

SOMETIMES THE HARDEST BATTLES TO FIGHT ARE THE  
ONES INSIDE OUR OWN MINDS

# WARRIOR

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT BELONGING

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE AUSTRALIAN FILM TELEVISION AND RADIO SCHOOL  
"WARRIOR" A FILM BY JEMMA CRAIG MUSIC BY HAMISH FRANCIS EDITOR BECKY EVANS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CHENG HAN PRODUCED BY JEMMA CRAIG  
CO-PRODUCER GABRIEL MURPHY SOUND SUPERVISOR SAMUEL TURNER PRODUCTION DESIGNER ROBERTO MANZINI WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JEMMA CRAIG

AFTRS  
AUSTRALIAN FILM TELEVISION  
AND RADIO SCHOOL



# WARRIOR

DOCUMENTARY | 15 MINUTE SHORT

## LOGLINE

After receiving a large payout from the church to pay back childhood victims of abuse, a Sydney man starts a medieval role-play club in a desperate fight to turn his life around.

## SYNOPSIS

A 30-year-old accounts manager and part-time medieval warrior from Western Sydney may battle werewolves and orcs in his spare time, but it soon becomes clear that he's really fighting his own inner battles. As a survivor of a violent and damaged childhood at the hands of the church, Tadd seeks to reconcile his fractured past to help others.

After receiving a large government payout to pay back victims of abuse, Tadd uproots his life, moves to a new town, and starts his own medieval role-play club. This documentary will join Tadd on his quest to come to terms with his own trauma and to provide a safe space for others within the fantasy world of Live Action Role Play.

## WHY NOW

This film will be an exploration into some of the unseen trauma of our neighbours, our friends, and our community. It will place a spotlight on the lasting effects of childhood abuse and depression.

Empowering recovery from childhood trauma requires a widespread recognition of the complex needs of trauma survivors throughout their lives.

Warrior will highlight the importance of these services not only for individuals but for families impacted by trauma, violence and abuse.

## WEBSITE

<https://www.warriorthemovie.com.au/>

# LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY (LARP)

LARPing is a form of role-playing game where the participants physically portray their characters. The players pursue goals within a fictional setting represented by real world environments while interacting with each other in character.

Live action role play was inspired by games like dungeons and dragons and genre fiction. The ABC in 2020 reported that LARPing in Australia has gained popularity off the backs off Game of Thrones (2011), Vikings (2013) and The Witcher (2019).

The Sydney LARP community call themselves Battlecry, led by their charasmatic leader, Tadd.



# CENTRAL CHARACTER

## TADD LYONS

30 Year old accounts manager from West Sydney

Tadd has a dark past, as a survivor of an abusive childhood and attempted suicide. Tadd went through his trauma alone, but he recognizes the power of talking about his experiences in the hopes that he can reach others who feel like they have nowhere left to turn.

Throughout the film, Tadd will be the guide for the audience, talking about and coming to terms with his own trauma, and sharing his quest to turn his life around by starting his own role-play club. Tadd knows that LARPing saved his life, and his organisation – Battlecry, gives him purpose every day to carry on.

Tadd seeks to get to the heart of why there is so much stigma around mental health and provide a safe space for others within the world of live-action role play.

"I was in a really dark place, I knew I had hit rock bottom when I couldn't even take my own life properly. I had to find another way to make drastic changes."

# THREE ARC STRUCTURE

- The audience is introduced to the medieval role-play world through a battlefield coronation. Tadd, the central character of the film, is right in his element as the leader of the group, standing bold in full armour. After the title, Tadd is moving to Western Sydney into his first home. He talks about how he received a large amount of money from the church to pay back victims of abuse.
- Tadd explains the world of live-action role-play through scenes of his club - Battlecry, fighting in full armour, and various members in character. He talks about his first time LARPing, and why he was interested in knights and the medieval era. Tadd links his desire for strength and armour with his lack of protection as a child and explains that he suffered sexual abuse at the hands of priests at his catholic school. With striking visual imagery of Tadd on a train and a fog-filled medieval battle, Tadd tells a dark story of his first attempted suicide, at the age of 16.
- Tadd arrives at his new home and explains how he plans to set things up, expressing the hope that it can be a safe haven for himself and LARP community. He talks about his determination to turn his life around and tells a story of going to a medieval fair, where he met his partner Lysa. Together, Tadd and Lysa form a bond through LARP, and Tadd shows the Audience the importance of the friendships he has made along the way. During an intimate camping trip with Tadd and Lysa's closest friends and family, Tadd proposes to Lysa, and the film ends with everyone cheering and crying in happiness.

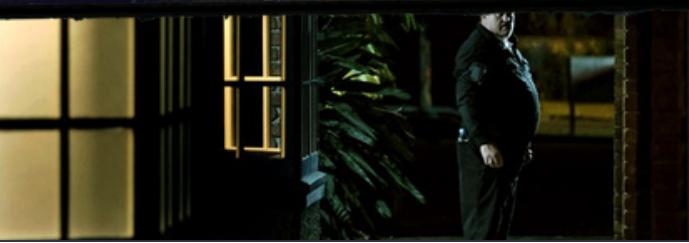
## KEY BEATS

- Interesting/vibrant community – exciting and fast-paced action visuals, along with sombre and stylistic visuals telling a metaphoric story.
- Tadd, the main character - receives a large payout from the church to pay back victims of childhood abuse. He buys a house and starts a Live Action Role Play (LARP) club to turn his life around.
- Tadd has suffered childhood abuse and tells a dark story of an attempted suicide at 16. This trauma is represented on screen through visual metaphors (such as battle scenes or choreographed recreation) and a master interview.
- Tadd's triumph as he settles into his new home, creates unforgettable bonds with lifelong friends and proposes to the love of his life who he met through LARP. Tadd's club is more than a game, its' a group of individuals who are banded together through their fears, hopes and even their fight against inner demons.

Warrior will follow Tadd on a journey to get to the heart of why communities such as his medieval role play organisation are so important to the lives of many individuals. Tadd will introduce the audience to the world of live action role play, before exploring his own personal trauma and survivor stories.



**STYLE REFERENCE:**  
**GHOSTHUNTER, MADMAN FILMS 2018**



# STYLE

Warrior is told visually with highly stylistic and exciting imagery, capturing the fantastic costumes and action of a medieval battle. The stylised approach helps to express the contrast of the subject's dark past with his bright future with LARPing. This allows the narrative to connect with a younger audience and provide a lighthearted platform to explore deeper emotional issues.

Warrior uses a slow-motion fight scene and a Stylistic close-up of Tadd (The central subject) in full costume to blur the lines of fantasy and reality, and metaphorically translate the darker aspects of Tadd's past. This highly thematic fantasy visual "third wall" is then broken with humor and realism in a more observational filming approach, humanizing the subjects and placing them in modern times, to show the relevance of mental health in today's society, and to link an intrinsic part of Australian culture.

Thematically, the story is told using a juxtaposition of tongue-in-cheek humour, in order for it to be relatable to the audience, and with the exploration of deeper emotional issues for social impact.

The juxtaposition of light and dark helps the film breathe and prevents it from being emotionally overwhelming or vain and empty.

# WHY NOW

"Once you start talking about experiencing a mental health struggle, you realise that you're actually part of quite a big club."

- Prince Harry

Childhood trauma and suicide affected Tadd significantly, as it was something he lived through. Tadd was lucky enough to receive the help he needed, but many people don't.

Childhood abuse is creating a vicious cycle and can be exasperated particularly for men by the stigma around mental health, it's seen as weak or unmasculine to talk about your problems. Childhood trauma and abuse can affect people for life, and services are really desperately needed.

Warrior will identify a number of these issues and share survivor stories, creating awareness for the general public of the physical, emotional, and economic impacts of childhood trauma.



Childhood trauma affects 5 million (1 in 4) Australian adults



Survivors often experience issues with low self-esteem, isolation and relationships. Longer-term consequences include homelessness, suicide, mental health issues, crime, drug and alcohol addiction



Survivors of childhood abuse often do not disclose their abuse until adulthood



Childhood trauma often has an impact for life unless people find the right support



There is an urgent need for trauma-informed training across health, welfare, justice, housing, employment and education sectors



# JEMMA CRAIG

## DIRECTOR

31 year old

Female

From Cairns, QLD Australia

Jemma Craig is a documentary filmmaker from The Great Barrier Reef, Cairns. Her work includes documentaries based on people and the planet around them. Graduating as a Master of Screen: Documentary from AFTRS in 2023, Jemma produced and directed two underwater-based 5-minute documentaries that screened at UNDEREXPOSED, SydFest, and Doc.Sydney film festivals; and her breakout documentary short "Warrior."

Jemma's intrinsic connection to nature fuels a storytelling style that delves into human interactions with the world around them. Jemma's upbringing drove her to embark on a journey of understanding human connection and empathy through the visual medium. Her latest work, "Warrior," reflects her commitment to showcasing the transformative power of vulnerability and healing through storytelling.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Warrior is an exploration into some of the unseen trauma of our neighbours, our friends, and our community, and a few of those people who are fighting to save others.

Live Action Role play can be a form of escapism for many of people, but it's more than that. It's a support network and place of belonging for people who feel like they have nowhere left to turn and nobody to talk to.

Many people feel like they do not belong in conventional sports, or experience ridicule for their interests and struggle to share these interests with others. The film will highlight the importance of having a place to belong in the community, no matter how left of centre or unconventional that place is.

Being isolated from the community, especially when we are dealing with trauma or underlying mental health issues can be extremely detrimental to our well-being. It helps to discover that you are not alone and feel like you have a place in the world.

