadicam operator, focus puller, director and producer. Along with his position for the Techos’ Guild, he is also president of the New Zealand Cinematographers Society. Richard’s background has seen him shoot numerous features and television productions with a specialisation in 3D. His involvement with the Techos’ Guild stems from his belief that industry members need to have a collective voice to promote fair and equitable treatment of all members, also to have a forum to interact and develop ideas to make the industry more sustainable.
Wellington branch committee | current chair
Adrian (Wookie) Hebron

Adrian (aka Wookie) has been in the industry since 1986 and works as a gaffer. On his first feature the DOP said “first we are here to have fun then we will make a movie”. Wookie has tried to carry that ethos through his work ever since. A Techos’ Guild member since 1990, Wookie believes that if he is to take advantage of what the Guild has fought for then he should put something back, even if it’s just being a member or turning up to occasional events. Wookie says we are very fortunate in our industry to have a set of conditions that contractors and productions work to. Few other self-employed industries have anything approaching the conditions we have.

Wellington branch committee | national executive
Graeme Tuckett

Graeme is a grip, dolly grip, location scout and occasional location manager. He writes extensively on film and is currently the film reviewer for Fairfax Media newspapers. He has written and directed several documentaries, including a feature length film on the pioneering Maori film-maker Barry Barclay. He has another feature documentary in development now. In 2012, Graeme set up the crew directory service Crew Wellington, and in 2013 he went into partnership with Sioux Macdonald to start Crew Auckland.

Wellington branch committee
Ken Saville

Ken is freelance location sound operator in Wellington. Ken has been in the film industry as a freelancer for 32 years. Ken’s support of good safety industry work practice within the film industry stems back to his attendance of the first Film Academy meeting in the early 80s out of which the Techos’ Guild was created. Voted chairman of the Wellington branch in 1999, Ken stayed in this position until his resignation in 2007. He additionally remained on the national executive until 2013. Often voted as crew representative, Ken stresses the Guild’s importance in upholding, representing and supporting the rights of all crew in the film industry. He stresses the importance that to survive, the Guild needs the help and support from all its members.

Wellington branch committee | national executive
Sally Cunningham

Sally has been in the industry since 2005 working mainly in the production office and occasionally as an AD. Most recently she has been working as an assistant production coordinator or production coordinator. Sally joined the Guild in 2006 as a way of meeting people and networking. These days she is interested in encouraging everyone to join up so we are all more involved in how our own industry runs, especially those new to it or just out of film school. We need to get more people along to regular branch meetings rather than just being passive members from afar.

Wellington branch committee | current branch secretary
Richard Lander

Richard Lander started out in the screen industry in 1979 at Avalon Studios as a TV One cadet. His first role was as a 2nd assistant to Dave Gibson on Black Hearted Blackfoot directed by Yvonne Mackay. Richard then became a cameraperson which is his craft and passion. Three years ago, when Avalon became a private independent company, Richard took on the role of studio and facilities manager. Richard now has the privilege of helping producers, directors and crews turn their stories into realities. Richard joined the Guild three years ago and believes strongly in its advocacy and looks forward to its growth.

Wellington branch committee
Jared Connon

Jared Connon began his career in the New Zealand film industry in the early 90s, initially training within the locations department and he has continued exclusively within this craft for over 20 years. He recently stepped up to production management and is looking forward to the very real and rewarding challenge that this role brings. He is also a foundation member of the Screensafe group, helping develop the new safety guidelines for the wider screen industry. Joining Screensafe and seeing how playing an active role in the film community really does make a difference, he hopes that more people will be attracted to supporting all the hard work that the Techos’ Guild puts in behind the scenes.

Wellington branch committee
Belindalee Hope

Belindalee has been in the industry since 1993 and works as a production manager on a broad range of projects. She is very aware of how tough it is negotiating independently as contractors, being at the mercy of tough deadlines and tight budgets. Without The Blue Book and the Safety Code of Practice, Belindalee believes this would be even tougher. She sees the Techos’ Guild as playing a vital role for peer support, networking, being a lifeline in times of need and as a voice on important industry issues. As demonstrated recently by the achievement of changes to the NZ Government’s screen production grants programme.

Wellington branch committee
Tim Hope

Tim has been working solidly in the production and locations departments of feature films over the last six years, mostly in the Miramar family. He has turned his focus to NZ films in his new role as film festival coordinator in the marketing department at the New Zealand Film Commission, to help get this country’s films out there in the world. Tim joined the Techos’ Guild to network with filmmakers and to get a better sense of the state of the industry.
Believes the role that the Techos’ Guild plays has been, and will continue to work on TVCs in Queenstown, Australia and south-east Asia. He has represented individuals working in the industry.

As of 2008, he has worked fulltime as a 1st AD mostly working on commercials and features and television and is now based in Queenstown to establish a lighting company. That led to his involvement in camera and grip rental as well as lighting. Brett sees the Guild as a relevant and valid organisation in an environment that requires a collective voice.

As a Techos’ Guild member since 1989, Mark began his career in the lighting department as an electrician on the NZ feature film User Friendly, remaining in lighting as a gaffer until 2008. With a well-timed move from Auckland to Queenstown in early 2006 he began his transition from gaffer to 1st AD, finding a niche with a strong technical background. As of 2008, he has worked fulltime as a 1st AD mostly working on TVCs in Queenstown, Australia and south-east Asia. He believes the role that the Techos’ Guild plays has been, and will continue to be, vital to the success and stability of our ever-changing industry.

Mark has been tech support and an AVID Media Composer tutor at the NZ Film School for the last six years and a Guild member since 2011. He is fully behind the Guild and what it does for the industry. Mark is interested in preparing students for the real world of the film industry both on set and in post-production. The Guild is an important contact point and he wants to ensure that NZFTS, as a school, teaches industry relevant skills.

As a member of the Techos’ Guild for 15 years and believes the occasional feature. Jamie has been a member Queenstown branch committee mostly working on commercials and the occasional feature. Jamie has been a member of the Techos’ Guild for 15 years and believes there needs to be a body looking out for issues affecting NZ technicians.

Jamie has been involved with film lighting in NZ for 15 years in a range of roles and projects. Based in Wellington for eight years, he worked on features and television and is now based in Queenstown mostly working on commercials and the occasional feature. Jamie has been a member of the Techos’ Guild for 15 years and believes there needs to be a body looking out for issues affecting NZ technicians.

Mark Gillings
Queenstown branch committee | national executive

As a member of the Techos’ Guild since 1989, Mark began his career in the lighting department as an electrician on the NZ feature film User Friendly, remaining in lighting as a gaffer until 2008. With a well-timed move from Auckland to Queenstown in early 2006 he began his transition from gaffer to 1st AD, finding a niche with a strong technical background. As of 2008, he has worked fulltime as a 1st AD mostly working on TVCs in Queenstown, Australia and south-east Asia. He believes the role that the Techos’ Guild plays has been, and will continue to be, vital to the success and stability of our ever-changing industry.

Brett Mills
Queenstown branch committee | national executive

Brett has been in the industry for over 30 years, 25 of them in Queenstown. He has been a member of the Techos’ Guild for longer than he can remember. Brett did his first 10 features based in Auckland working in the lighting department, returning to his home town of Queenstown to establish a lighting company. That led to his involvement in camera and grip rental as well as lighting. Brett sees the Guild as a relevant and valid organisation in an environment that requires a collective voice.

Jaime Couper
Queenstown branch committee

Jamie has been involved with film lighting in NZ for 15 years in a range of roles and projects. Based in Wellington for eight years, he worked on features and television and is now based in Queenstown mostly working on commercials and the occasional feature. Jamie has been a member of the Techos’ Guild for 15 years and believes there needs to be a body looking out for issues affecting NZ technicians.

Thomas (Thom) Watson
Queenstown branch committee

Thomas is a technician based in Queenstown. He has been working on TVCs and films for the last 15 years, joining the Techos’ Guild soon after falling into the industry. Involved in stabilised remote heads predominantly, with occasional involvement in other technical areas, he is split fairly evenly between overseas feature film work and local TVCs, with the odd NZ feature in the mix. His interest in the Guild stems from the belief that there needs to be a collective body representing individuals working in the industry.

John Allan
Queenstown branch committee | executive committee

John has done it all, starting around 25 years ago as a swing driver, in the catering department, doing a bit of set labouring, as unit manager and more. It wasn’t until John worked on Muriel’s Wedding as a greensman that he found his home in the art department – a place in which he has found neverending workplace joy for the past 20-odd years. At the end of the day John says workplace conditions that most crew take for granted are because people in the Techos’ Guild made an effort and that is one of many reasons why he continues to be a member.

Wayne Allen
Queenstown branch committee | current chair

Wayne started in the outdoor adventure industry in the late 80s and has been in the Queenstown film business for around 15 years as a safety officer. He operates Southern Safety Film and Events, managing safety on TVC’s, features and large adventure events in the South Island. He sees the Guild in association with ScreenSafe, working together to provide a clear understanding of requirements for the filming community in its projects. The Guild can provide the framework for unity and support for PCBU’s (new acronym) in the industry.

Nic MacAllan
Queenstown branch committee | branch secretary

Nic spent many years on the peripheral of the film industry and in 2008 she walked away from her role as a HR Manager in the real world, and has been happily freelancing since then in production and art department. Nic strongly believes it is in the best interests of all those in the screen industry to collectively support the Guild and ensure a safe crew environment. A strong crew will provide a platform for the industry to grow which in turn will benefit everyone. What comes around goes around!

Jo Bollinger
Queenstown branch committee

Jo is an electrician who started doing lighting in the early nineties in Queenstown. From the West Coast, he has worked mainly in Te Wai Pounamu apart from a couple of years earlier on in Tamaki Makaurau. He is a member of the Guild because without it he says, “we’re screwed”. To ensure he’s not surreptitiously voted president, he turns up to as many meetings as possible.
**Take one – Auckland**

Summer is upon us and with the longer daylight hours come longer shoots and hopefully less weather cover days needed.

In the Filmcrews office in Auckland we have noticed the most incredible spike of work in the last few weeks, stretching an already thin list of crew even thinner. It’s a pretty great position to be in, and even the lack of studio space in Auckland doesn’t seem to be holding us back.

The whiteboard in my office that generally has six or seven long-term projects up on it (in large writing) has needed a proper wipe down with Spray n’ Wipe, and a rewrite in smaller font, to allow for the 18 long-term projects that are happening around the country over the summer/autumn season.

We’ve noticed an incredible shortage of location scouts and managers, camera and grip teams. A lot of juggling of dates and personnel has been needed just to make some jobs happen, and then somehow, on top of all that, the line productions finally seem to be coming back to NZ, taking up any possible slack in crew and production people.

We look forward to NZ hosting some of the production of Disney’s *A Wrinkle in Time* early 2017 (starring Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon), as well as supporting further seasons of *Ash vs Evil Dead*, *The Shannara Chronicles*, some Netflix productions as well as local productions *Filthy Rich*, *Brokenwood Mysteries* and *Westside 3* to name but a few.

I might sound like a broken record but, once again, I have to stress just how important it is that all crew support and train those that are younger and newer, properly and safely, and pass on your skills and knowledge to help create an even more vibrant and energetic industry than the one we are currently experiencing.

*Sioux Macdonald, Guild vice president and executive committee member*

**Take two – Wellington**

A year draws to a close and in Wellington you can pretty much smell the déjà vu on the wind. Once again Miramar is gearing up for a monstrous shoot – that’ll be *Squeaky Wheels* or *Mortal Engines* or *Hungry Cities*, depending whose mailing list you’re on – which will be rolling cameras in late Summer 2017.

And, as always, the offices of Crew Wellington are still receiving emails on a daily basis asking when *Avatar 2* is coming to town.

And, again, there’s another extraordinarily exciting shoot happening right under our noses which we can’t even talk about on pain of excommunication and the threat of never carrying a sandbag across Stone Street’s carpark again.

I can also tell you that Crew Wellington’s email server has been running hot with requests for location scouts and managers. Mostly because yet another pack of bloody fools are intending to shoot a car commercial in downtown Wellington a week before Christmas. Never has the sign-off line ‘good luck with that’ seemed more appropriate.

But, somehow, maybe, with the endless forbearance of our film-friendly city council, a streak of bleak good humour from the crew and the endless grim bemusement of a hundred business owners and a thousand car drivers, we will probably pull it off again. This city, walking that mostly non-existent line between a can-do attitude and a hunger for another payday before Christmas, will prevail.

Around the traps, I’m writing this in the lunch tent of the American shoot *Palisades*, which has been twelve weeks so far of unalloyed fun, cordial relations, balmy weather, and trouble-free days on a selection of comfortable, well-drained, unchallenging and sublime well-managed and scouted locations. More on this when the medication wears off.

Actually, it’s been a blast. But, rain, quakes and a go-fast schedule have most definitely confirmed all those things we hear about Kiwi crews being the toughest and best attituded in the world.

There has also been a fine little bunch of medium budget TVCs in town, plus various other TV and web projects all taking up crew and resources.

We are happily busy down here, as we dodge the crumbling masonry and rising water levels.

Best to you all, and our thoughts and wishes to all our colleagues and comrades up and down the country.

It’s been one of those months that reminds us all of the importance of working to tell the stories that need to be told, but also of how there are so many things in life more important than our jobs.

Love your work,

*Graeme Tuckett and Crew Wellington*
Take three – Queenstown

Another four months have passed and, while work hasn’t been as busy as last year, it’s still keeping local crews on their toes.

We’ve had a fairly typical combination of TVCs, bits of films, small films, large format film, VFX shoots, under- and over-budgeted shoots and now an Aussie TV series – *Wanted 2*.

*Wanted* is interesting in that it’s sucking up significant numbers of local crew making quoting for large TVCs challenging as you contemplate where to find people. Bringing in non-local crew will cost productions more and finding and paying for accommodation brings further challenges, especially when post-GFC Queenstown saw no further hotel development. Now that things are booming hotel rates are at an all time high. Christchurch is probably in similar situation. Not only post-GFC but lump an earthquake on top as well.

After Brexit and Trump we will probably have Winston steering the country next, probably great for our ageing grey-head crew in Queenstown, shame about the rest. Anyway, roll on summer. Let’s hope that its long, hot and lovely.

Have a great Christmas and here’s to seeing what we will be calling ourselves next year.

John Allan, Queenstown branch and executive committee member
As a member you’ll get all the benefits and support that the Guild provides, as well as the satisfaction that you’re helping to support a safer and more productive industry for all techos.

Membership is just $243 (incl GST) per annum or $20.25 by monthly AP. Students and recent graduates can receive a 50% discount (no monthly AP option). You will receive a membership pack including *The Blue Book*, *The Safety Code of Practice*, a Techos’ Guild membership card (to access all our wonderful benefits) along with ongoing support and advice.

Join the New Zealand Film and Video Technicians’ Guild today – online at [www.nztecho.com](http://www.nztecho.com) or email info@nztecho.com
NEW MEMBERS

Join us in giving the following new members a hearty welcome!

**Auckland**
Anne-Louise Spraggon, 3rd AD
Laura McGeorge, production manager and co-ordinator
Wayne McCormack, animal wrangler
Natalie Ziblung, drone operator
Steph Griesel, film and video camera

Guy Quartermain, DP/film and video camera
Anna Walsh-Wright, production manager

**Wellington**
Keri Manuel, lighting technician
Andreas Mahn, film and video camera

Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/NZFVTG

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Techos’ Guild office hours
Monday to Friday, 9am to 3:30pm
Outside these hours, please leave a phone message or email us.

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Richard Bluck 021 449 124

**Queenstown chair**
John Allan 0274 301 604

For full committee listing and contact details please email: info@nztecho.com

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The TECHOs Guild
New Zealand Film and Video Technicians’ Guild Inc.