OCCUPATION: NATIVE

SCREENING KIT
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT FILM SCREENINGS
SYNOPSIS

In this country, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander story is often buried deep beneath the colonial Australian historical narrative. It’s not that the Australian story is wrong, it’s just that it’s a wee bit one-sided. Getting all historical, Aboriginal filmmaker Trisha Morton-Thomas bites back at Australian history.

Bite-sized stories from European arrival to federation, from the expansion of Australia across the states to today, give a fresh look at the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our country’s history. Comedy including skits and cartoons are balanced with serious moments of reflection and poignancy, creating an eclectic blend of Australian history that will engage wide audiences.

CREDITS

Production Company  Brindle Films
Writer and Director  Trisha Morton-Thomas
Producers  Rachel Clements
Meredith Garlick
Trisha Morton-Thomas
Editor  James Bradley
Director of Photography  Tim Alewood
Occupation: Native aims to engage all Australians in a national conversation about Australian history and what has been missing from our history books. Aboriginal peoples and perspectives have largely been left out of formal historical accounts. Historical acceptance, and truth-telling, is a core and crucial dimension of reconciliation in Australia. It is vital that we start to better embrace the integral place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in national accounts of how Australia was founded and developed.

The fact that Aboriginal peoples and perspectives had been ignored from our national history has led to confusion and misunderstanding for non-Indigenous Australians who may not be able to adequately understand our nation’s past and present from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander points of view. Occupation: Native gives all Australians the chance to change the way they think about our history, including recognising the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ enormous contributions in the development of our country since time immemorial.

Occupation: Native will aim to give non-Indigenous people new understandings of Australian history, from an Aboriginal point-of-view. It will aim to give non-Indigenous Australians a new perspective, proving that our past and present is larger and more complex than we all learned in school. The film will inspire pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the oldest living continuing cultures on the planet, and will support audiences to acknowledge the strength and resilience they have demonstrated in the face of colonial injustices.

Aboriginal adults and children will be given the opportunity to learn aspects of their ancestors’ fight for inclusion and the important role that they have played over the past 228 years and indeed for tens of thousands of years prior to European colonisation.

Using comedy as a vehicle for change can allow us to reach audiences that may otherwise turn off when confronted with serious Aboriginal stories. The film does not ask audiences to feel guilty or to reverse the damage done to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It asks them to understand, and to recognise history from all perspectives.

At the very least, audiences can contribute to reconciliation in Australia by generating widespread acceptance of our nation’s true histories, and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated.

Occupation: Native shows that our history books do need to be rewritten – and are being rewritten – but are not yet widely distributed. It’s time for change.
HOW TO HOST A SCREENING

We are thrilled that you’ve decided to host a screening of Occupation: Native. Here are a few tips to help make your screening a success.

PLANNING THE EVENT

• Find a space: screenings can be held anywhere where there is a digital projector and speakers. Best-case scenario is a cinema, but community spaces, school halls or boardrooms can work too.
• Give yourself about six weeks to plan the event.
• Get a team together to help with publicity, catering and technical logistics. Consider opportunities to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses for these purposes. Supply Nation’s Indigenous Business Direct search tool can be a great starting place for investigating these opportunities.
• Are you raising money for a charity? If so, consider negotiating sponsorships, fee reductions or other in-kind support from event partners such as your venue provider.
  Set up an online ticketing system. Here are a few suggestions:
  - eventbrite.com.au
  - floktu.com
  - trybooking.com
• Make sure the invite sets out the running order of the event. The film runs for 53 minutes.

PUBLICITY

• Start publicising your event as soon as possible.
• Set up a Facebook event page (make sure it has the RSVP or ticketing link!) and include the trailer.
• Tweet using the hashtag #OccupationNative – include the trailer.
• Distribute marketing materials – send an email, put up posters in strategic areas.
• Write a one page press release and let your local newspaper and radio station know. Follow up on the phone.

TECHNICAL CHECKLIST

• Get access to a good projector.
• Do a sound and vision check (also called a technical or ‘tech’ check) as soon as you receive the DVD or online link to Occupation: Native.
• Check that the aspect ratio for the projector is set correctly (the picture shouldn’t look too wide or too tall).
• Check that the colours are as they should be (the picture should not look too dark or light, or too blue, green or red).
• Check that the room where you are doing the tech check and screening is dark!
• When you’re doing a tech check, sit in different seats in the audience area – try the back row and the sides to test whether everyone can see and hear the film adequately.
• If you have time play the whole film at the tech check. If you don’t, play the film at various random scenes (beginning, middle and end). Can you understand the words? Hear the music? Is the sound coming out of all speakers? Is the sound clear and constant?
SUGGESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY OR CORPORATE SCREENING EVENTS

• Hosting a screening of Occupation: Native in your community or workplace is an opportunity to have a positive dialogue about our nation’s history - including an attention to Aboriginal histories and perspectives, and an acknowledgement of the important contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures for tens of thousands of years prior to colonisation, and to this day.
• Make sure you have a skilled and informed facilitator to lead any post-screening discussion.
• If your workplace has a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) you can also use the screening as an opportunity to raise awareness and support for your RAP.
• You could use your screening event to fundraise for a local Aboriginal organisation, perhaps one which actively addresses the need for historical acceptance, truth-telling and healing across Australia. For example, you might consider repatriation projects, foundations such as The Healing Foundation, and education organisations focused on truth-telling/giving voice to Aboriginal histories and perspectives.
• If you’re hosting a fundraiser for an organisation, make sure to let them know about your screening so they can help spread the word.
• You can host an event any time that suits your calendar. However, you might consider aligning your event with a significant date such as during National Reconciliation Week which occurs from 27 May and 3 June each year or NAIDOC Week, held each July to celebrate the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
• Consider partnering with a local Aboriginal organisation to host your screening.

RECRUITING A SKILLED FACILITATOR

Key characteristics of a good facilitator should include:

• Active listening skills.
• Ability to acknowledge and be responsive to the diverse experiences of people in the room.
• Ability to foster a culturally safe and respectful listening, questioning and sharing environment. Doing so includes actively recognising, and being sensitive to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s personal and cultural prerogatives, and understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need not be expected or obliged to share details of their personal experiences and cultural knowledges (see Guide to Fostering Culturally Safe and Respectful Reconciliation Film Screenings).
• Ability to re-focus discussion if it goes off-topic.
• Ideally they should be provided with an opportunity to view the film prior to the screening and background information on the issue they will speak to after the screening.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PANEL MEMBERS

• Panel members should have expertise in the issues raised in the film. Choose someone who is skilled at sensitively talking about the material in the film. It would be appropriate to invite Aboriginal leaders/community members in the first instance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS

• Use the Occupation: Native discussion questions as a starting point for the panel and encourage audience questions as well.
• Make the panel discussion at least half an hour long to allow for audience participation.
# SCREENING TIMELINE

Here is a suggested timeline with tips to help you plan a successful screening.

## SIX WEEKS OUT
- Request a copy of the film and purchase a screening license
- Set time and date
- Book venue
- Compile invitation list
- Design marketing materials or adapt from templates in the screening kit you’ve received from us
- Get your event team together
- Do you intend to have a Q&A? If so, book speakers and an MC/moderator
- Are you providing catering? Consider engaging an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food supplier or catering service

## FIVE WEEKS OUT
- Set up online ticketing system
- Send out invites and let invitees know if this will be a catered event or not
- Set up a Facebook event page with a ticketing link
- Start sharing on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

## FOUR WEEKS OUT
- Visit the venue and do a technical check, including testing the DVD or video file (see technical checklist)
- If you have a Q&A, do you need a microphone for your MC/moderator?

## THREE WEEKS OUT
- Distribute posters
- Write press release to local media
- Continue sharing your event on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

## TWO WEEKS OUT
- Contact your local newspaper and radio stations by phone

## ONE WEEK OUT
- Send out an email/Facebook reminder of your event one week and one day before
- Follow up with local media

## DAY OF SCREENING
- Set Up
- Final tech checks (make sure everything still works!)
- Once everyone arrives, consider formally opening the event with an Acknowledgement of Country and/or Welcome to Country before then introducing the film

## THE DAY AFTER
- Thank the audience and your event team in person and on social media
- If you hosted your event as part of a fundraiser, send out an email/Facebook message to let everyone know how much funds were raised; what those funds will go towards; and what any immediate outcomes of your screening and fundraising have been.
PROMOTING YOUR EVENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media makes it easy to alert your community about your screening.

CREATE A FACEBOOK EVENT

When creating a Facebook Event you can choose between setting it as a private or public.

A private event is only visible to the people who are invited. You can choose to allow guests to invite their friends. A public event is visible to anyone on or off Facebook.

Step 1
On the left side of your Facebook page, click on ‘Events’.

Step 2
Click on ‘Create an Event’ and fill out the form. Don’t forget to include the trailer and your ticketing website URL.

Step 3
Click ‘Create’ and you’re set. You’re now ready to invite your Facebook friends to your screening.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: FACEBOOK

Come and watch a powerful and entertaining film about what’s been missing from Australia’s history books – Aboriginal perspectives. #OccupationNative showing one night only. [insert venue, date and time or add ticketing website URL]

Most Australians were educated about a very one-sided history of our nation. In #OccupationNative Trisha Morton-Thomas gives us her own Aboriginal perspective. Come and see the film and be part of the conversation. Screening one night only. [insert venue, date and time or add ticketing website URL]

I’m excited to host a screening of #OccupationNative at [insert venue and time]. Come and be a part of an important conversation about our nation’s history. Free snacks provided. Get tickets here [add ticketing website URL]

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: TWITTER

Come see a powerful and entertaining film about what’s been missing from our history books. #OccupationNative screening one night only [add your ticketing website URL]

I’m hosting a screening of #OccupationNative at [insert venue and time]. Free snacks provided. Tickets here [add your ticketing website URL]

Let’s create a new understanding of our history that includes Aboriginal perspectives. Come see the film #OccupationNative Tickets here [add your ticketing website URL]
SENDING AN EMAIL TO YOUR NETWORKS

(NB: If doing a group invite, for privacy reasons address the email to yourself and be sure to BCC the email address list)

MailChimp is an App that helps you to create email campaigns. If you use MailChimp, we’ve created a template you can adapt. Just click here and add it to your template folder. Alternatively, here is a suggested email invitation.

Subject: Invitation to a screening of Occupation: Native

Dear [insert name]

The majority of Australians grew up with a very one-sided history of our nation. In Occupation: Native Trisha Morton-Thomas adjusts the narrative using both seriousness and humour to include the perspectives and histories of Australia’s Aboriginal peoples and communities.

We invite you to a special screening of the film at [insert place] on [insert date].

The screening will be followed by a discussion with [insert speakers name if you have one].

Bite-sized stories from European arrival to federation, from the expansion of Australia across the states to today, give a fresh look at the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our country’s history. Comedy including skits and cartoons are balanced with serious moments of reflection and poignancy, creating an eclectic blend of Australian history that will engage wide audiences.

Let’s change the way we view our history by including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and recognising the strengths and resilience that they have demonstrated in the face of colonial injustices as well as the positive contributions they’ve made in the founding of this nation.

You can purchase tickets here [insert web address or email address – be sure to let people know if any of your ticket sales are being used to fundraise for a cause]

Check out the film trailer here (hyperlink the trailer if possible): https://vimeo.com/225496245

For any questions please contact the event organisers at [insert email address].

We hope to see you at the screening.

[insert name of individual or organisation]
DISCUSSION GUIDE

These questions can be used as a starting point for a facilitated discussion in a small or large group setting.

We encourage you to use this discussion guide to generate positive and meaningful dialogue about the film and the issues it explores.

DO YOUR RESEARCH FIRST

Do some critical research before you begin to help you prepare for a group discussion.

Occupation: Native may raise themes that could be sensitive to audience members, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is appropriate to invite local Aboriginal leaders/community members to participate in the discussion.

It’s important to recognise, and be sensitive to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be at your screening discussion to ensure that their engagement with your event is met with cultural safety and respect. There can be significant socio-emotional complexities involved in inter-personal and inter-cultural sharing, and it is not always culturally safe, fair, reasonable or appropriate to expect people’s personal or cultural knowledges to be exchanged. Check out the links to resources in the next section on creating a culturally safe, respectful and inclusive screening event.

At the very least, it is appropriate to talk to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and community members to gauge their perspectives to ensure you set up a respectful and meaningful dialogue.

RESOURCES FOR SCREENING DISCUSSIONS

These resources from Reconciliation Australia can help you to create a culturally safe, respectful and inclusive screening event.

- A Guide to Using Respectful and Inclusive Language in communicating about Reconciliation

- A Guide To Facilitating Culturally Safe and Respectful Reconciliation Screenings and Discussions

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q. How did you feel as you watched the film Occupation: Native and why?

Q. What were your first reactions and what personal assumptions or experiences do you feel triggered this response? Did the film strengthen and/or challenge any of your prior attitudes or understandings and why?

Consider the clip in the film that talked about the date of Federation and the corresponding date on which Australia Day was originally marked as a national day of celebration, “And so, on the first of January 1901, the Federation of Australia was born. ‘What? First of January? You mean, I’ve been protesting Australia day on the wrong date?”

Q. Why do you think January 26 can be considered a contentious date on which to celebrate Australia day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
Q. Based on the film and in the context of the current “Change The Date” debate, why do you think it is important to appreciate that the debate around the date on which Australia Day is scheduled to be celebrated is not new?

Q. What do you think some of the shared characteristics of an Australian national identity are? Why is it important to appreciate that, since tens of thousands of years prior to colonisation, more than 250 distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait geo-cultural communities of Nations have existed? Why do you think it is important to proote an Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity and sense of unity?

Q. What are your hopes for the future of Australia, particularly with regard to the relationship between non-Indigenous Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Q. Why is a holistic understanding of the past necessary for understanding, and positively shaping, the present and the future? Why is truth-telling and historical acceptance, important to reconciliation in Australia?

EXPLORE MORE

Interested in engaging in further learning and discussion of relevance? Consider engaging with the professional learning resources listed on the following Narragunnawali Actions pages:

• Teach about Days of National Significance
• Explore Current Affairs and Issues
• Teach about Reconciliation

Are you hosting your screening event in conjunction with a local school or early learning service, or wider educational community?

If so, consider downloading the Occupation: Native Teacher Notes, produced in collaboration with Reconciliation Australia, from the SBS Learn website.