

A HISTORY OF WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION IN NEW ZEALAND

1973 *Women in Film (WIF)* is founded in Los Angeles, motivated by the editor-in-chief and publisher of *The Hollywood Reporter* Tichi Wilkerson Kassel.

1992 *WIF* has nine chapters in the USA and chapters in Canada, the UK, Britain and Australia.

1993 WIFT Wellington is established, on the model of other international WIFT chapters. The Foundation Committee comprised: Robin Laing (founding president of WIFT NZ), Dorothee Pinfeld, Bronwen Stewart, Glenis Giles, Nicola Olsen, Carol Davidson, Rosemary Fullerton-Smith, Anna Cahill, Whetu Fala, Clare O'Leary.

By December there are 40 paid up members. Records show that Dame Kate Harcourt is the first to sign up.

1994 Wellington WIFT Chair Robin Laing encourages Barbara Cairns to set up an Auckland chapter, and WIFT Auckland is launched at the Carlton Hotel. Over 400 women attend the launch. Pioneer filmmaker Ramai Hayward (*Rewi's Last Stand*) is presented with a life membership in recognition of her contribution to New Zealand film. Labour leader Helen Clark is to be an Honorary Friend.

WIFT Auckland's membership is described in the *TV Guide* as reading like "a *Who's Who* of movers and shakers" (*TV Guide* 18 Nov, 1994).

1995 With funding from the New Zealand Film Commission Alison Colvine's survey, *Behind The Scenes* is launched in May 2006, aimed at researching the participation and roles of women in the New Zealand film and television industry.

A screening of Auckland women's short films is held at the Civic to celebrate International Women's Day. The films screened *Rud's Wife* (Alison Maclean), *Mon Desir* (Nicky Marshall), *Kitchen Sink* (Alison Maclean), *Invisible Hand* (Athina Tsoulis), *One Man's Meat* (Christine Parker), *Old Bastards* (Niki Caro).

The first international guest, Broadcast and Communications consultant Kealy Wilkinson (Women in Film and Television (Toronto)) gives a seminar on the role TWIFT plays in the Canadian Broadcasting scene.

A sneak preview of Dame Gaylene Preston's *War Stories Our Mothers Never Told Us* is screened.

WIFT Auckland joins chapters from France and Wellington in hosting a cocktail function at the Cannes Film Festival.

WIFT is established in Christchurch with Bridget Scoular as Chair.

1996 The WIFT Executive votes to support a SPADA initiative to lobby for the retention of Television One in public ownership and initiates a letter-writing campaign targeting key ministers and all female MPs in support of the Film Commission lobby for more funds from government.

The first policy summit is held to discuss: production and training funding for women; codes of practice; workplace legislation; local content; the portrayal of women on screen.

WIFT sponsors the Best Supporting Actress Award at the TV Guide Film and Television Awards.

1997 This year sees WIFT Auckland working more closely with WIFT Wellington.

The WIFT survey *Behind The Scenes* is launched. It is celebrated as a profile of women working in the film and television industries that will replace the hearsay with quantitative evidence and that will give substance to concerns and issues raised by WIFT and others about the position of women.

WIFT International Summit is held in New York with more than 85 delegates from 25 chapters.

WIFTI's objectives are to:

- enhance the international visibility of all women in film and television
- facilitate and encourage communication and cooperation among WIFT chapters
- develop bold international projects and initiatives benefiting women in film and television and related industries throughout the world.
- Stimulate professional development and opportunities in the pursuit of professional equity for women in screen-based media world wide.
- Promote and support chapter development.
- Celebrate the achievements of women in film television and related industries.
- Encourage diverse and positive representation of women in screen-based media worldwide.

WIFT Wellington assists Jan Gilbert to travel to New York for the WIFTI Summit.

1998 WIFT New York celebrates its 20th birthday, WIFT LA celebrates its 25th birthday.

The first pan-industry lobby group, now called Local Content Lobby, establishes the need for a local content quota on television to counter the current situation of 19% local content on TV (including repeats).

A conference entitled *Endangered Species? Local Programming and the Media* is held at the University of Auckland. The focus is on local content and culture and includes guest speakers from Ireland and Australia. WIFT's speaker is Ginette McDonald.

Russian director Lidia Bobrova attends the International Film Festival in Auckland as a guest of WIFT accompanying her film *In That Country*.

The Local Content Lobby Group launches its campaign nationwide, asking for a 30% local content quota on television and 10% level of New Zealand music on radio. The group is to be administered by the Green Ribbon Trust.

Fiona Milburn represents WIFT Auckland at a Women In Film & Television International (WIFTI) summit in LA. In a newsletter report on the summit Fiona commented, "Our comprehensive programme of workshops seminars and special events compares favourably with the larger chapters and our involvement with wider issues such the Green Ribbon Campaign for local content is almost unique."

1999 The world celebrates the centenary of cinema.

WIFT hosts Deepa Mehta while her film *Earth* screens at the Auckland International Film Festival.

WIFTI now has 40 chapters worldwide and over 10,000 members.

WIFT lunch held at the SPADA Conference, Wellington. Rhys Kelly talks on marketing women's stories on the international stage.

2000 WIFT Local Content Quota Forum. Attended by the Hon Marian Hobbs, Minister of Broadcasting and the Hon Judith Tizard, Associate Minister of the Arts, Culture and Heritage.

WIFT NZ works in conjunction with the New Zealand Film Archive, Ngā Kaitiaki O Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua, to submit to New York WIFT's Preservation Fund early works by NZ female filmmaker Bathie Stuart for preservation assistance.

TVNZ Draft Charter released. WIFT makes a submission.

WIFT International Summit held in London. The WIFTI New Zealand session is panelled by Robin Laing and John O'Shea and moderated by Liz Stevens.

2001 Mairi Gunn is a WIFT representative at the second Annual Women in Film Independent Vision Awards at the Sundance Film Festival.

The lobbying committee meets with Broadcasting Minister Marian Hobbs for a discussion on such topics as Charter implementation, restructuring of TVNZ, funding issues, local content quotas, children's and educational broadcasting.

Gaylene Preston becomes New Zealand's first filmmaker Laureate.

WIFT NZ presents a proposal to the WIFTI board to hold the 2004 International Summit in Auckland and wins the bid.

On behalf of NZ, Prime Minister Helen Clark invites WIFTI to hold its 2004 International Summit in Auckland.

The NZFC begins to contribute to infrastructure and administration costs.

2002 WIFT Auckland is represented at and/or made submissions to the NZFC's Strategic Planning Day; the NZFC's Review of the Industry Support Programme; the Ministry of Culture and Heritage's Local Content Meeting; Judith Tizard's Arts Forum; Industry NZ's Workshop; the Commerce Committee's TVNZ Bill; the MCH's Signature Television Questionnaire; the Screen Industry Task Force Report.

The Screen Production Industry Taskforce is announced. WIFT Auckland's Di Rowan and WIFT Wellington's Robin Laing are named as members.

WIFT hosts Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco while their film *Daughter From Danang* screens at the Auckland International Film Festival.

WIFTI's inaugural online Master Class in Screenwriting is run by writer Linda Aronson.

2003 WIFT includes the women of Ngā Aho Whakaari as affiliate members.

WIFT makes policy statements on the proposed change to AFTA's Constitution; IRD's One Stop Shop; the Screen Production Industry Taskforce Report.

The NZ Coalition for Cultural Diversity is formed. WIFT is represented by Mary Jane O'Reilly, Susan Nemeč and Eileen Lavranos. The Coalition aims to establish workable local content systems that allow for the representation of New Zealand culture through NZ's media organisations.

2004 The Fifth Biennial WIFTI Summit is held at the Carlton Hotel, Auckland. Over 350 national and international delegates and guests take part.

The inaugural WIFT Awards are presented at the Summit's *Women As Leaders* Lunch. The categories are: Achievement in Film; Success in Television; the Woman to Watch Award and the Outstanding Contribution to the New Zealand Screen Industry.

There are three joint recipients of the Woman To Watch Awards - Ainsley Gardiner, Leanne Saunders and Niki Caro.

The WIFT Auckland Executive and Board hold a hui to discuss the reasons for WIFT's existence, its principles and how to best structure the organisations' management to meet members' changing needs.

After a vote by the membership WIFT Auckland's two-tiered management system is dismantled and is replaced by a Governance Board and an Honorary Board.

Fiona Milburn takes up the position of WIFT International Chair.

2005 WIFT Auckland celebrates 10 years with a *Women As Leaders* workshop, anniversary magazine and an evening celebration with Awards and film premiere.

2009 WIFT becomes an Incorporated Society. The regional chapters merge to become WIFT NZ. The National Office is opened in Auckland.

2010 Membership numbers hit 514.

2011 Katie Wolfe (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga, Pākeha) receives the inaugural WIFT Mana Wāhine Award at the Wairoa Māori and Indigenous Film Festival.

The inaugural Gaylene Preston 48 Hour Award for Best Female Director,* in association with WIFT NZ, is awarded to Laurie Wright. *Now known as the *Dame Gaylene Preston and WIFT NZ 48 Hour Award for Best Female / Gender Diverse Director*.

2013 Patricia Watson takes on the role of WIFT National Manager.

WIFT hosts The Transmedia Toolbox with Jeff Gomez, the world's most successful transmedia producer and Chief Executive of Starlight Runner Entertainment. Jeff presents *Creating Blockbuster Worlds: the Power of Transmedia Storytelling*.

2014 WIFT NZ reintroduces the WIFT Awards as a biennial Awards ceremony.

Film Editor Annie Collins is awarded the Great Southern Film & Television Award for Outstanding Contribution to the New Zealand Screen Industry.

A special award was presented to NZ Film Commission Chair Patsy Reddy for her leadership in achieving the changes necessary to secure a future for filmmaking in New Zealand.

Up With The Play, a Finance and UK Co-production Summit is held, in Auckland, organised by Patricia Watson and helmed by Sharon Menzies with funding from the NZFC. Representatives from BBC Films and Hanway Films attend.

2015 The second *Up With The Play* Co-production Summit is held in Auckland, for Australia-Denmark-New Zealand, organised by Patricia Watson and helmed by Sharon Menzies with funding from the NZFC.

Piv Bernth, Head of Drama, Danish Broadcasting DR, and Protagonist Films attend, together with a number of Australian producers.

Over 330 people attend the WIFT NZ YouTube Roadshow, in Auckland at Unitec, in Wellington at Park Road Post and in Christchurch at the NZ Broadcasting School. These events covered the 10 essentials to YouTube success, and clarification of the complex topic of copyright and monetisation.

WIFT NZ hosts a special screening of *The Dressmaker* in Wellington, direct from its world premiere gala screening at the Toronto International Film Festival and in the presence of celebrated guests writer/director, Jocelyn Moorhouse and producer, Sue Maslin.

2016 WIFT receives operating funding from the NZFC, equal to that of the other major screen guilds.

2017 The New Zealand-Germany Co-production Summit, the third in the *Up With The Play* series, is held in Auckland, organised by Patricia Watson, helmed Sharon Menzies with funding from the NZFC.

Susanne Muller, Executive Director International Drama, ZDF and a brace of German major producers in attendance, with support from Screen Auckland.

Patricia Watson is the Executive Director of WIFT NZ.

By this time WIFT is presenting around 30 workshops a year around the motu.

2018 Anna Serner, Chief Executive of the Swedish Film Institute visits New Zealand as a guest of WIFT NZ for the Big Screen Symposium in Auckland. Serner, the instigator of 50:50 x 2020, gives an electrifying keynote speech provoking the audience to think differently about gender equality and laying out her step-by-step plan to achieve it. She also leads a day's intensive at the NZFC in Wellington focussing on gender equity.

WIFT NZ members and guests fill The Academy Cinema for a special preview screening of *The Breaker Upperers*, moderated by Gemma Gracewood, with Jackie van Beek, Madeleine Sami and James Rolleston.

2019 WIFT NZ co-hosts the Power Of Inclusion Summit held in Auckland. Over 700 people attend the event, hosted by the NZFC and Women in Film and Television International (WIFTI), with support from The Walt Disney Studios. The summit is an unprecedented event in the Asia Pacific region in the scale and breadth of voices on the topics of representation, inclusion and belonging.

In collaboration with SPADA and with funding from the NZFC WIFT NZ presents the six-day Emerging Producers Intensive, programmed and presented by Sue Maslin and Charlotte Seymour of Film Art Media.

2020 Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic WIFT NZ manages to deliver 22 workshops throughout the year and the 2020 WIFT Awards in December. Topics covered were as diverse as *NZ On Air: Where To From Here; The Impact of Foley: Sound As Character to Rights, Camera, Contracts!*

WIFT NZ membership reaches 1000.

2022 WIFT NZ runs the 15-week Moana Pasifika Women Screenwriters Programme with Karin Williams and Nicole Dade.

In collaboration with SPADA and with funding from the NZFC WIFT NZ presents the second six-day Emerging Producers Intensive, programmed and presented by Sue Maslin and Charlotte Seymour of Film Art Media.

The inaugural Māoriland Filmmaker's Residency, in association with WIFT NZ, is taken up by award-winning First Nations playwright, screenwriter, director, producer and actor Leah Purcell.

WIFT NZ membership reaches 1200 making it the country's largest screen industry guild.

After several postponements due to COVID-19 WIFT NZ presents the 12th WIFT NZ Awards with support from NZ On Air. The 12 categories presented are: SAE Award for Outstanding Newcomer; Fulcrum Media Finance Woman to Watch Award; South Pacific Pictures Award for Achievement in Film; Imagezone Entrepreneurship Award; Images & Sound Award for Success in Television and Digital; Professional Lighting Services Award for Unsung Heroine of the New Zealand Screen Industry; Queenstown Camera Company Craft Award; Wingnut and Wētā Companies Creative Technology Award; Te Māngai Pāho Te Reo Māori Champion Award; Tautai Award for Moana Excellence in the Screen Industry; Great Southern Film & Television Award for Outstanding Contribution to the New Zealand Screen Industry.

With thanks to Helen Martin for her 1973-2004 version of this history.