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Torres Strait history brought to life as ABC's Blue Water Empire goes into production

An all star cast has commenced filming on **Blue Water Empire**, a three-part primetime dramatised documentary series which gives a unique insight into the history and culture of the Torres Strait Islands.

The cast list includes Jack Thompson, Ryan Corr, Damian Walshe-Howling, Aaron Fa'Aoso, Jimi Bani, Roy Billing, Geoff Morrell, Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, Peter Phelps, Merwez Whaleboat, Robert Mammone and Damian de Montemas. The series is shooting in Far North Queensland and the Torres Straits, where the production is also using local cast and crew.

This exciting series traverses pre-colonisation life through to the pervasive impact of European arrival; from the influence of missionaries to the influx of people from all over the world during the pearling era. The Straits were not immune to the devastation of World War II either, which triggered mass migration to mainland Australia. In more recent times there has been an explosion of social activism, fighting for recognition and acknowledgement of connection to not only land but sea. It is a thrilling and vital piece of our shared history that the ABC is proud to vividly bring to life for Australian audiences.

Blue Water Empire is being produced for the ABC with assistance from Screen Australia and Screen Queensland, by a partnership between Lonestar Company, headed up by actors and producers Aaron Fa'Aoso and Jimi Bani, and Bunya Productions (*Mystery Road*, *Goldstone*) led by producers David Jowsey and Greer Simpkin.

Fa'Aoso says: "It's an honour to be telling the stories of our amazing people and their contribution, over the last two centuries, to the history of Torres Strait Islanders and wider Australia. Blue Water Empire also critically underpins our aspiration to develop the film and television industry in Far North Queensland and the Torres Straits".

Sally Riley, ABC's Head of Scripted Content, says: "Blue Water Empire is a strikingly original and distinctive dramatised documentary series and we are delighted that so many of Australia's finest actors are helping bring to life the fascinating history of the Torres Strait Islands."

Blue Water Empire will screen on ABC TV in 2017.

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