

OWELLINGTON IMPROVISATION TROUPE 11th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Date: 2 July 2013
Time: 6.52pm
Venue: Capital E
Quorum: 15 members
Chair: Brenton Hodgson, Coordinator
Secretariat: Mary Little, Secretary

Members in attendance

Jennifer O'Sullivan
Hedy Manders
Ali Little
Adam Williamson
Brenton Hodgson
Kate Wilson
Anrik Drenth
Lyndon Hood
Tai Samaeli
Nicky Hill
Mary Little
Christine Brooks
John Rutherford
Amy Williamson
Susan Williams
Simon McArthur
Duoyi Xu
Dale Burrell
Phil Anderson
Matt ??
Kate Zabranski
Chris House
Colin Basterfield
Maggie Cargill
Russ Drewry
Rose Andalaro
Ryan Docherty
Garret (observer)

Apologies

Barry Miskimmin
Matt Hutton
Nicola Pauling
Steven Youngblood

Welcome and acknowledgements

The coordinator called the meeting to order at 6:52 and welcomed the membership.

Clarification: there was one non-member present; it was clarified that observers were welcome but could not vote.

Minutes of the previous AGM (held 13 July 2010)

Tai moved that the minutes of the previous AGM be accepted by the membership.

Anrik seconded

All in favor:

Against: 0

Abstained:

MOTION PASSED

General Business

1. NZIF Proposal (Christine Brooks) (moved forward due to timing)

The NZIF proposal has been before the membership for some weeks, uploaded to the Members' section of the website (see Appendix 1). Christine opened to the floor for questions

Chris: NZIF would remain in Wellington as a location. Will that be official?

Christine: This can't be guaranteed - it would be up to the board and constituents. But since Jen and Christine are both Wellington-based, it's likely to remain here.

Proposal: that the membership endorse the proposal

Tai moved

Adam seconded

(Clarification: we only need to call for a vote if someone objects to the motion.)

Motion carried with the endorsement of WIT. General approbation.

Coordinator's Report (Brenton)

Brenton read the high points of his report.

Spontaneous acclamation for the Committee's work this year.

Thanks to Danni, who was treasurer before Phil.

Tai moved the report be accepted.

Adam seconded.

Coordinator's Report to the AGM 2013

Welcome to WIT's Tenth year!

As Tai reminded us last year, WIT founding document was signed on the 5th of August, 2003, so WIT isn't *quite* ten years old - but it will be soon!

The founding members of WIT are:

Anton, Barry, Nicky, Alistair, Carmen, Chrissy, Clare, Danielle, Julian, Linda, Naomi, Nic Nigel, Pete and Ryan.

(I've included the full names at the end of this report)

Since then, WIT has faced and met challenges, overcome most, introduced a whole lot of people to improv and has done a pretty good job of meeting its three objectives:

1. To promote, develop and foster the performance of improvised theatre and comedy in the Wellington

region

2. To teach the skills of improvised theatre and comedy through workshops, classes and any other means to members and to the wider Wellington community
3. To encourage the having of fun and the not taking of oneself too seriously

One of the biggest challenges we've faced over the last couple of years has been (to some extent), forgetting about number 3.

If you were at last year's meeting, you may recall some challenges were identified:

- Status anxiety
- Negativity
- Lack of inclusiveness of the group
- Leadership burnt out
- Lack of effective guidance

We heard some other things at that meeting, including discussion about winding WIT up.

Well, we've been working on that quietly over the last year, and I hope you've seen improvement.

We've tried to make WIT more inclusive. I feel this has been largely successful, as we've seen a lot of new faces on stage, including people like me in high-profile shows like "Secrets". And the cast for Soap this year is huge – and there are plenty of new faces in it.

We are starting a new season of Micetro tomorrow night at the Fringe Bar - and most of the people performing have been WIT members for less than a year. We recently ran a training day for that that and it'd be fair to say it was one of the more enjoyable I've been to. There is so much energy, creativity and above all optimism in the group!

In 2011 / 2012, we 5 new members join. In 2012 / 2013, we had closer to 25 new members join.

We still have challenges, of course.

Not everyone sees the value of the Playful Tuesday sessions.

My take on those is that they are core to the social development of WIT, they provide vital training and experience opportunities for newer members and old timers alike, they give people a chance to work together and we've been working to bring in guest presenters to teach us stage fighting, masks, puppets, and new (to some) formats like Ferris Wheel and Soap. And they are proving very successful. You'll hear more about that later from other members of the committee.

Audience numbers are still variable, but the upcoming Micetro and Soap seasons should both be successful if history has taught us anything. My challenge to you all is to get out and support these shows. Invite your friends, family and work mates.

If you aren't involved directly in shows, offer to run lights (we'll teach you how to do it if you don't know!), front of house, hand out fliers, or just sit and have a beer and watch the show. And bring your friends. Go to a show that you aren't personally involved in.

We've also looked at the other issues raised last year.

- Constitutional reform. If you want it, write a proposal. Nicky has - and will talk to it shortly. Or already has. I wrote this before the meeting....
- WIT's membership cost - it was voted last year to increase it to \$20 per year. If you still want that, tell us now. We'll change it. There is no constitutional issue. It was voted on last year - we just need to do it.
- Working with HAT. We've had a couple of "in principle" meetings with HAT. We need to do more work on this.
- NZIF - we've either just discussed it, or will be soon... (I wrote this earlier, remember?)

And just having a look through the Facebook posts that have happened since I started writing this, it is clear we aren't all of the way there yet. Remember though, we are on a journey here. WIT is evolving. And, I am happy to say, continuing to grow.

Keep your passion alive! Channel it to help us all do a better job. Keep challenging yourselves and the rest of the organisation. We are all here with a common goal.

And I just want to conclude this report by thanking the good folks of WIT for the opportunity and privilege of making me coordinator, and most especially to the committee - Ali, Mary, Lyndon and Phil. You are all awesome! And also to Danni, who was part of the committee until she left Wellington. She kept her promise, "I'm gonna count the money and ain't gonna steal any."

I took this role as something of a caretaker, as did several other members of the committee, and I gotta be honest... I think we've been pretty successful.

Thank you.

Brenton Hodgson
WIT Coordinator, 2012 / 2013

The Founders:

- Anton van Helden
- Barry Miskimmin
- Nicky Hill
- Alistair Wishart
- Carmen Mak
- Chrissy Ainsworth
- Clare Kerrison
- Danielle Grant
- Julian Wilson
- Linda Kilday
- Naomi Stephen-Smith
- Nic Grove
- Nigel Chin
- Pete Hodgson
- Ryan Hartigan

Co-creative Director (Ali Little and Lyndon Hood)

Training report for the year: a whole heap of Thank Yous.

Over the last year we have enjoyed some fab guest trainers, including Troy Zimmerman from Minneapolis, Bobbi Block from Philadelphia, Patti Stiles from Melbourne, Wade Jackson from Auckland

and Peter Hassell from Upper Hutt. Our guest trainers helped us discover secrets, soaps, trance masks and how to beat ourselves up safely. But the best came from within WIT. So, thank Nicky Hill for training all the starry eyed new people in the level one and level 2 courses, Geoff Simmons for taking on the Narrative and Storytelling courses, and leading shows at the end of each of these. Thank Kate Wilson for bringing back weeks worth of Tuesdays from Improvention last year, as well as Jen O'Sullivan for her music and soap workshops, Nicola Pauling for drama, Christine Brooks for Thrills, Robbie Ellis for the Beat, Heidi Drew for stepping up and leading a Californian workshop, Hedy Manders for sharing her puppets, Lyndon Hood for co-creatively supporting the training and Everyone Else who turned up and helped us help ourselves to some powerful and playful improv.

Looking forward, WIT will enjoy some exciting guest trainers, including those the NZIF team will bring to Wellington for workshops in September. However, I am keen that WIT find more ways to mine the breadths and depths of WIT member talent, and better support people developing training, directing, and technical skills. Learning from each other is key: I've certainly learnt a lot from you guys this year.

Cheers,
Ali Little.

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Lyndon

Putting my name forward last year for co-creative director shows I recall having an overall intention not to break anything. I also believe I ran on a platform of not being very organised or good at making things happen. And I stand by that.

I'm actually really pleased with how this year went but I also don't see that as my doing.

Overall my creative strategy was one of trying not to get in the way – if you imagine a brick with 'I vote yes' written on the side. There is no grand plan here. I think that's good, with a couple of caveats about my approach that I'll get to. Things happened that people have the energy and inspiration for. It turns out that's quite a lot.

I count:

- Witless
- Wishing Tree
- Xmas cracker: that is Panto, Apocalimpro, Puppets, Micetro, Duets (that is, in itself a bunch of shows) and Improv Unwrapped
- Fringe, that is: Secrets (thx Bobbi and everyone behind Bobbi's work) and Micetro complete with random Trans Tasman challenge (so thanks Australians)
- Comedy, that is: Thrills & Swoon and Gorilla
- Little bit of Improv Lounge at either end with a number of shows in it, and I'll mention Ferris Wheel as something new and really useful.
- General little one off things out in the world that I didn't keep track of.
- Coming up more Improv Lounge, and a new Witless and quite some presence at a certain New Zealand Improv Festival which is I think just slightly more future planning than I came in with.

That is a lot of shows and a lot of new formats and a lot of very different formats. And I know there are a few more out there and I kind of still want to put them all out there and make them fight for supremacy.

Anyway thank you those creative leads (so I make that Jen Christine Geoff Geoff Ali Jen Christine Bobbi Christine and sort of Jen/Christine/Ali) and thank you producers and thank you performers and thank you crew. Producers and crew especially because let's be honest they deserve such veneration. Let's mention Jen and Andrea. And in fact thanks to everyone who made any shows I was nominally in charge of happen – Kate Z was particularly life-saving – because dealing with me gets extra points.

And thank you trainers. This is huge. I honestly think we are a better, happier group than last year and you are why.

Sometime during the year I remember feeling like as a group we were a bit anxious, like we were trying to Do It Right – that might of course have just been me. It might also be me now, but I feel like we're much better.

I'd thought it was the kind of thing a visit from Patti Styles might help with and turns out that happened without any effort on my part. But I think we were already better.

Nicky's new people who are actually happy to be here and actually volunteer for things without being pestered (and other new people who are happy to be here and do that), the extra layer of training Geoff is doing. And Ali. We need people coming along on Tuesdays, this is happening. And so many guest trainers (we should definitely keep the financial setup behind that). And all these workshops. All these workshops with proper new things and new people getting sucked right into the deep end and ending up in shows and it's awesome. And oh look there's another one on Monday?

Another cool thing, incidentally, is that under the auspices of Jen we are having meetups with the local improv groups and talking about stuff. Which is a good thing.

So if you read the Creative Director job description it doesn't actually say anything about organising actual shows. But it is the job to see that shows happen and there you are; it especially happens when we need performances that are geared towards more junior members, as well as the mad enthusiasms of more senior ones.

I do not like organising and I'm not very good about doing it in a timely fashion and apparently I'm not even organised enough to delegate.

I sort of tried to compensate by being in everything for a bit but it's fair to say the Christmas Cracker was enough of that. I actually did that because all those shows were really inspiring and it was huge and exciting and we're still feeling the creative benefits and let's not do it again. I think it was an extreme stretch for our resources.

Just doing the organisation the festival made me do seemed to work quite well for the Fringe but not so well for the Comedy Festival (which I actually applied for slightly late). I think you need to market properly for the Comedy Festival but I think the costs associated with an official venue (which the Fringe Bar was and presumably will be) are not worth the risk.

I'm increasingly of the view that people should be allowed to run whatever creative train wreck they like as long as they wreck it good and hard and that's an exciting thing to do but to do that we need to avoid logistical train wrecks.

There are a few things that didn't really happen that I miss:

- To some extent, player development support, getting new people on stage

I raised the possibility of properly casual friends and family style shows – it didn't happen and I kind of went off the idea (much like my wish to move to an online platform less evil than Facebook). I don't have the same sense of a need for this right now but we should keep alive to how much new players have to do through all the weeks of Soap and Festival. Also remember if anyone gets bored this is exactly the kind of thing you can make happen. It's a good way to start the producing thing and we do need more of them though we won't abduct you or anything.

But I don't feel the need for casual show right now myself. The way training is at the moment is probably helping. And it turns out we have run more Fringe Bar shows than I expected and they were not in my estimation half arsed, which is something to watch for – we don't want to be doing things out of obligation, that doesn't help anyone.

And of course the occasional bright young thing got plucked straight out of a workshop.

- Getting shows into training

I think we need an expectation of some connection between shows and training. This has happened a couple of times: a couple of weeks of open-auditions or an open rehearsal workshop later on. So the group can see how the format works. I think that would be really useful and I believe committee minutes show that I was awesome for suggesting it.

- Format development support

Feedback towards developing all these formats. Because we are doing a lot of stuff and much as it's sometimes planned as a one-off we often DO do these things again. Again, this is something that happens, but remembering to keep that as an expectation in our planning. And it will be good practise for all concerned.

- I will write down here that as far as I know we still need to sort out payments for Micetro and Gorilla.

Overall, I submit that I did not in fact break WIT [*spontaneous applause*], though I think one of my email clients has been deleting prior years' email messages sorry about that.

It has really actually been a pleasure serving on the committee and I'd like to thank everyone for making it that way, Brenton and Mary and Danni as was and Phil as is. And of course Ali for as I said doing so much of the actual business of making this a better place and also for looking sternly at me when I tried to weasel out of things. Thank you. And let it be recorded I have a bunch of training I can take.

I understand WIT is buying a pull-up banner. I dibs that as my legacy for this term as co-creative director.

Because reasons.

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Tai moved that the co-creative directors' reports be received
 Kate seconded
 Report received

Financial Report (Phil Anderson)

Phil tabled: Balance Sheet including profit and loss (see Appendix 2)

Cries of approbation on the news that WIT was modestly profitable this year.

Kate asked about the 20 cents that appears.

Phil explained this was the discrepancy between the existing balance and what it should have been when he took over as Treasurer.

Chris House asked about the "bonds, floats and so on" account.

Phil explained that's a legacy account that hasn't been touched since 2008.

Tai moved
 Kate seconded
 Report received

General Business

2. Resolution moved (Nicky Hill)

This resolution has been before the membership for some weeks, via the website and Facebook page (see Appendix 3).

Kate mentioned that she hadn't been sure if this resolution was for real. Steven Youngblood's name on this proposal put her right off.

There has never been a resolution run by WIT in its ten-year span.

Nicky asked for a show of hands for people who were members over the last ten years. The membership has grown and changed over time.

The idea at the heart of the resolution has changed: from a tight-knit and small group to having over 60 active members trying to understand each other. This presents a greater set of challenges than the original group faced.

This resolution is excited that we've come this far and acknowledges the people who've got us this far.

Currently, if someone has the passion to put on a theatre show, it can happen – but if nobody has the impetus to do that, then what does that mean for the creation of opportunities for people to perform?

Issues people have mentioned: the committee changes every year and things get lost that were meant to be addressed – continuity issue; management capacity issues – there are only a handful of people who've been putting on shows; improv capacity and ways to sustain directors, performers and producers; what's a WIT-core or a WIT-sponsored activity, ie which activities are financially supported by the Committee as they support WIT's core business and growth.

Where is the engine of WIT? What is the mission? Have the objectives of WIT changed?
We need as a group to make our business sustainable.

To keep our new performers and players, we need to give them somewhere to go.

We also have an issue with the end of access to Cap E and change of Fringe Bar venue.

How do we work as a collective?

We need goals.

The decision would be for the future Coordinator would take this idea and craft it into whatever he in his wisdom decides to do with it.

[Applause for Nicky's presentation.]

Christine suggested in addition to this the issue of the WIT brand, so that WIT is clear on what it's marketing, bearing in mind the variety of activities going on under the WIT umbrella.

Jen: knowing what we are so we can be clear to our audiences.

Gary: asked about having "levels": alumni, rookie, etc.

Brenton: that was disastrous for WIT.

Nicky: Tai disestablished those levels two years ago. WIT is in good heart now.

Nicky thanked her co-sponsors.

Improvements:

Phil: You're proposing to have recommendations/decisions ready by the next AGM, but that's too late. Shouldn't take more than 6 months to get some of this underway.

Nicky: The issue of timing resides with Brenton and those who would be doing the work.

[Christine had to leave]

Brenton: I believe the proposal is flexible enough that if we decide to change it in any practical way, we can do so.

Nicky: Phil's saying, can you do it quicker?

Brenton: We can do a draft in the not-too-distant future. This is doable.

Nicky: Resolution amended to January 2014.

Kate Z: Can we decide how much consultation there will be? Or will there be no consultation? Changes could be great, but it would be nice if it would not be just the Committee that did it.

Ali: This would definitely not be purely run by the Committee, but would be based on consultation. Brenton is very happy to discuss with interested parties.

Hedy: If the Committee had a bunch of exciting plans like running our own theatre, that would have to come back to the AGM anyway.

Brenton asked for someone to move that we accept the resolution and work through it as a Committee

Jen moved to accept the resolution

Amy seconded it

The resolution was passed by consensus

3. Matters Arising

In his report, Brenton mentioned an outstanding item from last year's AGM: Membership fees.

Last year it was \$20 dollars a year, or \$30 for ever

Two proposals: that we retain \$30 for life membership, or we adopt

Hedy: What was the result of the constitutional review?

Brenton: It was that we could decide at this meeting.

Ali: If we change to \$20, what does that mean for life members?

Jen: You would move to becoming a lapsed member. If you're paying dues yearly, you're an active member with rights to come to AGM, vote and perform. Maybe we link the annual fee to the discounted training and show prices you get as a WIT member.

Chris: Would active members be encouraged to pay up?

Nicky: What constitutes an "active" member? We need a clearer narrative on what it means to belong to the group.

Lyndon: Can we call it "financial members" for the purpose of this discussion?

Chris: What was the purpose of this change?

Brenton: It was to get people to put skin in the game.

Ali: There was also a concept to have "WIT dollars" earned by activities eg admin help.

Jen: What if you sign something upon paying up: "I renew my enthusiasm, acknowledge my rights and responsibilities."

Nicky and Kate Z: We could have a re-enrollment process where members say what they're willing to do for the year.

Jen: Laid out possible rights/responsibilities as per other improv troupes

Brenton: We could tie it to Nicky's Resolution. We leave it as it is for now, but produce a report and recommendation as part of the resolution work (look into admin etc).

Jen: Volunteered to be involved with this.

Nicky: We need an online device by which the membership can be consulted.

Ali: We're pressing for that on the WIT website.

Tai moved

Chris seconded

Accepted

4. Jen's NZIF update

Programme is finalized. 17 performances in 5 days. There will be 8 workshops in 4 days. Morning and afternoons sessions on Fri and Saturday, also afternoon ones on Weds and Thurs. Performance

opportunities, as shows are ensemble cast from workshops. Two of the shows are late-night parties. All based at BATS, in the current Guano (74 seats). Looking for volunteers who'll get benefits like free tickets and Jen's love. Will also have access to participant packages: pay a set fee, get 5 tickets to shows, standby for everything else, a set number of workshops (option to book more if you like).

Jen opened the floor for questions.

Gary: What is WIT's emphasis/style for the festival?

Jen: A variety. Shows are coming from all over the country and from Australia. (NB Special guest this year is Rik Brown.) There will be long-form, short-form, parties, puns, etc.

Amy: Afternoon workshops only – no evening or weekday?

Jen: No evenings as there will be performances. Since we've just voted to spin NZIF off WIT, there will be the first NZIF AGM this week. Going to get legal advice to see what form will work for what we want to achieve.

Chris: Thanks for the massive amount of work this must have all been. When's a rough idea when all this will be available?

Jen: When we have confirmation of locations for workshops, wider improv community will be told how to register. Public launch: there will be a programme launch probably on the first or second week in August.

Nicky: Final NB there's a chance of Patti Stiles coming over. She's an expensive option, so needs to be both outside of WIT and with WIT buy-in. Happy to take this on. Wants this to support WIT's longer term development.

Ali: Noted there are other possibilities for visiting trainers for next year, such as Shaun Kinley.

Chris: Some of the FB discussion of Patti was about training directors' workshops, which is chicken and egg with the Resolution.

Nicky: There is funding in WIT's accounts that can be used for this sort of further training and development.

Brenton: This will all have to be part of the Resolution development. If someone wants to make this happen, put a budget to the Committee and we'll decide whether to take it forward.

Committee elections

Coordinator

| Name | Nominated by | Accept? |
|---------|------------------------|---------|
| Brenton | Anrik, seconded Kate Z | Yes |
| Tai | Jen, seconded Kate W | Decline |
| Hedy | Jen, seconded Kate W | Decline |

Creative Director(s)

| Name | Nominated by | Accept? |
|---------------|----------------|---------|
| Nicky Hill | Seconded Chris | Yes |
| Ali | Mary, Tai | Yes |
| Lyndon | Adam, Kate Z | No |
| Kate W | Hedy, Anrik | No |
| Nicky and Ali | Lyndon, Adam | Yes |

Treasurer

| Name | Nominated by | Accept? |
|------|--------------|---------|
| Phil | Ali, Adam | Yes |

Secretary

| Name | Nominated by | Accepted? |
|------|--------------|-----------|
| Mary | Kate W, Adam | Yes |
| Kate | Adam | Decline |

Structure of Committee and Further Positions

The constitution allows for up to 3 other positions as determined by the membership

Cruise director (new person support officer, combined with social)

| Name | Nominated by | Accepted? |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Hedy | Jen, Anrik | Apparently, yes |
| Chris | Jen, Adam | No |
| Kate | Jen | No |
| Dale | Russ, Anrik | No |
| Matt | | Hell, no |
| Anrik | Kate, | No |
| Russ and Hedy | Jen, Chris | Hedy yes, Russ no |

Jen moved that the following committee be elected and Adam seconded:

Co Creative Directors: Ali and Nicky

Secretary: Mary

Coordinator: Brenton

Treasurer: Phil

Cruise Director: Hedy

Vote of confidence: all

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

The Committee is

Co Creative Directors: Ali and Nicky

Secretary: Mary

Coordinator: Brenton

Treasurer: Phil

Cruise Director: Hedy

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8.28pm by Brenton

Minutes submitted by: Mary Little

Appendix 1

NZIF proposal

The Future of NZIF - Proposal to WIT membership at WIT AGM 2013

The Future of NZIF

Proposal to Wellington Improvisation Troupe membership

Proposal:

1. That Wellington Improvisation Troupe (WIT) endorses the proposed spin-off of New Zealand Improvisation Festival (NZIF) to become an independent project from 2014, the governance of which will be determined at a Special Meeting to be held with NZIF constituents during NZIF 2013.

[Metaphor version of proposal featuring birds and nests

2. WIT is the parent bird. NZIF has been the baby bird, sometimes flying, sometimes falling a little bit but always being caught by the WIT bird. It is time for the NZIF bird to seek to fly on its own wings while maintaining strong ties with the nest where the magic of flight all began. This proposal is seeking the blessing of the WIT bird for the NZIF to take its first independent flight.]

Background

History of NZIF

3. NZIF was started in 2008, and enjoyed critical and financial success in its first two iterations. 2010's festival, while critically successful, operated at a loss, and 2011 suffered both from financial loss and low audiences.

4. Behind the scenes, there has been confusion over governance, ownership, and outcomes of the festival between changing committees and NZIF management.

5. After last year's hiatus, NZIF 2013 has been confirmed at BATS Theatre (Out of Site) on 17-21 September with a new management team. This year's festival is managed by Jennifer O'Sullivan (Producer/Marketing) and Christine Brooks (Artistic Director) and as per previous years is financially supported and underwritten by WIT and overseen by the WIT committee.

Objectives of NZIF and WIT

6. The creative drivers and desired outcomes for WIT and for NZIF overlap but are not entirely mutually inclusive. Appendix 1 contrasts the two sets of objectives.

7. The main difference in objectives is WIT's local and community focus vs NZIF's national focus. This difference in drivers means there is an ongoing tension between WIT's desired outcomes for the festival and those that the NZIF is capable/designed to produce. This tension is amplified when the financial support of NZIF by WIT is factored in.

Financial support of NZIF by WIT

8. To date, NZIF has only been able to operate due to the financial support of WIT. It is a significant project and has a number of upfront costs, especially in years where creative decisions have been made to support international guests to attend and participate in NZIF.

9. WIT has taken all the financial risk for the project. In addition, practice has been to reinvest profits back into future NZIFs. Some have perceived this as an 'all risk and no reward' strategy for WIT from a financial standpoint. Others would argue that the (non-financial) benefits accrued by WIT are worth it. At times, the financial risk taken on by WIT has led the Committee to seek to influence the creative decisions of the NZIF management team. This has led to tension and frustration as both sides have been unclear about their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the running of the Festival.

Discussion

10. The proposal is that Wellington Improvisation Troupe (WIT) endorses the proposed spin-off of New Zealand Improvisation Festival (NZIF) to become an independent project from 2014, the governance of which will be determined at a Special Meeting to be held with NZIF constituents during NZIF 2013.

11. One way of viewing WIT's investment in the NZIF to date is as an 'incubator'. WIT's support has allowed the NZIF to get off the ground and build momentum, leading to a festival that is nationally recognised as the best and only improv festival in NZ with a clearly established home in Wellington, which is of real benefit to WIT members in terms of access.

12. WIT's incubation of the NZIF has been a critical factor in it being staged. However, the time is right for NZIF to branch out and become an independent organisation that responds to the needs of the national improvisation community and is responsible for its own governance, allowing WIT to focus on its core responsibility to its membership.

Benefits/challenges to NZIF of proposed approach

13. The benefits to NZIF of the proposed approach include:

- a. **Effective governance** - Governance of NZIF specifically designed to support NZIF objectives, and elected by NZIF constituents (including, but are not limited to, WIT members)
- b. **Clear roles and responsibilities** - the roles and responsibilities of WIT and NZIF will be clearly defined, leading to efficient and effective decision making and minimising the tension experienced by NZIF management and WIT committees in years gone by.
- c. **Artistic autonomy** - autonomy of artistic direction vested in NZIF
- d. **Collaborative relationship with WIT** - NZIF will continue to work with WIT as a partner and collaborator delivering mutual benefits to both constituencies where relevant.

14. The challenges for NZIF of the proposed approach include:

- a. Accessing greater diversification of funding sources to ensure the NZIF can go ahead

Benefits/challenges to WIT of proposed approach

15. For WIT the benefits of the proposed approach include:

- a. **Access** - a national festival in our own city, bringing the country's best and brightest work to the Wellington stage, and networking, workshop and performance opportunities at low/no cost to Wellington participants.
- b. **Value for money** - WIT gets the best 'bang for buck' for its investment in NZIF. If approached by NZIF for grant or sponsorship of the Festival, WIT can be clear about what return it would like on that investment (whether financial or non-financial). It will not need to take an 'all risk and no reward' strategy to keep the Festival afloat.
- c. **Focus on WIT core business** - Without the running of the NZIF to worry about, WIT will be able to devote that time to its core business - delivering on its objectives as outlined in the Constitution.
- d. **Clear roles and responsibility** - the roles and responsibilities of WIT and NZIF will be clearly defined, leading to efficient and effective decision making and minimising the tension experienced by NZIF management and WIT committees in years gone by.
- e. **Good governance** - knowledge that responsible governance is in place that protects the festival and maximises the chance it is sustainable event years into the future (without it being a burden/distraction from WIT's core business).

16. For WIT, the challenges of the proposed approach include:

- a. ??

Governance options

17. Research is being done as to what form the organisation governing NZIF could take, and is likely to be either an incorporated society or a charitable trust depending on legal advice and assessment of best

fit with NZIF's objectives. A proposal will be made at the NZIF 2013 Special Meeting for endorsement by the NZIF constituents. If required, elections or ratifications to Board and Trust roles will occur at this meeting.

18. The current management team is keen to remain in place for the foreseeable future ensuring continuity of project delivery.

Recommendation

19. That Wellington Improvisation Troupe (WIT) endorses the proposed spin-off of New Zealand Improvisation Festival (NZIF) to become an independent project from 2014, the governance of which will be determined at a Special Meeting to be held with NZIF constituents during NZIF 2013.

Endorsed / Not endorsed

[signed]

Proposed by Jennifer O'Sullivan and Christine Brooks
 NZIF 2013 Management Team and WIT members

[signed]

Proposal endorsed by 2012/13 WIT Committee

Appendix 1: WIT and NZIF objectives, core business and constituents

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>WIT objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote, develop and foster the performance of improvised theatre and comedy in the Wellington region. 2. To teach the skills of improvised theatre and comedy through workshops, classes and any other means to members and to the wider Wellington community. 3. To encourage the having of fun and the not taking of oneself too seriously. | <p>NZIF objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audience Development Increase public awareness of the participating companies and grow audience numbers, and ensure that audience is aware of the varying forms of improvised theatre beyond Theatresports and Whose Line Is It Anyway; Increasing industry awareness of the artform 2. Education Increase public participation in improvised theatre in Wellington; improve practitioners' work through providing opportunities for masterclass training with elite level improvisors from NZ and the world, and opportunities to perform with improvisors from other troupes through jam sessions and ensemble performances 3. Participation in a global improvisation network Participating companies gain a wider perspective of their work's national and global context, helping them strive to produce high quality, innovative work for New Zealand audiences; Earn recognition of the festival, our city and New Zealand work; Solidify Wellington's image as the country's Cultural Capital in the minds of New Zealanders and international guests alike; Ensure the work of New Zealand artists is valued and recognised internationally |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>WIT core business</p> <p>Teaching - Tuesday workshops, Level 1 and 2 courses, regular trainers from overseas/nationally</p> <p>Performance - performance opportunities for members during festivals and regular seasons at venues around Wellington</p> <p>Development - of WIT's audience, brand, members and skill-set</p> | <p>NZIF Core business</p> <p>Production and marketing of an annual festival that supports the drivers above.</p> |
| <p>Who does WIT serve?</p> <p>The WIT membership</p> | <p>Who does NZIF serve?</p> <p>The NZ improv community (including but not limited to WIT)</p> |

Appendix 2

Balance Sheet including profit and loss

Balance Sheet at 30-Jun-13

| Assets | | | | Liabilities and Capital | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Liquid Assets (Kiwibank) | | \$32,163.71 | | Liabilities | | |
| Transaction Account | \$400.94 | | | Accounts Payable | \$0.00 | |
| Callable Reserve Account | \$4,407.47 | | | Pending reimbursement | \$0.00 | |
| Notice Saver 32 Day | \$11,561.24 | | | Unpresented cheques | \$0.00 | |
| Notice Saver 90 Day | \$15,794.06 | | | Withholding tax | \$0.00 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Investments | | \$5,000.00 | | Capital | | \$37,878.71 |
| NZIF 2013 Seed Funding | \$5,000.00 | | | Equity | \$293.25 | |
| | | | | Retained Earnings | \$37,585.46 | |
| All Other Assets | | \$715.00 | | | | |
| Other Assets | \$765.00 | | | | | |
| Prepaid license fees | \$0.00 | | | | | |
| Bonds, floats and so on | (\$50.00) | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Imbalance-NZD | | \$0.00 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Total Assets | | <u>\$37,878.71</u> | | Total Liabilities & Equity | | <u>\$37,878.71</u> |

Appendix 3

Resolution moved by Nicky Hill

Resolution on 'WIT10' - a Review of WIT on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the Wellington Improvisation Troupe Inc

pp 1 Recalling the Constitution and the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Improvisation Troupe (WIT) in 2003, which created WIT ('the Organisation'), and noting with excitement that this is the first resolution put before WIT, with more and more cosponsors every day,

pp 2 Expressing profound gratitude for all the members of WIT who have since directed, trained, produced, administrated or assisted in any way to further the objects of WIT over the past ten years, including Keith Johnstone, while affirming the dignity and worth of every single member of WIT,

pp 3 Acknowledging the evolution of WIT and the growth of membership from 15 members to over 100 members, and the diversity of its membership, and lessons learned over the evolution of WIT, while being conscious of the risk of 'taking oneself too seriously' contrary to object 3 of the Constitution,

We, the members of WIT,

1 Declare the Year of WIT, which may also be referred to as WIT10, as an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the future operation of WIT, bearing in mind the success of the Organisation and potential for continued joy and growth,

2 Request a process of consultation and review to ensure that Constitution and operation of the Organisation are sustainable and fit for purpose for the next ten years, including by consideration of the following issues previously raised by members and recommendations for future action:

- a) Committee composition and roles and length of membership
- b) Management capacity including through payment for management services
- c) Improv capacity and ways to sustain directors, trainers and producers
- d) Clarification of WIT core activities and WIT sponsored activities
- e) Identification of major needs of members and any major gaps in meeting them
- f) The end of access to current training and performance venues
- g) WIT's role in a changing improv scene, not excluding pillow fights with Amy Williamson
- h) Our goals including whether having a theatre is realistic or achievable
- i) Steven Youngblood

3 Decide that the Coordinator, bound by the principle of pithy communication, should oversee this review and may co-opt assistance as required to undertake the review which should be completed speedily with decisions taken as possible and within the year and no later than the AGM 2014, and which might include but not be limited by a performance of Kumbaya led by Christine Brooks.

See over for cosponsorship sheet.

COSPONSORSHIP SHEET

Cosponsors

- 1 Nicola Hill
- 2 Chris House
- 3 Merrilee McCoy

- 4 Steven Youngblood
- 5 Pete Hodgson
- 6 Russ Drewry
- 7 Christine Brooks
- 8 Brenton Hodgson*
- 9 Jennifer O'Sullivan's hat
- 10 Amy Williamson
- 11
- (awaiting 100 signatures)

Abstaining

Geoffrey Simmons

Implacably Opposed

Brenton Hodgson*

Civil Society Supporters

Bertram Russell

Chuck Norris

*Coordinator has two votes