

ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE TO THE INVASION OF AUSTRALIA NEVER CEASED.

A STORY OF RESISTANCE ACROSS GENERATIONS,
THE POWER OF FAMILY AND THE UNRELENTING
STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN A COUNTRY THAT
REMAINS IN DENIAL.

OUR WARRIOR

THE STORY OF ROBBIE THORPE

Media kit

WWW.OURWARRIORDOCO.COM





LOGLINE

A story of resistance across generations, the power of family and the unrelenting struggle for justice in a country that remains in denial.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Shoot gauge: Digital Cinema ProResHQ

Archival Formats: HDV HDCamSR, Digital Betacam, SP Betacam, DVD and VHS

Ratio: 1.78 (16:9)

Picture: Colour and B&W

Sound: Dolby Digital

Duration: 53 minutes

Language: English

Australian Classification: Unclassified (G, General viewing)

ABOUT

Length: 53 minutes

Director: Anthony Kelly

Editor: Anthony Kelly

Funders: Crowd-funded, self-funded, small grants, City of Yarra Arts, Black Rainbow Printing, Documentary Australia Foundation

Stage: Finished

Available for: Distribution / festival selection / broadcast acquisition / community screenings



Our Warrior: was selected for competition in the 2025 Impact Docs Award and received an Award of Merit.

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The producers of this film acknowledge the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands this film was made. We pay our respect to Country and to Elders, past and present.

SYNOPSIS

RESISTANCE ACROSS GENERATIONS, THE POWER OF FAMILY AND THE UNRELENTING STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN A COUNTRY THAT REMAINS IN DENIAL.

Aboriginal political activist Robbie Thorpe stands as part of a long line of Indigenous resistance to invasion.

This 53 minute documentary shows the making of this modern leader and tracks the resurgence of a powerful Black, Indigenous, anti-colonial movement that is currently reshaping the country.

Our Warrior looks back at Robbie's early life, his family and explores the emergence of his radical politics in the formative years of Black Power in Australia, his apprenticeship in the 1970's under Dr Bruce McGuiness, and his emergence as one of the most controversial and uncompromising activists in Australia today.

This film examines his political impact as an activist, how he sustains himself against such great odds and whom he has influenced. In doing so the film uncovers the story of how resistance and resilience is transmitted across generations and the power of family.

Robbie is Krauatungalung (Gurnai) / Djapwurrung (Gunddijmara) raised in Yallourn, a State Electricity Commission town in Eastern Victoria and later moving to inner-city Fitzroy with his family.

Robbie has organised challenges to ongoing genocide, colonization and assimilation for more than 35 years, always working toward indigenous economic and political independence.

This documentary is the first to give us a sense of who he is the forces that shaped him.

Robbie's high court legal actions on Genocide were broader than the Mabo case and shifted the national conversation and ultimately our laws. His series of high profile controversial political and cultural interventions have shaken many out of complacency.

He remains a fierce and unrelenting advocate today.

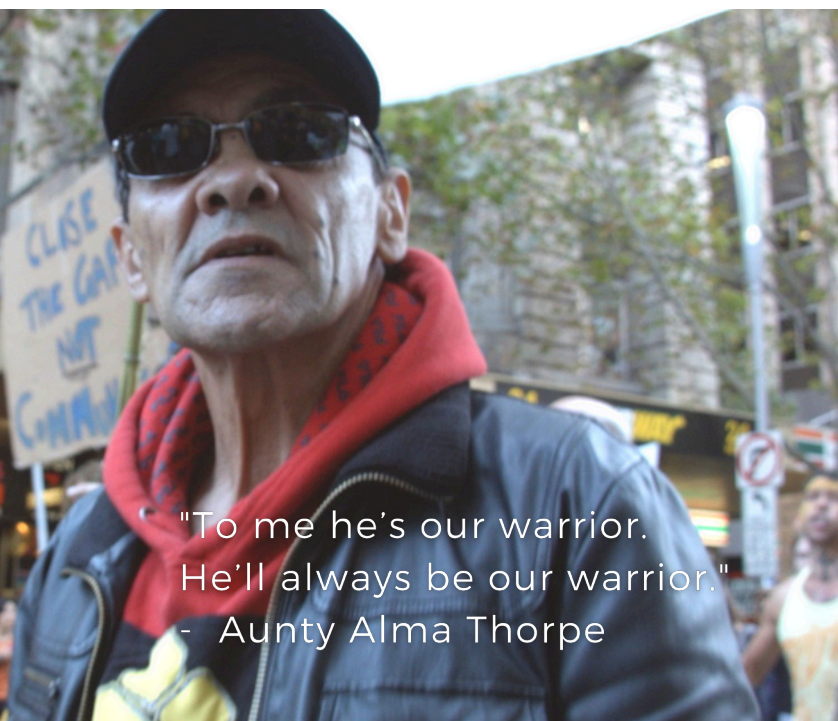
Our Warrior looks back at the 60-day Camp Sovereignty during the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in 2006, which Robbie rebranded as the StolenWealth Games and declared the Black GST (Genocide to end, Sovereignty acknowledged, Treaty to be made). It put Robbie in the international spotlight and attracted criticism from prime ministers, premiers and even other Aboriginal activists, including Elders.

Camp Sovereignty's influence, however, upon today's new generation of activists is profound.

Robbie draws the threads of two centuries of oppression together by relentlessly focusing our attention on the core injustices. His messages are critical to modern Australia.

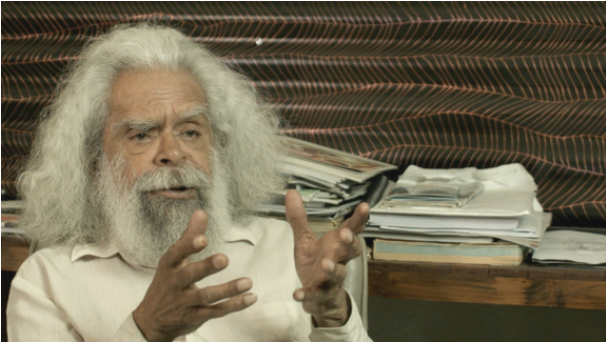
He is outspoken and always provocative, providing high-profile voice and leadership yet also acting as a mentor and quiet support to indigenous and non-indigenous people alike. He stands unapologetically on the most controversial and radical edge of Indigenous politics.

As the country debates its 'Australia Day' foundation myths and as governments grapple with Treaty negotiations with the First Nations of Australia, the story of Robbie Thorpe is vital.



"To me he's our warrior.
He'll always be our warrior."
- Aunty Alma Thorpe

APPEARING



Uncle Jack Charles. Award-winning actor of stage and film, musician, Stolen Generations member and subject of the 2008 documentary *Bastardy*. Born to a Bunurong mother and Wiradjuri father at Cummeragunja Mission on the Murray River, Charles was a victim of the Australian Government's forced assimilation programme which took him from his mother as an infant. In 1971 he co-founded, with Bob Maza, Nindethana ('place for a corroboree') at The Pram Factory in Melbourne, Australia's first Indigenous theatre group. Uncle Jack passed in September 2022.

Auntie Alma Thorpe. Auntie Alma is a truly inspiring woman. A Gunditjmarara Elder who was born and raised in inner-city Fitzroy during the Great Depression, Auntie Alma helped develop the groundbreaking Fitzroy Aboriginal Health Service project from which many of the other community organisations were formed. At 18 she married and moved to the regional town of Yallourn where Robbie was born. Auntie Alma was a close friend to champion Lionel Rose and the late Dr Bruce McGuiness, she was instrumental in the formation of the Black Power movement, the struggle land rights and sovereignty throughout the 1970's and eighties. As Robbie's mother, Auntie Alma provides the films' title and forms the central focus of the story. "My children became activists because of me."



Meriki Onus. Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance cofounder and one of the extraordinary leaders of the wave of huge indigenous street marches, occupations and anti-colonial actions over the past decade. Meriki is Robbie's niece, Marjorie's daughter and the granddaughter of respected Aboriginal Elder Edna Brown.

Vivian Podesser (Malo) was a proud Goonyandi woman, producer of *Black Block* on radio 3CR, a close friend and collaborator of Robbie's, a fiery speaker and an extraordinarily brave and ferocious activist with the group First Nations Liberation. Vivian died way too young in January 2022. News of her passing, aged 48, sparked an outpouring of social media tributes and heartfelt solidarity for her partner, Robbie Thorpe.



Lidia Thorpe. As a high profile and outspoken member of Victorian Parliament with the Greens over 2017-2018 Lidia played a prominent, high-profile role in the Treaty framework negotiations in Victoria. Lidia is Robbie's niece and credits Robbie for given her her first job at the Koorie Information Centre (KIC) in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy. Lidia is now an independent Federal Senator for Victoria and committed to building the momentum for Treaties and Truth-Telling processes led by First Peoples at the national level,

APPEARING

Professor Gary Foley. As an historian, activist and a long-time colleague of Robbie's, (they met in 1972) Gary provides the critical historical positioning and perspective on Robbie's impact and role in the film. Gary was born in Grafton (1950), northern NSW of Gumbainggir descent and has been at the centre of major political activities including the Springbok tour demonstrations and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in the early 1970's. He was involved in the establishment of the first Aboriginal self-help and survival organisations including Redfern's Aboriginal Legal Service and many others.

In 1994 Foley created the first Aboriginal owned and operated website *Koori History* which remains one of the most comprehensive Aboriginal education resources available today online. He is currently Professor, Moondani Balluk Indigenous Academic Unit.



Auntie Marjorie Thorpe. A descendant of the Gunnai and Maar people of South-Eastern Australia, Marj was born and raised in Yallourn, Victoria and is highly experienced political activist for Aboriginal and women's rights and a dedicated community worker. She has been a Director and Senior research officer with the Resource Unit for Indigenous Mental Health Education and research, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne, a director of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and Coordinator of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). She also held the positions of Victorian Co-Commissioner for the Stolen Generations Inquiry and Council member for the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1997-2000. Marjorie is Robbie's sister, was part of the small organising team for Camp Sovereignty in 2006 and has been a comrade and fellow trouble maker since childhood.

Professor Tony Birch. Tony is an acclaimed and award-winning author, historian and was the Dr Bruce McGuinness Indigenous Research Fellow at Victoria University. Tony is the author of *The White Girl* and *Ghost River*, which won the 2016 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Indigenous Writing, and *Blood*, which was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award. Tony has been awarded the Patrick White Literary Award for his contribution to Australian literature and is currently Boisbouvier Chair in Australian Literature, Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.



"We're all actors in our own right, us Blackfellas.
But Robbie Thorpe, his act is a good one"
- Uncle Jack Charles



DIRECTORS BIO

Anthony Kelly started shooting Super 8 as a teenager, trained at Open Channel in Fitzroy in the early 1990's and shot punk gigs, protests and post-apocalyptic shorts until activism and campaign work took over. He had to put the camera down for the next 20 years after realizing that you cant play key organising roles and shoot documentaries at the same time.

Nowadays Anthony brings over three decades of peace, environmental and social justice activism to documentary film making. Anthony has shot, edited and directed a series of short-form and mid-length projects over the past 10 years. Our Warrior is his first mid-length documentary as Director.

Based in Melbourne, Australia Anthony forefronts important, under-heard and deeply personal narratives of resistance, change and resilience in the face of extraordinary odds.

FILMOGRAPHY

War On Trial (2016) 52'. Directed by David Bradbury, Frontline Films, Official Selection Global Peace Film Festival 2016. - Editor

Waging Peace (2015) 49'. Directed by David Bradbury, Frontline Films - Editor

Hidden Valley (2013). 23' - Directed by Jessie Boylan. Produced by the Mineral Policy Institute. Premiered as opening film at the Environmental Film Festival Melbourne, Australia. (September 2013) - Editor

Maralinga Pieces (2012) 12' - Directed by Jessie Boylan. World Premiere screening at the 2nd International Uranium Film Festival, Rio, Brazil 2012, Official Selection for the SoCal Film Festival, California, 2012, Touring Uranium Film Festival Berlin, 2012
Official Selection for the Byron Bay Film Festival (BBFF), Australia, 2013 - Editor

Other films see:
www.anthonykelly-doco.com

DIRECTORS NOTES

I am a Melbourne based independent documentary filmmaker and editor but it is through decades of peace, environment and social justice activism that I got to know Robbie Thorpe.

I first met Robbie around 1989 when he would attend activist meetings around Melbourne arguing for us to join the Pay the Rent campaign – in which non-indigenous people would contribute a small percentage of their income to Indigenous controlled organisations or campaigns, which would then provide an independent economic base for Aboriginal resistance. Pay the Rent exemplified Robbie's strategic vision – as a tactic it was brilliantly constructive.

It emphasized independence, practical solidarity, and drove home Robbie's key messages that Indigenous Sovereignty was never ceded, nor was there any form of treaty and that all non-indigenous people in Australia are living on the proceeds of an horrific, illegal and premeditated act of genocide.

But Pay the Rent was only one of Robbie's campaigns. In 1991, Robbie ceremoniously marched to the statue of Melbourne's revered 'Founding Father' John Batman in Collins Street and, before a crowd of several hundred people, proceeded to put him on trial for crimes against humanity, genocide and murder. The statue's hands were made red – his crimes were listed and hung around the statue's neck.

I witnessed this form of expertly conceived, theatrical, deeply symbolic protest action from Robbie over the next two decades.

To me, Robbie has been a primary educator. I've listened to and learnt from Robbie throughout my work as a social justice and human rights campaigner. I know Australia is a crime scene and I know why.



Robbie draws the threads of two centuries of oppression together by relentlessly focusing our attention on the core injustices. I believe that Robbie's messages are critical to modern Australia. I want to explore why and examine his political impact as an activist.

I have been interested in how Robbie sustains himself against such great odds. What drives him to continue to resist colonialism in a country that was occupied 237 years ago? His public rhetoric is powerful and relentless but I want this film to provide a sense of who he is and the forces that shaped him.

As a filmmaker I have an opportunity to forefront important and under-heard narratives. The issues of sovereignty and treaty raised by Robbie are vital to me not only as a social justice activist but also as a citizen of this colonial-settler nation state, which we call Australia. Through this film I took a place amongst a long line of non-indigenous filmmakers depicting, documenting and collaborating with Indigenous artists activists and communities [i]. Whether that 'line' should continue or not is an open question.

As a non-Indigenous filmmaker respect, consent and appropriate cultural pathways[ii] are vital. I have drawn much from Clare Land's 2015 book [Decolonising Solidarity](#) [iii] which reckoned with much of the tensions, dilemmas and complicity of my own activist and movement based experience and emphasised critical self-reflection, acknowledging intersectionality and the need to act politically. I hope this documentary comes close to meeting [Lester-Irabinna Rigney's](#) definition of 'Indigenist research' – which is research that is culturally safe and respectful and follows three principles: that it is guided by resistance as an emancipatory imperative, that it has political integrity, and that it privileges Indigenous voices. These principles have informed my research, production and editing throughout.

Through this film I have looked for ways to interpret, communicate, depict the struggle that Robbie articulates to audiences beyond those already engaged. I will be looking to ways to maximize its social and political impact.

I want to thank Robbie for sticking with this project and his patience as year after year went by. I also wish to thank the entire Thorpe family for their support, trust and extraordinary generosity of spirit.

Anthony Kelly 2025



SCREENINGS

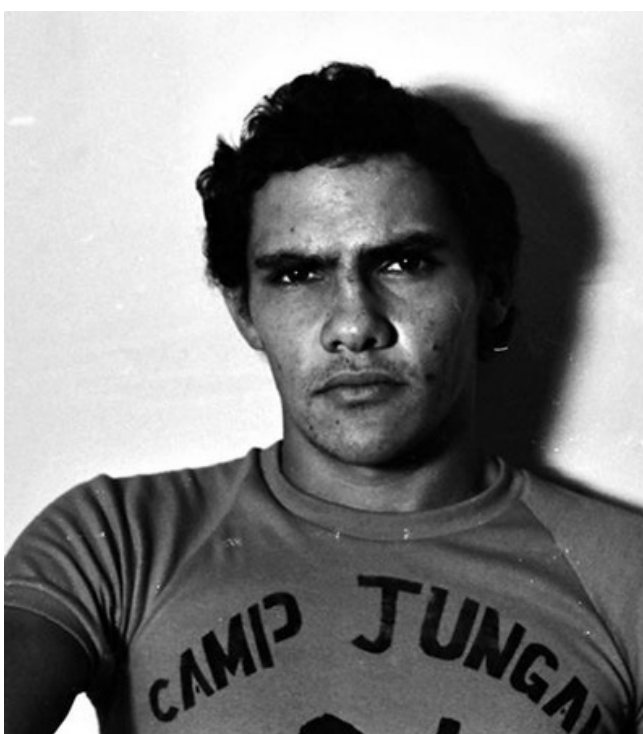
Festival submissions are underway.

Our Warrior: The Story of Robbie Thorpe currently has World Premier status.

Our Warrior: The Story of Robbie Thorpe is currently seeking broadcast or streaming.

“to accept one’s past — one’s history - is not the same thing as drowning in it.”

- James Baldwin



AUDIENCE, OUTREACH AND IMPACT

Genocide, Sovereignty & Treaty, (Genocide to end, Sovereignty acknowledged, Treaty to be made), the three core goals espoused by Robbie's lifetime of activism stand on the radical edge of indigenous politics in Australia.

Mainstream engagement with each of these areas is growing in Australia but remains marginal. There is no denying that each speak to the core legal, moral, ethical, historical and contemporary understandings of Australia.

The deeper and contextual exploration of these issues provided by the mid-length documentary format goes far beyond what news media formats can provide. This project is designed to provoke audience engagement with these issues in a way that personalizes each, through the voices of prominent and experienced activists, family history and narrative.[1]

Subjects in this film are at the very forefront of the debates around Treaty, sovereignty and reconciliation.

The sheer scale of the annual Invasion Day marches around Australia each 26 January are shaking the countries foundations. The growing calls to change the date or to totally abolish Australia's national day of celebration, are but one indication of the rapidly growing interest in the subject matter covered in *Our Warrior: The story of Robbie Thorpe*.

The project's outreach and impact plan includes an array of distribution methods which engaged increasingly wider audiences. Each engagement area is designed to increasingly build and widen audience.[2]

This film will provoke, engage and bring focus to the critical conversations we will continue to have in Australia.

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer - conducted by Reconciliation Australia shows a growing support for truth-telling to "acknowledge the reality of Australia's shared history". 80% of people considered it to be important. [3]

All voices in the emerging debate need to be heard - not just those who have national platforms already.

Our Warrior had Australian film festival premiere at the Birrarangga Film Festival in March 2025 with no less than 4 sold out screenings. It will have a minimum 12-month festival release, aiming for at least one A-list festival screening per continent with multiple city festivals throughout the world.

Producers are then anticipating a local, Australian TV broadcast with streaming options.

US, European and Asian streaming or broadcast networks will be approached.

Parallel to this will be a concerted campaign of community screenings (requests are already coming in) around Australia. QandA's, forums and local special event screening will aim to build an audience, generate discussion and engagement and support local struggles and campaigns.

Our Warrior's hero themes stand it apart from documentary's that focus upon Aboriginal disadvantage or specific or local struggles. It is this hero theme that will attract wider and international audiences intrigued by the depiction of a modern urban warrior and his struggle.



CRIME SCENE AUSTRALIA

www.crimesceneaustralia.com

Robbie Thorpe is prosecuting a case of Genocide to the international community, using the lens of International Customary Law, to get justice at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The cases assert that the current legal framework perpetuates the destruction of Aboriginal communities by denying their sovereignty.

[1] IMPACT WORKBOOK 2016 ENGAGEMENT LAB, The Fledgling Fund.

[2] <https://www.if.com.au/tom-zubrycki-charts-the-shifting-face-of-the-documentary-sector/>.

[3] Reconciliation Australia News 11 Feb 2019 <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-support-grows-but-more-needs-to-be-done-latest-australian-reconciliation-barometer/>

STILLS



CREDITS

MUSIC

'Rekindled Systems'
Allara

'Indigenous Land'
Neil Morris DrmngNow

'Ancestors' (instrumental)
Neil Morris DrmngNow

'Indian Love Song'
The Dirty Three
Ellis/White/Turner

'Naming & Blaming'
Public Opinion Afro Orchestra

'We have Survived'
No Fixed Address
Bart Willoughby & R. Harrison

'The Whale Rider Song'
The Bart Willoughby Band
Bart Willoughby

'Stranger In My Country'
Vic Simms

'Genocide'
Us Mob

PRODUCTION

Camera: Anthony Kelly

Soundtrack and music: Neil Morris

Editor: Anthony Kelly

Sound mix: Dale Warren & Paul Shanahan

Colourist: Dan Molony

On-line edit: Steve Jansen

Post-Production: CityPost

Motion graphics and Animation: Keke Marc Robertson, Daniel King, Isobel Knowles

FUNDING

Made with the generous support of:

City of Yarra Arts

Black Rainbow Printers

Pay the Rent

and 136 crowd funders

Financed with the assistance of Documentary Australia Foundation

And the PAY THE RENT COMMITTEE



WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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Everyone at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Canberra

All of the Thorpe Family for their support and generosity.

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Jade Soldati, Chris Peterson
Aboriginal Advancement League, Kellie Snr,
Bunjilaka Cultural Centre, Multicultural Arts Victoria,
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
Lionel Rose painting at MAYSAR Gym by Bryan Membrey
Glass Windows appearing with Lionel Rose Footage at the MAYSAR Gym
designed by Mandy Nicholson

COLONIAL FRONTIER MASSACRES DATA COLLATED BY:

Colonial Frontier Massacres in Central and Eastern Australia
1788-1930
Digital Humanities Lab
Centre for 21st Century Humanities
The University of Newcastle (UON)
in consultation with The Wollotuka Institute and AIATSIS.
