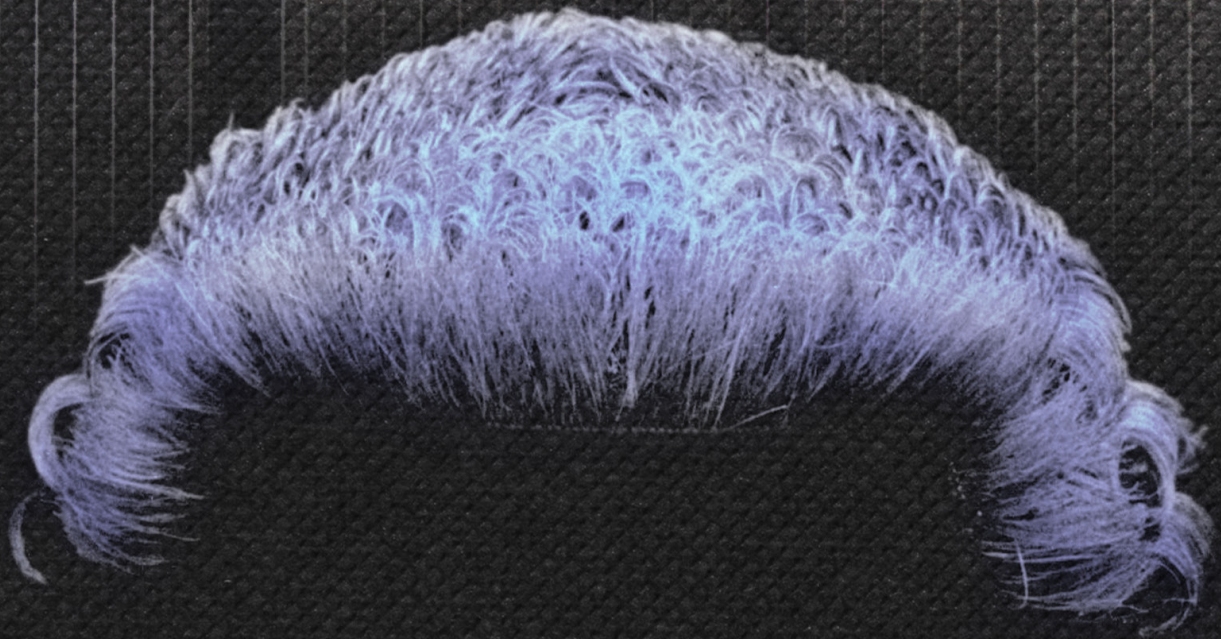




# JUDGMENT

CASES THAT CHANGED AUSTRALIA



**ABC**  
**COMMERCIAL**  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation



# ACROSS FOUR LANDMARK COURT CASES, ORDINARY PEOPLE CHALLENGE THE LAWS THAT DEFINE THE NATION

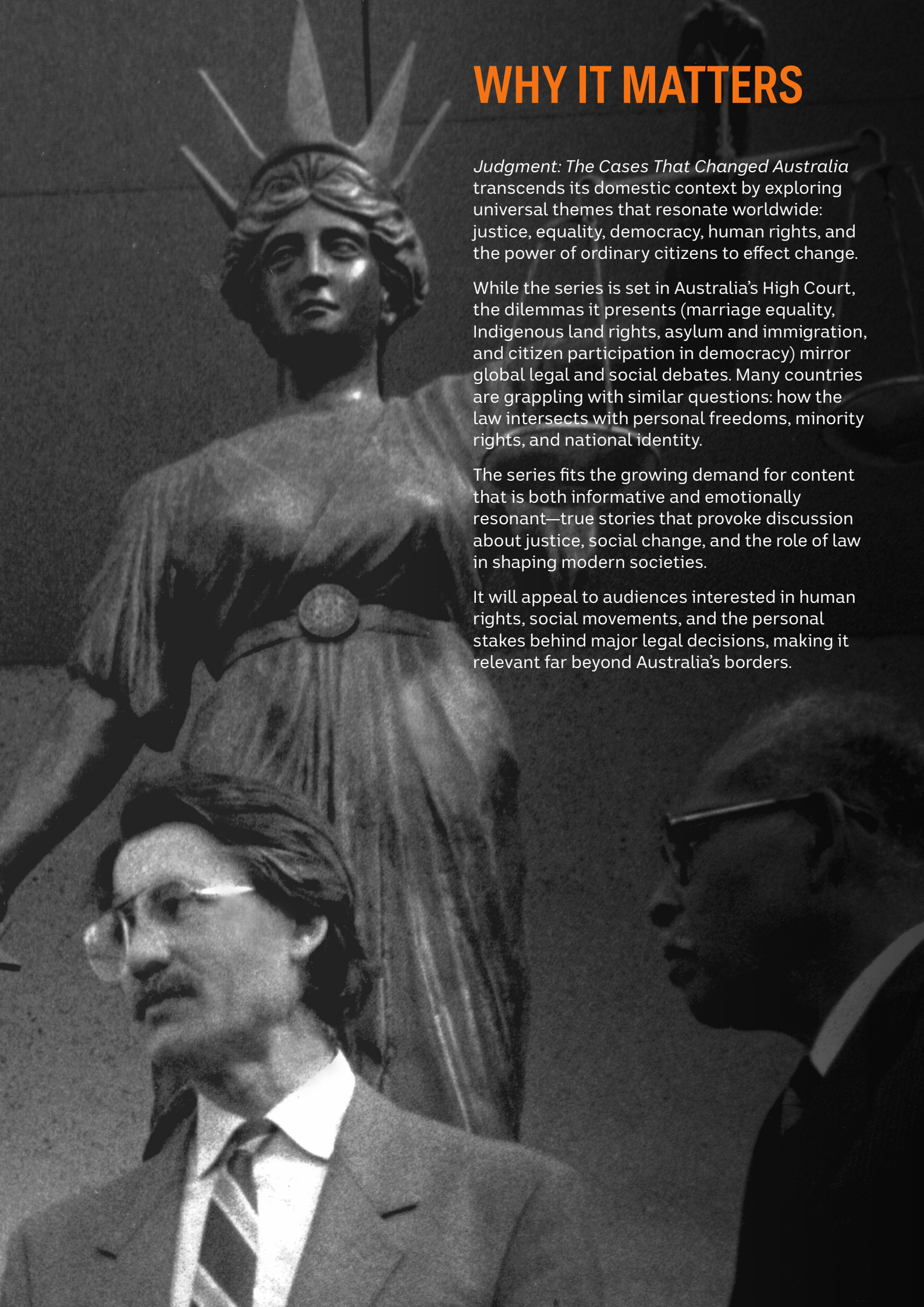
This fascinating series takes audiences inside the High Court of Australia where, across four landmark cases, personal battles become constitutional turning points.

The High Court is where Australia answers its hardest questions – the country's most powerful legal minds confront cases that test the meaning of love, land, democracy and belonging. Behind the bench, the Justices wrestle with principles that will shape the nation's future. Before them stand citizens willing to risk everything to be heard.

The series reveals not only the legal reasoning behind these decisions, but the courage, strategy and conviction that drove them. It explores universal themes that resonate worldwide – justice, equality, democracy, human rights, and the power of ordinary citizens to effect change.

FACTUAL | 4 X 60'  
WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT





# WHY IT MATTERS

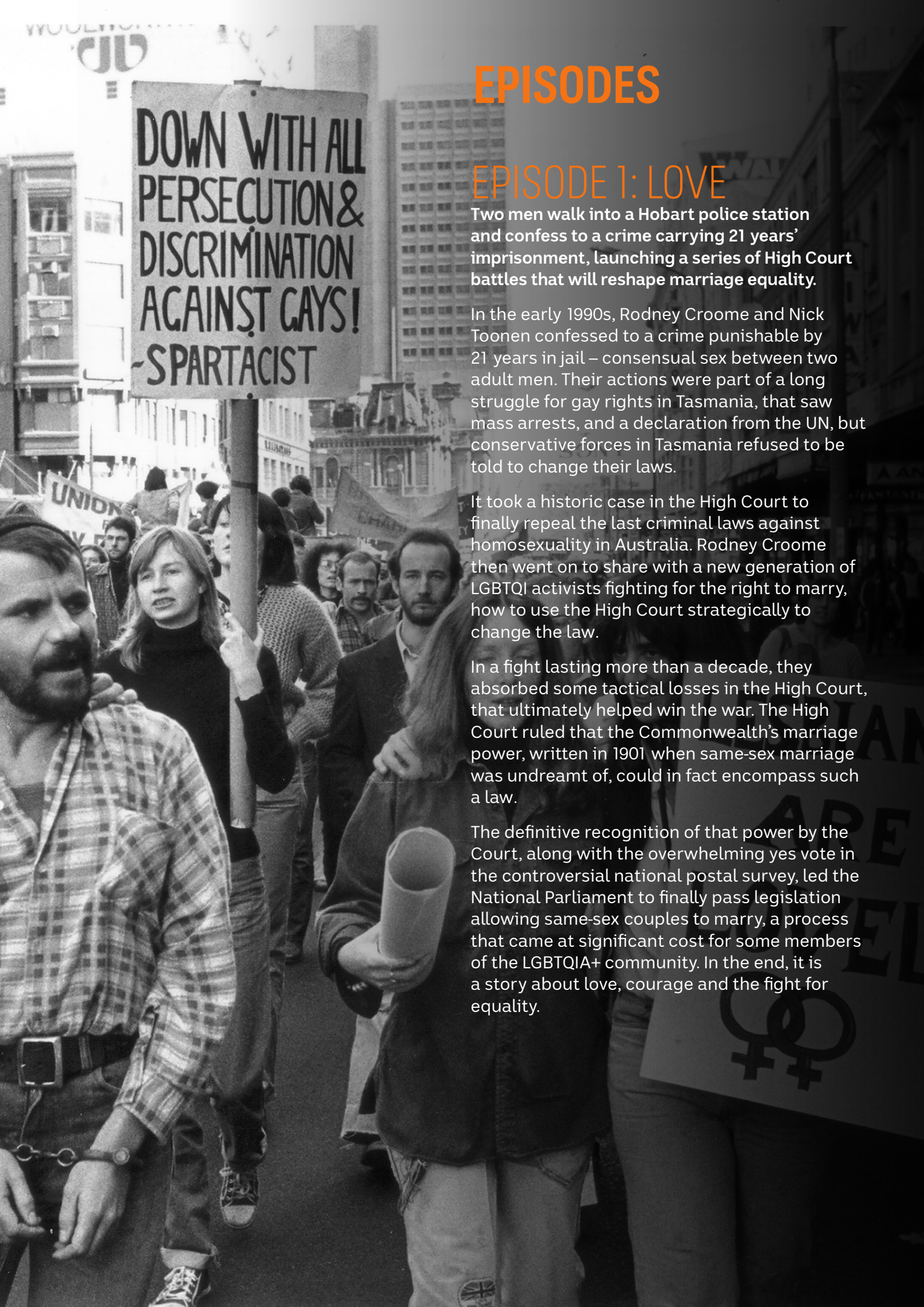
*Judgment: The Cases That Changed Australia* transcends its domestic context by exploring universal themes that resonate worldwide: justice, equality, democracy, human rights, and the power of ordinary citizens to effect change.

While the series is set in Australia's High Court, the dilemmas it presents (marriage equality, Indigenous land rights, asylum and immigration, and citizen participation in democracy) mirror global legal and social debates. Many countries are grappling with similar questions: how the law intersects with personal freedoms, minority rights, and national identity.

The series fits the growing demand for content that is both informative and emotionally resonant—true stories that provoke discussion about justice, social change, and the role of law in shaping modern societies.

It will appeal to audiences interested in human rights, social movements, and the personal stakes behind major legal decisions, making it relevant far beyond Australia's borders.





# EPISODES

## EPISODE 1: LOVE

Two men walk into a Hobart police station and confess to a crime carrying 21 years' imprisonment, launching a series of High Court battles that will reshape marriage equality.

In the early 1990s, Rodney Croome and Nick Toonen confessed to a crime punishable by 21 years in jail – consensual sex between two adult men. Their actions were part of a long struggle for gay rights in Tasmania, that saw mass arrests, and a declaration from the UN, but conservative forces in Tasmania refused to be told to change their laws.

It took a historic case in the High Court to finally repeal the last criminal laws against homosexuality in Australia. Rodney Croome then went on to share with a new generation of LGBTQI activists fighting for the right to marry, how to use the High Court strategically to change the law.

In a fight lasting more than a decade, they absorbed some tactical losses in the High Court, that ultimately helped win the war. The High Court ruled that the Commonwealth's marriage power, written in 1901 when same-sex marriage was undreamt of, could in fact encompass such a law.

The definitive recognition of that power by the Court, along with the overwhelming yes vote in the controversial national postal survey, led the National Parliament to finally pass legislation allowing same-sex couples to marry, a process that came at significant cost for some members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In the end, it is a story about love, courage and the fight for equality.



# EPISODES

## EPISODE 2: MABO

**Terra Nullius: law or lie? Eddie Mabo and others challenge the legal fiction at the heart of colonisation and transform Australia's understanding of land and sovereignty.**

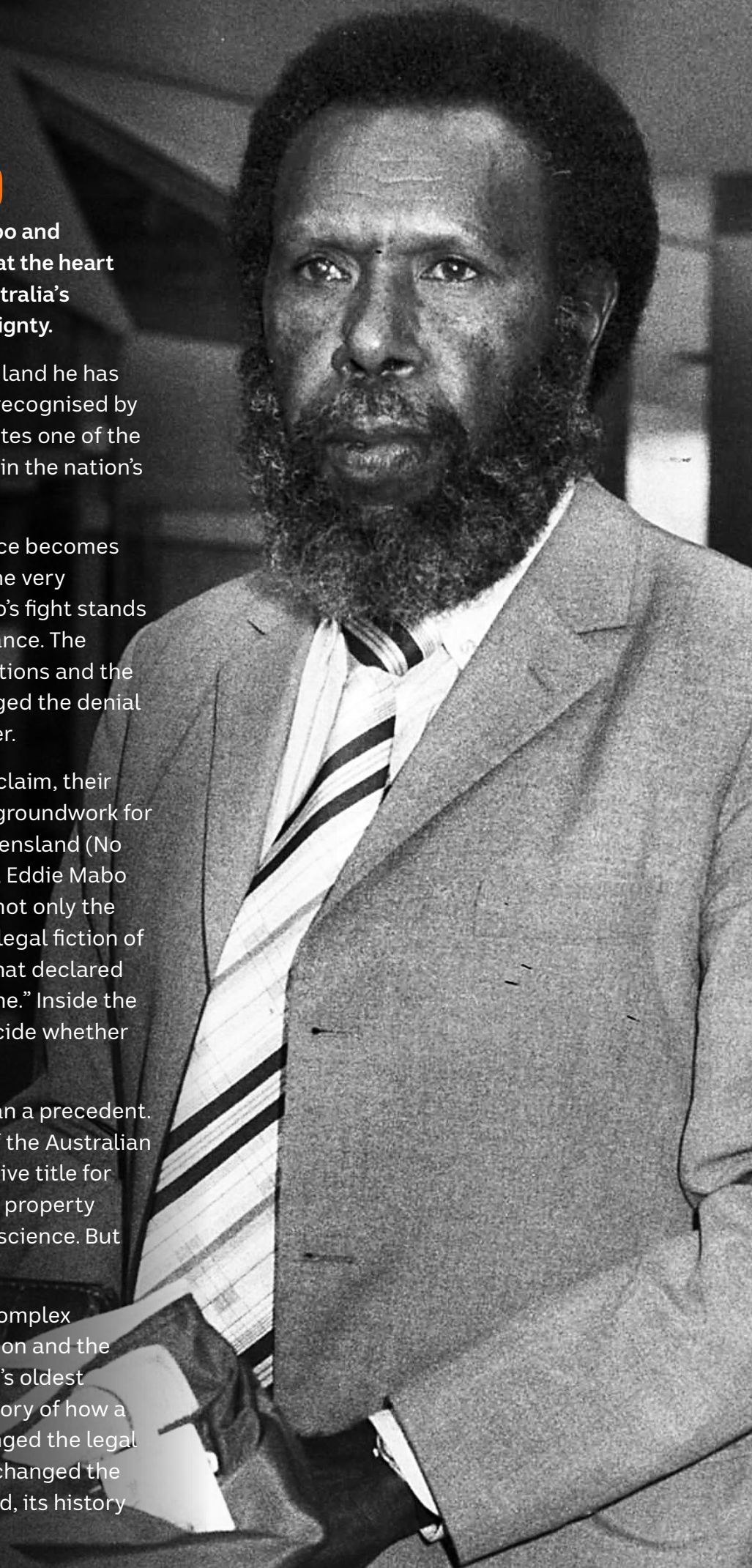
When Eddie Mabo learns that the land he has always known as his home is not recognised by Australian law, the revelation ignites one of the most consequential legal battles in the nation's history.

What begins as a personal injustice becomes a constitutional reckoning with the very foundations of colonisation. Mabo's fight stands on the shoulders of earlier resistance. The Yolngu Peoples' Yirrkala Bark Petitions and the landmark Milirrpum case challenged the denial of their land rights decades earlier.

Though the courts rejected their claim, their assertion of sovereignty laid the groundwork for what would follow. In *Mabo v Queensland (No 1)* and *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)*, Eddie Mabo and his fellow plaintiffs confront not only the Queensland Government but the legal fiction of Terra Nullius itself, the doctrine that declared Australia "land belonging to no one." Inside the High Court, the Justices must decide whether that fiction can stand.

Their decision overturns more than a precedent. It dismantles a foundational lie of the Australian state and formally recognises native title for the first time. The ruling reshapes property law, politics and the national conscience. But recognition is not resolution.

The judgment opens a long and complex path toward restitution, negotiation and the restoration of rights for the world's oldest continuous cultures. This is the story of how a Torres Strait Islander man challenged the legal architecture of colonisation and changed the way Australia understands its land, its history and itself.





# EPISODES

## EPISODE 3: WE WILL DECIDE

**When asylum seekers' futures are argued before the High Court, questions of borders, power and national identity are laid bare.**

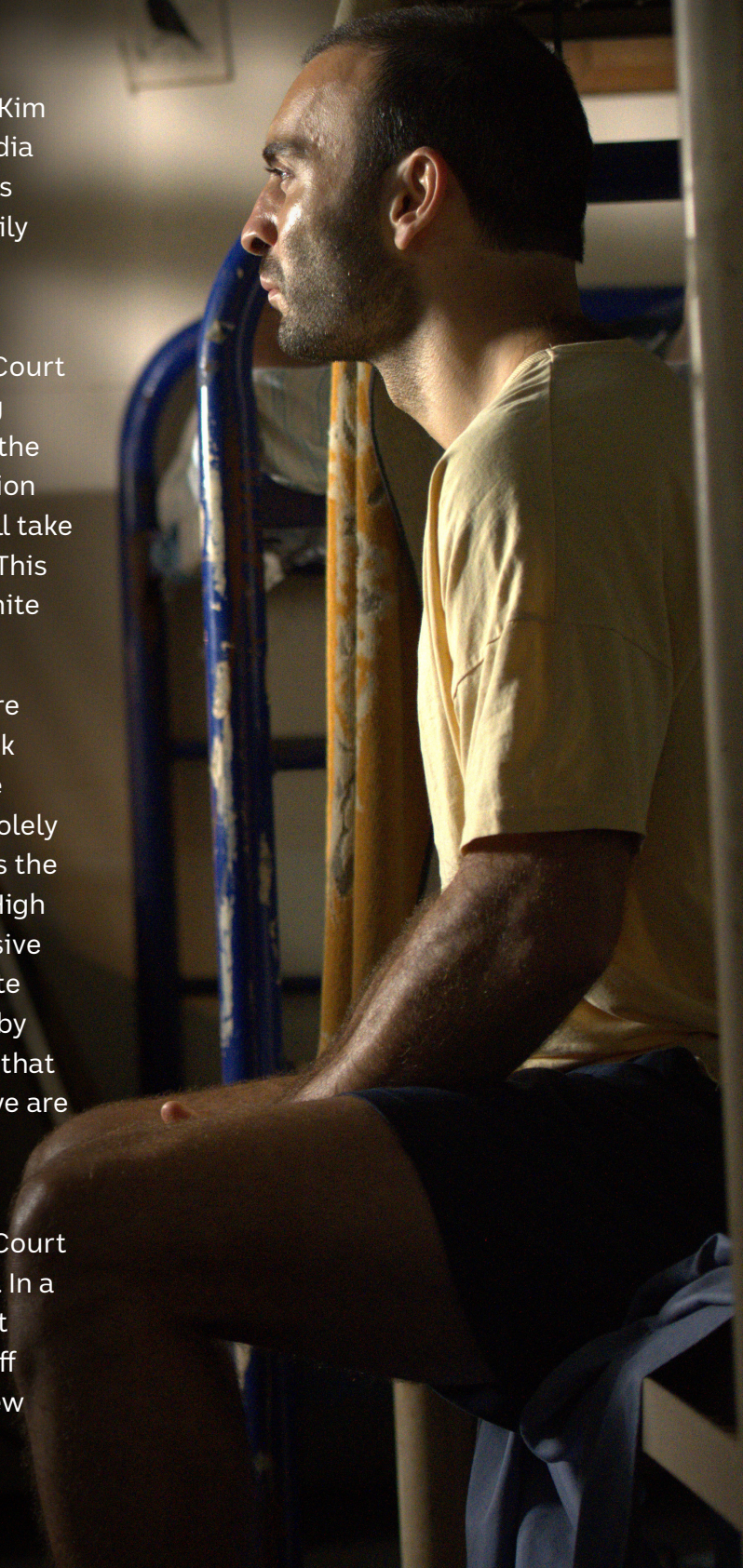
Australians have long wrestled with the challenges of controlling who enters the borders of a country built on immigration. Kim Lim's family come to Australia from Cambodia on a leaky boat in the 1980s, fleeing Pol Pot's murderous terror. Aged 10, she and her family are swept up in Australia's first regime of Mandatory Detention.

They challenge their detention in the High Court - and lose. In 2000, Ahmed Al Ketab, a young Palestinian man, finds himself locked up in the same system. Australia rejects his application for refugee status, but no other country will take him. Australia simply keeps him locked up. This is not just mandatory detention, but indefinite detention.

In the High Court fundamental questions are tested - can the Australian government lock up people who have not committed a crime indefinitely? Or are such harsh sentences solely the prerogative of our courts? How far does the power to control our borders extend? The High Court delivers one of the most bitterly divisive judgments in its history, endorsing indefinite immigration detention - a power exercised by no other Liberal Democracy in the world at that time. Decades of debate follow over what we are willing to do to control our borders.

Then in 2023, another man facing life in immigration detention applies to the High Court to overturn the famous Al Ketab precedent. In a snap, unanimous judgement the High Court strikes down indefinite detention, setting off fury amongst some critics, and a rush of new laws in our national Parliament.

This is a story about the impulse to control who comes to a country. About the Australian expression of that impulse - an extraordinarily harsh regime, now being copied in other countries. It is about the power to lock people up - who holds that power in our country, what are its limits, and who really gets to decide.





# EPISODES

## EPISODE 4: VOTE

**An unlikely hero takes on laws that silence citizens and reignites a democratic struggle older than the nation itself.**

When Parliament changes the rules of the ballot, thousands of Australians are quietly stripped of their right to vote. Among them is Vickie Roach – a Wiradjuri woman from the Stolen Generations, serving a prison sentence and determined not to be erased from the democratic process.

Backed by the Human Rights Law Centre, Vickie launches a High Court challenge that asks a fundamental question: can Parliament silence citizens simply because they are imprisoned? At stake is not only her vote, but the meaning of representative democracy itself. Her case, *Roach v Electoral Commissioner*, forces the High Court to confront the limits of legislative power.

Does the Constitution protect a minimum right to vote? And if so, who decides who belongs within it? The fight does not end there. When further changes to electoral laws threaten to close the rolls early – potentially disenfranchising thousands, including young and first-time voters – a group of university students brings their own challenge.

With a federal election looming, the Court must act quickly, aware that its decision could shape the outcome. Through these cases, *Vote* reveals democracy not as a settled achievement but as a contested space, where rights must be defended against erosion. It is the story of citizens insisting that their voices count and of a High Court asked to determine who has the power to decide.





# KEY CREATIVES

## LARISSA BERHENDT SERIES DIRECTOR, WRITER

Larissa Behrendt AO is a writer, director, lawyer and academic whose work sits at the intersection of law, history and national storytelling. She is a Distinguished Professor at the Jumbunna Institute at University of Technology Sydney and a leading authority on Indigenous rights, constitutional law and social justice. Larissa has authored numerous influential books, including *Finding Eliza* and the novel *After Story*. As a screen storyteller, she has written and directed acclaimed documentaries and series exploring power, identity and justice, including *The First Inventors*, *You Can Go Now* and *After the Apology*. Her work is characterised by intellectual rigour, emotional depth and a commitment to highlighting lived experience within complex legal and political histories.

Larissa currently chairs the National Library of Australia and of Writing Australia and is a prominent voice in Australia's cultural and creative life.



## ALAN ERSON PRODUCER

Alan leads the WildBear Entertainment teams creating history, science, wildlife and arts factual series and documentaries for global audiences. Recent credits include Sundance-selected feature documentaries *Every Little Thing* and *Playing With Sharks*, *Joh: Last King of Queensland* (Stan) and CBC-ABC co-production *Stuff The British Stole*.





# KEY CREATIVES



## VICTORIA MIDWINTER PITT – WRITER, DIRECTOR

Victoria Midwinter Pitt is an award-winning documentary film-maker, playwright and theatre director.

Victoria's documentary film practice has been in complex historical moments told directly, and only, by the people who have actually lived through them. Her films include *Frontier*; *Rampant: How a City Stopped a Plague*; *Surviving Mumbai* (later developed into the feature drama film *Hotel Mumbai*); *Leaky Boat* and *Afghanistan: Inside Australia's War*.

Victoria's work has been nominated for UN Media Peace Prizes and two Emmy Awards, and won Australia's major documentary awards including Walkley, AACTA, SPAA, and the NSW Premier's History Prize. Her films have screened at the UN and across the world's major film festivals and broadcasters.

Victoria trained in directing at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her first play *All the Things I would NEVER Tell You in 8 Songs & 12 Pictures*, based on her own accidentally hilarious coming-out story, opened Spain's Alternativa Festival at the Sala Triangulo and toured Australia. Her most recent play *I'M WITH HER* (Currency Press), is based on conversations with eight extraordinary Australian women in response to #metoo, and focuses on the dark female arts of resistance and counter-attack. The play has enjoyed sold-out productions at theatre festivals across Australia, performed by diverse casts of local women who are leaders in their fields and their communities.

All Victoria's work rests on the power and revelation of first-hand story-telling, and a battle-tested, diamond-hard belief in the intelligence of her audience.



# PRODUCTION COMPANY

## WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT

WildBear Entertainment combines the skills and experience of respected producers Bettina Dalton, Serge Ou, Alan Erson, Craig Meade and Michael Tear. An integrated factual entertainment company, WildBear Entertainment works across television, theatrical, corporate, educational, and government communications.

WildBear has been commissioned by leading international platforms including BBC, National Geographic, Discovery, Netflix, PBS, ZDF/Arte, CCTV, NTV, France Televisions, Mediawan, Viasat and Australian broadcasters Nine, Seven, Ten, ABC, SBS and Foxtel.

With offices in three Australian capital cities as well as Dunedin Aotearoa (New Zealand) and a comprehensive catalogue of completed projects, WildBear is an ideal co-production partner. WildBear also owns Content Mint, an internationally renowned stock footage library. The library holds thousands of hours of HD, 35mm, 16mm, and other high end video stock footage with a focus on travel, worldwide locations, wildlife and nature.

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