



A deadly short film about smashing hepatitis C

Originally staged as a play which toured in 2018 and 2019, VIRAL is a short film made by Australia's longest running First Nations theatre company, ILBIJERRI, about navigating hepatitis C.

The film is one of a suite of works tackling health and social issues, commissioned by ILBIJERRI's long term partners of fifteen years, the Victorian Government's Department of Health.

These works are specifically designed for First Nations audiences and are performed and distributed in community spaces, prisons, and health centres across Victoria. Now, in film format, VIRAL is set to reach broader audiences, available via ILBIJERRI's website, and will be further disseminated by myriad partners across the health and justice sector, and many First Nations community groups.

In 2005, ILBIJERRI was approached by the Victorian Government Department of Health & Human Services to develop a play that would communicate hepatitis C prevention and education messages in a culturally appropriate way to the Indigenous community. It was understood that theatre - essentially delivering message in alternative creative formats - is an effective tool in breaking down social boundaries, where certain concepts and issues are considered too confronting to publicly discuss.

In 2018, the stage play VIRAL followed on from widely acclaimed works CHOPPED LIVER and BODY ARMOUR - three exciting installments in ILBIJERRI's trilogy of hepatitis C health works. These works are aimed at breaking down stigma, promoting healing, and getting the First Nations community to live hepatitis C free.

Created through an in-depth engagement process, including community workshops and yarning circles, VIRAL was remounted for a second regional tour in 2019, following its inaugural tour in 2018, and once again performed in community centres, schools and prisons.

VIRAL was due to have its third and final community tour in 2020 as a live theatre show. In response to Covid restrictions and the uncertainty of getting the work out into community, the production was re-imagined as a film in 2021, to be rolled out in 2022 - with the film to be publically promoted from **Wednesday 27 July**.

Writer Maryanne Sam

Screen Adaptation
Chantelle Murray

Creative Direction
Kamarra Bell-Wykes

Producer Lauren Sheree

Performers Blayne Welsh,
Laila Thaker, Corey Saylor-
Brunskill, Joshua Austin,
Zerene Jaadwa, Lisa Maza,
Nick Sumner-Wright, Eban
Roach, Melodie
Reynolds-Diarra, Jaeden
Williams, Stone Motherless
Cold, Alinta Roberta, Natasha
Garling, Dylan Kerr

Voiced Narration
Uncle Jack Charles

Filmed and edited
YOUTHWORX Productions

WATCH 27 MIN FILM

WATCH TRAILER

This project has been commissioned by the Victorian State Government via the Department of Health. With special thanks to LiverWELL incorporating Hepatitis Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), Justice Health via Department of Justice and Community Safety, Thorne Harbour Health, the Burnet Institute, and the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health (CERSH)

FILM SYNOPSIS

Join Ally and Kev who live up in the flats. They've got their own little place, a brand new baby and dreams for the future. Life should be good but sometimes things don't always go to plan.

Meet Merv who hasn't been feeling great lately, not for some years in fact. Years of tough luck, bad choices and hard living have finally caught up with him.

They're all looking at one final chance to make things right before it's too late.

**For further information, interviews and images
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