



PITCH DECK STRONGER ON COUNTRY

CULTURE, SPIRIT, CONNECTION. THIS IS HOW WE HEAL.

AN ARTICLE ONE IMPACT PRODUCTION WITH THE BIG ANXIETY RESEARCH CENTRE
ACQUIRED BY NITV 2026 - SEEKING COMPLETION PARTNERS



UNSW
Big Anxiety
Research Centre

A THIRTY MINUTE IMPACT DOCUMENTARY PROJECT ACQUIRED BY SBS/NITV

As incarceration and mental distress rise among young Aboriginal people, First Nations communities are urgently calling for solutions grounded in culture, not correction.

Backed by the Australian Research Council (ARC), the Big Anxiety Research Centre has partnered with the Githabul community in Warwick, Queensland, on groundbreaking research exploring whether traditional Aboriginal trauma healing practices deserve clinical recognition. Stronger On Country documents this pioneering journey.

Led by Nathan, an emerging Githabul Traditional Owner, the team combines cultural knowledge with virtual reality (VR) to reconnect incarcerated young Aboriginal men with Country, creating a virtual pathway home for those who are lost.

Stronger On Country is a powerful documentary by and for Aboriginal men, capturing a world-first collaboration that aims to break cycles of trauma and incarceration while reshaping how Australia understands healing.

Filmed on
GITHABUL COUNTRY
Wadingh Wadingh (Warwick, Qld)



IMPACT VISION

A future where Aboriginal cultural healing is recognised, valued and accessible across Australia – where Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing are embraced as essential to improving social and emotional wellbeing. *Stronger On Country* shifts the national conversation and inspires greater investment in Indigenous-led healing.

IMPACT OBJECTIVES



INSPIRE HOPE AND HEALING

Share Nathan's story to show that healing, leadership and positive change are possible, inspiring young Aboriginal men, families and communities to reconnect with culture, Country and community.



SHIFT PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

Challenge deficit-based narratives by showcasing Indigenous-led solutions to trauma and the strength, resilience and leadership within Aboriginal communities.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Create opportunities for communities to come together through screenings, yarning and discussion, fostering connection and awareness.



SUPPORT EVIDENCE-INFORMED CHANGE

Increase awareness of the emerging evidence for culturally grounded healing and encourage recognition across health, justice and wellbeing sectors.



ENCOURAGE FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Encourage ACCHOs, communities and service providers to engage with the *Stronger On Country* initiative and support future delivery of the VR healing program under Aboriginal leadership.



OUR AUDIENCES



Aboriginal communities (young people, Elders, families)



ACCHOs and community organisations



Health professionals, psychologists and trauma practitioners



Justice sector and service providers



Researchers and academics



Policymakers and government



Broader Australian public (via NITV and community screenings)

STRONGER ON COUNTRY

Storytelling • Culture • Research
Connection • Healing



OUR PARTNERS



Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)



Community and cultural organisations



The Big Anxiety Research Centre



Health, mental health and wellbeing organisations



Justice organisations



Universities and research institutions



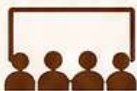
Media partners (NITV and others)



Government and philanthropic partners

KEY IMPACT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY SCREENINGS



Deliver screenings with ACCHOs, community organisations and cultural partners, followed by yarning circles and panel discussions.

HEALTH & SECTOR ENGAGEMENT



Facilitate screenings and discussions with health, justice, research and policy sectors to promote dialogue on Indigenous-led healing approaches.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS



Present at Indigenous health, wellbeing, justice, research, immersive media, education and community conferences to inform and influence decision-makers.

EDUCATION



Develop educational resources for schools, universities and professional training programs on Aboriginal wellbeing, trauma-informed care and Indigenous healing.

FUTURE PROGRAM DELIVERY



Promote engagement with the broader *Stronger On Country* initiative and support future implementation of the VR healing program under Aboriginal leadership.

LONG-TERM IMPACT OUTCOMES



Culturally grounded healing is recognised and accessible



Stronger, connected Aboriginal communities and young people



Improved social and emotional wellbeing



Policy and systems change informed by Aboriginal leadership



Sustainable investment in Indigenous-led healing initiatives



WE'RE SEEKING A COMPLETION PARTNER TO SUPPORT THIS GROUNDBREAKING PROJECT

Stronger On Country has secured a national broadcast through SBS/NITV, with a \$30,000 licence fee already committed. To complete the documentary to the standard this story deserves, we are seeking a minimum of \$20,000 in completion funding.

Completion Partners will help bring this groundbreaking documentary, and the research it documents, to audiences across Australia while becoming part of a project advancing new approaches to Aboriginal trauma healing.

More than financial supporters, our Completion Partners become part of a nationally significant project exploring how culture, research and lived experience can help reshape trauma healing for future generations.

Partnership Benefits

Completion Partners may receive:

- Logo in documentary end credits
- Website acknowledgement
- Premiere invitations
- Recognition in documentary educational resources
- Social media acknowledgements
- Participation in the impact campaign
- Staff screening opportunities
- Opportunity to host a panel with documentary participants and project representatives



STRONGER ON COUNTRY

PROJECT BUDGET OVERVIEW

Investing in an Indigenous-led solution to trauma.
Creating evidence. Changing lives.

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

\$190,414.00

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED



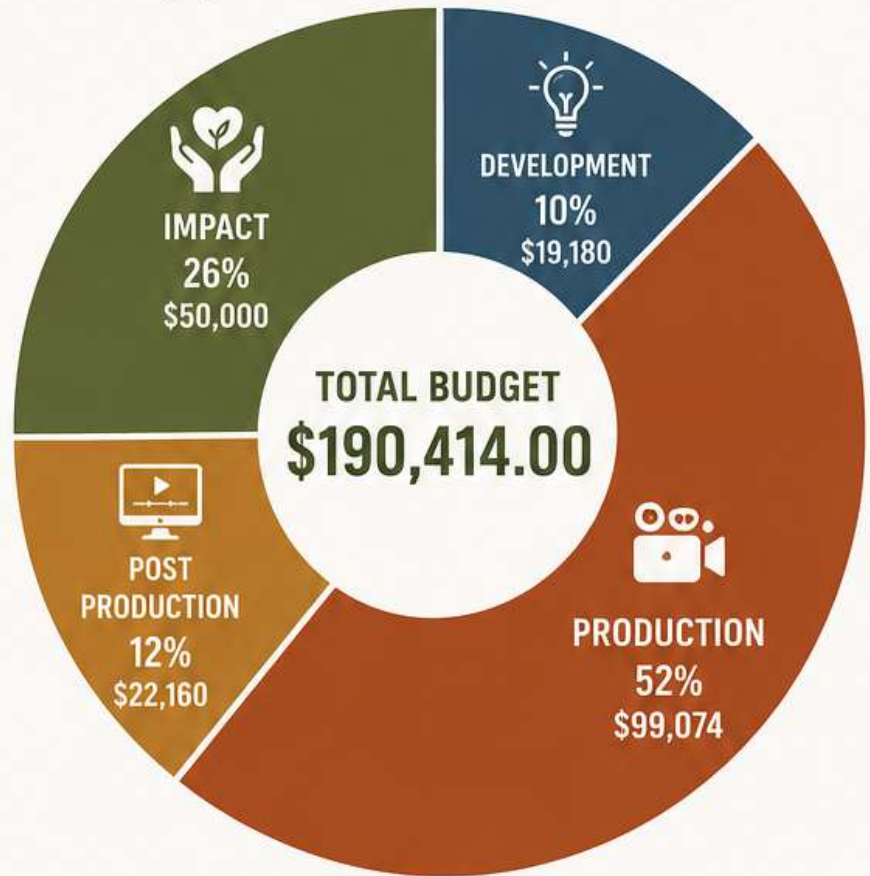
SBS
\$35,000.00



Screen Queensland
\$5,000.00



Big Anxiety Research Centre
In-kind contribution
\$73,074.00



OUR ASK: STAGED & TIME CRITICAL



WE ARE LOOKING TO RAISE

\$80,340.00

Production and Post Production are the most important now to complete the story and create impact.

STAGED FUNDING PRIORITY

- 1 IMMEDIATE PRIORITY** **\$30,340**
Production & Post Production
To complete filming and deliver the edit.
- 2 NEXT PRIORITY** **\$50,000**
Impact
To drive impact, engagement and systems change.



DEVELOPMENT
\$19,180.00

- Research & consultation
- Story development
- Permissions & ethics
- Script writing
- Project planning



PRODUCTION
\$99,074.00

- Pre-production
- Filming & expeditions
- Crew & equipment
- Travel & accommodation
- Community engagement
- Insurance & permits



POST PRODUCTION
\$22,160.00

- Editing
- Sound design & mix
- Colour grade
- Graphics & titles
- Finishing & delivery



IMPACT
\$50,000.00

- Community screenings
- Yarning & engagement
- Education resources
- Conferences & events
- Research dissemination
- Campaign & communications

WHY THIS PROJECT?

First Nations Australians are significantly over-represented in the Australian prison system, with incarceration rates far exceeding those of non-Indigenous Australians — particularly among youth. In New South Wales, the Aboriginal imprisonment rate is nearly 10 times that of non-Aboriginal Australians.

Despite comprising only 3% of the adult population and 8% of the youth population, Aboriginal people make up over 30% of the adult prison population and 50% of those in youth detention. The vast majority are men.

These statistics are not just the result of individual behaviours or poor choices — they are the outcome of ongoing systemic inequality, intergenerational trauma, and the erosion of cultural continuity through colonisation,

dispossession, and forced removals. For many Aboriginal families, cycles of incarceration, substance use, violence, and mental distress are legacies of historical trauma that continue to play out across generations.

What we know and what research increasingly supports, is that Indigenous-led cultural practices have a profound and positive impact on Aboriginal mental health.

Connection to Country, cultural identity, and community-based healing are protective factors that can reduce recidivism, support emotional regulation, and restore a sense of belonging. Programs grounded in culture, rather than punishment, offer more than just an intervention - they offer a pathway back to self, spirit, and strength.





NATHAN CHARLES is a *Githabul* emerging cultural leader based in Warwick, Queensland. Over the past 5 years, Nathan has focused on expanding his cultural knowledge and practise, delivering Welcome To Country and site cleansings in his local region. A practising artist, Nathan has also been engaged by local schools to create murals and installations. *Stronger On Country* is based on Nathan's collaboration with Ash, Uncle Alan and Volker to deliver a VR experience that can help young First Nations men struggling with their mental health to heal and reconnect with country.

UNCLE ALAN MARTIN is a proud *Gungarri* man from the Maranoa region who uses Aboriginal techniques along with a variety of other cultural practices in his healing work. He is a universal leader in providing holistic health services to those looking for a diverse approach to their well-being and life. Uncle Alan is a key person in the *Stronger On Country* series, providing mentoring and support for Nathan and allowing the team access to people he works with on-country and at detention centres.



ASH DARGAN is a *Larrakia* man, recording artist, storyteller and social and emotional wellbeing specialist who implements Culturally Informed & Trauma Integrated Healing Approaches (CITIHA) programs focussed on trauma recovery, cultural healing and community development. His considerable experience, dedication, advocacy and determination to deliver culturally rich narratives and collaborative works to completion make him a highly skilled and valued member of the team. In *Stronger On Country*, Ash leads the projects facilitation and works with Volker to develop the VR outcome.

VOLKER KUCHELMEISTER is an expert in presence, embodiment and place representation for immersive applications and has worked extensively in cinematography, interactive narrative, experimental imaging, spatial mapping, interactive systems, immersive visualisation and in the performing arts while exploring and exploding the boundaries of the cinematic image. Volker appears in the series to capture VR content, engage with other team members during workshops and site visits and develop the VR experience back at his office at UNSW in Sydney.



KEY APPEARANCES IN STRONGER ON COUNTRY

DELIVERABLES

Pre Production from May to October 2025

Production from Oct 25 to January 2027

Post Production wrap March 2027

A 30 MINUTE DOCUMENTARY
ACQUIRED BY SBS/NITV

STRONGER
ON COUNTRY

*Culture, spirit, connection.
This is how we heal.*

CULTURAL SAFETY & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

This plan outlines our commitment to respectful, meaningful and culturally safe engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities throughout the development, production and distribution of "STRONGER ON COUNTRY".

Cultural Leadership

Ash Dargan (Larrakia man)

Cultural facilitator

Co-writer

Chief Investigator

Co-designer of VR tool

Nathan Charles (Githabul man)

Community leader / traditional owner

Co-designer of VR tool

Protagonist of film

Alan Martin (Gunggari Elder)

Cultural consultant/mentor

Retreat facilitator

Advisor for testing

Chelsea Winder (Yuin woman)

Producer

Co-writer

Engagement

Community engagement is not a one-off consultation — it is an ongoing, reciprocal process grounded in trust, cultural authority, and respect for lived experience. This project recognises the importance of engaging not only individuals but whole communities, families, and Elders whose knowledge and leadership shape every stage of the work.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Community-led Co-design
- On-Country development
- Culturally grounded workshops and yarning circles
- Ongoing engagement through testing and feedback
- Review and accountability
- Reciprocity and return

Informed Consent & Cultural Safety

Big Anxiety Research Centre & Article One have committed to following strict protocols to ensure free, prior and informed consent is obtained from all participants, with re-consent gathered at key stages (filming & distribution).

Support will be available for participants during filming and testing, particularly when discussing trauma or justice system experiences. Participation is voluntary, and withdrawal is supported at any point. Where needed, psychological first aid and cultural support will be provided.

Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property

All contributors of cultural knowledge or performance will be acknowledged through our written ICIP agreement [see attached]. Big Anxiety Research Centre & Article One ensure cultural materials remain under the authority of Traditional Owners. No content will be used outside the agreed scope without further consent.

This includes protocol around sacred sites, ceremony, body painting, music, language and cultural stories. We recognise that cultural knowledge is owned collectively by the community, not by individuals, and commit to working within those boundaries.

OUR TEAM



Chelsea Winder

PRODUCER, CO-WRITER

Chelsea is a proud Yuin woman, Project Manager on the MRFF Transforming Trauma project and Producer of its companion documentary 'Stronger on Country'. With a background in Indigenous health as a midwife, she leads cultural coordination and community partnerships to ensure Indigenous leadership and values are central to every stage of the work.



Prof. Jill Bennett

CREATIVE PRODUCER

Jill is Director of the Big Anxiety Research Centre, where she leads large-scale R&D projects, developing creative VR with remote and regional communities. She has led 12 major collaborative immersive media productions, winning multiple awards. She has a background in trauma and is founding director of The Big Anxiety festival.



Ash Dargan

CO-WRITER, SOUND DESIGN

Ash is a Larrakia man, recording artist, storyteller and social and emotional wellbeing specialist. He holds a Master's degree in Indigenous Studies (Wellbeing), where he studied under Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson. As a Senior Trainer at We Al-li he specialises in Trauma-informed program delivery and implementing cultural frameworks for social and emotional wellbeing.



Steph Vajda

DIRECTOR, CAMERA, EDITOR

Steph Vajda is an award-winning producer, director, editor, cinematographer and drone pilot whose work combines participatory documentary with community-led and impact-driven storytelling. Since co-founding Article One in 2021, he has led acclaimed documentaries including Changing Our Ways, Beyond Invasion and Return of the Gweagal Spears, creating authentic films that combine collaboration, engagement and measurable social change.



Dan Baebler

CAMERA OPERATOR

Dan is a multitasking filmmaker adept in all stages of the filmmaking process – conceptualisation, shooting, editing, colour grading and audio mixing. Dan has created dozens of films including music videos, social advocacy, corporate video, event documentation and drama and has a special interest in social justice.



Sam Woripa Watson

1ST AC, ASSISTANT EDITOR

Sam is a Wanggerriburrah and Birri Gubba emerging filmmaker with skills in camera operating, sound recording and post production. After working with Link-Up from 2015 to 2020, in 2021 Sam joined the Article One team, developing his skills in camera, lighting and sound, while building his capacity as a Director and editor.



View our **Promo Reel** for this project with the QR code. Also, check out examples of other collaborations between Article One and The Big Anxiety Research Centre, including the trailer for a feature documentary made with the Warwick community in 2023 titled *Changing Our Ways*.

QR not working?

www.vimeo.com/showcase/A1-TBA

www.thebiganxiety.org

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www.articleone.com.au

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