



## Press Kit

### Short Tagline(29 words)

We need to be armed with the best of Aboriginal connection and the best of regenerative science to move forward together.

### Short Synopsis (70 words)

After seeing the destruction of the fragile alpine ecology of Australia's Snowy Mountains first hand, Richard 'Cooma' Swain decides to speak out. Hard hoofed feral animals are trampling and endangering the viability of the headwaters of three iconic rivers. While city people demonstrate against climate change inaction the massive bushfires of 2019-2020 threaten Richard's community. Vast swathes of Kosciuszko National Park are burnt, highlighting the broader context of climate change.



Alison and Richard 'Cooma' Swain with 2 young wombats in care, Happy and George Photographer: Fabio Cavadini



Eucumbene River, Kosciuszko National Park in the Australian Alps Photographer: Fabio Cavadini

### **Medium Synopsis(160 words)**

**Where The Water Starts** reveals how the fragile alpine region, particularly Kosciuszko National Park, the largest in the Australian Alps is seen by a number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who were born or live, or who care deeply about it.

Australia's alpine area, which covers only 0.01 of the inhabited part of the continent, is under threat from a combination of feral animals, artificial water flows and climate change. The headwaters of three iconic rivers, the Snowy, Murray and Murrumbidgee start there yet these vital water sources are being trampled. The legal protection of the feral animals is also a grave threat to the thirty four native species of plants and mammals living in this unique and sensitive habitat.

The film's main protagonists speak about caring for Country as a shared responsibility of all Australians; that the best of Aboriginal connection and of regenerative science can work together for a better future for the alpine environment and the planet.

### **Long Synopsis(315 words)**

After seeing the destruction of the fragile alpine ecology of the Snowy Mountains first hand, Richard Swain with the support of his wife, Alison decides to speak out. The trampling of hard hoofed animals is endangering the long term viability of the headwaters of vital south-eastern Australian rivers, the Murrumbidgee and the Murray Rivers. Thirty four native species of plants and mammals are threatened by the impacts of the horse on their unique and sensitive habitat.

Since 2018 a state law - The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act - protects the feral animal above the native species and environment. It's a challenge Richard embraces despite a negative and virulent social media campaign which include threats against him and Alison.

Richard contacts other local and regional Indigenous community leaders to organise Narjong, a water healing ceremony, the first of its kind to be performed in 160 years. It was attended by traditional owners from four interconnected waterways — the Lachlan, the Darling, the Murrumbidgee and Murray.

**Where The Water Starts** reveals how these challenges are seen by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who were born or live in the southern mountains area, or who care deeply about it.

The film brings together respected Aboriginal community leaders as well as business

people, a local farmer, a scientist, a former parks officer and a social historian.

The film explores our shared Indigenous and colonial histories and identities. Revealing the beliefs of its core interviewees, it focuses on the themes of caring for Country as a shared responsibility of all Australians; that the best of Aboriginal connection and the best of regenerative science can work together for a better future for the alpine environment and the planet.

Listed as a national heritage area in 2008 the Australian Alps remains vulnerable, particularly in New South Wales, because of threats from a combination of feral animals, artificial water flows and climate change.



Narjong, water healing ceremony, Kosciuszko National Park in the Australian Alps Photographer: John Ford

## **Director's Statement**

### **Amanda King**

Myself and my partner, cinematographer and producer, Fabio Cavadini started filming in mid 2019 to create a documentary focussing on the environment in Australia through stories about our precious and fragile high country. After three months of filming our main protagonists and most of the rest of the country was engulfed in wild fires never seen on such a scale or intensity before. Much of the alpine region was severely burnt. While the immediate issue that our participants was the highly destructive impact of feral animals in the national park, the fires brought the larger picture of climate change into sharp focus. We hope this film will inspire communities to take a different approach and work alongside Indigenous communities speaking out about environmental degradation and threats to life, water and country.

## The Broad-Toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*)



Photographer: Ken Green

### **Cast**

Richard Swain and his wife, Alison  
Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison (Yuin Elder)  
Aunty Sue Bulger (CEO Brungle Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council)  
Aunty Rhonda Casey (Ngarigo descendant)  
Bruce Pascoe (Yuin descendant, author and historian)  
Sterling Dixon (local farmer)  
Professor David Watson (Environmental scientist)  
Paul Hardey (former national parks officer)  
Dr Isa Menzies (social historian)

### **Key Personnel**

Director: Amanda King  
Co-Producers: Fabio Cavadini  
Screenwriter: Amanda King  
Director of Photography: Fabio Cavadini  
Editors: Amanda King & Miriana Marusic  
Graphic Designer: The Kingdom of Ludd  
Animation FX: Miriana Marusic  
Sound Designer: Anthony Marsh  
Music: Audio Hero and Audio Jungle

### **Donors**

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Documentary Australia Foundation

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NED Foundation Social Developers Network(SDN)

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Porcupine Rocks, Kosciuszko National Park Photographer: Emily Presser-King

## **Reviews**

TBA

## **Trailer/Short video links**

<https://vimeo.com/459235203>

## **Technical Information**

Shot on Canon200C

Master: ProRes422

Duration: 71 minutes

## **Contact Details**

Frontyard Films

W [www.frontyardfilms.com.au](http://www.frontyardfilms.com.au)

P +61 410633503

E [cavadiniking@icloud.com](mailto:cavadiniking@icloud.com)