



real2reel



Australian Biography to go online

Australian Biography is to go online. A new website was announced by Senator Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts and Sport at the launch of the eighth series in the ongoing *Australian Biography* project at the National Library of Australia in June.

There are now more than 50 episodes in the series, which profiles individuals who have had major impacts on Australian life.

Attending the launch were director/producer Robin Hughes (pictured top left) with interview subjects from Series Eight (left to right) Jack Munday, Barbara Holborow and Diane Cilento.

Also photographed at the event were (bottom left to right) Film Australia Executive Producer Mark Hamlyn, Film Australia CEO Sharon Connolly, Minister for the Arts and Sport Senator Kemp, Film Australia Chairman Rob Fisher and Board member Dr John Hirst.

For more information about the website project and the latest series, see *In Production* on page 2.

Indigenous voices

Film Australia's unique collection of film, video, stills and sound material includes an invaluable record of life in indigenous communities of Australia, Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific, from the early 20th century until the present.

In October, the company will publish a new Indigenous Studies catalogue featuring a selection of over 170 programs, ranging from classics such as *The Yirrkala Film Project* and *The Human Face of the Pacific* to recent releases such as *Mabo—The Native Title Revolution*, *Bush Mechanics—The Series* and *Black Chicks Talking*.

The films are wide-ranging, covering subjects from law and land rights to health and aspects of identity.

"Film and television often provide the first impression most Australians get about Aboriginal culture—impressions that will underpin their sense of understanding of what it means to be Aboriginal in Australian society," observes Dr Michael Dodson, Chairperson of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, in the catalogue's foreword.

"Such films as *Mabo—Life of an Island Man* have played a significant role in the nation's understanding of reconciliation and what it means to Indigenous Australians."

"Aboriginal people, who, in the past were overwhelmingly the subjects of films, have now gained a voice and are speaking back."

One of the latest Film Australia productions is *Everyday Brave*, a series designed not only to profile and celebrate Indigenous Australian achievers but also to offer production opportunities and skills development to Indigenous filmmakers. The six-part series was written and directed by emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander filmmakers and made in conjunction with two Indigenous production companies.

For Who I Am, written and directed by Danielle Maclean, focuses on Bonita Mabo, widow of Eddie Mabo, and her campaign to gain recognition for Australia's South Sea Islander people. *Mistake Creek*, directed by Allan Collins and written by Mitch Torres, follows Steven Craig who, with his wife Jo-Anne, manages a highly successful cattle station for its traditional owners. Both episodes were produced by Priscilla Collins in association with CAAMA Productions.

Ray Cotti was born black but brought up white; his search for identity is the subject of *Stranger in My Skin*, written and directed by Darlene Johnson. *Jetja Nai Medical Mob*, written and directed by Catriona McKenzie, tells the story of Naomi Mayers, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Medical Service in Sydney's Redfern, who is highly respected in Australia and overseas for her expertise and commitment to Aboriginal health. Written and directed by Donna Ives, *Media Nomads* features two brothers, Bill and Mick Thaiday, who overcame alcoholism to play a key role in developing Aboriginal radio networks in remote areas. And *Saltwater Bluesman* from writer/director Mitch Torres and producer Jeff Bruer, celebrates influential blues musician "Uncle Kiddo" Taylor. These four episodes were produced by series producer Rod Freedman in association with Macumba Media Enterprises.

The series was produced with the support and assistance of ScreenWest, the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, the National Council for the Centenary of Federation and the Australia Council and in association with the NSW Film and Television Office, Pacific Film and Television Commission and SBS Independent.

Everyday Brave was awarded the Tudawali Award for best television series at the Message Sticks Festival last May and the *Mistake Creek* episode won the Gold Award for documentaries in the cinema and television category at the Australian Cinematographers Society Awards for South Australia and Western Australia.

The series will screen on SBS-TV from Friday 18 October 2002 at 7.30pm.

Behind the *Everyday Brave* series: writer/directors Catriona McKenzie, Donna Ives and Mitch Torres





Filming *Muddy Waters*

History initiative

In July, Film Australia, ScreenWest and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation announced a joint development fund for West Australian producers for documentary series that focus on Australian history. Up to three development investments are available to develop outlines, research, development and notional production plans. It is hoped that one Australian history series will commence production in the 2002–2003 financial year. Interested producers should contact a Film Australia executive producer or ScreenWest.

In pre-production

The Capitalist Drive

Filmmaker Barbara Chobocky turns the camera on her own extended family in this very personal film about the contemporary history of the Czech Republic and Australia. The one-hour program is being made with the assistance of ABC-TV, with Damien Parer co-producing.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Land of the Morning Star

This one-hour program for ABC-TV will uncover the rich and turbulent history of West Papua. Writer/director Mark Worth and producer Janet Bell will begin filming in November.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Under One Roof: The Puckeridge Family

Pre-production has begun on the second episode in this series for SBS-TV which looks at the lives of contemporary Australian families. The Puckeridge family consists of mum, dad and five very active kids aged 2 to 10 who, from the outside, seem to be living the Aussie dream. Ray Argall will direct this episode with Rosemary Blight producing.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

In production

Australian Biography Series 9

Producer/director Rod Freedman and writer/interviewer Robin Hughes have filmed intensive three-day interviews with former National Art Gallery director, Betty Churcher and author, Thomas Keneally for the ninth series of *Australian Biography*, which charts the lives of some of the most extraordinary Australians of our times.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Australian Biography Online

Production has commenced on a new website, hosted by the National Library of Australia, that will bring online the valuable biographical material collected for the *Australian Biography* project. Full transcripts of interviews will be available on the internet along with video extracts and study notes.

The online project's producer is Ron Saunders; website director is Thomas Ashelford.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Law and Order

Producers Denise Haslem and Rose Hesp and director Trevor Graham are filming in Yirrkala in northeast Arnhem Land until November. Their one-hour documentary for ABC-TV will look at how Australia's legal system has failed to deal with the complexities of crime and social issues in Indigenous communities.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Slow Food

Principal photography is well underway for this one-hour program exploring the international eco-gastronomic movement known as Slow Food. The team has filmed celebrity chef Stephanie Alexander teaching school kids about the delights of food and visited tv chef Stefano di Pieri on the Murray River as part of a three-country shoot.

Produced in association with CM Film Productions and SBS Independent with the assistance of ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, the program was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria. Carmelo Musca is producer, Carlo Buralli is director and Gabriella Pignatelli is the writer.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Ted's Evolution

Ted Steele is an Australian scientist who could change the way we view evolution. He is the subject of a new one-hour documentary from director Lou Petho, co-produced with David Noakes and co-written with Geoffrey Burchfield. The team is currently working with award-winning Queensland company Digital Dimensions on animation sequences that will explain some of the concepts at the centre of Ted's work. Made in association with Stoney Creek Productions, the program was developed with the assistance of the AFC and produced with the assistance of the ABC.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Wildness

This one-hour documentary examines the legacy of two of Australia's greatest wilderness photographers, Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis. The first stage of principal photography has been completed in the stunning Tasmanian wilderness that the two men helped to save. Produced by Michael McMahon and written and directed by Scott Millwood, the program was developed with the assistance of the AFC and is being produced with Big and Little Films. It is being produced with the assistance of Film Victoria, Screen Tasmania and the ABC and is the first project in which Film Australia, Film Victoria and Screen Tasmania have co-invested.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

In post-production

Fearless—Stories from Asian Women

This four-part series examines the experiences of women from different cultures fighting for social justice. The first two episodes have been completed, featuring Philippine terrorist turned public broadcaster Doris Nuval (*Explosive Devices*) and Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin (*The Price of Freedom*). Episodes three and four are in the final stages of post-production. Made in association with Mask Productions and SBSI, the series has been produced and developed with the assistance of ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia. Samantha Kelley and Peter du Cane are producing with du Cane and Mathew Kelley directing.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Human Contraptions

Andrew Denton will narrate this series of ten five-minute animations from Oscar-winning animator Bruce Petty and producer Deborah Szapiro, which is being produced with the assistance of the ABC.

Executive Producers: Stefan Moore, Anna Grieve

Muddy Waters—Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef

Previously known as *Reef Doctors*, this one-hour program is in the final stages of post-production. Produced by Tony Wright and Stuart Menzies and co-produced and directed by Sally Ingleton, it looks at why parts of the reef are dying and what can be done to save it. Developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and the AFC, it is being produced in association with SBSI.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Plumpton High Babies

Producer Julian Russell and director Aviva Ziegler are completing the offline edit of their four-part series for ABC-TV, which follows a year in the lives of schoolgirl mothers.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Under One Roof: The Chakos Family

The Chakos family is a lively Greek-Australian extended family that has held together through tough times. Producer Rosemary Blight and director Kay Pavlou have completed the fine cut of the first one-hour episode in this series for SBS-TV.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve



At the inaugural meeting of the International Council for Diversity in Film & Television (ICDFT) at Banff: (l to r) Peter Flemington, consultant and member of the International Advisory Board; Franco di Chiera, Film Australia Executive Producer and Chair of the Advisory Board; Judy Earl, ICDFT Managing Director; and Paul de Silva, ICDFT Executive Director.

Promoting cultural diversity in film & tv

The International Council for Diversity in Film and Television (ICDFT) met for the first time at the Banff Television Festival in June. The aim of the council is to provide opportunities for broadcasters, development and production agencies, independent distributors and funding agencies to share experiences, expertise and resources in order to promote cultural diversity through high-quality film and television productions.

These kinds of productions often have difficulty attracting finance and presales to broadcasters due to their perceived lack of commercial appeal. The ICDFT hopes to provide a pipeline to potential international partners. It will not have an editorial role but rather bring together like-minded organisations.

Film Australia is a founding member of the ICDFT and its representative at Banff, executive producer Franco di Chiera, is Chair of the International Advisory Board.

The inaugural meeting of the council attracted over 100 people, including representatives from NFB, APTN, the Banff TV Foundation, the British Council, Channel 4, OPB, Alliance Atlantis and the National Film and Video Foundation of South Africa.

24/7 and The Crop at Film Australia Studios

Film Australia Studios are buzzing with two new productions based at the Lindfield studios and also shooting on site.

Twentyfourseven is a ground-breaking new drama series from the production company of Hal and Di McElroy, who have transformed the foyer of Film Australia's Roxy Theatre into the office set of a funky magazine. Every week viewers are able to interact directly with the series by voting on a choice of three storylines for the next episode, either via the website www.twentyfourseven.com.au or via SMS text. The show is written on Monday following the result of the audience vote, shot on Tuesday and screened nationally on Wednesday at 7.30pm.

Meanwhile, the feature film *The Crop* is shooting in the Film Australia sound stage. It is one of only a few local movies being filmed entirely in Australia this year.

Festivals & screenings

Four Film Australia productions will have their US premieres at the prestigious Hawaii International Film Festival in November: *The Trouble with Merle*, *Rosa's Story* from the series *East Timor—Birth of a Nation*, and *The Price of Freedom* and *Explosive Devices* from the series *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women*.

Film Australia documentaries will also feature in November at the Shanghai Documentary Film Festival as part of an Australian focus—an initiative of the Australia International Cultural Council and the Australian Film Commission. Of the seven documentaries selected for screening, five are Film Australia productions—*Cane Toads—An Unnatural History*, *Buried Country*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture*, *Rats in the Ranks* and *Facing the Music*—and another—*Emily's Eyes*—is distributed by the company. *Facing the Music* will open the program, with filmmaker Bob Connolly introducing his acclaimed feature.

After its premiere at the Sydney Film Festival in June where it was voted in the top 10 documentaries by the State Theatre audience, *The Trouble with Merle* has screened at the Wellington and Christchurch International Film Festivals. A special screening and panel discussion was held with the filmmakers at the State Theatre in Hobart, Tasmania on 25 August to discuss some of the issues the film raises and Tasmania's claim to be the birthplace of 1930s movie star, Merle Oberon.

Facing the Music continues to screen at festivals around the world, including the recent Jerusalem Film Festival (Israel) and Cinemanila International Film Festival (the Philippines). It will also compete in the documentary section of the Bangkok Film Festival (Thailand) in October.

In September, *Reunion*, *Sadness*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture* and *Gorgeous* screened at the Malaysian Video Awards—an event supported by the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur—and *The Diplomat* screened at the Incheon Human Rights Film Festival in South Korea.

Five AFI nominations for Rosa's Story

The *Rosa's Story* episode from the two-part series *East Timor—Birth of a Nation* has been nominated for five Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards. The nominations are for Best Documentary, Best Achievement in Direction in a Documentary, Best Achievement in Cinematography in a Non-Feature Film, Best Achievement in Editing in a Non-Feature Film and the Open Craft Award in a Non-Feature Film for Original Score. Winners will be announced later this year.

In other award news, *Australian Biography Series 8* has been nominated for the Audio/Visual History Prize at the NSW Premier's History Awards, to be announced on 4 October 2002.

Welcome to the Waks Family was a finalist in the Documentary (Broadcast) section of the recent Australian Writers' Guild (AWGIE) Awards. The film has been screening theatrically at Nova Cinemas in Melbourne, beginning with a "Meet the Filmmaker" session with writer/director/producer Barbara Chobocky on 4 September.

Ten Million Wildcats

It is estimated that there are now ten million feral cats in Australia and that each year they kill billions of native animals. With their remarkable survival skills, they are thriving in some of the country's harshest regions. Where did they come from? Why did they spread so quickly? And how much of a role have they really had in the destruction of the country's unique wildlife? Find out in *Ten Million Wildcats*, to be broadcast nationally on ABC-TV on Thursday 7 November at 10.00pm. The one-hour documentary was produced in association with Wild Visuals for Discovery Channel. It was recently awarded a Certificate for Creative Excellence in the Nature/Wildlife category at the US International Film and Video Festival. The program was produced under the Film Australia National Interest Program by Gary Steer and Tina Dalton-Hagege and directed by Steer and Alice Ford.



Recent acquisitions

Film Australia has recently acquired a number of independent productions for distribution. In *Black Chicks Talking*, performer and writer Leah Purcell talks with five dynamic Indigenous women—Rosanna Angus, Kathryn Hay, Deborah Mailman, Cilla Malone and Tammy Williams—about what it means to be Aboriginal in Australia today. Frank Rijavec's *A Million Acres A Year* is a devastating examination of the ecological disaster brought about by massive land clearance in Western Australia. *Two Thirds Sky* goes to the desert to explore the creative journeys of five contemporary artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, while *In Limbo* follows the story of an Australian-Vietnamese lawyer who is determined to see 2000 Vietnamese boat people stranded in the Philippines regain their lives, identities and homes.

The company has also acquired international rights for *Long Tan—The True Story* which it has distributed domestically since 1994. The film recounts the battle at Long Tan rubber plantation on 18 August 1966 where 108 young Australian and New Zealand soldiers overcame a Vietcong battalion of over 1500 men.

Sales highlights

Film Australia has licensed several titles to Discovery for broadcast, including *Admission Impossible* and *Shellshocked* for the UK, Europe and Africa, and *Auto Stories* for the UK. *Welcome to the Waks Family* has been licensed to DRTV in Denmark, *Risky Business* to RVU in the Netherlands and *The Diplomat* to Slovak TV in Slovakia. *Bush Mechanics—The Series* has been licensed to European Cable & Satellite and *Sadness* to DRS Family in Germany and France. *Billion Dollar Crop* has been relicensed to Multithematiques and *In the Desert We Have Written Our Names* has been licensed to specialty cable channel, Equidia.

In China, *East Timor—Birth of a Nation* has been licensed to Phoenix Satellite and *After the Warming* to Star Image Film & Media. *The Trouble with Merle* has been licensed to Hong Kong Century along with the older titles *Great National Parks of Australia*, *Koalas—The Bare Facts* and *Mystique of the Pearl*. *After the Warming*, *Catalyst*, *The Edge of the World* and *An Imaginary Life* have been licensed to TVIQ in Malaysia and Brunei and the recent acquisition title *Troubled Waters* has been licensed to Metropolis Television in Indonesia.

In Israel, another recent acquisition title *From Korea With Love* has been licensed to IETV, and *In the Realm of the Hackers* and *New Horizons* have been licensed to Open University Channel for non theatrical distribution.

In Canada, *Bush Mechanics—The Series* has been licensed to SCN and *Welcome to the Waks Family* to Canal Vie.

City of Dreams has been licensed by WTTW for broadcast in Chicago and American Public Television has licensed *Fortress Australia* for its network of channels.

Breaking Bows and Arrows has been licensed for a single run on EMTV in Papua New Guinea and *Bobtales* has been relicensed to SBS in Australia.

Australian retail rights have been licensed to ABC Enterprises for *Film Australia's Outback DVD* and *East Timor—Birth of a Nation*; to Screensound for the classic film *Mike & Stefani*; and to Umbrella Entertainment for a DVD of *Cane Toads*.

Melbourne office is on the move

From 21 October 2002, Film Australia's Melbourne office will be located at 170 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne. All other contact details remain the same (see below).

In brief

- Denise Haslem (*Mabo—Life of an Island Man*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture*) and Ray Thomas (*Facing the Music*, *Rats in the Ranks*, *Black Harvest*) were among a small group of editors honoured with ASE accreditation by the Australian Screen Editors Guild on 21 September. Both have made significant contributions to Film Australia productions and to the Australian film and television industry.

- On 25 June, John Hirst and Megan McMurchy were reappointed to the Film Australia Board for another three years.

- Judith Bowtell joined Film Australia in August as Executive Officer. Judith comes to the company from the Sydney Writers' Festival where she was Festival Administrator. She has previously worked in the area of corporate management, policy development, marketing and administration for such organisations as the Sidetrack Performance Group, the Olympic Coordination Authority, and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

- The revamped Film Australia website went live in July, with a new look and additional information about the company, programs, the Library and Film Australia Studios as well as simple and secure online ordering. You can register as an online member to receive regular email updates about Film Australia activities and programs. Visit www.filmaust.com.au and click on Membership at the bottom of the screen.

- The Film Australia Annual Report 2001–2002 is scheduled for tabling in Federal Parliament in October and will then be posted on the Film Australia website. If you would like to receive a printed copy, contact the Publications & Website Manager: phone 02 9413 8723, fax 02 9416 9401 or email web@filmaust.com.au

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