

**A ground-breaking 13 x 24 minute
factual entertainment series for ABC3**

MY:24

the day that changed their life forever

**Twenty-six young people from around Australia tell their story
about the day that changed their lives forever and how the
events of 24 hours can fundamentally change attitudes and
aspirations.**

Developed and produced in association with the
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Developed with the assistance of and distributed by the
Australian Children's Television Foundation

Produced by Penny Robins for
Essential Media and Entertainment

PRESS KIT

The highly aspirational stories in MY:24 are told by 11-21 year olds. They are most suited to 10-14 year olds but have broad appeal as a window into a generation – and into Australian society generally.

International distributor: Australian Children's Television Foundation

Australian broadcaster: ABC3

Language: English

Nationality: Australia

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Financed with the assistance of
The Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation
Coronella and Dennoch Funds Of The Australian Communities Foundations
Mantana Foundation For Young People
Documentary Australia Foundation

MY:24 – Key points and context

- **MY:24 is a 13 x 24-minute factual entertainment series.**
- It features 26 young people from around Australia telling their story about the day that changed their life forever and about how the events of 24 hours can fundamentally change attitudes and aspirations.
- **The highly aspirational stories most suit viewers aged 10-14 years, but the breadth of the content, the unfiltered style and the high production values give it broad appeal.**
- In the Australian and international context the series is ground-breaking and unique. Because it is documentary in form it boldly veers away from traditional children's television, namely fictional animation and drama. Because it features participants speaking in such a direct and unguided way it represents a fresh approach to children's factual entertainment.
- **The Producers intend to sell the format rights to MY:24 to other territories so viewers across the world can also get a fly-on-the-wall look at their generation and their society through the eyes of young people.**

MY:24 – Series overview

MY:24 is a factual entertainment format where twenty-six young people chronicle the impact of a life-changing experience within a 24 hour period – expressed in their own words and using their own images.

In an upbeat, visual feast of social-media-inspired storytelling, **MY:24** is a factual series chronicling the life-changing events from just one day in their lives that has shaped a diverse and fascinating collection of young Australians. In each episode, two individual stories are interwoven, with both participants taking us on a personal journey to relive their ‘MY:24’ event and the transformational impact it’s had on their lives.

What sets this true-life format apart is that in each episode the young person is the driver in the telling of their own story – the series is built not only on their own words, it is constructed with the contribution of their own content created specifically for the series. With this emphasis on individual perspective, **MY:24** is a factual entertainment series where social history meets autobiography for kids.

Twenty-six young people, aged between 11 to 21 years from around Australia, tell their own story about the one day that changed their lives forever and how the events of 24 hours can fundamentally change attitudes and aspirations.

Whether it is the experience of the individual impact of major national disasters, such as the Victorian bushfires in the case of aspiring tennis professional Romy and the Queensland floods in the case of schoolgirl Sarai – while Sarai now has more links to her community and stronger relationships than she had in the past, Romy has simply become a far more resilient person - all the young people featured in *MY:24* in some way show how people don’t have to be defined by tragedy.

Others chronicle their turning point through chronic health problems or physical differences that are seen as disabilities. Coen had a double lung transplant at 15 years of age. Comedian Adam Hills encouraged Madeleine to think she could have a career in the same arena – especially as he too is missing a limb. Other stories turn around the experience of living with family members with physical issues.

The young people selected and the stories they tell reflect the broad mix of contemporary Australian life. Rida had to reluctantly cut ties with her Pakistani family in order to embrace the opportunity of becoming an independent member of Australian contemporary society. But she’s determined to rebuild those ties. Uncle and nephew Fabrice and G-Storm have channelled the terror of growing up in refugee camps and witnessing terrible violence into music via their hip-hop duo act FLYBZ.

The participants are the youngest of Generation Z so parts of their lives had already been documented by friends and family before their life-changing 24 hours hit. The footage of Byron Bay “shark girl” Madison tethered to the deck of a boat when she was a toddler, for example, beautifully illustrates how she grew up to regard the ocean as her second home.

Because they have never known life without the Internet, are technologically focussed and social media is a huge part of their lives, these young people are comfortable and able to tell their own stories frankly and intimately.

Viewers will feel the pain and loneliness that used to rule the lives of Dave, during the time that he struggled with depression; Justin, when he was trying to come to grips with his sexuality; and Faith, who had difficulty making friends because her dad's work took the whole family from place to place. Truant-turned-football star Tyrone, and Lyndsey, who dreams of going into acting, don't pull any punches about being the bad apples in the barrel during earlier times.

But like Tyrone and Lyndsey, the life-changing 24 hours of the participants has lead them to a better place and a more positive outlook. Even if it followed or preceded a stretch of darkness that almost overwhelmed them.

MY:24 could well become an expression signifying not just change but positive change.

MY:24 – Individual episode synopses /character biographies

Media note: these synopses double as the biographies of the on-screen participants.

1. Featuring Dave and Crystal

Both Dave and Crystal's MY:24s had a strong physical component, albeit in very different ways.

Dave

Dave suffered depression until, aged 15, he went to a Sydney gym for the first time and met Greg. After that first workout he was hooked: the gym was his new anti-depressant and Greg became his trainer and mentor. Eight months later Dave was still on anti-depressants but believed the gym and Greg were more effective in enabling him to adopt a healthy mental and physical outlook and manage his anxiety and depression.

The support of his family has also been hugely important in managing his disorder: his mum and dad often work out at the gym alongside him. His mum also plays a crucial part in an arrangement that allows him to forego school when a panic attack is approaching and head for the gym instead. But he catches up on his schoolwork later of course.

As a result of sending the YMCA his story as part of a competition, Dave won a free year-long membership for his entire household and became part of the YMCA family. He has given presentations on behalf of the organisation and works part-time for the local YMCA. He has also talked publicly at his own school about how to identify depression and help friends with mental health issues.

Dave is passionate about spreading his message and aims to develop a career as a motivational speaker or within the mental health sector, perhaps within the public sector or as a lobbyist.

Dave says he feels happy and loved, and has a strong sense of belonging; sensations he never dreamed possible for himself. Months now pass without the dull fog of depression or panic attacks.

Crystal

Crystal never imagined that a fun spare-time activity with her best friend would eventually become her life's focus even though her circus classes had got into her system by the time she was 12 years of age.

Her MY:24, the day she made the mental switch that the circus was her passion, she decided to get serious and trekked to a hardware store on a mission to make a stack of hula-hoops. Since then she's been on a steady, glittering trajectory to achieve her dream of one day performing around the world professionally. This has transformed her from an unconfident and hesitant schoolgirl amateur to a rising circus superstar.

Crystal has been with Australia's national youth circus, the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, for two years. She still gets terribly homesick for Broome and, given that her hometown is in the tropics, she greatly dislikes how cold it is in Albury, where the school and performance group is based. Being a circus performer is a very tough life physically – especially due to the pain associated with working with a trapeze. She hasn't settled in completely but is trying to make the most of this wonderful opportunity.

The future is very exciting for Crystal. Once she graduates her dream is to travel the world as part of an international troupe such as Cirque du Soleil.

2. Featuring Coen and Romy

Both Coen and Romy's *MY:24s* involved extreme life threatening events, one internal and one external, and both have been indelibly changed as a result.

Coen

Coen from Queensland's Sunshine Coast was born with cystic fibrosis and later developed diabetes. His *MY:24* was a double lung transplant at the age of 15. In the six months before, he only had 20% lung capacity and would spend eight hours of every day for a stretch of two weeks taking medication and having treatment.

Simple things were such a struggle before the operation but now he's able to breathe deeply, run around and wrestle with his little brother. He can also laugh: his version of a laugh used to be a hiss because of the pain it caused.

Coen can now live life to the full like a normal teenager and he and his family have recently been travelling the Whitsundays by boat. He is immensely enjoying snorkelling, jet-skiing and swimming. He is also enjoying the experience of eating like he never has before, in part because he no longer takes the medications that negatively affected his sense of taste.

In early 2014, Coen plans to jet ski the Murray River for a second time during DonateLife Week to raise awareness and encourage potential organ/tissue donors to sign up. He expects it to take seven days, rather less than the seven weeks it took before his transplant.

At a very early age, Coen learned the importance of making every moment count. He has big plans for his future and wants to be a TV presenter, preferably on a wildlife, environment or adventure show.

Romy

Before her *MY:24*, Romy was a carefree 13-year-old, living with her family and a lot of dogs and kangaroos on a four-hectare property. She loved her big bedroom and riding her bike around the property and she had a passion for playing tennis. Then the Black Saturday bushfires hit.

Romy had to dig deep to find strength she didn't know she had after her family's home and all their possessions and personal treasures were destroyed. She had to will herself to find the drive that would enable her to recover and refocus rather than succumbing to despair.

She now lives in suburban outer Melbourne, a big change from her rural lifestyle, and once the renovations are finished she will have her own room again. She still struggles with aspects of what happened and constantly checks weather reports, especially in the summer, but she has a new appreciation for life and family and for making the most of the here and now. And she loves her new ukulele.

Finding solace in tennis, Romy has also transformed from laid-back country girl to a fiercely driven athlete. She trains every night of the week, is ranked 200th in Australia and plays Grade 1 at Kooyong. Romy dreams of heading to tennis college in the US and playing in the International arena. Her coach is Michael Baroch, who used to coach Maria Sharapova.

3. Featuring Jake and Rida

Jake and Rida's *MY:24s* set in motion a chain of events for each of them that would bring both freedom and belonging, but also familial friction and challenges.

Jake

Jake is the current open male world champion in rope skipping and holds the world record as the fastest skipper as at 2013.

Jake had been training for years as an elite swimmer when he happened upon the sport of competitive skipping at a school fete. It offered him a whole new world of passion and possibilities but the reaction of his family and peers caused considerable friction and heartache: he was bullied at school for joining the skipping group and did so behind his disapproving dad's back.

Jake is now studying primary education at university, a career direction inspired by his skipping coach Carolyn. He coaches a junior team of skippers and works for the Heart Foundation: visiting schools, giving skipping demonstrations and promoting the organisation's "Jump Rope for Heart" physical activity and fundraising program.

In future Jake wants to continue to give back through coaching, better his record at the next world titles, be an advocate for the acceptance of students who go against the norm, and give those students the skills to build their confidence.

Jake, 20, lives with his family on Queensland's Gold Coast and is the middle son of three boys.

Rida

At the age of 16, Rida chose to be part of mainstream contemporary Australia rather than adhere to her traditional Pakistani upbringing. Her *MY:24* was taking the frightening first step of standing up for herself by refusing to leave her new home in Australia and her educational aspirations here for a life she felt would be limiting – a life she saw would involve an enforced return to Pakistan, an end to her formal education and the possibility of an arranged marriage. This necessitated breaking away from her family and seeking the support of friends and professionals in her local community to help her finish her schooling.

Now 18, Rida is a productive and free-spirited young woman who has retained her faith and cultural identity. After completing her Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) with sponsorship from her employer, the Australian Taxation Office, she was accepted into University, and now lives independently. She is heavily involved in community radio and is soon to launch a new program titled Colourful Australia, has won several short story competitions and is working on her first novel, and has been invited back to Pakistan to speak to the media about women and choice.

Rida is determined to continue to contribute to society's cultural understanding and advocate for greater freedoms. She dreams of becoming a philanthropist who helps rebuild communities in poorer nations and of studying psychology in order to be a better counsellor.

Importantly for her, she is repairing the relationship she has with her family. They can see she's making the most of the opportunities open to her and all admit to loving one another very much.

6. Featuring Mikey and Faith

Mikey and Faith's *MY:24s* helped them get the stability in their lives that they both craved.

Mikey

Mikey grew up with parents who both suffered from severe mental illnesses and at times they were unwell his home life was extremely difficult. He would often go hungry and missed a lot of school, and when he did go to school he had no school bag or books. The one thing he always enjoyed though, was learning new tricks at the skate park.

Mikey's *MY:24* was meeting an aunt that he never knew he had and realizing that she was going to take him under her wing and love him, care for him and support him. At that time he wasn't enrolled in a high school but Aunty Debbie made sure he got a good education.

She also encouraged and supported his passion for skating and it paid off when he won first the state titles, then the national titles. In 24 hours he went from "normal skater kid" to Australian skating champion.

He greatly appreciates the help he got to turn his life around and intends to spoil his aunt and uncle rotten if he ever becomes wealthy from his professional skateboarding. Perhaps the fact that he is school captain at a Gold Coast school indicates just how well he is also performing within the education system.

Faith

Faith was born in the Philippines but she has also lived in the Middle East and Australia moving countries a lot when she was younger due to the demands of her father's work. She currently lives with her parents in Brisbane.

The friendships that Faith made suffered because of her nomadic life and she found it increasingly difficult to connect with people. “Shy and awkward” is how she has described herself. Her escape was always music and after teaching herself to play the guitar and then to compose music on her tablet via YouTube tutorials, she started to write songs.

Faith’s music teacher encouraged her to enter one of these songs, Liar, into the triple J unearthed initiative, aimed at discovering and sharing the best new Australian music. Her *MY:24* was the day she was told she was one of six finalists. The song was subsequently broadcast to thousands of people across Australia.

This recognition from strangers gave her the confidence to pursue music more seriously but she has a slow and steady attitude. Besides honing her craft and composing tracks for an EP, she is also focusing on her schooling – and developing friendships, including with musicians. She has also reconciled with the girls who prompted her to write the song that had such a big impact on her life.

5. Featuring Andy and Lyndsey

Andy and Lyndsey’s *MY:24*s made each of them realise just how they could take control of their lives and help them achieve their dreams.

Andy

Andy’s *MY:24* was debuting at his fashion collection at Melbourne Spring Fashion Week in 2012. At 15 years of age he was the youngest designer to have a solo show – and was heralded as Australia’s youngest fashion designer.

Despite still being a student at Kew High School, he runs his own fashion business – designing four collections a year – and studies fashion part-time at Kangan Institute. His manufacturing partners in Springvale are currently working on 50 different pieces.

Andy also sells movie tickets and popcorn part-time at Hoyts Cinemas in order to fund his passion but still finds time to hang out with his friends and exercise his desires as a self confessed “shopaholic”.

Due to his hard work the future looks incredibly bright for this young entrepreneur, especially as three Melbourne boutiques now include Andy’s designs in their range. Upon finishing school he plans to go into the business full-time or study at Parsons School of Fashion in New York City, showcasing his designs at New York Fashion Week.

His long-term ambition is to have his own haute couture collection in Paris within 15 years.

Lyndsey

Lyndsey was one of the naughty kids in her Sydney high school up to the point when she met her “big sister” Kathy through a mentorship program. Kathy made her see that she shouldn’t

spend her time planning and executing pranks, then helped her set some life goals and gave her the confidence to pursue those goals.

When Kathy stood by Lyndsey during a particularly tough period it was Lyndsey's *MY:24* and it created an unshakeable bond between them.

Since then Lyndsey has graduated from Bradfield Senior College and completed an audio engineering course at a music college. A self-taught guitarist, she now writes her own music and songs.

Kathy's continuing support and influence has had a wider and more far-reaching affect than Lyndsey could ever have imagined: it has given her the power and confidence to take control of all areas of her life including the sometimes difficult arena of family. She has moved out of her dad's home, and lives with her grandad now.

One of Lyndsey's dreams is to attend acting college and she is currently saving up to cover the tuition fees and other costs. She knows she has to be financially independent to achieve that goal but has developed a determination and drive that is sure to see her through.

6. Featuring Sam and Makhala

Sam and Makhala's *MY:24s* both centre around rescues – Sam rescued a drowning man and Makhala was rescued from the life threatening condition of anorexia through making a surprising new and lasting friendship.

Sam

Sam had been involved in Sydney's Bronte Surf Lifesaving Club since he was five years old but he was 17 years of age when his whole perspective on life changed as a result of saving a man caught in rough seas from drowning.

It was a very frightening experience not just for the survivor but for Sam too, and it prompted him to develop an ethos of always being in the present, making the most of every moment and getting out into the world in order to see and feel as much as he can of life.

Sam is living up to his ideals by working as a ski instructor at Perisher in Australia for some of the year, in Canada for some of the year, and by holidaying and surfing in Bali at other times.

Nevertheless, he has stayed connected with the club and still goes on patrol with his mates at Bronte when he's back home. The beach, and this one in particular, will always be Sam's home but his future will continue to shape his "living in the moment" philosophy and his desire to experience different cultures, people and places.

Makhala

As a little kid in Rockhampton, Makhala was as bubbly, bright and optimistic as she is now, but there was a time in between when she was shy, quiet and tormented, in part due to one or two difficult relationships with friends and family. Anxiety and depression lead to the onset of anorexia when she was in her early teens.

A few years later, weighing in at 36 kilograms, Makhala was hospitalised and told she wouldn't live another two weeks if she didn't start eating. Her *MY:24* occurred when she met a fragile horse named Karma that was in danger of being put down and was gripped by the need to save him. That led to her saving herself, discovering a passion for horses and being inspired to help others avoid downward spirals of the kind that nearly crushed her.

Makhala now has more friends than she's ever had in her life and enjoys an active social life. She is active, exuberant and is studying youth work and mental health in the hope that she'll be able to major in psychology at university and use her experience and knowledge for the benefit of others. She's already an active participant in the Inspire Foundation and regularly speaks to kids about depression and anxiety.

She also loves spending lots of time riding her horse – and dreams of eventually setting up an equine-assisted therapy school.

7. Featuring Justin and Stephanie

Justin and Stephanie's *MY:24*s lead to each of them standing out uncomfortably from their peers, albeit in very different ways.

Justin

Justin moved around a lot living in various countries in Asia and as a child had difficult relationships with his family. He moved to Australia at the age of 16 to board at a school in Melbourne. Life at boarding school was difficult for Justin, he found the environment oppressive and didn't know how to deal with his sexuality. Alone and isolated, Justin was often bullied and had frequent temper tantrums.

One day it all came to a head - he screamed at one of his tormentors for making fun of him and fled the room in a complete state. He suddenly realised he no longer cared what people thought of him. Finally he had found the freedom to start to become the person that he wanted to be. Thus Justin's *MY:24* changed him from repressed teen to confident young man.

Justin now works as a trainee copywriter in an ad agency after deciding not to follow through with a commerce degree. He's exuberant and optimistic, is a volunteer at ACON and campaigns for equal marriage rights.

He lives with friends in inner city Sydney and is obsessed with cooking because of the sense of belonging it gives him. He knows it will be difficult for his parents to hear the news that he is homosexual but he plans to tell them soon.

Justin thinks of his school years as a bittersweet experience: they caused him great anxiety and broke him down but it was also the place where he broke free of his lack of self-worth. He now has a circle of dependable friends, a promising career and is at peace with himself.

Stephanie

As a 15-year-old, Stephanie was a regular teenage girl at a Christian high school in Canberra, hanging out with friends and her first serious boyfriend. But then her world turned upside down when she found out she was pregnant and her relationship with her boyfriend finished.

The birth of baby Charlotte turned out to be Stephanie's *MY:24* because it led her to discover enduring love and find the strength and determination to finish her studies, and to become "the best mother and person" she can possibly be.

Stephanie is now studying full-time for a Bachelor of Primary Education at Canberra's Australian Catholic University, while living at home with a blended family of her mum, dad, slightly older sister and brother. Stephanie's brother is only seven years old and he and young Charlotte love running around the house together and getting into mischief. Stephanie has lots of friends and is in a new relationship now and she and Charlotte have the support of his family too.

She learned some tough lessons and fully understands how one decision can change your entire life for better or worse, but she is in a good place and looks ahead with optimism. She is determined to become financially independent as soon as feasible, rather than relying on the public purse, and hopes to travel overseas with Charlotte at some stage, own her own home – and get married and have more kids.

8. Featuring Fablice and G-Storm

Fablice and G-Storm are uncle and nephew and came to Australia from war torn Africa. For G-Storm meeting up with a caring relative in the camps of Tanzania was his *MY:24*, and everything has changed for Fablice since he arrived in Australia.

Fablice

Fablice is a 20-year-old Melbourne-based hip-hop artist who has performed with one of Australia's greatest music legends. His life now is a world away from his time as an orphaned 11-year-old soldier during the civil war in the Republic of Burundi in Africa.

Fablice was able to relocate to Australia only after a courageous escape and a stint in a refugee camp. His flight to and arrival in his new country has given him opportunities he never dreamed were possible. He is currently studying International Business at university while living in student accommodation.

Fablice and his nephew G-Storm (see below) write and perform together under the name FLYBZ, an African/American rap act. They have wowed crowds at venues as big as the Melbourne Cricket Crowd – during a football game – and their debut single *Child Soldier* is a collaboration with singer/songwriter Paul Kelly.

Fablice and G-Storm made a very touching return to Burundi to tour schools and inspect projects under the AidAction Australia banner. They were very touched by the trip, which inspired them to work harder at their music in order to spread a message of peace. By

achieving great things in Australia they believe they can give the people of Burundi the help they feel they owe them.

G-Storm

G-Storm is a 17-year-old Melbourne-based hip-hop artist who was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania. At the age of nine he met and fell under the spell of his Uncle Fablice (see above). Fablice was only three years older but under his influence G-Storm gave up his wild ways and aspired to be a better person.

While living in the refugee camp a dream came true for G-Storm: he and his family were granted a visa for Australia and he now attends a high school in multicultural Melbourne.

G-Storm now writes and performs with Fablice for their rap act FLYBZ and since travelling back to Burundi recently as part of his aid work, he has become further immersed in and committed to music. He wants to keep improving, creating and reaching audiences all over Australia. FLYBZ's debut single refers to cannibalism, brutal violence and loss of innocence, subjects that nephew and uncle have experienced first-hand. Their story is a powerful reminder that the human spirit has the potential to overcome the harshest of circumstances.

Apart from school and his music, G-storm enjoys playing soccer – and doesn't mind boasting about his skills on the field.

9. Featuring Lucas and Madeleine

Lucas and Madeleine's *MY:24s* lead them to put their disabilities behind them and follow their passion to perform and be creative.

Lucas

Lucas's Melbourne childhood was defined by profound learning difficulties because of his profound dyslexia, and relentless, seemingly fruitless special education classes. His *MY:24* was the day he decided that enough was enough: he no longer wanted to be singled out for his disability or to feel separate and different from his peers.

Lucas has subsequently changed from "special ed" kid to a creative powerhouse by embracing his passion for filmmaking, celebrating the heightened creativity he feels dyslexia has given him and taking control of his persona and his life – he now makes his own educational choices and this is working for him and his parents.

Lucas now lives and breathes film and filmmaking and is inventive and prolific. His bedroom is a shrine to film – especially to his idols Quentin Tarantino and Woody Allen – and he watches about eight films a week. He is almost always working on some aspect of his next planned production.

Lucas has a full-time scribe he jokingly refers to as his assistant. People have suggested that he try audio books and technology so that he isn't as reliant on this kind of help, but he says having a lot of close contact with people helps him focus his thoughts and share and build on

his ideas. The future is most definitely paved in pictures and sound for Lucas, although he's got some way to go before finishing his formal schooling, and dyslexia has most definitely taken the backseat in his life.

Madeleine

Madeleine was born with one arm. Madeleine has always strived to be independent, and has a wicked sense of humour. At 16 years of age she made the decision to become a "complete set" and made various applications to fund a bionic arm. She says her applications were rejected because she was seen as too capable.

To cheer herself up, she went to see a show featuring comedian Adam Hills. When they met after his stand up routine, he told her she was funny and encouraged her to think she might have similar abilities. Madeleine's *MY:24* was when she discovered she and Adam Hills had more in common than just being able to make people laugh: she saw that he was missing a limb too. It was just the lift she needed to kick-start her comedy career.

Madeleine took a gap year between high school and university in 2013 in order to coordinate stand-up comedy nights and do her own gigs several times a month. Sometimes she gets paid, and sometimes she doesn't.

She is now studying performance at Wollongong University and has added acting and singing to her repertoire. She wants a future in comedy but also intends to heed the advice of Will Anderson, another comedian, which is to always have a back-up plan.

10. Featuring Ryan and Rose

Ryan and Rose's *MY:24s* both strongly involve family, though one of them had to leave his to follow his dreams and the other had to step up and take responsibility for her's.

Ryan

Ryan is a hip-hop dancer who hails from the country town of Taree. His *MY:24* started with a nervous solo plane trip from Taree to Sydney to attend a dance workshop, and ended with him meeting and being inspired by talented indigenous dancers. The experience left him with the firm conviction that he too wanted to be a dancer.

Subsequently Ryan auditioned for the NAISDA Dance College. When he was accepted he had no choice but to move away from his home and family in order to study on the NSW Central Coast.

He boards with a couple whose kids have grown up and left home and travels back to Taree during holidays to visit his family. One of his sisters lives in Newcastle and he'll often visit her on the weekend, especially if he's feeling a bit homesick.

Ryan's favourite dance styles are hip-hop and modern, although he is enjoying the challenge of learning ballet, contemporary and tap. He plans to continue his NAISDA studies for the

next three years and, after graduating, become a professional dance and choreographer. He particularly wants to choreograph music videos and bring Aboriginal dance into mainstream music.

Rose

Rose was once an average Sydney kid with little responsibility but at the age of eight her mother developed a spinal nerve condition that resulted in paralysis. Rose suddenly had to manage the household and take on other new adult responsibilities. To go from “cared for” to “carer”, required her to grow up fast.

Rose is now a confident 13 year old with a great sense of humour. She takes flute lessons and enjoys public speaking, acting and dancing. She is a member of the School Representative Council and the debating team and is an ambassador for Australian Kookaburra Kids, a foundation that provides respite and support for kids who live in families affected by mental health issues.

Her mum says that sometimes Rose acts as though she’s 22, at other times as though she’s 2. Rose agrees and says she understands adult concepts but is capable of throwing tantrums just like most kids of her age. This very self-aware teen knows her flaws and happily admits that although she’s generally organised, her room always looks like a bomb’s hit it, despite her grandma’s threats about cutting her out of the will.

Rose’s mum now has regular carers but Rose still helps to cook, look after her eight-year-old sister, go to the market each week with her mum’s friend to shop for fruit and vegetables, and she assist her mum to dress and undress during visits to the swimming pool.

She very much wants to become an English teacher or look after young carers who have problems at home similar to those she has experienced.

11. Featuring Harry and Sarai

Harry and Sarai’s *MY:24s* led to them each having to adapt to entirely new situations that they were completely unfamiliar.

Harry

Harry was a regular Melbourne kid with a love of video games when his baby sister Millie was born three months prematurely and was later diagnosed with Down syndrome.

He is now an adoring older brother who gets his satisfaction, not from the solo pursuits of sitting upstairs in front of his computer, but from being downstairs engaging with his family and playing with and helping to care for Millie. There’s a lot to do: feeding her, changing nappies, providing entertainment and making her laugh.

The wonderful new addition to the family has largely shaped Harry’s future goals and aspirations: he now wants to become a teacher working with kids with disabilities and help

to educate people about what it's like to have a sibling with Down syndrome or other illness or genetic disorder.

Sarai

Before her *MY:24*, Sarai was an ordinary young girl from rural Queensland. She went to the local private school, did karate, sang in the choir, loved dressing up in the period-style costumes that her mum would meticulously make and spent a lot of time at home with family and their pets.

Then, as a result of the extensive flooding in her state, Sarai came face to face with the agonising prospect of losing her home and everything in it including the pets.

But amidst the hardship and loss that she suffered, Sarai has discovered a personal truth: you don't have to be ruled by the tragedies that happen to you. She is now much better at taking life in her stride and rolling with the punches and is more heavily involved in her community and has stronger, closer relationships with family and friends than at any other time in her life.

She has also developed even more respect for her mum who has physically helped the community effort to gather supplies of emergency clothing and furniture and the rebuilding of 28 of the 99 local homes that were destroyed in the floods.

Sarai is involved in the St Vincent de Paul's Buddy Day camps that brings kids together for challenging physical activities as a way of building confidence, the Ipswich Youth Advisory Council and the Youth Advisory Group of Cyber Safety. Recently she attended a Mad Hatter's Tea Party – dressed in a brand new costume – to raise money for mental health research.

A keen drawer and bookworm, she is considering pursuing a career as a journalist or a graphic designer but she's open to the future.

12. Featuring Dom and Tess

Dom and Tess's *MY:24*'s are both entwined in the art of performance and illustrate how a taste of success can have a big impact on someone's level of self confidence.

Dom

At just five years old, Melbourne-based Dominic was shown a magic trick by his granddad that inspired and amazed him: a magic trick. But by the time he got to high school, Dom was hiding the magic skills he learned in the ensuing years for fear of being labelled as different and not being able to fit in.

His *MY:24* happened when he was a 15-year-old, and his mentors Tim and Tam gave him his first paid gig as a magician. His success on the night made him realise that his magic performances were a big and important part of who he was – and they were worth sharing.

Now a charismatic performer, Dom lives and breathes the mystery and wonder that is professional magic. He became a member of the Australian Institute of Magic at the age of 19, has been crowned Australian Junior Champion of Magic and co-produces a monthly magic night in Melbourne.

Dom's specialty is close-up magic tricks that involve sleight of hand, cards, coins and so on. He performs at weddings and parties and in professional stage shows. The future for Dom is bright because he's found a comfortable place for himself in the world and because he's in possession of a secret technique that few can claim.

Tess

When Sydney-based Tess was 14 years of age she won the APEX Teenage Fashion Awards for her wearable art piece: a pom-pom dress that she made from 1784 individually-constructed pom-poms and hula-hoops. It was her *MY:24*.

She knew how to make pom-poms but had entered the competition with limited sewing skills – making a pillowcase at the age of 13 was the only item she had previously made and it was part of a school project. The youngest entrant in the category, Tess was shocked when she won but also very inspired to keep imagining and creating amazing wearable art.

The days when Tess used to think of craft and sewing as just a bit of fun are long gone. She is now approaching it as if it was a full-time gig and is often up until 3am working on projects.

Tess recently graduated from high school and hopes to study costume design at the National Institute of Dramatic Art or some other reputable institution. She'd love to continue making wearable art and go on to create costumes for the film industry. She's inspired by the work of Australian production designer (and producer) Catherine Martin of *The Great Gatsby* and *Moulin Rouge* fame.

13. Featuring Tyrone and Madison

Tyrone and Madison's *MY:24s* pushed them into areas they had the most passion for – sport and the ocean respectively – and lead to extraordinary opportunities.

Tyrone

Tyrone used to be an angry, alienated kid who found it was easier to spend time on the streets getting into trouble than to behave. That all changed when he was offered a full scholarship at a prestigious private school. That day was his *MY:24*.

Melbourne Grammar, with the support of his adopted family and his mum and dad, didn't just give him a foothold into the world of elite sport but also gave him an education, confidence, the skills to build a life of hope and achievement.

Tyrone was also encouraged to reconnect with his indigenous heritage and he is now a confident, laid back young man, no longer caught between his black/white parenthood –

and with the Aboriginal flag tattooed on his arm and the symbol of the Gubbi Gubbi and Bindal people on his chest.

With the help of a scholarship Tyrone is studying sociology at university and has a cadetship as a social worker at the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

He hopes he can give people like himself the skills to aim high from an early age but his own future is yet to be written especially as sport remains a big motivator, despite two knee reconstructions and heart surgery. He is interested in leadership and is well aware of how much has to be done to break down negative stereotypes about indigenous people.

Madison

Madison practically grew up on the ocean. Because of her parents' love of boats and sailing, she spent her first few years living at sea and the ocean was her second home.

Madison's *MY:24* came when she went on a night dive with her Dad at a reef they'd visited many times previously. She was 14 years of age and was absolutely shocked to only see one shark, a dramatic decline compared to a year earlier when she had swum among a colony of hundreds of these sleek sea creatures.

This experience was Madison's "wake up call": overnight she went from shark admirer to shark conservationist and – to add weight to her cause – serious filmmaker. Her "shark girl" nickname suddenly began to carry more weight.

Madison is currently working on one of the vessels owned by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and expects her life to always involve conservation, activism and travel – when at home in Australia, her base is Byron Bay with her dad.

Madison's passionate and occasionally idealistic activism has matured. She is now a politically-savvy campaigner but her aims remain the same: to better protect sharks by lobbying to change the laws about legal shark fishing in marine parks and to educate the public about how amazing the much maligned shark really is.

MY:24 – A statement from the producer

When I first set out to make *MY:24*, my dream was that this documentary series would communicate the reality of young peoples' lives. I feel so proud that the final product does exactly that. Our 26 participants talk about their lives and the significance and ongoing impact of the event that changed those lives with frankness, intimacy and energy.

The *MY:24* stories we chose to tell feature young people with talent, passion, maturity and self-awareness, even if it took a while for each of them to recognise they had these attributes – or to connect with others who did recognise them. All now feel hope about the future, which is what makes *MY:24* not just a snapshot of a generation but an inspiring snapshot.

From the outset I knew that *MY:24* was an attempt at a new, daring and ground-breaking format: documentary for kids presented directly by real kids telling their own stories with very little intervention. The production has been carefully structured and developed to be entertaining and compelling of course, but each episode also gives viewers access to the direct, unfettered and unfiltered views of the participants, delivered via intimate “diary cam” confessionals.

I believe, and hope the audience will agree, that the final product adds something that is completely different and intriguing to Australian children's television landscape.

I've loved every single minute of working on *MY:24* for the reasons I've outlined and, from a very personal point of view, because it's not like anything I've made before. It is for the socially networked generation and communicates with a degree of frankness, informality and unselfconsciousness completely absent from the interactions of baby boomers.

After a 30-year career as a documentary and factual producer, branching off into a format children's television series has been quite a change – and a challenge. The spark behind *MY:24* came while producing a panel discussion on kids factual entertainment for the Australian International Documentary Conference, held in early 2012. During the process I met a range of network executives, producers and distributors working in production for kids and examined a bank of recently produced international factual material, much of it award winning. But what struck me was a certain similarity of style. As a result I became obsessed by the prospect of creating something raw, edgy and less “mediated”. I wanted to encourage and hear young people speak for themselves. I've been fascinated by adolescence since before dealing with my own two, and I'm sure it fascinates many others.

From when I took a raw idea to Essential Media and Entertainment and I was able to work closely with on-staff development producer Wendy Hanna to find a shape for the series, the title, the form and outline of content, *MY:24* has been a wonderful team effort. Carmel Travers as head of Children's Content for the company, worked closely with me on the financing and contracting of the series and the company relationship has been wonderful. Thanks to the fabulous core of skilled, talented freelancers, each of whom have contributed countless ideas and solved countless problems. Thank you!

Penny Robins, January 2014

MY:24 – Making the series

While no professional television production is easy to make well, the *MY:24* series required enormous discipline and rigour in order to be produced on budget and in the time allowed.

The nearly 11 hours of compelling and entertaining programming comprises 13 x 24-minute episodes (also available as 26 x 12-minute individual stories) and several YouTube clips. It draws on master interviews, the filmed equivalent of selfies, family archival material, clever graphics and entertaining factual tidbits.

MY:24 took two years from pitch to delivery

Independent producer Penny Robins' initial concept was for a factual entertainment series focussed on stories told directly by young people who had experienced and been profoundly shaped by a life-changing experience. She took this raw idea to the Sydney-based production company Essential Media and Entertainment. A partnership was immediately born.

Robins developed and produced the series with Essential Media's Children's Content Division, headed by Carmel Travers.

"From the get go, *MY:24* was a perfect fit for Essential because the company's commitment to high quality factual entertainment, meant that producing this genre for a younger audience fitted its DNA," she said. "Having such great partners as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), and a producer with Penny's experience, also meant it would be made by the best in the business. We're really proud of what's been achieved and feel it will be of interest to a wide audience spectrum."

Robins and on-staff development producer Wendy Hanna worked very closely on development and format creation in the lead-up to pitching *MY:24* to the ABC and ACTF during the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) in February 2012. Once both entities signed up, ACTF Head of Development and Production Bernadette O'Mahony joined Travers and Robins as the third Executive Producer.

The ABC and ACTF's early interest paved the way for "proof of concept stage one development", an exercise that thankfully proved that amazing stories did exist about ordinary young Australians whose lives had been changed by the events of a single day.

The 35-week production and post-production schedule kicked in from late May 2013 and the series was delivered on January 24, 2014. In other words, *MY:24* took two years to make from start to finish, a short time frame for something so ground breaking.

Research and casting was rigorous

After intensive research during the proof of concept stage, more than 300 potential stories had been found. These were shortlisted down to 17 by July 2012 and then followed a period of several months developing and refining the format for the series.

Once the series was officially commissioned and pre-production began, final decisions had to be made about whose stories to tell and why. Every candidate had been interviewed on Skype but now it was time to meet and screen test the potential participants in person to see if the stories were intriguing enough and could deliver the narrative arc and visual interest required.

“We wanted stories that together demonstrated the social, economic and cultural diversity that is Australia,” says producer Penny Robins. “We wanted some to be funny, others offbeat, others upbeat, some to be deeply moving and others to deliver lightness. We chose stories that featured experiences of external events beyond the control of the participants and others that occurred deep inside despite these inevitably being harder to express. Every story also had to be aspirational: the journey may have been rough and tough and devastating but the outcome had to be at best transformational, at least uplifting.”

Archival material also had to be available for each story in order to paint a vivid picture of each participant’s life before their *MY:24*. That is not such a big ask these days however.

The research net was thrown wide to include web-based research, a call out via ABC 3 and approaches to schools, foundations, support organisations and training institutions nationwide. Robins met the shortlisted potential candidates and most of their parents and guardians. The responsibilities and restrictions of working with children under 18 years of age are significant, and getting parent/guardian permission is mandatory.

The 17 were whittled down to nine so an additional 17 had to be found so two stories could be interwoven to make up each 24-minute episode. Once confirmed, each story was thoroughly fact checked by the research team.

Young people drive their own stories

A key factor behind the style and legitimacy of the series is that each young participant drives their own story, they tell their story in their own words, contribute images and perspectives. They are at the heart of the program rather than a presenter or narrator. After being trained in the art of self-filming and other legal and physical considerations, their “diary cam” style confessionals and candid snatches of video with friends and family are central to the style.

The series could be described as social history meets autobiography on screen.

The storytelling and communication between peers that occurs continuously on social media provided the inspiration for this approach: these participants had never lived in a country without the Internet and access to technology.

The professional filmmaking team behind the project were always well aware that young viewers now expect intimacy.

Filming was meticulously planned

The theme of every episode is how events triggered change and fundamentally influenced lives. The structure follows a traditional three-act arc. First there's life before, then there's the blow-by-blow cause-and-effect transformational account of *MY:24*, finally there's an exploration of future hopes and expectations.

Master interviews had to be used to form the framework of the series, into which the participant's own visual material was layered in. Another way of describing *MY:24* is amateur meets professional filmmaking.

The production crew was a tight unit. Associate producer Amanda Isdale was a consultant at the format creation stage and had a key role too in post-production. She worked with the researchers and prepared the shooting scripts. The hefty domain of scheduling the busy teenage participants and their families, clearing every location and reconstruction for production was with senior researcher Rachel Griffiths, and production manager Petrice Graham made sure the crew remained constantly aware of the rules, guidelines and constraints that are applied to G-rated programming through production and post.

After a thorough briefing about the project the field directors travelled the country filming with the participants and their families and friends. They filmed on boats and beaches, in houses, in schools, on playing fields and in locker rooms, on stage and in shopping malls. They worked on every component of nailing the story and getting the best visual material possible.

Many stylistic decisions underpin the series

The format laid out the graphics and visual style in detail and the field directors contributed some ideas of their own. "To give viewers the sense that a journey was taking place, a variety of 'following' shots were devised, and the intention behind filming so much in close-up was to make them feel they were truly hearing the participant's deepest thoughts", says field director Dan Mansour when asked about overall stylistic considerations. "Participants were asked to close their eyes in one place to signify they were leaving behind that part of their life and open them in another: Jake shuts his at the pool, for example, because he no longer wants to swim, and opens them at the skipping shed where he began chasing his dreams of world domination."

Visually inventive field director Britt Arthur explains how she used visuals within specific stories, "The visuals for Harry's story were inspired by Peter Gabriel's music videos. Funnily 'Sledgehammer' came on TV while we were filming - it was cool because it meant his whole family could see the end results of what we were filming in his bedroom. They ended up playing it over and over - it was a great way to involve the whole family". And "When Rida showed us her incredible sketches we knew we had to incorporate them into her story. We decided to adapt them into the style of 'Draw My Life' and it was definitely a great way to

bring Rida's difficult, but inspiring story, to life".

The two field directors have dozens of anecdotes

Bonds were forged during production. Dan Mansour looks back with fondness at witnessing Mikey telling his school principal why he would make an ideal school captain then hearing a few months later that he got the gig.

"Dave the gym fiend challenged us to do chin ups with him. As the heaviest thing I've ever held is a clipboard, let's just say he may have been able to do up to 200 more than me. Before we know it that kid will be on the cover of *Men's Health*."

Mansour remembers the crew arriving at one home to film an "extremely emotional" part of the story only to find bulldozers, cement mixers and burly workmen about to build a driveway.

Rose's younger sister Stella helped us out with some reenactments despite the fact she had never acted before. She was amazing and if she doesn't end up being an actor she should be a comedian! So witty and sharp, within the first hour she was bantering with the crew and had us all in stitches.

Field director, Britt Arthur, recalled how humbling and shocking it was to hear the stories that accompanied the very tasty authentic Burundian refugee camp meal that G-Storm cooked for the crew. But it was a lot of fun getting lots of "toots" from passing traffic when they hit the streets of Albury with circus-performer-in-training Crystal and her hula hoops.

Two car trips stand out in her mind: reliving Romy and her mum's "incredibly emotional" seven-minute car ride to safety at the height of Black Saturday; and re-enacting the moment when Faith's father "screamed like a girl" when he first heard Faith's song coming out of the car radio. The scene was filmed in his native Tagalog, one of the languages of The Philippines.

"Tyrone is doing some modeling now and really wanted to grow his facial hair, but due to concerns about continuity we had to get him to keep shaving it off," says Arthur. "Sorry Tyrone! We got to film him in the men's locker room during the last game of the season for the football team that he captains. The atmosphere was electric!"

Post-production

A big team worked on the post-production with the gentle direction of supervising editor Mike Connerty. They spent more than 20 weeks weaving the various kinds of footage together while adhering to the overall format structure and design. Just as with the production period, budget limitations dictated process. There were no lazy days of deliberation in the edit room, foregrounding this element or that. Rather, everything had to be pre-prepared, thought through and set up.

Bold and colourful graphics, planned early and then refined in post, were used to enhance the social media motifs and style, artful grading and graphics were used to signify the

passing of time and to denote what material was from personal archives. Fun-fact and back-story “bubbles” added yet another layer of information.

Music is an all important element for the kid’s audience, the *MY:24* title track was composed and created by Sydney composer Kyla Burtland and the soundtrack has been created from additional composed music and some which was sourced.

MY:24 – Point of view from ABC3 and the Australian Children’s Television Foundation

Jan Stradling, Executive Producer of ABC Children’s TV, says the public broadcaster plays a lot of factual entertainment shows on ABC3, and they’re very popular. *Deadly 60* and *Bushwhacked!* are two very successful shows for example. It’s only recently that they’ve shifted more towards documentary, however, with the host-lead *Dancing Down Under* being the first show commissioned in this genre.

“MY:24 offers something different in that we have given a very diverse selection of young people an opportunity to truly tell their stories with a significant amount of airtime to set their story up, tell it and reflect on what it meant to them,” says Stradling. “They’ve been encouraged to shoot their own diary cam and select photos and excerpts from home videos. With this age group’s use of social media being so prevalent, they document their lives daily, and MY:24 has really tapped into that. The result is a selection of very unique and personal Australian stories told with universal themes.

“Not only does MY:24 provide a platform for these voices, but the stories also carry a great message of resilience and hope. Simply being allowed the time to tell a life-changing story that isn’t reduced to sound bites, makes this quite groundbreaking. Also, we haven’t stayed away from heavy issues; we’ve just worked together to tell them in a way that will work for our audience.”

ACTF chief executive Jenny Buckland says people usually think of fictional animation and drama when they think of shows for kids and in Australia in particular there hasn’t been a lot of factual programming made. The programs that do exist are usually magazine based and hosted by adults who impart information or advice. MY:24 is most definitely documentary, not instructional.

“It is unique because it is kids and young adults telling their own real stories in their own voices about a significant event in their childhood and how it shaped them,” says Buckland. “That’s what makes it documentary. It’s giving kids an opportunity to share, reflect, express and think about themselves and others – and about how we are all shaped by the things that happen to us and the way we deal with them.

“I don’t think we have ever done this kind of reflective, genuine documentary in kids television in Australia before. We are hearing real children with amazing stories talk about what life is like to for them. It is a real mark of respect to the child audience that ABC3 is doing this kind of programming.”

Penny Robins, executive producer, producer

Penny Robins is an independent Sydney-based producer and executive producer who loves telling stories that entertain audiences and make a difference.

She has produced and executive produced for ABC Television, SBS, Canal Plus, BBC and Film Australia, where she worked as an executive producer from 2003 to 2008. From long-form documentaries to series, Penny has worked with some of the country's top talents and has drawn the best from an array of subjects.

At Film Australia she was one of the founding executive producers on the hit Australian series *Who Do You Think You Are*, produced with Artemis and Serendipity Productions, and on the *LIFE AT* series with Heiress Films. Both have since become long-running repeat series.

Since going back into the world of freelance filmmaking in 2009 she has executive produced and produced, with Paul Clarke, a body of award-winning social history series for ABC TV: namely *Bombora the Story of Australian Surfing*, *Wide Open Road* and most recently *Whitlam: The Power and The Passion*.

Penny initiated, produced and was an executive producer on the 13-part youth series *MY:24* for Essential Media and Entertainment. The series was borne out of a passion to make stories for young people that allow them to speak openly and honestly about contemporary life and it will air on ABC3 in early 2014. *MY:24* is Penny's first children's television production.

Carmel Travers, executive producer

Carmel is Head of Children's Content and Executive Producer at Essential Media and Entertainment. With four decades of experience in the film and television industry, Carmel has headed up major production companies and been a senior network executive. As a Partner and Executive Director of Essential Media and Entertainment, she is overseeing the growth of its children's, youth and online content.

Bernadette O'Mahony, executive producer

Bernadette O'Mahony is Head of Development and Production at the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF).

She has worked in film and television since the 1980s, and her name is linked to a number of prominent Australian productions including *The Henderson Kids*, *The Flying Doctors*, *Spotswood*, *The Man From Snowy River* and *Crackers*.

Since joining the ACTF, Bernadette has worked on *Crash Zone*, *Legacy of the Silver Shadow*, the award-winning series *Mortified*, *Lockie Leonard* (series 1 and 2), *Dance Academy* (series, 1, 2 and 3) and *My Place* (series 1 and 2), *Worst Year of My Life*, *Again* and *Bushwhacked!*

Amanda Isdale, associate producer

Amanda Isdale is a producer/writer/development consultant who has been working in the children's television industry for more than 10 years. She has considerable experience in both live-action and animated children's factual/entertainment and also documentary television production, and is particularly drawn to working with the 10-14 age group. She is passionate about providing an empowered and genuine voice for them to share their real stories and real experiences with others.

After completing a journalism degree at the University of Queensland, Amanda worked in the children's and documentary Unit at Network Ten, then moved to London and Vancouver to gain international experience. She returned home to Sydney four years later and has had various local production and development roles with broadcasters and independent production companies since 2011.

Amanda's skills encompass producing, directing, writing, script-editing, format consulting, research and development. Her clients include Network Ten, CBBC, DHX Media, Disney Channel Australia, ABC3, Little Airplane Productions, The Feds, The Glorious Picture Company, Beyond Productions, activeTV, Blacklab Productions, and Essential Media and Entertainment.

Amanda was the producer of ABC3's children's television series *My Great Big Adventure*, which recently won the 2013 Association of International Broadcasters Award in London in the category for children's factual program or series.

Dan Mansour, field director

Dan is a passionate writer/director/producer who loves telling stories that can truly make a difference.

He studied film and television at Macquarie University and the University of North Carolina, and for the past 10 years has directed, produced and written for the Nine Network, ABC Television, SBS TV, Ambience Entertainment, The Feds, ASTRA, XYZnetworks, Nickelodeon and MTV, where he worked as a producer/director from 2006 to 2011.

From long form documentaries to animation and live awards shows, including the ASTRA Awards and the MTV Awards, Dan has an eclectic showreel.

His clear vision and people skills help him to get the best performance from both the talent/subject as well as the crew.

Dan produced, directed and edited an original rock 'n' roll documentary series in the USA for MTV, alongside his creative/business partner Tim "Gonzo" Ryan. He wrote, produced and directed the critically acclaimed documentary film *The Final Word* which premiered on ABC2 in 2013.

Britt Arthur - field director

Since making her first multi-award winning documentary *Not in Front of the Kids*, Britt Arthur has worked on more than 100 hours of programming for commercial, public and cross-platform broadcast.

Whether she is crafting a story about celebrities, buildings or the sex lives of the elderly, there is an empathy, candour and sense of humour that illuminates her work.

Her films have screened at prestigious international festivals such as IDFA and won a bunch of awards, including at the Australian Directors Guild Awards, the ATOM Awards and the Australian Film Festival.

Her credits include *Grand Designs Australia*, *The Force*, *Life at Three* and *Who Do You Think You Are?*

Mike Connerty, supervising editor

Mike Connerty has more than 20 years experience in post-production, documentary, lifestyle and reality programming, public affairs and children's programming.

Recent projects include the feature documentary *The Crossing*, which won the audience award for best documentary at the Sydney Film Festival, the ABC 3 music series *Stay Tuned*, a pilot for MTV International titled *The New Crowd*, and the acclaimed documentary *The Final Word*, which was part of the ABC TV's *Opening Shot* series.