

A Screentime Production  
for ABC TV



An 8 x Half Hour  
Observational Documentary Series

## MEDIA KIT



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## SERIES OVERVIEW

An 8 x half hour observational documentary series, **Outback ER** sheds light on one of the most unique Emergency Departments in the country - that of the Broken Hill Base Hospital. The series highlights the important work the Emergency Response teams do in rural Australia - including the Broken Hill Base Hospital Emergency Department, the Ambulance Service of NSW and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

From snakebites and amputations, to farm accidents and heart attacks, every admission brings a new challenge. Witnessing real human drama and meeting some extraordinary characters, **Outback ER** gives introduction to the diverse population of Broken Hill. This unforgiving desert landscape breeds a population of no nonsense locals who live hard and play hard – some will even wait a few days before getting a broken bone treated! The doctors and nurses deal with those who sometimes feel like they are bullet proof with locals often treating serious injuries as just a part of ‘life on the farm’.

With remoteness, a lack of resources and recruitment all major challenges at the Broken Hill Base Hospital, it takes a special kind of medical team to work in a place like this. With an extraordinary line up of staff hailing from all parts of Australia, the series features Dr Andrew Olesnicky, Dr Katy Ellenberger and Dr Sandy Clarke. In Broken Hill Base Hospital, one thing’s for sure - every day is different, every hour is different, and just when they think they’ve seen it all...!



In a rare geographical location that borders three states, the Broken Hill Base Hospital was built by the miners 125 years ago. It was also the first hospital in the southern hemisphere to install air conditioning. With an Emergency Department faced with cases including high-speed car accidents, mining injuries, farming accidents and tourist misadventures, Broken Hill is also the main base for the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

With some patients driving themselves 450km to see a doctor and the nearest CT scanner in a different state, for the first time we see just how different things are in one of Australia’s more remote and geographically unique places.

A Screentime, a Banijay Group company, production for ABC TV, made with the financial assistance of Screen Australia and Screen NSW, created by Simon Steel, **Outback ER** is series produced by Tony De La Peña and executive produced by Screentime’s Jennifer Collins and Simon Steel with ABC TV’s Commissioning Editor, Andrea Ulbrick.

**OUTBACK ER – SERIES EPG:** A unique series that sheds light on the important work of rural ER teams including the Broken Hill Base Hospital Emergency Department, the Ambulance Service of NSW and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Screentime used an intimate crew of three to shoot **Outback ER** - a cameraman, sound recordist and field director.

The crew filmed for nearly 4 months out in Broken Hill, spending 10 days at a time camped in the Emergency Department.

Screentime producers put in place access agreements with the Broken Hill Base Hospital, The Royal Flying Doctors Service and the NSW Ambulance service.

Trying to cover stories that take place over such a huge geographical area proved challenging.

### **For example:**

To tell a story of a patient that gets transported from a remote farm by the Royal Flying Doctors Service, transferred from the airport to the hospital by ambulance and then treated in the Broken Hill Emergency Department was logistically very challenging for the crew to cover.

Obviously with such sensitive content, producers had to work very hard on relationships with patients and hospital staff and trust was key.

To showcase the Australian Outback, producers wanted to give the series a cinematic feel, which the talented Director of Photography, Steve Davis, achieved brilliantly. The use of drones also provides viewers with amazing aerial shots that demonstrate exactly how remote Broken Hill Hospital is. Within the emergency department itself, the use of locked off GoPro cameras strategically placed around the hospital gives the series a “fixed rig” feel, providing viewers with a rare insight into the inner workings of an emergency department.



# PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

**Simon Steel – Executive Producer, Screentime**

Outback ER was shot over 4 months in the Emergency Department of Broken Hill Base Hospital.

The idea of the series was to highlight the talent and commitment of the doctors and nurses in one of the most unique Emergency Departments in the country.

We wanted to give viewers a rare look at what goes on behind closed doors in an outback hospital and the challenges that emergency services face in such a remote location.

It took a professional and experienced crew to gain the extraordinary access that is self evident in the series.

The amazing people of Broken Hill that feature in the show allowed Screentime's film crew to follow the medical staff in often very stressful, tense and private situations. As a result, the series contains an extraordinary amount of resilience, emotion and personal drama.

The patients that come through the Emergency Department doors are often colourful characters that demonstrate the spirit and humour of country people.

Over 8 half hour episodes, this series introduces viewers to a real mix of people - cowboys, miners, travellers and Broken Hill locals which all make for truly engaging television.

Apart from the characters that present themselves to the Broken Hill Base Hospital, it is the unique cases that medical staff face which provides a real point of difference to other hospital observational documentary series.

Patients that have been knocked off their motorbikes by emus and kangaroos, farmers that have been attacked by livestock, spiders and snake bites are all in a days work for the doctors and nurses at Broken Hill and this makes for fascinating viewing.

The series also set out to showcase the beauty of the Australian landscape that surrounds the hospital. We wanted to give the production a really cinematic look that does justice to the beauty of the Australian Outback and this series definitely delivers on that... it looks amazing.



## MAIN MEDICAL TEAM

### Dr Andrew Olesnicky



***“Every now and then you get to be a hero. Save someone’s life and that’s a really good feeling”.***

As the Director of Emergency Services at Broken Hill Base Hospital, Dr Andrew Olesnicky is originally from Adelaide and he studied medicine at Flinders University. He completed his training at Adelaide’s Flinders Medical Centre before moving to Broken Hill four years ago.

### Dr Katy Ellenberger



***“ED out here is very different from ED in the cities... it is really exciting, it is really scary but you know the buck stops with you”.***

Originally from Sydney’s northern suburbs, Dr Katy Ellenberger studied a Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery at University of Western Sydney. Before coming to Broken Hill, Dr Ellenberger worked at Concord Hospital.



## Dr Sandy Clarke



*“Emergency can be an adrenaline rush, it’s volatile, it’s unpredictable and that can be quite a buzz”.*

Originally from the Blue Mountains near Sydney, Dr Sandy Clarke studied nursing after finishing high school. Dr Clarke previously worked as an intensive care nurse for almost five years at Concord Hospital and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, before studying medicine at the University of Queensland.

## Dr Phillip Vitols



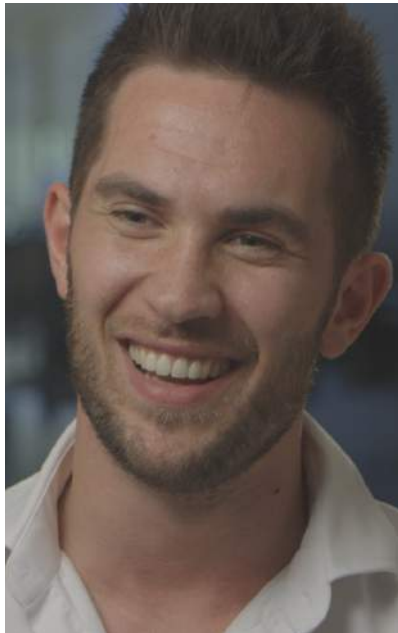
*“Working in an emergency department for me is a very enjoyable, yet very challenging job as well and especially out here in Broken Hill... you don’t know what is going to come in and there is such a variety of presentation”.*

Dr Phillip Vitols previously lived in Sydney before moving to Broken Hill over two and a half years ago. He studied at Sydney University and previously worked in Newcastle.



## SUPPORT MEDICAL TEAM

**Dr Leigh Golding**



*“Working in Broken Hill can be a bit nerve wracking... you can get some emergency situations that you would deal with in a different way if you had all the resources of a big hospital”*

**Peter Ballard**



*“The reason why I am in Broken Hill; I have always wanted to do rural and remote nursing. No two days are the same in the emergency department.”*

Originally Wauchope, Peter Ballard studied a Bachelor of Nursing at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst. After working at the Queanbeyan District Hospital Emergency Department, he then worked at Westmead Children’s Hospital for 3 years. Peter has been managing the ED and ECU in Broken Hill as a Nursing Unit Manager for 6 months.



## KEY CREW

<b>Executive Producers</b>	Jennifer Collins Simon Steel
<b>Commissioning Editor</b>	Andrea Ulbrick
<b>Series Producer</b>	Tony De La Peña
<b>Field Producer</b>	Catherine Ledingham
<b>Line Producer</b>	Catherine Durr
<b>Production Manager</b>	Kathryn Lowry
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Steve Davis
<b>Sound Recordist</b>	Grant Beed
<b>Editors</b>	Chris Beeson Renelle Richards
<b>Post-Producer</b>	Anthony Griffis
<b>Narrator</b>	Chris Burke





## EPISODE 1: John's Heart Attack

Set in the unofficial capital of the outback - Broken Hill, every admission to the local hospital presents a new challenge to the Emergency Response team. In this episode, the Broken Hill doctors call upon the Royal Flying Doctors Service to transfer a critically ill patient; they tend to a farmer who has a severe hand injury and treat a burns victim.



When John is rushed to hospital by Ambulance after suffering a severe cardiac arrest, the Broken Hill Emergency Department is put to the test. Unable to keep the man's heart beating and with limited resources at hand, Dr Andrew Olesnick is forced to use a risky procedure. With his family by his side, they prepare themselves for the worst. As a last resort, the Royal Flying Doctors Service is called to make an urgent transfer to Adelaide Hospital.

Meanwhile, sheep farmer Tim risks amputation and ultimately his livelihood after an eighty-kilo ram has crushed his hand. With the flesh severed and bone exposed, the patient has travelled 200km from his 80,000-acre property to be treated by Dr Phillip Vitols. With all operating theatres occupied in Broken Hill, the farmer may have to drive himself another 500km to Adelaide for surgery. For now, he just hopes the ram has a headache!

Born and bred in Broken Hill, Barry survived years working in the local mines, but after attempting to mend his hot water system, he suffers severe burns. Despite trying to treat his own scalded hand with "bags of frozen broccoli and brussels sprouts", Dr Sandy Clarke treats this colourful character and uncovers a heartfelt story of love and devotion.

**EPISODE 1 EPG:** Every admission to the Broken Hill Base Hospital presents a new challenge for the ER team. The doctors tend to a farmer with a severe hand injury, treat a burns victim and get the RFDS to transfer a critically ill patient.



## EPISODE 2: Grey Nomad

**A grey nomad has a horrifying accident on a remote stretch of road, baby Chloe is flown into hospital with gastro but doctors find a more worrying symptom, and the city doctors get a taste of the outback at the local races.**

After two family tragedies - the death of her son in a plane crash and the death of her husband shortly after, 68-year-old Yvonne embarks on a solo outback adventure. On a remote stretch of road she has a horrific accident rolling her campervan several times. She is flown to Broken Hill Base Hospital for urgent treatment. Yvonne's daughter rushes over from New Zealand to be by her bed, the memory of her brother's tragic accident still fresh in her mind.



Nine-month-old Chloe has had a long bout of gastro. She is flown in from a remote property in South Australia by the Royal Flying Doctors and examined by the hospital paediatrician. Concern shifts to a rash that has developed on Chloe's body. Could this be the first sign of the deadly bacterial meningitis?

Vince has come into hospital with scalded genitals. He had been boiling and skinning sausages for his wife, as he has done many times, when he accidentally poured the water onto his lap. After a delicate examination he jokes to his wife "why don't you just buy skinless sausages?"

Dr Andrew Olesnicky, Director of Emergency Department gives the big city doctors a taste of the outback by taking them to one of Broken Hill's biggest and dustiest events, The Silver City Cup.

**EPISODE 2 EPG: Doctors treat the victim of a horrific car accident, tend to a baby with worrying symptoms, examine scalded genitals and take some city folk to the local races.**

## EPISODE 3: Roo & Emu Accident

The emergency department deals with two extraordinary motorbike accidents at the same time, one hit an emu, the other a kangaroo. A mystery illness has the doctors completely baffled, and we meet Kirsti, a transgender taxi driver who found acceptance in Broken Hill.

Accidents involving wildlife aren't uncommon in Broken Hill's emergency department, but staff are surprised when two separate motorbike accidents arrive at the same time – both involving iconic Australian animals.

22 year old station hand Liam was knocked unconscious when he hit an emu on a property 65kms out of Broken Hill. Fortunately he was found by the station owner and taken to hospital. While the ED staff attend to his injuries paramedics bring in Logan, another motorcyclist critically injured after hitting a kangaroo at over 100km/h.



74 year Joan is rushed to hospital after a sudden deterioration in health. She is unresponsive to treatment, her mysterious illness completely baffling the doctors. Joan's daughter keeps a bedside vigil.

A fear of hypodermic needles gets the better of 10 year old Imogen who has cut her foot while riding her scooter.

Kirsti has a migraine, something she's dealt with since her teens when life was very different. Back then she was male. As a man, Kirsti married and had three kids, but at the age of 33 while working as a maximum security jail officer she had a sex change. Now Kirsti is a taxi driver in Broken Hill where she feels accepted for who she really is. She jokes that the only thing that has changed since becoming female is that her driving skills have deteriorated.

**EPISODE 3 EPG:** The emergency department deals with two motorbike accidents - one hit an emu, the other a kangaroo. A mystery illness has the doctors completely baffled, and we meet a transgender local who found acceptance in Broken Hill.



## EPISODE 4: Circular Saw Accident

Two brothers require urgent treatment after they both cut their hands in a freak circular saw accident. Paramedics attend to a child with a suspected spinal injury, a young man has an embarrassing pain in his bottom and the hospital staff come to terms with the death of a patient.

Brothers Keith and Paul arrive at the Emergency Department both with hand injuries. They had been restoring an old car when Keith slipped with a circular saw and cut his fingers. In that moment he offloaded the saw to his brother Paul and cut his hand as well. Keith's injury though is far more serious and it's a race against time to save his fingers.

22 year old Peter has an embarrassing problem – he has a sore bottom. Dr Sandy Clarke's examination has him wincing with pain, but he maintains his sense of humour throughout the procedure.



Dealing with the death of a patient is all part of the job for the doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department. This episode includes a rare insight into hospital procedure, providing an emotional glimpse into how hospital staff cope professionally and personally.

A backyard party ends abruptly when 4 year old Ramsay goes into seizure after jumping off the top of a slide. Paramedics are concerned about the pain in his back so he is immobilised with a neck brace and rushed to hospital. Doctors are baffled as to what caused Ramsay's seizure as he did not have a head injury. But a greater concern comes from his spinal x-ray.

**EPISODE 4 EPG:** Two brothers cut their hands in a freak circular saw accident, paramedics tend to child with a suspected spine injury, doctors treat a man with a pain in his bottom and hospital staff deal with the death of a patient.



## EPISODE 5: Young Cowboy

The Emergency Department is sent into a spin when vital hospital equipment fails. An ex-miner has his skin turn blue from drinking a homemade concoction while a young cowboy weighs up whether to get treatment for his injured leg or go drinking with his mates.



Bush characters don't get any more colourful than Michael – a young cowboy covered in tattoos that he's acquired during drinking nights with his mates. He's got his postcode tattooed on his finger, in case he forgets it, and a couple of noughts and crosses games on his leg that he's played with his Mum.

Michael is no stranger to hospitals, he's had numerous mustering accidents over the years including breaking his back twice. This time he's been stomped on by a bull leaving him with a potentially serious injury which could mean losing his leg. Michael's main concern though is missing his mate's birthday party so he has a decision to make – stay in hospital for observation, or ignore the doctor's advice and go partying.

The hospital staff are shocked when old ex-miner, Ron, presents himself to the Emergency Department looking blue – literally. His skin has turned blue after years of drinking a homemade concoction which he claims “keeps the doctors away”. But it seems this time his alternative remedy has seriously failed him. An x-ray for a possible shoulder fracture reveals a more sinister prognosis.

Equipment breakdowns hit the Emergency Department as a lady is rushed in with breathing failure. The staff can't get the hospital's ventilator to work so they use a handheld ventilator to manually pump air into her lungs. She is rushed to the CT scanner to get a diagnosis as to why she can't breathe but it breaks down. With no scanner within 400km staff scramble to get it fixed.

**EPISODE 5 EPG:** The Emergency Department is sent into a spin when vital hospital equipment fails. Doctors treat an ex-miner who has turned blue and a young cowboy who may decide to go drinking with mates instead of treating his injured leg.



## EPISODE 6: Mining Town

**Joseph is struggling to breathe, but attempts to help him send him into a further panic. Ex-miner Ron takes a nasty fall when his prosthetic leg gives way. A skate park stunt goes terribly wrong for a drunk man and Fay's simple hospital procedure takes a dramatic turn in the hospital toilet.**

Joseph is brought into emergency gasping for air. For five years he has struggled to breathe thanks to emphysema, but today a chest infection has made it much worse. For his son Geoff, it's a scene he knows all too well. Just four years ago he watched his mother slowly die of emphysema and now fears the same fate awaits his father. An attempt to put Joseph on a breathing machine sends him into a panic, worsening his condition.



Ron has a nasty fall at home when his prosthetic leg suddenly gives way. He lost his leg 45 years ago in a mining accident, but has retained his sense of humour. His wife still vividly remembers the day she got the phone call from the hospital – it was Christmas Eve as she and the kids were waiting for Ron to get home.

Fay's visit to hospital for a simple procedure takes a dramatic turn. While waiting to have her ears syringed she falls off the hospital toilet. Staff hear her screaming in the bathroom and find she has broken her leg. It's a serious break to her femur, which requires urgent transfer to Adelaide for surgery, but giving her painkillers for the flight is an operation in itself.

A drunk 31 year old man stumbles into emergency after a skate park stunt goes wrong. He's proud of the video captured by his mates, showing him fall from a shopping trolley while descending a steep ramp. The deep gash on his forehead requires stitching but his behaviour proves a handful for the doctor and nurse treating him.

**EPISODE 6 EPG: Doctors attempt to help Joseph who is struggling to breathe, but this makes him further panic. Meanwhile, Ron's prosthetic leg gives way after a nasty fall and Fay's routine hospital procedure takes a dramatic turn.**



## EPISODE 7: Young Doctors

**Young doctor Alex is put under pressure when he needs to attend to two critically ill patients at the same time and perform delicate hand surgery on a station owner. A motorbike accident victim suffers worsening headaches, and 14 year old Patrick has a mysterious seizure.**

25 year old Dr Alex Rack feels the pressure of working in a regional emergency department when James is rushed in with a chronic lung infection. As Dr Alex works to stabilise him, a second trauma patient arrives in ED. Velma has fallen and hit her head, causing a possible bleed on the brain. Alex is stretched as he attends to both critically ill patients.



Station owner Richard has driven over 200km to Broken Hill Hospital after gashing his finger while fixing a windmill. Dr Alex's examination shows the injury is far worse than expected, requiring delicate hand surgery. This is a job normally requiring highly specialized surgeons, but in Broken Hill Hospital Alex must deal with it on his own.

Tony had a motorbike accident while travelling at 80km/h on a dirt road. The impact destroyed his helmet, but Tony had relatively minor injuries... or so he thought. Since the accident he has developed a headache, and it's been getting worse. Eleven days later he finds himself in hospital with an unbearable headache.

14 year old Patrick is brought into emergency after suffering a violent seizure. He has spent his whole life in and out of hospital, but the cause of the seizures remains a mystery. Patrick's parents are frustrated at not getting the same specialist treatment for their son that a major city hospital could provide.

**EPISODE 7 EPG: Dr Alex is under pressure when he attends to two critically ill patients then performs delicate hand surgery. A motorbike accident victim has a worsening headache and a young boy suffers a mysterious seizure.**



## EPISODE 8: Doug's Roof Fall

**Doug falls off his roof and shatters his leg, but complications with internal bleeding require emergency surgery. Housebound Margaret is cut from her home in a bizarre rescue, and a late night feast sees Geoffrey with serious burns.**

Paramedics rush Doug to hospital after he fell from the roof of his house while repairing his TV antenna. Doctors are concerned he has leg and spinal injuries. X-rays confirm his leg is shattered so badly that he'll need transfer to Adelaide. Of bigger concern though is the internal bleeding, which needs immediate surgery.



Housebound Margaret fell awkwardly out of bed, pinning her leg underneath her. She's not found until the following day and by that stage her leg is blue from lack of circulation. Paramedics need to cut a hole in the bedroom wall to shift her out and rush her to Emergency.

Colin has lived a tough life working in Broken Hill's mines. He's now 87 years old and his wife of 67 years comes to terms with his ailing health.

For 28-year-old Geoffrey, a few too many drinks have resulted in a trip to Emergency. While frying up chips at 4am, he forgot about the pan and it caught fire. He suffered serious burns to his arms and hands when he grabbed the pan and threw it outside, splashing burning oil over himself.

**EPISODE 8 EPG: Doug falls off his roof and shatters his leg, but his internal bleeding requires emergency surgery. Housebound Margaret is cut from her home in a bizarre rescue, and a late night feast sees Geoffrey with serious burns.**





## Simon Steel

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

One of Australia's leading executive producers, Simon Steel has produced some of the country's most iconic television shows.

Joining Screentime, a Banijay Group company, Simon created and executive produced five seasons of **RBT** for the Nine Network, executive produced the observational documentary series **Outback Coroner** for Foxtel's Crime & Investigation Network, and was both creator and executive producer of the critically acclaimed **Taking On the Chocolate Frog** for Foxtel's STUDIO.

Most recently, Simon executive produced **Village Vets Australia** for Foxtel's Lifestyle Channel and the observational documentary series **Flying Miners** for ABC TV.

Previously with the Nine Network, Simon began his career with the **Wide World of Sports** before producing numerous shows for the channel across many genres. Over a period of fifteen years Simon series produced and executive produced shows including the iconic **This is Your Life**, the hugely popular **The Footy Show**, **20 to 1 with Bert Newton**, **Skating On Thin Ice**, as well as the channel's eponymous **New Year's Eve Coverages**.

## Jennifer Collins

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

One of Australia's leading entertainment and factual executives, Jennifer Collins is Screentime's Head of Non-Fiction. During a substantial career at ABC TV, Collins worked across multiple genres of production including documentary, arts, entertainment, comedy, sport and events - overseeing the development, commissioning and production of programming across ABC1, ABC2 and online.

As ABC TV's Head of Entertainment, Jennifer commissioned **Julia Zemiro's Home Delivery**, **The Agony of Life**, **Gruen Nation**, **Gruen Sweat**, **#7 Days Later**, **Adam Hills Tonight** and the **Fresh Blood** Comedy Initiative.

Prior to her appointment as Head of Entertainment, Jennifer spent three years as ABC TV's Head of Factual where she commissioned hundreds of hours of factual and documentary programming including **Poh's Kitchen**, **Who's Been Sleeping in My House**, **Dream Build** and one of the networks most successful shows of 2013 – **The Checkout**.

At Screentime, Jennifer was executive producer of **Flying Miners** and **Felicity's Mental Mission**, and is currently in production with **Stop Laughing... This Is Serious**.



## Tony De La Peña

## SERIES PRODUCER

With 30 years experience working in television, Tony is a talented senior media executive who has been producing high quality programs for the commercial networks and the ABC in Australia for over 20 years.

Tony has extensive experience across a broad skill set having held the roles of: Executive Producer, Post Executive Producer, Post Supervising Producer, Series Producer, Post Producer, Field Producer as well as Videotape Operator.

He has executive produced and series produced a variety of shows including **The Waiting Room**, **RPA**, **Getaway** and **Animal Hospital** all for Channel Nine.

In recent years Tony was Post Executive Producer of series 3 of **The Voice** and **The Voice Kids** for Channel Nine as well as series 8 and 9 of **The Biggest Loser** for Channel TEN. Tony executive produced Channel Nine's **Home Cooked!** and was Post Supervising Producer on Channel TEN's **Junior Masterchef**.

### ABOUT SCREENTIME

Screentime, a Banijay Group company, is a specialist television production company with an outstanding list of productions. Recently, the company has produced a number of observational documentary series including **Outback Coroner** for Foxtel, **Taking On The Chocolate Frog** for STUDIO, **Flying Miners** for ABC TV, **Village Vets Australia** for Foxtel's LifeStyle Channel and **Stop Laughing... This Is Serious** for ABC TV. Screentime's other productions include **Popstars** and five seasons of **RBT**. Their award winning and celebrated dramas include six series of **Underbelly**, the **Underbelly Files**, **The Incredible Journey of Mary Bryant**, **Society Murders**, **Jessica**, **My Husband My Killer**, **A Model Daughter: The Killing of Caroline Byrne**, **Breakers**, **MDA**, **Crownies** for ABC TV, **Brothers In Arms** for Network TEN and the critically acclaimed Tim Winton's **cloudstreet**. In 2013 the company produced the miniseries **Janet King** for ABC TV, **Fat Tony & Co** for the Nine Network and **ANZAC Girls** for ABC TV.

A MEMBER OF THE BANIJAY GROUP, Screentime includes Screentime Pty Ltd and Screentime Communications in Australia, Screentime Limited in New Zealand and joint venture partners Flying Start Pictures in New Zealand and Screentime ShinAwiL Productions Limited in Ireland.