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PRODUCTIONS



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# SWEET COUNTRY

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TORONTO INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL 2017



# SWEET COUNTRY

A Film by Warwick Thornton

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Create NSW  
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## SYNOPSIS

Sam, a middle-aged Aboriginal man, works for a preacher in the outback of Australia's Northern Territory. When Harry, a bitter war veteran, moves into a neighbouring outpost, the preacher sends Sam and his family to help Harry renovate his cattle yards. But Sam's relationship with the cruel and ill-tempered Harry quickly deteriorates, culminating in a violent shootout in which Sam kills Harry in self-defence.

As a result, Sam becomes a wanted criminal for the murder of a white man, and is forced to flee with his wife across the deadly outback, through glorious but harsh desert country. A hunting party led by the local lawman Sergeant Fletcher is formed to track Sam down. But as the true details of the killing start to surface, the community begins to question whether justice is really being served.



## LONG SYNOPSIS

*Sweet Country* is set in 1929 in outback Alice Springs, in the Northern Territory.

When Harry March (*Ewen Leslie*), a shell-shocked World War I veteran, asks station owner Mick Kennedy (*Thomas M. Wright*) for the loan of some of his Aboriginal workers to help on his property, Kennedy sends his head stockman Archie (*Gibson John*) and a young boy Philomac (*Tremayne Doolan/Trevon Doolan*).

When they arrive at Harry's station, Harry immediately chains Philomac. During the night, Philomac unpicks the lock and escapes. He makes a run for it to the neighbouring Black Hill station where Aboriginal head stockman Sam Kelly (*Hamilton Morris*) and his pregnant wife Lizzie (*Natassia Gorey-Furber*) are alone on the station while their boss, Fred Smith (*Sam Neill*), is in town.

Following closely behind Philomac on horseback, Harry arrives at Black Hill. Storming up to the Homestead, he demands they give him back the boy. Harry is yelling and threatening with his rifle. When Harry starts shooting at Sam Kelly, Sam kills Harry in self-defence.

An expert bushman, Sam and Lizzie quickly go on the run across country, with a posse pursuing them - across the outback and through beautiful desert plains.

Eventually, for the health of his pregnant wife, Sam gives himself up and a trial is held in town. In the courtroom in front of Judge Taylor (*Matt Day*) the truth comes out about Sam's actions – and he is acquitted on the grounds of self defence. Justice has been served.

Fred, Sam, Lizzie and Lucy (*Shanika Cole*) set off on their journey home, but soon after leaving town, a shot rings out ...



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

## Warwick Thornton

"*Sweet Country* is set in Central Australia, where both me and writer David Tranter grew up. We both come from the same town and I've known him most of my life. My Kaytej tribe shares borders with David's tribe, the Alyawarra. When David came to me with a beautiful script, loosely based on stories passed down to him by his Grandfather I immediately connected to it and realised it had a lot of me in it too.

Our families went through a lot of the same things, and it's a history we would hear about growing up. In the 1920's we indigenous Australians weren't technically slaves but we worked for free, worked for rations, under the authority imposed by a law called the Native Affairs Act. So these family stories are also my inheritance - a personal part of this history that belongs to all of us.

One of these stories is the true tale of an Aboriginal man, Wilaberta Jack, who in the 1920s was arrested and tried for the murder of a white man in Central Australia. He was found innocent on the grounds of self-defence. The politics of the era didn't accept the verdict and Wilaberta Jack was the victim of a revenge killing.

Wilaberta Jack is our Sam, who has become his own character with his own original story. While Sam drives the plot and is our central character, the story is also told through the eyes of the character of Philomac. Philomac is an Aboriginal boy of 14 who lives on a cattle station, and is coming of age while caught between the social upheaval and cultural conflict of frontier life in 1920s Central Australia.

The film has all the elements of the Western genre - the frontier, confiscation of land, subordination and conquest of a people and epic sweeping landscapes.

In relation to many classic westerns however, things are turned upside down. We don't have any clear-cut heroes here, or simple ideas of good and evil projected onto a straightforward narrative.

When I was growing up, VHS tapes had opened up a large back catalogue of classic films, and I would watch a lot of classic American westerns and just not really connect, because the Indians were always the bad guys. And I'm an Indian, from an indigenous tribe connected to a country that was stolen.

But then I discovered other Western films, many of them Italian – movies like *The Good The Bad and The Ugly*, *A Fistful of Dollars*, or the *Trinity* series where everything was a little different. These movies featured anti-heroes, and the thieves still possessed the ability to have moral thoughts. These films inspired me to see the potential of the genre to tell my story.

With *Sweet Country* I wanted to look at all the different sides. The film isn't meant to blindly portray racism as a simple, senseless evil, but rather as a systematic reality of the time.

*Sweet Country* was shot in the MacDonnell Ranges. This is mesmerising country, it's where I grew up. The landscape is truly another character in the film, especially in the scenes with the posse chasing Sam and Lizzie across the countryside.

*Sweet Country* uses the vast spaces of the desert and its silence to emphasise the story of our characters and the hardships they face. The Aboriginal characters' communication reflects the authenticity of the local culture - using looks, hand signals and that understanding between them, rather than being all in the dialogue.

From the beginning I decided there wouldn't be music in the film. I didn't want to use the score as an overarching emotion. I wanted to keep the reality based in this time, in this place, in each scene as it played out. Getting rid of the score helped me focus entirely on the story and the characters, and move towards the narrowing of truth I wanted to find with the film.

The world of *Sweet Country* has been newly established by the British Crown through the forceful taking of Indigenous lands. Yet these are lands which did and still do possess a deep and complex web of ancient Indigenous laws, customs and life.

Here on this frontier outpost in 1929, the different cultural worlds collide in an epic and beautiful desert landscape. It is a place where Indigenous, and non-Indigenous people push against each other like tectonic plates. It is a clash of cultures, ideologies and spirits that still continues today from when the colonisers first arrived in Australia.

It's a history that isn't taught or spoken about much outside of specialised departments at the university. The issues raised in *Sweet Country* rarely find their way into mainstream consciousness.

In that sense there's a deep connection between *Sweet Country* and my other films. What we see in *Sweet Country* is directly connected to the world we saw in *Samson and Delilah*. This is its foundational history. The taking of country, the belittling, the racism – these things become generational.

My aim has been to use the accessibility of the genre for audiences to enter and be drawn into this world, and so experience the issues faced by an occupied people. The film's immersive approach is designed to break down the cultural boundaries between us and bring us together.”

**Warwick Thornton**

DIRECTOR





“Warwick Thornton’s films mark him as a unique voice in Australian cinema. His great film, *Samson and Delilah* won the prestigious *Camera d’Or* at the *2009 Cannes Film Festival*. His short films have played at the A-List International festivals. Both *Nana* and *Greenbush* premiered at the *Berlin International Film Festival* – with *Nana* winning the *Crystal Bear* for *Best Short Film*. Each of Warwick’s films offers a powerful personal vision.. He is above all, a director, but Warwick Thornton is also an award-winning cinematographer and he shot *Sweet Country* together with his son Dylan River.

*Sweet Country* is a historical drama and a chase thriller, delivering the unique and artistic vision Warwick Thornton brings to his films. In some ways Warwick employs the iconography of a classic Western – evidenced in wardrobe, location and the production design – yet he also brings his own particular visual style and staging to the film.

The film employs a wonderful mix of marquee Australian actors and local first time actors from Alice Springs which gives a powerful sense of authenticity to the story and the world.

We have Sam Neill as religious good Samaritan “Fred Smith”, Bryan Brown as the tough local police sergeant “Fletcher”, Ewen Leslie as the shell-shocked first world war veteran “Harry March” and Thomas M. Wright as the selfish narcissist “Kennedy”. They all deliver outstanding performances.

# SWEET COUNTRY

PRODUCERS’ STATEMENT  
Greer Simpkin and David Jowsey

These performances are matched by our local Alice Springs Aboriginal actors primarily from the “Arremte” tribal group and most related to one another. Hamilton Morris plays “Sam Kelly” one of the lead roles in the film. Hamilton had acted on the television series “8MMM” shot previously in Alice Springs. The role of the young boy Philomac was in fact played by 13 year old identical twins Tremayne and Trevon Doolan. It was the twins’ first experience in front of the camera and they combine brilliantly to portray the vulnerable Philomac coming of age into a rapidly changing world.

*Sweet Country* offers a stunning cinematic vision set in the magnificent desert landscape of the MacDonnell Ranges around Alice Springs in central Australia.

The fictional town of “Henry” is located at Ooramina Homestead some 30 kilometres from the town of Alice Springs. Ooramina boasts some period buildings built as a set for an earlier movie that never eventuated. Production Designer Tony Cronin was able to extend and enhance the existing buildings and construct more buildings to make the town of Henry.

When the Europeans first came to settle in Central Australia they tended to be either pastoralists or missionaries. In *Sweet Country* the character of “Fred Smith” (*Sam Neill*) represents this religious engagement with the Aboriginal people.

Fred is a good man “we are all equal in the eyes of the Lord” and so he treats his Aboriginal workers well. We see Fred leave his station in the care of his main stockman “Sam Kelly” (*Hamilton Morris*) and head into the frontier town of Henry to oversee the building of the new Church. However by the end of the film we learn that all of Fred’s good intentions mean nothing and his religion cannot “save” Sam.

*Sweet Country* has no music in the film. Director Warwick Thornton chose not to have music, instead wanted to create a soundscape of the desert, inviting audiences to feel and hear the desert wind, the birds and insects.

Warwick Thornton’s films always say a lot about our society and identity. *Sweet Country* is a stunning complex and layered work that comes together brilliantly as an action chase thriller, but also in its deeper exploration of the violence and bigotry at the heart of our country and its history.

*Sweet Country* delivers a story of black and white frontier conflict, yet turns the central theme of justice on its head, to both surprise and ultimately move audiences.”

**Greer Simpkin and David Jowsey**

PRODUCERS

Director	Warwick Thornton
Producers	Greer Simpkin, David Jowsey
Writers	David Tranter, Steven McGregor
Script Editor	Stephen Cleary
Co-Producer	David Tranter
Line Producer	Fiona Lanyon
Cinematographer	Warwick Thornton
Second Unit Director/DOP	Dylan River
Editor	Nick Meyers
Production Designer	Tony Cronin
Costume Designer	Heather Wallace
Hair and Make Up Designer	Jen Rossiter
First Assistant Director	Thomas Read
Sound Recordists	David Tranter, Will Sheridan
Horse Supervisors	Jim and Tom Willoughby
Colourist	Trish Cahill
Online, VFX Supervisor	Craig Deeker
Sound Designers	Sam Gain-Emery, Thom Kellar
Re-Recording Mixer	Phil Heywood

# SWEET COUNTRY

THE  
FILMMAKERS

Sergeant Fletcher

Sam Kelly

Mick Kennedy

Harry March

Archie

Lizzie

Judge Taylor

Nell

Philomac

Bryan Brown

Hamilton Morris

Thomas M. Wright

Ewen Leslie

Gibson John

Natassia Gorey-Furber

Matt Day

Anni Finsterer

Tremayne Doolan and Trevon Doolan

And

Sam Neill as Fred Smith

# SWEET COUNTRY

THE CAST

# Warwick Thornton

## DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Warwick Thornton is an internationally-recognised director, screenwriter and cinematographer. Born and raised in remote Alice Springs, Australia, Warwick travelled to Sydney to study cinematography at Australia's prestigious film school AFTRS.

Warwick quickly established a strong presence in the industry shooting, directing and writing a series of short films, focusing on contemporary Indigenous Australian stories. Both *Nana* and *Greenbush* were premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival – *Nana* winning the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film – establishing Warwick as an important voice in Australian cinema.

Following the success of these films Warwick began work on his first feature *Samson and Delilah* - a confronting look at the relationship between two young Aboriginal teenagers in Alice Springs. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009, winning the Caméra d'Or. *Samson and Delilah* collected many other awards including best film at the Asia-Pacific Screen Awards, the AFI awards, and the Film Critics Circle awards.

Next, Warwick completed his next feature *The Darkside*, a film which presents well known Australian actors retelling Indigenous ghost stories. This became Warwick's third film invited to premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival.



Following this he directed and shot the opening segment of Tim Winton's *The Turning*, and the opening segment of Guillermo Arriaga's *Words With Gods* – which was invited to premiere at Venice 2014.

Although Warwick has solidified a name for himself as director and screenwriter he is also widely regarded for his work as a cinematographer. His work as DOP on the 2012 hit musical *The Sapphires* once again highlighted Warwick's ability to present diverse and exciting Indigenous stories. He went on to shoot with the same director Wayne Blair on their next collaboration *Septembers of Shiraz* - starring Adrian Brody and Salma Hayek.

Most recently, Warwick has directed the feature documentary *We Don't Need A Map*, which explores Australia's relationship to the Southern Cross. The film premiered as the Opening Night film at the Sydney Film Festival in June 2017.



## Bryan Brown as SERGEANT FLETCHER

Iconic Australian actor Bryan Brown became an international success in the early eighties with the critical acclaim from performances in *Breaker Morant* and the TV series *A Town Like Alice*. A stream of well-known Australian hits and Hollywood productions followed: *The Thorn Birds*, *Gorillas in the Mist*, *FX*, *Newsfront*, *The Shiralee*, *Cocktail*, *Blood Oath*, *Risk* and *Two Hands* in 1999, for which he won his second Australian Film Institute Award for Best Supporting Actor. In 1999 he starred with his wife Rachel Ward in the Golden Globe nominated telemovie *On The Beach*, which won an Australian Film Institute Award. In 2004 he starred, alongside Candice Bergen in *Footsteps for CBS*. 2004 also saw the release of the Box Office smash *Along Came Polly* for Universal, in which Bryan played a major supporting role. In 2007 he played a pivotal role alongside Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman in Baz Luhrmann's visual masterpiece *Australia*, and starred with Peter O'Toole, Sam Neill and Jeremy Northern in *My Talks with Dean Spanley*.

Bryan's passion for storytelling behind the camera emerged in the formation of New Town films, a production company for film and television. New Town Projects include *Dead Heart*, an Aboriginal-themed film and powerful contemporary drama while his 12 part series *Twisted Tales*, featuring some of Australia's most prolific actors and exciting new directors, has screened in over 100 countries.



In 2002 Bryan produced and starred in *Dirty Deeds* opposite Toni Collette and directed by David Caesar which was released through Hoyts Australia. In the 2007 Bryan co-produced with Leah Churchill Brown the Australian film, *Beautiful Kate*, written and directed by Rachel Ward. The film had local box office success and received a total of ten AFI nominations, winning for Best Supporting Actress.

His latest film credits include *Kill Me Three Times* with Simon Pegg and Sullivan Stapleton, directed by Kriv Stender; Alex Proyas' studio epic *Gods of Egypt*; *The Light Between Oceans*; *Red Dog: True Blue* and the soon to be released *Australia Day*. In a 40 year career Bryan has appeared over 80 films and filmed in some 25 countries.

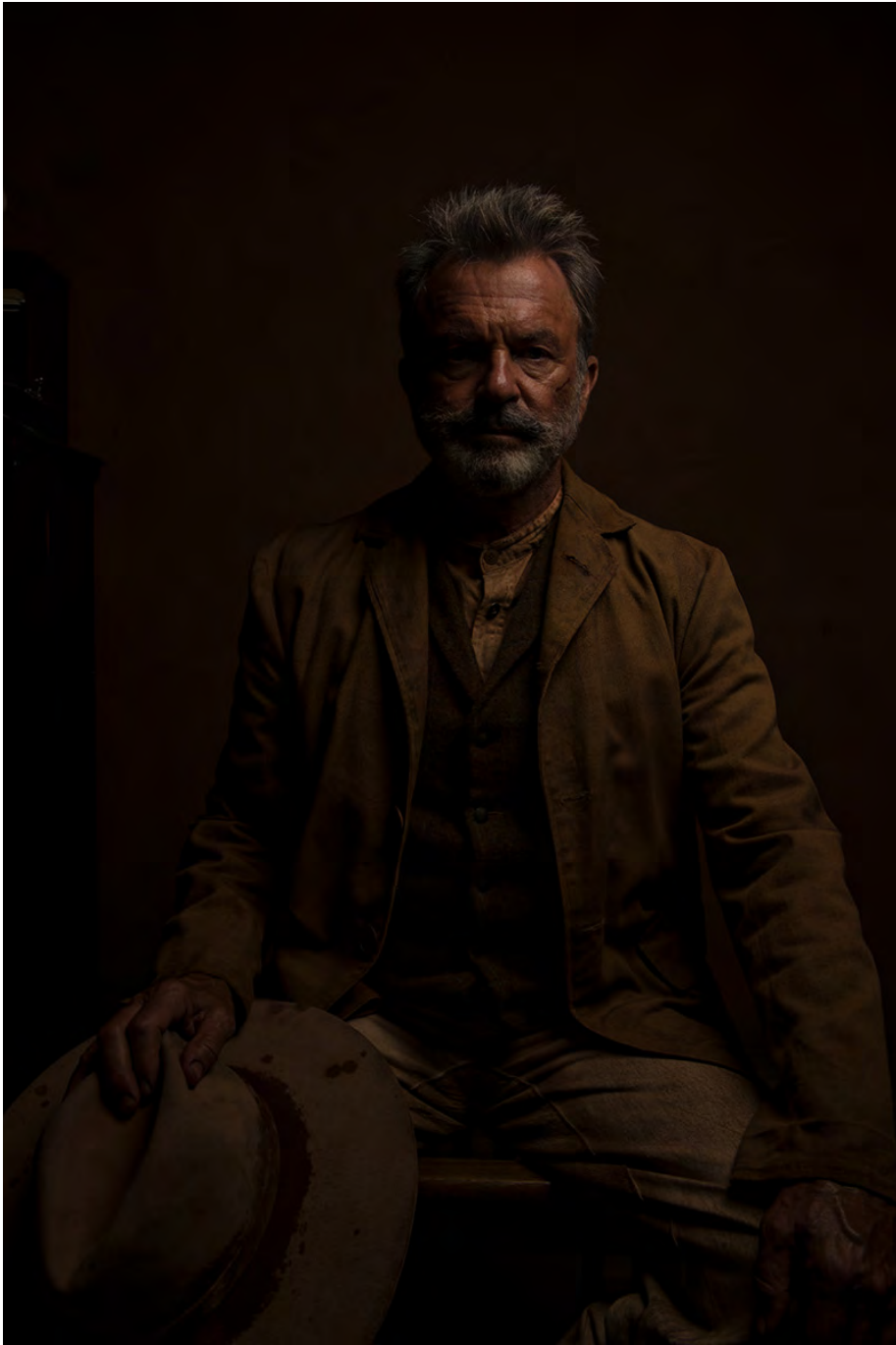
## Hamilton Morris as SAM KELLY

Hamilton is a Walpiri man and lives at Nyirripi in Australia's Northern Territory which is approximately 440 km from Alice Springs by road.

*Sweet Country* is Hamilton's first feature film.







## Sam Neill as FRED SMITH

A recipient of an Order of the British Empire for Services to Acting, and a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, Sam Neill is internationally recognised for his contribution to film and television, with more than 75 films and over 45 television programs to his credit.

Neill made his film debut in Roger Donaldson's *Sleeping Dogs* and his feature breakthrough in a starring role opposite Judy Davis in *My Brilliant Career*. The two films that subsequently brought him international stardom and acclaim were writer/director Jane Campion's *The Piano* and Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. Written and directed by visionary filmmaker Jane Campion, *The Piano* starred Neill, Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel and Anna Paquin and won three Oscars, three BAFTA and 11 Australian Film Institute (AFI) awards, along with an AFI Best Supporting Actor nomination for Neill. In 2016 he received an AFI Best Supporting Actor nomination for his work in *The Daughter*.

His film credits include *Dead Calm* opposite Nicole Kidman for director Phillip Noyce; *A Cry In The Dark* opposite Meryl Streep for director Fred Schepisi; *The Hunter* opposite Willem Dafoe (for which Neill received an AACTA Best Actor nomination); *Little Fish* opposite Cate Blanchett; *The Horse Whisperer* alongside Kristin Scott Thomas, Robert Redford and Scarlett Johansson; *Perfect Strangers*; *The Hunt For Red October* alongside Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin for director John McTiernan; *Dirty Deeds* alongside Bryan Brown and Toni Collette; *Bicentennial Man* opposite Robin Williams for director Chris Columbus;



*Wimbledon* opposite Kirsten Dunst; *My Talks With Dean Spanley* alongside Peter O'Toole and Bryan Brown; *Skin* opposite Sophie Okonedo; *Yes for Orlando* director Sally Potter; *Daybreakers*; the animated film *Legend Of The Guardians: The Owls Of Ga'hoole*; and Czech production *The Zookeeper*. Recent features include *The Daughter* and *Hunt For The Wilderpeople*.

His work in television has earned Sam Neill three Golden Globe Best Actor nominations. In 1998 he received Emmy and Golden Globe nominations for his performance in the title role of the NBC miniseries *Merlin*. He received a Golden Globe nomination in 1992 for his performance opposite Judy Davis in *One Against The Wind* and a third Golden Globe nomination, along with the BAFTA Award for Best Actor, for his performance as British spy Sidney Reilly in director Martin Campbell's *Reilly: Ace Of Spies*. He received the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Best Actor Award for the Australian drama *Jessica*.

Other television credits include the upcoming ITV miniseries, *Tutankhamun*; the first two seasons of the hit BBC series *Peaky Blinders*, starring alongside Cillian Murphy; the Australian crime drama *Old School* opposite Bryan Brown; the FOX drama series *Alcatraz*; the acclaimed Australian television series *Rake*; NBC's *Crusoe*; Showtime's *The Tudors* with Jonathan Rhys Meyers; the miniseries *To The Ends Of Earth* with Benedict Cumberbatch; and Granada's epic miniseries *Doctor Zhivago*.

He has a small organic winery called Two Paddocks, and is a longtime activist and spokesman for environmental causes.

## Thomas M. Wright as MICK KENNEDY

Thomas M. Wright has forged a distinct path as an actor, producer, director and writer across many forms.

He has steadily garnered international recognition for his work on screen after receiving a 2013 Critics' Choice Award nomination for his role in Jane Campion's award-winning *Top Of The Lake* for Sundance Channel/BBC.

He featured in *Everest* - a film of the 1996 'Into Thin Air' climbing disaster - for Working Title/Universal; in the critically acclaimed independent feature *Van Diemen's Land*; and as murdered journalist Brian Peters in the award-winning *Balibo*. He most recently starred in Cedric Jimenez's upcoming *HHhH*, opposite Jason Clarke and Jack O'Connell.

He featured as the lead role, Sheriff Houghton, in the WGN American/Sony series *Outsiders* - the second season recently aired - and also portrayed cotton-mouthed Steven Linder in the 2014 Peabody Award-Winning FX series *The Bridge*, based on the Scandinavian series *Bron*.

Wright is an acclaimed theatre maker and director. He has played lead roles and directed productions for many mainstage companies and festivals in Australia, including Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and Adelaide Festival.



He played the title role of the Malthouse Theatre/Sydney Theatre Company production of *BAAL*, commissioned by artistic directors Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton, directed by Simon Stone, which led to his role in *Top Of The Lake*.

Wright founded the award-winning theatre company Black Lung in 2006, at the age of twenty two. The company has garnered numerous awards and critical acclaim from its inception and has been hailed as one of the most influential theatre companies of the past decade.

In 2013/14, he produced and directed *Doku Rai (you, dead man, I don't believe you)* - a production created over four years and rehearsed on an island off the coast of East Timor with Indigenous companies Liurai Foer (King Bin) and Galaxie. *Doku Rai* played to public and critical acclaim over a two year period. Nominated for multiple awards, *Doku Rai* was named one of the best productions of 2013/2014 by Time Out and The Monthly.

Wright is currently adapting and co-producing the biography of one of Australia's most celebrated painters, for the screen, with award-winning producer Robert Connolly. Wright will direct the film.



# SWEET COUNTRY

## Ewen Leslie as HARRY MARCH

Ewen graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2000 and has since become one of Australia's most popular faces in stage and screen.

Ewen's films credits include the critically acclaimed *The Daughter*, *The Mule*, *The Railway Man*, *Dead Europe*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Three Blind Mice*, *Katoomba*, *Kokoda* and *Jewboy*. He will next be seen in *The Butterfly Tree* and most recently wrapped on Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale*.

Selected television credits include *Janet King*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Wonderland*, *Mr and Mrs Murder*, *Top of the Lake*, *Rake*, *Redfern Now*, *Devil's Dust*, *Mabo*, *My Place*, *Lockie Leonard*, *Love My Way*, *The Junction Boys*, *All Saints* and *The Road from Coorain*. Ewen is set to start filming the highly anticipated *Fighting Season* later this year and will next be seen in *Top of the Lake: China Girl* directed by Jane Campion which premiered at the Festival de Cannes.

Theatre credits for Belvoir include *Ivanov*, *Thyestes*, *Hamlet*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Wild Duck*, *The Promise* and *Paul* (Belvoir); for STC *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*, *Riflemind*; for MTC *Hamlet*, *Richard III*; for Malthouse *The Trial* and *The Wild Duck*.

He received the Helpmann award and a Green Room award for his role in *Richard III* and the Helpmann Award and the Sydney Theatre Award for *The War of the Roses*. Ewen has also received an AFI nomination for his performance in *Jewboy* and AACTA nominations for *The Daughter* and *Dead Europe*.

## Gibson John as ARCHIE

Gibson is an Eastern Arrernte man who lives in the town of Santa Teresa (a former Catholic Mission). His wife Ann McMillan was also an Extra in Sweet Country, and Ann is the sister of Martin McMillan who plays Barney.

*Sweet Country* is Gibson's first feature film.





## Natassia Gorey-Furber as LIZZIE

Natassia is an Eastern Arremte woman who lives north of Alice Springs.

*Sweet Country* is Natassia's first feature film.

## Matt Day as JUDGE TAYLOR

Matt Day is well known to Australian audiences having worked extensively in film, television and theatre.

Matt's film roles include *Kiss Or Kill*, which saw him nominated for an Australian Film Festival (AFI) Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role and a Film Critics Circle of Australian (FCCA) nomination for Best Actor; the international hit film *Muriel's Wedding*; Emma-Kate Croghan's critically acclaimed debut feature film *Love And Other Catastrophes*; *Doing Time For Patsy Cline*; and the award winning Sarah Watts' *My Year Without Sex*. In 2005 Matt also appeared in a cameo role in Woody Allen's *Scoop*.

Matt has also worked extensively in the UK, including roles in the BBC's *The Hound Of The Baskervilles*, in which he played Sir Henry Baskerville; the photographer Frank Hurley in the Channel 4 tele-movie *Shackleton* opposite Kenneth Branagh, and a recurring guest role in *Spooks*.

Matt numerous television credits include the role of David Potter in ABC's *Rake* opposite Richard Roxburgh; the ABC mini-series *Paper Giants: The Birth Of Cleo* opposite Asher Keddie; and Showtime's critically acclaimed series *Tangle* alongside Justine Clarke, Ben Mendelsohn and Catherine McClements. Matt's leading role of Gabriel in *Tangle* saw him nominated for Most Outstanding Performance by an Actor at the 2010 ASTRA Awards. Matt also featured in the 2015 ABC tele-movie *The Outlaw Michael Howe* directed by Brendan Cowell.





Recent film credits include the local independent feature film *Touch*, and the movie version of the popular ABC children's series, *Dance Academy: The Comeback*, directed by Jeffrey Walker.

In 2015 Matt returned to the stage in the lead role of the Melbourne Theatre Company's (MTC) production of Simon Phillips' stage adaptation of the Alfred Hitchcock film *North By Northwest*. Matt's most recent theatre production was the Griffin Theatre's 2017 production *A Strategic Plan*.

Matt has recently returned to television screens, appearing in Nine Network's hit series *Love Child*, and Foxtel's *A Place To Call Home*.



# SWEET COUNTRY

## Anni Finsterer as NELL

Anni's career in film, television and theatre spans some 30 years. She has most recently been seen in television series *Secret City* for Foxtel and *Glitch* for the ABC, and the feature film *Teenage Kicks* which premiered to critical acclaim at the 2016 Sydney Film Festival.

Previous TV credits include *3 Acts of Murder*, for which she was awarded an Australian AACTA Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Film credits include *Sleeping Beauty*, *Johnny Ghost*, *The Boys are Back* and *Prime Mover*.

She has written, produced, performed and directed her own work and trod the boards with all the major theatre companies and Festivals including STC, MTC, QTC, Belvoir, Ensemble, Bell Shakespeare, Griffin, Parramatta Riverside and toured Asia and Europe with The American Drama Group Europe.

## Tremayne Doolan and Trevon Doolan as PHILOMAC

Eastern Arrente twins Tremayne and Trevon Doolan live at Sandy Bore - a remote outstation north of Alice Springs. They travel an hour and a half by bus (each way) every day to attend school.

*Sweet Country* is their first feature film.



# Greer Simpkin

## PRODUCER

AACTA-Award nominee Greer Simpkin produced the Ivan Sen feature *Goldstone* (nominated for five AACTA Awards in 2016) and was an Executive Producer on the Rachel Perkins feature *Jasper Jones*.

Greer is currently producing the *Mystery Road* drama series and the documentary-drama series *Blue Water Empire* for ABC Television, plus the independent feature documentaries *Sanctuary* and *Beautiful Minds: The Agents of Change*.

Prior to joining Bunya Productions in 2015, Greer was *Deputy Head of Fiction* at the ABC where she was able to commission and supervise a large slate of new dramas and narrative comedies including; *The Code*, *The Slap*, *Rake*, *The Time of Our Lives*, *Paper Giants*, *Cliffy*, *Jack Irish*, *Please Like Me*, *Upper Middle Bogan*, *It's a Date*, *A Moody Christmas*, *Devil's Dust* and *Mabo*. Greer was an Executive Producer of *The Code*, *Hiding*, *Parer's War*, *Serangoon Road* and *The Secret River*.

Previously, Greer was a *Production Executive* at the ABC working across many genres including drama, comedy, factual, documentary and multiplatform.

Before returning to Sydney in 2002, Greer lived and worked in the UK. She was a Programme Finance Executive for Channel 4, and prior to that, Head of Production for Mentorn Films (now Mentorn Media).

# David Jowsey

## PRODUCER

David Jowsey has had an extensive career as a film and television producer. He has been nominated for three AACTA Awards for *Best Picture* (*Mystery Road*, *Satellite Boy*, *Goldstone*).

In 2009 David Jowsey formed BUNYA Productions with award winning filmmaker Ivan Sen. BUNYA Productions' first film was Ivan Sen's experimental digital feature *Dreamland*. David is also Producer of the 2011 Sundance Film Festival selected feature film *Mad Bastards* directed by Brendan Fletcher. The same year David produced *Toomelah*, which focuses on a 10 year old boy growing up in an isolated Aboriginal community, with Sen directing again. The film was selected for the Cannes Film Festival 2011 in Un Certain Regard. David also produced the Toronto Film Festival 2012 selection, *Satellite Boy*, directed by Catriona McKenzie. *Satellite Boy* received a *Special Mention* at its European Premiere in the Generation section of the 2013 Berlin Film Festival.

In 2015 David produced Ivan Sen's *Goldstone*, and *Jasper Jones* based on the best selling novel and directed by Rachel Perkins.

He is currently producing the television adaptation of *Mystery Road* for ABC TV, and the documentary-drama series *Blue Water Empire*. David is also Executive Producer of the feature documentaries *Sanctuary* and *Beautiful Minds: The Agents of Change*.

# David Tranter

## WRITER and CO-PRODUCER

Based in Alice Springs, David Tranter is Australia's leading Aboriginal sound recordist. With a career spanning more than 20 years, he has recorded sound all over Australia, in cities and the remotest areas, in New York, Paris and Beijing.

David's work includes feature drama films (*Samson and Delilah* and *Here I Am*), television drama series (*The Alice* and *Double Trouble*), short drama films (*Green Bush*, *Nana*, *Plains Empty* and *Jacob*), and over 200 documentaries (recent work includes *Songlines to the Seine*, *Running for New York*, *Spirit Stones*, *My Brother Vinnie*, *Art and Soul*, *First Australians* and *Ochre and Ink*). He won an AFI Award and an Australian Screen Sound Award in 2009 for his work on *Samson and Delilah*, and was also nominated for an IF Award.

David began directing documentaries in 2004. He directed *Willaberta Jack* in 2006 for the ABC, and has made four *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* documentaries for Imparja Television and ABC. His film *Karli Jalungu: Boomerang Today* was screened at Sydney Film Festival and ImagiNative in Canada. His most recent film, *Crookhat and the Kulunada* is currently touring around Australia with the Message Sticks Film Festival.

In 2011, David was awarded the inaugural Bob Plasto Screen Award by Screen Territory for his contribution to film and television in the Northern Territory.

# Steven McGregor

## WRITER

Steven McGregor is an award-winning writer and director. Most recently, he has directed two episodes of the ABC's drama series *Warriors*, and is currently directing the three part documentary-drama series *Blue Water Empire*, also for ABC TV. Steven has directed numerous award winning documentaries and a one-hour feature drama. Several of his highlights include:

*Croker Island Exodus* (2012) is the epic journey of a group of stolen generation children during World War II. *Big Name No Blanket* (2013) is a portrait of the Warumpi Band's charismatic front man George Rurrumbu. Both films were nominated for the Sydney Film Festival Documentary Prize, they also played in the Melbourne International Film Festival and in the FIFO Film Festival Tahiti. In 2016 Steven directed *Servant or Slave*, the story of five Aboriginal women from the Cootamundra Girls Home, who were trained as domestic servants and farmed out to properties at a young age into forced domestic servitude. The film premiered at the 2016 Melbourne International Film Festival, FIFO Film Festival Tahiti and was the highest grossing documentary in the history of NITV.

*Pretty Boy Blue*, an episode Steven wrote for the drama series *Redfern Now*, won the AACTA Award for *Best Screenplay in Television* in 2013. He wrote four episodes across the two ABC series. Steven also wrote

the *Redfern Now* telemovie *Promise Me*, which screened on the ABC to critical acclaim and was nominated in the 2015 AWGIES for *Best Original Telemovie*.

Steven was also a writer on the Blackfella Films & Werner Film Productions children's television series, *Ready for This*, which won the 2015 AACTA award for Best Children's Television Series and the 2016 TV Week Logie for *Most Outstanding Children's Program*.

CAAMA Production's one hour drama for SBS TV *Cold Turkey*, was written and directed by Steven McGregor. The drama centers on the sibling rivalry of two brothers living in Alice Springs. *Cold Turkey* earned two AFI Award nominations and screened in local and international festivals.

*My Brother Vinnie* (2006) which he directed, won major awards at the Melbourne International Film Festival, Flickerfest and the St Kilda Film Festival; was nominated in the IF Awards and for a TV Week Logie. *My Brother Vinnie* also screened at several festivals abroad. It examined the close relationship between actor Aaron Pedersen and his brother Vinnie, who suffers from cerebral palsy.

# Nick Meyers

## EDITOR

Nick Meyers is a highly regarded and award-winning film editor based in Sydney. Nick was involved with Sydney's experimental Super-8 film scene in the 1980s and since then has enjoyed working on films with an artistic or experimental nature as well as editing films with a more commercial focus.

Feature Films Nick has edited include; *The Boys* (1998) Berlin Film Festival, *Balibo* (2009) Toronto Film festival, *Sleeping Beauty* (2011) Cannes Film festival, *The Rocket* (2013) Tribeca film festival, and *These Final Hours* (2014) Cannes Film festival.

Nick has also cut a number of films with rogue documentarian George Gittoes, including *Rampage* (2005) Berlin Film Festival and *The Miscreants of Taliwood* (2009) Telluride Film festival.



# Tony Cronin

## PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Tony Cronin commenced his career in ABC television Sydney, working on numerous period and contemporary television series and tele-movies including, *Tusitala – The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* filmed in Samoa, D.H. Lawrence *The Boy in the Bush*, *The Coral Island*, *Amorous Dentist*, *Lizard King*, *Sweet and Sour*, *Mother and Son*.

Moving to Adelaide in 1989, Cronin began working freelance on film and television series including *Struck by Lightning*, *Tracks of Glory*, *Golden Fiddles*, *The Adventures of Black Beauty*, *The Last Crop*, *Hammers Over The Anvil*, *Heaven's Burning*, *Kiss or Kill*, *Napoleon*, *Sample People* and *In a Savage Land*.

Cronin art directed the Academy Award nominated film *Shine*, directed by Scott Hicks and went on to production design Paul Cox's award winning features *Innocence*, and *The Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky*. Other features include *Shot of Love*, *Coffin Rock*, *Swerve*, *100 Bloody Acres*, the drama doco *Shut up Little Man*, *On her knees (The Turning)* *The Pack* and *Bad Blood*.

He also production designed over 221 episodes of the television series *McLeod's Daughters*, 22 episodes of *The Extreme Adventures of Sam Fox* and the drama doco *The Lost Tools of Henry Hoke*.

Cronin also does Art Directing on many television commercials. He is committed to the fostering of new talent and works with many young emerging producers/directors on their short film projects.

# Heather Wallace

## COSTUME DESIGNER

Heather started her career in Melbourne working in theatre and opera before returning to South Australia and transitioning into on-screen mediums. For the past ten years, she has focused on costume design working on a variety of feature and short film projects including *Samson and Delilah*, *The Babadook* and *Cargo*. She has twenty-seven years' experience as a key stand-by working in both film and television, and has been involved in projects including *The Rover*, *Anzac Girls* and *The Boys Are Back*.

Heather has a Bachelor of Visual Art majoring in *Sculpture and Art Theory*, and studied at the Centre for the Performing Arts majoring in *Design*. She grew up in the Southern Flinders Ranges and has a connection to the Australian landscape. Heather is passionate about telling new stories and has a strong interest in Australian history.

# BUNYA PRODUCTIONS

Bunya has produced and collaborated on a slate of award winning feature films, all of which have premiered at a top international film festival: *Goldstone* (Toronto), *Mystery Road* (Toronto), *Toomelah* (Cannes), *Mad Bastards* (Sundance), *Satellite Boy* (Berlin and Toronto), and *Dreamland* (Busan).

*Goldstone* opened the 2016 Sydney Film Festival and won five awards at the 2016 Australian Film Critics Circle Awards (*Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Music* and *Best Screenplay*). *Mystery Road* opened the 2013 Sydney Film Festival and garnered many awards including *Best Film, Best Director* and *Best Actor* at both the 2014 Australian Film Critics Association and the 2014 FCCA Awards for Australian Film. *Jasper Jones*, directed by Rachel Perkins, was released in Australia in March 2017.

Bunya is currently producing the six-part television adaptation of *Mystery Road*, a three-part drama documentary series *Blue Water Empire* on the history of the Torres Strait Islands for the ABC, *The Troublesome Priest* for ABC Compass and the feature documentaries *Beautiful Minds* and *Sanctuary*.



SWEET  
COUNTRY

BUNYA  
PRODUCTIONS

