

# WADU MATYIDI



## Press Kit

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**General Audience Blurb – *Wadu Matyidi*** (War-do Mudgee-dee) breaks new ground in Indigenous animation. This eight minute dramatization brings the past to life through the imagination of a talented Adnyamathanha language revival class. It is accompanied by back-story documentaries featuring students of the class and their community.

**Child Audience Blurb** – Imagine it! Non-stop fun and games with cheeky little brother in a totally awesome, adult-free, adventure playground. Throw in some supernatural creature possibilities, well-timed burps and farts and some seriously bad weather and anything could happen!

## **Synopsis**

### **Wadu Matyidi – A Time Long Gone**

In this short animated film we're taken back to pre-contact times (early 1800s) when Adnyamathanha children of the Flinders Ranges were inspired, schooled and entertained by their interactions with 'country'. The characters in the story are three adventurous Adnyamathanha kids who set out for a day of exploration near their camp. The children play traditional games and spook one another with tales of the ancient creatures of their country. They see unusual tracks that set their hearts and imaginations racing. Then, unexpectedly they make a discovery that changes their lives forever.

Unlike many animations with an Aboriginal theme, ***Wadu Matyidi*** diverges from Dreaming story traditions. Almost like an ancestral memory, this story set two hundred years in the past has arisen from the imaginations of students attending an Adnyamathanha Ngawarla (language) class from 2008 to 2010.



**Behind the Scenes (the docos)** – Five short documentaries, between six and eight minutes in length, present the background story of the Wadu Matyidi animated film project. In a fast-paced, light-hearted style we learn how a diverse group of fascinating individuals conceived and developed this exceptional high-tech journey into ancient knowledge. Although each documentary has its own theme and is self-contained, there is also a half hour version that combined all five short films and linked chapters.

### #1 Who We Are - Inhaadi Utyu Ngarlpurla



We meet charming 13 year-old Ema; a student in the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla Class and narrator of the ***Wadu Matyidi*** documentaries. Ema introduces us to her family and the rest of the class. She explains how the class came to write a script and the momentum this created for students to get out of the comfort zone and realise an impressive film project.

### #2 Walking Our Country – Yarta Mandaawi Widniarlurla

In this documentary we travel with the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class to Adnyamathanha yarta (country) where most of the class' ancestors have lived for thousands of years. Meeting and listening to Elders and experiencing the ancient rhythms of the land infuses class members with spirit and belonging.



### #3 Telling Stories – Yarta Wandarlurla

Stories are the theme of this documentary. What role have Dreaming stories played in Adnyamathanha culture? How do memories become stories? What are the elements of the original story created by the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class? What role does this story play in the uncertain future of the Adnyamathanha language?



#### #4 The Scary Beast - Antyi, Yamuti Yurdlu Ya!

“Watch out, the Yamuti will get you!” This threat has been used for centuries to keep Adnyamathanha kids in line. Fear of the Yamuti is central in the *Wadu Matyidi* story and this documentary explores the nature of Yamuti and why people continue to find it so frightening.



#### #5 How to Bake an Animation – Animation Nguthaarlpurla

Taking an original short story in Aboriginal language and turning it into a state-of-the-art animated film has been a fascinating process. Not only were there unexpected technical challenges, but the process of working in collaboration with traditional culture and language advisors makes *Wadu Matyidi* a formidable and precedent-setting achievement. The kids in this doco talk about the unique experience of providing the voices for animated characters that represent their own ancestors.



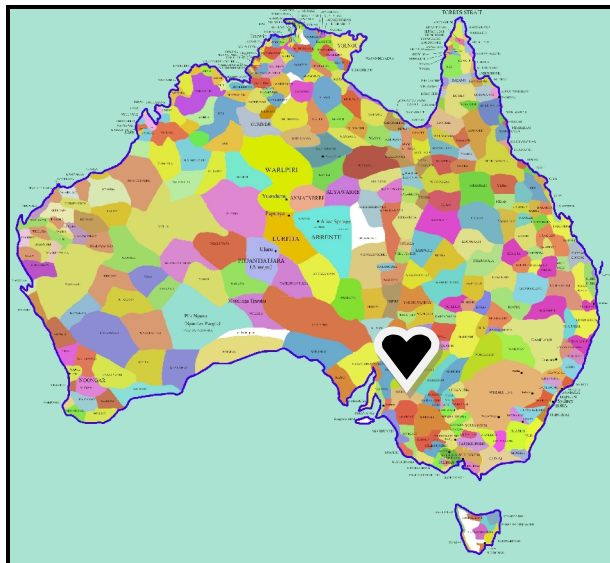
## Location

Adnyamathanha yarta (country) is a vast area in the ancient, awe-inspiring Flinders Ranges. This is the heart of Adnyamathanha life and culture. It is the Adnyamathanha University, holy place and playground. This beautiful country is animated with the latest 3D computer-generated techniques to become the 'pre-contact' setting for ***Wadu Matyidi***.

About twice a year, the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class travels to the Flinders Ranges to connect with Country and to spend precious time with Elders still fluent in their language. It's the video footage from these trips that makes up most of the content of the 'Behind the Scenes' docos.

The central community within the Adnyamathanha Country is Nepabunna, and although almost all yuras (Adnyamathanha people) express strong ties to Nepabunna, most live elsewhere. Significant numbers of Adnyamathanha families have settled in the communities between Nepabunna and Adelaide; particularly Copley, Quorn, Hawker and Port Augusta.

Hundreds of yuras live in the surrounding suburbs of Adelaide and it is from this group that students of Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class are drawn. From 2008 to 2010 they met weekly at Taoundi Aboriginal Community college in Port Adelaide.



## Production Overview

The **Wadu Matyidi** story at the core of the project is an entirely original work written collaboratively by members of an Adnyamathanha language class as a homework assignment proposed by Elder and teacher Uncle Buck McKenzie.

All class members, mostly Adnyamathanha and some udnyus (non-Aboriginal people) contributed ideas towards a fictional story as a way of learning ngawarla words and phrases. Thus, three loveable young characters were brought to life and set on their way to an incredible adventure. In a similar fashion, writing the **Wadu Matyidi** story has taken class members on adventures into the new realms of animation and film production.

In a number of cases, this project has seen established film practitioners nurture emerging talent in a generous process that has rewarded both parties. Consultant Producer Molly Reynolds and Editor Tania Nehme have mentored and guided newly established producing and directing team Sonja Vivienne and Marjo Stroud.

2009 AFI Award winners Vishus Productions came on board the **Wadu Matyidi** fully committed to make accurate and respectful portrayals of pre-contact Adnyamathanha life. The animators regularly visited the Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class, consulted with Elders and researched the 1800s Adnyamathanha context in literature and at the Royal Adelaide Museum. In an attachment to the project, Vishus hired Indigenous trainee Nunya Glazbrook who successfully completed her traineeship on **Wadu Matyidi** and is now employed full-time in the industry.

To truly bring the gorgeous animated scenes to life, animation Director Luke Jurevicius coached brilliant voice performance out of three young non-actors and Inhaadi Adnyamathanha Ngawarla class students Salote, Ema and Emori Bovororo. Auspiciously, when these Adnyamathanha siblings recorded the dialogue for the three characters in **Wadu Matyidi**, they were actually giving voices to imaginary portrayals of their own ancestors.

## Soundtrack

Hearing the entire animated dialogue of **Wadu Matyidi** in Adnyamathanha Ngawarla gives audiences a rare chance to experience the melodic cadences and richness of one of the world's oldest living languages. It also quickly becomes evident that universal humour transcends dialogue in any language.

The music and soundtrack on both **Wadu Matyidi** and the 'Behind the Scenes' docos are an entrancing combination of sounds from nature, traditional Adnyamathanha songs and new music written specifically for these productions.

## Language/Extinction

A culture is held together with language. With less than 100 fluent speakers left, Adnyamathanha is registered as severely endangered (<http://fatsil.org.au>). The theme of extinction is evident throughout **Wadu Matyidi** through the central role given to the extinct Yamuti and also through the surprising ending when the pre-contact children glimpse something that will threaten the essential elements of their very existence.

The idea for the Yamuti, the unseen creature spooking **Wadu Matyidi** characters, comes from Uncle Buck's recounting of childhood stories about this dangerous, extinct animal that lived near waterholes and made scary slurping noises. Archaeologists have dug up skeletons of this creature, naming it Diprotodon and determining that it became extinct around 15,000 years ago. As an Educator at the Royal Adelaide Museum, Uncle Buck pieced together facts from both cultures to confirm that Adnyamathanha Elders have been retaining terminology and passing on detailed oral histories for 150 centuries!

Sadly, many Aboriginal languages have been lost forever. The project from which **Wadu Matyidi** comes is an attempt to save the Adnyamathanha language. In addition to being rollicking entertainment, **Wadu Matyidi** is also designed as part of an interactive resource to encourage the learning of Adnyamathanha in classes across Australia. It also stands as an accessible, high tech archive of precious endangered knowledge and language.

ENJOY and LEARN!





## Adnyamathanha Ngawarla Glossary

Some Ngawarla words used in the animation and documentaries:

Word	Meaning
Adnyamathanha	Adnyamathanha language and people. A group of Aborigines native to South Australia's Flinders Ranges whose name means 'rock' or 'hill people'.
Akurra	Old serpent from stories of The Dreaming who made all of the waterholes.
andu	yellow-footed rock wallaby
arlaarpi	hand, finger; five
ardla	fire
adnya	rock, stone
awi	water, rain
awi urtu	waterhole, pool of water
irta	bird (general)
malka	drawing, writing
mambarna	boy
marngarra	girl
mantaawi	foot
mia	sleep
mina(aka)	eye
muda	Dreaming, history, rule, custom; hawk
ngalkundha	eat
ngamaka	tree hollow
ngawarla	word, speech; language
udnyu	Non-Aboriginal person
ulhu	gum leaves
urlpi	cloud
urdlu	red kangaroo
utya	cloud threatening rain
vundyu	hair
vrndu	smoke
wandatha	tell stories
wabma	snake
warla	belly, stomach
wartu	wombat
widhi	laughter
widlya	hut or wurley
wipa	ant
wityarti	witchetty grub
yakarti	child
Yamuti	large 'scary beast' mammal from stories of the Dreaming
yarta	land
yarta wandatha	tell a story (connecting that person through story with the land)
yura	Adnyamathanha or Aboriginal person
yura muda	Adnyamathanha Dreaming, providing law, knowledge and guidelines for everyday living.
yura ngawarla	Adnyamathanha language

## Production Team

### Producer and Co-Director

**Sonja Vivienne** trained as a writer/director of drama and documentary at the Australian Film Television and Radio school (AFTRS). She has made many documentaries across subjects as diverse as youth suicide; drug culture in Vietnamese communities; and lesbian personal columns. For several years she worked at the South Australian Film Corporation where she was involved in commissioning and project managing the online documentary initiative *dococom.com*.

Over recent years, Sonja has become increasingly involved in a range of community Digital Storytelling projects. *Journeys from Heartache to Hope*, produced in collaboration with the Aboriginal Women's Healing Group at Nunkuwarrin Yunti, received a Community Impact award in the 2008 Ruby Awards and has been distributed nationally. More recently she developed and produced the *Rainbow Family Tree Project* for Shine SA and launched both an educational resource and the website [www.rainbowfamilytree.com](http://www.rainbowfamilytree.com) at FEAST 2009.

She is creative principal of 'Incite Stories' [www.incitestories.com.au](http://www.incitestories.com.au) and is currently undertaking PhD research into 'Digital Storytelling and Social Change'.

### Co-Producer and Co-Director

**Marjo Stroud** has worked across a diverse range of film projects since training in professional film making in Canada over 20 years ago. Within Australia she has: written and directed a short series, *Traditional Pitjantjatjara Skills*, permanently playing in the Wadlata Outback Interpretive Centre, Port Augusta, SA; coordinated various film projects as Video Unit Producer at Umeewarra Aboriginal Media, Port Augusta, SA; produced and co-directed *Home Station*, a personal tribute to Point Pearce, SA history by Narrunga women Elders; and wrote, directed and edited *Dicons*, a short documentary telling the story of a unique interstate lesbian art project.

Marjo recently trained at the Media Resource Centre as a facilitator of digital storytelling programs and is currently coordinating the collection of Adnyamathanha Elders' stories and language.

Marjo has also written and produced a dozen educational and documentary films in Canada and Afghanistan. <http://www.fardafilm.com.au> .

### **Consultant Producer**

As a screen practitioner, **Molly Reynolds** has recently produced, wrote and/or directed a series of documentaries and websites including 12canoes.com.au, *Peter Churcher*, *An Artist at Work* and *The Balanda and the Bark Canoes*. Molly has worked at the ABC, producing and creating content in a multiplatform environment. She has had management, consultancy and producer roles within the SA, NSW and NT governments, the AFC, Film Australia and the Beyond International Group. She has also been an Associate Professor at Carnegie Mellon University and is an AIMIA board member. She recently completed her Masters in Communications and Media Law.

### **Documentaries Editor**

An editor since 1986, **Tania Nehme** edited numerous documentaries, commercials and short dramas before she cut her first feature, *Epsilon*, for Rolf de Heer in 1995.

A graduate of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Tania was a student at the AFTRS when she was nominated for her first Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award in 1991 for Best Editor on *Once in Time*, directed by Isou Morimoto.

Working as both picture and sound editor, *The Tracker* was the fifth feature Nehme has cut with de Heer, earning her Best Editor nominations at both the 2002 AFI Awards and the 2002 Film Critics Circle Awards. She also received an award from the Sound Editors Guide for Best Dialogue. Nehme also edited *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, *Dance Me to my Song*, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* and *The Quiet Room*. After its delayed release in 2004, Nehme received nominations for an IF, AFI and Critics Choice Award for *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*. She won the Best Editor Award at the Independent Filmmakers (IF) Awards in November 2004.

Apart from feature films, Tania has edited the Television series *Chuck Finn* and *Risking It All* directed by Kath McIntyre as well as the short feature *The 13<sup>th</sup> House* directed by Shane McNeil. Other documentary credits include, *Circle of Support*, *Casualties of War* and *Kumarank 5214*. Her sixth feature collaboration with Rolf de Heer, *Alexandra's Project*, resulted in nominations for Best Editing for Film Critics Circle and AFI Awards in 2003. IN 2007 Tania edited the silent feature *Dr Plonk*.

As well as the film editing nominations, Tania also received nominations for and IF and AFI Award as part of the sound team for *The Tracker* (2002) and *Alexandra's Project* (2003). In 2006 Tania won the AFI and Critics Circle Award as Best Editor for *Ten Canoes*. She also shared the best documentary Award at the Critics Circle Awards with Molly Reynolds and Rolf de Heer for *The Balanda and The Bark Canoes* (aka *Making Ten Canoes*).

*12 Canoes*, a web based multimedia project comprised 12 x 5 minute short stories by Tania in collaboration with directors Rolf de Heer and Molly Reynolds and the Yolngu people of the Arafura swamp. *12 Canoes* website design by Wanted Digital was awarded Best Indigenous Resource at the 2009 Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) Awards to Best Cultural, Lifestyle or Sport Website – Winner at the 2009 AIMIA awards.

In early 2009, Tania edited *Jacob* a short drama directed by Dena Curtis. *Jacob* recently won best Drama at the Adelaide Short Film Festival and The Women's International Film Festival. Tania also edited the highly successful Feature documentary *Contact*, made by writer, producer team Martin Butler and Bentley Dean. The Documentary has earned several awards including Best Sound, Best Cinematography as well as Best Documentary at the Sydney Film Festival 2009.

### **Animation Producers/Directors**

**Luke Jurevicius** is a composer, Illustrator and animator. He is the Director of Vishus Productions, a creative company specialising in 3D animation, music composition, sound production and illustration.

Luke has worked on several high profile jobs for clients and investors such as ABC TV, SAF, Passion Pictures Australia and Nickelodeon Australia. Most recently he has won international awards for creating, directing and composing *Dust Echoes Series 2* and *Figaro Pho*. For more info see <http://vishusproductions.com>.

Luke has several projects in production including a 10 x 45 sec interstitial series for ABC 3 entitled *Horace in Slow Motion* with fellow artists Andrew Kunzel and Arthur Moody.

Luke has recently formed a second company BOOMBADA with Andrew and Arthur specialising in concept creation and high-end animation and TV.

In his 15 year career, Luke has also illustrated over 400 children's books for most major international educational publishers. <http://vishusproductions.com>

**Arthur Moody** is an Adelaide-based Computer Graphics Artist with a strong history creating quirky, compelling animated characters and mind blowing computer-generated imagery and special effects. Through Visual Media Production, which Arthur established in 1998, he has created visual effects and animation for local and overseas broadcast productions. This includes the first CG TV series produced in Australia, *Shopies* and music videos for prominent Australian musicians Powderfinger, Aneiki, Regurgitator and Alex Lloyd. Arthur's Aboriginal heritage gives him a special

connection to the indigenous productions he's worked on such as award winning ABC *Dust Echoes* series and *Wadu Matyidi*. <http://visualmediaproductions.com>

### **Sound Designer**

**Michael Darren** is a multi-talented artist who has developed and worked on many highly entertaining and innovative productions. He is a composer and sound designer who also produces, directs and edits live-action, animated and cross-platform projects. Michael's musical composition and sound design achievements encompass theatrical performance, television, orchestral work, animation, theme parks and computer games. His music has been commissioned by Magpie Theatre, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Colonial Stadium, Telstra Dome, University of Adelaide, Kojo Productions, Threshold Entertainment, and Blackbelt TV.

Michael has produced and co-directed around 45 animated shorts for Threshold Entertainment and provided over 150 program sound mixes for Asia Pacific Television. His feature-length work includes sound design and mixing on animated feature film *Foodfight!* and producing, co-directing and editing the concert movie John Fogerty, *Comin' Down the Road*. In addition Michael has made original contributions such as Star Trek Borg Encounter 4D, The Fremont Street Experience, the Queen Tribute, Don McLean's American Pie, Bad 2 the Bone, Kiss Rocks Vegas and the Doors, Strange Days in Las Vegas.

In 2006 Michael moved to Los Angeles to form Mammoth Sound and Vision with partner George Johnson. The Company specialises in providing original and service based production and post-production facilities. [www.mammoths&v.com](http://www.mammoths&v.com)



## **Visual References**

A comprehensive range of still photos are available electronically to represent the content of ***Wadu Matyidi*** (both animation and documentaries) and illustrate the production processes. Following is a guide to the still shots in the gallery:

### **Animated Stills**

AS1 Rehearsing script at Willochra  
AS2 Character modelling  
AS3 Set Construction  
AS4 Witchetty Grub  
AS5 Scene Panorama  
AS6 Moonlit Camp  
AS7 Quoll Sketch  
AS8 Parrot Design  
AS9 Parrot new  
AS10 The Cave  
AS11 Waterhole  
1AS3 Unanha at waterhole  
1AS1 Kids campfire  
1AS2 heading out in morning  
1AS3 Unanha at tree  
1AS4 Snake on ledge  
1AS6 Hill in storm  
1AS7 Kids climbing up hill  
1AS8 Kids cave

### **Production stills**

PS1 Uncle Buck in headphones  
PS2 Camera in country  
PS3 Luke, Nunya & kids  
PS4 Camera at Lookout  
PS5 Luke, Annie & kids  
PS6 Yamuti model  
PS7 Diprotodon skull  
PS8 Luke consulting with committee

### **Community and Class Skills**

CCS1 Willochra Camp  
CCS2 Class Nepabunna  
CCS3 Class at Arkurra rock  
CCS4 Class on sculpture

CCS5 Aunties & littlies at Minuwerta

CCS6 Uncle Buck

CCS7 Aunty Judy

CCS8 Uncle Kelvin

CCs9 Aunty Elise

### **County Stills**

CS1 Temaanha Bromley in Country

CS2 Wilpena pound

CS3 Gorgeous rock face

CS4 Cliff against darkening sky

CS5 Close up etching

CS6 Sign for magpie crow eagle story

CS7 Elders Rangers

### **Kids Stills**

KS1 Kids at Willochra

KS2 Salote, Iteka, Temaanha & Ema

KS3 Ema & Bromley kids at fire

KS4 Kids sitting on sculpture

KS6 Aunty Elise & Littlies

KS7 Kids approaching roos

KS7 Emma, Emori & Salote