

PRESS KIT



A FOUR-PART SERIES
NARRATED BY HUGO WEAVING

AUSTRALIA IN COLOUR

TURNING THE MONOCHROME PAST INTO GLORIOUS COLOUR
PREMIERING 8:30PM, WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019

SYNOPSIS: OVERALL SERIES

SCREEN AUSTRALIA AND SBS TELEVISION PRESENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH
CREATE NSW AND THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE OF AUSTRALIA
A STRANGER THAN FICTION FILMS PRODUCTION

DIRECTORS LISA MATTHEWS, ALEC MORGAN, ROSE HESP
PRODUCER JO-ANNE MCGOWAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JENNIFER PEEDOM, NICK METCALFE, DAVID GROSS

One sentence synopsis

This groundbreaking four part series relives modern Australia's history, for the very first time in colour.

One paragraph synopsis

Australia in Colour is the history of Australia told via a unique collection of cinematic moments brought to life for the first time in stunning colour. It tells the story of how Australia came to be the nation it is today. Narrated by Hugo Weaving, it's a reflection on our nation's character, its attitudes, its politics, and its struggle to value its Indigenous and multicultural past. *Australia in Colour* gives us a chance to relive history from a fresh perspective.

Long synopsis

When colour is applied to the black and white footage of Australia's film archives, the footage comes to life in a way never seen before, inspiring a new look at Australian history.

This four-part series carefully curates familiar footage, touching home movies and never-before-seen archival material to chart how Australia developed as a nation. From the oldest surviving footage captured in Australia in 1896 in Sydney's Prince Alfred Park, to the beginning of colour television in the mid 1970s, each sequence is lovingly restored and colourised. The effect is remarkable, bringing to light history that is both iconic and deeply personal.

The landscape of our collective memories is revealed. From the foundation of modern Australia when six British colonies unite to the arrival of Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson, amongst the first heroes of the new nation. We relive a time when Ned Kelly was the first hero of the silver screen. We see some of the quarter million men who fought in World War I, made all the more vivid in colour. We take a look at the evolving role of women in the workforce and their struggle for equal rights, from the right to equal pay to the right to drink in public bars and the right to not wear pantaloons when swimming.

The series also reflects back on uncomfortable moments in the treatment and characterisation of Indigenous people and non whites. It charts the gradual changes in these attitudes through the 1960s and 70s.

Through the decades, the series reveals how Australia finds its voice as a nation. From the White Australia Policy of 1901, to the "populate or perish" slogan of the 1940s; from the spirited protests of the 1960s to the very first hints of modern multiculturalism in the 1970s.

The series has been meticulously researched, including the historical accuracy of the colours themselves. Every sequence has been curated and carefully considered. The result is a remarkable, fresh vision of history that reconnects us with our past in a way that no other medium can.

“It was an exquisite joy – and fun – trawling through the archive, seeing all the fabulous images and finding the gems. The images are the stars of the show. The colour has made them feel immediate and real. Audiences are going to be gob-smacked by what they see. We could have made a series that was 20 hours long.

What struck me was how we are still grappling, as a nation, with many of the same issues we struggled with in the past: fear of immigrants and refugees, the sad and sorry relationship between mainstream and Indigenous Australia, even sporting controversies. When we covered bodyline, a bowling tactic that became a diplomatic issue, I thought of the recent ball tampering episode.”

Favourite footage includes: Louise Lovely and the McDonagh sisters, women who were in front of and behind the camera in Australia's fledgling film industry.

Lisa Matthews, writer/director

“Colour is emotion but the colourisation done in the past could produce images that were a bit tacky and cartoonish. The quality of this work adds energy and vibrancy and gives it an emotional connection that you don't get with black and white footage.

I jumped at the opportunity to enrich history with colour and also to work with good people who wanted to add to and balance history with stories that have got lost, stories that are about migrants and Indigenous people and women.”

Favourite footage includes: The “kidnapping” of six-year-old Indo-Fijian Nancy Prasard by Indigenous activist Charles Perkins at Sydney Airport in 1965, just before she is deported to Fiji. The stunt highlighted the injustice of an immigration policy that favoured white people.

Alec Morgan, writer/director

“This is an essay film, the most difficult type of documentary to produce. There are no interviews so the writing had a very big job to do: it had to interpret the footage and analyze why the events and images we were showing were important then and important still now; and it had to tell the overarching story of a small colonial British outpost growing up into an independent nation.

In factual television these days there's a preference for contemporary stories so it was a privilege to have the opportunity to re-examine Australia's recent past in the way we did.”

Favourite footage includes: The arrival from Europe of the first boatload of post-World War II migrants and Jewish refugees and the reaction, “an explosive mix of sympathy and paranoia that continues to resonate down through the decades and into the current debates about immigration”.

Rose Hesp, writer/director

STATEMENT FROM THE NARRATOR

“I’ve long been passionate about history, Australian culture, photography and the moving image. This series incorporates all of those, hence my involvement. My favourite piece of footage is the very first one... the larrikin cigar puffing roller skating entertainer. Wonderful character and energy. Both of its day yet somehow essentially timeless.”

Hugo Weaving, narrator

STATEMENT FROM THE PRODUCER

“A certain magic happens when we colourise black and white footage. History that seemed removed in time suddenly springs into the present in a very vivid and emotional way. To facilitate this and witness it occur is the privilege of making this series.

We have used colourised images that record significant events and illustrate critical turning points in the development of modern Australia but have tempered that material with touching home videos of everyday life, and tales of ordinary as well as extraordinary Australians.

With so much wonderful material we were able to construct a dramatic narrative packed full of serious meaning and riddled with larrikin Australian humour.

What also makes Australia in Colour a landmark series is the extensive research that sits behind it. This research has actually been happening for decades because Lisa, Alec (directors Lisa Matthews and Alec Morgan) and myself have worked in archives between us collectively for more than 50 years. Happily we got the opportunity to mine that experience in this series.

It was challenging at times to find the organic visual and thematic links between what was quite disparate material in order to make the storytelling feel epic. We didn’t follow chronology in a despotical way but without it, editing the series would have been like solving a Rubik’s Cube. There are more than 600 edits in each episode which emerge from an extraordinary number of hours of viewing archive.

We had incredible support from everyone at the NFSA (National Film and Sound Archive). It’s been a real partnership. They opened up the vaults and couldn’t help us enough. We also couldn’t have done this without the extraordinary expertise of Samuel François-Steininger and his team, who oversaw the colourisation and visited Australia to conduct local research. So many people played a huge role in the making of this program and I thank them all.”

Jo-anne McGowan, producer

One sentence synopsis

This episode charts the story of the nation from 1896 to 1929 as agriculture transforms the land. Explorer Douglas Mawson, swimmer Annette Kellerman and the men fighting under Britain in World War I become the new nation's first heroes.

One paragraph synopsis

Modern Australia is born on 1 January 1901 when six British colonies unite. Agriculture and mining transform the country despite a preference for white people limiting the availability of labour. Explorer Douglas Mawson, swimmer Annette Kellerman and the men fighting under Britain in World War I are the new nation's first heroes.

Long synopsis

More than half a million people gather to see six British colonies officially become Australia on 1 January 1901. It takes another 12 years to decide where to locate the national capital of Canberra and another 14 years before Parliament House officially opens.

New arrivals supplying cheap labour are all affected by the racism of the White Australia Policy - Chinese settlers, Japanese divers harvesting pearl shells and especially South Sea Islanders cutting sugar cane.

Irish bushranger Ned Kelly is immortalized on film for his anti-authoritarian ways and Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson is one of the first heroes of the new nation and the new century. He survives against the odds; some of his companions do not. Frank Hurley's images of the icy wilderness astound the world. There are heroines too: swimmer and actor Annette Kellerman throws off constraints – and her clothes. Afro-American Jack Johnson wins the first world championship fight between a black and a white boxer, inspiring Indigenous Queenslander Jerry Jerome and many others to enter the ring.

Indigenous people suffer from introduced diseases and incarceration. Across the country they are forced off their lands and their children are removed.

Britain declares war on Germany in August 1914 and young Australians flock to fight under the British flag. The images of death and destruction from Hurley's camera – he's now Australia's official war photographer – influence the public. Conscription is rejected in a referendum. The Indigenous soldiers who experience equality abroad are denied war pensions on their return.

Australia is promoted as an agricultural paradise but it can be a harsh and inhospitable land of drought and self-inflicted environmental catastrophes such as rabbit plagues and prickly pear invasions.

The 1920s sees the beginnings of the great suburban sprawl, a resilient love for the car, a local film industry – albeit short lived – and new freedoms for women.



Group of 1920's women under broad hat enjoy the beach life



Charles Kingsford-Smith (R) and Charles Ulm are celebrated as they complete the first trans-pacific flight from America to Australia in 1928

One sentence synopsis

In Episode Two, 1929 to 1945, sport and comedy offer some relief from the Great Depression – at least until war breaks out.

One paragraph synopsis

Sport and comedy offer some relief from the hunger and hopelessness of the Great Depression – at least until war breaks out. Australia sends troops to Europe to fight beside Britain but when Japan invades Pearl Harbor the nation turns to America for protection and pulls troops out of the Middle East. Fighting reaches Darwin.

Long synopsis

Australia is hit hard in the global Great Depression, sparked by the 1929 Wall Street Crash. Construction continues on the engineering marvel that is the Sydney Harbour Bridge, but the debt left by it and other infrastructure projects, and the human and financial cost of the Great War, adds to hunger, homelessness and despair. A monarchist on horseback upstages NSW Premier Jack Lang at the official bridge opening; the intruder thinks the Governor should have the honour.

When English bowlers start aiming for the players not the stumps in the Third Test of the Ashes in 1933, it's regarded as just not cricket and it's big news.

Comedians George Wallace, the Ada and Elsie duo and other homegrown entertainers become popular, as does the internationally successful wirewalker Con Colleano. Few knew he was Aboriginal because rampant discrimination prompted his parents to change the family surname.

On 26 January 1938, 150 years after the First Fleet landed, Indigenous people are tricked then blackmailed into taking part in a reenactment. Activists declare it a national Day of Mourning.

Prime Minister Robert Menzies announces in 1939 that Australia is again at war because of the actions of Germany. Foreigners are interned and young men enlist. The official war cameraman, Damien Parer, sends home images of soldiers fighting and dying at Tobruk in Egypt and elsewhere.

Japan invades Hawaii's Pearl Harbor in December 1941. By then John Curtin is Prime Minister and he turns to America for protection and orders home the troops from the Middle East – against the wishes of Britain's Winston Churchill. Singapore falls in February 1942; four days later bombs rain down on Darwin. General Douglas MacArthur gets a rock star welcome when he arrives in Australia to direct the war in the Pacific. Some of the women who stepped up into food production, military and other roles are distracted by the American GIs. War ends with the detonation of atomic bombs over Japan in 1945.



Champion cricketer, Don Bradman in 1932



Circular Quay, Sydney is the hub of all transport in the 1920's

One sentence synopsis

From the end of World War 2 in 1949, immigration changes the face of Australia and this influx of labour and the diversification of the economy lead to prosperity.

One paragraph synopsis

The government adopts the slogan “populate or perish” after World War II and immigration changes the face of Australia. This influx of labour, as well as the diversification of the economy, delivers increasing prosperity. National identity is embraced but Indigenous people face racism and discrimination – and their children are removed, creating the stolen generations.

Long synopsis

The government adopts the slogan “populate or perish” after World War II, a reaction to Australia’s vulnerability to invasion. There’s also a need for labour. British immigrants are offered cheap passage; Jewish Holocaust survivors and refugees from southern Europe are warily welcomed in the face of the White Australia Policy. New Australians help build the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme – and influence culture, art and architecture.

Australia is particular about who it admits. Thousands of Asians given sanctuary during the war are repatriated – although, in the High Court, Indonesian woman Annie O’Keefe wins the right to stay. The women who meet and marry Australian soldiers stationed in Japan after the war have to fight to live in Australia too.

In 1954 the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth is the first reigning monarch to visit Australia and the enthusiasm underlines the continuing allegiance to Britain. When communist North Korea – with Soviet backing – attacks South Korea, Australia takes part in the United Nations action against the invaders. There is a dramatic defection by Soviet diplomat Vladimir Petrov and his wife Evdokia.

Wool remains the leading export but car manufacturing grows. By the late 1950s half of all new cars on the roads are Holdens – and the dusty cars competing in the Redex car rally in the rough Australian terrain attract global interest.

The birth rate grows and so does prosperity – but not for Indigenous Australians. Their land is stolen and their children too and often they get “paid” in rations and clothes in lieu of wages. When Australia agrees that Britain can test nuclear weapons in the South Australian desert, little care is taken to check that there are no longer First Peoples in the area. They and others report radiation sickness.

The 1955 play *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* proudly shows Australia’s distinctiveness. Indigenous opera singer Harold Blair is lauded by white society. Television arrives and embeds itself in the nation’s way of life.



Newly crowned Queen Elizabeth II tours Australia in 1954, the first reigning monarch to set foot on Australian soil and millions turn out to catch a glimpse



Returned servicemen march through the streets of Sydney to mark the end of the Second World War, August 1945

One sentence synopsis

Between 1960 and 1970 we see a Decade of Protest as the nation finds its voice. The Vietnam War is a hot button issue and inequality between black and white, and women and men, become mainstream issues.

One paragraph synopsis

The public supports Australia joining the Vietnam War – but not conscription – until the toll becomes apparent. Awareness grows about discrimination and the extent of everyday racism against Indigenous people – and about land rights. Gender inequality in the workforce and elsewhere also becomes an issue in the 1960s.

Long synopsis

British culture invades Australia with the arrival of Beatle mania in 1964. The rock band inspires many local acts, including The Easybeats, five musicians who are all migrants but who identify as Australian. The opening of the Sydney Opera House also strengthens local cultural identity.

The nation is not proud of its Indigenous culture, however. Awareness about racism grows with a “Freedom Ride” led by student activist Charles Perkins.

Australia joins the Vietnam War but the death of 21-year-old Errol Noack, killed by friendly fire after 10 days in the warzone, fuels anti-conscription feeling. Lyndon Johnson visits, the first ever US President to do so and there’s both enthusiasm and protest. Labor promises to bring home the troops in the 1966 federal election but the public backs the pro-war stance of conservative Harold Holt. In the following year Holt disappears in the surf and, five years later, public opinion turns and the troops come home. They are greeted with hostility.

Women’s voices get louder in the 1960s. In Queensland they win the right to drink at public bars and in the workforce they fight for equal pay.

Some Indigenous workers in the cattle industry don’t get paid at all and in 1966 Gurindji elder Vincent Lingiari leads a walk off at Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory. The test case for land rights becomes a lesson for all Australians on Indigenous connection to country. Nine years later Prime Minister Gough Whitlam symbolically pours red dirt into Lingiari’s hand, returning his land to the Gurindji.

The nation loves sport and takes notice when young tennis star Evonne Goolagong publicly grapples with her Aboriginality – but it divides the country when six Wallabies refuse to play South Africa because of apartheid. Indigenous people get to vote at last and are counted in the census.

In 1975 Australia sees itself on television in colour for the first time. One of the last black and white broadcasts is of the moon landing, broadcast via the Parkes Radio Telescope and watched by more than half a billion people worldwide



Asian children being deported from Sydney in 1946



Sydney welcomes American President Lyndon B. Johnson in October 1966

METICULOUS RESEARCH PRECEDED THE COLOURISATION

Art director Samuel François-Steininger developed many of the processes, skills and techniques for colourising *Australia in Colour* when working on the US series *America in Color*. He is based in Paris and his production studio is called Composite Films. He says that what he and his team of researchers, animators and artists do is “like a police investigation” because it involves so much analysis of minute details. The result he describes as “micro history”.

When colourising the footage of a significant historical event, they might go to weather records to find out the temperature and the extent of the cloud cover at a particular location on a particular date. When working on crowd scenes they might study the fashions and the dominant colours of the season.

Books, still photographs, interviews with historians and eyewitness accounts are among the resources used.

One of the most widely seen clips in *Australia in Colour* is the iconic footage of Frank McAlary dancing along Sydney’s George Street during a tickertape parade on 15 August 1945. He and those around him are celebrating the end of World War II. A bundle of letters and newspaper clippings were passed on to the filmmakers from the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). They came from a woman who was in the footage with McAlary – arm and arm with her aunt – and that these two women became famous by association is now part of their family’s folklore. These letters contained a lot of invaluable details about the day, the celebrations, the fabric of McAlary’s clothes, and the colour of them, his shoes and hair – and those of others too. He was a redhead, by the way.



The footage of the dancing man can be seen here <https://aso.gov.au/titles/newsreels/movietone-special-peace/>

What is believed to be the first film of Australia’s Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people is shown near the beginning of the four-part series. It was filmed during an expedition lead by British anthropologist/ethnologist AC Haddon and his diary which noted the colours of clothing and artefacts was very helpful in the colourisation.

The footage, filmed on Murray Island, is here <https://aso.gov.au/titles/historical/torres-strait-islanders/>

Colour is initially added to just one frame when a scene is colourised. Once satisfied with the result, that frame becomes a colour reference for every other frame in that scene. There are 24 frames per second of film, which gives an indication of the magnitude of the task. Care is then taken to ensure the film as a whole is aesthetically coherent.

Samuel came to Australia twice during production and, coincidentally, spent 2012 in the country on a working holiday.

“It would have been more difficult for me if I’d not lived in Australia. I saw the nature of the light and the colours of the countryside, and got a sense of what the cities and towns look like. Film stock and lenses have changed over the years. Film is organic and it gets old, and shapes and textures change.”

Whether black and white footage should be coloured at all is not debated as vehemently as it once was – at least not in cases where colour was unavailable to the filmmakers of the time.

“Composite Films was founded on the idea that colourisation could have an editorial and an historical value for the films,” says Samuel. “We brought an approach to colourisation that aimed to restore the film to the closest original state of the scene. The colourisation was not made to be only aesthetically pleasing or believable, but above all historically accurate.”

ARROW MEDIA SAYS YOUNG PEOPLE RESPOND WELL

Australia in Colour is based on a format created by UK production company Arrow Media. Arrow produced the five-part series *America in Color* for the Smithsonian Channel and continues to make additional series.

Get more information about and take a look at *America in Color* here
<https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/shows/america-in-color/1004516>

Arrow Media’s Nick Metcalfe, one of the executive producers of the Australian edition, travelled from the UK to look at cuts during production. He says he is extremely proud of the In Colour format.

“The combination of rare and never-before-seen archive footage, brought alive through painstaking research and accurate colourisation, has proved a real hit with audiences across the world, including playing well with younger audiences,” says Nick. “It’s the ability of this format to make forgotten history both accessible and compelling which is where its real success lies.”

THE SERIES PREMIERES ON MARCH 6

Australia in Colour will premiere at 8.30pm on Wednesday March 6 on SBS TV. Each episode is between 48 and 52 minutes. Traditionally history skews male. As well as bringing in younger viewers, SBS is hoping to attract many female fans when the series goes to air.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

Sydney-based Stranger Than Fiction Films and *Australia in Colour* are a natural fit. The company's two previous productions, *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life* and *Mountain*, demonstrated the ability of company principals Jo-anne McGowan and Jennifer Peedom to create acclaimed productions using existing footage. Also, John Smithson, creative director of Arrow, was one of the producers on Jen's *Sherpa*, the documentary she directed prior to *Mountain*. Jennifer is an executive producer on *Australia in Colour*.

See more about Stranger than Fiction here <https://www.strangerthanfictionfilms.com.au/>

Australia in Colour received two different kinds of funding from the Australian Government: direct funding from Screen Australia and an indirect rebate as a result of the PDV Offset. Create NSW also provided finance to *Australia in Colour*, which was produced and financed in association with Definition Films, developed and produced in association with the Special Broadcasting Service, and financed in association with GRGSF. Transmission Films is the Australian distributor.

Definition Films CEO David Gross is the third executive producer on *Australia in Colour*.



Sidewalk cafes were instantly popular in 1950s Melbourne

PERMISSION WAS GRANTED TO COLOURISE LUMIÈRE FOOTAGE

One of the first sequences included in *Australia in Colour* shows a man roller-skating in Sydney's Prince Alfred Park in September 1896. The entertaining footage is believed to be the oldest surviving moving image of Australia. A record of the running of the Melbourne Cup from later that year also exists and is included. Both sequences were filmed under the patronage of Auguste and Louis Lumière, French siblings generally regarded as the world's first filmmakers.

See the footage of the 1896 Melbourne Cup here <https://aso.gov.au/titles/historical/melbourne-cup-1896/>

"Sam (art director Samuel François-Steininger) said that we'd never be allowed to colourise Lumière material but we did get permission and I understand that may be a first," says producer Jo-anne McGowan. Not surprisingly, she was delighted.

The Lumière films, and footage from nearly 80 years later when black and white television was about to be overtaken by colour television, book end *Australia in Colour*. One of the last monochrome telecasts was of the moon landing – Australia helped beam the images to viewers around the world courtesy of the Parkes Radio Telescope.

INTERESTING NOTES



Diners at the Roosevelt Restaurant in Sydney's Kings Cross, 1948

Alex McDermott, author of *Australian History for Dummies* and historian at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, was the consultant historian on the four-part series.

He describes the production as “history made new”. Rather than the usual suspects found in typical Australian history, he says it quite often uses chance characters and ordinary moments that happen to have ended up on film. “It opens a totally new window on what Australians were actually doing, what they could see and what was important to them at the time. “As a historian it is easy to lose the lived immediacy and reality of each historical moment because our job is to reduce and distil all the totally complex variegated moments into a singular cause or into a connecting point that leads to another outcome. We are meant to find the deeper meaning.

“What *Australia in Colour* does is rich and powerful and it’s going to feel fresh and new whether someone is an established historian or a rookie off the street.” Sometimes there was a lot of footage of events that the filmmakers wanted to include, at other times not enough or none. “I would love to have found footage of the Yolngu at Yirrkala in north-east Arnhem Land, actually painting the Bark Petition, to show the incredible dignity of their attempt to engage with White Australia on its terms and their own,” says director Rose Hesp. “The petitions were the first that combined bark paintings with text typed on paper, to be recognised by the Commonwealth Parliament.”

A still photograph of the Bark Petition is used in the series instead. Photographs were also used to illustrate other important events, such as the first national Day of Mourning in 1938 on the 150th anniversary of British colonisation.

“We intercut footage of white Australians celebrating Australia Day – including a re-enactment of Cook’s landing – with stills of Indigenous people protesting in Elizabeth Street in Sydney with placards declaring that Jan 26th was a day of mourning” says director Lisa Matthews.

“As they predated the first moving images, key events like the Eureka Stockade in 1854 and the shearer’s strikes in 1891 were not able to be included.” Some footage, much-loved by the directors, didn’t quite fit other content or there were time constraints. If she could have, Rose would have included British model Jean Shrimpton when she caused a sensation at the 1965 Melbourne Cup with her hem line and also the first Indigenous debutante ball in 1967.



Telephonists in the Postmaster General's Department in the late 1940s



British migrants disembark in 1957

Director Alec Morgan reports having to drop material from the 1960s and '70s that he dearly would have liked to include in Episode Four. The reason? The early videotape on which it was recorded was nowhere near the quality of film. Technological issues also impacted Episode One: a significant amount of the footage used was mute so sound had to be added, painstakingly recreated by sound designer Liam Egan

ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF WHAT'S ON SCREEN IS FROM THE NFSA

Newsreels are a big component of *Australia in Colour* and were sourced from the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) collection, including their holdings from Cinesound Movietone – and Cinesound Movietone directly supplied additional material.

Newsreels were made in Australia between 1913 and 1975. Shown mostly in cinemas, they were the forerunners of television news and current affairs. Significant amounts of the news material in Episode Four is from the 1960s and '70s and came from the ABC.

More information about newsreels is here <https://aso.gov.au/titles/collections/cinesound-movietone-newsreels/>

The NFSA's collection of 2.8 million items is wide-ranging. *Australia in Colour* uses newsreels, parts of feature films – including *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) – the government-produced Film Australia Collection, the world's first documentaries, home movies and advertisements.

The NFSA is accustomed to supplying ultra-high definition (UHD) material for film and television productions but rarely are those productions made entirely from archival footage or of the scale of *Australia in Colour*. While such high quality vision (4K for 35mm, 2K for 16mm) is now an industry standard, when work on *Australia in Colour* began, the requirements were higher than the norm.

“It was daunting,” says Anna Nolan, Senior Manager of Access and Commercial, “but it was exciting to be part of such a major documentary series, using such a high volume of archival materials.”

In all, *Australia in Colour* uses 144 minutes of material drawn from 323 NFSA titles. Collection Reference Coordinator Simon Drake reckons this was five per cent of the amount of NFSA material that was previewed. The 144 minutes represents about 70% of the whole series.



A young man crosses Richmond Bridge, Tasmania circa 1925

A HUGE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL HAD TO BE SCANNED

Many say that the sheer volume of material that was being handled, and the complex technical requirements of scanning, could have turned the job into a logistical nightmare.

Craig Dingwall, Digital Film Preservation Colourist at the NFSA, scanned 230 of the 323 titles and estimates that the average length was 30 minutes – and that scanning, grading and the data transfer process takes three times as long as the running time.

Each title had to be scanned in its entirety, even though the filmmakers were only using a fraction, because there was so much more to be seen in the new scans compared to the preview copies and this had an influence on exactly how the material was edited together.

“We created ultra-high definition digital scans in 4K, which is twice the resolution of what you see in most cinemas now,” said Craig. “We’ve been able to see so much more detail on street signs and car number plates, and we’ve been able to recognise faces and places.”

Newfound details about each title were added to the NFSA’s catalogue database throughout the process.

Before being scanned the material had to be retrieved from the vault, prepared, checked and cleaned. After being scanned it was graded to ensure the footage looked consistent. This might include lightening shadows or making adjustments because of different exposure levels between one piece of film and another.

“The result of the colourisation is truly amazing,” says Craig, who was in regular contact with Samuel François-Steininger to ensure that what was being delivered was suitable. “The public is going to be much more interested in the NFSA collection as a result. It excites me to be sharing this historical footage. The collection belongs to all Australians and is our nation’s audiovisual heritage.”

THE BEST COPY AVAILABLE WAS USED

Most of the film material used had been telecined previously by the NFSA in standard definition: the film in the archive is precious and best left alone as much as possible and it is also cumbersome to work with so tape and digital versions are used for previewing. Some items, however, had not been previously made available to the public.

Almost everything that the filmmakers wanted to include, however, had to be scanned again in a higher resolution to accommodate Composite Films' colourisation process. (The number of pixels, or tiny dots, that an image contains determines resolution. The more there are, the clearer and sharper is the image.)

Often people talk about “going back to the original” when discussing scanning. In reality an archive is likely to have several ‘elements’ of the sound and picture of an individual film, as well as several copies of that film, many of which are not the original camera negative. Choosing the most suitable components, the ones that will result in the best quality scan, is a painstaking process that requires checking and comparing the condition of all sources available. The earliest generation copy is preferred but in many cases, image and sound were copied from separate items.

“It was an enormous undertaking and we had to be pragmatic,” says Simon. “We knew we didn’t have the capacity to scan everything in-house. We had to accept that, when it came to sound, we had to do things differently than if we were creating preservation copies. We had to juggle multiple collections and methodologies. The NFSA had only been scanning in 4K for a couple of years (when work ramped up on the series) and we were learning as we went.”

Definition Films carried part of the load. ‘*Australia in Colour* is an incredibly ambitious project and Definition Films enjoyed using every single piece of technology at its disposal to bring to life the original black and white archive’ says CEO David Gross. ‘The stunning high definition colourised results are an important part of Australia’s cultural heritage’

The files being sent between Canberra and Sydney and Paris were often very large – five seconds of footage represents one gigabyte. This had to be carefully managed by everyone involved and the turnaround required was relatively fast.

The NFSA also had to check and recheck copyright clearances. All the licensing and scanning work will benefit not only the NFSA but other filmmakers and content producers.

“What we have now is magnificent scanned materials that is a resource for others,” says Anna. “We would never had said ‘no’ to being a partner; the project was too valuable an experience for all of us.”



World War Two servicemen are warmly welcomed home

HUGO WEAVING, narrator

Hugo is one of Australia's most loved actors and one of the most well known internationally. He won best actor at the Australian Film Institute (AFI)/Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards – the AFIs became the AACTAs – for *Proof* (1991), *The Interview* (1998), *Little Fish* (2005) and for the television drama *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (2017). In the supporting category he won for the UK co-production *Oranges and Sunshine* (2010), *The Dressmaker* (2015) and *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016). Other of his notable Australian films are *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (1994) and *Last Ride* (2009). He played Agent Smith in the sci-fi *Matrix* trilogy (1999-2003), Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings* films (2001-2003), V in *V for Vendetta* (2005), Johann Schmidt in *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011) and David Melrose in the television productions *Patrick Melrose* (2018). He is a graduate of Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art.

LISA MATTHEWS, writer/director

Most recently Lisa directed an episode of the Channel 9 drama *Doctor Doctor* (2018), and was consultant producer on the feature documentary *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life* (2017). She wrote and directed the Shane Jacobson and Jacqui Weaver episodes of *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2016, 2013) for SBS and directed five episodes of the eight-part dramatized series *Australia – The Story of Us* (2015) for Channel 7. To coincide with the 2013 release of the Disney film *Saving Mr Banks*, Lisa reversioned the one-hour documentary *The Real Mary Poppins* (2013)– she made the original in 2003. Her other credits include co-writing and directing the 26-part Channel Nine series *Our Century* (1999) and directing two three-part series, *Australia on Trial* (2012), courtroom drama exploring notorious criminal trials that earned her an Australian Directors Guild Award nomination; and the dramatized documentary *Darwin's Brave New World* (2009), nominated for a Logie. Her one-hour documentaries include *Ten Pound Poms* (2007), which earned many accolades. She is currently developing a drama series with writer Katherine Thomson and two feature films with *Australia in Colour* producer Jo-anne McGowan, Lennie & Ginger Mick and Firefly. Lisa wrote and directed Episodes One and Two of *Australia in Colour*.

ALEC MORGAN, writer/director

Some of Alec's most enduring documentaries as a writer/director have been Indigenous themed, from the landmark exploration of the stolen generations *Lousy Little Sixpence* (1983) to the short *ASIO Makes a Movie* (2018), which can be seen on the Guardian Australia site. History generally imbues his work. Of particular relevance to *Australia in Colour* is the 26-part series *Our Century* (1999), which screened on Channel Nine and which he lead creatively, and *Admission Impossible* (1992), about the White Australia Policy. Alec's innovative hybrid feature *Hunt Angels* won eight awards, one of which acknowledged its contribution to Australian film history. A number of Indigenous filmmakers have made good use of Alec's archival expertise; one of these collaborations resulted in the highly acclaimed series *The First Australians*. Alec is currently working with Indigenous opera singer Tiriki Onus on a documentary titled *Ablaze* about the search for the lost films of her grandfather William Onus. Alec wrote Episodes Three and Four alongside Rose Hesp, directed Episode Three, and he and Rose directed Episode Four.

ROSE HESP, writer/director

For the nine years up to 2014, Rose was series producer and executive producer of *Compass*, the Sunday night program on ABC TV that explored big ethical and religious questions. A number of episodes won prestigious Walkley and other awards; others put significant issues on the public agenda. Since then her work has included post producing the second season of *Marry Me, Marry My Family* (2019), producing five episodes of *Insight* (2017) and working as writer and senior post producer on the Peter Garrett, Delta Goodrem and Rachel Griffiths episodes of *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2016). All were or will be broadcast on SBS TV. In all, Rose has more than 250 hours of factual content to her name. She began her career in news, then worked on a number of one-off ABC documentaries before joining *Media Watch* as supervising producer in 2003. Rose wrote episodes three and four alongside Alec Morgan and she and Alec directed episode four.

JO-ANNE MCGOWAN, producer

Mountain (2017), an epic exploration of the spellbinding nature of mountains, and *David Stratton: A Cinematic Life* (2017), the story of Australian film through the eyes of one of the country's most admired critics, were Jo-anne's last two feature length productions – *A Cinematic Life* is also available as a television series. Jo-anne's business partner and *Mountain's* director Jennifer Peedom was also a producer. Jo-anne has produced a range of documentaries on the creative industries and their connection to society and culture including *A Frock and a Hard Place*, about the beloved Australian film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of The Desert* and two series of *Art + Soul* (2010, 2014, with Bridget Ikin) a compelling look at Indigenous art. Her other work includes the Dendy Award winner *Troubled Waters* (2002), about Australia's role in East Timor, and *Kabbarli* (2002), about Daisy Bates. In 2018, *David Stratton's Stories of Australian Cinema* was nominated for an International Emmy.

COMPOSITE FILMS

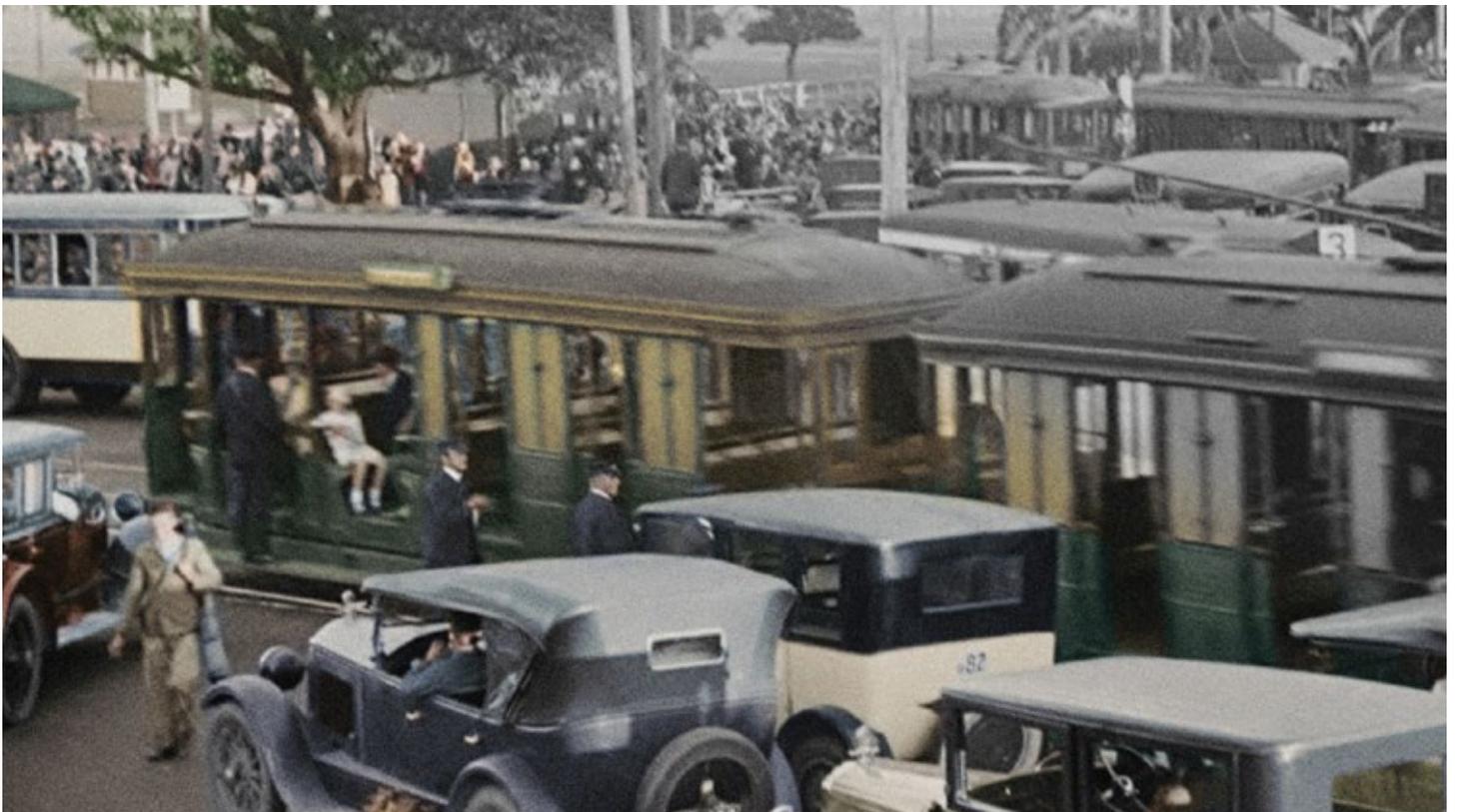
Composite Films is a production studio founded in 2013 by Samuel François-Steininger that specialises in the colourisation and restoration of film and archive footage, the production of animation films and the creation of new documentary content. The studio has become a major player in the archive footage colourisation business. They have developed a unique expertise by combining cutting-edge technology, artistic design and in-depth historical research. Their latest work includes *America in Color*, a colorised series about American history between the 1920s and the 1960s. They have also restored and colourised footage for Raoul Peck's *I'm Not Your Negro*, which was nominated at the 89th Academy Awards for Best Documentary.

SAMUEL FRANCOIS-STEININGER, art director

Samuel Francois-Steininger founded Composite Films in 2013 after a ten-year experience in documentary production companies and broadcasters. He specialises in archive footage based History programs for French TV and developed a dedicated workflow for colourisation and a passion for making history accessible. His main most recent credits include the feature film *I Am Not Your Negro* (dir: Raoul Peck), *Maria by Callas* (dir: Tom Volf), Smithsonian Channel and Arrow Media's documentary series *America in Color*, or David Korn-Brzoza's films *After Hitler* and *Hitler's Youths*.



A couple dance the latest dance craze of the '20's "The Carioca" at a dance hall in Manly



Anzac Parade Junction in Sydney bustles with trams and cars and pedestrians after a day at Randwick Racecourse circa 1918

WRITERS **LISA MATTHEWS, ALEC MORGAN, ROSE HESP**
DIRECTORS **LISA MATTHEWS, ALEC MORGAN, ROSE HESP**
PRODUCER **JO-ANNE MCGOWAN**

ART DIRECTOR **SAMUEL FRANCOIS-STEININGER**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **JENNIFER PEEDOM, NICK METCALFE, DAVID GROSS**

EDITORS **KAREN JOHNSON, KAREN JOSEPH**
SOUND DESIGN **LIAM EGAN**
COMPOSER **RAFAEL MAY**

POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR **TOM PASTRO**
POST PRODUCTION MANAGER **LORELLE ADAMSON**
NARRATION SCRIPT EDITOR **ROSE HESP**

ARCHIVE PRODUCERS **CON ANEMOGIANNIS, GERALDINE MCKENNA**
CONSULTANT HISTORIAN **ALEX MCDERMOTT**
INDIGENOUS CONSULTANTS **MELISSA LUCASHENKO, PAULINE CLAGUE**

ASSISTANT EDITOR **DAVID STRAIN**
DIRECTOR'S ATTACHMENT **MATISSE RUBY**
EDITOR'S/RESEARCH ASSISTANT **ROXIE VUONG**

COMPOSITE FILMS HISTORIANS
MELANIE MONTFORT, JULES LURY, CLEMENCE DE LAMBILLY, TRISTAN RUBY
MAYLIS COUTURIER, CHLOE FOLENS, TESS ROELOFSEN, HERMINE MAGUESYAN
IN ASSOCIATION WITH **LIVE PIXEL TECHNOLOGIES**

POST PRODUCTION FACILITY **DEFINITION FILMS**
HEAD OF POST PRODUCTION **DAVID GROSS**
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR **MAILE DAUGHTERTY**
DI SUPERVISOR **HAMISH MASON**
DI COLOURIST/ON-LINE EDITOR **MARCUS FRIEDLANDER**
DIGITAL CONFORM **JOYCE ESCUADRO, KIM BJØRGE**
POST FACILITY COORDINATOR **FREYA ROGERS-FAUSKE**
POST PRODUCTION LEGALS **JANINE PEARCE**

TITLES **THE KINGDOM OF LUDD**
OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE EDITORS **KAREN JOHNSON, DAVID STRAIN**

ADDITIONAL MUSIC COMPOSITION **TOM PASTRO**
MUSIC SUPERVISION **KIM GREEN**
ADDITIONAL MUSIC SUPPLIED BY **AUDIO NETWORK**

PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT **LEAH HALL**
LEGALS **STEPHEN BOYLE**
INSURANCE **GALVANISE INSURANCE**

SBS COMMISSIONING EDITOR **JOSEPH MAXWELL**
SBS PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR **HEATHER OXENHAM**

