

# NZ ACTORS' EQUITY

## DISCUSSION DOCUMENT: "Casting Guidelines NZ"

26 February 2010

Dear Members,

The National Performers' Committee offers the following comments on the document "Casting Guidelines NZ", presented to us and written by casting directors. We'd like to know your views on the document. Have your say and send us your comments.

Your National Performers' Committee

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Ward-Lealand  
President  
New Zealand Equity

Committee members; Rodney Bane, Phil Darkins, Charlie McDermott, Russell Pickering, Cameron Rhodes, Jeff Szusterman, Richard Thompson, Leisha Ward Knox and Tandi Wright.

### "Casting Guidelines NZ"

Refer: "GUIDELINES PART A – PREPARATION FOR AUDITIONS"

1.

"Advance Notice of Audition":

(iii) Strike. This is a matter between performer and agent.

"Scripts & Other Relevant Character/Role Information":

(ii) Strike “when and where possible”. A performer should be informed of the size of the role.

(iii) Strike. This is a matter between performer and agent.

(iv) Strike. This is firstly a matter between the performer and her or his agent, and secondly, it is unnecessary to explain professional practice to a professional performer, who is fully aware of the consequences of inadequately preparing for an audition.

4.

“Availability for Shoot Dates and Shoot Location”:

(ii) Strike. This is a matter between agent and performer.

(iii) Strike. This is a given.

(iv) Amend for clarity’s sake to include, “*for the nominated shoot*”, that is: “Any known availability issues *for the nominated shoot* dates must be... .”

Refer: **“GUIDELINES PART B – THE AUDITION”**

5.

“Privacy during the Audition”:

Add, “Where the audition is not to be held in private, the performer is to be notified at least at the time of the booking of the audition.”

6.

“Professional Actor as Reader”:

Add, “The casting agent will advise the performer’s agent, at least at the time of the booking of the audition, if a reader is not to be present, and in such a case the performer may bring a reader to the audition.”

7.

“Direction/Treatment of the Script”:

Amend to, “The performer will have an opportunity during the audition to discuss the role for which s/he is auditioning with the *director, or where the director is not involved in the audition process the key creative principal responsible for casting.*”

8.

“Identification on Tape”:

Amend to, “The performer will not be required to identify themselves on tape at anytime either before, during or after the audition. The performer and their agent may be identified by graphic and/or voice over by a third party.”

This amendment addresses an issue of respect; a professional performer should not have to identify themselves. Also, if the audition is for an accented role, a first-person identification throws a performer’s preparation.

9.

“Actor Provided Auditions”:

(ii) Strike, “It is at the casting director’s discretion as to whether they will accept APAs for any given brief.” This is redundant given that in the preceding (i) the document already states “...the actor *may* have the opportunity to provide...an audition on a format specified by the casting director... .”

(iii) Amend to, “*Should the performer be cast in the role, whether the performer is considered to be resident in the city specified in the casting brief is a matter for negotiation between the producer and the performer’s agent.*”

10.

(iii) Add, “where relevant to the role” and “only in the case of TVCs” and “information is disclosed strictly on the basis that it is treated with the utmost confidentiality”.

11.

“Notification of Results”:

(ii) Strike, “This hold excludes the possibility of the performer being able to contract for any other conflicting role etc etc... .”

(iii) – (vi) Strike. A hold is a courtesy; it is not legally binding.

Refer: **“PART C – FEES AND NEGOTIATIONS”**

16.

Amend to, “*or proposed contract*”, that is, “Where the casting director is involved in negotiating the performer’s contract they shall ensure that the agent is supplied with a copy of the relevant producer’s contract, *or proposed contract.*”

17.

Add, “*or the usage of the production is changed, or any other significant change*”, that is “...and this includes situations where the scripts provided didn’t accurately outline the size or significance of the performer’s role, *or the usage of the production is changed, or any other significant change*”.

Refer: “**PART D – OPERATING WITHIN THE BILL OF RIGHTS ACT 1990 & THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1993**”

18.

Add, “Performers will not be asked to disclose information at the time of casting which could be grounds for discrimination, such as, date of birth.”