

KEEPING AUSTRALIA ALIVE

Production Background and Logistics

Production statistics

- 7 months pre-production, 1 day production, 4 months post production.
- Filmed using a multitude of different cameras, 550 hours of rushes.
- More than 1000 consent forms.
- With the Australian time zones, 24 hours was actually 27 hours with a bonus three hours in WA.
- Some surgeries, like Deep Brain Stimulation, we filmed with 2 separate patients and two crews to ensure we had the story (there was a risk that if a patient had a temperature or was not well they wouldn't go ahead with surgery and we would miss the story).
- We had units in 10 different emergency wards.
- We had units in maternity wards in 2 different states.

List of story locations			
Alfred Health, Victoria	Bendigo Hospital, Victoria	Central West Health Service - Longreach Hospital	IVF Australia, NSW
Ambulance Victoria	Boigu Clinic, Torres Straits	Cowra Medical Associates , NSW	Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Queensland
Ballarat Hospital, Victoria	Capital Women's Health, ACT	Cygnnet, Tasmania	Longreach Medical Practice
Bendigo Hospital, Victoria	Melanoma Inst. NSW	EVb Clinic, Western Australia	Mater Private, Brisbane
Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Queensland	Melbourne Health - Royal Melbourne Hospital	Fiona Stanley Hospital , Western Australia	Metro centre GC, Queensland
Longreach Medical Practice	Metro centre GC, Queensland	Golden Age Senior Citizens Home, Bribie Island	Monash Hospital , Victoria
Mater Private, Brisbane	Monash Hospital , Victoria	Greenslopes Private Hospital, Queensland	Wagga Wagga Base Hospital
Melanoma Inst. NSW	Royal Adelaide Hospital	St John of God Subiaco Hospital	NSW Health - Northern Sydney LHD
NSW Health - Bear Cottage , Manly NSW	Royal Brisbane & Women's Hosp.	St. Vincent's Sydney, NSW St Vincents Public Hospital, Melbourne, Vic St Vincents Private Hospital , Melbourne Vic	Royal Prince Alfred, NSW Concord Hospital, NSW
South Western Sydney Liverpool Hospital, NSW	Royal Flying Doctor Service	Sunshine Hospital, Victoria	Prince of Wales Private, Sydney
Westmead Hospital , NSW	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	QLD Ambulances	Purple House – Kintore NT
Peter MacCallum Centre, Victoria	Tasmanian Health Service	Yallabing, ACT	

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From the Executive Producer, Karen Dewey

This was a big task. The job of filming an entire seven episode series in 24 hours with no opportunity for second takes or pick-ups required careful pre-production. How do you eat an elephant? Bite by bite.

We were committed to covering the key challenges of the Australian health system, while telling the stories of the people within it... the staff, the patients, the loved ones. We wanted to tell stories that would resonate with viewers.

We began by hiring seven senior 'hub' producers across the country. From the beginning we wanted to empower them to take responsibility for every aspect of their story until handover on shoot day. We assigned health areas for each producer to investigate. We required them to do all their own legwork – they identified stories and they spent hours on the phone with our contributors. In many cases we were asking people to share with us the most trying day of their lives, so we were keen to limit the number of hands on each story. The trust between the contributors and the producers was paramount.

Selecting D-Day – at first we kept a two week target in October for shoot day. The hub producers specced out dates for key stories – organ transplants, deep brain stimulation operations, key trials. Then, we honed in on one day – **Wednesday October 28th, 2015.**

The series producer Elle Gibbons and the ITV legal team then had the huge job of negotiating and securing access to all the hospitals and clinics – more than 80 in all. We worked closely with the Health departments in each state, and the media liaisons in the major hospitals. Elle also worked closely with cultural advisors on indigenous content.

The story development list was extensive – we wanted to ensure we had all angles covered. We had to create a balance of stories; metropolitan to rural to regional to remote, public to private, from birth to death, from far North Queensland to Southern Tasmania, from East to West, from surgical to clinic to home care. We allowed for seven stories per episode, plus emergency room sequences. And then we allocated another 10-15 reserve stories to allow for drop off on the day. Some of the stories were "bankable" in that the surgery was scheduled, some were speculative in that we were embedded in a neo-natal ward, for instance, where we couldn't count on finding any stories until a day or two before shoot day.

We selected stories based on the key themes they covered... we wanted every story to hit at list three of our key themes: love and sacrifice, quality of life, tyranny of distance, compare and contrast, the indigenous health gap, private versus public, the future of medicine, ageing population, cost of health care, pressure points in the system.

As the stories began developing, at HQ we started amassing the long list of producers, camera operators, shooter producers and sound recordists for the shoot day. We tried as much as possible to match producer to story, based on experience and personal interests. We were very pleased to be able to secure the services of many senior people, some at Executive Producer level, who were able to take a week's leave from their usual jobs to join the team for this special series with us.

BOOT CAMP

In the week before shoot day we had secured more than 130 producers, camera operators and sound recordists from all over the country. What we called 'boot camp' comprised four separate briefings for crews assembled in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane. Each team was armed with a producer pack full of different forms of consent, access agreements, research briefings, legals, conduct codes.

The vital part of boot camp was to ensure everyone was aware of the shooting style and series mission. We wanted to ensure they captured the human stories, the heart – we encouraged them to ask questions of contributors about how they feel, what they're afraid of, what their future holds. DOP Ian Peterson gave a brief on shooting style and Head of Sound Tony Clunes on tips for capturing sound in difficult clinical circumstances.

At the end of the boot camp days, each senior producer handed their precious research and shooting briefs on contributors and individual producers handling the story on Shoot Day.

Producers flew out to far flung destinations all over the country – Kintore (five hours drive from Alice Springs), the Torres Straits, Longreach, Cowra, Ballarat, Perth, Tasmania, Wagga Wagga and Bendigo.

And then, we had to wait and hope for the best.

SHOOT DAY OCTOBER 28TH

When D-Day arrived we expected to be frantic all day. Instead we were surprised to find things were very calm at base. We received updates throughout the day – most good, some exciting, and some disappointing. The emergency room crews kept us informed about stories as they came in so we were able to keep an eye on the balance of stories being captured. When the final crew wrapped, we celebrated cautiously. **Seven episodes in the can in 24 hours, and we hadn't seen a frame.**

The most nerve wracking time was the day after shoot with the huge job of wrangling the vision from 100 cameras across the country. The production management comprised three teams who worked closely with field producers and PA's to keep track of every consent form, every card, and every field note.

POST-PRODUCTION

We discussed many ways of approaching the editing process – in the end we decided to assemble all available stories with a rough series template in mind. Then we allocated a producer and senior editor to each episode and they set about 'crafting' them thematically. The challenge was to keep a balance across the stories, and to hold the 24 hour chronology with each episode beginning in the morning and ending in the evening.