

STITCHED TOGETHER

A FILM BY TESS MCARTHUR-DOWTY





LOGLINE

In a small town outside Melbourne, a community of unlikely activists fight climate change with their sewing machines – making reusable bags out of recycled fabrics.

SYNOPSIS

In a small town outside Melbourne, a group of unlikely activists band together to fight for the future of our planet. Armed with sewing machines, recycled fabrics, and an array of baked goods, the group at ‘Woodend Community Bags’ meet up weekly to sew reusable bags. The group is a beacon for those who want to take action against the climate crisis, or who just want to strengthen their sense of community. Led by Sally, these self-described ‘granny activists’ are determined to leave a legacy of hope and sustainability to the next generation. However, faced with a global pandemic they will have to find new ways to get the bags into the community and spread the message of environmentalism. As they find strength in working together after so long in isolation, they discover that it will take more than a six-month lockdown to break their fighting spirit.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In a year that started with our country on fire, and has continued with much of the world isolated during a global pandemic, we've all been looking for stories of hope. For me, this hope has come from my connection with Sally and the group at Woodend Community Bags.

I am fascinated by stories of people using their skillset to create change. This is what initially drew me to Woodend Community Bags as an activist group using sewing to fight for the environment. In making something like reusable shopping bags that can be used and distributed amongst the community, the group draws all of Woodend into its fight against plastics, and challenges people to reflect on their own impact in the world.

What I was not expecting when I first reached out to Sally was how inspired I would be by the resilience and community strength of Sally and the group. They draw strength from each other and their connection to the Woodend community, and in doing so inspired me to reflect on ways I can contribute to my own community. This feeling is something I would like to bring to a broader audience. I hope that this film can inspire people, as I have been inspired, to use your skills and passions for activism, and to find strength in the community around you.

While this is a story that is local to Woodend and its community, its broader themes of activism, community, feminism, environmentalism, and Woodend Community Bags' connection to the global movement of Boomerang Bags mean that the story will resonate far beyond the Woodend Community. After bushfires destroyed the lives of so many over the summer of 2019/2020, and a pandemic disrupted our entire world, we all need stories like Sally's to remind us that there is hope and that even seemingly small actions can have a large impact.





SCREENINGS & AWARDS



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 00:17:02

Year: 2021

Country: Australia

Language: English

Screening Format: HD 16:9

Sound: Stereo



DIRECTOR BIO

Tess McArthur-Dowty is a writer, director, and editor with a Master of Film and Television (Documentary) from VCA, who has always had a passion for film. She is interested in making films that deal with social issues, and is inspired by film's ability to allow audience members to try and understand a perspective that may be different from their own. This has been reflected in the short documentary films she's made which have screened at festivals globally, including her short experimental documentary *Just that time of the month* which screened at St Kilda Film Festival 2021, while *Vigilance* was nominated for Best Australian Short Director at Melbourne Documentary Film Festival 2020.

CONTACT

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CREDITS

Director, Editor, Cinematographer:
Tess McArthur-Dowty

Sound Recordist:
Rachel Tierney

Additional Camera & Sound:
Emmy Clifton

Production Assistant:
William He

Stills Photographer:
Emmy Clifton & William He

Edit Consultant:
Natalie Cunningham

Online Editor:
Declan Loughran

Sound Mixer:
Lincoln Sharpe

VCA Screen Production Coordinator:
CJ Welsh

Post Production Coordinators:
Gordon Lyon & Grayton Hevern

Supervising Producers:
Shannon Owen & Steve Thomas

Featuring:
Sally Scanlan, Barbara Black, Barbara Glanville, Carmel McPhee,
Deann Collier, Jasley Wilding-McBride, Lorraine Masterman,
Margaret Corcoran, Marianne Brockmuller, Sheila Brennan, Susan
Carroll, Susie Game, Brian Thomas, Dean Mighell

VCA Film and Television
Faculty of Fine Arts and Music
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