

**SPADA**

Screen Production and Development  
Association of New Zealand Inc.  
Waka Pāpāho.

# SPADA NEWS

August 2002

## Small Country, Big Picture Conference 2002

**Considerable work is going on behind the scenes to whip the screen industry conference for 2002 into shape.**

The theme is "Development - creative and business", and we've cast our net wide in targeting people internationally who might help push the boundaries for New Zealand producers, directors and writers.

On the local front, there's been considerable change over the past 12 months. At TVNZ, Rick Ellis is out and Ian Fraser is in. There's a new public broadcasting charter. There's a new

Government. TV3 and TV4 are for sale. And there's a new Maori Television channel. What a year! There's obviously a lot to talk about.

Turn to page 4 for a full run down on the great range of sessions that are being planned, and for the cast list of international film and television luminaries who've agreed to come to our conference.

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**"Tongan Ninja"  
goes to Cannes**  
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# Editorial



Welcome to the new look SPADA NEWS and SPADA's new incarnation as the Screen Production and Development Association of New Zealand, Waka Pāpāho.

We've come a long way since the TVPDA and the IPDG and, indeed, since the creation of SPADA. In some ways, the development of the Association is reflected in the development of the industry itself. In its various guises, SPADA's reason for being has remained the same: to advocate for and support a healthy, skilled industry making great New Zealand films, programmes, commercials and moving image productions.

The new-look SPADA will strive to represent the industry and its issues at all levels. Our mandate comes from you, our members, and we will continue to ensure that our policy development is transparent, involving wide and receptive consultation. You talk, we'll listen! We'll liaise with the other industry guilds, seek partnerships and alliances and encourage industry-wide broad agreement on the big issues. We'll represent the producer's voice in intra-industry matters, the director's voice when requested, and be an informed commentator for the wider industry as issues reach the public domain.

We encourage membership from all walks of screen production: producers, directors and line producers as primary members and we welcome interested others as associate members. We'll continue to focus on both creative and business screen production issues as well as involving ourselves in public policy development affecting the screen industry.

An enormous number of people have worked hard, over many years, to set up the Association and ensure that it has the resources and networks to do its job properly. I pay tribute to all who have served on the Executive, past and present, to those who have generously helped us with advice, feedback and sponsorship, and to all our members who understand the need for a strong production association.

We're over 300-strong now - our largest membership ever - and we intend to keep growing and providing bigger and better services. In the face of all the interest in foreign production - which we welcome as an important part of the wider industry - New Zealand cultural production needs a strong voice. The vitality of New Zealand-originated storytelling and the value of its intellectual property must not be forgotten.

SPADA thanks you for helping us to provide that voice.

Jane Wrightson  
Chief Executive

## Stop Press:

### Election Result

Congratulations to Labour for winning its second term in office.

In its broadcasting policy statement (see [www.labour.org.nz](http://www.labour.org.nz)), Labour listed its achievements to date, including:

- Developing a charter that requires TVNZ to act principally as a public broadcaster, and changing TVNZ's legal structure to a Crown Company to assist in that shift of mindset;
- Allocating \$12 million pa to help implement the TVNZ Charter, and increasing NZOA's television funding to \$60 million pa;
- Forming a Television Local Content Group including broadcasters, producers and NZOA with the aim of substantially increasing the amount of local content screened on television;
- Developing a voluntary radio quota to ensure that at least 20 percent of all music played on commercial radio is New Zealand music; and
- Providing funding for a Maori Television Service.

Labour makes several new promises for its second term, including:

- Financial support for TVNZ's charter;
- NZOA funding remaining contestable;
- Supporting the growth of regional television;
- Supporting the Maori Television Service;
- Assessing whether current institutional and funding arrangements for Maori broadcasting purposes can be further enhanced; and
- Developing a coordinated strategy for Pacific broadcasting.

On the quota issue, there is a radical change of direction from the unfulfilled 1999 election promise to introduce a mandatory quota scheme. Labour's policy now says:

"Labour is committed to increasing the levels of local content on both television and radio. We recognise that increased levels of local content require the development of partnerships between broadcasters, producers, government agencies, musicians and performers. There has been encouraging progress in this area but it is important that concrete targets are agreed and met for increased local content. Our preference is for agreed targets but we reserve the right to impose mandatory quotas if this is not possible."

[PROMISE] Labour will: "further develop the partnership with television and production industries to achieve an increased level of New Zealand content on television."

Labour may think that there has been "encouraging progress" - we do not. We need strong political leadership on the local content issue, not endless meetings where broadcasters make excuses and funders cry poor. If the Government can spend millions on consultants' reports on the screen industry, inward missions for foreign studio executives and various other fripperies, it can certainly afford to fund - and demand - a quota system. This would be the single most influential mechanism to grow the New Zealand screen production industry.

### Hands up for SPADA's executive?

What should SPADA be doing next year? If you have ideas about where the organisation should be heading and what issues we should be tackling in 2003, you should seriously consider putting yourself forward for the Executive, SPADA's governing body.

The SPADA Executive meets every two months during the year and is responsible for the governance of the organisation. Decisions on policy, funding and strategy are all made at Executive level. Being a member of the SPADA Executive makes a tangible difference to the organisation, and to the industry at large.

Elections for the Executive will be held at SPADA's Annual General Meeting in Auckland on 15 November. We will be distributing nomination forms in October to all current financial members.

**Please put your hand up!**



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# Small Country, Big Picture Conference Highlights

15-17 November, Auckland

The theme for the 2002 SPADA Film and Television Conference is "Development - creative and business". Huge effort is going on behind the scenes to frame sessions that reflect the current state of the industry and that people will feel compelled to attend. And a mountain of emails, phone calls and faxes are being exchanged as we confirm inspirational guest speakers from parts foreign who have a gap in their diary.....

Here, to tempt you, is a selection of panel sessions we're currently formulating:

Have Format, Will Travel - Selling NZ programmes to the world

TVNZ and the Charter, with Ian Fraser

Thinking Outside the Box - Alternative and additional TV funding options

Film Directing - Making it here or there?

Developing Stories - 10 to 1 Odds?

Finding the Money Tree - Film financing options

Maori TV - Life, the Channel and Everything

International speaker confirmations to date include:

**Nick Drake:** a poet and script specialist, ex-Director of Development at Intermedia, the entertainment investment company with offices in London and Los Angeles. When it comes to creative development, Nick's one of the best.

**Alan Harris:** an expat Kiwi, Alan Harris is an expert in UK sale and leaseback deals. Alan has strong opinions on what New Zealanders need to do to successfully attract international film finance.

**Alison Rayson:** is Managing Director of London-based sales agency Target TV which sells television drama and formats. Among its many international clients, Target has represented programmes for SPP, Gibsons and is currently selling *The Chair* for Touchdown. Alison also has strong views about what is needed to sell New Zealand programmes overseas, and the role sales companies can play especially if they are involved early in development.

**Ed Solomon:** writer of *Men in Black*, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*, *Leaving Normal*. He is also writer/director of *Levity*, the upcoming independent film, starring Billy Bob Thornton, Morgan Freeman, Holly Hunter and Kristen Dunst.

**Mark Horowitz:** Mark has over 15 years of experience in international distribution of feature films, from commercial big budget to independent art house films. Most recently, Mark was president of Alliance Atlantis Pictures International, distributors of films such as *The 51st State*, Neil Jordan's latest thriller *Double Down*, the teen hit *Slackers* and David Cronenberg's *Crash*. Alliance Atlantis International also worked with Istavan Szabo (*Sunshine*) and Atom Egoyan (*The Sweet Hereafter*, *Exotica*), and fostered the careers of directors including our own Alison McLean, Denis Villeneuve (*Maelstrom*) and Stacy Peralta (*Dogtown & the Z-Boys*).

**Ruth Atkinson:** Has worked as a freelance reader and feature film development consultant for companies including Catchlight Films, Alliance/Atlantis Communications/H2O Productions and Crystal Sky, LLC. She was Executive Director Production & Acquisitions at Unapix Films, specialising in low budget independent films. She has also held roles as Director of Development at Bedlam Pictures, Outside Productions and American Odeon in association with Alliance Entertainment.

We have an inspiring line-up of speakers – and new confirmations were coming in at the time **SPADA NEWS** went to print. Registration information will be available in September.

## Focus on producer training

SPADA has prepared a major draft discussion paper on producer development which proposes a strategic approach to upskilling opportunities.

"We've done this because producer training has been ad hoc to date," says Jane Wrightson, "If all the current Government and funding agency initiatives are to bear fruit, New Zealand must have a good pool of talented, savvy producers.

"The function of a producer is not always well understood, and their critical contribution in growing the industry is in danger of being overlooked."

Jane says that the New Zealand industry needs producers skilled in working for other producers, as well as others with the entrepreneurial skills needed to grow the total production pool by sourcing new money for projects.

"Entrepreneurs are born, not made, but there are ways that some of the road blocks for development can be kicked aside."

New Zealand producers will only make the most of the potential in the global and domestic market for screen content if they have the entrepreneurial, creative, financial and management skills and networks to negotiate their way through this highly competitive environment, says Jane.

The draft paper is being considered by the Screen Production Task Force, and is still in its early stages. Nevertheless, it is the most comprehensive overview of producer training prepared to date. Member input is very welcome. If you'd like a copy, the draft is available from [jane@spada.co.nz](mailto:jane@spada.co.nz)

**SONY**  
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# Task force sets its sights high for screen industry



## Members

The Screen Industry Taskforce includes:

- Jim Anderton - Industry and Regional Development Minister, co-chair
- Julie Christie - Managing Director, Touchdown Productions, co-chair
- John Barnett - Managing Director, South Pacific Pictures Ltd
- Grant Bradley - CEO, Daybreak Pacific
- Geoff Dixon - Managing Director, Silverscreen/Oktobor
- Ian Fraser - CEO, TVNZ
- Dave Gibson - Managing Director, Gibson Group
- Nigel Hutchinson - Director, Motion Pictures (Chairperson, Commercials Group)
- Robin Laing - Preston Laing Productions (Chairperson, Independent Film Group)
- Diana Rowan - Council of Trade Unions (CTU) nominee
- Don Selwyn - Producer, He Taonga Films
- Michael Stedman - Managing Director, Natural History NZ Limited
- Richard Taylor - Director, Weta Workshop Ltd
- Sue Thompson - CEO, The Film Unit (Chairperson, Post-Production Group)
- Ray Thompson - Chairman, Cloud 9
- Rick Friesen, TV3

The Screen Industry Task Force should have completed a set of recommendations to Government for growing the screen industry in New Zealand by the end of the year, says co-chair Julie Christie (left), managing director of Touchdown Productions.

"I'd like to think we'll be finished by the end of year because by then I'd say we'll all be keen to get back to focusing on growing our own companies," she told SPADA NEWS by cell phone from Sydney where she had just landed.

At the conclusion of its first meeting in May, the task force set a clear goal for the screen production industry - to grow international sales from an estimated \$200 million per annum to \$400 million per annum, excluding *Lord of the Rings* revenue.

To achieve this, the task force will focus on increasing the number and size of screen production houses in New Zealand. The goal is to have 10 companies with revenues greater than \$50 million and an additional 20 companies with revenues of more than \$10 million per year.

Julie Christie did not think these goals were too ambitious.

"I think they're quite achievable," she said. "In the group [task force] are many of New Zealand's most successful film and TV entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses from scratch. There's a great deal of knowledge and expertise we can draw on in making recommendations for future growth."

Julie said the task force had established three special interest groups, on education, and existing and new investment.

The first was focusing on education issues such as an examination of current tertiary courses in film and TV production, and the quality of graduates they produced. The second was looking at the existing public funders such as the New Zealand Film Commission and New Zealand On Air, to see if improvements could be made in how they funded projects in future. And the third was examining how the State could help attract new sources of investment to New Zealand's screen industry.

"We are still very much at the information gathering stage," said Julie. Industry New Zealand was doing a lot of the leg-work for the task force. As a result, she said it was still far too early to give any clear sense of what initiatives or strategies the task force might recommend.

However, she said the group was extremely practical in its outlook, and had the best interests of the industry at heart.

"This is a group with very strong ideas," Julie said. "But our hearts are all in the same place. We want to make a real contribution to the growth and development of the industry in New Zealand. We want more TV and better TV, more films and better films coming out of New Zealand. The group's driving force is to make that happen."

## Goals

The Taskforce is charged with:

- **Setting and agreeing growth economic goals for the NZ screen production industry;**
- **Addressing the key development gaps in the industry of:**
  - **craft development and business upskilling;**
  - **retention and exploitation of intellectual property;**
  - **capital for creative ventures; and**
  - **international marketing and distribution.**
- **Developing an understanding of what 'partnership' means between government and industry, and the extent and nature of potential government involvement in the industry;**
- **Developing an awareness of the significance of and need for a more focused and collaborative approach within the industry; and**
- **Providing information to help shape sector strategy.**

## Caterina De Nave update

So far \$16,500 has been raised for Caterina De Nave, with a further promised \$12,000 in monthly payments for one year.

"This is an excellent result and gets us well on the way to reaching the target of \$56,000 (US\$25,000) for one year's supply of Glivec for Caterina," says Karen Soich who is helping to manage the screen industry fund raising effort.

Caterina has chronic myeloid leukaemia, a rare, fatal illness diagnosed last year. The disease has three stages: chronic, accelerated and blast crisis. Patients tend to survive for perhaps five years after diagnosis, and quality of life is severely reduced both by the disease and current treatment.

This type of leukaemia responds to a new drug called Glivec, the only drug which allows patients to enjoy a relatively normal life and lifespan. Pharmac has said it may fund the drug for patients only at the beginning of the dying process (accelerated and blast stages). But the most effective time to use the drug is at the chronic stage as it gives a 70-80 percent chance for a normal life span. This is the stage Caterina is at now.

Karen said that Caterina has had to complete six months on another drug Interferon, and chemotherapy, to be eligible for any trial of Glivec. She still has a couple of weeks to go on this course of treatment before she will start using Glivec.

"Clearly the more money we can get in at this stage the greater peace of mind she will have over the months to come," says Karen, adding that Caterina will contribute her own funds for as long as she can afford to.

**People can make a donation by depositing funds into:**

**Bank:** WestpacTrust

**Branch:** Ponsonby

**Account number:** 03 0255 0206473 00.

**Account Name:** Buying Time Fund.

**For more information and a fact sheet, please contact Karen Soich at (09) 376 5739 or ksoich@extra.co.nz.**

If there are unused funds, or if the drug becomes subsidised in the future, outstanding funds will be used to set up a benevolent fund to support other industry members in similar circumstances.

# Tongan Ninja goes to Cannes



Pass Jason Stutter on the street, and you might not notice him, but spend an hour in his company and you enter a world of make-believe come true. For Stutter is one of New Zealand's up-and-coming film directors, with 12 short films to his name. As of February, he is represented by the powerful Artists Management Group in Los Angeles and has a feature film, *Tongan Ninja*, that sold very nicely thank you at the AFM and Cannes markets this year. He has two more feature film projects in the pipeline, one of which he hopes will get off the ground next year.

So how did a nice young man from the Wellington suburb of Wainuiomata get to Cannes and the American Film Market with his first feature film?

The answer is dollops of talent, drive, passion, self-belief and the experienced guiding hand of Sue Rogers, his executive producer. Winning the inaugural SPADA Young Film Maker Of The Year award in 1998 also helped.

"That was a fantastic boost," he says now. "Because the award came from the industry, it gave me confidence in what I was doing."

The cash prize also helped him finish *Fizz* (1999), the short film he was making which went on to gain official selection to a number of significant film festivals including Valladolid and Clermont Ferrand. It was enough of a boost to consider making a first feature.

"I always wanted to make films, ever since I can first remember," says Jason.

By age 10, he was already bypassing the actors' credits for the name of the director when he watched a movie. He was always most interested in the unseen hand behind the film, the person whose vision had shaped the way the story was told.

As a youngster he wrote short stories, plays and film scripts. At age 19, he wrote, directed, funded and produced a musical which he put on at the now defunct Phoenix Theatre in central Wellington. "I went into it with the attitude that the money *would* come," Jason recalls. "For about a week, it was touch and go as to whether the money would come, but in the end, it broke even."

This seems to have been Jason's attitude from the start. Having left school and gone straight into a job as a trainee tape operator at the Avalon Film Studios, with the intention of learning to be a film editor and then segueing his way into the director's chair, he has quietly gone about making his own shorts. They have all been self-funded, along with the considerable assistance and goodwill of many friends and colleagues.

Jason's first love is comedy. Certainly, *Tongan Ninja* is a madcap parody of a Hong Kong martial arts film, complete with over-dubbed dialogue and musical moments featuring several original songs.

The idea arose while he was making one of his early short films, *Gun Lovers*, for which he needed a clip of an action film to play in the background of one of the scenes. The intention was that the action in the closing moments of the short film would imitate the action of the promo. The promo he shot was called *Tongan Ninja*. Stutter recalls that when they were shooting it, "we all laughed about how one day we'd make this [feature] film". Several years later, the feature version of *Tongan Ninja* went into production.

Jason's Artist Management Group agent describes it as "early Peter Jackson meets John Malkovich". Jason, very deadpan, calls it an "art film".



"No, really, it's a completely unpretentious, fun movie," laughs Jason.

It was completely improvised in the making and, of course, the ending needed to be re-shot. Naturally, it was made on the proverbial shoestring budget, personally funded by Jason and his dedicated producer Andrew Calder. There were three people in the crew - "we looked like a wedding video crew" - and Jason was cinematographer, caterer and director as well as co-editor.

They had the film to an advanced stage when they approached Sue Rogers of Midnight Films. Her reaction was extremely positive. "She spent ages going over the script with us, and there were many changes as a result." She then committed to the project, and represented them in negotiations with the NZ Film Commission.

"It's because of Sue that the film was finished," says Jason simply.

She took the film to Los Angeles where she knocked on doors, and showed it to senior executives at a number of major studios including Paramount, New Line and Columbia Tri-Star. These efforts have raised awareness of Jason's talent with some of Hollywood's key players.

The film had its first trade screenings at the AFM in February. A marketing strategy was brainstormed by the top creative team from Wellington's Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency, supported by "ninjas" handing out promo flyers at the market, alongside actor-comedian Jemaine Clement and actor-singer Narelle Ahrens from the film.

The successful AFM marketing strategy was also called into play at Cannes, where it was enough to gain the attention of the highly influential, US-based website [www.aintitcool.com](http://www.aintitcool.com), which reviewed *Tongan Ninja* and loved it, calling it an "hilarious, wonderful film".

Following the film's exposure at AFM and Cannes, it has sold to France, Russia, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey and Singapore. It has also been invited to the Warsaw Film Festival, to Hawaii and to Hof (Germany), as well as the Brussels Science Fiction and Horror Film Festival.

Right now, Jason is working with Costa Botes on three documentaries about the making of *Lord of the Rings*. He hopes the first of two screenplays he has co-written with Costa (Sue Rogers is producer for both) will go into production next year.

It will be an action adventure. And, no doubt, given Jason's involvement, lots of fun.

## New Film Maker Alumni:

The SPADA Young Film Maker of the Year Award has been running since 1998. It has gathered an impressive roll call of winners. As well as Jason Stutter's 1998 success, the title has been held by:

**Vanessa Alexander:** (1999) Vanessa's first feature film, *Magik and Rose* had a highly successful New Zealand season, and screened at a number of international film festivals. She produced South Pacific Pictures' *Being Eve*, an award winning drama series for 9-15 year olds, and is writing her next feature.

**Hamish Rothwell** (2000) Hamish is director of the internationally successful *Stickmen*. He was awarded Best Director at the 2001 Nokia Film Awards and now has several projects in development.

**Karl Zohrab** (2001) Karl has produced several award-winning shorts and is commencing pre-production on *Water* with Chris Graham. Karl is also co-chair of one of the production companies supervising the NZFC's short film programme.

This year, we're renaming it the SPADA New Film Maker Of The Year. There will not be an upper age limit but entrants will have spent less than ten years in the industry.

**To enter the 2002 Award, contact [mhairead@spada.co.nz](mailto:mhairead@spada.co.nz). Closing date is 13 September.**

The Award is made possible through the sterling support of the The Film Unit, Kodak, Panavision, FACB and Stage & Screen Travel.



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# Hunn takes hands-on approach to NZOA



The Government must think television production people are a stropky bunch. Why else has it appointed former diplomat and State Services Commissioner Don Hunn to the role of chairman of New Zealand On Air?

There's a surfeit of former diplomats associated with NZOA. The first chairman, Merv Norrish, was one, as was current chief executive Jo Tyndall. Don Hunn is in good company.

In announcing his appointment, Broadcasting Minister Marian Hobbs said: "Don Hunn will bring both extensive experience in governance and knowledge of the public sector to the board. He will also provide a neutral perspective to the board as well as [bring to the role] his experience in developing consensus."

Don Hunn is himself a little unsure about why he was tapped on the shoulder for the position. All he'll venture to say is that he is a "problem solver" by nature, and that he thinks the Government wanted more emphasis on "managing the relationships with the other players in public broadcasting".

"This Government has different ideas on public broadcasting, and they wanted a more hands-on approach to encourage a robust and independent homegrown industry," Don says.

Perhaps, too, the Government had concerns about possible tension in the industry due to the charter and other changes to public broadcasting, and wanted a man like Don Hunn to build bridges.

Don says it's too early for him to have formed a sense of vision for his new role. Having been appointed in early May, he has attended just one board meeting so far.

"My background is in implementing government policy. Right now, I'm just trying to understand the relationship between what's mandated in law and what this Government wants from NZ On Air, and to get a better sense of what NZOA has achieved," says Don.

"It is obviously a prime influence on the New Zealand media, but I need to learn more before I would be able to say where it should set itself for the future, and what our role should be in the new environment."

Don enjoyed a distinguished 25-year career in diplomacy, holding posts in Washington, Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Suva, Santiago, Brussels and Tonga. His final post was Head of Chancery in Canberra before deciding to leave Foreign Affairs in 1981.

In the late 1980s, he was appointed New Zealand State Services Commissioner, head of the New Zealand public service (his father had been SSC Deputy Chairman a generation before - "they had the misfortune to have a Hunn every 25 years," he quips). During his tenure, he was deeply involved with major policy and organisational reforms under successive New Zealand governments. Don held this appointment for 10 years until his retirement in 1997.

Since then he has divided his time between his farm at Otaki, and running an international strategic management consultancy.

The 36-hectare farm called Te Awamara is near the banks of the Otaki River and enjoys views to the Tararuas. Here he and Jannie, his wife, have built a house, planted thousands of trees and established a Suffolk sheep stud. The place is clearly dear to his heart. The couple has two adult children, Nicola, an economist who lives with her family in Tokyo, and Martin, a Wellington neurosurgeon.

Meanwhile, Don's consultancy jobs keep his mind sharp. He was recently asked by the Government of Argentina to advise on the reform of its civil service. He is also adviser to the Chief Secretary and to the Public Sector Reform

Management Unit of the Papua New Guinea government. And in June he was in Bougainville looking at what the public service there will need to do to prepare the way to autonomous government.

Closer to home, his work has covered all manner of issues from an analysis of the work of the now defunct WINZ under Christine Rankin to a review of the work of the early childhood development unit (he was once a primary school teacher). Other jobs have included a review of the structure of the military-civilian relationship between the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, and helping the Building Industry Authority figure out why so many new housing developments are experiencing leakage problems.

Currently Don's on the national committee of IHC, and has just completed a four-year term on the Friends of Te Papa committee where he played a key role in creating a new strategic plan. He's chair of the Friends of the Otaki River, and is on the board of the local health trust which is exploring the possibility of assuming a larger role as Otaki's primary health organisation.

When it comes to watching television, he admits to being "nothing other than a lay viewer." He watches mainly sport, news and the odd Sunday night drama. The only prejudice he confesses to having at the outset is his view that New Zealand television has not reported events in the Pacific well in the past. "And I'm sure many Maori New Zealanders would say the same thing about Maori news and events."

While serving in Canberra, he grew to love SBS. "It's really good television. They don't just offer one cultural prism but many. It's very diverse, which I really enjoyed."

He confesses to being sports mad, particularly about rugby and cricket, but often turns off the commentary because it drives him "nuts".

"My brother John (former head of the Todd Corporation) and I will watch just about any sport on TV, we have very eclectic tastes, much to the chagrin of our wives. They think we've never quite grown up."

He loved watching the World Cup soccer, and at the time of talking to SPADA NEWS was engrossed in the Tour de France, not just for the spectacle of the cyclists but for the magnificent French countryside which he grew to love during his diplomatic posting in Brussels. "It's an annual treat!"

If Don Hunn is concerned at all about the challenge ahead in negotiating the shoals of Government broadcasting policy as it relates to TV production, he's not letting on. In fact, one suspects it's small fry compared to the management and probity issues that he has encountered at the most senior levels in a career spanning some 40 years.

"Anyway," he laughs, "I always take an optimistic view of these things."

***"This Government has different ideas on public broadcasting, and they wanted a more hands-on approach to encourage a robust and independent homegrown industry," Don says.***

## Editor's note:

**SPADA NEWS hopes to profile Barrie Everard, new chairman of the NZ Film Commission, in the next issue.**

# "I was a MIP virgin"

By John Givens

Until this year, I was a MIP virgin.

A year ago I decided to explore 'growth strategies' for my production company. Bryce, David, Lindsay and I decided that MIPTV at Cannes in April was the best window for interaction with gay television and history documentary makers.

Having got there, nothing had prepared me for the intense range of feelings I experienced - disorientation, exhilaration, confusion, passion, exhaustion and isolation in a crowd of thousands at the largest television market in the world.

We decided that the best use of our time and limited budget was to visit people en route to France. So, first we went to Los Angeles, Palm Springs, San Francisco and, finally, London. The contacts we made doing this led to some great times including a wonderful lunch with a Canadian network executive.

We arrived in Cannes late at night on the Sunday. Our apartment was magnificent. It featured two huge bedrooms, a dining room for eight, and a case of fine New Zealand wine.

I have been in the television industry for over twenty years and until this year never thought about the need to "go the market". Surely, if I could make good quality programmes for our own audience then somebody else could buy them for their network. All I had to do was get there and meet them. Easy.

The first morning at MIP was an eye opener. The main entrance stairs are a waterfall of network executives. Thousands of them!

Fortunately, there is an inbuilt security to be amongst so many fellow New Zealanders - Jo, Dave, John, Andy, Karen, Kristen, Shaun, Brian, Vincent, Don, Rosina, Graham, Jessica, Bryce, David - every one of them looking focused, engaged, comfortable and successful. This is our industry on the move!

Fortified by the comforting image of a full-size cutout of the male lead from *The Strip* meeting me at the bottom of the stairs, I was ready to chat.

MIPTV runs from Monday to Friday but really the big days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Many of the people you want to see have gone by Thursday, and Friday is really a clean up day.

For a virgin, making appointments is the single most important activity. Every network executive who is buying or investing in 'product' has a full diary of half hour appointments. The old hands have most of their diary filled *before* they arrive. Trying to get a meeting with the "big" networks when you arrive is virtually impossible but it can happen with luck. I now have a tray full of business cards from the major network executives and production professionals in six continents.

MIP is a marketplace. Just like the bazaars of old, it's the people you come to fundamentally trust that actually do the deals. Very little

signing of deals is done at MIP, it's all done afterwards. But the initial face to face contact is crucial. After you enrol for MIP, the very efficient (and very rich) organising body sends you a list of all the people who are going to be there. The problem for a virgin is they all look great; so which one to pick?

MIP is so huge that there are five floors of stalls, staircases full of suits and thousands of striking images. Everyone is looking for the next big thing.

Reality is big but where to now? Animation is enjoying a renaissance and has a long shelf life. Networks want HOURS not a programme. Drama is too expensive but is still the centre of the schedule. Interactive is in but phone voting is even bigger. *Pop Idol* is huge in the U.K with 13.9 million viewers and 9 million phone votes on the final.

Ideas that start their life from our beautiful place, can be cousins to big things. Competition is hot. Production funding is just part of a business where the merchandise and telephone income is more important.

It doesn't take long to realise that MIP is a necessary visit that every New Zealand producer should make, if just to appreciate that we operate on a global stage. We are very good at what we do but getting to the right person at the right time at the right place is what the market is all about. It's the unplanned meetings that are best. In the middle of a cocktail party for 10,000 delegates, or at a dinner, you suddenly find yourself talking to the main person from a major Australian channel.

Relationships are everything. As a virgin, no one knows you. It may take several visits to the market to actually build the size of deals you want. I met one producer who had been coming for twenty years and he had just concluded the biggest deal of his career. It does happen!

So I have lost my innocence, and it was fun. My programmes are now heading for Canada, Britain and Australia. The potential is fabulous.



**John Givens** is the founder and managing director of Auckland-based Livingstone Productions. The company produces *Queer Nation*, broadcast weekly on TVNZ, and recently won 2001's Best Documentary Award for "Captain's Log", a four-part series inspired by Captain Cook's voyage around New Zealand in 1769.

## Lessons I learned:

- There is a vibrant, interesting and sophisticated industry out there;
- Spend time reading the trade journals to identify the players you want to meet;
- Get to France via other places and meet people on their home turf, and then at Cannes;
- A stand has benefits as an anchor and a meeting place but is not absolutely necessary;
- Have a supply of glossy brochures, business cards and moving pictures;
- Contact the people you want to meet and book a time *before* you leave;
- Best advice - get in, see a small range of people, and get out;
- Get a nice apartment close to the Palais and have people to your place for meetings;
- Start early each day to maximise the time. After all, everyone needs breakfast; and
- Research who has the super yachts in the harbour and find a way to meet them.

# Opportunities ahead, courtesy of NZFC



The Film Commission also has some treats in store over the next year, according to Chief Executive Ruth Harley. She identified the following calendar of development opportunities for producers, directors and writers to look forward to in 2002-2003.

- **Writers and producers to attend Equinox workshops in France:** The Australian scout Clare Doobin for Equinox, the prestigious French-based intensive script writers workshop, has agreed to include New Zealand in her round. It will be the first time she will take New Zealand writers to Equinox. *August 2002*
- **Producers mission to Strategic Partners Conference, Toronto:** Following on from the Canadian mission invited to last year's SPADA conference, a New Zealand mission will attend this conference in Toronto. The conference, which promotes co-productions between Canada, Australia and New Zealand, will begin at the Toronto Film Festival then move to Halifax. The New Zealand mission will be headed by Don Reynolds, and include 15+ others, mostly producers. *September 2002*
- **Nick Drake workshops:** Nick Drake, former Director of Development at Intermedia, in the UK, will visit New Zealand for 4-6 weeks. While here, as well as his Small Country, Big Picture appearances (see Conference story, page 4) he will run development workshops. *Nov-Dec 2002*
- **Joan Scheckel workshops:** Joan Scheckel from the US has been invited back to run development workshops in November 2002.
- **Producers and directors to attend Cinemart, Rotterdam:** A New Zealand contingent will again attend the art film-focused Cinemart market in Rotterdam that coincides with Rotterdam Film Festival in January 2003. The market is organised for producers to make connections, and also has a teaching dimension. In January 2002, the NZ Film Commission helped a number of producers and some directors to attend, including Fiona Copland, Joanna Paul, Trevor Haysom, Philippa Campbell, Armaghan Ballantyne and Brad McGann. *Jan 2003*
- **Team of script specialists from Arista to come to NZ:** A team of 4-5 people from Arista in London is coming to New Zealand to run a producer and script editor-focused suite of writing workshops. The team will be headed by Stephen Cleary, a star from last year's SPADA conference. *Feb 2003*

Ruth explained the Film Commission's focus on script writing over past 12 months as essential in growing New Zealand's film industry.

"The only way our films can get scale is through the script. Other options that are available to bigger countries - big budget, star power and special effects - simply don't apply to New Zealand," she said.

In addition, the Film Commission is turning its focus to developing the talents of the next generation of creative entrepreneurs.

She pointed to the NZIER report which recognised the key role that Peter Jackson had played as a creative entrepreneur in having the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy made in New Zealand.

"Entrepreneurial and creative producers are pivotal in growing the New Zealand film industry," she told SPADA NEWS.

"We see the need to spend a lot of effort in developing the next generation of producers."



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## Budget Rent a Car

If you're looking at hiring a vehicle over a weekend, between Friday 9.00am and Monday 5.00pm, before the 30th of September 2002, Budget has some hot winter weekend special rates available for SPADA members and their families.

To find out about these rates, ring our friendly reservations team and quote BCD number E754239. This deal is available from all of our locations across New Zealand.

If you have any queries, please contact Louise on (04) 924 9908.



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## National

### Small Country Big Picture 2002

Auckland, November 15-17

See the article in this issue for more information or check the SPADA website [www.spada.co.nz](http://www.spada.co.nz)

### Wellington Screenwriters Group

The WSG is an informal group for up and coming screenwriters to meet others in the same position, and help each other out. It's a great chance to meet others, ask about any questions you may have on the craft, and recharge the batteries. While it is primarily a screenwriters meeting, producers and directors in the same situation are very welcome.

It meets at 7:30pm on every third Tuesday of the month at Crossways Community House, Elizabeth Street, Mount Victoria. For further information, please contact Malcolm Hill on 021 610 796, or [blofeld@ihug.co.nz](mailto:blofeld@ihug.co.nz).

#### New Zealand Film Commission

Feature Film Production Financing Applications

Deadline	Meeting
16 September 2002	14 October 2002
4 November 2002	2 December 2002

#### New Zealand On Air

Application Deadlines and Meeting Dates

Application Date	Meeting Date
13 Sept 2002	16 & 17 Oct 2002
01 Nov 2002	04 & 05 Dec 2002

## International

### First International Literary Adaptation Market

The International Forum of Cinema and Literature is holding the first International Literary Adaptation Market in Monte Carlo, October 3-6, 2002, just before MIPCOM.

The market offers the opportunity to meet with authors, publishers and agents from around the world. Attendees will have full access to the networking events of the Forum as well as debates on literary adaptation, comics and audiovisual rights.

For further information, please contact Kerem Ayan - [kerem@forum-cinema-ecriture.com](mailto:kerem@forum-cinema-ecriture.com)

### Wow 2002 - A World of Women's Cinema

Women in film have the chance to win more than \$40,000 worth of prizes at the twelfth annual World of Women's Cinema Film Festival (WOW), which premieres in Sydney from October 17 - 20, 2002. Offering the single most lucrative filmmaking prize package in Australia, the Sydney festival kick-starts a national WOW tour of 15 theatres around Australia from November 2002 to April 2003.

To be a part of WOW 2002, download an entry form from the WOW festival website at [www.wift.org](http://www.wift.org) <<http://www.wift.org>>

Deadline for shorts (under 30 minutes): 10 August.

Deadline for features and documentaries: 30 August

The only criteria? Films must be directed or written and produced by women. And if you have a feature or multimedia work to premiere, email the [festivaldirector@wift.org](mailto:festivaldirector@wift.org).

### MIPCOM 2002

Offering five days of non-stop business, MIPCOM is the place to do or prepare the maximum amount of decisive deals in a few days. For those involved in TV broadcasting, programme production & distribution, video, DVD & the Internet, advertising, licensing & merchandising, consultancy, service companies, new media...it's the market where programming policies are implemented and trends are spotted. Over the last 18 years, MIPCOM has firmly established itself in the TV executives' calendar and has become a must-attend event.

Deadline for registration September 19, 2002

For more info see [www.mipcom.com](http://www.mipcom.com)

### Sundance Film Festival 2002

The annual Sundance Film Festival, a major programme of the Sundance Institute, is held each January and is considered the premier showcase for American and international independent film. Sundance is now accepting entries for the 2003 festival.

Deadline for short films: September 27, 2002

Deadline for international features: October 11, 2002

For more information and a submission application, see [www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org)

# spadaSAVINGS

## Technical

**Hanimex NZ Ltd** proudly represents Fujifilm in New Zealand. The Fujifilm product range includes consumer and professional photographic film and cameras, digital cameras and printers, motion picture film, computer media, broadcast and professional video and audio tape. For more info, please contact John Bicknell on (09) 414 0984 or Mob 027 270 7206

email [jbicknell@hanimex.co.nz](mailto:jbicknell@hanimex.co.nz) or see [www.fujifilm.co.nz](http://www.fujifilm.co.nz) or [www.hanimex.co.nz](http://www.hanimex.co.nz)

**Sony New Zealand** is a leading supplier of cutting edge technology. Contact David Colthorpe on (09) 488 6134

**Kodak** is a major investor in the New Zealand film industry. Internationally Kodak has won eight academy awards for quality and service. For more information about any Kodak product or service, call Peter or Chris on 0800 500 135.

## Legal Advice

Members receive first 15 minutes of advice free. For larger inquiries members should seek a quote.

### Buddle Findlay

- **Wellington:** call Alastair Sherriff on 04 498 7327 or 021 430 462 (employment, OSH)
- **Auckland:** call Neil Russ on 09 363 0702 or 021 750 510 (tax) or call Philip Wood on 09 357 9385 or 021 624 356 (entertainment law)

**Crengle Shreves and Ratner** - Call Teresa Shreves in Wellington on 04 473 6655

**Sinclair Black** - Call Mick Sinclair in Auckland on 09 358 0666

## Locations

### DOC

- 10% off all charges (except consents) associated with filming on Department of Conservation land.
- Ask for the SPADA discount at any Conservation office.

## Travel

### Budget Rent A Car

- Reservations can be made by calling our Central Reservation Office 0800 652 227, ask for the SPADA rate.
- For further information, call Louise Kelleher on 04 924 9907

### The Corporate Traveller

- 2% discount on all Trans-Tasman airfares.
- 4% discount on all other international published airfares.
- Management of existing travel discounts.
- Call Jayne Thornley on 04 495 9575 and tell her you are a SPADA member.

## Accommodation

### Stamford Plaza Auckland

- Stamford Plaza Auckland has offered a superb hotel accommodation rate to SPADA members. For more details of this offer and to make reservations, please contact Jayne at the Corporate Traveller on 04 495 9575

### CDL - Millennium, Quality and Copthorne Hotels

- Discounts vary from 20% to 55% of rack rate, depending on the hotel. Hotels throughout New Zealand, as well as the Millennium in Sydney.
- Quote customer number 684144, rate code CPLUS, when you make your reservation.

## Web

### Spectrum.net.nz

SPADA members receive a 10% discount off individual subscription. Subscribers are also entitled to a free classified ad for one month in Spectrum's email newsletter. Check out [www.spectrum.net.nz/spada](http://www.spectrum.net.nz/spada) for more details.

## Movies

Discounts at movie theatres throughout New Zealand, and at the International Film Festival, through your AFTA membership (all SPADA members are automatically members of AFTA).

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