



real2reel



Top: An Olegas Truchanas photograph of his children at Lake Pedder, Tasmania in 1968.

Bottom: The Peter Dombrovskis photograph of Rock Island Bend that spearheaded the media campaign to save the Franklin River from damming.

A tribute to wildness

This year marks both the start of Tasmanian bicentennial celebrations and the 20th anniversary of the saving of the Franklin River. It also sees the completion of a new Film Australia documentary, *Wildness*, which examines the legacy of two of Australia's greatest wilderness photographers.

The work of Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis is synonymous with campaigns to protect Tasmania's natural heritage. The two men shared many things, including a bond that was more like that of father and son. Both migrated from Baltic Europe to Tasmania and died in the wilderness, doing what they loved. Both believed that if people could see the beauty of Australia's wild places, they may be moved to save them.

The images Olegas and Peter left behind are extraordinary. Many are featured in *Wildness* along with archival footage of the photographers' trips into the wilderness and stunning scenes of the landscape they helped to save.

The documentary also includes interviews with their widows and colleagues, while figures such as Greens Senator Bob Brown and writer Richard Flanagan talk about the contribution of their work to Tasmania and the conservation movement.

This year, Peter Dombrovskis was also formally recognised by his peers when he became the first Australian inaugurated into the International Photographers Hall of Fame in the United States.

Made in association with Big and Little Films and developed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission, *Wildness* was produced with the assistance of Screen Tasmania, Film Victoria and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The one-hour program, which will screen on ABC-TV, was written and directed by Scott Millwood and produced by Michael McMahon with Franco di Chiera as executive producer.

Management moves

Film Australia has appointed Penny Robins as Executive Producer, joining EP Mark Hamlyn in the company's Sydney office.

She will fill a position created by the move of Anna Grieve from NSW to Victoria to head Film Australia's Melbourne office. Current Melbourne Executive Producer, Franco di Chiera, leaves the company in April to live overseas for a year and pursue his own projects.

Penny Robins is known for producing documentaries such as *Paying for the Past*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Australian Eye* and *The Coolbaroo Club*. She was documentary division manager and executive producer at Film Victoria from 1991 to 1993 and manager of the women's program at the Australian Film Commission in the late 1980s.

Film Australia CEO Sharon Connolly said; "I'm delighted that the company is to benefit from the diversity of Penny's experience, as well as from her proven ability to realise strong documentaries which deal with important and sometimes difficult subjects."

"Film Australia is also very grateful to Franco di Chiera for his outstanding contribution to many notable National Interest Program documentaries he has executive produced in almost five years with the company. Franco has made an important contribution to the Victorian documentary community, with which he has worked closely in establishing and developing Film Australia activities in that state. Anna Grieve's return to Melbourne will ensure that Film Australia continues that work."

In other senior management moves, Ann Browne joins Film Australia as Director, Corporate Services, heading a unit comprising the Finance, Information Technology, Information Management, Human Resources and Administration areas of the company. Ann has significant senior management experience in the public and not-for-profit sectors, having worked for The Benevolent Society, Variety Club and NZ Children and Young Person Service.

David Walsh has been appointed to the newly created position of Financial Controller. He has extensive auditing, accounting and financial management experience and has worked for the Grundy Organisation and with News Corporation, Channel Seven and the Ten Network.

Paula Bray has recently joined the Film Australia Library as Stills Archivist, and Brigid Phelan has returned from maternity leave to her position as Festival and Events Co-ordinator.

New Executive Producer Penny Robins



In production

Australian Biography Online

Producer Ron Saunders, website director Thomas Ashelford and their production team are preparing material from seven episodes of *Australian Biography* for the launch of a new website in 2004. Hosted by the National Library of Australia, the site will provide video and full transcripts of interviews with composer Peter Sculthorpe, former prime minister Malcolm Fraser, physicist Sir Marcus Oliphant, Olympic athlete Shirley Strickland de la Hunty, economist HG "Nugget" Coombs, civil rights activist Faith Bandler and Northern Territory pioneer Lily Ah Toy, with further interviews to be added later.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Capitalist Drive

Writer/director/producer Barbara Chobocky and co-writer/DOP/editor Jeff Bruer have returned to Prague for a second shoot for this one-hour documentary for ABC-TV. The program will provide a personal account of post-war Czech and Australian history. Damien Parer is co-producer.

Executive Producers: Anna Grieve and Penny Robins

Colour of War—The Anzacs

Using only colour footage, this three-part series will tell the story of Australia and New Zealand at war in a way never seen before. Over 100 hours of material has been sourced from official archives and private collections locally and in the UK, the USA, Germany, Japan and Russia—much of it has never been seen on television anywhere. Paul Rudd is producing the series with Anita Sheehan and directing with Ben Ulm. Carryl Irik and Philippa Rowlands are editing. Produced in association with TWI, the Nine Network, Television New Zealand, NZ On Air, the New Zealand Department of Defence and ScreenSound Australia, it will be broadcast nationally on Channel Nine.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Last Great Amateurs

This one-hour program from director Sue Thomson for ABC-TV follows the women of the Melbourne Phoenix Netball Club as they struggle to survive the demands of elite-level amateur sport. Filming will continue until the end of the netball season in September. Richard Keddie is producing with Andrew Wiseman and writing with Angela Buckingham.

Executive Producers: Franco di Chiera and Anna Grieve

The Safe House

Production has recently commenced on a half-hour program from award-winning animator Lee Whitmore. Based on her own experience as a young girl when characters from a real-life spy-drama moved in next door, *The Safe House* provides an intriguing view of one of the most unsettling episodes in Australian history—the Petrov Affair.

Denise Haslem is producing.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

In post-production

Australian Biography Series 9

Three episodes of this seven-part series have been completed, featuring former National Gallery director Betty Churcher, author Thomas Keneally and athlete/South Australian Governor Marjorie Jackson-Nelson. Editing is well underway on a further four, featuring actor Charles "Bud" Tingwell, art historian and critic Bernard Smith, Aboriginal health worker Joan Winch and environmentalist Bill Mollison. Robin Hughes has again conducted the interviews with Rod Freedman producing and directing.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Land of the Morning Star

Stanley Hawes Award winner Stewart Young (see next page) is currently editing this one-hour documentary at Film Australia. Made with the assistance of the ABC, the program will reveal the little-known story of West Papua. Mark Worth is writer/director and Janet Bell is producing.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Law and Order

In what is shaping up to be a challenging film about contemporary Aboriginal Australia, *Law and Order* will focus on how one Indigenous community is dealing with the complex issues that it faces. Producer/editor Denise Haslem, co-producer Rose Hesp and director Trevor Graham have just completed further filming in the Northern Territory. The one-hour documentary is being produced with the assistance of the ABC.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Silent Storm

Acclaimed actor Billie Brown plays maverick CSIRO scientist Hedley Marston in this one-hour documentary. Written and directed by Peter Butt, who is co-producing with Rob McAuley, the program looks into the fallout from British atomic tests in Australia. It is being produced in association with SBS Independent.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Under One Roof

The last two episodes of this three-part series, which takes a revealing look at modern family life, are nearing completion. Mum, dad and five kids under ten feature in *The Puckeridge Family*, directed by Ray Argall. A single mother and her grown daughters feature in *The Kapsalides Family*, directed by Kay Pavlou. Rosemary Blight is producing the series for SBS Independent.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Recent acquisition

Film Australia has recently acquired the independently produced documentary *The Mascot* for distribution. Written and produced by Mark Kurzem and director Lina Caneva, this one-hour program tells the extraordinary story of an old man's search for his true identity and how a Jewish orphan became a poster boy for the Nazi ideal.



The Mascot



Australian Biography Series 9: Thomas Keneally

Editing rooms abuzz

Film Australia has refurbished two of its edit suites and expanded its editing facilities with the addition of new Avid systems.

Anzacs—The Colour of War is currently in the refurbished suites on two Avid Offline Media Composer systems. Each system has been outfitted with SAN 450Gb RAID storage to deal with the large amount of archival footage for this series. The new Offline Media Composer allows a greater variety of inputs, including SDI from Digital Betacam.

Law and Order is also at Film Australia Studios using the second new system, an Avid DV Xpress. The makers of this one-hour documentary (see previous column) initially edited with the system on location. This allowed for both subtitling with local translators and instant feedback from the community in which they were filming. It also provided large-capacity hard drive storage for well over 140 hours of rushes.

The Avid DV Xpress will serve as a location edit suite for future productions with the ability to come back in house as needed.

These new facilities are available to both Film Australia and independent productions.

Awards and screenings

Ted's Evolution has been selected to compete for a Banff Rockie Award in the Popular Science and Natural History category, to be announced on 9 June.

The Trouble with Merle and *In the Realm of the Hackers* have been shortlisted for a scriptwriting award in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, announced on 19 May.

The Trouble with Merle is currently featured in an exhibition at State Records NSW. The documentary was shown recently at the Blue Mountains Short Film Festival and will screen at the Reel McCoy Film Group in May.

In March, the Australian Screen Directors Association in conjunction with Melbourne Documentary Group and Nova Dose presented a preview screening of *In the Realm of Hackers* to a full house at Cinema Nova.

Welcome to the Waks Family was awarded second place in the Documentary Screen Awards of the Byron All Screen Celebration Film Festival (BASC). The documentary will have its international premiere at the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival in May and has been invited to screen at the prestigious San Francisco Jewish Film Festival in July.

Muddy Waters—Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef and *Film Australia's Outback* DVD screened at the Sustainable Living Festival held at Federation Square in Melbourne.

To celebrate SBS Melbourne's relocation to Federation Square, the Centre for the Moving Image programmed a selection of innovative works commissioned by SBS Independent, including the Film Australia documentary *Sadness*.

Sadness screened at the Taipei Film Festival, along with *China Dolls*, as part of a Tony Ayres retrospective. *After Hours*, directed by Jane Campion for Film Australia in 1984, was also screened.

A more recent classic, 1997's *Mabo—Life of an Island Man*, screened at Ditshwanelo, the Botswana Human Rights Film Festival.

Rosa's Story and *Lu Olo's Story* from the series *East Timor—Birth of a Nation* and *Explosive Devices* and *The Price of Freedom* from the series *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women* screened at the Goethe-Institute Singapore as part of the Singapore Film Festival Fringe program in April. *Rosa's Story* also screened at DocAviv, the Tel-Aviv International Documentary Festival.

Doco Conference

Film Australia was a major sponsor of the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) held from 17 to 20 February 2003. Over 800 delegates attended the event in Byron Bay, with sessions focused on industry, policy, market and cultural issues. Keynote speakers included German filmmaker Wim Wenders, Brian Winston (author of *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries*) from the UK and Indigenous Australian filmmaker, Lester Bostock. Film Australia CEO, Sharon Connolly joined a discussion panel about the state of documentary in Australia,

Executive Producers Anna Grieve and Mark Hamlyn participated in the DocuMart, and Director, Sales Augustus Dulgaro in a discussion about documentary distribution.

Stanley Hawes Award

Film Australia presented editor Stewart Young with the fourth Stanley Hawes Award at the AIDC in recognition of his on-going contribution to the industry. During a career of more than 30 years, he has edited the Oscar-nominated films *Frontline*, *Chile Hasta Cuando* and *First Contact* and won AFI Awards for the documentaries *Nicaragua No Pasaran*, *Rocking the Foundations* and *Year of the Dogs*.

The biennial \$5000 award, established by Film Australia, honours legendary Australian documentary producer and director Stanley Hawes who, from 1946 until 1969, was the first Producer-in-Chief of the Australian National Film Board, later to become Film Australia. Past recipients of the award are Graham Chase (1997), John Heyer (1999) and Pat Fiske (2001).

New partnership with National Film Board of Canada

Film Australia is to enter into a partnership agreement with the National Film Board of Canada, Canada's publicly funded film and television production agency.

Film Australia and the National Film Board of Canada have agreed on a framework partnership agreement, announced at MIPTV, that will strengthen collaboration between the two organisations. The partnership will include research and development, co-productions, application of new technologies to the management and distribution of audiovisual archives, and professional exchanges and development.

"Film Australia is delighted to enter into this partnership with the National Film Board of Canada. Our two organisations have much common history and many common interests, which will be furthered by the signing of this agreement. Of course, it promises to benefit not just these two institutions, but also filmmakers in both our countries, and audiences around the world," said Film Australia CEO, Sharon Connolly.

MIPTV and MIPDOC a success for Film Australia

Film Australia sold more than 30 hours of programming at MIPTV in March and screened a record number of documentaries in MIPDOC, which precedes the Cannes market.

"Film Australia has an international reputation for quality documentaries, which has been further enhanced by our recent marketing efforts," says Sales Director Augustus Dulgaro. "MIPTV and MIPDOC were incredibly successful for Film Australia this year because of our diverse slate of

programming and a move in the international marketplace back to strong social documentaries."

During the past three months, Film Australia has licensed *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women* to Free Speech Television and *Bush Mechanics—The Series* to WorldlinkTV in the US, while in Canada, *The Trouble with Merle* has been licensed to Discovery and *Slow Food Revolution* to CBC.

The Mascot and two episodes of *Fearless* have been licensed to VPRO in the Netherlands, *Sadness* and *Slow Food Revolution* to YLE in Finland, and *Koalas—The Bare Facts* has been licensed to Motion Pictures for Spain, Portugal and Andorra.

HRT3 in Greece has taken *Fearless*, *In The Realm of Hackers*, *Surviving Shepherd's Pie*, *Plumpton High Babies*, *Bush Mechanics*, *Selling Australia: The Brand* and *Under One Roof: The Chakos Family*.

In Ireland, *Troubled Waters* and *Muddy Waters—Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef* have been licensed to TG4, and *Visions of Yankaililla* and *Ten Million Wildcats* to RTE.

In Israel, *Auto Stories* and *Against the Odds* have been licensed to Ananay Communications.

In Asia, *Myths of Childhood*, *Return to Sandakan* and *Family* have been licensed to LIC International, *A Million Acres a Year* and *Muddy Waters* to China Hongjua, and *Fearless* to PTS in Taiwan.

Teachers of the World has been licensed to Channel 31 in the United Arab Emirates through our agent DARO, while *After the Warming* has been licensed to Rose Entertainment for South America.

In Australia, *Breathing Space*, *Mr Strehlow's Films*, *My Father My Country*, *Out of the Shadows*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture* and *Troubled Waters* have been licensed to Odyssey for pay television.

On the web

Film Australia's website now has a separate search function specifically for broadcasters and subdistributors. Called **Broadcast Sales**, this search restricts results to titles in the current international catalogue, uses categories relevant to international sales rather than the local education market, doesn't display Australian screening details or teachers information and allows users to add titles to the online enquiry mechanism. Broadcasters and subdistributors have also been added as a special category to the online membership, allowing Film Australia's international sales team to send email updates targeted specifically to this group.

Other website updates include the addition of a **transcript** to our Industry Resources section from the Footage Industry Group Meeting held on 27 February regarding culture, ethics and the licensing of sensitive footage.

New **catalogues** are also available for download on the Publications page in the About Us section. Or contact Film Australia Sales for printed copies.

Visit www.filmaust.com.au



The anarchic world of Bruce Petty's Human Contraptions

Australia's only Academy Award winner for animation, Bruce Petty, is best known as one of the country's most influential political cartoonists. In a new ten-part series made under the Film Australia National Interest Program, he takes a satirical look at the "contraptions" that shape our lives.

Education, sex, finance, globalism, art, media, medicine, law, government and even the brain are transformed by Petty into evolving machines. Beginning with a simple concept, he takes us on an anarchic journey through history as each apparatus builds to its complex contemporary form. In the wry, ironic style that is his hallmark, Petty reveals these to be contraptions of a very human kind—imperfect, sometimes unpredictable and always subject to change.

Here, he gives his spin on his chaotic creation, *Human Contraptions*:

"The series is a playful exercise in caricature—specifically, political cartooning—for television. The challenge was to imagine what could be said about such massive subjects in five minutes of animation.

I wanted it to be a cheerful reminder that, as our cars, videos and toasters get smarter and cheaper; the institutions we really need are getting more expensive and unreliable, and are starting to rattle.

The series offered a chance to check the workings of these 'contraptions'. However, this is not just a cynical take on society's major organisations. There is also an acknowledgment of the human ingenuity, brilliance and good intentions behind their construction.

Distilling such complex and lofty subject matter had a significant impact on how we made this series. Constant revision of the script and image interaction was necessary to refine the ideas and condense the timing.

The witty narration spoken by Andrew Denton suggests double-meanings while sound effects and music are also important ironic components. Award-winning composer Alan John created musical signatures for each contraption in the series. His challenge was to devise a musical reference for imagined constructions of abstract notions. Alan's solution for *Education*, for example, was children's sing-song versions of tables while *Globalism* had a stirring national anthem theme.

Visually, I needed to give each of the ten contraptions an individual style. The character of the image was mainly determined by a drawing style that could begin simply and then increase in complexity. I drew the production entirely in Flash, which is an extremely flexible software program.

In a production of this length there are 90,000 frames so another determining factor is drawing speed. The animation style is loose, with precision and smooth movement traded for a kind of dynamic and graphic energy.

My son, Sam Petty, then edited and manipulated the animation and archival images using a Media 100 computer package. These software packages don't require high-end hardware, so they enable timely comment on current issues.

Whatever the technology, the main issue is to get the graphic, animation and production techniques as intuitive as possible to allow concentration on the storytelling, which, for me, will always be the core of my work."

Petty's other work for Film Australia includes *Megalomedia*, *The Movers* and *The Magic Arts* as well as the Oscar-winning *Leisure*.

His latest series is also attracting critical attention. It has been invited to screen at this year's Melbourne International Film Festival and the *Sex* episode has been selected for the international showcase at Cartoons on the Bay in Italy and for competition in Annecy in France (which will also screen *Leisure*). The *Education*, *Global*, *Brain*, *Law* and *Government* episodes were screened at the inaugural Adelaide International Film Festival in March, introduced by Petty himself.

Human Contraptions was produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation with Deborah Szapiro as producer and Stefan Moore and Anna Grieve as executive producers. It will screen on ABC-TV later this year.



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