



The Insiders Guide to Conference: Wrap

Another conference under the belt - and from all accounts most people were well-behaved throughout the event. How is the industry to maintain its party-loving reputation? All rumours and unsubstantiated stories (photos please!) can be sent to us at info@spada.co.nz.

Highlights from Small Country, Big Picture 2004

Wired to the World – What really came out of this session was the need for New Zealand producers to work together to form a real brand for New Zealand television programmes, and focus on the world market, playing the international value chain. Delegates were given a strong message that relationships are the most valuable currency in the international market.

Meet the Programmers – The programmers of TVNZ, Prime, MTS and 3 fronted to the delegates. 3 Programmer Beverley McGarvey commented on the vibrancy of the NZ industry and said 3 is still in the market for 7.30pm and 8pm slots for independents. Tawini Rangihau and Hineani Melbourne from Maori Television Service showed the delegates just how much the network has achieved in its first year. TVNZ speakers made clear their commitment to Charter requirements and Andrew Shaw of Prime says he'd consider comedy and documentaries for an 18-54 audience and commissioning drama was a big statement for the channel.

Scenic Route to Morningside – There was a distinct muttering of “poos and wees” throughout the rest of the conference. The creators and producers of *bro'Town* walked us through the years of development and production, and showed that an indigenous New Zealand animation programme can strike a chord internationally.

Creative Strategies – Kathryn Tucker, Philippa Campbell, John Barnett and Tim White talked of diverse strategies for creative partnerships and being open to the best ideas, which could come from any source, and the importance of sharing the back-end with creatives.

A Fistful of Dollars – International speakers Tracey Josephs, Brian Rosen and John Sloss pointed out financing opportunities and pitfalls in their respective territories. John Sloss explained how his InDigEnt project works, with all those involved in the production taking a share of first dollar – counteracting the somewhat inflated costs of production. He also stressed the importance of a producer knowing about and maximising potential revenue streams.

Putting It Out There - Magna Pacific's Leon Coningham, Rialto's Kelly Rogers, Victoria Treole from Miramax and Fortissimo's Ashley Luke talked of the whole economies of the industry changing with the majority of the revenue stream being from DVDs and a minority from box offices. It's in the arthouse and crossover markets that the changes are having the most impact. The once clear lines between art house and mainstream have blurred. “Independent” now means character and story driven, rather than being focussed on stars and big name directors.

Yes, Minister - Minister of Broadcasting Steve Maharey assured delegates that New Zealand On Air funding would remain contestable, and outlined the recent decision to return approx \$11m from TVNZ's dividend back to the broadcaster and that major policy work was going on on the future of broadcasting, under the umbrella of “The Programme for Action”. Minister of Economic Development Jim Anderton highlighted increased funding for the Film Commission, the negotiation of co-

production agreements, and the establishment of the Large Budget Screen Production Grant (LBSPG) as achievements of his government. The Screen Council's discussion paper on potential enhancements to the Large Budget Screen Production Grant is available here:

www.nzscreenCouncil.co.nz/documents/LBSPGDiscussionPaperpdf.pdf

Saturday Workshops – Feedback on all the workshop sessions has been excellent. The range of content was incredibly diverse, from animation to running a production company to a master class on *The Station Agent*, but those who attended have reinforced the importance of practical, interactive sessions. Thanks to Sony and Park Road Post for their support of workshops in 2004.

The **roundtables** were a new feature for the SPADA conference. They proved incredibly popular, and we're very keen to hear your thoughts on their effectiveness and structure. The speakers at the tables worked hard and really gave a lot to delegates.

Word on the street is that everyone was happy with the replacement of the movie night with the **3 Welcoming Drinks** on Thursday night, which was a good opportunity to catch up with your comrades after an intense first day.

The **TVNZ Black Tie Dinner** was a fantastic social occasion and it was great to see everyone dressed up. The night was topped off by the presentation of three awards:

- the **SPADA New Filmmaker of the Year** – won by **Florian Habicht**
- the **SPADA OnFilm Industry Champion** – won by **Di Rowan**
- and the inaugural **SPADA Independent Producer of the Year Award** (supported by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise) – taken away by **Trevor Haysom**.

We're also really happy with the feedback we've received on the **pitching competition** at the **Great Screenrights Brunch**. The pitchers were entertaining and the judging panel of Victoria Treole, Ashley Luke, Norm Bolen, Beverley McGarvey and Jane Wilson were thoroughly impressed. Congratulations to Annie Goldson, who won with her pitch for "Elgar's Enigma" The competition is definitely back on the menu for next year (and up for sponsorship...!)

We've put together a conference feedback form (available on the SPADA website) and we'd really appreciate any comments on Small Country Big Picture 2004. In particular, we're keen to hear your thoughts on the new format.

Grateful thanks to all speakers, moderators, workshop facilitators, sponsors and delegates – we couldn't do conference without you! Keep an eye out for the post-conference SPADANews, out later this month.

The Spadettes - Penelope, Kim & Penny

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