

AFTERLIGHT

A FILM ABOUT GRIEF & HEALING
DIRECTED BY BEN PFEIFFER



TENACIOUS Stories

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Research from Screen Australia's Audience Insights shows that films addressing mental health issues have seen a 32% increase in audience engagement over the past five years.

– SCREEN AUSTRALIA (2023)

WHY THIS FILM, WHY NOW?

The COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented global grief experience. Over 7 million confirmed COVID-19 deaths have been recorded globally, with estimates of excess mortality suggesting the true figure could be 15-20 million (WHO, 2024).

- 68% of Australians report the pandemic fundamentally changed how they experience death and grief.
- Research published in The Lancet estimates that over 10.5 million children worldwide lost a parent or primary caregiver due to COVID-19.
- 54% of Australian adults report that the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health.

Complicated grief affects 10-20% of bereaved individuals. In Australia, **this translates to hundreds of thousands who are suffering in silence:**

- The economic cost of grief and bereavement in Australia is estimated at \$2.7 billion annually in healthcare costs and lost productivity.
- According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, approximately 15% of bereaved Australians develop complicated grief, affecting roughly 300,000 people annually (AIHW, 2023).
- Only 23% of Australians experiencing complicated grief seek professional help.

Cultural Relevance in a Diverse Society.

Our film's exploration of grief through the lens of cultural identity resonates deeply in Australia's increasingly diverse society:

- The 2021 Census revealed 29.3% of Australia's population was born overseas, with India and Sri Lanka among the fastest-growing migrant communities (ABS, 2022).
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that since 1979, approximately 9,700 children have been adopted through intercountry adoption programs, many facing unique challenges with grief and identity.



THE HEALING POWER OF SHARED STORIES

In a time when conversations about mental health are emerging from the shadows in Australia:

- A University of Melbourne study found that authentic portrayals of grief in media can reduce stigma and increase help-seeking behaviour by up to 24% (University of Melbourne, 2022)
- The Australia Council for the Arts reports that 63% of Australians believe creative content helps them process emotional experiences like grief (Australia Council, 2023)

Our film arrives at a pivotal moment when millions are seeking to understand their grief journeys in the wake of collective trauma. It offers not just entertainment, but a roadmap for healing—showing that there is no single "right way" to grieve, only the path that leads each of us toward presence and peace.

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The acting is great, the characters believable and relatable and the complexities of their ‘dying days’ beautifully articulated and filmed. I had tears several times throughout the film – and I imagine the audience will too! It is a powerful film.”

- PETREA KING, QUEST FOR LIFE, OFFICIAL PARTNER

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

Grief is universal, timeless, and an inevitable part of the human experience. Its complexity and depth have always fascinated me—how it evolves and takes on different shapes in response to loss. The COVID-19 pandemic brought grief to the forefront on an unprecedented scale—not only for the millions of lives lost but for entire ways of life, careers, and industries. In this collective sorrow, grief has proven itself to be a force that unites us. It need not remain a private battle hidden behind closed doors.

In 2006, after an 18-month battle with mesothelioma, my father passed away. Then, life mirrored art when, during post-production, my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. This devastating news refined my vision, prompting small but significant changes to the story. In many ways, *AFTERLIGHT* became a love letter to my mother—a homage to honour her life.

This story explores themes of loss, legacy, and love—what we leave behind and the impact of our lives. It is a testament to my growth as a filmmaker, and with a refined vision, I am more determined than ever to bring this universal story to audiences.



STORY

Themes:

End Of Life, Cross-Cultural Adoption, Motherhood, Identity, Complex Relationship Dynamics, Sexuality, Queer parenting.

Vianne, a feisty – almost seventy-year-old has received a terminal cancer diagnosis and is determined to die at her home in regional Victoria. Her oldest child, Connie, a detached and somewhat hard-headed individual, has made the decision to be her mother's sole end-of-life carer. The two younger children, Quinn and Amal, both come to keep vigil as Vianne's passing looms.

Each child has a different way of grieving – each approach shaped by their courage or desire to confront the truth. For Connie, denial and pragmatism allow her to hold grief at arms length.

Quinn, a single gay father, possesses an emotional maturity and the ability to hold space for his mother's journey. Vianne can express her fears, reservations and beliefs with Quinn. Spirited and passionate Amal, adopted from Sri Lanka as a baby, is the last to arrive at his mother's bedside. The feelings of abandonment he holds for his birthmother suddenly begin to intermingle with the imminent loss of the woman who brought him up as her own. He desperately tries to reconcile his own sense of cultural identity and his place as a brown man who was raised in a white, Western world.

As Vianne tackles her impending death with humour and humility, the onus falls on each child to face the inevitable and choose presence and peace, or let this milestone moment pass them by.

The film is broken into 3 parts with the same series of events around Vianne's passing seen three times over but from single points of view, first through Connie's, then Quinn's and then Amal. Each POV differing from their contrasting grief journeys.



PARTNER

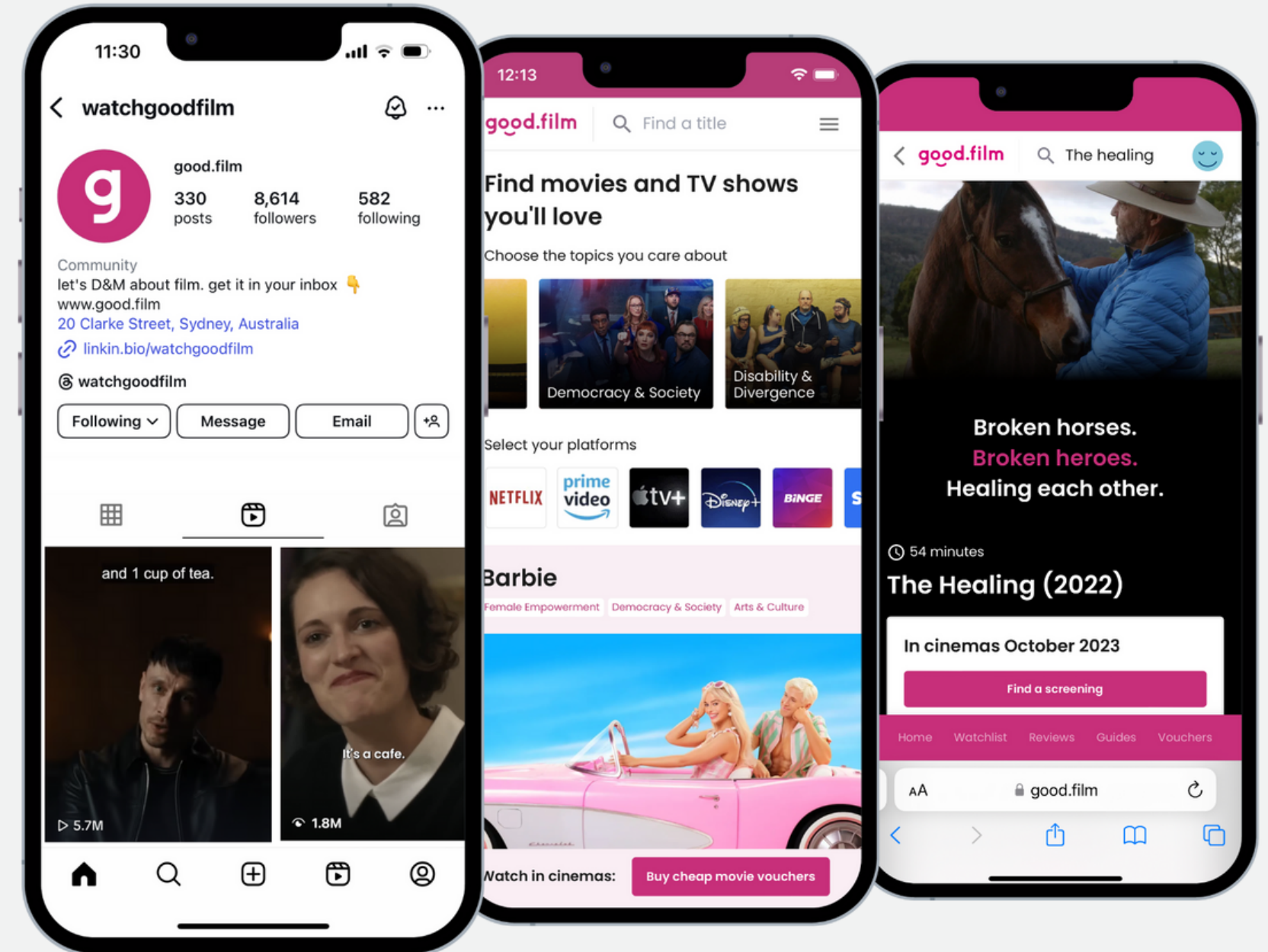
We are proud to partner with Australia's leading Impact Producer, good.film, to bring AFTERLIGHT to audiences all over Australia and globally. The good.film audience platform taps into a rapidly growing community of cinema and TV lovers from around the world with their proven partnership with ground-breaking films such as The Seed of the Sacred Fig, Mozart's Sister, The Healing and many more.

Impact campaign for theatrical release objectives:

- Amplify the film's reach and message.
- Integrate the film's release with the work of charity partners for AFTERLIGHT, (eg. Quest for Life Foundation, Salvo's, Love Your Sister).
- Connect audiences with solutions and support systems around grief and loss.

Audience reach:

- Social Media: Targeted social media strategy across TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn with consistently high views and content reach.
- good.film partners with the following cinemas in Australia: EVENT, VILLAGE CINEMAS, DENDY CINEMAS and HOYTS CINEMAS.
- Vast online presence through video and written blog content and interviews with filmmakers and audiences worldwide.





TARGET MARKET

Although AFTERLIGHT is designed to connect with a range of cinemagoers, our target audience is 40 to 60-year-old women, as this segment of society is most likely dealing with sick parents or an impending loss. Many women in this age bracket are supporting teenage or young adult offspring while also caring for ageing parents and navigating grief and loss. This has been termed a 'midlife collision' by UK Psychologist, Dr Lucy Ryan.

In Australia (2023), predominant cinemagoers were females 40+. This demographic has financial power, they are value driven, value experience over materialism, they have a health and wellness focus and foster a sense of community and social engagement.



IMPACT TOUR

August - November 2026

- AFTERLIGHT will screen across independent regional and metropolitan cinemas throughout Australia including a Q&A at each screening.
- A national tour will amplify the message with partners, supported by Producers, the Writer/Director and key Cast members.
- The Q&A will include discussion from a range of professionals including grief counsellors, end of life specialists and those dealing with terminal cancer.
- We will use grassroots outreach to form meaningful partnerships with organisations, in order for them to use this film to the best of their advantage.

Objectives:

- Raise public awareness about grief and loss and build community.
- Create safe spaces to have conversations about grief, including different aspects, personal loss, societal views of grief and stages of grief.
- Providing resources: practical information for support groups and mental health organisations.
- Reach regional and metropolitan communities across Victoria and Australia.





BUILDING OUR AUDIENCE

We would like to offer our distribution partners help in marketing and promoting the film and will be working with good.film to formulate a strategic plan, including:

Theatrical release:

- Introductions and submissions to major national/international festivals.
- Support of independent cinemas to entice our audience.
- Non-traditional route through private screenings across regional and metropolitan Australia, including a feedback event with the writer/director, lead cast and producers.
- Rally film critics and Letterboxd reviewers to start conversations about the film.

Promotion & Social Media:

- Content marketing and trailers (social media, media release and interviews).
- Building awareness via active social media (TikTok, Instagram, FB) and PR channels including publicity through podcasts, publications and interviews (Radio, TV and panels).
- Create a loyal #AfterlightFilm community opening discussion about grief with support resources.
- Supporting distribution through extra press coverage of all significant events and screenings.
- Cross promotions through partner organisations (Quest for Life, Salvo's Jean Hailes and Love Your Sister).
- Provide materials for our large base of loyal crowdfunding supporters to share.

MEDIA ATTENTION THUS FAR

IF magazine - 19th February 2024

"Community and family ties help Ben Pfeiffer delve into the different stages of grief with 'Afterlight'"

<https://if.com.au/community-and-family-ties-help-ben-pfeiffer-delve-into-the-different-stages-of-grief-with-the-returned/>

Hamilton Spectator - 17th February 2024

"Cinematic sunset at Wannon" - Front page

<https://spec.com.au/article/general/2024/02/17/cinematic-sunset-at-wannon/>

ABC South West Radio - Breakfast - 15th February 2024

link currently unavaialble

Mixx889 - 19th February 2024

"Movie recording"

<https://mixx889.com.au/articles/movie-recording/>

The Spectator - Newspaper article - 2nd September 2023

"Wannon picked for filming location"

<https://spec.com.au/article/general/2023/09/02/wannon-picked-for-filming-location/>

Link to all press:

<https://www.tenaciousstories.net/pr>

FilmInk - 24th October 2023

"Prepare for Afterlight"

<https://www.filmink.com.au/prepare-for-the-returned/>

FilmInk - 10th November 2023

"Join the Journey: 'Afterlight' Crowdfunding Campaign"

<https://www.filmink.com.au/public-notice/join-the-journey-the-returned-crowdfunding-campaign-for-a-feature-film-about-grief-and-terminal-illness/>

Cinema Australia -30th November 2023

"Join the Journey: Crowdfunding campaign"

<https://cinemaaustralia.com.au/2023/11/29/join-the-journey-crowdfunding-campaign-launched-for-feature-film-about-grief-and-terminal-illness-the-returned/>

The Big Smoke - 11th December 2023

"Afterlight – Up close and personal experience of grief and terminal illness"

<https://thebigsmoke.com.au/2023/12/11/the-returned-up-close-and-personal-experience-of-grief-and-terminal-illness/>

Creative Constitution - Podcast Episode -15th January 2024

"Why Being Resourceful is a Must for Creatives"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WBT8XGYCTo>

PRODUCTION TEAM



JOSEPHINE CROFT
PRODUCER

Josephine is interested in subtle styles of storytelling that resonate with our emotions and show multidimensional characters. She has produced multiple short films and web series. Her debut project, 'Hitting Zero', has over 60,000 views on YouTube and is set to be released as a feature documentary shortly. Her latest projects are 'Grounded' and 'In Newcastle Tonight'. 'Grounded', a short horror film set on an empty, disembarked plane, gained many nominations and awards on the festival circuit and will be released online shortly. It's currently in development to become a feature film. Her most recent film, 'Love', was a semi-finalist in this year's Very Short Film Festival.



AHALYA MAHARAJ
PRODUCER

Ahalya's career path encompasses finance, tech startups, and creative ventures with her expertise extending into digital strategy, marketing, leadership and growth. Presently, she manages a talented team for a global organisation. Parallel to her day work, Ahalya pursued screen acting and has spent years immersed in the craft. Her academic background in law, social policy and the arts merge to ignite her passion for bringing purpose driven stories with heart and a strong social conscience to the big screen.



AMANDA LABONTE
PRODUCER

Amanda LaBonte, is a powerhouse in the Performing Arts Industry with over 25 years of experience as a highly skilled actor and producer. As the co-founder and manager of Essential Theatre, a thriving independent theatre company, Amanda has played a pivotal role in shaping the Australian theatrical landscape for two decades. As Amanda continues contributing to the vibrant tapestry of Australian theatre, she seamlessly transitions her wealth of skills into the world of screen. With a career marked by innovation, resilience, and a love for storytelling, Amanda LaBonte remains a luminary in the performing arts community.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUY



PETE VULINOVICH
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Pete is a creative copywriter with 7+ years' experience in the advertising industry. He's built his career at international agencies including Wunderman Thompson and Grey, collaborating with notable clients such as Ford, Subway, and Kelloggs. Where Pete really shines is in the world of social media, having amassed a 59k+ following on TikTok with a number of videos clocking millions of views.

As a writer-director himself, Pete brings a unique dual perspective to content creation. He's passionate about leveraging social media's power to forge meaningful connections between audiences and filmmakers, helping authentic stories find their perfect viewers.



THANK YOU

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TENACIOUS Stories