

BLUE WATER EMPIRE

Three-part
Dramatised
Documentary
Premieres,
Tuesday, 25 June,
8:30pm on
ABC + ABC iview

 tv + iview



MEDIA CONTACT

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#BlueWaterEmpire

**BLUE WATER EMPIRE
WAS PRODUCED BY
BUNYA PRODUCTIONS AND
LONE STAR PRODUCTIONS FOR
ABC TELEVISION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE SCREEN AUSTRALIA
INDIGENOUS DEPARTMENT AND
SCREEN QUEENSLAND.**

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BUNYA
PRODUCTIONS





SYNOPSIS

Blue Water Empire is a 3-part dramatised-documentary series, giving a unique insight into the history of the Torres Strait Islands.

Traversing the pre-colonial era through to contemporary times, this compelling history is centred on the key stories told by the men and women of the region, brought to life by dramatic re-enactments from an all-star cast including Aaron Fa'Aoso, Jimi Bani, Ryan Corr, Damian Walshe-Howling, Roy Billing, Geoff Morrell, Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Peter Phelps, Merwez Whaleboat, Robert Mammone and Damian de Montemas.

With additional stories woven together through artwork, animation and archive material, and set to a soundtrack composed by Torres Strait Islander Will Kepa, the series explores how Torres Strait Islanders have sustained their cultural heritage throughout the impact of 200 years of European settlement.

The breathtaking beauty of the land and sea country of the Torres Straits features in the series. Stunning aerial cinematography, and magnificent CGI maps, navigate the audience through this vast and remote corner of northern Australia.

The series is anchored by popular actor, producer and proud Torres Strait Islander Aaron Fa'Aoso, who introduces and narrates each episode.

Across the series, we document and reveal the impact of past and present government policies and give insight to the social and economic paternalism that have affected the lives of Torres Strait Islanders - leading them to fight back or unite in strike action. We reveal contemporary Torres Strait Islander life, along with great Torres Strait Island characters such as the legendary George Mye and Eddie Mabo.

The series conclusion celebrates the resilience and resistance of the Torres Strait Islander people, despite their profound struggle to regain their land and sea country, their Blue Water Empire.

3 X 55 MINUTES

THE
INCREDIBLE
HISTORY
OF THE
TORRES STRAITS.

STORIES AND THEMES

"JOURNEY THROUGH TIME
TO THE KEY EVENTS
AND TURNING POINTS,
THAT HAVE SHAPED
OUR HISTORY"

The series opens with fearsome warriors in a powerful trading empire, and an exploration of the spiritual life that pervaded all aspects of traditional custom.

The episode journeys through stories of first contact, giving a fascinating counter-point to the colonial experience. Language, culture and the trading empire come under threat when, at the conclusion of episode 1, Captain William Banner (Ryan Corr) negotiates with the highly regarded King Kebisu (Jimi Bani) to harvest pearl shells from the waters of the Torres Strait.

The second episode opens with elder and performer Seaman Dan, recounting the excitement and danger of the deep-sea pearl diving days of his youth. The pearl rush in the 1870's brought thousands of men and women from many parts of the world to the Torres Strait Islands. While the boom brought great economic wealth and freedom for some, the realities for Islanders under the oppressive colonial powers meant their lives were highly regulated. This dynamic was challenged with the first major collective action in the Torres Strait since white settlement - the great Maritime Strike of 1936.

The episode continues on with stories of missionaries arriving in the Torres Straits, known as the 'Coming of the Light', and the lasting impact of Christianity on Islander language and culture. By the end of the second episode, World War II has come to the region. It brings devastating and permanent changes to the Torres Straits.

The third episode opens with collective action by the Torres Strait Islander Light Infantry Battalion soldiers, who were receiving only half the pay of white soldiers. After the war, we learn about the migration from Saibai Island to the Australian mainland, led by Chief Bamaga.



STORIES AND THEMES

"TOLD BY THE COURAGEOUS
MEN AND WOMEN,
WHO CARRY THESE
INCREDIBLE STORIES,
IN THEIR HEARTS"



The episode continues on with the collapse of the pearling industry that forced many Islanders to seek work on the mainland, on the cane fields and railways.

Torres Strait elders John Kennell Senior and Charlie Loban recall their days laying the Mt Newman railway track in the 1960s, which set a world-wide record for the longest track laid in a single day. That world record has never been broken – it still stands today.

With the Whitlam era came a new wave of hope and optimism for Indigenous Australians, but the promise of land rights did not extend to the Torres Straits – instead they were faced with the prospect of dividing the Torres Straits between Australia and Papua New Guinea during the negotiations for PNG's 1975 independence. "Border No Change" was a campaign won with an unlikely ally – then Premier of Queensland, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Later, while local leader and politician George Mye was increasing government infrastructure and investment in the Torres Strait, Eddie Koiki Mabo and his co-plaintiffs were forging ahead with their native title claim, ultimately won in the High Court of Australia.

OTHER NOTES

To provide an authentic insight into Torres Strait Islander life and history, the series features both the 'official' (English) names of Islands, and the traditional names of Islands – many of which are used by communities today and are being re-patriated and recognised by mainstream authorities.

The cultural leaders and Elder men and women who tell the incredible stories that shape the series, are identified on-screen by their name, totem or clan, and their Island – whether it is their Island of birth, family origin, or residence.

Traditional languages Miriam Mir, Kala Lagaw Ya, Kala Kawau Ya, and Yumpla Tok are also featured.

EPISODE 1

Tuesday, 25 June, 8:30pm,
ABC + ABC iview

SYNOPSIS:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
TORRES STRAITS, AND A
FASCINATING EXPLORATION OF
THE CONCEPTS THAT SHAPED
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
CULTURE AND CUSTOM
BEFORE WHITE SETTLEMENT.



CHARACTERS

DUPA (Jimi Bani) and PAMOY (Merwez Whaleboat): Husband and wife on Mer. Having lost two sons in a canoe accident they adopted two European boys who survived the Charles Eaton massacre. Pamoy cared for the boys and became especially close to the younger castaway. When the boys were rescued by Captain Lewis, Dupa became a celebrity, well-known to Europeans visiting Mer and Erub.

MELVILLE: An artist on HMS Bramble in 1845, Melville depicted aspects of Torres Strait life in a range of beautiful paintings and sketches. He executed an intimate portrait of Dupa and his family.

KEBISU (Jimi Bani): A great trader and warrior from Tutu/lama, Kebisu dominated trade in the central Torres Strait and commanded trading expeditions to the Fly Delta in New Guinea. The discovery of pearl-shell at his island led to a rapid influx of pearling vessels.

BANNER (Ryan Corr): A roguish captain with experience fishing beche-de-mer in Vanuatu. The discovery of pearl-shell by Banner's men at Tutu in 1869 changed Torres Strait history. Banner died at Tutu in 1871.

THEMES

***SEA:** Torres Strait Islanders travel their sea domain with their large sea-going canoes. No other people in this region had the technology and skills to construct and operate these vessels. The sea is at the heart of Torres Strait Islander life and religion.

***TRADE:** Torres Strait Islands are a trading people, using these large vessels Torres Strait Islanders travelled widely along the New Guinean coast, along the western edge of the Coral Sea and down the east coast of North Queensland exploiting the sea's resources and trading with other peoples on the rim of their empire.

***POWER:** Torres Strait Islanders totally dominated this vast sea space. Within this domain they were unchallenged and masters of their own destiny - until the late 1800's when pearls are discovered in their waters and thousands of foreigners from all over the world descend on the Torres Straits and everything changes.

EPISODE 2

Tuesday, 2 July, 8:30pm,
ABC + ABC iview

SYNOPSIS:

THE PEARLING BOOM BRINGS THOUSANDS OF STRANGERS TO THE REGION AND HAS A PROFOUND ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPACT ON THE TORRES STRAIT. MISSIONARIES INTRODUCE CHRISTIANITY, WHICH INFLUENCES THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF MANY TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS, AFFECTING TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE, DANCE AND TRADITION.

CHARACTERS

DABAD: A traditional leader on Erub. He had heard of the missionaries and welcomed the London Missionary Society to his island in 1871.

REVEREND SAMUEL MACFARLANE: A cleric with the London Missionary Society, he caused a diplomatic incident in New Caledonia and was deported by French authorities. MacFarlane brought dozens of South Sea missionaries into the Torres Strait. Many were unsuitable for the work and brutalised the islanders. MacFarlane was blamed for the 1875 measles epidemic which devastated Indigenous populations in Torres Strait and New Guinea.

MUARA (LIFU) WACANDO (Lilah Billy): Of mixed South Sea/Torres Strait descent, she rescued a man from shark attack at Mer. During the Princess Charlotte Bay Cyclone, her husband perished but Moara saved several people from drowning for which she received a bravery award. She remarried and had a large family.

TANU NONA (Aaron Fa'Aoso): His father was Samoan but Ugarie, his mother, came from the snake clan (thabu awgadh) on Saibai Island. He went to Badu Island and, through unrelenting ambition and hard work, built a famous pearling dynasty. He and his family respected their connections to Saibai and the snake clan.

PROTECTOR JOHN McLEAN (Roy Billing): A Queensland official based on Thursday Island, his experience in New Guinea worked against him. His autocratic style led to the Maritime Strike which was, in effect, a successful, popular insurrection against McLean and his policies.

THEMES

***SEA:** European vessels frequent Torres Strait waters. Torres Strait Islanders slowly begin to lose control over their sea. The old canoe trade lapses though it does not disappear entirely. More and more Torres Strait Islanders come to rely on lugger boats, not just for an income from pearling, but also for hunting and travel.

***TRADE:** A transition is taking place from traditional trade to resource exploitation by non-Islander entrepreneurs. The pearl-shell, trochus and trepang industries bring hundreds of outsiders to the islands and shift the economic base from traditional barter to a modern market economy determined by global demand.

***POWER:** As the trade shifts so does authority. Traditional leaders lose power to those who participate in, and derive their wealth from, the 'new' industries. Missionaries build churches and undermine traditional Island power structures and culture replacing them with a new hierarchy and authority. The Queensland Government gradually asserts control over most aspects of Torres Strait Islander life and limiting the peoples' freedom.



EPISODE 3

Tuesday, 9 July, 8:30pm,
ABC + ABC iview

SYNOPSIS:

AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF PEARLING, MANY TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS ARE FORCED TO MIGRATE TO THE MAINLAND FOR WORK. LEGENDARY LEADERS LIKE EDDIE KOIKI MABO AND GEORGE MYE TAKE HUGE STRIDES TOWARDS RETURNING AUTONOMY TO THE TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE, WHILE THE TRAGIC SINKING OF THE MALU SARA DEMONSTRATES THE POWER STILL HELD BY AUTHORITIES OVER ISLANDER LIVES TODAY.

CHARACTERS

BAMAGA GINAU: A leader of the cassowary clan (samu awgadh) on Saibai, he played an important role in the 1947 migration to the mainland of Australia. He died during the migration. The main Torres Strait Islander settlement on Cape York was named after him.

JOHN KENNEL: From Erub, he migrated to the mainland for work and enjoyed a career as a leader in railway construction in Western Australia.

GEORGE MYE: From Erub, eloquent spokesman and elder statesman of Torres Strait, Mye negotiated with a series of Australian Prime Ministers and Queensland Premiers to advance the interests of the Torres Strait people. He led the push for independence in 1987 and, in recent times, for autonomy.

MALUWHAP NONA: Attacked a non-Islander fishing vessel near Mer in 1998 for which he was charged, and finally acquitted in 2001. He led the fight for Torres Strait fishing rights and sea rights confirmed by recent legal decisions.

WILFRED BAIRA (Jimi Bani): From Badu Island, Baira was captain of the AQIS vessel Malu Sara which sank with the loss of five Torres Strait Islanders in 2005. He was ordered to sea in an unseaworthy vessel and then denied rescue by white authorities. This tragedy shook the Torres Strait.

GARY CHASTON (Geoff Morrell): In command of AQIS in Torres Strait, he approved a fleet of unseaworthy vessels then ordered his Torres Strait Islander staff to take them to sea. He deliberately withheld navigational equipment from these vessels because Islanders "wouldn't know how to use them". The night Malu Sara sank he is believed to have ignored direct requests for help from Baira (by satellite phone) while he had dinner at Thursday Island Bowls Club.

THEMES

***SEA:** Torres Strait Islanders have lost control over their sea space. They no longer have access to vast traditional fishing grounds down the east of Queensland. Licensed southern-based, non-Islander fishermen plunder the Strait's resources. The Torres Strait Treaty guarantees PNG access to its northern waters. Never has the Torres Strait Islander domain, reduced to a fraction of its former range, been so diminished and under so much threat. Then World War II hits, the Torres Straits is pounded by Japanese attacks and everything changes...

***TRADE:** After the war, pearling collapses causing widespread unemployment in the Torres Strait Islands - where no other industries have been permitted by government policy. Torres Strait Islanders lack financial resources to enter new industries, such as cray, prawn and mackerel fishing, and compete with licensed non-islander commercial fishermen. These professional non-islander fishermen simply move their existing operations north from the Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns.

***POWER:** Government, which has stifled economic growth in the Torres Strait Islands, has also refused Torres Strait Islanders social security payments (until 1975). With the collapse of pearling destitute Islanders are forced to migrate to survive. So, begins the Torres Strait Diaspora. The Torres Straits calls for independence and autonomy are the consequence of generations of colonial manipulation, control and exploitation. After a long struggle, the Islanders finally win back their sea rights.



TORRES STRAIT TIMELINE



Significant times and events, some covered in the documentary:

Torres Strait Islands first discovered by Luis Vaes de Torres, a Spaniard. **1606**

Captain James Cook passes through the islands and takes possession and lays claim of Australia for Britain and erects a flag on Possession Island. **1770**

The marine industry develops in the islands, first with beche-de-mer and later the pearling industry in the 1880s. **1860's**

London Missionary Society arrives and Christianity is introduced to the islands. The first landing is at Darnley Island (Erub) on 1st July 1871, this is celebrated annually as the 'Coming of the Light' on 1st July celebrations. **1871**

Thursday Island is founded. **1876**

Queensland Government appoints a Government Resident. Head men appointed and given police powers in outer islands. **1877**

TORRES STRAIT TIMELINE

Torres Strait Islands are annexed to Queensland. **1879**

Haddon's Expedition. **1888**

Cambridge Anthropological Expedition [Haddon] to the Torres Strait. **1898**

Queensland Government takes control of the islands from the London Missionary Society. Torres Strait Island Citizens become wards of State. **1904**
(Aboriginal Protection Act)
- Torres Straits under same legislation as Aboriginal People.
- Communities became Reserves
- Segregated from outside world.
- Personal/domestic & community affairs under control of a Protector.

Maritime Strike, resulted not only from poor working conditions of pearl divers but rather the Islander's right to control wages and their own affairs. It was about equality and autonomy. **1936**

Introduction of new legislation which provided for elected community councils. **1939**

Torres Strait Islanders contributed to the WWII of enlisting 700 soldiers. **1939 - 1945**

Torres Strait Islanders Soldiers strike for equal pay, of which was supported by while soldiers. **1943**

Torres Strait Islanders were allowed into mainland Australia, to seek employment. **1947**

AIATSIS is established in June as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. **1964**

Referendum - Torres Strait Islanders become citizens with equal rights. **1967**

Torres Strait Islander Service men receive full entitlements. **1986**

ATSIC comes into being as the main policy-making body for ATSI affairs. **1990**

The High Court Mabo Decision establishes that the Meriam people hold native title over the Murray Islands, and the notion of terra nullius is proved invalid. **1992**

TORRES STRAIT TIMELINE

Torres Strait flag is designed by Bernerd Namok. **1992**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority is established (TSRA). **1994**

ICC Councils made into Local Government Authorities. **2008**

Torres Strait Islanders elected as Mayors to the newly ATSI Local Government Authorities (NPA Regional Council, Torres Strait Islander Regional Council, Torres Municipal Council). **2008**

Successful Torres Strait Sea Claim upheld in Federal Court. **2014**



DAVID JOWSEY, AARON FA'AOSO & GREER SIMPKIN

PRODUCERS STATEMENT

Our vision for **Blue Water Empire** has always been to create a high quality dramatised documentary series for prime time broadcast television. **Blue Water Empire** is an entertaining, informative and culturally appropriate TV event.

Award-winning writer and director Steven McGregor has done a wonderful job bringing history to life with evocative dramatisations. Yet at the core of the series are surprising and accessible stories capturing the key moments and turning points in the incredible history of the Torres Strait Islands.

We believe that there is little known about Australia's other First Nations people, the Torres Strait Islanders, and their important contribution to Australia's history. **Blue Water Empire** gives a unique, in depth insight into the people, the place and the vibrant traditional culture that has continued to adapt, survive and thrive through the waves of early colonisation, the explosion of the pearling industry, the chaos and violence of World War II and more recently the famous Mabo Case and the hard-won fight for Sea Rights. It's an amazing history that all Australians deserve to know.

Blue Water Empire is a character-based narrative with compelling action. The characters that appear across the series are played by a host of marquee Australian actors, including Ryan Corr, Damian Walshe-Howling, Jimi Bani, Aaron Fa'Aoso, Peter Phelps, Robert Mammone, Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Damian de Montemas, Geoff Morrell and Roy Billing.

The series weaves interviews, archive, CGI and dramatised action into a compelling and poignant history of a people, told over some 300 years from the early 1700s up until today.

We aim for the series to be in all schools in Australia and for the history of the Torres Strait Islands to take its rightful place in our national curriculum and identity.

**David Jowsey, Aaron Fa'Aoso and Greer Simpkin
Producers**

CAST CREDITS

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Aaron Fa'Aoso | as John Joseph, Gerry Stephens and Tanu Nona |
| Jimi Bani | as Kebisu, Dupa and Wilfred Baira |
| Ryan Corr | as Captain Banner |
| Damian Walshe-Howling | as Wing Commander Donald Thomson |
| Jeremy Lindsay Taylor | as Captain Lewis |
| Merwez Whaleboat | as Pamoy and Flora Enosa |
| Arama Tabuai | as Ted Harry, Warrior and Soldier |
| Roy Billing | as John McLean |
| Olivier Vergari | as Government Assistant |
| Geoff Morrell | as Government Official |
| Peter Phelps | as Commanding Officer |
| Robert Mammone | as Major |
| Damian de Montemas | as Lieutenant |
| Barry Lea | as Dabad, Kebisu's Warrior |
| Abraham Mantey | as Musu |
| Matthew Predny | as John Ireland |
| Nancy Nona | as Valerie Saub and Warrior Woman |
| Lilah Billy | as Pasia, Moara, and Warrior Daughter |
| Caro Cardelli | as Missionary and Soldier |
| Caleb Cohen | as Soldier and Warrior |



AARON FA'AOSO

John Joseph,
Gerry Stephens and
Tanu Nona

Episodes 1, 2 and 3



JIMI BANI

Kebisu,
Dupa and
Wilfred Baira

Episodes 1, 2 and 3



RYAN CORR

Captain Banner

Episode 1



DAMIAN WALSHE-HOWLING

Wing Commander
Donald Thomson

Episode 2



JEREMY LINDSAY TAYLOR

Captain Lewis

Episode 1



MERWEZ WHALEBOAT

Pamoy and
Flora Enosa

Episodes 1 and 3



ARAMA TABUAI

Ted Harry, Warrior
and Soldier

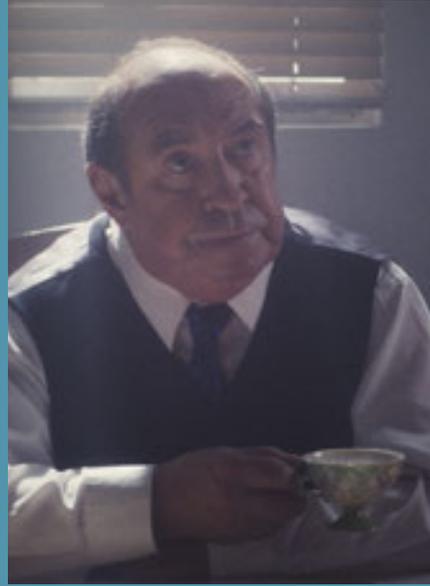
Episodes 1, 2 and 3



ROY BILLING

John McLean

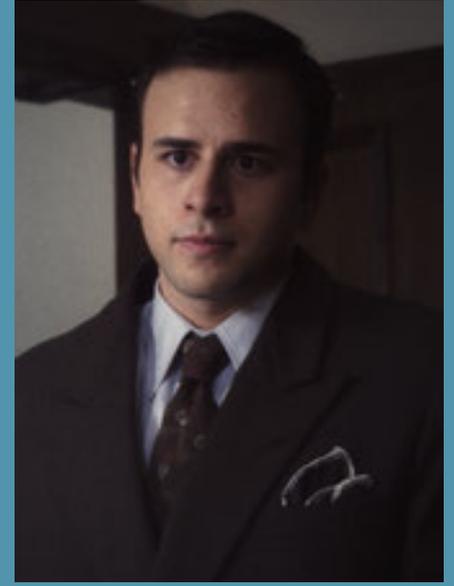
Episode 2



OLIVIER VERGARI

Government
Assistant

Episode 2



GEOFF MORRELL

Government Official

Episode 3



PETER PHELPS

Commanding Officer

Episodes 2 and 3



ROBERT MAMMONE

Major

Episodes 2 and 3



DAMIAN DE MONTEMAS

Lieutenant

Episode 3



BARRY LEA

Dabad and
Kebisu's Warrior

Episodes 1 and 2



ABRAHAM MANTEY

Musu

Episodes 1 and 2



MATTHEW PREDNY

John Ireland

Episode 1



NANCY NONA

Valerie Saub and
Warrior Woman

Episode 1



LILAH BILLY

Pasia, Moara and
Warrior Daughter

Episode 2



CARO CARRELLI

Missionary and
Soldier

Episodes 1 and 2



CALEB COHEN

Soldier and
Warrior

Episode 2



Comms
of
The Light
1 July
1871

St John
CAR 115
THE LIGHT
SHEDS IN
DANGER
AND THE
DANGER
IS NOT

SURPRISE

FILMMAKER CREDITS

Producers David Jowsey
Aaron Fa'Aoso
Greer Simpkin

Director Steven McGregor

Narration Writer David Jowsey
Aaron Fa'Aoso

Writers Steven McGregor
John Singe, Aaron Fa'Aoso,
Anna Shnukal, David Jowsey

Associate Producers Jimi Bani
Lauren Mather

Cinematographer Andrew Conder

Production Manager Deanne Stratford

Editors Nicolas Lee, Walter Ratcliffe

Consultant Editor Nicholas Holmes, ASE

Art Director Karen Ballantyne

Costume Designer Monica O'Brien

Hair and Make-up Designer Natalie Stanfield

First Assistant Director Richard McGrath

Sound Recordists Terry Meehan
Gary Hamden

Animation Director, VFX Supervisor Craig Deeker

Sound Designer and Mixer Nigel Christensen

Sound Editor, ADR, Additional Music James Andrews

Composer Will Kepa

KEY CREATIVES

AARON FA'AOSO

PRODUCER,
WRITER,
NARRATOR &
ACTOR

Based in Cairns Queensland, Aaron Fa'Aoso is one of Australia's leading Torres Strait Island actors. Best known for his appearances in ABC's Black Comedy, which was nominated for Most Outstanding Comedy Program at the 2015 Logies and won an AACTA for Best Direction. He first came to prominence in 2004 with his performance as 'Eddie' in the critically-acclaimed SBS mini-series, R.A.N., for which he received nominations for an AFI Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Television Drama and a LOGIE Award for Most Outstanding New Talent.

Following on from that success, Aaron joined the multi award winning SBS series East West 101 for which he received a 2011 Monte Carlo TV Festival award nomination for Most Outstanding Actor. In 2012 he was nominated for an AACTA Award for Best Supporting Actor, and the show was awarded Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Cast in a Television Drama Series at the Equity Awards.

His other television credits include the German series Munchen 7; City Homicide, Sea Patrol and Screentime's Bikie Wars: Brothers in Arms on Network Ten.

In 2009, Aaron made his feature film debut in Sue Brooks' Subdivision and in 2015 appeared in Ivan Sen's feature, Goldstone.

Aaron has also been active behind the camera writing and directing the short film, Sharp Eye, as part of the SBS Television series Bit of Black Business.

In 2012, Aaron was Associate Producer and starred opposite UK actor Brian Cox in the ABC crime drama, The Straits. The series is based on his original idea and was produced by Matchbox Pictures.

Aaron is also an accomplished stage actor, he was one of the devisors and performers in the Urban Theatre Project's highly successful play, Back Home, which sold out at the 2006 Sydney Festival and toured to Toronto, Canada the following year. He also featured in Queensland's Koeemba Jdarra Performing Arts Company productions of Howie the Rookie and Njunjal the Sun.

Aaron is a four time Deadly Award nominee for Male Actor of the Year for his performances in R.A.N. and East West 101.



KEY CREATIVES

DAVID JOWSEY

PRODUCER,
WRITER &
CASTING DIRECTOR

David Jowsey has had an extensive career as a film and television producer. 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 AACTA-Award nominated Goldstone, and Jasper Jones based on the best-selling novel and directed by Rachel Perkins.

He recently produced the drama series Mystery Road and the feature film Sweet Country. The titles won Best Drama Series and Best Feature Film respectively at the 2018 AACTA Awards.

David has also produced the documentary-drama series Blue Water Empire for ABC TV, and is Executive Producer of the upcoming feature documentaries Sanctuary and Beautiful Minds: The Agents of Change.

He is currently producing the feature films High Ground, Ivan Sen's Loveland and the second series of Mystery Road.



KEY CREATIVES

GREER SIMPKIN

PRODUCER & CASTING DIRECTOR

Greer Simpkin joined Bunya Productions as Producer and Head of Television in March 2015 after many years working in editorial and production roles in broadcasting – ABC (Australia) and Channel 4 (UK).

Since joining Bunya, Greer has produced the award-winning television drama series *Mystery Road* and the award-winning feature films *Sweet Country* and *Goldstone*.

Mystery Road and *Sweet Country* won Best Drama Series and Best Feature Film respectively at the 2018 AACTA Awards.

Greer was an Executive Producer on the feature film *Jasper Jones* and has also produced the documentary *The Troublesome Priest* (1 x 30') for ABC, the VR film *Every King Tide* for SBS and the drama/doc series *Blue Water Empire* for the ABC (3 x 60').

Greer is currently producing the documentary feature *Beautiful Minds: The Agents of Change*, the feature films *High Ground* and *Loveland*, and the second season of *Mystery Road*.

Prior to joining Bunya, Greer was Deputy Head of Fiction at the ABC for 5 years, where she was instrumental in commissioning a large slate of new dramas and narrative comedies and was an Executive Producer of *The Code*, *The Secret River*, *Parer's War*, *Serangoon Road* and *Hiding*.



KEY

CREATIVES

STEVEN MCGREGOR

DIRECTOR & WRITER

Steven McGregor is an award-winning Writer and Director. Most recently, Steven has directed for ABC's Black Comedy season 3, and prior to that two episodes of the ABC's drama series Warriors.

Steven along with co-writer David Tranter won the 2018 AWGIE (Australian Writers Guild) best screenplay for the feature Sweet Country.

He has directed numerous award winning documentaries and a one-hour feature drama. Several of his highlights include: Croker Island Exodus (2012) 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.

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.

CAAMA Production's one hour drama for SBS TV Cold Turkey, was written and directed by Steven McGregor. The drama centers on 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; and was nominated in the IF Awards and for a 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.



KEY CREATIVES

JIMI BANI

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER & ACTOR

Jimi Bani is a Torres Strait Island man from Mabuyag and Erub. Jimi is an actor best known for his portrayal of Eddie Mabo in the telefeature Mabo. Jimi also had leading roles in the TV dramas RAN and The Straits. In 2018 he wrote and also acted in his play My Name is Jimi.

LAUREN MATHER

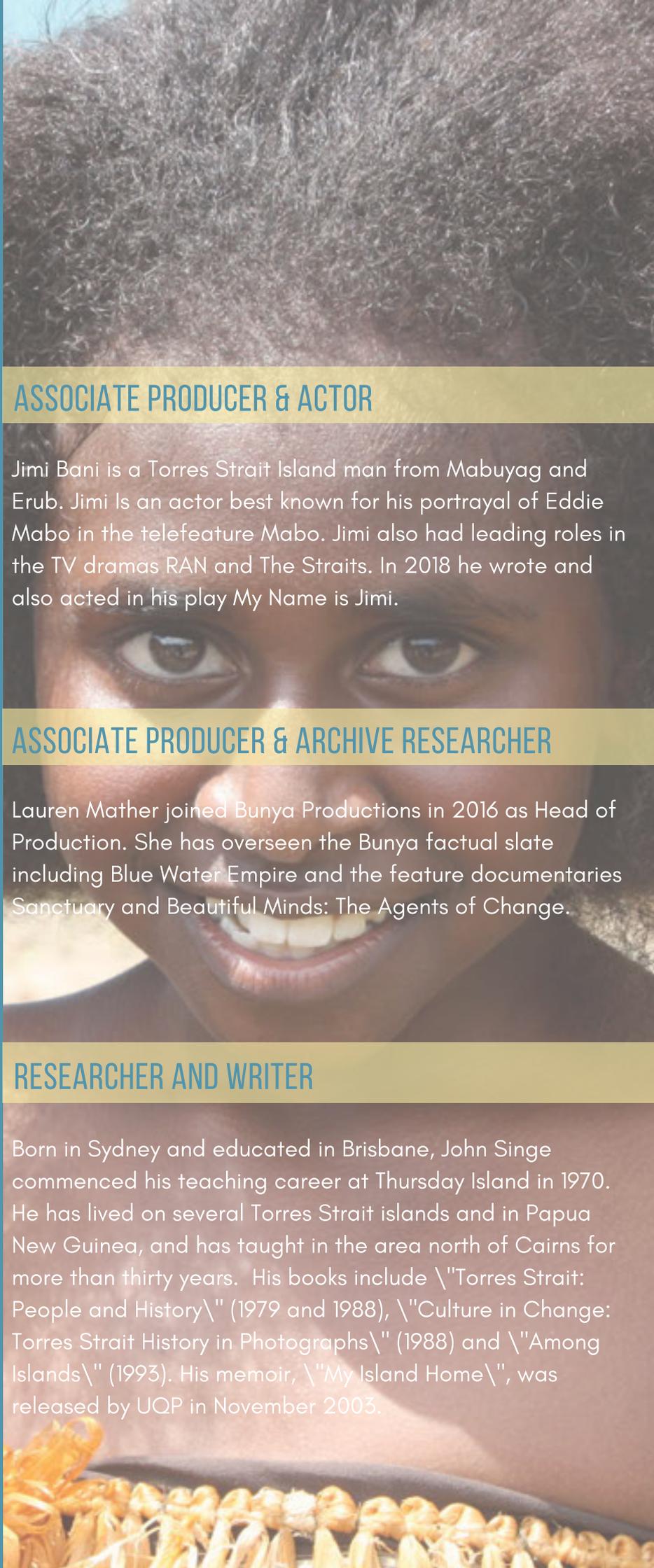
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER & ARCHIVE RESEARCHER

Lauren Mather joined Bunya Productions in 2016 as Head of Production. She has overseen the Bunya factual slate including Blue Water Empire and the feature documentaries Sanctuary and Beautiful Minds: The Agents of Change.

JOHN SINGE

RESEARCHER AND WRITER

Born in Sydney and educated in Brisbane, John Singe commenced his teaching career at Thursday Island in 1970. He has lived on several Torres Strait islands and in Papua New Guinea, and has taught in the area north of Cairns for more than thirty years. His books include "Torres Strait: People and History" (1979 and 1988), "Culture in Change: Torres Strait History in Photographs" (1988) and "Among Islands" (1993). His memoir, "My Island Home", was released by UQP in November 2003.



KEY CREATIVES

ANNA SHNUKAL

WRITER

Dr Anna Shnukal is Honorary Research Fellow and formerly ARC Australian Research Fellow at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, the University of Queensland. A former Senior Lecturer in Linguistics, she is the author of more than 50 publications on aspects of Torres Strait language, culture and history.

KAREN BALLANTYNE

ART DIRECTOR

Karen is a Cairns-based Art Department Director and Event Producer. During production she worked with a large team of local Torres Strait Islander art department trainees. Karen previously worked in the Art Department for Sea Patrol and more recently, Safe Harbour.

MONICA O'BRIEN

COSTUME DESIGNER

Monica's recent television credits include The Family Law and Homecoming Queens, both for SBS.

KEY CREATIVES

NATALIE STANFIELD

HAIR & MAKE-UP DESIGNER

Most recently Natalie was the hair and make-up designer for SBS's Homecoming Queens and prior to that, worked on a number of feature films in hair and make-up departments.

CRAIG DEEKER

ANIMATION DIRECTOR, HEAD OF POST PRODUCTION & VFX

Craig Deeker is an Executive Producer of the feature films Goldstone, Jasper Jones and Sweet Country. Craig is the principal of his own post production company The Gingerbread Man based in Sydney.

WILL KEPA

COMPOSER

Will Kepa is a Torres Strait Islander multi-instrumentalist, audio engineer and producer based in Cairns, Far North Queensland and has been on the professional music scene for the past decade. After learning to play the guitar in 1998, he enrolled in the Indigenous Music Program at the local TAFE College in 2000. Graduating a few years later with a Diploma in Music, Will has become one of the most sought after musicians in the area, as well as interstate.

Will has performed with the likes of Johnno's Blues Band, Phil Emmanuel, One Drop Reggae, the Briscoe Sisters, Wilma Reading, David Hudson, Kamerunga, Tribe Of Jubal, and Seaman Dan on a regular basis. His skills have taken him to many of the major festivals around the country and abroad.

BLUE WATER EMPIRE

MEDIA KIT

