

HISTORY BITES BACK

NO MATTER WHAT,
YOU'RE GOING TO GET SCREWED!



Written and Directed by: Trisha Morton-Thomas
Craig Anderson
Producer: Bridget May

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

History Bites Back evolved and eventuated at an incredibly difficult time in my life. Development and Filming was particularly painful and heart wrenching for me. Two nephews suicided while we were still writing. I watched my aunt pass away days before we commenced filming, then on the first day of principle photography, I learnt my sister had terminal cancer and was in palliative care and I was also helping my cousin organise her mother's funeral between scenes and yet it was 'normal' to me and most of the Indigenous cast and crew on this doco. I felt the injustice of this 'normal' and it is reflected in the tone of History Bites Back.

In essence I was wrung out and worn thin by what was essentially a decade long, endless waves of loss and grieving in my family as well as feeling hampered by appeasing 'Australian Sensitivities' in representing authentic Indigenous voices and experiences on screen. I felt disheartened, disillusioned and deeply aggrieved by this country and its long tradition of presenting non-sense and non-truths about Australia's first peoples and our history - In traditional media and now especially in online Social Media.

ignoring the well-rehearsed, worn and generational put downs by clueless Australians with no understanding of history and its social impact on Aboriginals, is the rational thing to do - But I'm only human and often the strain of the constant, ongoing and unjust vilification of Indigenous peoples, barbs painfully deep. Non-deeper than the annual -

THE WORST DAY OF ALL...



Historically commemorated as the national 'Day Of Mourning' by Aboriginal peoples since 1938 then, eighty years later officially adopted federally as 'Australia Day' in 1994 - January 26th has become an ugly and violent social media frenzy of historical inaccuracies and racist rhetoric's. On this day, more than every other day, Australia's Indigenous people are assaulted by a tsunami of baseless, factually inaccurate, on-line racial vilification that wears on both mental and emotional well-being of Aboriginal people of all ages.

HISTORY BITES BACK is a reply to the historical myths and negative Social media stereotyping of a unique Australian minority; of which me and my family are a part of.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trisha Morton-Thomas".

TRISHA MORTON-THOMAS
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRESENTOR

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Yeah, so taking into account everything Trisha has just mentioned, she then engaged me to try and make this content funny.

Luckily, Trisha has the darkest sense of humour and was open to my shenanigans. Trisha believes that the way forward is working with whitefellas, and hopefully we walked the fine line between palatable and outrage.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Anderson".

CRAIG ANDERSON
DIRECTOR, WRITER





SYNOPSIS

One Line Synopsis

History Bites Back is satirical, self-aware, and not afraid to launch a rocket into taboo issues.

One Paragraph Synopsis

Aboriginal filmmaker Trisha Morton-Thomas (Destiny Does Alice, Occupation: Native) teams up again with Comedy Director/Writer, Craig Anderson (Black Comedy, Occupation: Native), and some of Australia's freshest comedic talent (Steven Oliver and Elaine Crombie) to bite back at negative social media comments and steer the conversation to look into the historical context of the fortunes and misfortunes of Aboriginal Australians from social security, citizenship and equal wages to nuclear bombs and civil actions.

One Page Synopsis

History Bites Back is the antidote to the boring, faceless, and overly sincere docos that often populate Indigenous issues. It's comical, self-aware, and not afraid to launch a rocket into taboo issues.

Our continent has over a hundred thousand years of black history but when the whitefellas began to build their country on top of Aboriginal mob's countries, they believed that the Aboriginal population would die out. Luckily they were wrong, but ever since then the whitefellas haven't really known what to do with the blackfellas and the blackfellas haven't been able to get rid of the whitefellas..

....and now there's other fellas, biggest mob of fellas from all over the world sharing this place called Australia. Still, our schools concentrate on the last 250 odd years of colonisation and most of that through a white colonial lens.

So, in this day of modern technology, unlimited information and the World Wide Web, Aboriginal people still put up with a boatload of ignorance and misconceptions from our fellow Australians.

From the creators of 8MMM Aboriginal Radio and Occupation: Native and continuing in the tradition of films like We Don't Need a Map to tackle the hard issues with comedy and humour History Bites Back is a one hour, presenter-led documentary designed for a modern audience to be segmented into bite sized episodes for additional on-line streaming options.

PRODUCER STATEMENT BRIDGET MAY

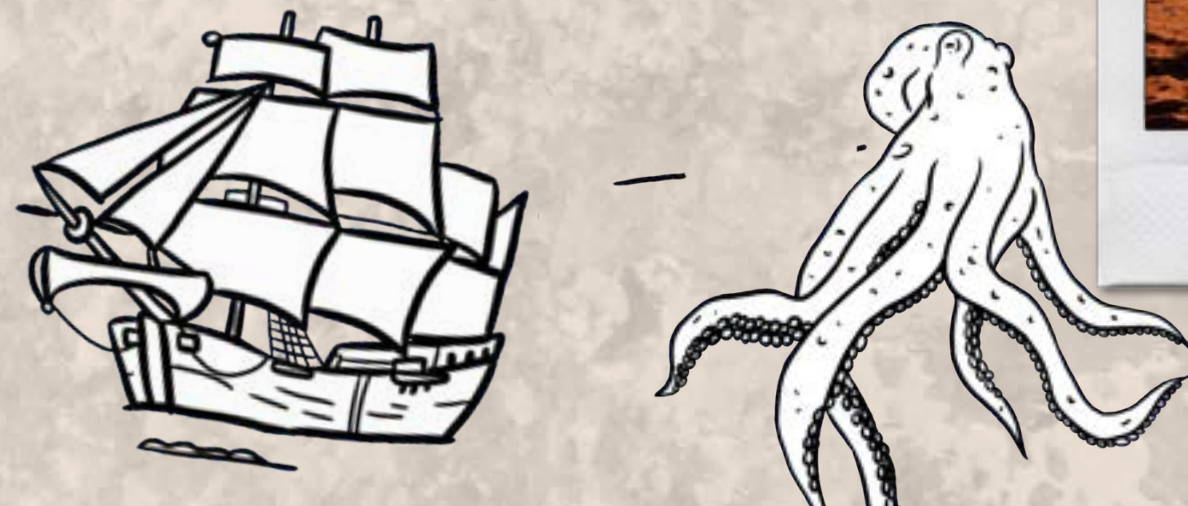
Being given this opportunity to produce a production like *History Bites Back* was a great opportunity for me. Having worked with Trisha and Craig on *Occupation: Native* as a production Manager and Post Production Supervisor, I jumped at the opportunity to be the producer on this project having really enjoyed working with them both before.

I love living in Alice Springs, and I have been here for over 20 years, but the open racism that is seen on the local Alice Springs Community Facebook Forum and sometimes in the streets, is, to put it bluntly, disgusting. It is endless and it is not just here, and it is not just from a random white bloke who has just moved here, it comes from everywhere even people you thought you might know. The ability to make something that could make people stop and think prior to hitting 'enter' when they comment online, is an awesome thought.

Many of the cast said that they were unaware of some of the historical things that happened and were quite shocked. It is about time that people learned more about the history of the county they live in and how their Australia came about, what happened in history to get us to where we are today.

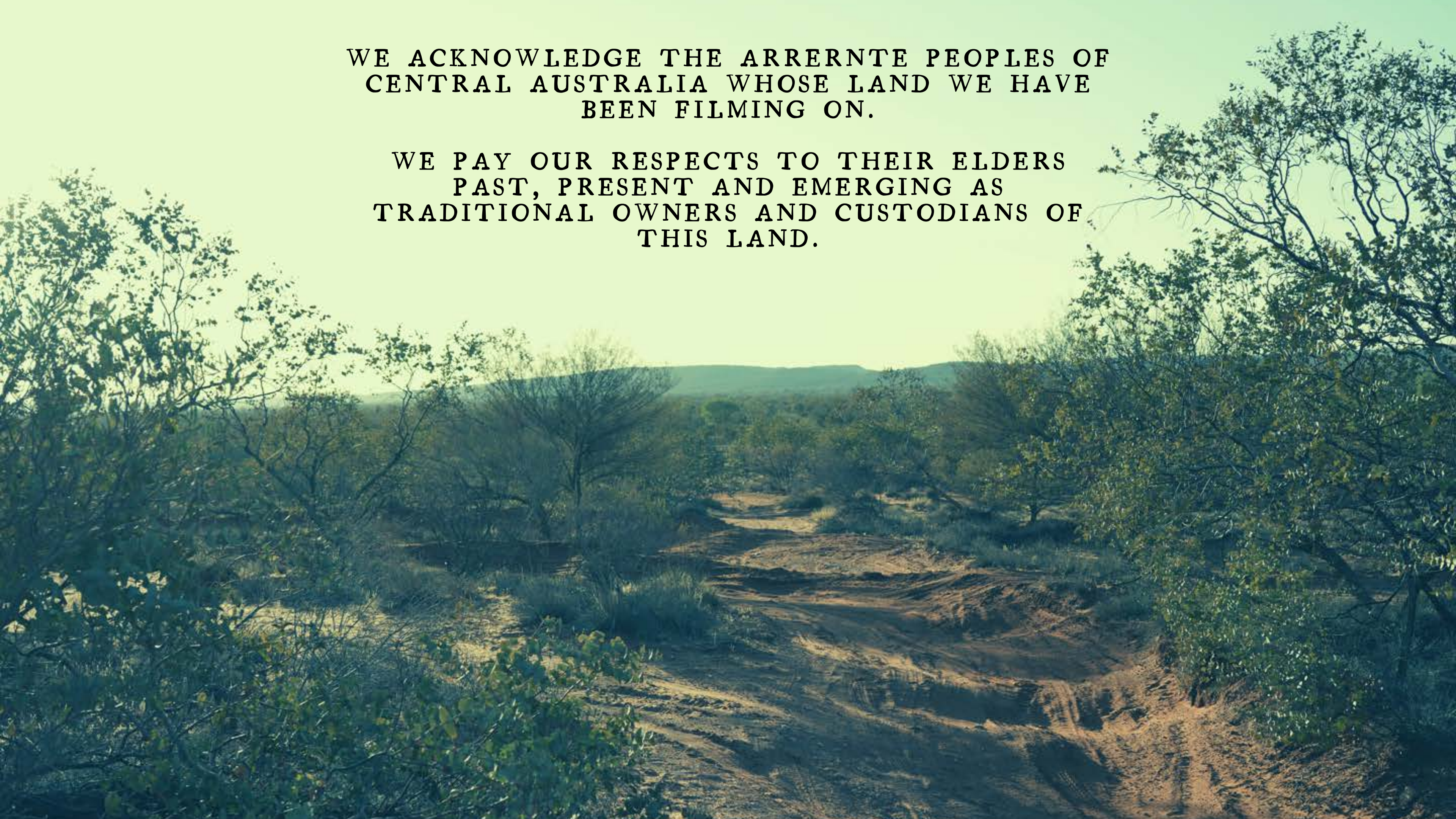
I hope that this project really hits home and makes people think about what they are reading or replying to online, how they see the history of this country and First Nations people, and frankly, go and find out more for themselves with some real research. I am immensely appreciative to Trisha and Rachel for trusting I could produce this for them and hope everyone enjoys it.

Tally ho!



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE ARRERNTE PEOPLES OF
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA WHOSE LAND WE HAVE
BEEN FILMING ON.

WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS
PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING AS
TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF
THIS LAND.



PRODUCTION NOTES

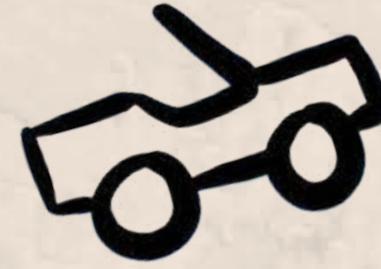
We began the development of *History Bites Back* with a healthy amount of knowledge and research and this certainly helped in the scripting process and allowed us to go in with eyes wide open. We had known from making *Occupation: Native*, that we were going to delve into areas that would be hard for Trisha, who lives with these social media comments on a day-to-day basis. We wanted to ensure that Trisha was supported throughout the process, and, if at all possible, had some fun while making *History Bites Back*.

Craig Anderson was brought on board at an early stage to help balance out the racism and full-on assault on indigenous people, by bringing in some comedy and satire to the program and we think we squarely hit the mark on that.

Using the presenter-led narrative, supported by graphic effects, animation, archival materials, re-enactments and infused with comedy, satire and good old fashioned irony to bring home more of the story behind Australia's black history, *History Bites Back* takes a cheeky swipe at the negative historical press that continues to plague Aboriginal people to the modern day.

History Bites Back uses humour and modern filmmaking techniques to unpack the negative social bias of 250 odd years of shared history between its First Peoples and modern-day Australians.

Though there is serious historical and contemporary content in this film, humour, comedy and irony are the attitudes that drive *History Bites Back*. Trisha and Craig brought their combined comedic skills and perspectives to present a modern take on history that dares





to poke fun at the establishment and challenge the status quo of the prevailing historical narrative of this nation. *History Bites Back* weaves a historical narrative through the re-enactments of historical events, scenarios, animations, archival materials, social media commentary, black screen and simple presenter-led storytelling. Why make it easy, where is the fun in that.

As with all documentaries, things rarely goes to plan, but it was invaluable to start with such a strong script, that was the foundation of the film. It was also immensely helpful that we were such a small crew and were able to be immediately responsive to situations as they occurred and the unpredictable movements of people and cast. Having such a tight time frame to shoot, and it being so scripted, meant that we knew exactly what we needed, but on the other hand, we had very little room for error, though changes were made, and it was great working through all of that.

Though there is serious historical and contemporary content in this film, humour, comedy and irony are the attitudes that drive *History Bites Back*. Trisha and Craig brought their combined comedic skills and perspectives to present a modern take on history that dares to poke fun at the establishment and challenge the status quo of the prevailing historical narrative of this nation. *History Bites Back* weaves a historical narrative through the re-enactments of historical events, scenarios, animations, archival materials, social media commentary, black screen and simple presenter-led storytelling. Why make it easy, where is the fun in that.





For the most part *History Bites Back* was shot in a blackened studio environment, reminiscent of a live performance space, using props and simple sets such as office equipment, signage and counters. *History Bites Back* was also shoot in locations around Alice Springs, originally, we were going to shoot more on set, but found we preferred to do more outside as it gave it a much better look and feel and allowed us to mix it up.

Everything was shot in Alice Springs, including using 100% crew from Alice Springs, the only people not from the NT were Steven Oliver, Elaine Crombie and Craig Anderson, and this was great! Working with a full NT crew, who all knew each other, making it a very friendly atmosphere and many laughs were had.





TRISHA MORTON-THOMAS DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRESENTER

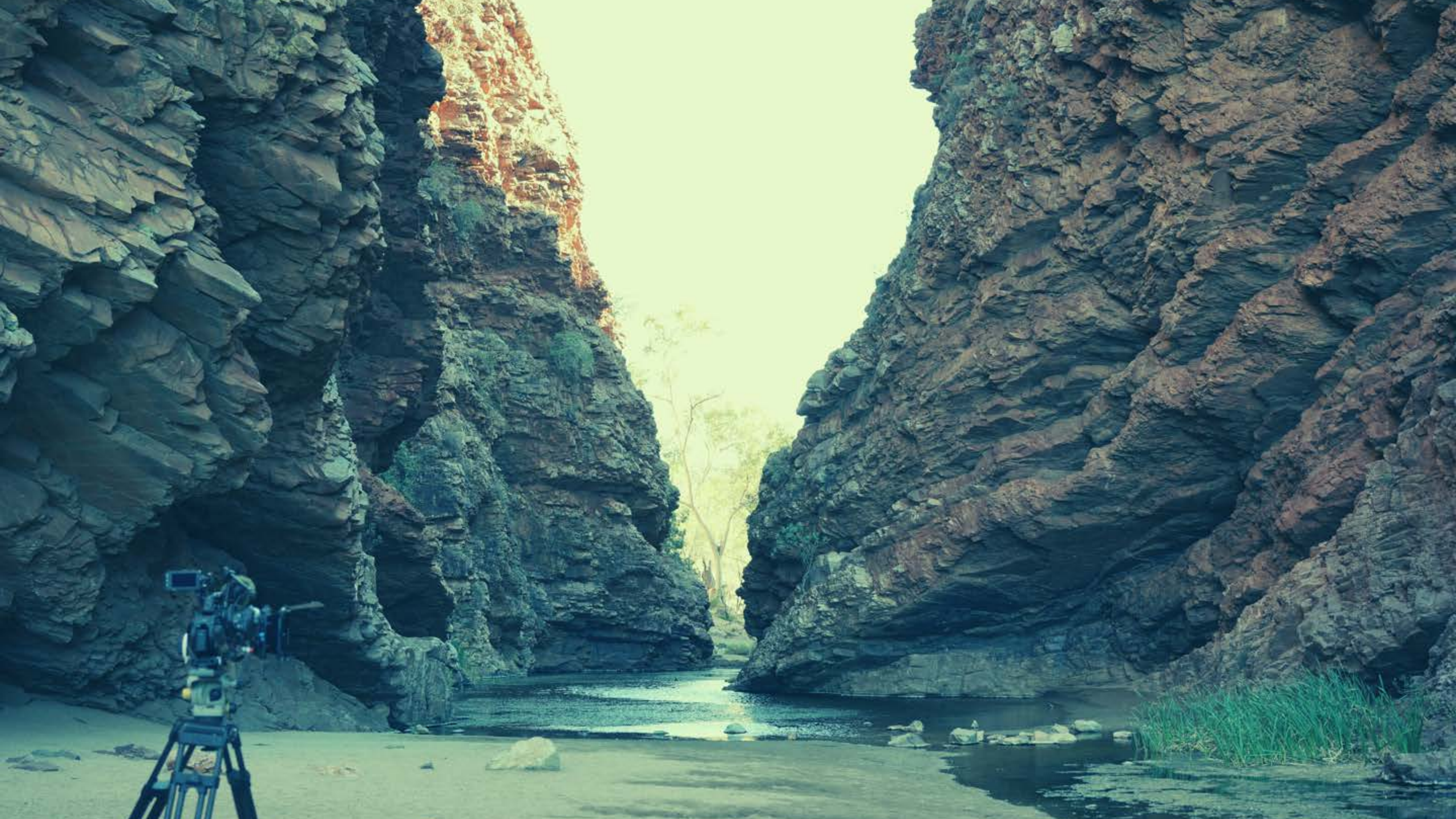
Born in the Northern Territory, Trisha Morton-Thomas is a writer, producer, director and actor who has worked in film and television for over 25 years. She has a background in teaching, radio broadcasting, journalism and theatre. She is an Aboriginal woman from the Anmaterr People in Central Australia. Trisha has become one of Australia's most renowned Aboriginal actors, recently starring as Lola in 8MMM Aboriginal Radio (2015), the first Aboriginal narrative comedy series which she also wrote and produced. Trish also appears in the award-winning Redfern Now and Total Control.

From 2004, Trisha worked for CAAMA where she produced, directed and wrote documentaries for Imparja TV, ABC and NITV including *Destiny in Alice*, *Ridin' Time*, *Bungalung* and *Finding Place*. In 2007 she joined the newly established National Indigenous Television Services (NITV) as one of the first Aboriginal Commissioning Editors, eventually working her way up to Senior Commissioning Editor. While at NITV, Trisha oversaw hundreds of television hours including documentaries, dramas, music television and magazine-style formats.

Trisha wrote, directed, produced and presented *Occupation: Native* for NITV/SBS, which won the Screen Producers of Australia Award for Best Documentary, an ATOM Award and a Capricornia Award (Darwin International Film Festival). Trisha produced *The Song Keepers*, a feature documentary which premiered at Melbourne International Film Festival in 2017 and had a strong theatrical release in 2018.

Recent projects include *Finke: There and Back*, a feature documentary for Madman which was released into cinemas in 2019, and *Uluru & the Magician*, a feature documentary currently in production. She is also producing *Audrey and Me*, a feature documentary in production, and *Maverix*, a children's television drama series scheduled for production in 2021 for ABC and Netflix. She is in development on a number of feature drama and television drama projects.





CRAIG ANDERSON DIRECTOR/WRITER

Craig Anderson is a comedian who works in the medium of film. As a director, he has twice won the Australian Oscar (AFI - Best Comedy TV Series 2004, and AACTA - Best Director - Light Entertainment or Reality 2015) and an International Gold Promax for his network promos for Showtime Australia.

In 2016 Craig's horror film *Red Christmas* (starring horror/sci-fi icon Dee Wallace) had a very successful festival circuit receiving praise from Variety, Scream Magazine, Fangoria and LA Times. It has now sold to ten territories as well as Netflix US and Channel 9 Australia. As an actor, Craig has appeared in many successful comedy television programs including *Black Comedy*, *Double The Fist*, *The Moodys*, *Review With Myles Barlow*, and *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide To Knife Fighting*. He starred in indie comedy *The Tail Job* which screened at Slamdance 2016. Craig has also starred in the ob-doc programs *Next Step Hollywood* and *Miso Hungry*.

BRIDGET MAY PRODUCER

Bridget has built up her knowledge and skills by working on several projects, including *Finke: There and Back* (Brindle Films); *Oceans Apart: Art and the Pacific with James Fox* (BBC) as Field Producer; Producer on *Utopia Generations* (Sandover Films), an NITV and Screen Territory Red Ochre initiative, and produced *When the River Runs Dry* (Nora & R.D. Productions)

Recent projects while working with Brindle Films include *Uluru & the Magician*, a feature documentary currently and on *Maverix*, a children's television drama series scheduled for production in 2021 for ABC and Netflix.

Bridget also works as a Producer, Production Manager, and Post-Production Supervisor with Brindle Films over their slate of factual and drama projects.





STEVEN OLIVER ACTOR



Steven Oliver is a descendant of the Kukuyalanji, Waanyi, Gangalidda, Woppaburra, Bundjalung and Biripi peoples, Steven is best known for his work in comedy, but the talented playwright, dancer, screenwriter and poet.

Productions include Looky Looky Here Comes Cooky, Faboriginal, Thor: Ragnarok, A chance Affair, Black Comedy, Tiger Cops, Occupation: Native, Stop Laughing... This is Serious. And Zero Point.



ELAINE CROMBIE ACTOR



Elaine Crombie is Yunkuntjarra/Warrigmay/South Sea Islander/German. She is an actor, director, singer, songwriter, stand-up comedian and writer.

Television productions include 8MMM Aboriginal Radio, How To Stay Married - Brindle Films/Princess Pictures, Redfern Now, Series 1 - Blackfella Films, Black Comedy - series 2, Scarlett Pictures, Top of the Lake: China Girl - See-Saw Films, Kiki and Kitty - Porchlight Films, Rosehaven series 2 - What Horse? Productions, Grace Beside Me - Magpie Pictures, Nowhere Boys S3 - Matchbox Pictures, Thalu - Weerianna Street Media Pty Ltd.

Film productions include: Jackie Jackie - Scarlett Pictures, Ties That Bind - Kalori Productions, Black Talk, Top End Wedding- Goalpost Pictures





REBECCA ELSON COSTUME DESIGNER

Rebecca Elson became a freelance costume designer and supervisor after completing a Bachelor of Arts (hons) Costume for the Screen and Stage at the Arts Institute in Bournemouth in 2005. She worked in the film industry in the UK, as well as west end theatre, ballet, opera and musicals. Moving to Australia in 2012 she worked with Opera Australia and Sydney Theatre Company, but now resides in Alice Springs where she had been the creative producer for an Indigenous light festival and now working as a costume designer once again.

The creative hub of Alice Springs has allowed her to come back to her passion as a costume designer. Rebeca has worked as a Costume Supervisor on such productions as Arcadia, King Lear, Noises Off and Suddenly Last Summer, Sydney Theatre Company; Here Lies Love and Medea, Royal National Theatre, UK; The Ring Cycle, Opera Australia; Father Brown, BBC; Topgirls, Trafalgar Studios, UK. And Head of Wardrobe, Madame Butterfly, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour



JEREMY CONLON SOUND RECORDIST AND SOUND MIX

Jeremy Conlon, a freelance sound recordist, sound engineer, musician, and composer, who has had over 29 years experience in many facets of the music industry, and more recently the film industry. He is based in Alice Springs and been in the Northern Territory since 2003.

As a location sound recordist Jeremy has built a professional kit that allows him to work on documentaries and short films in the Northern Territory. He also undertakes Field Recording in his travels, to build a library of environmental sounds and ambience for future projects. He is committed to capturing the stories of the Northern Territory to and industry standard and professional quality, and where possible, up skilling others in the process. Jeremy was awarded for Best Sound along with Pete Best (BestFX) at the American Golden Picture International Film Festival, Florida USA of the documentary 'When The Rivers Run Dry' Recent productions include "Robbie Hood" (Ludo Studio / Since 1788 Productions - Dylan River), 'The Australian Dream" (Good Thing Productions). Music credits include the ARIA award winning albums "Gurrumul" (credit - additional recordings) and "Rrakala" (credit - assistant engineer, New York City Avatar Studio) by Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu (Skinnyfish Music)





KAMSANI BIN SALLEH (KAMBARNI) ILLUSTRATIONS

Kambarni is descended from the Ballardong Noongar people and Nimunburr and Yawuru people of the Kimberley region in Western Australia. He is an artist who reflects the natural world with his intricate designs and graphically interprets designs from both pre-colonial and post-colonial Australian histories. Re-telling old stories or creating new narratives through community engagement. In 2018 Kamsani was named WA's Young Person of the Year and was awarded the Mission Australia Cultural Endeavours Award.



RACHEL CLEMENTS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Rachel Clements recent feature documentaries include Finke: There and Back, and The Song Keepers. Rachel has produced drama projects including 8MMM Aboriginal Radio, the first Aboriginal comedy narrative series, for the ABC in 2015, and Double Trouble (2007), the first Indigenous children's drama series for network television (Channel 9, Disney Australasia, ACTF).

Rachel has produced award winning documentaries including Big Name No Blanket and Ochre and Ink. In 2014, Rachel produced Blown Away, a documentary for the ABC on the 40th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy. Occupation: Native (one hour documentary) for NITV/SBS won the SPA Best Documentary Award in 2017. Rachel has produced or executive produced feature documentaries for cinema, television drama (children's and comedy), 30 broadcast documentary films, and over 65 hours of magazine style television for NITV. Rachel's films have been broadcast in over 40 countries. Her films have won AACTA, ATOM and AWGIE awards.

Current projects in production include Uluru & the Magician (feature documentary), Audrey and Me (feature documentary), History Bites Back (television documentary) and Give Us Green Darling (television documentary). MaveriX, a 10 x 30 min children's drama series, created by Rachel, is financed and scheduled to enter production in 2021 for ABC and Netflix.



Written and Directed by

Trisha Morton-Thomas
Craig Anderson

Produced by

Bridget May

Cinematography by

Shane Mulcahy

Edited by

Craig Anderson

Sound Design by

Jeremy Conlon

Production Design

Rebecca Elson

Illustrations

Kambarni

VFX and Animation

Doug Byrne

Colour Grade

Rory Mcleod

Production Company

Brindle Films, Alice Springs, NT 0870
info@brindlefilms.com.au
www.brindlefilms.com.au

Publicity

info@brindlefilms.com.au

Social Media

www.instagram.com/historybitesback
www.facebook.com/HistoryBitesBack

Tech Specs

Runtime: 56 mins
Colour: Colour
Aspect Ratio: 16:8 1920 x 1080
Shooting Format: 4K
Cameras: Sony FS5
Sound: Stereo
Frame Rate: ProRes 422
Language: English

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CREDITS

OPENING CREDITS:

CARD 1:

SCREEN AUSTRALIA AND
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TELEVISION PRESENT

CARD 2:

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SCREEN TERRITORY

CARD 3:

A BRINDLE FILMS PRODUCTION

CARD 4:

PRODUCED BY BRIDGET MAY

CARD 5:

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
TRISHA MORTON-THOMAS & CRAIG ANDERSON

TITLE - HISTORY BITES BACK

END CREDITS:

CARD 1:

PRESENTED BY
TRISHA MORTON-THOMAS

CARD 2:

FEATURING
STEVEN OLIVER
ELAINE CROMBIE

ROLLING CREDITS:

ALSO APPEARING

ACACIA LEWIS
ADAM GOODERHAM
ANDY GODKIN
ANNETTE BRAY
AOIFE MURRAY
AVA HODGSON
BARBARA CLIFFORD
BIDDY O'LOUGHLIN
BLAIZE MCPHERSEN
BRIDGET MAY
CHERYL SANDERSON
CLAYTON BAILEY
DAMON VAN DER SHUIT
DAVID OAKES
EMMA SMITH
ERIC BRODRICK
EVERLYN WALLACE
HARLEY MYERS
HUGH WINTERFLOOD
JOHN HODGSON
KESTREL KENDELL
KIRRA VOLLER
LEVI THOMAS
LUKE TONKIN
MARY O'LOUGHLIN
NATASSIA GOREY-FURBER

RACHEL CLEMENTS
ROBERT KENNY
RON COOPER
RONAK PUROHIT
RUSSEL VOLLER
SALLY WESTAWAY
SANE KANE
SCOTT FRASER
SHANE MULCAHY
TITO WALLACE
TYRONE WALLACE
UGO FREDIANI
VICTORIA HERNANDEZ
VINCENT FORESTER

ROLLING CREDITS:

Executive Producers	Rachel Clements Trisha Morton-Thomas Meredith Garlick
Production Manager	Bridget May
Production Assistant	Biddy O'Loughlin
Director of Photography	Shane Mulcahy
Camera Assistants	John Hodgson
Sound Recordist	Jeremy Conlon
	Pin Rada
Sound Assistant	Nikola Van de Wetering
Stills Photographer	Lisa Hatzimihail Bridget May
Runners	Emma Smith Ron Cooper Damon van der Schuit
Costume Designer	Rebecca Elson
Costume Assistant	Luke Tonkin
Makeup/Hair Artist	Aoife Murray
Props	Bau Stone
Prop Buyer	Daniel Milne

Attachment: 1stAD	Biddy O'Loughlin
Volunteer	Zoe Walters
Fact Checker	Evelyn Saunders
Studio	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
Animations & VFX	Doug Bayne
Illustrator	Kambarni
Post Production Supervisor	Bridget May
Editor	Craig Anderson
Assistant Editor	Rory McLeod
	Aidan Tai-Jones
Colourist	Rory McLeod
Sound Mix	Jeremy Conlon
Post Production Script	Anne Coleman
Subtitles/Closed Captions	Vinnie May
Financed with the assistance of	Indigenous Business Australia
Legals	Shaun Miller Lawyers
Accountants	Nagle Accounting
Insurances	SURA Film and Entertainment
Travel	Stage and Screen

ARCHIVAL IMAGES:

Albert Namatjira signing autographs.
Portrait of Albert Namatjira painting, central Australia, ca. 1946.
Albert Namatjira painting at Finke River near Hermannsburg, approximately 1953.
Albert Namatjira watercolour, no title, Central Australian landscape.
Albert Namatjira watercolour, no title, Central Australian waterhole.
Sophia Marinos, Namatjira Legacy Trust Chair.

Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into the hands of
traditional landowner Vincent Lingiari, Northern Territory.
Mervyn Bishop and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Wyndham Chain Gang
Ghillar, Michael Anderson, Sovereign Union

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Additional music provided by:

Audio Network

NITV:

NITV HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND PROGRAMMING:
KYAS HEPWORTH

SCREEN AUSTRALIA:
ALYSSA ORVIS, MANU SAMARAKKODY

SCREEN TERRITORY:
JENNIE HUGHES, SEBASTIAN ANGBORN, MELANIE MCCLURE

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AUSTRALIA.

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OF THE LANDS ON WHICH WE FILMED.

CARD 1:
PRINCIPAL PRODUCTION FUNDING FROM
[SCREEN AUSTRALIA LOGO]

CARD 2:
PRODUCED BY BRINDLE FILMS
(LOGO)

CARD 3:
FINANCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
[SCREEN TERRITORY LOGO]

CARD 4:
DEVELOPED AND PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TELEVISION
[NITV LOGO]

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**HISTORY
BITES
BACK**