



The life and music of
George Rrurrambu and the Warumpi Band
a 58 minute documentary

PRESS KIT

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SYNOPSIS (ONE LINE)

George Rrurrumbu, legendary frontman of the Warumpi Band, made an extraordinary contribution to contemporary Indigenous music and awakened the Australian consciousness of a third world in its own back yard.

SYNOPSIS (PARAGRAPH)

In the 1980s, GEORGE RRURRAMBU, the frontman of the pioneering Warumpi Band made an extraordinary contribution to contemporary Aboriginal music and reconciliation. Dubbed the black Mick Jagger for his energetic performances and hailed a legend for being the first to sing rock and roll music in Aboriginal languages, George caught the Australian nation by surprise. He left a legacy that changed the face of Indigenous music, uniting his own people and promoting reconciliation. George Rrurrumbu died a rock and roll legend in 2007 and there is no other quite like him. For the first time, this is his story.

SYNOPSIS (ONE PAGE)

BIG NAME NO BLANKET tells the extraordinary story of GEORGE RRURRAMBU, the former lead singer of the pioneering Warumpi Band of the 1980s. George features as the charismatic frontman, who combined rock and roll, reggae, pop and traditional culture to spread the message about Indigenous contemporary issues, awakening the Australian consciousness of a third world in its own backyard.

With George joining founding members Neil Murray and the Butcher Brothers, the Warumpi Band became the most successful Indigenous rock and roll band that Australia had ever seen. Dubbed the black Mick Jagger for his energetic performances and hailed a legend for being the first Aboriginal frontman to sing rock and roll music in Aboriginal languages, George caught the Australian nation by surprise.

George was also the first Aboriginal man to introduce clap sticks and boomerangs into his rock and roll repertoire that reached wider Australian audiences. Iconic songs *Jailanguru Parkurnu* (*Out From Jail*), *Sit down money*, *Blackfella/Whitefella* brought to the nation's attention, the hard-core issues faced by Indigenous Australians and *My Island Home* became the unofficial national anthem to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across the Pacific. By the late 1980s, after national and international touring, George became the rock and roll star that he always aspired to; however, alongside success, George struggled with alcoholism and fame. While pursuing a solo career, he admitted, "I started off singing ... with the alcohol in my hand. I was singing about 'When are you going to stop drinking?' but I was falling all over the place. I realised that I was cheating my own people, saying, 'You stop drinking so I can drink it myself.' With support from his wife, Suzina McDonald, George drew on the influences of the Christian faith to give up alcohol, which coincided with the break up of the Warumpi Band. At the Stompin Ground Festival 2000 held in Broome, he formally announced 'that it's time for a change'.

His solo career spanning 7 years enabled him to return to practicing his Gumatj traditions inherited from his forefathers of Bawaka, his traditional homeland, situated at north-east Arnhem Land. George found the freedom to perform his traditional stories on stage and continue his role as a singer, teacher, hunter, dancer and performer. Maintaining a strong identity with the song *My*



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Island Home, written by Neil Murray about George's life, George later translated the English version into the Gumatj language. Towards the end of his life, George became an Australian ambassador for reconciliation and continued to spread the message about contemporary indigenous issues through performance. Born at Elcho Island on 13 June 1956, George Rrurrambu died of lung and bone cancer on 10 June 2007, aged 51 years of age.

EPG PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The fascinating story of George Rrurrambu, the charismatic and inspirational frontman of the Warumpi Band - filled with interviews, clips and scorching music, we follow George's story from his island home to his premature demise.





BACKGROUND INFORMATION & 'MAKING OF' NOTES

Over 20 years ago, young Indigenous film and television director Steven McGregor was working at the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Alice Springs on a music series called **Corroboree Rock**. One episode was dedicated to the Warumpi Band and Steven travelled to Darwin to film the band rehearsing for a new tour. Steven had seen the charismatic George Rrurrambu around the traps in Alice Springs, and was looking forward to the shoot. Steven and George struck up a friendship and destiny kept them in contact on and off during the following 15 years: working together, representing Indigenous Australia together in Berlin, and often bumping into each other on the escalators of the Casuarina Shopping Centre in Darwin.

Lisa Watts was living in Alice Springs in the 1980s when she met her husband, Brian Butcher. Brian and his brothers Sammy and Gordon, known as the Butcher brothers, were the legendary Warumpi Band members from Papunya, alongside George Rrurrambu and Neil Murray. Lisa became a much-loved member of the Butcher family, through her marriage and subsequent children. In 2007, during the tragic demise of George, resulting in his death on 10 June 2007 caused by lung and bone cancer, he had appointed Lisa as Executor of his Estate. Lisa worked with Suzina McDonald, George's wife, on hosting memorial concerts and other Estate matters and the two would often talk about creating a documentary that would remind Australia about the importance of his legacy. A clause in his will stipulated a rest period of 5 years following his passing, which George's immediate family honoured; when this time had passed Suzina and George's father, brothers and children gave authorization for a film to be produced.

Towards the end of this rest period, the family gave permission to Lisa to commence the research and development of the film. Lisa approached experienced documentary producer Rachel Clements and the two women formed a solid production team. They reached out to Steven McGregor who joined the team very quickly and responded – "It's a deadly project", he said.

Screen Australia, ABC and Screen Territory came on board in development, funding a trip to Elcho Island to undertake time critical filming in 2011. George had been lying in an unmarked grave since his death and Lisa had raised funding for a headstone. A moving ceremony performed by the Gumatj clan accompanied the unveiling of the headstone situated at the gravesite. This ceremony was filmed during the time critical shoot with interviews recorded of elders, including George's father and Uncle. Directly following the unveiling of the headstone, a special event honouring legendary bands (Warumpi Band, Coloured Stone and No Fixed Address) was held at the inaugural National Indigenous Music Awards in Darwin. Warumpi band members Neil Murray and Sammy Butcher and his two sons Jason and Jeremiah Butcher performed with George's brother Lei Lei Burarrwanga.

Research for archival footage, press and audio took over 16 months. Starting in late 2011, Lisa and Rachel searched the country for video, radio and paper material, including posters, photos, and press clippings. Within this period, over 100 hours of video footage had been sourced from both private and institutional collections, including remote Aboriginal media organisations, national broadcasters, archivists, resulting in a definitive collection of George Rrurrambu and Warumpi Band material. While not everything collected appears in the film, all material will be archived at the National Film and Sound Archives to ensure that the story of George and the Warumpi's is accessible for future generations.

With research and development completed, pre-production went in to full swing in 2012. This was Lisa and Steven's final tribute to their friend and they wanted to do justice to his life



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story. Destiny, being the wilful beast that it is, was not going to make their job easy. The principal photography, which was scheduled within a one-month block, actually took six months because of major events, including births, deaths, accidents and cultural barriers. With filming occurring in Darwin, Elcho Island, Papunya, Barunga, Alice Springs, Melbourne and Sydney, the production team had to juggle its schedule around funerals, sorry business and cultural business time, which meant that each location's filming had to be planned and executed separately. This was perhaps a blessing in disguise as the team were able to spend additional and quality time with people in each of the above-mentioned major locations thus allowing greater access to interviewees and their memories. However, this did mean that we had to work with two different Directors of Photography and Sound Recordists because their availability was restricted by other commitments as production had been extended to over a six months period.

Along the way, many people had different views on what George's life was about. George had lived a full life and left a vivid impression on many people across Australia and the rest of the world. He was a complex man with deep roots in the traditional world and the non-Indigenous world, and was a pioneering figure in black/white reconciliation. Taking all of these influences and complexities on board, Stephen and Lisa decided that the diverse story of George Rurrumbu's life was best told with music as the backbone. This then allowed an exploding soundtrack to accompany the personal stories told by interviewees, and in the songs we hear the important messages delivered by George and the band.

While *Big Name No Blanket* is a celebration of George Rurrumbu and the Warumpi Band, and a reminder of their importance and legacy to Aboriginal music and reconciliation, the film touches on sensitive issues including George's alcoholism and rock and roll behaviour. It also touches on the controversial issues of the music business such as misappropriation of Aboriginal culture and copyright laws for songwriters. With full access to George's family, friends and colleagues, *Big Name No Blanket* has brought George to life again, painting a fascinating picture of a flawed hero of Aboriginal music, a much loved icon who rose above personal challenges to bring the messages of remote Aboriginal communities to a national audience.

Murray Lui (DOP), Shane Howard (Goanna Band) & David Tranter (sound)



Murray Lui, Steven McGregor (wr/dir.) & David Tranter



Tim Alewood (DOP) and Steven McGregor in Papunya





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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

by Steven McGregor

GR was the front person of the renowned Warumpi Band. He joined a collection of musicians from Papunya, Central Australia and together they created a musical legacy. I saw the Warumpi band play many times over the years, Bathurst Island, with Midnight Oil, Sing Loud Play Strong concert in Darwin, Alice Springs on the back of a truck, Stomping Ground Broome and even in Berlin Germany. Each concert, GRB was the emotionally charged frontman who just rocked the crowd, they loved him, and he loved it. It's been said over and over again that he was Australia's black Mick Jagger and it is true, it's such an apt description of the man.

This film celebrates GR and the journey of the Warumpi Band. It is a classic rock documentary but one with a slight edge. What we have in our favour is his family wants us to tell his story and they want everything revealed. GR loved being a rock star and all the "benefits" that came with it, including drinking.

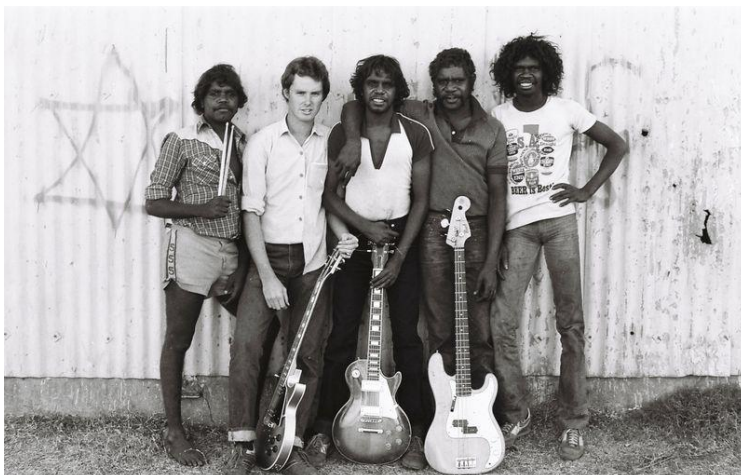
We peel back the layers to reveal the essence of who GR was. From his birthplace on Elcho Island off the coast of Arnhem Land where he grew up under the tutorage of his father and uncles, a student of his culture. He was also a student of the church, and remained a deeply religious man through out his life.

GRB had strong a social conscience, which was reflected in his music and his passion for speaking up and challenging society. We place GR and the band into the social fabric of the day to punctuate GR's passion for his people.

The origins of the band are in Papunya, Central Australia, where GR married and settled down to raise a family. Neil Murray, Sammy and Gordon Butcher along with GR began jamming together in the middle of Australia. The band members provide us with first hand accounts of the early years along with life on the road and the chaos that ensures when seduced by the rock'n'roll lifestyle.

There is a wealth of film and video of GR, in full flight, and the Warumpi Band, which is a gift. We have combined this extensive archive with interviews with his family, band members and his musical peers of the day.

When GR passed away in 2007, Australia lost a remarkable man and musician. This film wants to make sure people don't forget him, the contributions he made and the dreams he lit.





BIOGRAPHIES – TALENT

GEORGE RRURRAMBU – Please refer to the synopsis.

NEIL MURRAY – Biography

Neil Murray first appeared in the late 1970s as a founding member of the Warumpi Band, which, over three albums (*Big Name No Blankets*, *Go Bush*, *Too Much Humbug*) and 20 years, propelled contemporary Indigenous music into mainstream Australia, yielding such classic songs as *My Island Home*, *Blackfella Whitefella*, *Fitzroy Crossing*, *Jailanguru Pakarnu*, *Stompin Ground*, *From the Bush* and *Waru*.

Neil has since become one of Australia's most respected and influential singer/songwriters and has enjoyed a solo career since 1989. He has released eleven solo albums- *Calm & Crystal Clear*, *These Hands*, *Dust*, *The Wondering Kind*, *Going The Distance*, *About Time* (a 2CD retrospective compilation), *Spoken*, *2 Songmen* (live with Shane Howard in Darwin), *Overnighter*, *Witness* and the latest *Sing the Song - the essential Neil Murray* - a double album compilation of his best loved songs.

Neil's songwriting is diverse - from the rollicking *Good Light in Broome*, to the environmental urgency of *Burning Land*, to the prayerful *Native Born*, the roots groove of *Long Grass Band*, the endurance of love in *Over the Moon*, the journeyman monologues of *Lights of Hay*, the reflection on mortality in *High On a Hill*, and the contemplation of place in *Burrumbeep Hill* and *Tjapwurrung Country*. His work collectively describes an inner landscape to the heart of the nation – a journey, which has done much to deepen and strengthen Australia's contemporary musical heritage.

Those who have read his novel *Sing for me Countryman* (regarded as an Australian classic) or poetry book *One Man Tribe*, or listened to his spoken word CD *Spoken* or seen his play *King For This Place* or read his song lyrics in the published book *Native Born* would know of his affinity for the land and respect for indigenous culture.

In 1995, Neil Murray was awarded the APRA song of the year for *My Island Home* originally written for the Warumpi Band and re-recorded by Christine Anu. *My Island Home* has become something of an unofficial anthem and featured in the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

In 2007, *Jailanguru Pakarnu (Out From Jail)* a song he co-wrote in the Indigenous Luritja language with fellow Warumpi Band co-founder Sammy Butcher was honoured by the National Film And Sound archives "Sounds Of Australia" series as a significant recording in Australia's musical heritage.

In 2010 his iconic song *My Island Home* was published as a children's book and the equally landmark *Blackfella Whitefella* was published as a children's book in 2012 by One Day Hill.

Neil Murray's songs have been recorded by Mary Black, Jimmy Little, Amy Saunders, Tiddas, Christine Anu, Ursula Yovich and the Warumpi Band.

Neil Murray performs regularly at festivals and live music venues in Australia and overseas. Neil Murray's albums are out through ABC Music. He is currently working on new recordings with producer Craig Pilkington.



SAMMY BUTCHER - Biography

Sammy Butcher, a Luritja man from Papunya community, 250km west of Alice Springs in the NT, is renowned by his musical peers as the best Aboriginal guitar player in Australia. Musically, he is famous for his guitar riffs and his songwriting skills, in which he has been a key songwriter for iconic tunes such as *Blackfella Whitefella*, *Mountains Never Change*, and *Jailunguru Pakurunu*. This has put him in the top league nationally of the Indigenous music scene, for his role in forging the Indigenous music movement of the NT, mentoring the youth and expressing Indigenous issues. Sammy holds an innate responsibility to facilitate a better life for his fellow people and he uses music to strengthen the politico-social relationships between governments, agencies and communities.

His passion for music began at an early age when he was growing up during the establishment of Papunya community in the 1960s. He was already self-taught by the age of ten; his main influences being The Shadows, Jet Atkins, Tommy Emmanuel and Dire Straits. Sammy is a founding member of the legendary Warumpi Band, which emerged as a result of his musical rapport with artist Neil Murray and his brother-in-law, the late singer Mr George Rurrumbu. In the 1980s he toured nationally with the Warumpi Band, and throughout the NT with Midnight Oil. In 2008 an album comprising both Warumpi Band and Midnight Oil songs was released in the USA.

National and international touring was prolific in the 1990s. To mention a few tours and gigs: in 1993 Sammy and the Warumpi Band joined the *Carnivale Tour* in NSW, touring with Tiddas, Kev Carmody and Roger Knox. Also in 1993, the Warumpi's opened the *Ray Martin Show*, singing *Blackfella Whitefella*, and in 1994 they performed at Darling Harbour and at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. In 1995, gigs included *Survival Day* and *Big Day Out* in Sydney. They toured throughout Europe in 1995 including: England, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France, and Romania. The Warumpi's toured with acclaimed Indigenous artists: The Mills Sisters, Kev Carmody, Tiddas, Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter, performing at *Outdoor Festival* in Zug Switzerland, the House of World Cultures in Berlin and also at the *Summer Festival* in Bonn. In 1996, the Warumpi Band received an award at the *Too Deadly Music Awards* at the Metro Theatre in Sydney for 'Outstanding contribution to Aboriginal Music'.

In the mid 1990s, Sammy received a grant from the Arts Council that resulted in his solo instrumental album *Desert Surf Guitar*. Since then, Sammy has been integral to the ongoing development of emerging bands in the Luritja/Pintupi region. Sammy has dedicated himself over two decades on a voluntary basis, working and teaching youth, producing both the Little Orphan Band and now the popular Tjupi Band. The Tjupi Band comprises some members of the Little Orphan band and, under his leadership, has generated up to sixty songs that convey messages on: petrol sniffing, drugs and alcohol, belonging, and identity.

To ensure that music remained active and alive in the Papunya Community, Sammy established the Warumpi Music Studio, opened by Peter Garrett in 2002 and which he still operates today. In this studio, Sammy has made many recordings in various genres: reggae, gospel and instrumental. In 2004, CAAMA produced a documentary about Sammy Butcher under its Nganampa Anwernekenhe' series, titled *Sammy Butcher: Out of the Shadows*. Produced by Rachel Clements and directed by Allan Collins and Lisa Watts, this documentary was broadcast on ABC, Imparja Television and Maori Television, NZ.

Today, Sammy continues to play and write music, organise community concerts, record, mentor the youth and is a prominent leader in Central Australia on Indigenous struggles. He has dedicated his life to Indigenous music and is an exceptionally hard working and extremely busy man.



BIOGRAPHIES - CREW

Director	Steven McGregor
Producers	Rachel Clements & Lisa Watts
Writers	Lisa Watts & Steven McGregor
Cinematographers	Murray Lui & Tim Alewood
Sound Recordists	David Tranter and Steven McDonald
Editor	Bill Murphy
Music Clearances	Belinda Yates

STEVEN MCGREGOR – Writer/Director

Steven McGregor is an Indigenous writer/director from Darwin. He has worked in the film and television industry since joining Imparja Television as a cameraman and editor in the 1990s. A directing graduate of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Steven has worked on numerous documentary and drama projects as a writer, director and/or producer, including a 50-minute drama, *Cold Turkey*, for which he received two AFI nominations. His documentary, *5 Seasons*, won the award for Best Indigenous Film at the National Geographic Film Festival. *My Brother Vinnie* was a festival favourite winning awards in Australia and overseas, including being nominated for a Logie and an IF Award.

In 2007, Steven spent ten months on the Baz Luhrmann epic *Australia*, working closely with Baz and his creative team as script adviser and acting tutor for the Indigenous cast. His most recent work is the touching documentary *Croker Island Exodus*. Steven has also written for the acclaimed drama series *Redfern Now* (series 1 and 2) which saw him receive the 2013 AACTA for Best Screenplay in Television for episode 6, “Pretty Boy Blue”.

LISA WATTS – Writer/Producer

Dr Lisa Watts is a documentary filmmaker, political ecologist, academic and music manager. Documentaries written and directed by Lisa include *Sammy Butcher: Out of the Shadows*, broadcast on Imparja and ABC, and *Mer Rwerker-akert (Brooks Soak Country)*, also broadcast on the ABC.

Lisa is the Executor of The Estate of the late GRB, and has a strong and solid relationship with the family built over 25 years. She is the manager of Sammy Butcher, founding member of Warumpi Band, and the Tjupi Band who are descendants of the Warumpi Band.

Lisa Watts is nationally renowned for forging Warlpiri and Anmatyerr water rights of the Central and Western Desert. Her groundbreaking work in this field includes developing Indigenous groundwater modelling and applied approaches to Anmatyerr and Warlpiri struggles for environmental justice. In 2000, Lisa completed the first joint masters in an Australian University with Simon Fisher, a Warlpiri man from Yuendumu. She gained an Australian Post Graduate Award (APA) and subsequently completed her doctorate on the political ecology of Warlpiri water rights in 2009 under the University of Melbourne.



Lisa also facilitated the Stolen Generations movement of the Northern Territory that formalized the Central Australian Stolen Generations & Families Aboriginal Corporation (CASG&FAC). Her work involved addressing the struggles of the Stolen Generations people of the NT, instigating narrative therapy within this framework, and facilitating many healing summits and films, including *Beyond Sorry* and *Case 442*, and the book '*Alone on the Soaks: the life and times of Alex Kruger by Alec Kruger and Gerard Waterford*' which won the inaugural Human Rights Commission prize in 2008.

Lisa is currently writing her first manuscript '*Pikilyi: water rights – human rights*' which has been accepted by Charles Darwin University Press.

RACHEL CLEMENTS – Producer

Rachel wrote & produced her first short film *Flasher* in 1996, winning Most Popular Film at the Queensland New Filmmaker Awards. She moved to London where she worked for MTV and Miramax Films, returning to Australia to attend AFTRS in 1999. Short AFTRS drama films produced by Rachel, including *Joy* by Cate Shortland and *Into the Night* by Tony Krawitz, won many awards. She graduated in 2001 with an MA in Producing; she was the recipient of the inaugural FFC Creative Producer Award. From 2001-2004, Rachel produced award winning short films funded by Screen NSW and the Australian Film Commission including *Tree* (Sundance Film Festival) and *Soul Mates* (nominated for an IF Award).

From 2004 to 2009, Rachel worked at CAAMA, Australia's largest Aboriginal multimedia company, producing award-winning shows including *Double Trouble*, the first Aboriginal children's drama series for network TV (Channel 9, Disney), and documentaries including *Karli Jalangu* and *Cheeky Dog* (both Sydney Film Festival and ABC broadcast). She was Executive Producer at CAAMA during the development and production of Warwick Thornton's *Samson and Delilah*. Rachel has executive produced documentaries for CAAMA/ABC (*Destiny in Alice*, *Willaberta Jack*), and *Urrepeye*, the launch film for NITV. Films produced by Rachel have won awards including AFI, ATOM and Australian Writers Guild. Her most recent film, *Ochre and Ink*, was filmed in China and the NT for ABC and NITV.

MURRAY LUI – Director of Photography

Murray was born in the small community of Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. His interest in stills photography and video cameras as a teenager became a full time passion and profession and 'Muz' is now recognised as being the first Torres Strait Islander professional film and television cinematographer. In 1994 he was selected as a part of Lester Bostock's Indigenous TV Training Course, which was run through Bostock's company, Kuri Productions and based at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. During the short, he grew to realise there was a vast and creatively expansive world to explore far away from the sandy white beaches of his childhood.

In 1998 Murray was accepted into the mainstream AFTRS Cinematography course. He achieved his MA in Drama Cinematography, graduating in 2000. He has worked as a camera operator on the mini series (*RAN*) *Remote Area Nurse* and *The Circuit*, and as 2nd unit DOP for the feature films *Footy Legends* and *Prime Mover*. He was DOP on Dena Curtis's powerful short drama *Jacob*, Warwick Thornton's *Green Bush*, and Wayne Blair's *The Djarn Djarns*. Murray has been DOP on feature films including *Orange Love Story* and *The Finished People*, and has been DOP on many documentaries, including *Footy: the La Perouse Way*, *The Good Fight*, *Ochre and Ink* and *Buckskin*.



TIM ALEWOOD – Director of Photography

Tim is an award winning cinematographer whose works spans documentary, television, commercials and drama. He's a AFTRS graduate, and has filmed extensively throughout the world.

TV and documentary projects include 4 seasons of *Mythbusters* in San Francisco for Discovery, *Taboo* (series) for Beyond and National Geographic, *No Way Get F*#ked F*#k: The Angels* (Beyond/SBS), and shark specials all over the world.

He has won 2 golden tripods at the ACS awards, and has a passion for timelapse photography. He has also exhibited stills in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and San Francisco.

DAVID TRANTER – Sound Recordist

Based in Alice Springs, David Tranter is Australia's leading Aboriginal sound recordist. With a career spanning more than 20 years, he has recorded sound all over Australia, in cities and the remotest areas, in New York, Paris and Beijing. David's work includes feature drama films (*Samson and Delilah* and *Here I Am*), television drama series (*The Alice* and *Double Trouble*), short drama films (*Green Bush*, *Nana*, *Plains Empty* and *Jacob*), and over 200 documentaries (recent work includes *Songlines to the Seine*, *Running for New York*, *My Brother Vinnie*, *art + soul* and *First Australians*). He won an AFI Award and an Australian Screen Sound Award in 2009 for his work on *Samson and Delilah*, and was also nominated for an IF Award.

David began directing documentaries in 2004. He directed *Willaberta Jack* in 2006 for the ABC, and has made 4 *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* documentaries for Imparja Television and ABC. His film *Karli Jalungu: Boomerang Today* was screened at Sydney Film Festival and ImagiNative in Canada.

STEVE MCDONALD – Sound Recordist

A graduate from the Australian Film Television and Radio School, Steve McDonald has recorded sound for drama and documentary. Feature dramas include *A Day in the Life* (2009), *Anyone You Want* (2008) as well as the Making Of documentaries for *The Great Gatsby* and *Australia*. Documentaries include series *Persons of Interest* (2010) and *Bizarre Foods* (2008), and television shows such as *Beauty and the Geek* (2011).

Alongside his sound recording career for film and television, Steven also records sound for TVCs, teaches sound recording at tertiary level and flies helicopters.

BILL MURPHY ASE – Editor

Bill Murphy's editing work encompasses award winning films across many genres. His credits include the Oscar Winning animation *Harvie Krumpet*, the Emmy Award Winning feature documentary *Exile in Sarejevo*, the A.F.I Award winning television documentary *Wildness* and the feature films *Romper Stomper* starring Russell Crowe, *Amy* starring Rachel Griffiths, *Till Human Voices Wake Us* starring Guy Pearce and Helena Bonham-Carter and *Half Light* starring Demi Moore. In 2000 Bill edited an innovative, two hour film, *El Nino* which accompanied the John Adams oratorio *El Nino*, directed by Peter Sellars, and premiered at the Theatre du Chatelet, Paris in December of that year. In 2003 Bill was accredited as a member of the Australian Screen Editors Association, in recognition of his screen editing and his outstanding contribution to Australian screen culture.



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BELINDA YATES - Music Supervisor

Renowned as one of the most experienced licensing people in the country, Belinda has spent over 30 years working in the Australian Music Industry. Belinda spent 19 of these years with EMI, one of the world's largest publishing companies where she licensed their copyrights for advertising, film, corporate, internet and theatrical productions. Belinda negotiated licensing deals for world famous catalogues; The Beatles, Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Disney, Motown and top local acts, Men At Work, Savage Garden, The Veronicas, Divinyls, and The Whitlams.

Belinda has also been involved in negotiating music for some of Australia's best known and most loved films and stage and television shows - *Happy Feet*, *Babe*, *The Dish*, *Boy from Oz*, *Priscilla Queen of the Dessert*, *Shout*, *Australian Idol*, *It Takes Two* and *Bodyline* to name just a few.





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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1baOxLwccB8> (Jailangaru Pakarnu)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tq0Nd2Btf1I> (Blackfella Whitefella)

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End of the Corrugated Road, dir. Jason Ramp, ABC 2002



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1 SPIRITUAL PLACE OF BIRTH - BAWAKA

George Rrurrambu was a Gumatj man, whose spiritual ancestral ties connect to a place called 'Bawaka', a small Yolngu Homeland in East Arnhemland. Bawaka is situated right on the beach at Port Bradshaw, near Cape Arnhem and is about 90kms across the sand dunes from Yirrkala. The Gumatj people comprise three main family groups: Gumatj Burarrawanga, Gumatj Munungirritj and Gumatj Yunupingu. As the working title of the film suggest, 'George Rrurrambu' is his stage name and 'George Djilayngu Rrurrambu Burarrawanga', is his full traditional name, identifying him as a Gumatj Burarrawanga.

Spiritually, the anchor symbolises the country of Bawaka to represent the history and stories of the Gumatj early contact with the Makassar trepangers (Macassans) from the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia around the early 1700s (or possibly earlier). It reminds the Gumatj people of the importance of being anchored to the land.



The Anchor, an important symbol to the Gumatj people

George Rrurrambu's immediate family live permanently at Elcho Island but some close family members moved back to Bawaka in the 1980s and continue to live there today. It is the spiritual birthplace of the Baru (Saltwater Crocodile) Dreaming, which has special significance to the Gumatj people.

The documentary opens with aerial shots of Bawaka, filmed by the crew from a helicopter, chartered from the township of Nhulunbuy.

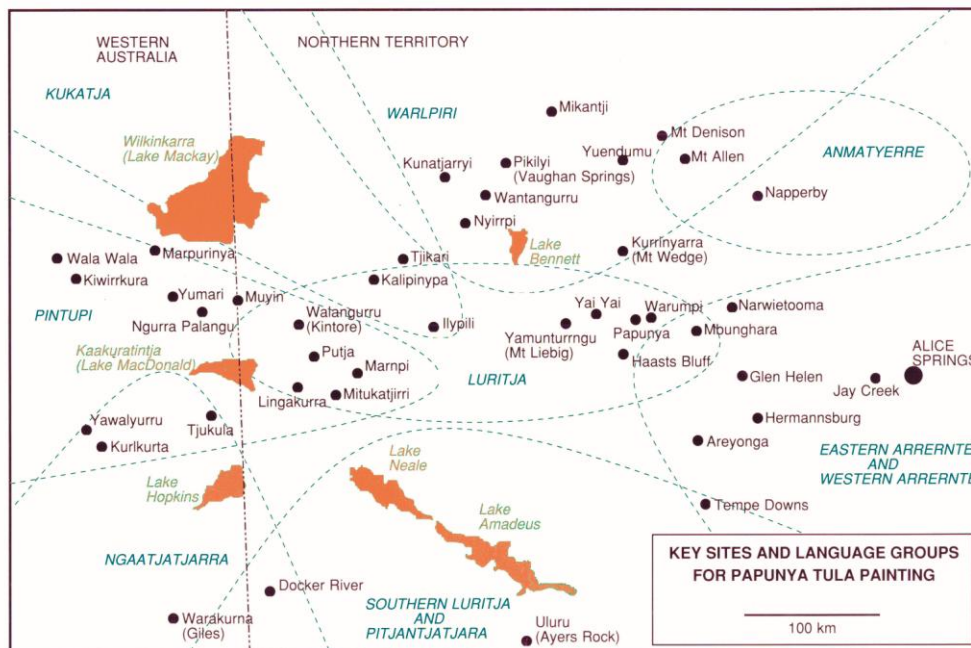


The anchor flag held by George Rrurrambu's son and daughter at the Alice Springs memorial concert held in collaboration with the Black Arm Band, Alice Springs 2009.



2 THE SOCIO POLITICAL CONTEXT OF PAPUNYA

About the same time George Rrurrambu was born at Elcho Island in 1956, the government began to establish the Papunya settlement in the Northern Territory. These were amongst the very last of the Aboriginal people to have first contact with European people, as recently as the 1930s. With regards to the Warlpiri, Pintupi and Luritja people, Pastor Albrecht and two Arrernte missionaries set out on camels from the Lutheran mission established at Hermannsburg to spread the Gospel and to see how the neighbours of the Arrernte people was fairing.



Language groups and Indigenous communities of the Central Australian region

The small party traversed the traditional walking course of water holes, passing through Haasts Bluff, Ilpili, Pikiliyi of Mt Doreen Station, Central Mt Wedge Station, eventually returning to Hermannsburg.

They found their neighbours in the most deplorable condition, dying of starvation, thirst and horrific diseases from being squeezed out of their country by the cattle stations.

This expedition triggered a campaign, which was to last for the next two decades. It involved the Lutherans, South Australian Baptist Church, and the Association for the Protection of Native Races lobbying the government to draw the authorities' attention to the desperate situation of the western tribes and to argue that unless the government deemed themselves responsible, the future of the tribes was grim. Many of the neighbouring language groups had found it increasingly hard to find food because the cattle had desecrated the waterholes or white pastoralists and miners had deliberately despoiled the waterholes as a means of warding the local people out of the area. Aboriginal people were also living in fear of attack by police or pastoralist and their choices were limited to either staying out in the desert and dying of starvation or thirst or to come into evangelists' camps or mission depot. The closest set up was at Alapi, at the edge of Haasts Bluff.



By 1944, nearly 500 people congregated at the mission outpost at Alapi and with such a large number of people living close together without adequate infrastructure, including adequate water supply, an epidemic of measles broke out, causing many to get sick. By the end of the 1940s, the government established one of the first canteens of the region to provide regular meals and this marked an era where people could not longer fulfil the law of the land and became dependent on government rations.

The mission outpost could not sustain a large congregation due to the shortage of water and in the late 1940s, the government surveyed the country for another area to relocate the people. They found an ample water supply where the honey ant dreaming meets at Warumpi Hill. This area intersects many neighbouring tribes, bordering Pintupi country to the west, Arrernte and Pitjantjara land to the south, Warlpiri land to the north, and Anmatyerre land to the north and east. People called this place Papunya.

The establishment of Papunya coincided with the severe drought of the 1950s and the introduction of the government's assimilation policy that attempted to make Aboriginal people live like white people. It was like all social policy seen before and which followed, aiming to reform Aboriginal people. In 1963, a government patrol brought in about 74 Pintupi people into Papunya by truck, deemed the last ever hunter-gatherer society on this earth. Within two years, half of them had died.

By the mid 1960s, government and missionaries forcibly relocated up to 1,000 traditional people of mixed language groups into the settlement. Between 1962 and 1963 over half of the children population had died of malnutrition. Most others had fallen ill from a lack of tolerance to the canteen diets. Alcohol was another lethal factor and fatefully resulted in many alcohol related deaths, including car accidents.

In the late 1970s, when George Rrurrambu arrived at Yuendumu, he could very well relate to the effects of colonization; he too had been born into a similar history. In the 1940s, the collusion of both government and missionaries had forcibly relocated his own family from his spiritual birthplace of Bawaka to the mission settlement of Elcho Island.

While high mortality rates were still extraordinarily high in the 1970s and 80s, most of the Australian population remained oblivious to the devastating impact of colonisation on the bush people and this was not publically made until the emergence of the Warumpi Band.

The Warumpi Band referred to this period of dispossession, *The Secret War*. They sang:

This is a story of colonisation

It's a story that's been told before

It's the blood of indigenous races

On the hands of invading force

There's a government and an army

Not far from these north shores

And the tribesmen in the jungle

They fight a secret war



3 BUSH POLITICS

Urban politics had received national attention in the 1960s and 1970s. Bart Willoughby of No Fixed Address (a reggae rock band from Ceduna) is recognised for writing and performing the first anthemic Aboriginal rock song *We Have Survived*. The song features as the soundtrack in a film the band made, *Wrong Side of the Road* in 1981. The film exposes the racism the band encountered, while touring with 'Us Mob' through the country towns of the remote areas of South Australia. Both bands had studied together at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) based in Adelaide. No Fixed Address embraced reggae, heavily influenced by the 1979 Bob Marley tour of Australia and wrote lyrics that encompassed the socio-political themes of Australian Aboriginal oppression set in an urban context.

In 1983, No Fixed Address supported Peter Tosh's Australian tour, consolidating Indigenous contemporary music by linking it to the music of 'other oppressed peoples around the world. Already received by wider Australian audiences, the Warumpi Band made public a new bush politics, in which the faces of oppression entered the Australian consciousness: unemployment, poverty, and Australia's lack of recognition of Indigenous Australians.

George via the Warumpi Band took the contemporary Indigenous music movement one step further by enunciating a new bush politics that offered an in-depth insight into the struggles of traditional Aboriginal people from remote Australia, linked to the land rights movement that emerged in the 1970s. A wave of organised Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal protests of the 1960s had demanded the return of traditional land, awakening the Australian social consciousness like in no other period of white settlement.

4 GEORGE RRURRAMBU – The Performer

The general notion that fans have of George Rrurrambu are analogous to major figures of 20th century popular music, especially the originators of a new wave of music or genre. Australian audiences and the music industry have placed him on the highest possible pedestal, denoting him as 'the black Mick Jagger', or, 'the father of Aboriginal rock'n'roll'. Strong musical figures, for instance, Peter Garrett have compared him to the likes of James Brown, the originator of funk American music and who has referred himself and by others as the 'the godfather of soul'.

George Rrurrambu exuded macho cool with his huge and naturally grown afro-hair style that gave a bush appearance, dressed in his signatory performance attire: yellow shoes, leather pants in stripes of Aboriginal colours and a matching vest with an Aboriginal flag encrypted on the back. His costume alone projected the strongest of symbols of black traditions and culture. He was the first artist to introduce Aboriginal clap sticks and boomerangs into rock and roll and his performances were so electric that he has been compared to Michael Hutchence, the founding lead singer-songwriter of rock band INXS, described by Ian McFarlane, rock music historian as 'the archetype rock showman'.

As the frontman of Midnight Oil, Mr Garrett worked and toured with George Rrurrambu in the late 1980s, and hailed him as one of the world's best performers. Peter Garrett states:

'If you think of Mick Jagger or James Brown or Michael Hutchence or any of the sort of really charismatic performers that just take over a stage - whether they are on the back of a flat bed truck in a dusty community or whether they're in a theatre in Sydney or Melbourne - this bloke had it and he had it in spades.'



In his solo career, he continued his role as ambassador for delivering socio-political issues. Footage shows him working closely with the Northern Territory Government, producing video works on health and educational issues: *Gotta Go to School* and *Living in a House*. He travelled the Territory promoting these issues through live performances on communities.

'He was in many respects a great leader and advocate for Indigenous people in this country and not only by his music but by his character, by his attitude and just by the way in which he dealt with other Australians.'

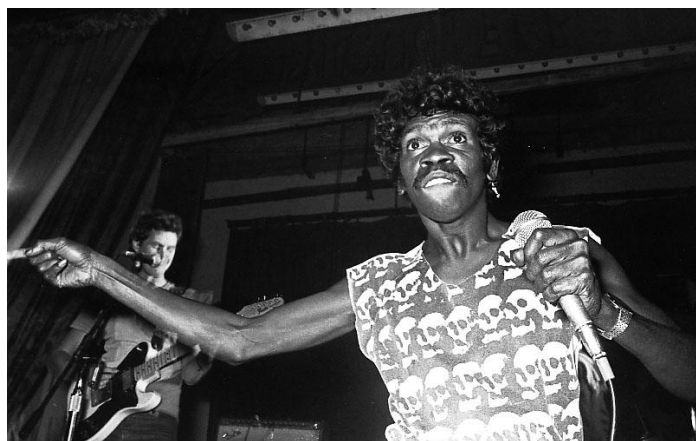
Warren Snowden, Federal Minister for Lingiari, NT.

The only time George gave recognition to his own influence was in a statement he prepared to formally notify his fans of his passing on 10 June 2007. A separate clause reads in his will, 'The King of Rock and Roll has died today'.

4 GENERAL

George was integral to the emergence of the contemporary Aboriginal music industry, breaking away from the musical genre of gospel and country that dominated the Indigenous music scene in the 1960s and 1970s. However, his motivations focused on using music and culture as a vehicle to speak for his people, helping them overcome their struggles. On one level, he used music and culture to resist white reform policy but on the premise that he knew it would never work. He offered to the nation, a better way of doing things that would give his people hope and help them successfully move through this difficult transition.

His respectful nature of culture and people inherited through his Gumatj tradition, inhibited him from flaunting his fame. His fans only knew him as the Aboriginal rock and roll legend of the 1980s, just from what they saw of his stage appearances, mainly as the front man of the Warumpi Band that reached wider Australian audiences and which gathered huge crowds, bringing white and black together across the continent. Throughout his lifetime, the Australian public have not had an insight into the motivations that drove him to be the performer he was, the purpose of his outstanding work, including the struggles he toiled with. Most of the work produced about him, for example, *End of the corrugated road* (ABC), places him in a performing role as a lead singer and, in reality, his place in the musical genre of rock n roll is grossly understated and misrepresent both the context of his era and who is really was and what he represented.





5 INTERVIEWEES INCLUDED IN THE FILM

LOCATION		RELEVANCE
Elcho Island	Marion Burarrawanga	Eldest daughter
	Loretta Burarrawanga	Daughter
	Peter Djatchin	Elder brother
Barunga	Suzina McDonald	Wife
	Carlos Burarrawanga	Son
Papunya	Sammy Butcher	Warumpi Band guitarist
Lake Bolac	Neil Murray	Contemporary/peer/co-songwriter
Darwin	Allan Murphy	Drummer Warumpi Band, close friend
	Richard Micallef	Music Producer
	Carroll Karpany	Peer/friend (Us Mob)
Alice Springs	Warwick Thornton	Filmmaker, early CAAMA radio DJ
Melbourne:	Shane Howard	Peer/friend (Goanna Band)
	Selwyn Burns	Peer/friend (Coloured Stone)
	Lou Bennett	Peer/friend (Tiddas, Black Arm Band)
Sydney:	Rachel Perkins	Close friend
	Peter Garrett	Contemporary/peer
	Glenn A Baker	Australian music expert
	David Cooke	Ex-Warumpi Band manager





6 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES

Name: George Djilyangu Rrurrambu Burarrawanga

D.O.B: 13 June 1956

D.O.D.: 10 June 2007

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1979 | Arrives at Yuendumu, Central Australia |
| 1980 | Forms the Warumpi Band and marries Suzina
Perform at Papunya Hall and at Elcho Island |
| 1981 | Commence touring to bush communities in Central Australia and to Western Australia. |
| 1983 | Releases first rock song in an Aboriginal language |
| 1984 | Releases debut album 'Big Name No Blankets |
| 1983-1985 | Lives two years at Elcho
Returns to Papunya and tours Australia and overseas |
| 1986 | Releases second album "Go Bush" and tours interstate to promote the album |
| 1987 | The band takes respite. |
| 1990s | George returns to live at Elcho Island with his wife and kids, where he lived for the next six years. |
| 1993 | Recorded on compilation CD
Extensive touring as follows:
20 th January 1993: Survival Day at La Perouse – Sydney
Carnivale tour in NSW with Tiddas, Kev Carmody, Roger Knox.
This tour took in the towns of Tamworth, Nimbin, Brewarrina, Walgett, Wellington, Canberra as well as Sydney. |



- 30th May 1993** Took part in Black voice in Brisbane, which was part of the Brisbane Biennial, International music festival. Warumpi performed with Kev Carmody, The Mills Sisters, Roger Knox, Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter
- June 1993** Warumpi performed around some of the gaols in NSW, including Bathurst, Long Bay and Goulbourn. This was part of Aboriginal week celebrations. Warumpi opened the Ray Martin Show, singing Blackfella, Whitefella. On the same night, Warumpi performed at the Enmore Theatre in Enmore, Sydney.
- 30 October 1993** Warumpi performed at the Rose Shamrock & Thistle Hotel, Sydney along with Toni Janke
- 27 Nov 1993** Warumpi performed at the Bondi Beach pavilion as part of the Australian Music Day entertainment, then went on to Brisbane and Cairns to perform
- 1994** They performed at Darling Harbour in Sydney for a big anti drug and alcohol convention – no other information known. They performed at a big gig for Indigenous, which was held at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. It was supposed to be with Jimmy Barnes but he pulled out. It may have been during the winter months, like June.
- 1995**
- 26 January 1995** Survival day at La Perouse, Sydney and Big Day Out, Sydney showground. These events were both on the same day
- 28 May 1995** Warumpi left Australia for their overseas tour of Europe and English. This tour was completed on 10 July 1995, with their last performance at 'The Orange Club' in West Kensington. The tour travelled to Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France, England, and Romania. On this tour, were with the Mills Sisters, Kev Carmody, Tiddas, Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter. A part of the tour involved performing at the Outdoor Festival in Zug, Switzerland, The House of World Cultures at



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Berlin and at the Australian Embassy and the Summer Festival in Bonn.

Sept to Oct 1995 Band recorded the Too Much Humbug album at CAAMA

14 October 1995 Warumpi performed at Brewarrina in NSW as part of the Brewarrina Festival.

1996

1 October 1996 Warumpi Band received an award for 'Outstanding contribution to Aboriginal Music at the Too Deadly Music Awards.
Warumpi Band did a film session in Sydney at the Domain for an English breakfast show prior to going overseas.

1996 -2003 His mother died at Elcho Island and he subsequently moved to live at Barunga with his wife and children to focus on his solo career, producing his own one man shows, albums and wrote many songs in language, drawing from his Gumatj tradition.

2003-2007 Separated from his wife and moved to Darwin. He formed the Birdwave Band, continued to perform regularly and occasionally with the Warumpi Band at celebratory events.

Early 2007 George was diagnosed with lung and bone cancer. He returned to Elcho Island for his final months.

10 June 2007 George Rrurrambu passed away in Elcho Island, his island home.





7 COMPOSITIONS BY GEORGE RRURRAMBU

Compositions held with Universal Publishing

Composition:	Composers:
ANIMAL SONG	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
BLACKFELLA/WHITEFELLA	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
BOOMERANG	George Rrurrambu, (N. Bomba)
DIDGERIDOO BLUES	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
DJATPANGARRI CREATION	George Rrurrambu
DJULPAN	George Rrurrambu, (Peter Datjing), (Gumbula)
DJUTARRA	George Rrurrambu, (Bruce Layilayi), (Peter Datjing)
DULPAN	George Rrurrambu, (G. Datjin), (Gumbula)
EASTERN WIND	George Rrurrambu
FREEDOM PEACE IN ONE WORLD	George Rrurrambu, (N. Bomba), (I. Cook)
FROM THE BUSH	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
GALUKU	George Rrurrambu, (Bruce Layilayi)
GOTTA BE STRONG	George Rrurrambu, Sammy Butcher, Neil Murray
GUYULARRI	George Rrurrambu, (Bruce Layilayi)
JOINING MY LIFE	Neil Murray, Sammy Butcher, George Rrurrambu
KOORI MAN	Neil Murray, Sammy Butcher, George Rrurrambu
LAPU	George Rrurrambu, (GurrumGurrum), (Bruce Layilayi)
MAKES YOU FEEL	Neil Murray, Sammy Butcher, George Rrurrambu, (B. Hec
MARRAYILYIL	George Rrurrambu, (Peter Datjing), (Gumbula), (Bruce
NYUNTU NYAALTJIRRIKU	George Rrurrambu, Sammy Butcher, Neil Murray, (E. Ell
STAND UP	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
STOMPIN' GROUND	Neil Murray, Sammy Butcher, George Rrurrambu
TJILURU TJILURU	George Rrurrambu, Sammy Butcher, Neil Murray, (Ian An
WAKE UP AUSTRALIA	George Rrurrambu, (Richard Micalfeff), (P. Gadsby)
WARU	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu



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WATU	George Rrurrambu
WAYATHUL	George Rrurrambu, Neil Murray
WE GOTTA BE STRONG	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu, Sammy Butcher
WE SHALL CRY	Sammy Butcher, George Rrurrambu, Neil Murray
WIIMA TJUTA	Neil Murray, George Rrurrambu
YAKA BAYUNGA	George Rrurrambu
YOLNGU BOY	George Rrurrambu, Sammy Butcher, Neil Murray





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Compositions held with Skinnyfish

Composition	Composers
BARRA	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay, Hicks, Fell
BARU	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay, Hicks, Fell
CREATION	George Rrurrambu
DAYPAWI	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
DHIMURRU	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
DIRRMALA	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
ERNABELLA	Grifas G, George Rrurrambu
GATING	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
GELANG GELANG	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
KULILAYA	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
LIVING IN A HOUSE	George Rrurrambu, M Hohnen
LONELY NIGHT	Lewis M, Jarrett W, George Rrurrambu
LURRPU	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
MY BOYS ARE GOOD BOYS	George Rrurrambu, Layi Layi, Manydjarri, Yirryurng
PAYBACK	George Rrurrambu. Matjiwi C, Datjin P
POLICY	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
ROCK OUTCROPS	Girfas G, George Rrurrambu
SAILING	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
SHOW ME THE MONEY	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
STREET OF BLUES SOUL	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
WATJAPA	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell
WHALE SONG	George Rrurrambu, Matjiwi C
YAKA BAYNGU	George Rrurrambu
YOLNGU MAN	George Rrurrambu, Courtenay, Courtenay Hicks, Fell



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INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PROTOCOL

Big Name No Blanket is the story of the life and music of the late George Rrurrambu, front man of the Warumpi Band.

Tragically, George passed away in June 2007. George's family have signed release forms supporting the ongoing inclusion of George in our documentary. We have been granted permission to use George's image and music in *Big Name No Blanket*, and for promotion and publicity use.

All Indigenous IP rights in the paintings shown in the film remain with JBB's family or the other artists involved. All representation of Indigenous people, music, art, culture and places remain in the control of the appropriate Indigenous people and can not be used for any other purpose outside of *Big Name No Blanket* without permission from the appropriate people. This includes any interpretations of traditional art, music or culture discussed in the film, and translations. *The Bawaka song*, as performed by Charlie Matjiwi and Johnny Burarrawanga in the film, is a traditional song and can not be used for any other purpose outside of the film.

CREDIT LINES

Credit Line for Production

Developed and produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Screen Australia (a National Documentary Program) and Screen Territory. Produced with the assistance of Film Victoria. Featuring George Rrurrambu Burarrawanga, Neil Murray and Sammy Butcher, Director Steven McGregor, Writers Lisa Watts and Steven McGregor, Producers Rachel Clements and Lisa Watts, Director of Photography Murray Lui and Tim Alewood, Sound Recordists David Tranter and Steven McDonald, Editor Bill Murphy, Sound Designers Doron Kipen and Brendan Croxon, Composer George Papanicolaou, Featuring the music of the Warumpi Band.

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Credit Line for Publicity

Featuring the late George Rrurrambu, Neil Murray and Sammy Butcher, Director Steven McGregor, Producers Rachel Clements and Lisa Watts, Writers Lisa Watts and Steven McGregor, Directors of Photography Murray Lui and Tim Alewood, Sound Recordists David Tranter and Steven McDonald, Editor Bill Murphy, Designers Doron Kipen and Brendan Croxon, Composer George Papanicolaou, Featuring the music of the Warumpi Band.



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LOGOS



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