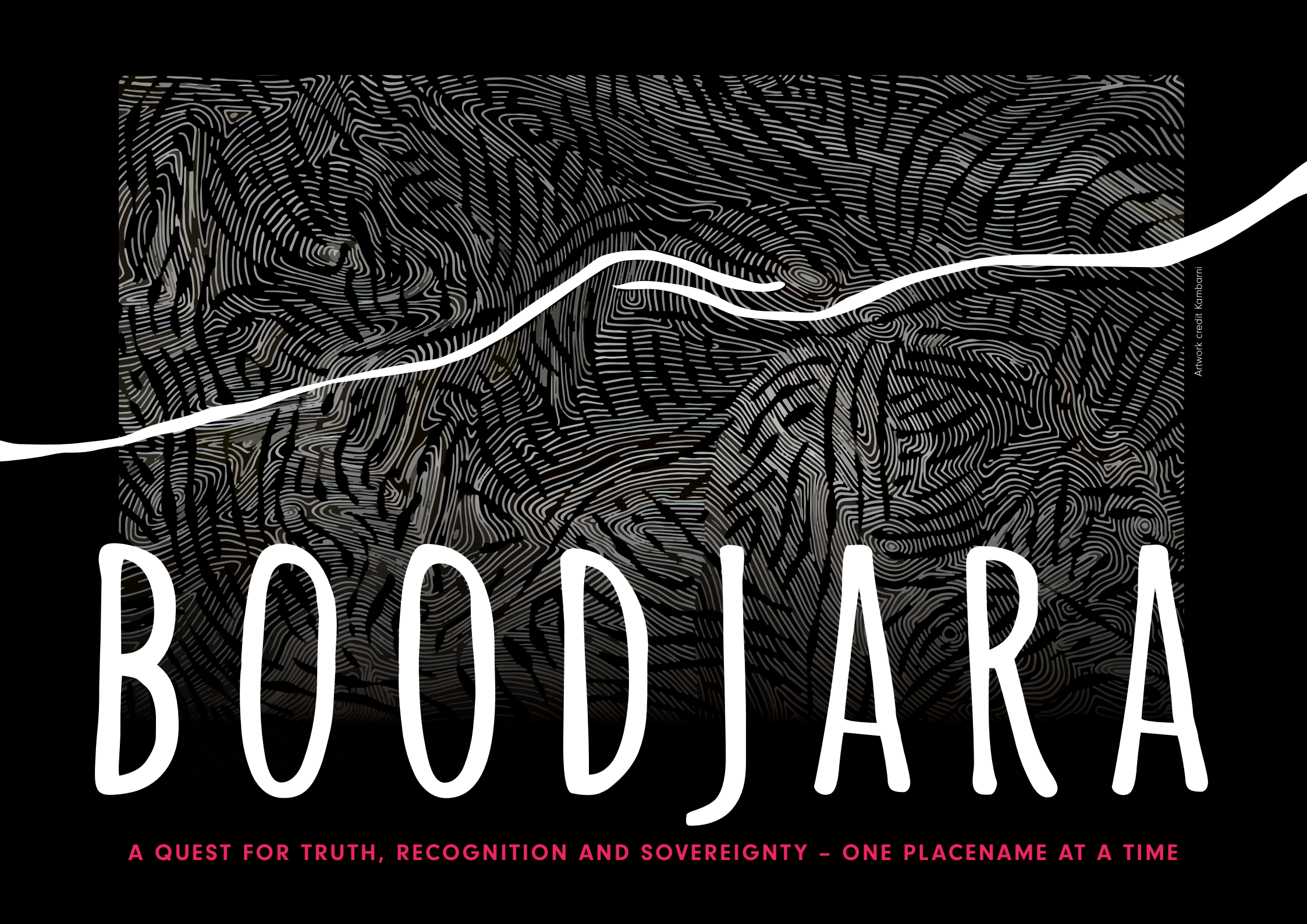
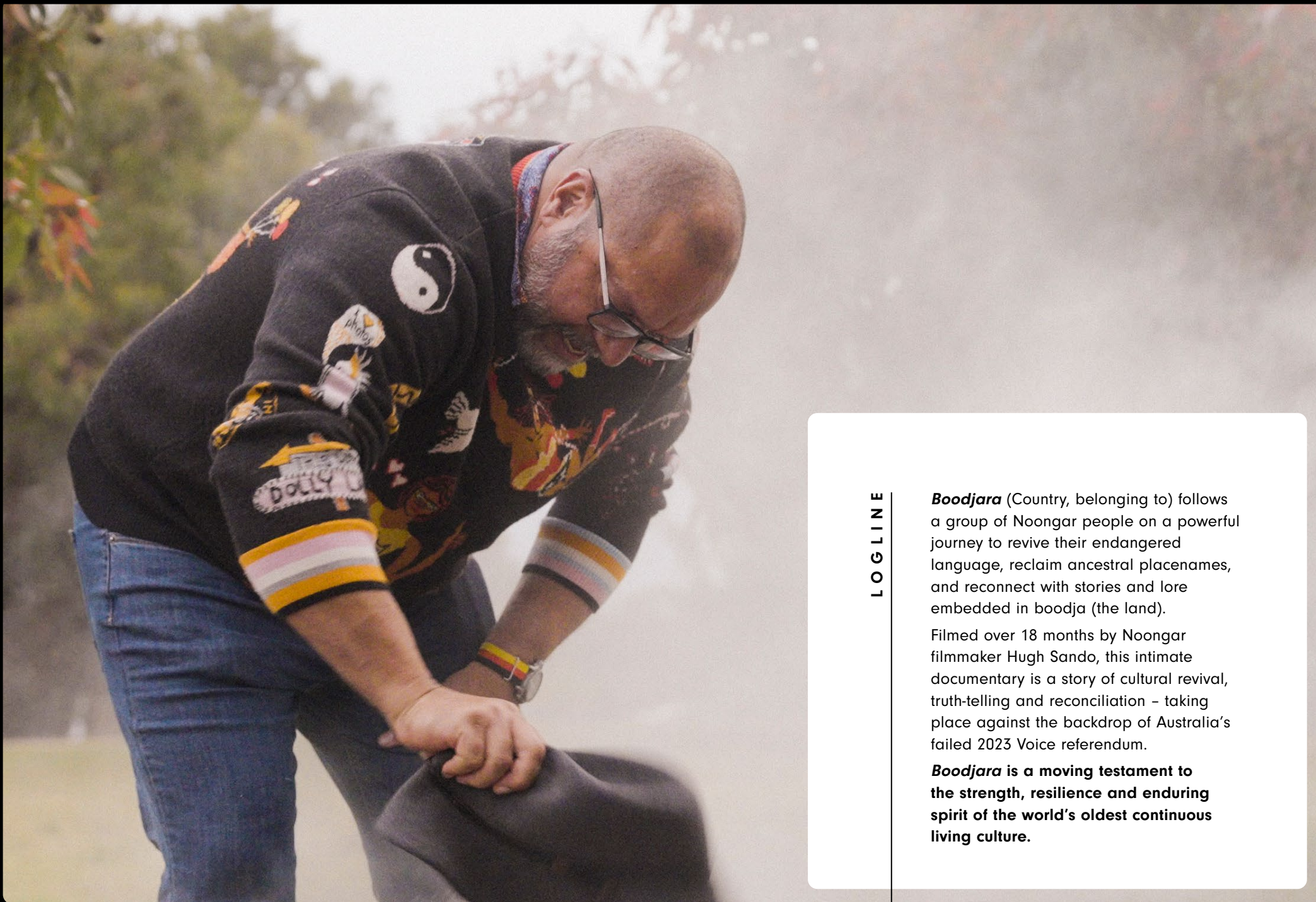




BOODJARA

Artwork credit Kambarni

A QUEST FOR TRUTH, RECOGNITION AND SOVEREIGNTY – ONE PLACENAME AT A TIME



LOG LINE

Boodjara (Country, belonging to) follows a group of Noongar people on a powerful journey to revive their endangered language, reclaim ancestral placenames, and reconnect with stories and lore embedded in boodja (the land).

Filmed over 18 months by Noongar filmmaker Hugh Sando, this intimate documentary is a story of cultural revival, truth-telling and reconciliation – taking place against the backdrop of Australia's failed 2023 Voice referendum.

Boodjara is a moving testament to the strength, resilience and enduring spirit of the world's oldest continuous living culture.



SYNOPSIS

Follow the extraordinary and heartwarming journey of a group of First Nations people as they embark on a quest to revive their endangered language, reclaim ancestral placenames and bring back to life the stories, culture and lore held in those sacred places.

This is their story. ***Boodjara***.

Boodjara means *Country, belonging to*. It's such a powerful word for the Noongar people (the First Nations people of Western Australia's South West region), that a derivative, boodjari, is used to describe pregnancy.

Mother Earth. Connection to Country. Ancient lore. Culture and customs. All these are embedded in ***Boodjara***.

For 18 months, renowned Noongar filmmaker Hugh Sando documented the journey of a group of First Nations people from Perth as they reclaimed traditional placenames and revived the culture and lore embedded in those landscapes.

Filmed on the traditional lands of the Noongar people, ***Boodjara*** (Country, belonging to) tells the story of [Place Names Melville](#), a Noongar-led arts project grounded in truth-telling, healing and deep engagement with Noongar kaartdijin bidi (knowledge trail). Directed by Hugh Sando, ***Boodjara's*** intimate interviews with Noongar Elders and community members are a poignant reminder that reconciliation is an ongoing process.

And though ***Boodjara*** is a story of cultural reconciliation and revival, it takes place against the divisive backdrop of Australia's 2023 referendum to decide whether a permanent advisory body should be established to give advice to the government about issues that affect First Nations people. The failure of that referendum highlights the urgent necessity of the work that ***Boodjara*** documents.

In a world that feels increasingly polarised, ***Boodjara*** provides hope through gentle truth-telling, extending the hand of reconciliation.

Place Names Melville is produced by Community Arts Network (CAN) in partnership with the City of Melville, the Noongar community and Moodjar.

HUGH SANDO

When I was invited to direct ***Boodjara***, I felt both humbled and deeply honoured. As a proud Whadjuk Noongar man, the opportunity to document this incredible journey was deeply personal. The film follows our Elders and knowledge holders as they revive an endangered language, reclaim ancestral placenames, and bring to life the stories, culture and lore held in those sacred places.

My vision for the documentary was to create an intimate, honest portrayal of the Elders and knowledge holders' journey. Grounded in truth-telling and cultural reclamation, ***Boodjara*** invites the audience to deepen their understanding of Indigenous culture and explore their own relationship with Country. It encourages viewers to recognise the beauty, strength and significance of First Nations knowledge and to share in the responsibility of caring for the land we all call home. More than anything, this film offers a platform for our Elders and knowledge holders to share their truth, language and history. It showcases the importance of projects like this as meaningful and significant steps toward reconciliation.

Being welcomed into the room to document these often sensitive, complex and beautiful conversations was a privilege. This project has been transformative for me, both culturally and creatively. As my first project in the role of director, it has expanded my understanding of storytelling and redefined my creative approach. It has deepened my connection to culture and taught me the immense responsibility and power in telling our stories with care, courage and truth.

Boodjara is not just a documentary. It's a conversation, an invitation, and a catalyst for change. I hope all who watch are inspired to reflect on their own relationship with this beautiful country and the significance of the connection First Nations peoples have with this land.



Hugh Sando filming the documentary at a Place Names Melville workshop // credit Cassandra Edwards



HUGH SANDO
Director, Editor, Colourist, DOP

Hugh Sando is a proud Whadjuk Noongar creative whose work is rooted in a deep connection to Country and an intrinsic passion for storytelling. Beginning his career in photography, Hugh developed a distinctive visual style grounded in light, texture and intentionality. This approach naturally extended into cinematography and directing. Now an emerging director and established cinematographer, Hugh is driven by the desire to craft both visually beautiful images and meaningful stories that inspire emotional and cultural connection.



MICHELLE WHITE
Executive Producer

Michelle is an award-winning former ABC journalist with more than thirty five years' experience in television, film, radio, print and digital media. A proud Yamatij/Badimia storyteller, she is committed to truth-telling and sharing the stories of First Nation people. Michelle has devised and overseen many of Community Arts Network's First Nations programs. She also manages the artistic career of her sister Mandy White and freelances as a writer, peer assessor, MC and public speaker.



PHIL WALLEYSTACK
Composer

Phillip Walleystack is a proud Noongar singer-songwriter, composer, producer and performer, whose career spans entertainment, entrepreneurship and cultural advocacy. A passionate champion of Indigenous culture and the arts, he brings powerful storytelling and connection to everything he does. Raised in country Western Australia, Phil's work is deeply rooted in his heritage and he has dedicated his life to preserving and promoting Aboriginal stories, voices and traditions – both on stage and behind the scenes. Phil's work as an artist and advocate has earned him induction to the City of Cockburn Arts Hall of Fame, multiple nominations for West Australian of the Year and established him as a role model for the next generation.

PRODUCTION TEAM

ENVELOPE AUDIO

Sound design, mix and supervision

Envelope Audio is a Fremantle-based studio specializing in immersive, narrative-driven sound design and composition. Founded by Josh Hogan and Ned Beckley, they blend cinematic music with detailed sonic environments for film, television, podcasts, and installations. Known for their collaborative approach, Envelope Audio partners with a diverse range of artists and creators to craft unique audio experiences. Their expertise spans scoring, sound design, and audio post-production, consistently earning industry recognition. Envelope Audio is dedicated to pushing creative boundaries and delivering high-quality, story-focused sound for a variety of media, making them a leading force in Australia's audio production landscape.

NDUTA GATHOGA

Producer

NATALIE SCHOLTZ

Producer

MIRANDA DE BAUGHN

Producer

CHRISTOPHER MACGREGOR

Sound Recordist

KAM BIN SALLAH (KAMBARNI)

Artist

SANDBOX PRODUCTIONS

DCP Mastering

PRODUCTION NOTES

CULTURAL RELEVANCE

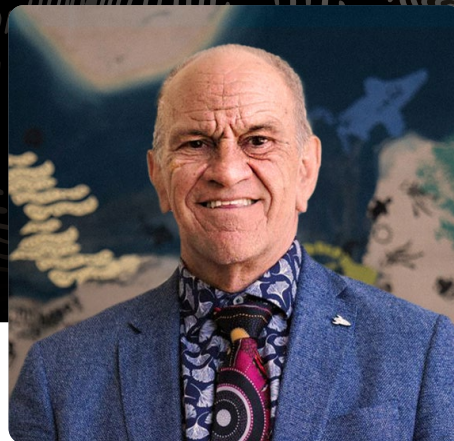
This film was produced on the traditional lands of the Noongar people. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

LANGUAGE

We acknowledge that the spelling and interpretation of Indigenous language can vary greatly from community to community.



GERI HAYDEN
Traditional Owner, Project Cultural
Advisor



DR. LEN COLLARD
Traditional Owner, Moodjar Director



VICKIE ZANI
Noongar Community Member



TREVOR WALLEY
Noongar Elder



JOSEPH COLLARD
Noongar Community Member

"This journey is going to be a wonderful journey. It's given us back recognition that when the old people walked and lived on this land, they named it. They named these places.

The old spirit, the moorditj wirrin, is coming back."

- Geri Hayden

PRESS CONTACTS

HUGH SANDO

Director

info@hughsando.com

NDUTA GATHOGA

Producer

Community Arts Network

nduta@can.org.au

MICHELLE WHITE

Executive Producer

Community Arts Network

michelle@can.org.au

ASSETS

Boodjara Stills [LINK](#)

Supporting photos [LINK](#)

Boodjara Trailer [LINK](#)

Poster [LINK](#)

Project website [LINK](#)

Social Media handle #boodjara



CREDITS

Director

Hugh Sando

Producers

Nduta Gathoga, Natalie Scholtz,
Miranda De Baughn

Executive Producer

Michelle White

Cultural Advisor

Geri Hayden

Director of Photography

Hugh Sando

Sound Recordist

Christopher MacGregor

Post Production

Haitch Studio

Editor

Hugh Sando

Colourist

Hugh Sando

Composer

Phil Walleystack

Title Design

Kamsani Bin Salleh,
Rebecca Lyon Augustus

Title Animation

Simone Woolfitt

Sound Design, Mix and Supervision

Envelope Audio

DCP Mastering

Sandbox Productions

Project Artists

Zali Morgan, Bruce Denny, Alexander Hare,
Kam Bin Salleh (Kambarni), Luisa Mitchell

CAN Project Team

Nduta Gathoga, Natalie Scholtz,
Miranda De Baughn, Michelle White,
Rebecca Lyon Augustus

City of Melville Project Team

Noelene Mantellato, Ebonnie Poletti,
Marcus Dickson

Moodjar Project Team

Dr. Len Collard, Monica Kane,
Niki Davison, Dylan Collard

TECHNICAL SPECS

Title Boodjara

Duration 18 minutes

Year of completion 2025

Genre Documentary

Rating Not Classified

Language English and Noongar

Subtitles English

Country of Origin Australia

Aspect Ratio 2.35:1

Resolution 3840 x 1634

Frame Rate 25 fps

Shooting Format 4K DCI

Finished Format 4K UHD

Audio 5:1

Premiered 10 July 2025

Revelation International Film Festival



Place Names Melville Cultural Mapping workshops // credit Matty Loucas