

DIRECTOR (FILM/TELEVISION/VIDEO)

Kaihautu (Whitiahua/Pouaka Whakaata)

Print Page

Description

Directors are responsible for interpreting a script or storyline, and telling the story in a film, television or video format. They often have the idea for the script or story.



The "Good Morning" production team

He Whakamarama



Mahi ai ki te whakamarama i nga tuhinga, te ahua o te pakiwaitara ranei, me te whakatakoto i nga korero i te ahua e pai ana ki a ia. Ia wa ka whiwhi whakaaro ia mo tetahi tuhinga, tetahi pakiwaitara ranei.

Alternative Titles

- Director (Field)
- Director (Studio)
- Television Director
- Film Director
- Video Director

Tasks and Duties

Directors:

- decide how to tell a story on film/television/video
- choose actors, designers and technical staff, often in collaboration with the producer/s

- choose settings for the film
- decide how scenes will be shot
- supervise and liaise with camera, lighting, sound and design staff
- run rehearsals
- direct actors' performances
- control shooting (filming)
- edit film with the editor, choosing the scenes that tell the story best
- supervise soundtrack, sound effects and music.



"The different types of director are marked by what they're working with. Whether it's film or video they're using, or one camera or a number of them - we basically do the same job, but using a variety of tools and methods."

Jacqui Farry, Director (Film/Television/Video)

Personal Requirements

Skills

Directors need to have story-telling skills, creative and artistic ability, strong written and spoken communication skills, and research skills. They also need to have good decision-making ability, management skills and good interpersonal and team management skills.

Knowledge

Directors need to know how to analyse scripts, books, plays and writing of all kinds. They need to know about various film and video techniques and how to best use pictures and sound to present a story and/or information. They also need to know about photography and music.



Monitoring filming on a hand-held screen

Personal Qualities

Directors need to be creative, artistic, imaginative, single-minded and self-disciplined. They should be able to motivate people, manage a team and work well under pressure.



"It's really weird for people to be sitting down with lights shining on their faces, cameras pointing at them, and strangers talking to them. So if you can put people at ease, you're going to get much better material."

David Crerar, Television Director

Physical Requirements

The physical requirements for directors vary widely from job to job.

How to Enter the Job

Secondary Education

There are no specific secondary educational requirements for directors, as experience and ability are generally more valuable in this industry.

Tertiary Education

Film, television and video production courses are available, and are generally required for getting a foot in the door.

Related courses:



[Media and Broadcasting Skills](#)
[Media Production \(General\)](#)
[Video and Television](#)
[Acting, Drama and Theatre](#)

Take off to tertiary!

[Take off to tertiary!](#) - information and advice to help with study or training decision-making.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority:



[Electronic Media](#)
[Film and Television](#)
[Performance Production](#)

Entry Requirements

There are no other specific entry requirements for directors.

Useful Experience

Work in many aspects of the film industry, such as camera operation, editing or production, and on different types of production such as commercials or short films, is useful for directors. Experience in creative writing, dance, or drama can also be useful.



"Being a good director is about being experienced enough to gather a team around you that have the same focus, think on the same level, and know what it is you're trying to achieve."

Jacqui Farry, Director (Film/Television/Video)

Training on the Job

Directors should already have a good understanding of what it is they do, but many skills are picked up on the job, especially in technical areas such as editing.

Working Conditions

Work Places and Travel

Directors work indoors in offices and studios, and outdoors on location. They may have to travel long distances, sometimes overseas, in order to get to location shoots.



David Crerar supervising a photo shoot

Equipment

Directors use office equipment, including computers and a cellphone or pager, as well as film/television/video-making equipment. They may not necessarily have to operate equipment such as cameras and sound recording gear (although many now do some filming using digital video cameras), but they generally need to know how they work and how to get the best use out of them.



In the control room

Workplace Conditions

Workplace conditions for directors can be very stressful due to their position of responsibility.

Employment Conditions

Hours

Directors work long and irregular hours, often at irregular intervals. They may have to work seven days a week, and spend long periods travelling to and from locations, and may also have to work nights, weekends and public holidays. When in production, directors are usually on-call.



"It's not a nine-to-five job, and because you need to film people when they're available, you work a lot of weekends. The odd hours can be really hard on relationships and make it difficult to keep any sort of regular commitments."

David Crerar, Television Director

Salary

Many directors work on a freelance or contract-to-contract basis. Pay varies widely from people working on their own short productions who may earn little or nothing, to people on regular freelance work who may earn up to \$1,800 to \$2,750 per week.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)

Contact with People

Directors deal with a wide range of people, including writers, producers, production managers and crews, designers and actors. They often have to supervise large and small groups, and co-ordinate team efforts.



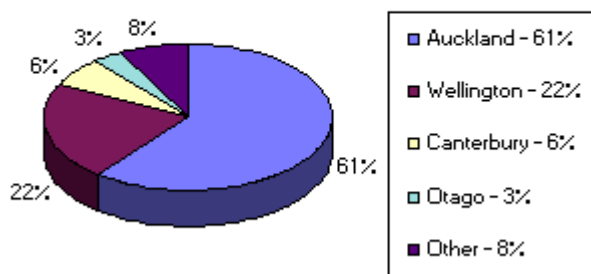
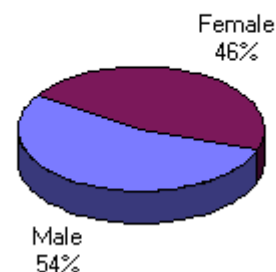
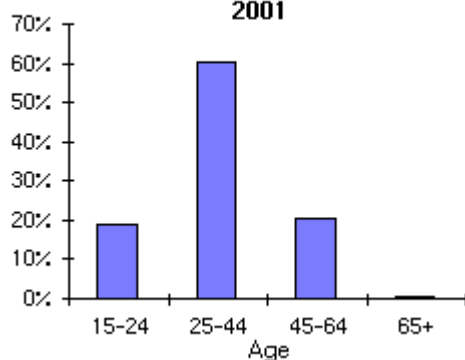
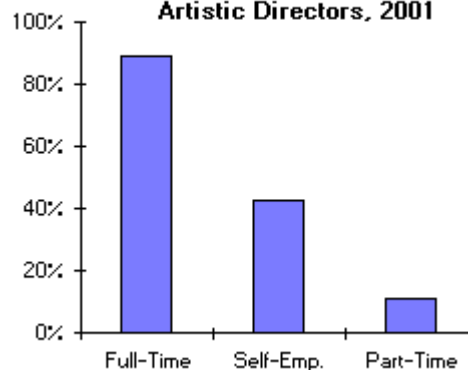
David Crerar working alongside an editor

Job Market

Market Details

These statements and statistics are based on information available from Statistics New Zealand about artistic director occupations. Charts and statistics on artistic directors include data on directors (film/television/video).

- 984 people were employed as artistic directors in 2001
- 89% were employed full-time
- 46% were female
- The highest proportion of people were employed in the Auckland (61%), Wellington (22%) and Canterbury (6%) regions.

**Regional Location of Artistic Directors,
2001****Gender of Artistic Directors,
2001****Age of Artistic Directors,
2001****Type of Employment of
Artistic Directors, 2001**

Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)

Job Outlook

The outlook for the occupation of director (film/television) looks fairly good for the next two to three years. There is optimism in the New Zealand film industry, and enthusiasm about its future in the international and domestic markets.

As part of the current Government's investment in the performing arts, a \$22 million grant was given in 2000 to establish a Film Production Fund to support the production of New Zealand films. In addition, an extra \$5 million increase in annual funding was given to New Zealand On Air for the development of New Zealand television programmes, especially children's television.

The Film Fund is expected to foster a strong commercial film industry in New Zealand by providing job opportunities for people such as television/film directors and producers, who might otherwise have been forced to look for opportunities overseas. It is also designed to encourage low-budget films to be made by first-time film makers, and should ensure the development of a pool of new film-making talent in New Zealand.

It is hoped that Peter Jackson's feature film, Lord of the Rings, will attract further overseas investment in New Zealand films, as international funding helps develop a strong film-making infrastructure. Some film makers, however, fear greater numbers of big overseas productions will shut out homegrown producers by pushing up costs and draining the pool of talented crews.

Digital technology has made the making of films and television programmes faster. It has also lowered costs, and directors can now be involved in shooting films themselves with a digital camera. The film and television industry is one where film processing, editing, and camera equipment are constantly changing, so directors are having to constantly keep up with these new technological developments.

With so many more television channels now available, there is a greater demand for programmes. However, getting a foot in the door to directing can be tough in the television and film industry because of its competitive nature. It also takes many years to become established in the industry, and doing so depends heavily on the skills and emotional resources of individuals.

There is a trend away from on-site training to institutional training at film and television schools like the recently opened Film School in Wellington. This move is bringing a greater consistency to production standards within the television and film industry.

(Written 26/10/2001 - Updated 23/12/2002)

Current Vacancies



[Writers, Artists, Entertainers, Sports & Religious Associated Professionals](#)



[KiwiCareers Job Vacancy Links](#)

Personal Profile

Jacqui Farry



Jacqui Farry, director-producer of TVNZ's 'Good Morning' programme, came into television after completing a Bachelor of Commerce. "I answered an ad in the paper about a job in television. Not in television production, more in the business side though. I asked for work experience on productions. Once you get the opportunity to have work experience, you have to realise that that's your chance to make an impact. I've had a lot of work experience people on the job, but their natural ability or general approach was not up to scratch. You have to show a passion for working in this industry. It's perhaps not the most just environment to work in - there is a certain perception out

there of being lucky to be even working in the film or television industry in New Zealand, whether you're paid or not, because it's so small and so hard to break into.

"It is seen as a glamorous industry and in some ways it is. In some ways it's a very exciting career with lots of opportunities and experiences inherent. Plus you have the ability to work in an environment where you can let your own natural personality come out. On the other side, as I said, it's something you've got to be passionate about. There's no point in being in it just for the money because you quite often have to take backward steps in terms of income to get the project that you want. There's no point getting into a career as a director because you want to earn a lot of money - I don't think the money can ever really compensate for the job and the lifestyle which goes along with it."

Jacqui is currently in her second season of producing and directing 'Good Morning', but is looking for more experience in the future. "I've been very, very fortunate to have had a lot of variety in my direction and production work, but I haven't had any drama experience as such. I'm torn between the production side of the camera and wanting to take on a more managerial role, but I would like to learn how to work on film. Film and television are both such evolving media, you really have to just take each step as it feels right and trust your gut."

David Crerar



After completing a Bachelor of Arts, I went overseas and then came back and did a course in broadcast journalism. I initially had my mind set on radio journalism without really considering television. However, I replied to an ad in the paper for a television production assistant, and two interviews later, eight years ago, I got the job.

I got to learn all facets of TV production before deciding that my strengths lay in directing. Even though I started from the bottom, I was able to make reasonable money a lot quicker than I would have in radio.

As a director, you're primarily responsible for telling a story with pictures, and I like being able to think visually. I'm involved in a project the whole way through at a hands-on level. It's a real team effort though; I'll work with the producer, with researchers, and go out in the field with the film crew and the talent. I'll also write scripts, and sit in with an editor.

There's a lot of variety in this job; you never get bored because you're moving on from one process to the next. And sometimes you can be out in the field having a cruisy day, but at other times it's just frantic, trying to meet the 'on air' deadlines. But it's quite nice to have the occasional 'buzz'!

I've directed documentaries and documentary series, and I've also done lots of magazine style shows like "Medical File". Throughout the year, you might get several projects that you have a real interest in, but there are some shows that don't have the same level of interest. However, because it's a competitive industry, and most directors are freelance, you can't be too precious. And because it's a small industry, you can't afford to get on the wrong side of anyone.

When you're out filming, before you even start rolling the first bit of tape, you do need an idea of how it's going to look in the end and to have a plan in your head of what questions to ask, otherwise you'll get into the editing suite with just a jumble of information. But it's good when you see the final product and you're happy with it - even though the networks always have the final say, and sometimes make changes that can frustrate you.

Further Information

Relevant Contacts

- [Film New Zealand](#)
- [NZ Film Commission](#)
- [Radio Broadcasters' Association](#)
- [TV3 Network Services](#)
- [TVNZ](#)

Related Jobs

- [Artistic Director](#)
- [Film/Television Camera Operator](#)
- [Film/Video Editor](#)
- [Producer \(Film/Television/Video\)](#)
- [Production Assistant \(Film/Television/Video\)](#)
- [Production Manager \(Film/Television\)](#)
- [Theatre Producer](#)

Industry Overviews

- [Motion Picture, Radio and Television Services](#)



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