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WIFT NZ

EXECUTIVE  
UPDATE

Anne O'Brien  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Much as I'm engaged by what I do for a living, it's always nice to take a break. The holiday season found me traversing the empty roads of the South Island, enjoying the magnificent scenery and marvelling at how lucky I am to live in this amazing place and enjoy the opportunities that are here.**

2008 wasn't all lucky though. Financially, things fell apart at the seams more than a little and the best indicators suggest that there's more to come before things bottom out. These pressures have the potential to affect all of us.

Included in the 2009 challenges facing WIFT, is the critical need to maintain secured funding to keep us active. At WIFT we are vitally aware that we need to be relevant in our professional and industry development endeavours, providing high activity of high value to membership, industry and funding providers. This is just one of the reasons the boards of WIFT Auckland and WIFT Wellington are proposing the formation of WIFT New Zealand.

The aim is to provide the best possible structure for increasing activity, delivering value, and minimising

cost. A successful merger should see increased activity in centres where there have been limited administrative resources, not to mention a national profile allowing us to build membership across the country (including in the South Island where we already have a small core group of members), extended programme reach and stronger industry links.

To achieve this, we're proposing a new national organisation committed to regional delivery, with a new constitution, a national representative board of seven, a central office of two staff, member involvement in lobbying and activity delivery, and a unified voice.

The full proposal has been emailed to all members and is also posted on the WIFT New Zealand website in the Auckland grassroots section. All members are asked to consider the proposal and provide input to assist Boards in deciding whether to bring a full proposal to members for a final vote.

WIFT is a democracy. Its direction is determined by its membership. This is an important moment in the history of both organisations – exercise your rights

and participate in the decision-making process so that the final outcome is a true reflection of the will and needs of the membership.

In 2009, amongst a myriad of planned activities, we'll also be focussing some energy in the technical area where women remain strongly under-represented. Two who have made their mark in this area are NZ grip Annie Frear and US filmmaker, Alexis Krasilovsky, both of whom feature in this issue of the magazine.

On a final positive note, notwithstanding current economic pressures, members tell me that there is a large amount of production activity on the slate at present and no sense of a screen slowdown for now. That's good news for all of us in 2009 – long may it continue.

# LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION

**When she's not working as a Professor of Screenwriting and Film Studies (in the Department of Cinema and Television Arts, California State University) Alexis Krasilovsky is making films. Award-winning. Praiseworthy. Important.**

At the head of her filmography is the award-winning *Women Behind The Camera* (and its shorter version *Shooting Women*), based on her book of the same name. It's a tale of women across the world taking on the male-dominated world of cinematography to realise their visions.

Breathtaking in its scope, inspiring in its stories, it features camerawomen from countries as far flung as Canada, China, France, India, Germany, New Zealand, Mexico, Russia, America and Senegal.

From pioneering African-American camerawoman Jessie Maple Patton – who had to sue the union and television networks to get jobs – to Ellen Kuras who DOPed on *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*; from the secret films by camerawomen of the Taliban beating Afghani women, to historic footage by China's first camerawoman of Mao's travels through the Chinese countryside; from the playful narrative of a Russian filmmaker who learned the art from her father and paints her choice of career as a love story, to rural India where subsistence-level women are taught camerawork as a means of empowerment; Krasilovsky shows a world of

technical skill, courage and beauty.

Krasilovsky is vocal not only about the brilliance of these women, but about the ongoing discrimination at play in the field. She cites statistics showing that a tiny proportion of Hollywood DOPs are women:

"A professor at San Diego State University determined that in 2007, two percent of the people who were working as cinematographers on the top 250 films in Hollywood were female," she says.

Discrimination, hierarchy and old boy networks – particularly influential in an industry built on getting your foot in the door through who you know – are all reasons Krasilovsky puts forward for a lack of equal participation, while dismissing quickly any argument about the physicality of camera work being a barrier. Camera weight is comparable to a child's weight which women take on all the time, she says.

In a 2008 interview with Kathleen King for DivineCaroline.com, Krasilovsky spoke of her own early experiences of discrimination and how they dissuaded her from continuing:

"... I didn't have the courage and tenacity to fight and persevere in my craft. One cameraman wanted me to swim naked in the ocean with him after a shoot which had entailed walking up and down sand dunes with heavy metal boxes of film equipment. I had been so proud of myself, proving that I could do this gruelling job, and for what? The manager



DIRECTOR/PRODUCER ALEXIS KRASILOVSKY.  
PHOTO CREDIT: LEE CHOO.

at one of the unions that I joined only had one question for me, and it didn't have anything to do with cameras: he wanted to know how tall I was. Another time, I spent a week in an equipment house learning to fix Arris in preparation for a shoot in a remote location, only to be replaced the day before the film went into production. It's my admiration for those camerawomen who were able to stick it out – suing the unions and networks, if





AMERICAN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ELLEN KURAS, ASC FILMED FOR "SHOOTING WOMEN" IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 2006 BY CINEMATOGRAPHER KARIN PELLONI.

## LIGHTS **CAMERA** ACTION (cont.)

necessary, to get work – that led me to want to make this *North Country* for camerawomen."

Importantly, however, the film is not only a record of discrimination but a celebration of great filmmaking, of the use of digital cameras as a political and social tool, of global commonalities in visual approach and career issues, and of the interconnectedness of women working in and for the industry.

Celebrating confident and strong camerawomen, raising awareness, validating the digital work of women and enjoying the privilege of sharing in the telling of creative stories all make this film an important contribution to our industry story.

*Alexis Krasilovsky will visit New Zealand for a DOCNZ Focus screening of her film Shooting Women, on Tuesday 24 February 6.30pm at the Academy Cinemas. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion. Event tickets are just \$12 for WIFT members (discounted from \$15) and can be booked with a credit card at [www.docnz.org.nz/trust/payment-form.html](http://www.docnz.org.nz/trust/payment-form.html) (select the \$15 option and add 'WIFT Member #' in the Film Title field); or purchased on the night from DOCNZ staff at the Academy from 6pm, cash only, subject to availability. Note: the Academy is not selling tickets to this event. ☺*

# NATIONAL NEWS

## November 2008

Candida Keithley joined the WIFT office in Auckland as part-time administrator.

The partnership working party met for the day in Wellington with a full partnership proposal emerging from the team's efforts. This was presented to the WIFT Wellington management committee who approved it with an additional amendment allowing for a one year review.

WIFT was delighted to present distinguished Belgian filmmaker Marion Hansel in lunchtime conversation with Kate Rodger during the 2008 SPADA conference in Auckland. SPADA lunches are a fabulous opportunity for non-delegate WIFT members to meet with international guests and Marion's long and successful career was perfect lunch material.

Voice practitioners and WIFT members Linda Cartwright and Jacque Drew led a half day WIFT workshop on voice, with the generous support of UNITEC. This was followed by an afternoon panel discussion with leading casting directors Christina Asher, Stu Turner and Annabel Lomas. The event was fully subscribed and very well received.

## December 2008

The Christmas season was upon us as WIFT Christmas gatherings took place in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland – a great chance to get together and celebrate the year. In each case, partnership with other key guilds was a hallmark of the evening's success.

Interns from the 2008 intake completed their year with WIFT by attending a drinks event in their honour with Board members and sponsors in Auckland. References and a small gift were presented to each intern to wish them well. It's been a great intern year with several already in employment (including Caley Martin who writes about her experiences in this issue), some going on to further tertiary study and at least two pursuing their screen goals overseas.

Also coming to a close was the mentoring pilot, although some of the ten partnerships will continue on to the completion of specified projects. A full review will take place in January and a call for 2009 applications will be issued once that's completed.

The Auckland Board met and endorsed the partnership proposal. It has now been issued to members for discussion with a further review set down for February.

## January 2009

After an office holiday over the New Year, 2009 got off to a flying start with exclusive WIFT preview screenings of *Revolutionary Road* in Auckland and Wellington.

## Coming Up

*The 2009 calendar is already hotting up. US filmmaker Alexis Krasilovsky comes to New Zealand in February for a special Auckland screening and panel discussion focused on camerawomen; we've got marketing and distribution seminars with an international guest tentatively confirmed for Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in February/March; and we hope to mark International Women's Day on 8 March with international short film screenings in Auckland and Wellington. On top of that we're working on national business practice seminars, DV camera and digital workshops, industry networking evenings and our major social event of the year- the WIFT NZ Awards, which will be presented in Auckland on Thursday 6 August 2009. Mark this date in your diaries now! ☺*



# SHORTY STORIES

*Think you've got what it takes to storyline New Zealand's iconic nightly drama? Caley Martin was a WIFT intern in 2008 and is now employed on the Shortland Street storylining table. She outlines a day on the desk as a newbie.*

It's Tuesday morning, and I'm up at the relatively painless time of 7.30am. To kick-start the day I jump on my bike for the ride from Mt Albert to South Pacific Pictures headquarters in Henderson. About half of the *Shortland Street* storylining team bicycle to work fairly regularly, weather and workload permitting. Could be something to do with having to sit down around a table for the rest of the day...

Start time is 9.30am but I'm at the studios an hour earlier. Because I know the day is going to be hectic, I like the extra time to ease into it, as well as quickly catch up with personal emails and diary management. Of course, I am also the newest kid on the block so it doesn't hurt to be early to work.

The storylining life is a full-on one. Each week storyliners need to create five half hour episodes, written up in detailed prose, and there's a clever structure to manage it. Monday-Tuesday is group brainstorming on the story and character arcs for the week; Tuesday-Thursday is episode-by-episode discussion and prose writing, with each storyliner



PICTURED FROM LEFT: STEVEN ZANOSKI, MAX CURRIE, PAUL HAGAN, DAMON ANDREWS, EDWIN MCRAE, CALEY MARTIN, ALISTAIR BOROUGHS, ANNICK RENNELL, KIRSTY MCKENZIE.

## SHORTY STORIES (cont.)

allocated responsibility for one episode. Friday is individual episode review with the story editor, as well as synopses and character notes preparation, before the finished piece is packed off with the producer for a weekend of final changes in readiness for allocation to a scriptwriter.

At half past nine, the team assembles at the storylining table – six storyliners, a story editor, medical advisor Annick (a former nurse, she deals with medical questions and suggests situations and surgeries that might work well in the story) and programme producer Steven Zanoski. The pressure's on to complete brainstorming before we move on to episode focus.

The story editor reminds everyone of where we are up to, and then it's a verbal free-for-all. Although it's daunting, everyone needs to submit ideas – even bad ones can be the springboard for better ones. I'm cultivating the essentials of life experience, general knowledge and quick thinking to make me good at this.

As the new person, when I want to say something anxiety sets in and my heart begins to beat faster. There is rarely a pause in conversation so I have to seize any opportunity. Sometimes I find I'm too late and the story direction has already been decided, or someone else has already voiced my idea. Note to self: must be brave.

I know it takes time to get a real sense of each character and how they interact with each other, and the better I know them the more confidence

I will have to contribute. And I am learning that conflict drives the show - the best idea is usually the one that provides the most dramatic tension, bringing character change and growth.

Non-stop thinking and talking is draining but luckily the table is not a rigidly formal environment and I



snack regularly to make up for all of the creative calories being burned. Today it's popcorn and lots of fresh fruit.

Discussion continues, one arc at a time, until both Steven and the story editor are satisfied with the direction of the story. As it draws close to one o'clock, the story editor confirms that he has enough to work with and an idea for the cliffhanger

for each episode. He blocks out where each story will fall within the week and allocates each episode to a writer. I'm on Monday which means that after this afternoon's detailed group work on my episode, I'll head off for a day and a half of writing up my 15 page, 5–7000 word episode.

Lunch is upon us – an hour's breather before I'm in the thick of it. Afterwards, we reconvene and begin to detail out my episode with me furiously writing up the notes. I need 19 or more story 'beats' for my episode, comprising two or three storylines. While storyliners support and contribute it's a stressful time for me and the story editor but we get there.

Once each scene has been detailed to the story editor's satisfaction the episode is put together like a jigsaw puzzle. The scenes before each of the two commercial breaks are carefully chosen to keep the audience interested, and the 'cliff' scene is designed to bring the audience back to watch the following night's episode, with a dramatic unanswered question or impending conflict. Final job is to assign a location to each scene and then we're done. Phew.

It's about 6.30pm by the time I leave but I'm thankful that at least it's not Friday when the working day can run on to 8 or 9pm. My mind is tired but I know I will not be able to help mulling over the week's worth of story on my ride home in preparation for tomorrow's challenge. I'm looking forward to it. ☺

# WIFT Handbook Update

## NEW AUCKLAND MEMBERS

### Barbara Lodge

SKYCITY  
Theatre Manager

### Sarah Gilbert

Production Manager

### Rachel Lang

Writer / Producer

### Heather Lee

Zoomslide  
Producer / General Manager

### Kathryn Philpott

Researcher / Scriptwriter

### Elana McNeill

Actor

### Julia Hyde

Actor / Producer / Writer

### Yvonne Donohue

Great Southern Film & TV  
Development Executive

### Jacqueline Loates

TVWorks  
Publicity Manager

### Charlotte Wood

Actor / Musician

### Megan Ritchie

New Night Productions  
Writer

### Liz Adams

Line Producer

### Magdalena Laas

Director / Production Co-ordinator

### Sophia Johnson

Actor

### Linda Cartwright

Actor / Voice & Dialect Coach /  
Acting Coach

### Jennifer Freed

Actor/ Singer

### Arani Cuthbert

Diva Productions  
Producer / Company Director

### Casey Fenton

Screen Writer / Composer

### Philippa Mossman

TVNZ  
Commissioning Editor

### Vanessa Horan

Maori Television  
Communications Manager

### Sheila Byrne

Maori Television  
On Air Promotions Manager

### Manutai Schuster

Maori Television  
Commissioning & Acquisitions  
Manager

### Ella Henry

AUT  
Senior Lecturer / Performer / Writer

### Dr Rachel Wolfgramm

Auckland University  
Producer / Creative Developer

### Jo Armstrong

Producer / Student

### Jennifer Edwards

TVNZ  
Commercial Manager

### Lisa Chappell

Actor

### Josie Haines

Freelance Editor

### Denny Kirrily

Feral Films Ltd  
Director / Camera Operator / Writer

## NEW WELLINGTON MEMBERS

### Harriet McGregor

Park Road Post Productions  
Communications Executive

### Louise Baker

Park Road Post Productions  
Head of Corporate Services

### Jessica Manins

StarNow  
Casting Manager / Actor

### Kim Baker

Inspire Films  
Producer / Consultant

### Kate Le Comte

Editor / Crew-Runner

### Linda McCarthy

Wardrobe / Costumer

### Miranda Rivers

The Casting Company  
Casting Director

### Lydia Moore

Student

### Yvonne Pasi

Actor / Model

### Judith Ritchie

Documentary Filmmaker

## NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

### Park Road Post Production

### Maori Television



## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Professional Development Workshops
- Mentoring and Internships
- WIFT NZ Online Handbook Listing
- WIFT International Membership and Online Directory Listing
- WIFT Magazine
- Regular e-news
- WIFT Website with news and links
- Membership Discounts, Competitions and Invitations
- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Networking, Visitor and Social Events
- Support and Information Services



*New Zealand's membership of WIFT International is made possible by KODAK NZ.*

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

(SUBS ARE GST INCLUSIVE)

### FULL MEMBER:

Any woman who has a minimum of two years experience in film, television or associated media.

Auckland: \$112.50  
Wellington: \$112.50  
South Island: \$ 90.00

### FRIEND:

Anyone ineligible to be a full member because they have less than two years in the industry or work outside the industry. Friends can attend WIFT activities (unless restricted to Full Members only) but have no voting rights and can not stand for election to the Executive.

Auckland: \$90.00  
Wellington: \$85.00  
South Island: \$67.50

### ASSOCIATE:

Members who are unable to attend meetings or functions. Have no voting rights and can not stand for election to the Executive.

All Areas: \$67.50

### STUDENT:

Any film, television or media student, eligible on presentation of student ID.

Auckland: \$45.00  
Wellington: \$28.00

## JOINING WIFT (Wellington)

Print and fill out the form on the next page and post.

Email [info@wiftwellington.org.nz](mailto:info@wiftwellington.org.nz)

For further information go to  
[www.wiftwellington.org.nz](http://www.wiftwellington.org.nz)

## JOINING WIFT (Rest of New Zealand)

Print and fill out the form on the next page and post.

Join online at [www.wiftauckland.org.nz](http://www.wiftauckland.org.nz)

Phone 09 373 4071

or email [office@wiftauckland.org.nz](mailto:office@wiftauckland.org.nz)

WIFT Auckland and Wellington are incorporated non-profit societies. All members are bound by the rules and constitution of the society. All prices include GST.

# WIFT NZ MEMBERSHIP FORM

To join please print, fill out the form and send it to:  
WIFT, PO Box 90415, Auckland Mail Centre

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (WORK) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (HOME) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

FACSIMILE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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EMAIL/WEBSITE \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION/TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION 2 \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION 3 \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY ☐

DO YOU WISH TO BE INCLUDED IN THE WIFT HANDBOOK? ☐ YES ☐ NO

DO YOU WISH TO BE INCLUDED IN THE WIFT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE  
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY? ☐ YES ☐ NO

<input type="checkbox"/> FULL MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/> FRIEND		<input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE -	\$67.50
Auckland/North -	\$112.50	Auckland/North -	\$90.00	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT	
Wellington -	\$112.50	Wellington -	\$85.00	Auckland/North -	\$45.00
South Island -	\$90.00	South Island -	\$67.50	Wellington -	\$28.00

method of payment

PLEASE TICK ONE

☐ CHEQUE (payable to WIFT NZ) ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD

NAME OF CARDHOLDER \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NUMBER

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SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

# SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS LIGHTING THE WAY

**Each year, through the fundraising efforts of WIFT Wellington members and supporters, the Robin Laing Scholarship is granted to one or more female students of The Film School.**

The scholarship, named after WIFT Wellington founding member and WIFT NZ Outstanding Contribution Award Winner Robin Laing, was established in 2004 to assist a female Film School student to complete her studies and go on to participate in the New Zealand film industry. The winner receives up to \$2,000 and a year's complimentary WIFT membership after graduation.

Since its inception six women have enjoyed the singular opportunities a scholarship grant at this level can provide. WIFT Wellington President Glenis Giles says recipients are carefully chosen through an essay and interview process.

"We're looking for someone who we feel shows the potential to create a long and successful career and significantly contribute to the industry as a whole - lighting the way for other women to come," Giles says.

2007 joint recipients Mary Anne Bourke and Sophie Cherry say they have prospered under the scheme, which has assisted them to move from fledgling film students to fledgling filmmakers. And Cherry says that the WIFT membership, in particular, has been invaluable.

"Getting to know other women in the film industry (and them getting to know me) has definitely helped with work", she says.

That assistance saw both of them fully engaged with the industry in 2008.

As well as working as continuity on a number of short films, including Wiremu Grace's *Kehua* and Claire Ashton's *Digit*, Bourke was involved in success story *Second Hand Wedding*, working on extras casting as well as ticketing for the Embassy premiere. 2009 finds her chained to her desk writing screenplays, with plans to shoot a no-budget comedy short film in April.

Equally busy, Cherry spent most of last year working as an assistant director and in production. Highlights included production management on Alister Barry's documentary *The Hollow Men*, which featured in the New Zealand Film Festival, and producing the short film *First Light*, directed by Simon Brown.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Cherry has also been a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Director on feature films, short films and music videos and is currently looking for work as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Director or in production.

Both are keen to acknowledge the support of WIFT Wellington and of all those who attended fundraisers to enable the presentation of the scholarships.



SIMON BROWN (DIRECTOR), SOPHIE CHERRY (1ST AD),  
ANDREAS MAHN (DOP)

"We would like to thank everyone who gave money to support us. We couldn't imagine doing anything else. It really is appreciated", Bourke and Cherry say.

2009 scholarship applications close early February, and the lucky recipient(s) will be announced in March. ☺



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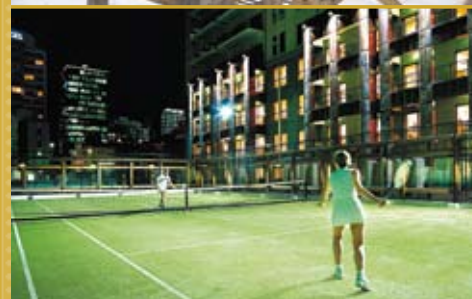
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# What I do... ANNIE FREAR GRIP

## WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

Common sense and the desire to find a solution.

Gripping involves achieving the desired position or movement of the camera. Movement in drama is the best and often involves passion. Timing of movement is about the scene and I try to feel the scene and move accordingly.

Knowledge of rigging and what you can make out of materials to hand. Driving skills. Hanging out of choppers, dangling off the sides of cliffs and mountains, avoiding damaging expensive locations, re-arranging rental vehicles for tracking shots, bashing around in boats, getting cranes onto scaff towers – always with safety at the forefront. No one usually knows how these things will be achieved, they ask and the grips will come up with a solution or the next best thing.

## WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT THIS JOB?

The adventure of it all. Getting down and dirty. Go hard, play hard, lie down.

The challenge of the movement and the build, the places and people.

Working in the world of illusion with creative people. Going to and staying in locations you would never go to in the so-called 'normal' world.

## WHAT IS THE WORST THING ABOUT THIS JOB?

It can be an array of things from weather, terrain, people or the whole damn lot. Running out of clean underwear.

Failing to fully achieve the challenge, which is always, a

personal disappointment although it can sometimes be seen as a comedy skit when you retell the story of the 'worst day in my entire career'.

## HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS LINE OF WORK?

Standing in the right place at the right time. It's a long story, but the short unexciting version is dragged off the street and into a government scheme to give long termed unemployed new skills.

## DESCRIBE A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR CAREER TO DATE

Shooting *New Zealand* on Showscan for the Helicopter Line with fantastic rigs by Harry Harrison and Kevin Donovan.

Going to Cannes to see the first screening of *Desperate Remedies* and hanging out amidst it all.

Seeing the Art Department performing amazing feats on LOTR with more rigs then you could wave a grip at.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN THINKING ABOUT GETTING INTO THIS LINE OF WORK?

Look after your body. It is very physical and women need to approach some lifting differently to men. Wear a weight lifting belt. Be open-minded and flexible and enjoy everything you do.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

Something that doesn't require lifting. I'd like to pass on my knowledge to anyone interested. I'd also like to involve myself with the youth in the North helping them to tell stories visually. ☺



## FAVOURITE FILMS:

*Star Wars*, *Desperate Remedies*, Bette Davis movies and the whole shebang.

Anything where I don't watch the technicality of it, although often I do but then perhaps the story lost me...

## FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMMES:

*Deadwood*. *The Survivors* (BBC). Don't watch too much TV these days.

## FAVOURITE PIECE OF MUSIC:

Many, ranging from opera to stuff that could easily make people feel slightly ill...

## INDUSTRY ROLE MODEL:

Any woman who has a vision without having to kill anyone to get there...

# Membership Discounts available on presentation of card

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Concession prices of \$35 A Reserve and \$30 B Reserve when booking direct with ATC on 09 309 3395.

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