

Recommended viewing

Films, documentaries and TV programs focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Cleverman (2016)

Director: Wayne Blair

Genre: Drama/Sci-fi

Duration: 6 episodes of 60 min

Classification: M

With an 80% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cast, *Cleverman* sets the benchmark for diversity on Australian television, and its contemporary themes set in the near future will resonate widely amongst various audiences. *Cleverman*'s narrative is couched squarely within Australia's divisive asylum-seeker situation and challenging colonial past. The series depicts a deeply conflicted and anxious society, fearful of a minority group, endowed with extraordinary physical traits, living among them. One young man – The Cleverman – struggles with his own power and the responsibility to unite this divided world, but he must first overcome a deep estrangement with his older brother. Carefully gathering Dreaming stories from around Australia – with permission from elders to re-tell them – creator Ryan Griffen's aim was to "put 60,000 years of old stories in a modern context, and keep them rooted in culture".

Cleverman is set to premier during National Reconciliation Week 2016, but you can view the trailer in advance [here](#).

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Schools and early learning service (professional learning and upper secondary students)

How to access:

Cleverman will premier in Australia on ABC and ABC iview during National Reconciliation Week (Thursday, June 2 at 9.30pm).

Spear (2016)

Director: Stephen Page

Genre: Drama

Duration: 84 min

Classification: M

Acclaimed Artistic Director and Choreographer Stephen Page brings Bangarra Dance Theatre's outstanding dance work SPEAR to the screen. Striking and original, Page weaves story through dance to deliver an extraordinary cinematic experience in his feature film debut. Using gesture and dance, with minimal

dialogue, *SPEAR* follows a young Aboriginal man named Djali from the outback to the streets of Sydney on his quest to understand what it means to be a man with ancient traditions in a modern world.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Schools and early learning service (professional learning and upper secondary students)

How to access:

SPEAR is currently in limited release in cinemas across Australia. Watch the [trailer](#) and see the list of screening dates [here](#).

Ready For This (2016)

Producer: Joanna Werner and Miranda Dear

Genre: Teen Drama

Duration: 60 min premier, followed by 12 episodes of 30 min

Classification: G

Soon to premier on ABC 3, *Ready For This* follows six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenagers, all elite within their own field, who have come to Sydney to pursue their dreams. For some performance school Arcadia House is the opportunity of a lifetime; for others it's a last chance. Far from home, they must find a path through the new challenges and adventures that the big city offers while dealing with all the trials of growing up. This exciting new series is the brainchild of the producers of *Dance Academy* and *Redfern Now*.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (primary age and young adults)
- Schools and early learning service (primary and secondary students)

How to access:

Ready For This is soon to premier on ABC 3, but you can view the trailer in advance [here](#).

Black Comedy (2015)

Director: Beck Cole, Craig Anderson and Erica Glynn

Genre: Comedy

Duration: 27 min per episode

Classification: M

Featuring a fantastic ensemble cast of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and performers, *Black Comedy* describes itself as "A sketch comedy show by Blackfellas... for everyone!" Some of *Black Comedy*'s lively characters include: the Tiddas – two of the most competitive, over the top gay Blackfellas; Mavis the mean-mouthed cleaning woman; the Housewives of Narromine; and Deadly Dave, who can fix anything. *Black Comedy* is irreverent, politically incorrect and goes where no other series can go.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)

How to access:

Black Comedy Series One can be purchased on DVD from the [ABC Shop](#) online.

Mugu Kids (2015)

Creator: NITV and Maling Productions

Genre: Children's education/entertainment

Duration: 24 min per episode

Classification: G

Indigenous actress, writer and director Jub Clerc hosts *Mugu Kids*, an exciting children's program aired on NITV. 'Mugu' means 'cheeky' in Yaegl language. The program highlights and showcases a number of Indigenous languages, including the Arrente language of Alice Springs and Hermannsburg, the Gumbaynggirr language of Nambucca on the coast of New South Wales, and the Gubbi Gubbi language from the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Each episode covers a different topic, such as feelings, animals, dreaming and school. Well-known Indigenous singer-songwriters like Warren H Williams and Kerriane Cox perform their favourite children's songs along with up and coming new artists such as Jason Brown and MStar. *Mugu Kids* is created and aired by NITV as part of [Jarjums](#), its programming dedicated to children. Catering to all kids and kids at heart, Jarjums provides fun and educational Indigenous and First Nations content from Australia and around the world.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (parents and young children)
- Community groups (focused on young children)
- Schools and early learning services (early learning)

How to access:

Mugu Kids can be watched live on NITV (2.30-3.00pm Monday to Friday) or on demand through NITV online.

NEOMAD (2013)

Creator: Sutu, the Love Punks, Satellite Sisters, Big hART and Roebourne community

Genre: Comic/live action films and books

Duration: NA

Classification: G

Set over three episodes, the *NEOMAD* comic series follows the story of the Love Punks, a group of tech savvy young heroes from the Pilbara who speed through a digitised desert full of 'spy bots', 'magic crystals', fallen 'rocket boosters' and mysterious petroglyphs (or rock engravings). They learn about their culture from the Murujuga Rangers and adults in their community. When a gigantic tourist shuttle heads towards a sacred constellation, they save the world from intergalactic catastrophe.

NEOMAD was created as part of Big hART's Yijala Yala Project, with the help of over 40 young people in the Leramugadu (Roebourne) community through a series of workshops in scriptwriting, literacy, Photoshop, filmmaking and sound recording over an 18-month period. Illustrator and interactive designer Stu Campbell (Sutu) spent over 500 hours teaching the young students to apply a complex colouring system to more than 600 scenes to create *NEOMAD*. These young people, aged between 7 and 14, star in the comic as the Love Punks and the Satellite Sisters and also assisted with the dialogue and live film segments.

The comics have also been published as a book, *NEOMAD- The Complete Collection*, which recently won the Gold Ledger award, the highest award that acknowledges comic art in Australia.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Schools and early learning services (primary and secondary students)

How to access:

In celebration of National Reconciliation Week, the *NEOMAD* app will be FREE to [download](#) from iTunes for the months of May and June. *NEOMAD - The Complete Collection* comic book can be purchased [here](#).

Utopia (2013)

Director: John Pilger and Alan Lowery

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 110 min

Classification: M

Director and journalist John Pilger first visited the Aboriginal community of Utopia in Central Australia three decades ago during the making of *The Secret Country*. He returned in 2013 to film *Utopia* and discovered things hadn't improved. Families live in third-world conditions, in poorly sanitised shacks where they are plagued by easily curable diseases. Extended families of 16 to 20 people living in the one house, a house which has been identified by government officials as an asbestos hazard. This is Aboriginal Australia now—the most abject poverty you can imagine in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. *Utopia* documents the saga of suffering, dispossession, alienation, racism and poverty suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contemporary Australia.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Utopia is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

The Sapphires (2012)

Director: Wayne Blair
Genre: Drama/Musical
Duration: 103 min
Classification: PG

The Sapphires is an adaptation of the hugely successful Australian stage musical of the same name, and is inspired by the remarkable true story of writer Tony Briggs' mother and three aunts. The film is set in the heady days of the late '60s and focuses on a quartet of young, talented singers from a remote Aboriginal mission. Discovered and guided by a kind-hearted, soul-loving manager the girls are named The Sapphires and given the opportunity to entertain American troops in Vietnam. Catapulted onto the world stage as Australia's answer to the Supremes, their journey of discovery offers them not only the chance to show off their musical skills, but find love and togetherness, experience loss and grow as women.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (secondary students)

How to access:

The Sapphires is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

Toomelah (2011)

Director: Ivan Sen
Genre: Drama
Duration: 106 min
Classification: MA

The film is set entirely in the remote Indigenous community of Toomelah, located on the New South Wales-Queensland border. The community was created as a mission during the 1930s, bringing together Gamilaroi and Bigambal people from the surrounding area. *Toomelah* centres on Daniel, a ten-year-old boy who dreams of being a gangster, and intimately depicts mission life in contemporary Australia. The film reveals the challenges facing the young Gamilaroi people of the Toomelah Community—robbed of much of their traditional culture by Government policy and struggling for an identity. It is a provocative and yet comic story that transports audiences inside the community, evoking an authentic world and way of life.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Toomelah is widely available on DVD for rent and purchase.

Tales from the Daly: 'Naiiyu Nambiyu' (2011)

Director: Steve McGregor

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 20 min

Classification: G

Tales from the Daly: 'Naiiyu Nambiyu' is a cinematic journey into the lives and Country of the Traditional Owners of the Daly River region in the Northern Territory. During the months of October to May the region is lashed by monsoonal storms. Legend says it is the Sugar Glider travelling across the sky mischievously moving the clouds around which brings the rains. The beauty and power of these storms takes the audience to the heart of the landscape. But within this beauty lies danger. Children are told stories to teach them respect for the bush and how to be wary of its dangers. The Wabuymem—a little grey spirit that lives in the Banyan Tree—is one of these stories. The Wabuymem stalks children and lures them away from their families into the Banyan Tree to never be seen again. This film reconstructs the story of Wangung, a child lured away from his family by the Wabuymem, and captures the full power and visual richness of the stormy wet season in the process.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning, primary and secondary)

How to access:

Tales from the Daly: 'Naiiyu Nambiyu' can be purchased on DVD from distributor [Ronin Films](#) or rented/downloaded through its [Vimeo](#) account.

Crookhat and the Kulunada (2010)

Director: David Tranter

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 23 min

Classification: G

Three old men—Donald (Crookhat) Akemarr Thompson, Alec Apetyarr Peterson and Casey Akemarr Holmes—travel by four-wheel drive out to a surprising strip of green bush in the desert, where a permanent spring feeds a large waterhole. We listen to their stories as they prepare their camp—stories rich in knowledge of the place and its history. They tell both the Dreamtime stories of the Rainbow Serpent, Kulunada, which lived in the waterhole, and also stories from the violent past during white settlement of the area.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning, primary and secondary)

How to access:

Crookhat and the Kulunada can be purchased or rented online from the [Vimeo](#) account of distributor Ronin Films.

Pemulwuy: A War of Two Laws (2010)

Director: Grant Leigh Saunders

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 54 min

Classification: G

Pemulwuy: A War of Two Laws charts the history of Australia's first ever Aboriginal resistance fighter. From his first encounter with the British in Botany Bay and 12-year war against the establishment, to his eventual demise in 1802 in Parramatta where he was beheaded. The program exposes one of Australia's forgotten histories and an unsung hero of the Bidjigal people of the Dharug language group of Sydney. In this two-part series, the story of Pumulwuy is examined by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal expert voices reconciling the contention between the oral and written history of the early European colonisation of Australia.

Recommended audiences:

- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Pemulwuy: A War of Two Laws can be purchased through [ABC Library Sales](#) or borrowed from the [National Library of Australia](#).

Bran Nue Dae (2009)

Director: Rachel Perkins

Genre: Musical Drama/Comedy

Duration: 85 min

Classification: PG

Bran Nue Dae is a feature film adaptation of the 1990 stage musical by Jimmy Chi, and tells the coming of age story of an Aboriginal teenager on a road trip in the late 1960s. In the summer of 1969 Willie Johnson is filled with the life of the idyllic old pearling port Broome—fishing, hanging out with his mates and his girl. However, his mother returns him to the religious mission for further schooling. After being punished for an act of youthful rebellion, he runs away from the mission on a journey that ultimately leads him back home.

Bran Nue Dae stars Geoffrey Rush, Jessica Mauboy and Rocky McKenzie, with Ernie Dingo, Missy Higgins and Magda Szubanski in supporting roles.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups

- Schools and early learning services (secondary students)

How to access:

Bran Nue Dae is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

Contact (2009)

Director: Bentley Dean and Martin Butler

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 78 min

Classification: PG

In 1964, Yuwali was 17 when her first contact with whitefellas was filmed. *Contact* is her story and it brings together two vastly different civilisations—the last remnant group of Aboriginal peoples still living traditionally in Australia's Great Sandy Desert, and Space Rocket Research. Set against the countdown to the launch of the Blue Streak rocket test, authorities are sent to clear the potential crash zone of inhabitants and capture their extraordinary first meeting with Yuwali's group in 16mm colour film. Yuwali's account is probably the fullest and most revealing of the 'first contact' experience ever caught on film. Now in her sixties, Yuwali is a natural storyteller, who gives a riveting personal account of her first contact with the twentieth century and the moment in time when she made the giant leap of faith from a subsistence lifestyle to cars, fresh-baked bread and space travel.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Contact is difficult to find, but can be purchased on DVD through [Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa: Martu Cultural Knowledge Program](#).

Samson and Delilah (2009)

Director: Warwick Thornton

Genre: Drama

Duration: 100 min

Classification: MA

Samson and Delilah's world is small - an isolated community in the Central Australian desert. When tragedy strikes, they turn their backs on home and embark on a journey of survival. Lost, unwanted and alone, they discover that life isn't always fair, but love never judges.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Samson and Delilah is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

The Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008)

Director: Sarah Spillane

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 22 min

Classification: G

The Apology to the Stolen Generations by the Australian Parliament on 13th February 2008 was a powerful and memorable moment in the nation's history. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people alike. The film begins two days before the historical event as people began to gather in Canberra and captures the anticipation on a thousand faces as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivers the Apology, and then the spontaneous outpouring of emotion all around the country. It includes interviews, stories and many moments including the first Welcome to Country in the Federal Parliament. Jack Thompson's narration, Shelley Reys' thoughtful commentary and the music of Silverchair, John Butler Trio, Missy Higgins and the Stiff Gins all help make this film a truly uplifting experience.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning, primary and secondary)

How to access:

The Apology to the Stolen Generations purchased on DVD from distributor [Ronin Films](#) or rented through its [Vimeo](#) account.

First Australians: The Untold Story of Australia (2008)

Director: Rachel Perkins

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 382 min

Classification: PG

First Australians: The Untold Story of Australia chronicles the birth of contemporary Australia as never told before, from the perspective of its First Peoples. The series explores what unfolds when the oldest living culture in the world is overrun by the world's greatest empire. Over seven episodes, *First Australians* depicts the true stories of individuals—both black and white—caught in an epic drama of friendship, revenge, loss and victory in Australia's most transformative period of history. We begin in 1788 in Sydney, with the friendship between an Englishman (Governor Phillip) and a warrior (Bennelong) and end our tale in 1993 with Koiki Mabo's legal challenge to the foundation of Australia.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends

- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

First Australians: The Untold Story of Australia can be purchased on DVD or downloaded via the [SBS shop](#) online.

Liyarn Ngarn (2007)

Director: Martin Mhando

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 70 min

Classification: M

Liyarn Ngarn, in the Yawuru language of the West Kimberly region around Broome in Australia's far north-west, means "coming together of the spirit". It epitomises a thirty year-long mission of Indigenous leader and Yawura man, Patrick Dodson, to bring about a lasting and true reconciliation between the original owners and the immigrants. In this compelling documentary personal stories of injustice are recounted by renowned English actor Pete Postlethwaite, as told to him by Patrick Dodson and Bill Johnson. Respected songman, Archie Roach, adds his powerful lyrics and voice to this often painful, yet inspiring, journey of strength. *Liyarn Ngarn* aims to change perceptions and attitudes to Indigenous peoples and to assist with the process of true and lasting reconciliation.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning service (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Liyarn Ngarn can be borrowed from the [National Library of Australia](#).

September (2007)

Director: Peter Carstairs

Genre: Drama

Duration: 85 min

Classification: M

Set in Western Australia's wheat-belt in 1968, *September* is a character driven film about two 15-year-old boys, one Aboriginal and the other non-Indigenous, whose friendship begins to fall apart under the stress of a changing world.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups

- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

September can be purchased on DVD from select retailers, including [Angus & Robertson](#) and [EzyDVD](#).

Kanyini (2006)

Director: Melanie Hogan

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 53 min

Classification: PG

Kanyini explores the philosophy and the life of Bob Randall—an Aboriginal man from Mutitjulu, a town beside Uluru in Central Australia. Bob Randall is a 'Tjilpi' or special teaching uncle of the Yankunytjatjara people and a member of the Stolen Generations. At about age 7, Bob was forcibly taken away from his mother and family under government policy. Like so many, he grew up alone, away from his family, and never saw his mother again. No records were kept of the Aboriginal nation, family name, or identity of the Aboriginal children who were stolen. Young Bob was kept in government institutions until he was 20, when he was banished for questioning white authorities. After many years of heart-wrenching searches, he found his roots and returned to his mother's Country, where he lives today in Mutitjulu. Throughout his life, Uncle Bob has worked as an educator and leader for equal rights, land rights, environmental protection, Indigenous cultural awareness and preservation, and community development. Uncle Bob co-produced and narrated this award-winning documentary.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Kanyini is difficult to find, but is available to borrow through the [National Library of Australia](#) at the time of writing.

Jimmy Little's Gentle Journey (2006)

Director: Sean Kennedy

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 55 min

Classification: G

Jimmy Little's Gentle Journey traces the extraordinary life and times of the popular and inspirational Aboriginal entertainer and activist. From a tragic childhood, to star of the Australian popular music scene, Jimmy Little proved to be both a survivor and a pioneer. Archival footage, anecdotes and interviews with his contemporaries shed light on the social and political issues of the last 65 years in Australia.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning, primary and secondary)

How to access:

Jimmy Little's Gentle Journey is difficult to find, but is available to borrow through the [National Library of Australia](#) at the time of writing. Short clips of the film can be viewed through [Australian Screen](#) online.

Ten Canoes (2006)

Director: Rolfe de Heer

Genre: Drama

Duration: 92 min

Classification: M

Based on an ancient story from the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land, *Ten Canoes* is a ground-breaking glimpse into Aboriginal life centuries before European settlement. The film is shot in and around the Arafura Wetlands of Central Arnhem Land, narrated by Australian icon David Gulpilil and stars his son Jamie as the covetous youth Dayindi. Through real collaboration, director Rolf de Heer and the people of Ramingining have together created a pioneering and timeless tale for all people and all cultures.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Ten Canoes is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

The Tall Man (2004)

Director: Tony Krawitz

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 78 min

Classification: M

When Cameron Doomadgee was found dead in the Palm Island police station, his injuries were like those of someone who'd been in a fatal car crash. The police claimed he had tripped on a step. The Palm Islanders rioted and burnt down the police station. The subsequent trial of Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley – who had been decorated for his work in Aboriginal communities – made headlines day after day, shadowed by Queensland police threatening to strike. *The Tall Man* tells the gripping story of the trial, of the complex

Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, and of the Doomadgee family as they struggle to understand what happened to their brother.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

The Tall Man can be purchased on DVD or downloaded via the [SBS shop](#) online.

Rabbit Proof Fence (2002)

Director: Phillip Noyce

Genre: Drama

Duration: 94 min

Classification: PG

Rabbit Proof Fence tells the story of three young Aboriginal girls—Molly, Gracie and Daisy—who were forcibly removed from their families in 1931 and sent to the Moore River Native Settlement. Based on the true story told by Doris Pilkington Garimara, daughter of Molly, in her book *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*, the film depicts the girls' escape and amazing journey home via the rabbit proof fence.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary students)

How to access:

Rabbit Proof Fence is widely available on DVD and online (including Netflix) for rent and purchase.

Black and White (2002)

Director: Craig Lahiff

Genre: Drama

Duration: 99 min

Classification: M

Black and White is a compelling story based on a 1959 landmark trial that irrevocably changed police procedure and judicial authority in South Australia. An excitable young lawyer, David O'Sullivan, is given the news that he has drawn a 'bad lottery prize' – a legal aid case. He must defend a young Aboriginal man Max Stuart who has been arrested for the rape and murder of a nine-year-old girl in the far west desert town of Ceduna. O'Sullivan soon concludes that the Stuart has been framed by the local police and decides he must

take a stand. O'Sullivan and his legal partner, Helen Devaney, embark on a 'David and Goliath' battle that threatens the world of closed ranks, hidden evidence and the establishment.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

Black and White can be purchased on DVD from select retailers, including [Amazon](#) and [EzyDVD](#).

One Night the Moon (2001)

Director: Rachel Perkins

Genre: Drama/Musical

Duration: 57 min

Classification: M

Set in 1932 outback Australia, *One Night the Moon* is based on a true story about an Aboriginal police officer and "black tracker" named Albert. The film focuses on a family who have lost their child and stubbornly refuse Albert's help in their desperate search. The "family" is enacted by one taken from real life—singer Paul Kelly, actress Kaarin Fairfax and their daughter Memphis—lending a certain authenticity and urgency to this historical tale, told through sung dialogue.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends (over 15 years-old)
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and upper secondary)

How to access:

One Night the Moon is widely available for purchase on DVD.

Babakiueria (“Barbecue Area”) (1986)

Director: Don Featherstone

Genre: Satire/Mockumentary

Duration: 30 min

Classification: PG

Babakiueria uses role reversal to satirise and critique Australia's treatment of its Indigenous peoples. Aboriginal actors play the colonisers, while white actors play the Indigenous Babakiuerians. The filmmakers have fun presenting Australian cultural stereotypes like the barbecue and football as strange 'native customs' seen through the eyes of an ethnographic observer, presenter Duranga Manika. According to

director Don Featherstone, the question of how to portray both black colonisers and white colonised was the subject of a lot of discussion during development. Ultimately, rather than involving any profound representation of their respective cultures, the transposition is literally skin deep—black people colonising a land of white inhabitants. This satirical examination of black-white relations in Australia first screened on ABC TV in 1986 to widespread acclaim with both critics and audiences alike.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Babakueria can be purchased on DVD from [ABC shops](#) or watched online via [YouTube](#)

The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back (1985)

Director: Alan Lowery

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 55 min

Classification: G

The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back is a 1985 television documentary made for the British Central Independent Television company by writer/presenter John Pilger. It details the persecution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia's history.

The film shows that when British colonists first arrived in Australia they saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as having no proprietary rights to their land because they didn't cultivate it. As a result of this, no treaty was ever signed. Indigenous peoples had no rights under British colonial rule and much of their resistance to British colonisation wasn't recorded. John Pilger aims to document some of the historical struggles of Aboriginal peoples as they were driven from their lands, as well as some of the major events relating to Aboriginal rights throughout the 20th century.

Reflecting on the film, Pilger says: "The Secret Country was my first film on Indigenous Australia. I look at it these days and what shocks me about it is that virtually nothing has changed.

"I knew almost nothing about the first people of my own country until I left Australia in my twenties and went to London to work. My London newspaper sent me back to Australia to find out the secret and shocking truth."

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning)

How to access:

The Secret Country: The First Australians Fight Back can be accessed and watched for free via John Pilger's website [here](#).

Lousy Little Sixpence (1982)

Director: Alec Morgan
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 54 min
Classification: G

Lousy Little Sixpence tells the story of Aboriginal children, now Elders and representatives for an entire generation, who were stolen from their families by the Australian government and turned into unpaid servants for white families. The title refers to the amount of pocket money the indentured workers were supposed to be given - but never received - while their wages were managed by their 'employers', on behalf of the Aborigines Protection Board.

Lousy Little Sixpence is an influential film in highlighting the injustice of stolen wages, and the fight for the rightful payment to be made to Indigenous peoples of that generation or their families. Through old newsreels, archive film, photographs and interviews with Elders, the film weaves a moving account of a hidden history, the early struggle for Aboriginal land rights and self-determination.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning, primary and secondary)

How to access:

Lousy Little Sixpence can be accessed and watched for free in four parts via [YouTube](#) or purchased on DVD from [Ronin Films](#).

Two Laws (1981)

Director: Carolyn Strachan and Alessandro Cavadini
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 140 min
Classification: NA

In this four-part documentary series, an Aboriginal community from the remote Northern Territory tells the story of their people through their own eyes. The Borroloola people were in control of the filmmaking process, so their history unfolds through their own storytelling conventions and focuses on the issues most important to them, such as land rights. The result is a fascinating film series that not only pushes the boundaries of documentary, but also challenges the stilted style of ethnographic filmmaking so often found on television. The concept of two laws – colonial and Indigenous law – can also be understood as two ways of storytelling or filmmaking.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Two Laws is difficult to find, but is available via [Amazon](#) at the time of writing.

The Last Wave (1977)

Director: Peter Weir

Genre: Drama

Duration: 106 min

Classification: PG

When lawyer David Burton is assigned a case to defend a group of Aboriginal men, he is unprepared for the nightmares and dreamscapes ahead. Accused of murdering one of their own, the men stand trial amidst suspicious circumstances. As Burton becomes plagued by unsettling visions, he is drawn to one of the defendants, the mysterious Chris Lee, for answers to his torment. Burton senses a greater power at play, a power involving tribal customs and the ideas of Dreamtime. *The Last Wave* is directed by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Peter Weir and stars award-winning actor David Gulpilil.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

The Last Wave can be purchased on DVD from the [ABC Shop](#) online and [Amazon](#).

Jedda (1955)

Director: Charles Chauvel

Genre: Drama

Duration: 91 min

Classification: PG

Jedda is perhaps Charles Chauvel's best film, as well as his last. It is historic both for being the first colour feature film made in Australia, but more importantly, because it is arguably the first Australian film to take the emotional lives of Aboriginal peoples seriously. When an Indigenous woman dies in childbirth, the baby is raised by Sarah, the wife of station owner Doug McMann. Doing their best to assimilate the child into white society, young Jedda (played by Rosalie Kunoth-Monks) is caught between two cultures – forbidden from learning about her Indigenous heritage and never fully accepted by the other. As a teenager, Jedda is drawn to a mysterious newcomer called Marbuck (played by Robert Tudawali), a tribal man in search of work and offering a new perspective on life.

Recommended audiences:

- Individuals and friends
- Community groups
- Businesses and organisations
- Schools and early learning services (professional learning and secondary)

How to access:

Jedda is widely available on DVD and online for rent and purchase.

To explore additional films, [SBS On Demand](#) has a broad and changing selection of films focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

[Black Screen](#) is also a stand-out resource and lends DVDs to individuals and organisations for use at screening events and community celebrations.

Tuning in to [NITV](#) during NRW is another great way to watch a diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused programs.