**In Conversation National Reconciliation Week**

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| **00:00:02:07** | **DANIELLE** | **Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to Screen Queensland's National Reconciliation Week 2024 event.****My name is Danielle Ah Boo, and I am the head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit here at Screen Queensland, and I am honoured to be your host today, so thank you for joining in.****Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which we are meeting today. For me, this is Brisbane, Meanjin. It's the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples. I pay my respect to the elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today.****So just as a bit of an intro to today, this year's theme for National Reconciliation Week is Now More Than Ever. This theme emphasises the urgent need for action in our journey towards reconciliation. It calls all of us to reflect on our shared histories and recognise the injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to actively participate in creating a more equitable and unified Australia.****Now More Than Ever reminds us that reconciliation is not just an abstract concept but a call to action that requires commitment, courage and tangible steps.****Now, more than ever, we need to strengthen our relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community to ensure mutual respect, understanding and harmony.****Reconciliation involves addressing historical and ongoing inequalities, fostering a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and working together towards a future where all Australians can thrive.****For us today at Screen Queensland, the focus is on the screen industry and its role in promoting reconciliation. The screen industry has a powerful influence on public perception and cultural narratives. Through film, through television and digital media, we have the opportunity to not only share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and narratives, but celebrate First Nations culture and the depth of diversity. These platforms allow us to challenge the stereotypes that have persisted for far too long, replacing them with authentic representation. In sharing these stories, we do aim to entertain, educate and inspire.****We are privileged to have distinguished panellists with us today who will share their insights and experiences for a strategy for advancing reconciliation through the screen industry and storytelling.****So let me introduce our panellists. Let me start by introducing Aaron Fa'Aoso. Aaron Fa'aoso is a proud Torres Strait Islander man and actor, screenwriter, director and producer. Since 2013, he has been the managing director of Lone Star, his production company. Aaron serves on our Screen Queensland board as well as the SBS board and is a board member for the National Film and Sound Archive and is co-chair of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body here in Queensland.****Dean Gibson also joins us today. Dean is a Guugu Yimithirr man. As a filmmaker with over 20 years of experience, his work includes children's television, documentaries, dramas, which airs on ABC, SBS and NITV, including the award-winning 'Incarceration Nation'. He serves on several boards, including Screen Queensland and Queensland Theatre.****We also have with us today Tanya Denning-Orman. Tanya is a Birri and Guugu Yimithirr woman, has led National Indigenous Television since 2012, and became SBS's first director of Indigenous content in 2020.****With over 20 years experience in media, she oversees NITV's content and First Nations storytelling across SBS. She also holds board positions with Media Diversity Australia, First Nations Media Australia and the World Indigenous Television Broadcast Network.****And our final guest speaker today is the Honourable Roslyn Atkinson, is a lawyer and former Supreme Court judge of Queensland. She has chaired numerous boards, including the Queensland Indigenous Justice Committee, and sits and chairs on our Screen Queensland board and contributes significantly to the law reform. Appointed as Officer to the Order of Australia in 2015, she has a lifelong commitment to human rights and the arts.****And today we also want to congratulate Roslyn on her appointment to the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, which will take effect from July 2024. So congratulations.****And thank you all very much for joining us today. As my long winded introduction, it's... The importance here is talking about the commitments that can come from the screen industry in...towards a reconciled nation.****So, Aaron, if I might start with you. This year's theme is Now More Than Ever, which resonates deeply in the context of last year's referendum and its outcomes. Could you share with me and our audience today how the no result has affected you personally and on your community?** |
| **00:05:30:11** | **AARON** | **I don't think I can use the appropriate language, I think, that I would like to use, but anyway, I'll give it a go. Look, I think it's fair to say that, you know, the referendum, you know, was, well, the loss of the referendum was quite devastating and felt, and the impact felt was quite devastating across the First Nations landscape across the country. But, you know, personally, I think for me, it almost ignited an inferno within, because it was quite evident that, you know, for me, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.****And at the time... Because I've only just recently stepped off the Truth and Treaty Interim Body as co-chair with Mick Gooda. And I think, in that space, you know, we were propelling and laying a lot of the foundation for what has now been established as the, you know, Treaty Institute, and, you know, with the Truth-telling Inquiry that our esteemed... My esteemed colleague Rosalind Atkinson now sits on the Truth-telling Inquiry.****But, you know, the referendum, I guess, gave me a lot of insight in regards to what needs to be done and what hadn't been done. And I feel that, you know, certainly through, you know, my role as a film and television practitioner, as a film and television advocate, not only as a First Nations practitioner, but holistically as a Queensland practitioner from the Queensland sector, I think the truth-telling is more, now, far more vital and critical as we move forward.****And as we speak about, you know, and we reflect on the referendum and we reflect on this week in regards to reconciliation, I think what the missing piece of the information with regards to, perhaps - and this is my own opinions, totally my own opinions, I don't speak for anybody else - but the missing piece of the puzzle driving or propelling the...the referendum piece or the information piece was around truth-telling. And I think it's about taking the rest of the country on a collective journey.****And what was, whilst it was, you know, from a First Nations perspective and with our allies, it was devastating that, you know, it was a resounding no. However, the positive that I've taken out of the referendum was that there were 6 million that actually voted for us.****So when you look at the numbers, 9 million to 6 million, we need to look for that 3 million to pull back over, or to inform, because those 6 million that stood shoulder to shoulder with us were those who were informed and also didn't get caught up in the disinformation, the misinformation of what was being thrown around at that time during the campaign, but also with those who were allies that understood the plight of First Nations people from a humanitarian perspective. And it wasn't... They didn't get caught into the political, I guess, football that we First Nations, I guess, people...** |
| **00:09:29:06** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah.** |
| **00:09:30:22** | **AARON** | **..forever get thrown into. But I think, certainly, moving forward, for me, will be that truth-telling piece, and I think it's something that we as creators, practitioners, can certainly drive and lean in.** |
| **00:09:49:09** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Aaron. And, you know, I reflect on the referendum personally, and, you know, 'no' doesn't mean 'stop'. 'No' just means, you know, how do we work around some of the things that may have been challenging in that referendum process.****So, and like you...you mentioned, you know, screen is that industry that can really drive some of this change given the platforms we do create content for.****So, you know, heading to you now, Dean, based on that, you know, given your experience in the screen industry, how do you view First Nations projects as a means to amplify First Nations voices and contribute to the ongoing goal of reconciliation?** |
| **00:10:34:00** | **DEAN** | **Thanks for having me, Danielle. Thanks for having... And it's great to see you all.****Can I just pick up really quickly off the question you asked Aaron? Because I think it's a really interesting observation of human behaviour where I think a lot of people who voted no assumed the ability to then step...come back and step beyond the middle ground and push things to where it is uncomfortable, where people don't want to... They just want to turn a blind eye to the history. They don't want to... They're not prepared to at least acknowledge things, people, who we are and the shared history of this country.****And I think that was a really evident thing, which kind of really didn't surprise me, but it also hurt to think about. 'No' wasn't a licence to step it back to the turn of the century. 'No' was just a case, as we said, it's a point where we can now continue to push forward.****I think that was a really... That's one thing I've noticed in my sort of world and in conversations is that, yeah, this isn't a licence to go crazy and say whatever you want to say. There's a lev... That level of respect needs to still be in place within society and we need to treat each other with that shared values as well.****And I think that is a really evident thing which you don't hear many people talking about. I think it's a really important thing that we need to call out when we see that kind of behaviour.****In terms of stories, I mean, Aaron's right. The truth-telling piece is a really strong component of this. And the appetite... I mean, you've just got to go to a bookshop and you can see that publishers see this. The appetite for our history is so big. The appetite for whatever histories from whatever part of the world, people want and have an urge and want to know what made up and what was the history of where they are or other parts of the world.****That has always been the case. It's what drives us to explore, what drives us to go across the world and learn and travel. That appetite to understand the history of a country and what got them to where they are today is a really important, strong piece.****So, for me, that's a really critical piece in content-making. And it's not just film. It's theatre. It's books. It's poetry. It's songwriting. It's all the art forms and all the... It's architecture. It's everything that we sort of bring to society.****I think, for me, it's about stories that create impact. And that's impact... For me, I guess, it's maximum impact and maximum reach for what we do.****And I'm at a privileged place in my career through the people in this forum who have given me opportunities to sort of do that art form and tell those stories. And it's not just impact that will create... It's not just impact that...focusing on atrocities or trauma. It's impact broadly, right? It's thinking about how do we talk to an audience in sport? How do we talk to an audience in music? How do we talk to an audience, and finding how, as filmmakers and as content-makers, that we live in an environment where there is this really strong appetite and urge to understand who we are, where we've come from, the ground we stand on today. And really try and make sense of... And bring that all together and make sense of who we are moving forward.****And I think we get lost in life, where we're busy doing things, keeping up, paying the bills, taking kids to school, all the things that keep us occupied, but I think there's still that strong appetite around identity and around truth and around history. And I think that's where we have a really strong place in our film sector to grab the baton and really show the audiences of the world and our sector as well that we have a really strong place and a really strong opportunity where we've moved beyond diverse storytelling as a tick-a-box exercise.****We're in a place and in a world now where diverse stories have...adds both to the richness of society but also has economic value. And I think we now need to recognise that, as filmmakers and as artisans in all-across forms, there's a really, really rich and great opportunity if you're prepared to sort of roll up your sleeves and dig into some of this stuff which will come through truth.****Because it's going to advise where we go and who we are today, and it's going to advise where we go into the future and I think it's got a really strong place.****And I think, you know, I try to be optimistic about what it will unveil and what it will teach us. That's not saying it won't bring up sadness, trauma and healing, and it will. And that's an important piece of this story as well. The opportunities are really exciting in our space.****And I hope that, more broadly, beyond... As content-makers, and as Tanya and her organisation, the national Indigenous broadcaster, bigger, broader networks and streamers and distributors and audiences...you know, find it within to come and ask and learn more about the stories we have to say.** |
| **00:16:26:24** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah, amazing. Thank you, Dean. I think you phrased that really, really well and absolutely agree.****And, Tanya, if I shoot a question over to you now. So given your role as the Director of Indigenous Content at SBS, how do you see television and broadcasting, the digital platforms playing...how do they play a role in amplifying First Nations voices and contribute to reconciliation? And where you can, are you able to share some initiatives or strategies that you've found most effective with trying to achieve that goal?** |
| **00:17:06:06** | **TANYA** | **Thanks. Thanks, Danielle. Wadda mooli. I've just been really, you know, enjoying this conversation so far, and just, I guess, listening. And I think if I can just step back really quickly, because my life at the moment is very mixed emotions, especially this week, looking back, learning and then seeing what we do moving forward and really resonating with Now More Than Ever.****But to go back to Az, you know, when he was saying about the more than 6 million people that voted, I like to think of that as the more than 6 million that actually listened and listened to a movement that's centuries in the making, pretty much.****You know, this week is also the anniversary of the '67 referendum. And, you know, Australians had it in them.****Next year will be 25 years since Australians listened and had the massive walks across bridges here up on Gamaragal country over in the river over there.****Our river, Sydney Harbour, was overtaken, and people showed how much they supported or how much they listened. I'm saying 'listened' - is the narrative and our craft, storytelling, is so critical at this point in Australian history.****And I agree with Dean, the consumption or the desire for First Nations stories has never been as high as it is right now.****NITV, an absolute success. We have almost doubled our revenue and our commercial ability. We haven't received any new funds from Federal Government since 2007. But what you see is our partnerships, including other streamers and partners, who are actually seeing the commercial viability, not just the right thing to do, but the commercial opportunity and desires of Australian audiences.****Like, in the last year alone, we've achieved 24 million hours of consumption of Indigenous content across this entire network. Millions of people watch NITV. You know, our population is only around 600,000.****So there is the desire, and to go and think about the year and this week that we're in, to know that, yeah, there are more than 6 million that listened. But then the 3-odd million that didn't know and were told, "If you don't know, vote no," you know, we worked extremely hard in the Australian... In my area in the broadcasting, I oversee news and current affairs as well, and I think about, "Thank goodness we were in a position the way we were in 2023 with..."****You know, when I think about NITV or Australian media when I started back in the late '90s, where we were, I think, "Thank God we were here. We were able to use the beautiful films like Dean's 'Incarceration Nation', you know, 'Rabbit-Proof Fence'."****We were able to curate, you know, a whole truth-telling season across the entire network. We were able to deliver our news and current affairs into 60-odd different languages, Mandarin, Arabic, so we could translate Indigenous perspectives into the languages new Australians trust. So that was massive.****Yet only the 6-odd million listened to that movement. And then those others, once the government... No, once certain news organisations made an agenda very clear, once the Leader of the Opposition made it very clear he was no longer listening to a movement, we were, you know, we were up against...****A juggernaut was hitting us as, you know, Australian media, those that, you know, I mentioned on other panels, with newsrooms, like my original craft was a journalist, and I believe in journalism still when you actually believe in the values.****And one thing that... Newsrooms around Australia and journalists around Australia forgot one of the core values, and that was humanity. That journalists must deliver to humanity and be a voice.****But the challenge is, when I think about, "Thank goodness we're where we are now," but we, 10 years ago, we weren't dealing with social media the way we were, misinformation, the AI the way we were last year.****And the fact that that was able to, as well as agendaed newsrooms, that was so much bigger than what we were, and then the algorithms, and going into people who, you know, wanted to, you know, thought that maybe Indigenous people didn't want it that way. That sort of gives me, you know, I'm thinking and reflecting on our media and our sector and what we do moving forward.****As also mentioned, treaties. As a movement, you know, we continue, and, yes, we still have to live in that moment. I don't want to race ahead of... You know, we need to grieve in a way that, for our elders who got us to that point, you know, we wouldn't exist as a sector without those who fought for First Nations people to be in charge and own their own media, their own stories. And I need to sort of reflect on that moment a bit longer and learn.****And then, being in my position, the influence across Australian media as we still continue, because we still have terrible incarceration, we still have infant mortality, our health issues.****We're at a tipping point still in Australia and we're still going to be going to the polls. Australians are still going to be voting. We're only 3%-odd of the Australian population. So, bad public perception leads to bad public policy. So how we craft that story and the role of this sector listening in here is critical.****So to go back to your original question, Danielle, Australian audiences want First Nations storytelling, whether they're being news and current affairs or entertainment. The data tells me that. So we're winning the awards. Globally, we're being asked for this content. So how do we then connect the audiences and give them what they actually want? And that's the exciting future we have.****However, we are up against a world where people are struggling, as Dean was also saying, getting the kids to school, but even just making ends meet. So the Australia we grew up in, I guess, you know, where we looked after our neighbour, that didn't quite happen, what we saw in the referendum.****So people are struggling. You know, there is a housing crisis. There is challenges. And we are in a more conservative time. And then the misinformation gets into people where once upon a time, even if you didn't have... You know, you'd give the shirt off your back. There's sentiments of Australia that don't exist the way it used to. So we've got to really think about it.****And you're right, Dean, as well. Some of our biggest hits on SBS, 'Australia in Colour', there is a desire to go back to looking at our history. And the challenge or, you know, the opportunity I put out to our filmmakers is the fact that that desire is there and people want to feel good, but they also want to look back. And we look back every year with Anzac Day. We look back all the time when we, you know, see where we've come from.****So, yeah, it's a big question, Danielle, but there's a lot of emotions, a lot of aspirations. And, you know, thank goodness we have, you know, First Nations leadership and opportunity to keep going, because that's what our old people tell us what to do.** |
| **00:25:04:18** | **DANIELLE** | **Absolutely. Thank you, Tanya. And, yes, very loaded questions today. And, you know, that is the space of reconciliation. And, you know, that's why it is important to also bring in perspectives from our non-Indigenous allies out there, and one that I'd like to now throw to, actually, the Honourable Roslyn Atkinson.****And, Roslyn, look, thank you for all your support in the First Nations space. You've been very supportive in my time here at Screen Queensland and to the arts sector. You've been recently appointed to the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. So I'd like to know, you know, how you see the screen industry contributing to that space that you are now entering. And, you know, how important is it for people to be our allies in this space?** |
| **00:25:52:19** | **ROSLYN** | **Oh, it's critical. Can I just, first of all, say what a privilege it is for me to be on a panel with the four of you? Dean and Aaron, who I work with on the board, Danielle, who's a wonderful head of Indigenous content at Screen Queensland, and Tanya, the work you do is amazing and reaches the whole of Australia.****Can I just begin by referencing three documentaries that recently and the recent past have had a big effect on me? I recently saw on NITV 'Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America'. I knew Dean from 'Incarceration Nation' before I met him. I knew Aaron from 'Strait to the Plate' before I met him. All of those documentaries are very powerful in very different ways.****First of all, the one about America, we are very different. Our history of racism in Australia is very real and very different. 'Strait to the Plate' celebrates the contemporary joy of First Nations culture. The richness, the diversity, what it adds to Australia, that we are a country that has, literally has, the oldest living culture in the world living amongst us, with storytelling, with food, with dance, with art, with kinship, with relationships.****I think in 'Strait to the Plate' it was more the relationships than the food that really spoke to me and made me understand much more about Torres Strait Islander culture.****And then with Dean, with 'Incarceration Nation', facing up to the fact that we have a shocking history, that we have a settler and colonial history that hasn't gone away and that reverberates into this current day with the incarceration of Indigenous young people and Indigenous men and women far outstripping their role in the population, and that being a historical legacy which we can't ignore.****We can't understand that. We can't understand how to change it unless we look at our history and see what happened. That we look at dispossession. We look at massacres. We look at all the things that happened. The attempts, the protracted attempts to destroy Indigenous culture and people and relationships, which didn't work because Indigenous culture, Indigenous relationships, Indigenous people and their creativity have actually not only survived, but in this day and age are thriving.****Certainly we've had some terrible setbacks and the referendum result was a shocking shame job for those people who voted no, but it hasn't destroyed the culture. It hasn't destroyed the people. It hasn't destroyed the relationships. And a culture that is based on an oral tradition and a strong arts culture is one that can survive, and that screen is uniquely placed to communicate to the rest of the country, indeed to the rest of the world, and that has happened and it will continue to happen.****And it's important when we document the stories in the truth-telling inquiry that they're documented on film...for documents for the communities from which those people are from, but also for the rest of Australia to see and to understand and to learn. To learn to accept what our history is so that we can move beyond it to a reconciled future where we value highly what we have, and that is, as I said at the beginning, literally the oldest living culture in the entire world. How lucky are we? And that's something we need to know about and value.****And I think... Maybe I'm too optimistic, but I feel if people get over their initial reluctance to face the past, then, and they learn and they see what a resilient, brilliant culture we have in our midst, that, I hope, will lead to a completely different understanding of who we are as a nation.** |
| **00:30:54:06** | **DANIELLE** | **Absolutely. Thank you, Roslyn. And like I keep saying myself, you know, history cannot be rewritten, but we can accept it and learn more about it. You know, it's really about that acceptance.****So before I continue, I just want to let everyone know as well that you are able to ask questions in the discussion panel, I believe. And I will get to those towards the end of the discussion. So please feel free to ask questions along the way. You don't need to wait until the end. And we'll get through them as much as we can.****But if I now throw back to you, Aaron, you know, from your perspective, what have been some of the challenges in the screen industry in facing the challenge with, I guess, authentically representing First Nations? And from your perspective, how can that be overcome?** |
| **00:31:47:01** | **AARON** | **Wow. OK. Yeah, look, I think... Look, certainly since my time in the industry, I think... When I dropped into the industry 20 years ago, I think it was post-Mabo. And one of the recommendations that came out of the Mabo case was to establish not only a First Nations funding organisation for screen, I think part of that was also to set up a network of some sort.****And we've seen the fruitions, right? We've seen Screen Australia. It's been established, you know, the funding unit there. The Indigenous unit was...was, I guess, you know, set up to drive...to drive, to cultivate, to nurture a thriving First Nations...a national First Nations screen sector. And I think we've achieved that.****And I think also in the NITV space, we've got a national broadcaster and, you know, Tanya's, you know, spoken briefly to the successes. Whilst there have been challenges, you know, there have been successes and NITV continued to punch above its weight. I remember when NITV first came on the scene, it was this little, unknown station stuck on the Fox channel. But now you look at how the NITV space has evolved, how we've evolved as a screen sector.****Yes, there is still much more work to do, a hell of a lot of work to do. But in that initial stage with Erica and Sally Riley were...headed up the Screen Australia Indigenous unit, they were, I guess, fixated to really kind of amplify and develop, you know, screen talent. And that first cohort that came through were the Ivan Sens, the Warwick Thorntons, the Wayne Blairs. And we've seen Rachel Perkins.****I came through with the second cohort, which was... Wayne was also there, Warwick was also there, Dena Curtis. And we see now in terms of that, when you have focused funding allocation...to drive and to nurture talent, but also amplify and elevate talent specifically in your chosen field, you get the successes that we have all been privy to in regards to creating our own productions, creating our own documentary films and television series that not only has reverberated nationally, but also we've had international success.****And I think if you look over the last, say, 15 years...we've had an insurmountable number of international successes through our films, through those names mentioned, the Leah Purcells, the Ivan Sens, the Warwick Thorntons, the Wayne Blairs...who have gone...Aaron Fa'Aoso, who have gone, my fellow practitioner, Dean...Dean Gibson, through his great work. I mean, he's a dual Logie winner. And, you know, and...****I think I just want to take a step back in terms of to be able to win commercial recognition from our space, which our space is, you know, it's taken some time to cross over commercially. But for the content, when I think about Dean's content, which is quite hard-hitting, which is quite in your face around, you know, truth-telling and so forth. But the wonderful way that, you know, Dean has been able to weave and weave those atrocities that have become palatable for a commercial market, to be able to bring an audience, without hitting them over the head, but bringing them on a journey.****And to be able to be afforded and to be recognised, you know, not only once but twice in that commercial marketplace is, for me, it's part of our history, but also part of that resilience that Roslyn spoke to.****I mean, we're still here. We're still driving. We're still thriving. We haven't gone away. Yes, we've had setbacks, but those setbacks have been, you know, been part of our narrative for so long, but yet we still continue to fly. We still continue to soar. We still continue to rise. And through this particular medium and through this particular landscape of film and television,****I mean, we are the custodians and owners of 65,000 years of storytelling. That's our superpower. That's...that's our space.****And for us, and for me moving forward, is...is to now... The challenge is not to be seen through, for me, and I've experienced this, whilst our sector is healthy and thriving in one aspect, there is still much more to do. There is still a gap that needs to be closed. You know, we still need to, you know, really drive diverse voices, diverse voices that, you know, we have across our vast nations and across the Torres Strait region that are still yet to be heard. There are still stories that are still yet to be unearthed.****And that's the beauty of us as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is that we are so diverse. We come with so many different language groups, dialects, cultural systems, kinships, songlines.****And that's the beauty of it. And how we're connected, you know, from north to south, east to west, and adjacent is through our songlines, you know? And how we're connected to the geography of the landscape, which in fact depicts how that...how the disposition of that particular nation is, is depicted by the environment. And we are so intrinsically connected to our environment, to the land, to the cosmos, to our language, and that now comes through our way of life.****So naturally, I think, you know, whilst, you know, I feel that we have still got a ways to go in regards to really kind of bolstering up, you know, business and being looked...to be seen as real commercial, economic, viable, you know, production companies that should be afforded the same opportunities to our counterparts in the film and television industry.****Because, you know, the runs are on the board, you know? There is an appetite, you know, for our stories internationally. There is an appetite domestically. We've got a broadcaster that continues to hit above its weight.****But now the challenge is, for me, I feel, you know, moving into this, you know, because I want to elevate, I want amplified, is now to really be seen as, you know, a commercial, viable business entity, because this is effectively what we are, at the end of it.****Whilst we are in the game of storytelling and creativity, this is a business and we need to be seen as commercially, like, economic entities.** |
| **00:41:03:09** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah, thank you, Aaron. And yeah, absolutely, too, spot on. If I quickly throw the same question to both Tanya and Roslyn, just looking forward now, right? What are some of the specific actions that you'd like to see implemented in the screen industry? You know, obviously Tanya, from an SBS perspective, but, you know, your counterparts in the industry, you know, what would you like to see implemented in the screen industry to help support and further our advance, our journey towards reconciliation?** |
| **00:41:38:15** | **TANYA** | **Look, I think just to go... I didn't quite answer your question before over really great results we've had across various productions and things like... What I would say to the sector is think outside the box, you know?****And same as for our First Nations sector, how, you know, when Aaron's talking about the legacy piece, how we were 30 years ago, 31 years ago, the First Nations unit started at Screen Australia. The sector was very different. So we really needed to invest in our babies, as in really getting the generation up.****Now we have, you know, First Nations businesses, to go back to what Aaron was saying, with Dean and Aaron. How do we reflect that as a sector? Our guidelines can't be the same as what they were 30 years ago. Of course, it's like kinship. We need our elders, we need our babies, we need our warriors, we need our lawmen, we need the women to do what they need to do.****So our sector, we need to look after the entire sector in that way, the broadcasters, the agencies, the funders, the creatives. So how do we keep listening and evolving as a sector?****So when I mentioned the way that we could get going back in 2013, the screen agencies. Screenwest and Screen Queensland still backed us, but I was really, "Oh, well, who's your audience?" I didn't have an opportunity to really get... They wouldn't put the funds into us in the same way as the ABCs or SBSs or others because we were still building our audience.****So we got our children's... Like, our children's slate is award-winning and incredible and we probably kept children alive in Australia as little old NITV. 'Little J & Big Cuz', we partnered with ABC and, you know, that was like, ooh, you know, but they put more money in, but we had the editorial sign-off.****So...and then a few years later, really working with SBS on how we did the 'You Are Here's. You know, 'Wik vs Queensland' came out of that, another one of Dean's. So we knew a referendum was coming and how do we actually get our content in prime time?****NITV was so little and I needed to make sure we looked after our First Nations audience, but we needed to have this sector or agencies believe in our producers. So I needed to work out a way to get the audience so then they would sign off on the cheque.****Then, you know, a couple of years ago, we had an incredible producing team come to us with Channel 10 and I said, "Well, OK, but we're going to simulcast together. So the NITV brand and..."****They go, "Oh!" But you know what? Their ratings were great, ours were great. And everyone thought it was an NITV show, so I won twice.****So now we've also got Netflix. Our most successful new children's show. 'Eddie's Lil' Homies'. Eddie Betts, you know, AFL, he's such a winner. So Netflix, you know, couldn't quite get the wheeling and dealing, but we've elevated off of them through it. So Netflix are talking about us in the US at the moment. It's incredible.****So I guess for the sector listening in, we've got to go outside the box. You've got to listen to your filmmakers. We've got to bend. The way we were 10 years ago is different to 20 years ago, different to prior to, you know, COVID. Our world really changed with Black Lives Matter, COVID. You know, there was a new way of filmmaking.****So I guess, you know, they're the tips, that's what the sector should do. Back our sector, but adapt. Look at our guidelines. Are we listening enough? How can we really help create a commercial First Nations production sector?****So it's not just two out of three writers, directors. We want everything below the lines everywhere and not just within our First Nations productions, in all content. Because we're in everything, right? You're filming on Australia. There's all aspects. And we can give so much.****And I guess just to round off and before hand over to Roslyn is, you know, one thing I always also question is if we gave Australians enough to really understand what they would be getting if they voted yes.****So we played a game to really show and so lean into that humanity, go, "Look, this will be the right thing. If you listen, this will help close the gap. This is how First Nations people really see the solutions, local solutions."****And, you know, it's not new money. It's actually making sure the money goes to the right places. But did we do enough to, you know... This is really crude because I think how come we have to do this all the time? But what are you getting out of it? Allies, mainstream mob, you know, how do we influence?****You're getting 60,000 years of continuous culture, science, knowledges, creativity. So I think it's lean in, listen, and really let's think outside the box.****You know, Danni had me in Queensland just over the weekend. And what I love about Queensland, we just, yeah, we're innovators. We always have been. We've been very bad, though, in history with our communities. But Queensland has always been innovative.****So I would, you know... Please, you know, be the leaders that you are in the state that I come from. Very proud Murri. And just keep on going outside the box.** |
| **00:47:14:07** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah, amazing. Thank you. Thank you, Tanya. Couldn't have said it any better myself. And, you know, the question to you as well, Roslyn. What would you like to see from the wider screen sector and the industry as a nation, not just in Queensland but, you know, in our nation? What would you like to...some of the practical things you would like to see people doing out there?** |
| **00:47:35:12** | **ROSLYN** | **Oh, let's start with what Tanya said about Queensland. I mean, Queensland is amazing because we do have the most diverse First Nations culture in the country.****We have people from all over Queensland and the Torres Strait and everywhere is different and everyone has their own culture. We have an amazing opportunity.****And then if we talk... And also, Tanya, from what you said, going to our young people, when I told my 4-year-old granddaughter what I was about to do, she said, "Oh, that's good because I know all about the Gubbi Gubbi people." She lives on the Sunshine Coast. "Let me teach you some words, Grandma."****"Oh, OK!"****So we do have a thirst for knowledge in our youth in a way in which, when I was young, didn't exist. We have this diverse First Nations culture across Queensland that we can showcase. We have the capacity to do documentaries. We have the capacity to do series. We have the capacity to do feature films. We have the capacity to do all sorts of things.****And people just need to be bold, put forward their applications for funding, make sure they're thoroughly done, and we will be so happy to support them.****And can I also follow up on something Aaron said to me a while ago? First Nations people are doctors, nurses, police officers, teachers. They are cleaners. They are dentists. Every aspect of life, there are First Nations people. Our stories ought to include that. Mainstream stories ought to just take it for granted that First Nations people are there.****I remember Aaron saying to me once that you went for a casting as... You know, I can't remember what it was, Aaron, but it was just an ordinary mainstream role and they kind of went, "Oh, but you're a Torres Strait Islander."****"Uh, yes."****It reminds me a bit of when... Before women were judges, you know, "Oh, I'd like to be a judge."****"But you're a woman."****"Um, yes." We can be everywhere.****And similarly, First Nations people can be everywhere. And the stories that need to be told are the stories of the history...the stories of contemporary culture in every kind of way, fiction and nonfiction, but also the stories of mainstream Australia where this is who we are in a reconciled nation. We're all here together.****So my message, I guess, to any screen practitioners who are watching is please be bold. Please make your applications. We are very keen to fund you. We would love to fund you. We would love to support you, whether through funding or in any other way. We have Danielle and her staff there ready to support you and we really encourage people to make those applications.** |
| **00:50:54:20** | **DANIELLE** | **Thank you, Roslyn. And I think what you've highlighted there is one of the key challenges I see, you know, to get to a reconciled country. You know, I would like to see Dean and Aaron celebrated as screen practitioners, you know, not always putting the label of "Dean's an Aboriginal director." He's a director.** |
| **00:51:18:02** | **ROSLYN** | **Yeah.** |
| **00:51:19:05** | **DANIELLE** | **You know, and you really highlight that. And that's one of the challenges, you know? That's something we need to overcome in this industry and all spaces in the nation and how we put an umbrella sometimes that's not always necessary. We are just part of the space, of the social space we live in, like everyone else, you know? So I think you really highlighted that.****And I think also what, Tanya, you highlighted as well is, you know, how do we get some of our amazing content to the wider audience? You know, that's also one of the key challenges I see out there.****And just to throw one last question towards you, Dean, I think. You know, the impact of 'Incarceration Nation' and, you know, how important it is for some of that truth to be coming from yourself, you know. What was the significance of your truth telling through 'Incarceration Nation' and, you know, the impacts that you wanted to have in the wider society on incarceration and our mob?** |
| **00:52:20:20** | **DEAN** | **Yeah, I mean, I come from a position where I haven't had, you know, major contact with the justice system. So, for me, it was a really interesting exercise where, you know, I had to go in and learn and listen and really take a really broad take on...****I guess I had the privilege to come in and take a look at where it's all at from the outside to some extent but still recognise that there's legacy of trauma that comes through on that.****For me, it was about looking at where it's at, well, where it was at when we made that film to get a sense of, I guess, really the historical legacy that got us where it got to. And think about, for me, as a filmmaker, with a skill set to go, "OK, we've got a 200-year story here. As a filmmaker and my superpower, what can I do to have my impact on this topic and this content?"****And for me it was about, "OK, you've got a chance and you've got a skill and you've got a talent and that talent right now is to take a look at it across the entire historical perspective line."****And, like, sort of coming back to what Aaron was saying, those kind words he was saying, about wrapping it up in a way where an audience can turn it on, be challenged but not be punched in the face and told "It's your fault." It's that fine dance you do in this space where you want to be true and honest to the topic and think about how you can move people.****And people always say, "Well, what's the impact? What's been the ramification?" You can sort of put your... Me as a filmmaker can put my finger on a little bit of that in terms of policy and reach into different screenings and all that sort of stuff.****But at the end of the day, myself as a filmmaker, the best thing I can do is make the best damn film I can make. I don't... I can't... I made that clear with the team really early on. I can't... We can't control what people do and their actions. That's their choice.****The best thing that...and the best thing that we can do as a team behind this production is make the best thing that can talk to the hearts and minds of the people who happen to turn that television on or click on On Demand to watch it in that moment.****In many ways, you create what you can create and you hand it over to the universe and to the audience to go, "How am I going to take that and digest that and take that in?"****One thing that I'll just... Can I pick up on a few things, Danielle, of hearing everyone talk? I think one thing... I mean, I'm a really big believer and I guess if I had my say on Reconciliation Week, my theme for next year's one would be something like "We can only move forward together."****I think there's this big thing about... We've got to do this together. I think we can try on our own, but in some ways, and I think broadly as a society but also as a sector, "We can only move forward together" is a really strong sort of ethos for me where whether that's... Let's, you know, let's open history books. We have our oldest culture, we have our English culture and we have our new migrant culture. And they're three really valued parts of our society and they all have their light-and-shade moments. And I think it's a really unique, special combination.****I mean, that's our point of difference for the world, in many ways, in some regards. It's such a special, unique, melting existence of history. We share values, we share dreams, we share opportunities.****And I think, again, this is... We come to the table with this opportunity to look in and find stories that talk to... I see one of the questions, it's just, you know, we create content that can transcend communities and cultures, transcend into our different communities and types and societies of Queensland and beyond. It's a really important thing I think we, as filmmakers, have and the opportunity we have is to really find what does it mean to move forward, what does it really mean to move forward together?****Because we can't... I don't think any of us can do it on our own from any part of our society. That's not what... That's not how it works. We're here in this together, we're on this thing together. What does it really take us as an industry and as a society to move forward together?****And I just think that's a chance for us as a sector to embrace that as well. It's about co-producing with producers from all parts of our society. It's about working interstate, telling stories, helping Queensland stories work with Southern stories and Western stories to think about how we bring that together for an audience. We've gotta do this together and we've gotta work it out together and I think that's a really good opportunity for our sector to think about that. How can we move forward together? And if we can, if... We can do it on our own, but we know it's going to be much special, it's going to be much economic value for us all, it's going to bring prosperity, it's going to bring opportunities and I think that's where I think the opportunity lies.** |
| **00:57:57:17** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah.** |
| **00:57:59:00** | **DEAN** | **For what you do in your world there at Screen Queensland but also for practitioners and for what Roslyn's doing on the Truth and Healing Inquiry.****I mean, I have no doubt there'll be people who aren't Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who will want to come and talk to Roslyn on her trip across Queensland to share their histories, and that's part of the fabric and the mosaic of the beauty of what this is all about.****And I think it's a really rich place to sort of lean in and grab hold of and see what that means for you as a soundie, as a producer, as a commissioning editor, as a CEO of an organisation, whatever it is. I think it's a really important question we need to consider and think about how we can apply that to what we do. What is our superpower? What do we do and how can we find what that means in that kind of statement?** |
| **00:58:57:14** | **DANIELLE** | **Amazing.** |
| **00:58:58:24** | **DEAN** | **So if it's "We can only move forward together," I'm going to take the credit on it, OK?** |
| **00:59:05:19** | **AARON** | **But I think if you think about a project, just a project, I mean, our industry by default is collaborative, right?** |
| **00:59:14:17** | **ROSLYN** | **Yeah.** |
| **00:59:15:17** | **AARON** | **And the many hands that take that embryonic idea to the writing room and the writers that play with it, to the...to the script producer, to now into the land of production. It just goes...that little embryonic idea, that little child, that baby goes through so many different hands because of the collaborative process that we are.****We actually lend... Our industry actually lends to what you're speaking to and what you're asking to, Dean, so naturally. I think it just needs to be amplified and elevated, because we, as an industry, as a sector, are already in cahoots with one another.** |
| **01:00:03:19** | **DANIELLE** | **Yeah, absolutely. Thank you both. And what a way to bring us to an end to our panel discussion. It's unfortunate that we have run out of time, but I would like to say thank you very much to all of our panellists for dialling in and taking your time to help raise awareness to Reconciliation Week and the importance of. I think, I guess, a couple of things that I take away.****Sorry, firstly I will say apologies we didn't get to the questions, the Q&A questions. My sincere apologies. I will try and get your details and get a response to you!****But, like, look, to sum it up, you know, National Reconciliation Week is about, you know, how our truth-telling can contribute to our healing as a nation for our people. I think some of the key takeaways from our panel today is to innovate.****Like Aaron and Dean said, we work in a very collaborative space. How can we work in partnership to support and elevate First Nations voices, storytelling, talent development? Many ways to do that.****You know, please contact myself here at Screen Queensland. Our Screen Queensland details are on our website.****So please take the moment to actually... Don't leave this conversation here. I really encourage you to take this conversation now into your workplaces, onto your sets, onto the different projects you work in. Please, it's a simple conversation that you can have with your colleagues and keep the movement of reconciliation going. And now, more than ever, we need to work together.****So thank you very much again, Tanya, Roslyn, Dean, and Aaron for all of your time today. Enjoy the rest of your day.****And I will note that today is also Torres Strait Flag Day. So, happy Torres Strait Islander Flag Day today. Yay!** |
| **01:01:55:15** | **AARON** | **Mr Bernard Namok.** |
| **01:01:57:07** | **DANIELLE** | **Yes! And happy Reconciliation Week to all. It's a journey for us. It's our shared histories. And we will work together to make it all happen. So thank you very much and hope you've enjoyed the panel. Thank you.** |
| **01:02:08:18** | **AARON** | **Go the Maroons. Go the Maroons.** |