

A castaway's true story of survival.

S O U
P A C I
O C E

The Extraordinary Tale Of
**WILLIAM
BUCKLEY**

A One Hour Dramatised Documentary

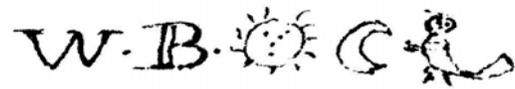
- PRESS KIT -

THE EXTRAORDINARY TALE OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

A castaway's true story of survival.

Press Kit

1



¹ Buckley's tattoo. Part from his army days and part from his life with the Wathaurong showing his totem – the magpie.

THE EXTRAORDINARY TALE OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

Table of Contents

SHORT SYNOPSIS	1
Log line:.....	1
One Line Synopsis.....	1
One Para Synopsis.....	1
LONG SYNOPSIS	2
PROGRAM OUTLINE	4
PRODUCERS STATEMENT	6
DIRECTOR STATEMENT	8
MICHAEL CATHCART – Presenter Statement	10
THE WATHAURONG – Background Information	12
STORY BACKGROUND INFO	14
BIOGRAPHIES	16
MALCOLM McDONALD – Director & Writer	16
TONY WRIGHT - Producer	16
STEPHEN AMEZDROZ - Producer	16
MICHAEL CATHCART – Presenter / Historian	17
DAVID TOURNIER – Cultural Heritage Education Officer	17
DALE CORNELIUS – Composer	17
TONY STEVENS A.S.E. – Editor	17
MARTIN McGRATH A.S.C. – Director of Photography	17
KEY CAST & CREW LIST	18
CONTACT DETAILS	19
Publicist.....	19
Production Company.....	19
Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative Ltd	19

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Log line:

The Extraordinary Tale of William Buckley – a castaway’s true story of survival.

One Line Synopsis

William Buckley’s amazing story of survival tells of his thirty-two years living in an aboriginal tribe before white colonization.

One Para Synopsis

On a stifling hot Christmas night in 1803 William Buckley, a young English convict, escaped from the doomed first settlement of Port Phillip Bay in South Eastern Australia. He risked his life in the unknown and hostile Australian wilderness rather than surrender his freedom. His account, told towards the end of his amazing life, of joining and living with an aboriginal tribe for thirty-two years before white colonisation, is one of the greatest survival stories ever told.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In 1835 a wild white man emerged from the Australian bush with long hair and beard, dressed in skins and carrying spears. He was escaped convict William Buckley, presumed long dead, who had spent thirty two years living with an Aboriginal tribe in south eastern Victoria.



William Buckley [Jean-Marc Russ], a convict in a strange land.

Near the end of his days, Buckley sat down to tell his story to John Morgan, a journalist with an eye for a good yarn. Buckley's account tells of his life in an ancient culture before white colonization. It is one of the most extraordinary survival stories ever told.

His journey into a different world began on a stifling hot Christmas night in 1803 - when the 23 year old Buckley, an English court-martialled soldier, escaped from the first settlement of Port Phillip Bay in South Eastern Australia, choosing to risk the unknown of the terrifying and hostile Australian wilderness rather than continue life as a convict.

After a year of harsh survival, Buckley, spent and starving, fatefully takes a spear from a recently dug grave to use as a crutch. When a group of Aborigines discover him they believe he is the warrior Murrangurk, the owner of the spear, returned from the dead. They take him in and he joins the family of Murrangurk - whose brother Torrenauk becomes his 'brother'.

We see Buckley become a Wathaurong tribesman, learning to hunt and fish and speak their language. He witnesses many battles (usually over women), cannibalism and various tribal customs. He endures hardship - tragically losing his family in a clan killing, and happiness - falling in love with a young woman who stays with him for many years. He grows into middle age as part of a world utterly different to the one he was born into.



Buckley's Wathaurong brother [Jamie Gulpili] teaching Buckley [Jean-Marc Russ] how to hunt eels.

But in 1835, Buckley's life faces new upheavals when John Batman's advance party for settling Melbourne arrives. Unbeknownst to them the local Wathaurong tribe is planning to attack and kill the intruders and steal their provisions.

Imagine the new arrivals' surprise when a six and a half foot giant of a wild white man emerges from the bush – and, it turns out, he can speak English!



William Buckley [Jean-Marc Russ] with his Wathaurong 'family'
[from left to right - Jamie Gulpilil, Sylvia Gurrappa, Francis
Daingangan, Alana O'Ryan , Angus Pilakui]

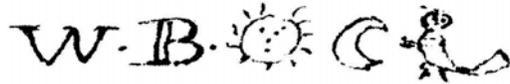
Buckley now stands between two worlds that are about to collide. Can he prevent bloodshed? Whose side is he on – white or black?

As the new colony is built, Buckley acts as mediator between white and black, knowing that one day, one side or the other may kill him. He can also foresee the dreadful fate of the Aborigines. He sets sail for Hobart never to return.

As dawn enters the room and the fire in the hearth grows cold he tells Morgan – “I wished the whites had never come”.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

In the wildest outpost of the British Empire, three soldiers are setting up camp in the rugged bush around Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne, Australia. The year is 1835. Emerging from the scrub, a wild-looking giant of a man approaches them, carrying a spear and dressed in animal skins. Though clearly European, the man doesn't speak a word of English. He points to a tattoo on his arm, bearing the initials WB alongside crudely executed figures of the sun, moon and a possum-like creature.



Renowned historian Michael Cathcart introduces us to the startling figure – William Buckley. He has spent thirty-two years living with the Aborigines from the local Wathaurong clan. Now, he stands between two worlds that are about to collide. Can he prevent bloodshed? Whose side is he on – white or black?

Years later, towards the end of his life, Buckley shares his incredible story with the journalist John Morgan. It all began when Buckley was a twenty-three year old convict, imprisoned in the doomed settlement of Sorrento in Port Phillip Bay.

Along with five other convicts Buckley escapes, hoping to reach Sydney or even China. One is shot, the other four return to camp but Buckley is determined to be free. He wanders on, choosing the hostile Australian wilderness over his convict life.

Buckley manages to survive in the alien landscape for an entire year, living alone, and with only shellfish and berries to sustain him. With his health deteriorating and spirit almost broken, he takes a spear from an aboriginal gravesite to use as a crutch, without knowing how fateful this act will be.



Buckley found starving and near death by the Wathaurong believe him to be 'Murrangurk' returned from the dead.

Two Wathaurong women discover the strange white man on the brink of death. They believe he's the owner of the spear, Murrangurk, returned from the dead, and take him back to their camp. Wathaurong cultural advisor, David Tournier provides additional insight and explains that the local clans people believe their ancestors travel in the spirit world as white ghosts.

Back at the camp, Buckley is welcomed into their tribe and becomes part of Murrangurk's remaining family. Despite this initial hospitality, it is clear that if Buckley is going to survive in this new culture he will have to adapt quickly. He is

expected to respect and obey the same laws, mythologies and cultural customs as everybody else.

Over the years, Buckley learns the language and is witness to sacred rituals and fierce inter-tribal battles. He learns of the mythical creature, the Bunyip and of Bunjil, the ancestor spirit who created the Kulin Land.

Buckley assumes a special place in Wathaurong society, frequently acting as a mediator between warring clans. He suffers great family tragedy as well as the pleasure and pain of 'married' life with at least two young women. Buckley grows into middle age as a Wathaurong. His old life is nothing but a distant memory – until 1835.



Buckley emerges from the bush, making contact with the soldiers after spending 30 years living as a Wathaurong man.

Setting up camp on the shore of the bay are three soldiers from the advance party of Melbourne's founder, John Batman. They are looking for a suitable place for a new colony. Buckley is initially wary of the strangers and fears he will be imprisoned again. Cautiously he makes himself known and eventually reveals his true identity to them.

As an escaped British convict who has lived much of his life as a Wathaurong man, Buckley is in a unique position; he knows both sides of the frontier and this knowledge secures his freedom and becomes his curse.

Buckley must now face the greatest dilemma of his life - the local tribesmen are hostile and reveal their plans to kill the settlers and steal their supplies. He is torn, wanting to warn the settlers without appearing like a traitor to his adopted people. Buckley must decide – is he English or Wathaurong?

With great skill, Buckley convinces the natives to delay their attack and mediates between the two groups. Now living with the whites, Buckley is amazed at the furious rate which Melbourne is being settled. Ships arrive almost daily with people and stock, and everyone is grabbing all they can, as fast as possible.

Buckley continues to mediate but he's viewed with suspicion by the influential white settlers and is losing the trust and respect of the natives he has abandoned. He senses that the fate of the Aborigines is sealed and retires to Tasmania before having to witness the full effects of white settlement on his Wathaurong friends.

Murder, disease, and displacement from their hunting grounds quickly follow and by 1861 only a handful of Wathaurong people remain.

Buckley's divided loyalty is never fully resolved but his truly extraordinary story provides a fascinating insight into this critical period in Australia's history.

PRODUCERS STATEMENT

Why we went to hell and back to make this film

Stephen Amezdroz - Producer

I grew up in the area that William Buckley had wandered over, throughout my childhood I was always being told stories about him. His life seemed to me to be lived almost horizontally rather than vertically, he had a breadth of experience you just couldn't replicate today. I thought it was an amazing story and the idea of making a film about his life is something I had been thinking about for many years.



Buckley, shortly after being discovered by the Wathaurong.

The timing was also right for this story to be told. The federal history initiative through Film Australia and now through Screen Australia has prompted a far greater level of our history being told on television than ever before and led to a greater interest in our history. Australians now want to know more about their past and history stories have started to find an audience.

And we've found new ways of telling our stories. It used to be that dramatizing was taboo. If you didn't have photos and letters you needed a reporter talking you through the story. Film making techniques have moved on and there is a greater license for documentary makers to be more innovative and to use dramatization in a range of ways.

I hope this film will get repeated viewings that it will go into schools and libraries. It gives the story a form of documentation that people today can access and gives more people an opportunity to learn William Buckley's remarkable story. I hope this film partially opens the door on aboriginal life pre settlement. Here's a culture that existed for 10 - 20,000 years prior to white settlement, a sustainable way of life that was devastated within a decade.

Tony Wright - Producer

I first heard about the story from Stephen. I just found it such an amazing story. That someone could survive in the way that Buckley survived. An amazing life of different chapters arcing as it does from Cheshire bricklayer to soldier fighting in the army against Napoleon to convict on the other



Buckley attempts to mediate between the white settlers and indigenous tribes.

side of the world and becoming an aboriginal tribesman and back to his own world after 32 years. Mind boggling. That's a life lived! I don't know of any other first hand accounts of someone who had contact and survived with an indigenous group before colonization. It's one of our best stories and all taking place before Victorian history starts, an extraordinary story of survival of a castaway.

The other fascinating thing is it's the only story of a white fella having to assimilate into black culture. He's also this continent's first illegal immigrant! Or maybe we all are.

It was an extraordinary experience bringing the mob down from Ramingining and a real pleasure working. They did a fantastic job in VERY cold conditions that they were not at all accustomed to.

The art department did a brilliant job of recreating artifacts from the time. When the Wathaurong people came down and saw the humpies they almost wept. I don't think they realized efforts we intended to put into recreating their heritage.

We were keen to get as much Wathaurong language as possible. It's amazing to realize that, according to David Tournier the Cultural Heritage Education Officer, it's been more than 100 years since it has actually been spoken.

We feel very lucky that we were able to make this film. Film Australia's history scheme through the ABC has generated an extraordinary raft of history projects. That scheme gives us the opportunity to tell these amazing stories that are here for us to tell, and the story of William Buckley would have to be one of the most the most amazing. I would hope that having put this story out, that it might open the road to a feature, our own *Dancing with Wolves*.



William Buckley [Jean-Marc Russ]
moments before making contact with white settlers

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

When I was first told about William Buckley I was totally entranced – why hadn't this amazing story of survival been brought to the screen before now? Buckley's story as told to John Morgan is the only pre white settlement account of Aboriginal life in Australia – full of controversial rituals like cannibalism and infanticide as well as the numerous triggers for battle, the 'payback' system and other ancient cultural traditions. It captured both the beauty and brutality of an ancient world.

I was excited at the challenge of bringing Buckley's story to life, and grateful for the opportunity to write the script – a process that over months showed us the way to make the film. For budgetary reasons a major stylistic decision was made to film scenes of Buckley telling Morgan his story near the end of his life. This not only functioned as a mode to move through the story, but provided Morgan as an interrogator to Buckley's experiences. An extra perspective was gained as Buckley 'remembered' his 32 years of Aboriginal life.

We were delighted to have historian Michael Cathcart to present and narrate the film and Wathaurong cultural advisor, David Tournier to provide us with cultural context.

But of course the bulk of the film is reenactment – and getting the cast and locations right was a huge task. After exhaustive auditions, Jean Marc Russ was cast as William Buckley - being close to Buckley's height of six and a half feet, he looked so 'right' as he towered over all he came in contact with, just as Buckley would have done 200 years ago.



An older William Buckley (Jean Marc Russ) with director Malcolm McDonald [right]

The inimitable Chris Haywood was cast as Morgan who would provide the 'niggle' that was needed to unsettle the ageing Buckley.

It was essential that our Aboriginal cast looked as they would have before the white man arrived. Our main mob came from Ramingining in Arnhem Land; many of them had no previous film experience, and when they arrived in Geelong in near zero temperatures, they were unsurprisingly not a very happy bunch!

Happily, both the cast and the weather soon warmed up. After the men had rehearsed a few fighting scenes with their weapons, there was no stopping them – the warrior gene kicked in big time!

It was also important to get locations that looked just as they would have 200 years ago and to use areas where William Buckley would have visited. I was pleased with our final tribal camp locations, which were further enhanced by the art department's determination to use local materials for building the encampments of humpies – giving each setting a fantastic, varied and authentic look.

Our equally dedicated costume and make-up teams worked virtually non-stop to help deliver the film on time and within budget.

I was also grateful for the efforts of David Tournier who helped us realise one of our goals - to have dialogue in Wathaurong, a language that may not have been spoken for 150 years!

One of the greatest pleasures for me was the commitment and attitude of every member of the crew. So many of them told me they felt this shoot was a once in a career opportunity and they were going to do whatever it took to make the most of the experience.

One day we filmed a scene where Buckley and many of the tribe were sitting around the campfire eating kangaroo and chatting in their own language. I just couldn't call



Buckley with his Wathaurong 'family'.

“cut”, it was so wonderful to be a part of it; afterwards many of the crew said they felt transported back 200 years. When this sentiment was shared with the Aboriginal actors they were touched by our ‘joining the moment’ and it felt from then on we really were making the film *together* – and the combined will of white and black was to achieve something very special, bringing the past to life through the language, acting, make up and art departments.

The experience of making this film is one that I will cherish forever. On a project like this with a limited budget the film gods need to smile upon you and it felt like all the right people gathered at the right place at the right time. I will always treasure the memories of my first film with an Aboriginal cast – and that really tall, weird white fella!

Malcolm McDonald
Writer/Director

MICHAEL CATHCART – PRESENTER STATEMENT

I've been enjoying holidays on the coast of Victoria at Queenscliff and at Aireys Inlet since I was a kid. These two seaside communities lie at either end of the country where the convict William Buckley lived for thirty years with the Wathaurong people. I became interested in him in the summer of 1996, when I read the book in which a colonial journalist named John Morgan retells Buckley's story.

The book was profoundly disappointing. It seemed to me that Morgan had transformed the illiterate convict's account into *literature* by giving Buckley a fancy, bookish way of speaking. Morgan was trying to reproduce the impact of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* rather than be faithful to Buckley's own voice. He had destroyed the very evidence he purported to collect.

So, when I was approached to be the on-screen historian in *The Reincarnations of William Buckley*, I was cautious.

Could we really recover Buckley's own story? The novelist Craig Robertson (*Buckley's Hope*) and the poet Barry Hill (*Ghosting William Buckley*) had certainly *imagined* poignant voices for Buckley. But could we make a history documentary that claimed something like authenticity?

And, more importantly, how could we present the Wathaurong? Did we know anything about their culture? Surely we couldn't use Morgan's book – with its talk of cannibalism and Aboriginal 'savagery' – as a source.

On the other hand, I had good reason to consider the project carefully. December Films has a record of producing inventive history documentaries, as does the writer-director Malcolm McDonald. The producer Tony Wright assured me that descendants of the Wathaurong supported the project. Indeed, McDonald's evolving script included space for explanations of Wathaurong culture by their spokesman, a koori named David Tournier.

I soon learned that Morgan was not our only source. The historical record also contains short verbatim interviews with Buckley conducted by other colonial gentlemen. Though brief, these reports confirm what we all suspect: that Buckley had found companionship and a sense of belonging among the Wathaurong. Indeed, the missionary George Langhorne reported that Buckley seemed 'discontented and dissatisfied' once he had rejoined European society. 'I believe it would have been a great relief to him,' Langhorne wrote, 'if the settlement had been abandoned and he left alone with his sable friends.' I also discovered that a university colleague of mine, the Aboriginal writer Dr Tony Birch, had thought deeply about William Buckley. He saw him as Australia's first boat person – a refugee from an oppressive regime who had been given sanctuary and recognition by these First Australians. The story was starting to seem rich – and achievable.

What's more, when I returned to Morgan's book I saw that it was a more revealing document than I had realised back in 1996. Morgan's take on the story was clear. He believed that Buckley had escaped the horrors of the convict system only to endure thirty years in hell – living among violent and savage cannibals. But Morgan was also a journalist of some integrity. Over several interviews, he accumulated a mass of detail from Buckley, who was by all accounts a reluctant speaker. This detail is so accurate that we can pinpoint the various creeks and valleys where Buckley lived. Once we allow for Morgan's agenda, we really can hear Buckley's voice: his horror at all forms of violence, his capacity to endure long periods of solitude, his resilience in the face of grief, and the power of the affections he shared with his own Aboriginal family.



William Buckley (Jean Marc Russ) with the journalist John Morgan (Chris Haywood) [standing]

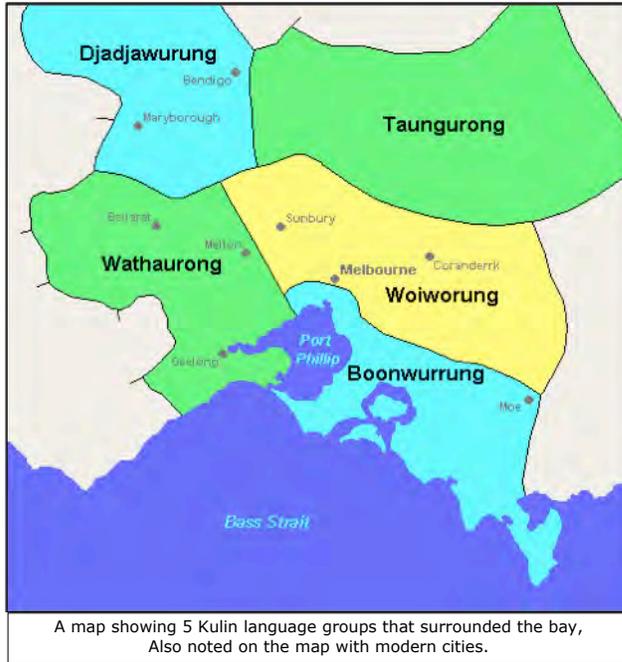
So it was with great delight that I collaborated with McDonald to develop the argument of this wonderful film. It was a further delight to meet on location with the Wathaurong representatives and with the indigenous performers from Northern Australia. Their candour, both in their commentaries and their performances, gave me – and viewers of this film – a powerful insight into the robust culture of the Wathaurong who had rescued William Buckley – and with whom he had made his extraordinary life.

We are, at last, out-growing the banal idea that history is the story of 'heroes'. For me, this is a rich story about love, violence, mortality and loyalty. It allows us to imagine the final thirty years of the Wathaurong people before they experienced the trauma of dispossession – and it takes us into the life of a tough and canny Englishman who understood the joys and the harshness of life on both sides of the frontier.

Dr Michael Cathcart
The Australian Centre
University of Melbourne.

THE WATHAURONG – Background Information

Wathaurong / Gunditjimara (Wada Wurrung Traditional Owners)



The Wathaurong people are the Indigenous tribe to whom belong the greater Kulin nation of Port Phillip and Western Port Bays. The Wathaurong communities consisted of 25 distinct clans who had their own territories, spoke related languages and shared similar cultural beliefs and practices. The Wathaurong's extensive traditional region would today encompass a wide area stretching from the Werribee River, Geelong, the Ballarine Peninsula, Aireys Inlet, Colac and extending to the north towards Ballarat. They inhabited the area for at least 35,000 years prior to European occupation in 1835.

There have been over 140 archaeological sites discovered in the region, indicating a significant level of activity of the Wathaurong people. Studies of these sites, habitation methods, tools, plant utilisation and midden sites reveals a very sophisticated society with a rich diet derived from careful agriculture and resource collection. The people built houses made of tree bark, leaves and branches. They conscientiously managed their land by cultivating root vegetables and promoting grasslands by using controlled winter fire to promote the best conditions for plants and game while eliminating the risk of wildfire in summer.

The various Wathaurong clans had a system of managing their land and resources. Sometimes resources were restricted depending on the season or health of the resource in question. For example; if a river or creek had been fished regularly throughout the fishing season and fish supplies were down, fishing was limited or stopped entirely by the clan who owned that resource until fish were given a chance to recover. During this time other resources were utilised for food. This ensured the sustained use of the resources available to them. As with most other Kulin territories, penalties such as spearings were enforced upon trespassers. Today, traditional clan locations, language groups and borders are no longer in use and descendants of Wathaurong people live within modern day society, although still preserving much of their culture.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights (ICIP)

The Producer and the Investors acknowledge the existence of the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous participants in the Film. With the assistance and guidance of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Limited the Producer has used his best endeavors to ensure that such Rights have been upheld and respected in the production of the Film.

STORY BACKGROUND INFO

The Extraordinary Tale of William Buckley is a true life castaway's story of survival. It is a tale of one man's extraordinary life at a critical point in Australian history.

What an extraordinary story. The bricklayer from Macclesfield, fighting in a great European war, then shipped as a criminal to the other side of the world, who escapes to live for decades as part of another civilisation and then returns to become the mediator in the clash of his old and new civilisation in the beginnings of a new British colony.

William Buckley was born in Macclesfield, Cheshire, the son of a farmer at Langton. By trade a bricklayer, he had learnt to read by the age of fifteen and served as a soldier, first in the Cheshire Militia and then in the 4th or King's Own Regiment of Foot in Holland. Buckley's survival against the odds, both among his own countrymen and the Aborigines, is astounding. Because of his height, he fought as 'pivot man' in the King's Own Regiment of Foot against Napoleon in the Netherlands, where he was held in high esteem and was wounded in action.

His military career was blighted, however, when, on 2 August, 1802, he was convicted at Sussex Assizes of knowingly having received a bolt of stolen cloth. He was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years, and in April 1803 was shipped aboard the *Calcutta*, which, along with the supply ship *Ocean*, comprised Victoria's 'first fleet'. The vessels were bound for Port Phillip Bay, discovered just the year before by Lieutenant Murray of the *Lady Nelson*. The 300 convicts were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins of the Royal Marines, a veteran in the field of convict transportation, having served as Judge Advocate with the First Fleet.

Two of the most glorious places on the peninsula became Buckley's principal haunts. One he described as being 'surrounded by the sea and the Barwon River'. It is today known as Barwon Heads, one of Victoria's most popular holiday destinations. The other, Buckley's beloved Karaaf is a small estuary located just a few kilometres to the west, is now the site of the hamlet of Breamlea, on Thompson's (or Bream) Creek. There, Buckley built a substantial hut and a fish trap for bream, and it was his skill in trapping bream and feeding his adopted tribe that led to him being given a wife.



A shelter made of sticks and tree bark where William Buckley would have spent many years living on the peninsula now known as Barwon Heads.

While Karaaf has changed relatively little since Buckley's time, other aspects of the region that Buckley describes are now very different. Elephant seals and sea lions abounded on the coast between Indented Head and Torquay, and eels were present in such numbers that they could feed a tribe for months. Water birds dotted the lakes and rivers in almost unbelievable profusion, and included species such as the brolga and magpie geese that today are found only far to the north.

Their vast breeding aggregations on the Western District lakes, where the birds returned each year, provided living larders for the tribes for many months. The nearby basalt plains were also rich in game, including, kangaroo, wallaby, koala, wombat and the now vanished plains turkey.

In one way, Buckley's story of life in this abundant region is deceptively simple. It tells of his adoption by, and life among, the Wathaurong people. They called him Murrangurk, believing that he was a man who had been recently killed and whose spear Buckley had taken from the grave.

The belief that whites were Aborigines come back from the dead appears to have been widespread during the early contact period in Australia. His experience thereafter was unique, for no other European lived among Aborigines in a pre-contact situation for so long and none gained the status in Aboriginal society, that Buckley eventually enjoyed. His narrative reveals Aboriginal life from a perspective of extended privilege and his observations of Aboriginal society before it was so greatly disturbed by the European invasion, provide a precious insight into an ancient and vanished world.



Indigenous cast in traditional Wathaurong dress

Buckley was not a man like Sir Joseph Banks or Watkin Tench, who revealed the newly discovered Australia through the lens of Enlightenment thinking. His was an altogether simpler soul. The reader may be horrified to find in Buckley's narrative cannibal practices including the eating of human flesh of enemies after a fight, and of loved ones in certain circumstances, as well as the practice of infanticide.

Buckley believed in the Bunyip - this aspect of his narrative is something that makes him special, for in a very deep sense he entered into Aboriginal life and understood it as did no other outsider, revealing it to us in that light.

Buckley's life with the Aborigines is the longest recorded period of time a white person has lived with an indigenous group. His story has triggered imaginings from writers, poets and artists, yet remains largely unknown to a wider audience. William Buckley is buried in Hobart under a school playground metres from the marked grave of David Collins who first brought him to Australian shores.

BIOGRAPHIES

MALCOLM McDONALD – Director & Writer



Writer and director Malcolm McDonald has a passion for telling stories about new people and new places, something that is reflected in his work.

His 25 year career has combined drama and documentary making programs like *Tribal Life*, *Six Degrees*, *Family Footsteps* and *The Colony* (the six hour living history series for SBS TV). McDonald wrote and directed *Gumshoe*, a film about private detectives, and *Watch the Watch* about hypnotism for ABC TV. He also directed second unit on the blockbuster feature *Master and Commander – The Far Side of the World*. Prior to making

The Extraordinary Tale of William Buckley McDonald directed *Monash the Forgotten Anzac* and *Mawson – Life and Death in Antarctica* – both screened on ABC TV and produced for Screen Australia’s Making History initiative. McDonald has found creating the drama elements in these three films a very rewarding experience.

TONY WRIGHT - Producer



Tony Wright is an award winning and highly experienced producer in documentary, drama and children’s television production. He has worked in all these areas with the commercial networks, the ABC and SBS in Australia as well as the BBC and Nickelodeon in the UK and other European broadcasters. His credits include: *Plasmo* (international co-pro), 52 episode children’s series *Li'l Horrors* (internationally financed), *Grey Voyagers* (international co-production) and *Revealing Gallipoli* (international co-pro). Tony is also the Managing Director of December Films. Most recent credits include producer of the

recent Australia/Canada Treaty co-production *Captain Cook: Obsession* and *Discovery* and blue chip science special *Catching Cancer*.

STEPHEN AMEZDROZ - Producer



Stephen joined December Films in 2003, after working for over 10 years with Beyond International. His background in high-end documentary series and adult drama makes him a perfect addition to the December team. His long experience and understanding of the international marketplace make him key to the project-financing role within the company.

MICHAEL CATHCART – Presenter / Historian



Dr Michael Cathcart is a writer and broadcaster. As a historian, he is best known for his acclaimed abridgment of Manning Clark's six-volume classic, *A History of Australia* (1993). He and Kate Darian-Smith produced the wide-ranging anthology, *Stirring Australian Speeches* (2004). Michael is also the author of *Defending the National Tuckshop* (1988), a study of conservative responses to the Great Depression notably the paramilitary movement, the White Army.

He was also a regular radio broadcaster on ABC radio. Recently in 2009, he presented the two-part TV documentary *Rogue Nation* that dramatised conflicts in colonial Sydney including the Rum Rebellion.

DAVID TOURNIER – Cultural Heritage Education Officer

Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative



David and the Wathaurong Aboriginal cooperative contributed greatly to the production of 'The Extraordinary Tale of William Buckley'. They advised on the accuracy of the customs and cultures of the time and assisted the cast with the pronunciation of the traditional language used in the program.

DALE CORNELIUS – Composer

Dale has been writing music for feature films, television series, documentaries for the last 17 years. He has won the Australian Guild of Screen Composers award for 'Best Music' twice and been nominated several times.

TONY STEVENS A.S.E. – Editor

Known as one of Australia's most experienced editors, his credits include the documentaries *Hunt Angels (AFI Best Documentary)*, *The Hit Game*, *Revealing Gallipoli*, *Vietnam Nurses (AFI BEST EDITING Nominee)*, *Two Men and a Baby* and *Inheritance*. TV Dramas include *My Worst Best Friends*, *L'il Horrors*, and the feature film *Road To Nhill*.

MARTIN McGRATH A.S.C. – Director of Photography

Martin McGrath an award winning and well-known Australian Director of Photography, Martin McGrath ACS whose credits include a vast number of Australian feature films and television productions including the much-loved *Muriel's Wedding*, and the highly successful television drama, *BlackJack*.

KEY CAST & CREW LIST

Key Cast

Presenter	Michael Cathcart
Wathaurong Cultural commentator	David Tournier
William Buckley	Jean-Marc Russ
John Morgan	Chris Haywood
Buckley Family Brother	Angus Pilakui
Buckley Family Woman	Sifora Durrurrnga
Buckley Family Cousin	Jamie Gulpilil
Buckley Family Girl	Alana O’Ryan
Wathaurong Woman # 1	Francis Daingangan
Wathaurong Woman # 2	Sylvia Gurrarpa
Wathaurong Man # 1	Mark Malibirr
Wathaurong Man # 2	Graham Gunurilee
Elder Man	Billy Black
Elder Woman	Margie Hayes

Key Crew

Writer / Director	Malcolm McDonald
Producers	Tony Wright Stephen Amezdroz
Associate Producers	Richard East Fiona East Glenn Shea
Director of Photography	Martin McGrath a.s.c.
Narrator / Presenter	Michael Cathcart
Editor	Tony Stevens a.s.e
Sound Designer	Tristan Meredith
Composer	Dale Cornelius

CONTACT DETAILS

Publicist

Miranda Brown Publicity

T: + 61 (0)3 9419 0931

F: + 61 (0)3 9417 4475

M: +61 (0) 411 568 781

@: miranda@mbpublicity.com.au

W: www.mbpublicity.com.au

1st Floor, 110 Argyle Street
Fitzroy, Victoria
Australia

Production Company

December Films

T: + 61 3 9699 8911

F: + 61 3 9699 8611

@: office@decemberfilms.com.au

W: www.decemberfilms.com.au

Level 1/462 City Road
South Melbourne
Victoria 3205
Australia

Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative Ltd

Trevor Abrahams (Cultural Heritage Officer)

T: + 61 3 5277 0044

F: + 61 3 5278 4123

@: trevora@gsat.edu.au

W: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~gcforum/WContactUs.htm>

LOT 62 MORGAN STREET,
NORTH GEELONG 3215
Australia