




Australia: An *Un*official History



A FASCINATING KALEIDOSCOPIC VISION OF AUSTRALIA IN THE 70S

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue patterned jacket over a blue top, is smiling and looking upwards. She is holding a long strip of film in her right hand and a film reel in her left hand. The background is a solid blue color.

Screen icon Jacki Weaver (*Yellowstone*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *Animal Kingdom*) cracks open a forgotten vault of government films and unearths a kaleidoscopic vision of the nation in the 1970s. The 'official' films produced during this decade are unlike anything that came before. Stylised, quirky, often hilarious, and at times deeply confronting, they capture a country reimagining itself in real time.

Featuring an all-star cast of commentators (including director Phillip Noyce; *Salt*, *The Quiet American*, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*) and behind-the-scenes insights from the people who made and featured in these revealing films, this energetic, entertaining series is a fun, insightful, and nostalgic exploration of a decade of political and social change – when the modern nation we know today came kicking and screaming into existence.

The 1970s were marked by explosive social change. In the space of a single decade, the picture of what it means to be Australian was transformed from a predominately white, male, and straight ideal to something far more colourful and complex.

A diverse chorus of voices called out to be heard – female, multicultural, Indigenous, queer – finally able to speak truth to power and reshape the nation.

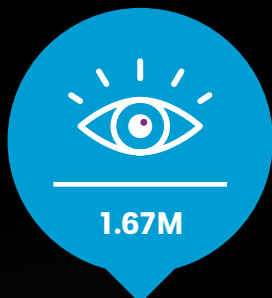
A new generation of young and socially conscious government filmmakers turned their cameras on subjects that had previously been ignored or considered off-limits. What they saw was a rising counterculture movement – Anti-Vietnam War rallies, Women's Liberation marches, and Gay Pride parades – and their cameras captured a messier and more complex vision of the nation.

The picture didn't change overnight. But it wasn't long before the carefully managed image of Australia, with a single voice, began to change rapidly. But was Australia ready for all this change?

DURATION · HD 3 X 60'

PRODUCTION COMPANY · STRANGER THAN FICTION FILMS

AUDIENCE



1.67 MILLION VIEWERS REACHED
ACROSS BROADCAST TV AND BVOD



UPLIFTED TIMESLOT AUDIENCE
BY +149% IN TOTAL PEOPLE
AND UP +122% IN 25-54



RANKED #3 PROGRAMME ON SBS CHANNEL
IN MARCH 2025 (AFTER *ROGUE HEROES*
SEASON 2 AND *ALONE AUSTRALIA* SEASON 3)



MEDIA

A fascinating series!

– **TV Week**

More than a dive into history...

I continue to be wowed by it

– **The Curb**

Offers modern perspectives

on social issues...powerful

– **Women's Weekly**

This rich tapestry is a roller coaster ride; funny and jaw dropping in places but contentious and provocative in others...a cultural crash course in our collective history

– **Mediaweek**

Looking back...Gen X and Gen Y commentators...can barely believe their eyes at the vision they are seeing, and who can blame them?

– **TV Tonight**

Journey back in time...from ground-breaking documentaries on post-natal depression and Australia's hidden Valium addiction epidemic to interviews with pioneering LGBTI activists and gloriously daggy films made to sell a vision of Australia to the world – this is the '70s that history forgot

– **TV Central**

GOGGLEBOX

A U S T R A L I A



“I learned more just then, than I ever did in high school history”

“That was very, very cool”

“This would have been mind-blowing for people”

“The non-propaganda side, the real truth!”

“We’ve come from there to here, but the country can still go a long way”

“That’s pretty gutsy”

“A big island? Is that how we are known?!”



Gogglebox™ courtesy of

FOXTEL

**EndemolShine
Australia**

ABC
COMMERCIAL
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

COMMENTATORS

Jacki Weaver AO

Actor

Phillip Noyce AO

Film Director

Benjamin Law

Writer

Jan Fran

Journalist & TV Presenter

Zoë Coombs Marr

Comedian, Writer *Queerstralia*

Dr. Gary Foley

Professor of History, Gumbaynggir

Mary Kostakidis

Journalist & Political Commentator

Dennis Altman

Writer & Political Scientist

Michelle Arrow

Historian

Biff Ward

Women's Liberationist & Author

Mariam Veiszadeh

CEO, Media Diversity Australia

Jazz Money

Poet/Artist, Wiradjuri

Aretha Brown

Artist/Activist, Gumbaynggir

Rachael Maza

Actor & Artistic Director, Yidinji & Meriam

Leila Gurruwiwi

Broadcaster & TV Producer, Yolngu

Deborah Kingsland

Director, Film Australia

Rod Freedman

Film Australia Director 1970s

Bruce Moir

CEO Film Australia

Julia Nolan

Subject of the documentary *Jenny*

Nick Constantinou

Subject of the documentary *Stirring*

Phillip Foxman

Subject of the documentary *Stirring*

Barbara Thompson

Subject of the documentary *All In The Same Boat*

Dennis Altman

EPISODES

Episode One

Rising Voices (1970–1973)

Episode one dives into the early 1970s when the polished façade of Australia's whitewashed, single-narrative identity began to fracture. Renegade filmmakers captured the true colours of a nation in transition. As movements like land rights and LGBTQI+ pride gained momentum, their films began to crack open the rigid image, revealing a more diverse and complex society who were willing to share their stories.

Episode Two

Between hope and reality (1973–1976)

The 1970s marked a time of progress and change in Australia, with new leadership eager to reflect the country's growing cultural diversity. Within the Government Film Unit, filmmakers began to focus on the lived experiences of marginalised groups. But as they uncover the raw truths behind issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, they also expose a simmering tension between the nation's hopeful vision and the sobering reality of its citizens' struggles.

Episode Three

Representation and collaboration (1976–1980)

In the latter half of the 70s, filmmaking changed as much as the country itself. With more and more diverse filmmakers behind the camera, this era saw women, Indigenous creatives, and gay activists using film as a powerful medium for social change, while the emergence of SBS fostered more authentic migrant storytelling. By the end of the decade the earlier monolithic portrayal of Australia had given way to a broader spectrum of the nation's stories.



KEY TALENT

Narrator • Jacki Weaver

The series is anchored by the incisive and playful narration offered by twice-Oscar-nominated screen legend Jacki Weaver.

It's astounding how omnipresent Jacki is in Australian film and television of the 1970s. She's all over the New Wave of Australian cinema: from crass box-office successes like *Alvin Purple* to arthouse icons like *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. She was in ads, had her face printed on cereal boxes, worked as a current affairs reporter on *Willesee*, was a singer and a dancer, and even won a Gold Logie for a Film Australia film about a trapped suburban housewife experiencing postnatal depression – a topic rarely explored either then or now. Jacki's willingness to embrace unconventional roles and her ability to cross between genres made her truly ahead of her time, challenging societal expectations of women in film and television.

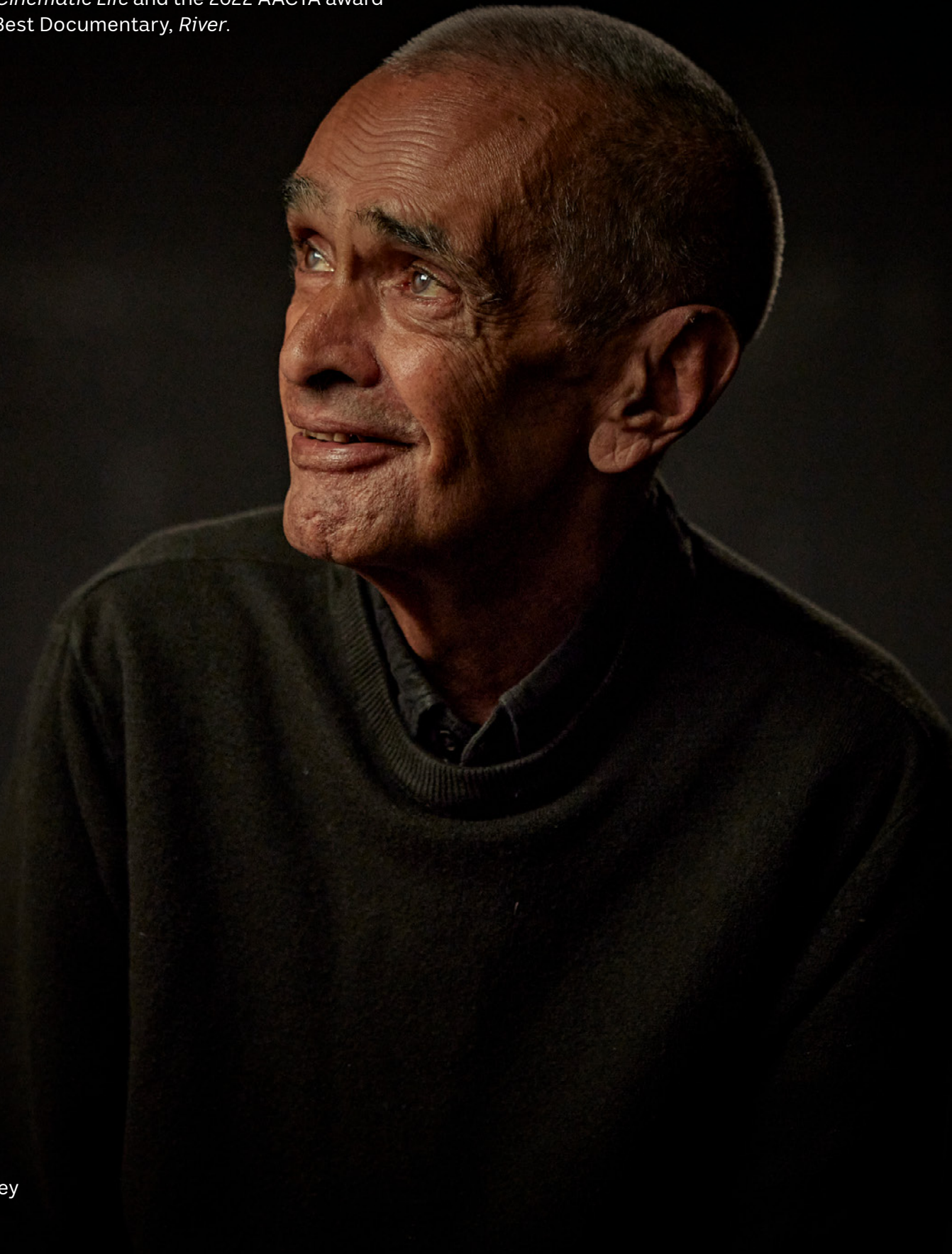
Jacki's reactions to the archival footage are captured alongside other contributors, and her own experience with the Government Film Unit serves as a great starting point for the series. But Jacki is more than a voice from the past. Her late career success in contemporary Hollywood has given her a unique visibility and reach that surpasses the nostalgic young Jacki Weaver we all remember from the 70s, and it provides a unique perspective on both her lifetime and the monumental changes that have occurred in the past 50 years.



PRODUCTION COMPANY

Stranger Than Fiction

Stranger Than Fiction (STF) is a BAFTA and Emmy-nominated production company with an international reputation for feature documentaries and blue-chip doc-series including top rating SBS program *Australia in Colour*, *Sherpa*, *Mountain*, *Harley & Katya*, *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life* and the 2022 AACTA award winner for Best Documentary, *River*.



Dr. Gary Foley

KEY CREATIVES

Jo-anne McGowan – Producer

Jo-anne McGowan is an Emmy-winning producer known for acclaimed documentary work spanning arts, culture and social justice. She co-founded Stranger Than Fiction Films and co-produced *Mountain* (2017), one of Australia's top-grossing documentaries, released theatrically in the US, UK and beyond.

Her follow-up *River* premiered at Telluride and won AACTA awards for Best Documentary and Best Score. Jo-anne also produced *David Stratton's Stories of Australian Cinema* (Cannes Classics selection, Emmy nominee) and the 2023 Emmy-winning *Harley & Katya*.

Rebecca Bennett – Producer

Rebecca Bennett is a multi-award-winning producer whose internationally recognised work includes the feature documentary *Ghosthunter*, which premiered at Sheffield DocFest and won multiple awards including an AWGIE and an AACTA for editing.

She also produced *The Scars of Ali Boulala*, which premiered at Tribeca, and executive produced the *Ghosthunter* podcast for Audible. Her work often integrates long-term social impact campaigns, especially around trauma and mental health.

Jennifer Peedom – Executive Producer

Jennifer Peedom is a BAFTA- and Emmy-nominated filmmaker known for visually stunning, globally released documentaries. Her breakout film *Sherpa* (2015) was BAFTA-nominated and screened at Telluride, Toronto and London.

Her collaboration with the Australian Chamber Orchestra led to *Mountain* and *River*, both major box office successes released in over 25 countries. Jen's producing credits include *Martha: A Picture Story*, *Australia in Colour*, *Big Deal*, *ONEFOUR: Against All Odds*, and IMAX features such as *Fungi: The Web of Life* and *Butterfly Kingdom*.



KEY CREATIVES



Mariam Veiszadeh

Chris Eley • Series Director and Writer/Director (Episodes One & Three)

Chris Eley is an award-winning director and writer with nearly 20 years' experience creating documentaries for international broadcasters including the BBC, Channel 4, PBS, A&E, Arte and France Télévisions. His work spans genres and continents, with a strong focus on archival storytelling and underrepresented voices.

He won a BAFTA for *Chosen* (2009), was nominated for a BAFTA for *15,000 Kids and Counting* (2015), and earned multiple other recognitions including AMI, Bulldog and Grierson award nods. In recent years, he returned to Australia to direct *Designing a Legacy* and develop *Unofficial History*.

Ili Bare • Writer/Director (Episode Two)

Ili Bare is an award-winning documentary writer/director whose work has screened internationally across the US, UK and Australia. Her acclaimed feature *The Leadership* (2020) was described as “faultless documentary making”, and *Australia's Open* (2023) was celebrated for its artistry.

Her films explore themes across science, sport and history through deeply human stories. Ili's accolades include the Eureka Prize for Science Journalism, the US Golden Cine Award, and multiple ATOM awards.

Pauline Clague • Director & First Nations Consultant

Pauline Clague is a leading Indigenous filmmaker, mentor and curator with a global footprint. She founded Winda Film Festival in Sydney, has programmed for imagineNATIVE in Toronto, and co-created nativeSLAM at New Zealand's Māoriland Film Festival.

With over two decades of experience championing Indigenous storytelling, she continues to shape the next generation of creators through academic leadership at UTS and mentoring programs like Creative Plus Business.

ABOUT THE FILM AUSTRALIA COLLECTION (FAC) AND NATIONAL FILM & SOUND ARCHIVES (NFSA)

The Film Australia Collection (FAC) spans 1913 to 2008 and includes over 3,000 Commonwealth documentary and docu-drama titles produced by the Cinema and Photographic Branch (1913–38), Australian National Film Board for the Department of Information (1939–49), Department of the Interior (1950–55), Commonwealth Film Unit (1956–72), Film Australia (1973–87) and Film Australia Limited (1988–2008).

The mission of Film Australia and its predecessors was to produce an audiovisual record of Australian life. Film Australia became one of the nation's leading producers of television documentaries and educational programs and served as a training ground for some of the biggest names in Australia's film industry who developed their early careers there.

On 1 July 2011 all the rights and obligations of Film Australia Limited – Library and Sales were transferred under the Screen Australia (Transfer of Assets) Act 2011 from Screen Australia to the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). From this date the Film Australia Library collection was renamed the Film Australia Collection (FAC).

The NFSA is the proud custodian of the FAC, preserving and providing access to the nation's documentary record – the stories not always remembered but shouldn't be forgotten.



Leila Gurruwiwi

**SIGN UP FOR OUR LATEST
NEWS AND RELEASES**

Visit us at
abc.net.au/contentsales

