



# real2reel

## Film Australia's Educational Production Initiative

Film Australia's Educational Production Initiative (EPI) is up and running, with a slate of projects in development and production.

In January 2003 independent filmmaker Chris Warner joined Film Australia's Melbourne office in the newly created position of Education Producer, charged with devising, developing and producing programs for the educational market.

The EPI's main goal is to enhance educational institutions' access to heritage audiovisual records managed by Film Australia's Library. It does this through the re-packaging of Film Australia copyright material contained in the 4500 films and 150,000 still photographs held by the Library, including material produced under the National Interest Program.

"The EPI also creates opportunities for new and established documentary filmmakers to develop skills and gain experience in the production of educational programming for delivery via a diverse range of platforms," says Film Australia CEO Sharon Connolly.

Integral to the strategy is the development and production of a relatively small but focused slate of projects, primarily for DVD and online delivery, and specifically targeted to explore emerging trends within the educational media arena.

The EPI is expected to put at least ten projects into development or production over the two years from July 2003 to June 2005, with the first projects delivered under the initiative to be released in late 2004.

Three projects are already in production: *Australians at Work*, *Completely Gorgeous* and *Ceremony*.

*Australians at Work* is a large and ambitious website project intended for use in secondary schools. It presents short clips from 50 Film Australia films, together with background information, curriculum links and lesson plans. The clips explore a range of issues around work and the workplace, and the resource will be particularly useful in Studies of Society and Environment, English, history and politics. The project is being produced by Ron Saunders, with Nicola Woolmington as content director and Thomas Ashelford and Ingrid Spielman as website directors.

*Completely Gorgeous* is an updated website version of the highly popular *Totally Gorgeous* CD-ROM, which Film Australia made with Kaz Cooke in the mid 1990s. An hilarious and helpful look at body image and the pressures on both young women and young men to conform to unrealistic stereotypes, it features Kaz's unique cartoons and commentary, together with games and the 10-minute animation *Gorgeous*. Kaz is editing and updating her original text and designs, with Rob Wellington producing.



Produced by Denise Haslem and directed by Trevor Graham, *Ceremony* is a two-DVD set that will explore the law and religion of the Yolngu people of northeast Arnhem Land through ceremonies filmed by Film Australia in 1976, by acclaimed ethnographic filmmaker Ian Dunlop, and in 2002.

Other projects in development include another two-DVD set, produced and directed by John Hughes, which will allow users to construct their own stories from a "video jukebox" containing clips illustrating the history and practice of democracy in Australia. And a website project will take participants on a variety of train journeys through time and place. Produced by Molly Reynolds with Laurindo Garcia as website director, it will include never-before-seen archival footage filmed during the making of Film Australia's popular films on Australian trains and railways.

The EPI is supported with on-going and indexed funding provided under the 2001 Federal Government Film Industry Package, as part of an agreement requiring Film Australia to provide community services through its library, distribution and facilities activities.

"Film Australia's archive is one of the largest and most historically significant collections of audiovisual material in the country," says Sharon Connolly. "By making use of new technologies, the Educational Production Initiative will make this unique record of Australian life available to new generations of Australians in contemporary and dynamic formats, tailored specifically to meet today's education needs."

## Australians at Work

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### Journey to Antarctica in 1912

About the video clip:



Study Module:

Curriculum Focus	English
Year	7-8
Theme	The Environment & Work

Key concepts

Environment, Sustainability, Global citizenship, Heroes, Change over time



## Colour of War— The Anzacs

Adelaide, 1936. This is the earliest known colour film of Anzac Day...So narrator Russell Crowe begins the extraordinary story of Australia and New Zealand at war as never seen before.

For the first time, only original colour footage is used to paint a vividly detailed picture of these closely allied nations, from the build up to World War Two to the end of the Vietnam conflict.

*Colour of War—The Anzacs* is a powerful and moving three-part series, produced by Film Australia in association with TWI, Nine Network Australia, ScreenSound Australia, NZ On Air, TVNZ and the New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

Slated for local release later this year on Channel Nine, it was broadcast in New Zealand from 21 April to 5 May, topping the ratings for its primetime slot.

The series maintains a delicate balance between military history and social documentary.

"The stories we tell make this program quite different to any other war documentary about Australia and New Zealand," says Paul Rudd, writer/director and series producer. "When you watch such vivid colour footage, the difference to seeing black-and-white wartime newsreel is striking. You become absorbed instead of detached."

"All the film is in natural colour—it has not been colourised. This rare combination of colour and content gives us a story that personalises the past by showing the emotional impact of war on ordinary people."

Newly discovered films, home movies and compelling first-hand accounts allow viewers an intimate connection to the war experience, both on the battlefield and on the homefront.

Diary and letter extracts tap into the thoughts of people living through world-shattering events, and reveal with great poignancy how every part of society was touched by war.

Years of international research unearthed footage of troops in Crete, Italy and North Africa in the 40s, in the snows of Korea in the 50s and the jungles of Vietnam in the 60s, along with film of women working on the land and in factories, and children playing dress-up as soldiers and nurses.

Much of the material was shot unofficially by civilians and servicemen, providing an eyewitness account of life in troubled times.

The Dunbar family of Sydney, for example, made a joyous home movie before sending four sons off to fight in World War Two. One wrote from a troopship: *Mum, dad, don't worry too much. I feel sure we'll all come back and make very good sons.* Three of them did; the fourth was killed in action.

"It's a lovely little home movie and the letter makes it so poignant," says Paul Rudd. "When we found a film like that we would try to find the people who owned it and match diaries and letters to their story."

Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies and US President Lyndon B. Johnston also emerged as home movie buffs, with personal collections of film—from Menzies' 1941 visit to London and LBJ's 1966 trip to Wellington and Sydney.

"Official Australian government film of the Sydney visit didn't show the protests, whereas LBJ's own film gives us a full, uncensored record," says Paul.

The research team also found 18 forgotten reels that Lord Wakehurst, the last English-born governor of NSW, filmed from 1937 to 1946, recording air-raid drills and firefighting demonstrations on the steps of Government House.

Footage of one of the most endearingly bizarre wartime inventions, known as the "Kiwi tank", came from Robert Semple, New Zealand's Public Works Minister during World War Two.

"That's a great example of finding a piece of film and going backwards to look for the story," Paul Rudd recalls. "We didn't recognise what it was when we first saw it, but Semple's tank says a lot about the New Zealand 'can do' attitude and underlines just how high the fear of invasion was."

The Kiwi's "secret weapon" was a Caterpillar tractor encased in corrugated steel, which never went into production.

In Adelaide, the researchers made one of the greatest discoveries of all, in the extensive film library of George Bolton, an amateur documentary maker who undertook an extraordinary one-man campaign to film messages from families for the troops in Tobruk.

Mislabeled or poorly labelled film was a hurdle the researchers faced. One "mystery" collection in the voluminous ScreenSound archives turned out to be an hour and a half of film from Brisbane in the 1940s. "All war effort material, like digging shelters, practising first aid...It was gold and every frame related to the war."

Another historic gem is colour film of HMAS *Melbourne's* sinking of the destroyer USS *Frank E. Evans* in 1969—believed to be the only footage of the event in existence.

The curtain is drawn on the series by a most unlikely source—a Japanese documentary crew filming in 35mm in Vietnam for the Soviet Union. The quality is astounding; the images harrowing.

Working with Paul Rudd on this mammoth project were producer Anita Sheehan, co-producer Sally Regan and Ben Ulm, who wrote and directed the third episode. Mark Hamlyn is executive producer.

## Awards and festival news

The National Interest Program series *Plumpton High Babies* and the distribution title *From Korea With Love* were finalists for Most Outstanding Documentary at the Logie Awards in April.

Another distribution title, *A Million Acres a Year*, won the Industry Award for Outstanding Editing at the West Australian Screen Awards. *Yum Cha Cha* won Best Documentary at the Honolulu International Film Festival and was a finalist at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in the USA, and *Two Thirds Sky—Artists in Desert Country* was a finalist at the International Festival of Films on Art in Canada.

The Film Australia National Interest Program *Wildness* has been nominated for a Tasmania Award for Environmental Excellence. The film, which screened at the Environmental Film Festival in Washington, USA in March, has been selected for competition in the Trento Film Festival of Mountains, Exploration and Adventure in Italy and the Ecocinema festival in Greece, with *Slow Food Revolution*.

*Wildness* and the distribution title *The Mascot* were joint winners of the audience vote for best documentary at March's London Australian Film Festival, where *Dhakiyarr vs the King*, *Welcome to the Waks Family* and the *Global* episode of *Human Contraptions* also screened.

The *Law* episode of *Human Contraptions* has been invited to screen at the Melbourne International Animation Festival in June and the London International Animation Film Festival in August. The series recently screened at Mediawave: International Festival of Visual Arts in Hungary.

*Slow Food Revolution* recently screened at the Convergence Living Festival in Ireland, the Marin Environmental Film Festival in the USA and the Sustainable Living Festival in Melbourne (with *Everyday Brave: Media Nomads*). It will screen with *Land of the Morning Star* at Mountainfilm in Telluride, USA at the end of May.

*Silent Storm*, *Ted's Evolution* and *The Professor's New Clothes* were shown at Vedere la Scienza in Milan as part of the Italian Festival of Science.

*Welcome to the Waks Family* continues to screen at Jewish film festivals internationally, including Seattle, Washington, Rochester, Boston, Atlanta, San Diego, San Jose and North Carolina in the US and Brighton in the UK.

A selection of older films—*Cane Toads*, *Buried Country*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture*, *Emily's Eyes*, *Rats in the Ranks* and *Facing the Music*—were invited to screen at the Australia-China Film Festival, organised by the Australian Embassy in Beijing in April to raise awareness of Australian film and film services.

And *Lonely Boy Richard* has been selected for the Chinese Documentary Film Festival to be held in Shanghai in June.



## In production

### The Safe House

Pictured above is animator Lee Whitmore in her Sydney studio. Lee is working on a half-hour animation for SBS-TV based on the infamous Petrov Affair of the 1950s. Denise Haslem is producing.  
*Executive Producer: Anna Grieve*

### Film Australia's Wilderness DVD

Director/producer Steve Thomas, producer Kath Symmons and the team at Roar Film are bringing together some of the nation's most acclaimed documentaries, an award-winning animation and contemporary interviews in a visually stunning two-DVD set that explores the idea of wilderness—real and imagined.  
*Executive Producer: Anna Grieve*

### The Last Great Amateurs

Editing continues on this one-hour program which will take viewers through the highs and lows of a year with champion netball team, the Melbourne Phoenix, to reveal the pressures of this elite-level amateur sport. Directed by Sue Thomson and produced by Richard Keddie and Andrew Wiseman, it is being produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.  
*Executive Producers: Franco di Chiera and Anna Grieve*

### A Matter of Choice

Writer/director Sean Cousins and producers Stuart Menzies and Tony Wright are following the progress of Australia's first "designer baby" for their one-hour documentary for SBS-TV. Exploring the complex and, at times, emotional issue of genetic medicine, the program is produced in association with December Films, with the assistance of Film Victoria. It was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and the Australian Film Commission.  
*Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn*

### Mr Patterns

Currently in the final stages of production, this one-hour documentary, directed by Catriona McKenzie, will be launched at the Message Sticks Festival in Sydney on 12 June 2004. It tells the story of Geoff Bardon, a teacher working with the Aboriginal community at Papunya in Australia's Western Desert in the 1970s, who was the catalyst for one of the most significant art movements of the 20th century. Written and produced by Nic Testoni and Jo Plomley with Megan McMurchy as co-producer, it was made in association with ReelWorld Productions, developed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission and the NSW Film and Television Office, and produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

*Executive Producer: Penny Robins*

### National Treasures

Filming started in March on this 15-part series of three-minute programs for ABC-TV. It's a road-trip of discovery with the irrepressible Warren Brown—political cartoonist, columnist, artist, banjo-wielding raconteur and history nut—as he uncovers an eclectic mix of objects in public and private collections across Australia. Paul Rudd is writing and directing with Matthew Thomason and producing with Sally Regan.  
*Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn*

### The Pilot's Funeral

This half-hour documentary for ABC-TV's *Compass* program is nearing completion. It captures the extraordinary funeral ceremony that followed the death of pilot Adrian Wagg in a helicopter accident, and tells the story of his life and his devotion to Arnhem Land and its people. Produced by Denise Haslem with Trevor Graham as co-producer, it was written and directed by Rosemary Hesp.

*Executive Producer: Penny Robins*

### Trafficked

This one-hour documentary will follow former Australian Federal Police officer turned private detective, Chris Payne as he investigates stories of women and children caught up in prostitution's "trade routes" in Australia, Thailand and Cambodia. Made in association with SBS Independent, the program is being co-produced by Stella Zammataro and writer/director Luigi Acquisto.

*Executive Producers: Franco di Chiera and Anna Grieve*

### Woomera

Editing is underway on this one-hour documentary which looks at Woomera, a purpose-built defence village famous for its rocket range, as a home to Americans from the Nurrungar base and, most recently, for its refugee detention centre. Made with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, it is written and directed by Steve Thomas, who is also producing Kim Anning.

*Executive Producer: Anna Grieve*

## Divorce stories sought for new series

Couples going through divorce are being asked to consider telling their stories as part of a new documentary television series being produced by Film Australia for screening on SBS next year.

"We're looking for people from different backgrounds with interesting stories to tell," says director Jessica Douglas-Henry.

"In 2004, one in three marriages in Australia ends in divorce. That poses the question of whether our primary social contract is being redefined. *Divorce Stories* will look at one of the biggest issues facing us today. It will show the real impact of divorce on communities and individuals—not just on couples, but also on their children, family and friends."

The three-part series is being produced by Jessica Douglas-Henry and Mary-Ellen Mullane. Steve Westh is series director and Penny Robins is executive producer.

People interested in being part of *Divorce Stories* should call 1800 077 471, or write to Divorce Stories c/o Film Australia, PO Box 46 Lindfield NSW 2070, or email [divorcestories@filmaust.com.au](mailto:divorcestories@filmaust.com.au)

## Betty Churcher presents The Art of War

Film Australia has commissioned *The Art of War*, a four-part documentary series to be written and presented by Betty Churcher, for production under its National Interest Program.

*The Art of War* will explore Australian art that has been inspired and provoked by our involvement in wars and armed conflicts during the past century. It is the story of artists including Arthur Streeton, Sidney Nolan, Stella Bowen and Margaret Preston.

The series will be produced by Film Australia and Early Works in association with SBS Independent. The Australian War Memorial will also support production of the series which Betty Churcher, former director of the National Gallery of Australia, will co-produce with John Hughes, who will also direct. Anna Grieve will executive produce for Film Australia.

"Film Australia is delighted to be working with Betty Churcher and John Hughes on this series, which will explore interactions between our art and our history," said Film Australia Chief Executive Officer, Sharon Connolly.

Betty Churcher's book of the series, also called *The Art of War*, will be published by Melbourne University Publishing's Miegnyah imprint to coincide with the television series.

## Sales update

A new international catalogue featuring Film Australia's latest documentaries was presented at MIPDOC and MIPTV in Cannes in April. The market consolidated the company's reputation for quality programs, with more than 160 meetings held with buyers and subdistributors from over a dozen countries.

Programs generating considerable interest included *Troubled Minds—The Lithium Revolution*, *Silent Storm* and the recent acquisition titles *Handle with Care* and *Keeping the Faithful*.

Meanwhile, in the USA, *The Fifth Set* has been licensed to the Tennis Channel for pay television in the US and Caribbean; *Breaking Bows and Arrows* to Link Media for satellite pay tv in Canada and *Troubled Minds* to Films for the Humanities and Sciences for non-theatrical distribution in the US.

In Europe, *Land of the Morning Star* was licensed to Euskal Telebista for free-to-air television in Spain's Basque territory; *Troubled Minds* was licensed to YLE's Digital Channel, TEEMA in Finland; *Ten Million Wildcats* to Erika CFT for both free-to-air and pay television in Italy; and *Diverted to Delhi* and the *Heart on a Sleeve* episode of *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women* were licensed to Swedish Educational Broadcasting for free-to-air television and non-theatrical rights in Sweden.

In the Asia Pacific, *Indian Cowboy...* *One in a Billion* was licensed to Discovery for pay television in the India region; *Slow Food Revolution* to PTV for free-to-air television in Taiwan; *Bush Mechanics—The Series*, *Balگو*, *Black Chicks Talking*, *Boomalli—Five Koorie Artists*, *Dreamings—The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, *Everyday Brave: Stranger in My Skin* and *Fly Peewee, Fly!* to Maori Television for free-to-air television in New Zealand; and *Australian Biography: Jack Hazlitt* was licensed to Umbrella Entertainment for DVD distribution in Australia.

## Dhakiyarr vs the King

In 1933 in remote northeast Arnhem Land, the great Yolngu leader Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda speared a policeman, Constable McColl, who had chained up his wife. This was Dhakiyarr's land and that was his law. On the advice of missionaries, he went to Darwin to explain his actions and his people's ways to the Northern Territory Supreme Court.

Seventy years after his controversial murder trial and subsequent disappearance, Dhakiyarr's body has still not been found and laid to rest. His descendants know that justice was not served. They want to restore what was denied to him: his honour.

A new Film Australia documentary, *Dhakiyarr vs the King*, journeys with the Yolngu as they re-trace his footsteps and finally come face to face with the authorities that let him down and with the descendants of Constable McColl.

Directors Tom Murray and Allan Collins present what happened to Dhakiyarr by allowing the Yolngu people—and Dhukal and Wuyal Wirrpanda, in particular—to tell their own story, in their own way.

"These people are the master storytellers," Allan says. "Yolngu have a way of telling stories: it is oral, it is physical. And we as filmmakers did our best to allow their story to be told in their own natural way. They are talking directly to the people watching the film."

Tom Murray first met Dhukal Wirrpanda when he went to Arnhem Land to make a radio documentary on the case. This eventually led to Tom helping Dhukal and his community make a "video letter" to the Northern Territory Chief Minister, Clare Martin, asking for a funeral for Dhakiyarr. As Dhukal explains in the film, the funeral is an important ceremony in Yolngu culture because "all the bones and strength and spirit of a person flows back into the land."

"It was a major gesture of support for Dhakiyarr's descendants when Clare Martin agreed to have a funeral ceremony and a memorial installed at the Supreme Court in Darwin," says Tom.

*Dhakiyarr vs the King* documents the creation of nine ceremonial burial poles that form the memorial. It also records the extraordinary Supreme Court ceremony, held in June 2003, when more than 200 Yolngu people were joined by Clare Martin, judges from the Northern Territory Supreme Court and the High Court of Australia plus 30 members of the McColl family.

"This is where Yolngu and white law come face to face," says Tom. "For Dhukal and Wuyal it was an opportunity to have their law and culture recognised in a white court in a way Dhakiyarr was unable to 70 years before."

Produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and CAAMA Productions, this inspiring story of remembrance and healing has been warmly received. Broadcast nationally on ABC-TV on 5 May, the one-hour documentary had its international premiere at the London Australian Film Festival in March and has been nominated for a Dendy Award. It screened, along with *Lonely Boy Richard* and *Land of the Morning Star*, at the REAL: Life on Film Documentary Festival in May and has been invited to screen at the Sydney Indigenous Arts Festival in Parramatta during NAIDOC week in July with *Mr Patterns* and *The Pilot's Funeral*.

Produced by Graeme Isaac, with Anna Grieve as executive producer, the film has been beautifully photographed by co-director Allan Collins (an AFI and IF award-winner for his cinematography on *Beneath Clouds*).

NT Supreme Court Justice Brian Martin (left) and High Court Chief Justice Murray Gleeson (right) meet Yolngu Law Man Wuyal Wirrpanda. Photo by Peter Eve



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