

# BIRRARANGGA FILM FESTIVAL

INDIGENOUS FILMS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE  
MARCH 11-14, 2021 ACMI, FEDERATION SQUARE



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MADE IN  
**MELBOURNE**  
#VICSCREEN



**WOMINJEKA**  
WELCOME

## Message from the Minister for Creative Industries

Welcome to Birrarangga Film Festival 2021 - Australia's largest celebration of Indigenous screen storytelling.

The act of sharing stories brings communities together, opens us up to new perspectives and unlocks our imagination. At a time when travel is limited, the second Birrarangga Film Festival gives Victorians an opportunity to come together and connect with Indigenous cultures from across the globe.

Through this dynamic program of screenings, talks and Q&As, the festival shares unique stories and insights, and will be an ideal way to welcome us back to ACMI following its transformative redevelopment.

The Victorian Government is proud to be the Principal Partner of Birrarangga Film Festival through Film Victoria.

To the festival team, congratulations on bringing together this incredible showcase of global stories; to participating filmmakers, thank you for sharing your creativity and talents; and to film lovers, enjoy the festival!

**Danny Pearson**  
Minister for Creative Industries

## Birrarangga Film Festival staff

Artistic Director - Tony Briggs  
Producer - Damienne Pradier  
Program Producer - Gillian McCarrey  
Associate Producer - Naomi Summers

Marketing Co-ordinator - Ravi Chand  
Publicity - Nicole Hurren  
Design - Ortolan  
Festival Artwork - Charlotte Allingham



## Elders Statement

When I was young my grandmother, Theresa Clements (Yamak) would sometimes perform cleansing ceremonies on family members. Songs and stories were part of cultural practice, and these ancient ways have been handed down through the generations to this very day. Aboriginal Australians are from the oldest living culture on earth. The Aboriginal way of thinking and our beliefs tell us that country has its own spirit. The old people would sing to these spirits; The stars, river, water, land and fire. Everything was connected to the journey of our people.

The Birrarangga Film Festival will show a strong similarity between Aboriginal cultures from around the world, and that our journeys have been and will continue to be connected with the same strong spirit journey. I hope that the Birrarangga Festival will be the start of a long lasting connection between all of the Aboriginal cultures to share their stories on our country.

### Aunty Zeta Thomson

Elder, Wurundjeri (Yarra Yarra Clan)/  
Yorta Yorta (Dhulanyagan Clan)  
Spiritual & Cultural Advisor



## Artistic Director's Statement

Hello and welcome to the 2021 Birrarangga Film Festival!

We are thrilled to be once again delivering a festival that celebrates the connections between Aboriginal cultures worldwide.

Our aim is to continue a focus on the many faces of the global Indigenous community and to promote indigenous traditions, language and pride. We have drawn together some of the most inspiring storytellers driving the international movement of Indigenous representation for the screen.

Since our inaugural festival, life has changed dramatically for many around the globe. What has been incredibly inspiring for me is the fantastic display of strength and resilience that people possess.

We hope that our festival program encapsulates these qualities with compelling stories of courage, love, and survival that we trust will be inspirational for audiences.

It is with great pride that I welcome you to enjoy the 2021 Birrarangga Film Festival. A celebratory offer to one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world.

### Tony Briggs

Yorta Yorta/Wurundjeri  
Artistic Director  
Birrarangga Film Festival

# OPENING NIGHT

## Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra

Thursday 11 March 7pm | ACMI Cinema 2

\$40 includes entry to afterparty with a drink and hors d'oeuvres

OPENING CEREMONY & WELCOME  
6.30pm | Outside ACMI (Fed Square)

SPEECHES & FORMALITIES  
7pm ACMI | Cinema 2



**Content warning:** This film contains scenes or themes of suicide that some audience members may find disturbing. Viewer discretion advised.

We're very proud to present *Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra* as the opening night film of the Birrarangga Film Festival.

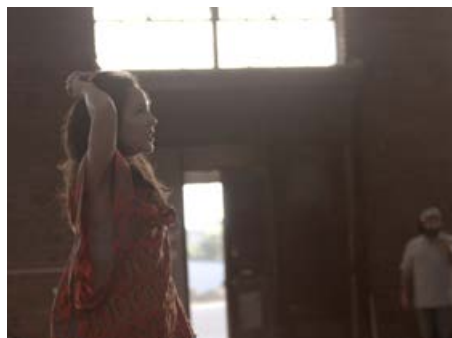
**Bangarra is a Wiradjuri word which means 'to make fire'.**

*Firestarter* marks Bangarra Dance Theatre's 30th anniversary. Taking us through Bangarra's birth and spectacular growth, the film recognises Bangarra's founders and tells the story of how three young Aboriginal brothers – Stephen, David and Russell Page – turned the newly born dance group into a First Nations cultural powerhouse. Through the eyes of the brothers and company alumni, *Firestarter* explores the loss and reclaiming of culture, the burden of intergenerational trauma, and – crucially – the power of art as a messenger for social change and healing.

**Directors: Wayne Blair (Batjala/Mununjali/Wakkawakka) & Nel Minchin Australia | 2020 | 96 min**  
**Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult**

### Preview Short: El Colour Negro

There is so much more to the colour black than a shade on a spectrum.  
**Director: Andy Hodgson | USA**



## nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up

Fri 12 March 6.30pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Sensitively directed by Tasha Hubbard, *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up* follows the family of the late Colten Boushie, a young Cree man fatally shot in a Saskatchewan farmyard, as they demand justice from Canada's legal system.

**Director & Writer: Tasha Hubbard (Cree) Canada | 2019 | 98 min | English**  
**Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15 and over unless accompanied by an adult**

### **Preview Short: Spirit of the Bluebird**

A fitting tribute to a woman who embodied the bluebird spirit and speaks to deeper themes of the ongoing mistreatment of Canada's indigenous peoples by the criminal justice system, and the long term negative effects of the Residential School system.

**Directors: Jesse Gouchey (Cree) & Xstine Cook**

## Love and Fury

Fri 12 March 8.30pm | Gandel Lab 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Director Sterlin Harjo follows Indigenous artists on their journey to create and share their work and perceive across the U.S. and abroad. Among those profiled are musician and composer Laura Ortman; artist and composer Raven Chacon; famed poet, musician and author Joy Harjo; singer and guitarist Micah P. Hinson; multidisciplinary artist and musician Nicholas Galanin; and Bobby "Dues" Wilson.

**Director & Writer: Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Muscogee Creek) USA | 2020 | 90 min | English**  
**Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15 and over unless accompanied by an adult (Coarse Language)**

### **Preview Short: RKLSS**

Tank, a natural artist who is always drawing, runs into trouble with the law with his gang of friends.

**Director: Tank Standing Buffalo (Potawatami/Metis/Black)**



## Red Snow

Fri 12 March 9.30pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Dylan, a Gwich'in soldier from the Canadian Arctic, is caught in an ambush in Kandahar, Afghanistan. His capture and interrogation by a Taliban Commander releases a cache of memories connected to the love and death of his Inuit cousin, Asana, and binds him closer to a Pashtun family as they escape across treacherous landscapes and through a blizzard that becomes their key to survival.

**Director & Writer: Marie Clements (Métis/Dene) Canada | 2019 | 100 mins | English/Gwich'in/Inukituk/ Pashto with English Subtitles**  
**Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15 and over unless accompanied by an adult.**

### **Preview Short: Meke**

The arrival of a trainer's daughter into the midst of backstage preparations before a boxing match threatens to destroy the relationship between fighter and coach.

**Director: Tim Worrall (Ngai Tuhoe/Te Arawa)**



## Eating Up Easter

Sat 13 March 10am | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

The iconic statues and sensationalized 'mysteries' of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) have drawn the interest of the world for centuries, attracting curious visitors to its shores. Today, this tiny, barren island is experiencing an economic boon as tourism skyrockets. Yet the indigenous culture and the island's fragile environment are suffering.

**Directors: Sergio Mata'u Rapu (Rapanui) Writers: Elena Rapu, Liz Kaar USA | Chile | 2018 | 75 min | English/Rapanui/Spanish with English Subtitles**  
**Unclassified – No age restriction**

### **Preview Short: Yulleroo**

There is a conflict brewing between Traditional Owners and Energy companies. Yulleroo is the story of Micklo Corpus, Yawuru Traditional owner who is spearheading the fight to protect his country from hydraulic fracking.

**Director: Bessy-May Taylor (Kokatha Mula)**



## Not Just Numbers

Sat 13 March 5pm | Gandel Lab 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Meet the women who run Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group. These inspirational grassroots activists work within their communities, raising awareness and taking action against family violence in and around Alice Springs, Australia. They fight for Indigenous women who are survivors of abuse to be respected and seen as more than just statistics on a page.

**Directors:** Shirleen Campbell (Warlpiri/Anmatyerre/Arrernte/Luritja)  
**Writers:** Shirleen Campbell, Danielle Maclean  
Australia | 2019 | 53 min | English  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15 and over unless accompanied by an adult.

**Preview Short: Isolated Conversations**  
Told through a series of recorded phone calls *Isolated Conversations* is Aboriginal perspective on Covid-19 and its effects on society.  
**Director:** Daniel King (Awabakal/Yuin)



## One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk

Sat 13 March 5.45pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

In Kapuvik, north Baffin Island, Noah Piugattuk's nomadic Inuit band live and hunt by dog team as his ancestors did when he was born in 1900. When the white man known as Boss arrives at Piugattuk's hunting camp, what appears as a chance meeting soon opens up the prospect of momentous change.

**Director:** Zacharias Kunuk (Inuk)  
**Writers:** Zacharias Kunuk (Inuk), Norman Cohn  
Canada | 2019 | 113 min | Inuktitut with English Subtitles  
Unclassified – No age restrictions

**Preview Short: They Came on Ships**  
During a naming ceremony for his grandchild, an Elder tells a traditional oral story of when the Earth was visited by the sky people, made with the Institute of American Indian Arts.  
**Director:** Erik Sanchez (Shoalwater Bay)



## Sisters Rising

Sat 13 March 7.15pm | Gandel Lab 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Native American survivors of sexual assault fight to restore personal and tribal sovereignty against the backdrop of an ongoing legacy of violent colonization. 1 in 3 Native women report having been raped during her lifetime and 86% of the offenses are committed by non-Native men. These perpetrators exploit gaps in tribal jurisdictional authority and target Native women as 'safe victims'. *Sisters Rising* follows six women who refuse to let this pattern of violence continue in the shadows.

**Director:** Willow O'Feral & Brad Heck  
USA | 2017 | 60 min | English  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

**Preview Short: Purea**  
Māori Elder Hamo must bear the burden of carrying the spirits of her ancestors to their sacred mountain.  
**Director:** Kath Akuta Brown (Ngati Porou)



## Rustic Oracle

Sat 13 March 8.45pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Set in the late 90s, *Rustic Oracle* is a dramatic feature about Ivy, an 8-year-old girl trying to understand what happened to her big sister who has vanished from their small Mohawk community. With minimal clues, Ivy and her mother Susan embark on an unwelcome journey to find Heather which ultimately brings the pair closer together despite challenging circumstances.

**Director:** Sonia Bonspille Boileau (Mohawk Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy)  
Canada | 2019 | 98 min | English  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

**Preview Short: My Name is Mudju**  
1950's Australia, Mudju's daughter Munna has been stolen, helpless against the Mission governance, she must find the strength within to reunite with her daughter.  
**Director:** Chantelle Murray (Bardi/Bunial)

# BIRRARANGGA FILM

# FESTIVAL CALENDAR

- Feature
- Shorts
- In Conversation

AM 10 11 PM 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

THUR 11

**OPENING NIGHT**  
**Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra** Cinema 2

FRI 12

**nipawistamásowin:  
 We Will Stand Up**  
 Cinema 1

**Red Snow**  
 Cinema 1

**Red Tide**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Love and Fury**  
 Gandel Lab 1

SAT 13

**Eating Up  
 Easter**  
 Cinema 1

**The Making  
 of The  
 Drover's Wife**  
 Cinema 1

**The making of  
 The White Girl**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**One Day in the  
 Life of Noah  
 Piugattuk**  
 Cinema 1

**Rustic Oracle**  
 Cinema 1

**Kyindoo  
 Wilam**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Along The Rise**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**He Māngai He  
 Kōrero, He Māngai  
 He Kōrero**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Not Just  
 Numbers**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Sisters Rising**  
 Gandel lab 1

**Blood Quantum**  
 Cinema 2

SUN 14

**The Future**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**For My Fathers  
 Kingdom**  
 Cinema 1

**Matters of Heart  
 & Soul**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Brother I Cry**  
 Cinema 1

**The Sun Above Me Never Sets**  
 Cinema 2

**Sembradoras de  
 Vida**  
 Cinema 1

**Growing Pains**  
 Gandel Lab 1

**Restless River**  
 Cinema 1

**Pilluarneq  
 Ersigiunnaarpara**  
 Gandel lab 1



## Blood Quantum

## Sembradoras de Vida (Mothers of the Land)

## For My Fathers Kingdom

## Restless River

Sat 13 March 9.30pm | Cinema 2  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Sun 14 March 10am | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Sun 14 March 12.15pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Sun 14 March 3pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

The dead are coming back to life outside the isolated Mi'kmaq reserve of Red Crow, except for its Indigenous inhabitants who are strangely immune to the zombie plague.

**Director/Writer:** Jeff Barnaby (Migmaq) Canada | 2019 | 98 min | English/Migmaq  
Unclassified – Rated R (Restricted to 18+)

### Preview Short: Closed Doors

A young father must move through his grief and reach out to those who remain.  
**Directors:** Hunter Page-Lochard (Mununjali/Nunukal) & Carter Fred Simpkin

Follow five women from the Andean highlands in their daily struggle to maintain a traditional and organic way of working the land. In the Andean worldview, women and earth are strongly interrelated. Both a woman's body and the earth's soil are capable of giving and nurturing life.

**Director/Writer:** Alvaro Sarmiento, Diego Sarmiento (Quechua) Peru | 2019 | 74 min | Spanish/Quechua with English Subtitles  
Unclassified – No age restriction

### Preview Short: Sky Aelans

*Sky Aelans* poetically shares imagery of community and land, looking at decades of logging that have drastically changed the landscape and lifestyle of their home. Now, the last untouched forest of the country is at risk of being lost.  
**Directors:** Daniel Kakadi, Edward Manuga, Georgianna Lepping, Jeremy Gwao, Junior Patrick Kauha Maka, Mannar Levo, Neil Nua, Regina Lepping & Zahiya Namu

Driven by his deep faith in God and traditional culture, a flat-broke Tongan pensioner must navigate not only the rough streets of South Auckland, but also his tumultuous relationship with his New Zealand born son who struggles to accept his father's commitment to a Kingdom that tore their family apart.

**Director:** Vea Mafile'o & Jeremiah Tauamiti (Tonga) New Zealand | 2019 | 97 min | English/Tongan with English subtitles  
Unclassified – No age restrictions

### Preview Short: In My Fathers Country

Searching for 'old knowledge' on how to survive on country is the passion of self-confessed young 'bushies', bloggers and partners in life Lydia and Jesse of #L&J Adventures.  
**Director:** Vince Carter (Gooniyandi/Jagera/Kija/Butchella)

Navigating the social norms of the colonizers and the reality of her own family situation, the young Inuk Elsa draws courage from her land to become a woman as strong and independent as the restless river that cuts across it.

**Director / Writer:** Marie-Helene Cousineau, Madeline Ivalu (Inuit) Canada | 2019 | 99 min | English/French/Inuktitut  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult (Warning – sexual violence)

### Preview Short: Hawaikii

For a young Maori girl it's the first day at school, first day without the security of her parents. Raised with Maori culture as her basis she is about to enter a foreign environment with little or understanding of their culture nor they of hers.  
**Director:** Mike Jonathan (Waikato/Mataatua/Te Arawa)



## Pilluarneq Ersigiunnaarpara

Sun 14 March 5pm | Gandel Lab 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

While Gukki Nuka finally visits the hometown where he was sexually abused as a child, Kornelia is at a point where moving on is within her grasp, because they both strive for happiness despite being sexually abused in childhood.

**Director:** Nivi Pedersen  
(Greenlandic Inuk)  
Greenland | 2020 | 71 min | Greenlandic/  
Danish with English Subtitles  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons  
15+ unless accompanied by an adult  
(Themes of sexual violence, viewer  
discretion advised)

**Preview Short: Nanayqa Mana Chinkaqmi**  
A group of Andean Quechua women from Peru open up about their personal experiences with violence and discuss how these experiences have shaped their lives, families and communities.  
**Director:** Collective  
(Young and Quechua women)



## Brother, I Cry

Sun 14 March 5.30pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Jon is a young Indigenous man struggling to keep it together as addiction and the pain of intergenerational trauma engulfs him. *Brother, I Cry* looks at the ways in which Indigenous families love and heal through spiritual and cultural practices.

**Director:** Jesse Anthony  
(Onondaga Nation Beaver Clan from the Six Nations of the Grand River).  
Canada | 2020 | 96 min | English  
Unclassified – Restricted to persons  
15+ unless accompanied by an adult

**Preview Short: Aboriginal Warrior**  
Chris Collard grew up in a home without love. He thought the world hated him, so he hated it back. Going in and out of juvenile detention, and eventually turning eighteen behind bars, Chris decided to turn his life around.  
**Director:** Gary Hamaguchi  
(Noongar/Jaru)

# CLOSING NIGHT



## The Sun Above Me Never Sets

Sun 14 March 7.30pm | Cinema 2  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60  
3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Altan gets a job on a desolate island. Unsure and alone, Altan discovers he has a neighbour – elderly Baibal with a special request. Baibal is ready for death and asks the boy to bury him near his wife's grave when he dies. Afraid, everyday Altan does everything to make the old man look forward to living another beautiful day.

**Director:** Lyubov Borisova  
(Sakha Republic - Russia)  
Russia | 2019 | 108 min | Yakut/Sakha/  
Russian with English subtitles  
Unclassified – No age restrictions

**Preview Short: Elders**  
Two Elders take their grandson out bush and put him to the test.  
**Director:** Tony Briggs  
(Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta)



# BIRRARANGGA SHORTS



## Red Tide

Fri 12 March 6pm | Gandel Lab 1 | Unclassified 15+  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Indigenous Avant-Garde Cinema of North America: Guest curated by Adam Piron (Kiowa/Mohawk) who is currently the Associate Director of Sundance Institute's Indigenous Program where he oversees the organization's investment in Indigenous filmmakers globally. He was previously the Film Curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).



## Kyindoo Wilam (Learning Place)

Sat 13 March 10.15am | ACMI Studio | Unclassified – No age restriction | F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

A selection of short films from across the world that explore family and culture. This is a place where kids can come and sit, listen and learn together.



## Along the Rise

Sat 13 March 12.15pm | Gandel Lab 1 | Unclassified 15+  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

A selection of short films curated by Darlene Naponse, an Anishinaabe Kwe from Atikameksheng Anishnawbek – Northern Ontario. She is a writer, film director, and video artist. She is currently a programmer at imagineNATIVE Film Festival.



## He Māngai He Kōrero, He Māngai He Kōrero

Sat 13 March 2.30pm | Gandel Lab 1 | Unclassified 15+ | F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Rotorua Indigenous Film Festival (RIFF) presents a selection of short films from New Zealand curated by Piripi and Richard Curtis.



## Growing Pains

Sun 14 March 12.15pm | Gandel Lab 1 | Unclassified 15+  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

A selection of shorts curated by Artistic Director of Winda Film Festival (NSW), Pauline Clague (Yaegl)



## Matters of Heart and Soul

Sun 14 March 2.45pm | Gandel Lab 1 | Unclassified 15+  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

A selection of Indigenous short films from across the Globe curated by our Artistic Director Tony Briggs.

# BIRRARANGGA IN CONVERSATION



## The Making of *The Drover's Wife*

Sat 13 March 12.30pm | Cinema 1  
F \$19 | C \$16 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

In Conversation with Leah Purcell and Bain Stewart moderated by Daniel Browning discussing the making of *The Drover's Wife* Feature Film.



## The Making of *The White Girl*

Sat 13 March 3pm | Cinema 1  
F \$13 | C \$11 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

In Conversation with Tony Birch, Tracey Rigney and Tony Briggs discussing the adaptation of *The White Girl* Novel to a Feature Film.



## The Future

Sun 14 March 10am | Gandel Lab 1  
F \$13 | C \$11 | Family \$60 | 3 Pass \$45 | 5 Pass \$75

Indigenous Screen Creatives from Across the Globe

A conversation with young talented leaders of the Indigenous Screen Industry from across the globe who are in front of and behind the camera.

# FESTIVAL PARTNERS

## PRINCIPAL PARTNER



## PARTNERS



## SPONSORS



## SUPPORTERS



Festival Artwork (cover) – Charlotte Allingham

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