

WORLD PREMIERE



Goolarri Media
Enterprises
and
Yirra Yaakin
Theatre Company
present

FIFO

A PLAY BY MELODY DIA

The
things
we do
to fit in.



Creating and Sharing our local stories through
Television, Radio, Events, Stage, Training and Music.



For more information on event dates and media content visit

Web: www.goolarri.com
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CAST

Marlanie Haerewa
Bobbi Henry
Trevor Ryan

PLAYWRIGHT DIRECTOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Melody Dia
Eva Grace Mullaley
Bruce Denny

DRAMATURGS CREATIVE PRODUCERS

Mari Lourey & Dot West
Jodie Bell
Elinor King
Mari Lourey

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER SOUND DESIGNER LIGHTING DESIGNER STAGE MANAGER ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER (BROOME) PRODUCTION MANAGER COSTUME ASSISTANT

Neil Sheriff
Ella Portwine
Peter Young
Karen Cook
Scott Wilson
Mike Nanning
Keira Gentle

VOICE COACH

Julia Moody

CAST AND CREW

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SPECIAL THANKS

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Goolarri Media Enterprises and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company would like to thank Australian Plays, Copyright Agency Cultural Fund, Corrugated Lines Writers Festival, Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Magabala Books, Moogahlin Performing Arts, Playwriting Australia, Yellamundie Festival, Subiaco Arts Centre and APE Productions for their support. We would also like to thank Jub Clerc, Jayla Shae Davey, Rachael Maza, Kyle J Morrison, Ngaire Pigram, Ningali Lawford-Wolf, Nelson Baker and Stefo Nantsou for their contribution.

Note: Coarse language, drug references, suicide references, drug paraphernalia, smoke, haze. Recommended for ages 15+.

SYNOPSIS

The boom went bust, and now Jono's in a mine donga, trapped in debt and a lifestyle that is slowly strangling his liyarn.

Jono's wife Mary feels stuck in the high-flying life of the lonely FIFO parent and has decided they'd be better off cutting their losses and moving home to Broome, close to family and her younger sister Janey.

But the old neighbourhood, and her sister, 'ain't what they used to be'. Janey is locked in her house, basking in the glory of becoming a YouTube comedy sensation as she awaits the return of Brad, her FIFO husband. But where is Brad? And where's their young daughter Katie? Something's gotta give, but what will it take to stop the slide into the deepening pit that threatens to engulf them all?



NOTES

WRITER'S NOTES

When I joined Goolarri's Indigenous Writers Program I wasn't out to write a drama for stage specifically about the FIFO lifestyle, but it's become a way of life up here and having worked FIFO myself I recall the struggle and how negatively it can impact on Aboriginal families.

For Aboriginal people part of that struggle is the fact mining digs up our country and goes against our belief of living in harmony with the land, a constant tension. Theatre drama thrives on tension and character dilemmas: the theme of FIFO was a natural fit and started with the idea of being locked into an isolated way of life and dictated by lists and routine. First it was the character of Janey locked in her house, and then one day, the voice of the character Jono just started talking from his donga on an isolated mine site; I started writing and didn't stop. The characters I was creating were all somehow under extreme pressure, as many people's lives can be when families fly in and out for work.

I read Jono's monologue at Broome's annual Corrugated Lines Writers Festival and people came up and wanted to tell me their own stories about FIFO – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the stories were similar, the isolation, mental health, drugs and disconnect; but no one was really talking about it. When I started writing the stats were high, but research was low on how FIFO mining can negatively impact on lives. Nobody wants to admit to the scale of the problem.

I gathered research, interviews and anecdotal evidence. There's a saying out on site, "What happens on camp, stays on camp." But it doesn't; miners are flying back and forth and disrupting their home life. People can become so lonely, but the money is good for the family. It's addictive and the more you spend and extend your line of credit, the happier the banks are and they reward you with yet more credit.

While *FIFO* has a serious intention, I hope it's leavened by humour – albeit pretty dark – with scenes that are appalling, yet funny at the same time. The story I have written is only a glimpse into FIFO: there are as many positive stories as there are negative ones and it does end with a sense of hope.

FIFO has been a delight to write and I'm so grateful for this opportunity. I've had the privilege of working with Aboriginal theatre companies Ilbjerri and Mooghalin Performing Arts along the way, and am thrilled that it is premiering here in WA with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and Goolarri Media. Thank you all for the support, especially my family and friends who have encouraged me to continue writing. I look forward to seeing you in the Foyer after the show.

Melody Dia
Writer

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

A shiny new writer
This job is the best
Partnering south to north
To tell a tale of the West

A story from here
Supported by the nation
Of family and loss fed by
The mineral excavation

Oh to be back in our theatres
With an audience to feed
relating to a Western tale
of debt and corporate greed

This team continued to work
During COVID isolation
There's even a mention
Of this country's ICE fixation

Digging holes in the land
Destroying the mother
The struggle to be seen
As one and not the other

Feeling lost and lonely
And making it funny
In this digital new normal
It's not all about the money

A new work, a new writer
A new play, a new team
An ode to remember
That we are 'living the Dream'

Eva Grace Mullaley
Artistic Director

FIFO has emerged from Goolarri Writers Program which began in 2014, with support from the Australia Council for the Arts, Playwriting Australia and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

It is a unique Indigenous writers program that evolves the professional skills of emerging performance writers for Stage and Film with a combination of masterclasses, mentorship and tuition from leading industry professionals, alongside experiential training.

The program is co-facilitated by award winning writers **Dot West** (screen) and **Mari Lourey** (playwright/dramaturg).

There are presently several film and theatre projects in development, following previous successes.

If you would like to get involved, contact **Goolarri Media on:**
08 9194 9999,
 or email: reception@gme.com.au



Melody Dia

Writer

Melody is a proud Nyul Nyul woman, born and raised in Broome WA, with a mixed heritage of Indonesian, Indian and European background. She has worked in pubs/kitchens, classrooms, mine-sites and offices. Her current job working in Aged Care, regularly takes her to the Fitzroy Valley region of the Kimberley, supporting Elders who live in remote communities across the Kimberley.

Melody has loved theatre ever since she saw the original stage play of Bran Nue Dae, as a

young girl. Discovering Shakespeare at school inspired in her an avid interest for the written word in all its forms. She has written and performed poetry ever since and is a popular fixture every year at Broome's Corrugated Lines Writers Festival spoken word event. She has been a participant of Goolarri Writers Program since 2014 where she began to write *FIFO- Fit in or F**k Off!* - for 2019's Yellamundie First Nations Play Festival, directed by Rachael Maza. *FIFO* is the first of what she hopes will be more professionally produced plays.



Eva Grace Mullaley

Director

Eva Grace Mullaley is a Widi woman from the Yamatji Nation in the Midwest Region of Western Australia. She graduated from the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Theatre Course at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2003 and began her directing career in 2005 as an assistant to David Milroy for the first creative development of *Windmill Baby*, produced by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

In her 17+ year career Eva has worn many hats in the theatre industry including Director, Arts Administrator, Stage Manager, Tour Manager – internationally and nationally, Producer, Event

Manager, Actor, Dramaturg, Lecturer in Character and Script Analysis, Collaborating Director, Workshops Coordinator and many more.

She has worked as a director and dramaturg for Moogahlin Performing Arts, Yellamundie Indigenous Playwrights Festival, Ilbijerri Theatre Company, Te Rehia Theatre Company, WAAPA and Yirramboi Festival. Eva was also working as the Development Producer for the Australian Blackfulla Performing Arts Alliance (BPAA), a national peak body for Indigenous theatre and performers.

She is currently Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company in Perth, Western Australia.

| CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Marlanie Haerewa
Janey

Marlanie Haerewa is a Nyikina woman from Derby, Western Australia. In 2017 she graduated with a Cert IV in Aboriginal Performance at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, where she is currently completing a Bachelor of Performing Arts, majoring in Performance Making. In 2019, she travelled to Singapore to study an intensive program at the Intercultural Theatre Institute.

Marlanie worked for Barking Gecko Theatre Company, playing the role Ophelia in the production *My Robot* which was performed at the State Theatre and toured Western Australia.



Bobbi Henry
Mary

Bobbi-Jean Henry is a proud Noongar woman. She is an actress who after a long break to raise her 3 sons endeavoured to return to the theatre and acting. She landed back in the theatre world and took it by the horns in 2019 when she starred in *Cracked* by Barbara Hostalek.

Bobbi's theatre credits include *Hecate* (2020), *Cracked* (2019) and *Runamuk* (1997) with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Randolph Stow's *Tourmaline* (1993) with the Black Swan State Theatre Company as well as a stage production of *Educating Rita* and *By Degrees* for Effie Crump Theatre Company and Queensland State Theatre Company.

She worked with Australian Children's Television Foundation on the second series of *Genie from Down Under*. Bobbi played Pearl in the award-winning short film *Pilbara Pearl*, and appeared in the film *The Life of Harry Dare*.

Bobbi is currently studying a Masters of Arts (Performing Arts) at WAAPA.



Trevor Ryan
Jono

Perth-based performing artist Trevor Ryan (Jetta) has a passion of drawing from his inner strengths and beliefs as an Aboriginal Nyungar/Yamatji man to create the many interesting and challenging characters he takes on. Trevor graduated from NIDA in 2006. In between teaching, he has appeared in *Sunday in the Park with Frank* for Short and Sweet, *Warengesda – a Place of Mercy*, Series 2 of *The Circuit: My Girragundji* with Canute Productions, and for ABC Radio *The Jetty*. Most recently, Trevor played the role of Baz in *The Heights*, for ABC TV.

Trevor's theatre credits include *Hecate* and *Shakespeare's Sonnets in Noongar* with Yirra Yaakin, *Sunday in the Park* with Seymore Theatre Company, *Comedy of Errors* and *Tempest* with Shakespeare WA, and *The Beast and the Beauty* with Old Mill Theatre Company.

Trevor is currently studying Master of Arts (Performing Arts) at WAAPA.

| PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



Jodie Bell
Creative
Producer

Jodie Bell is a First Nations descendant of Butchella and Jagera people of Southeast Queensland and is CEO and head Producer for Ramu Productions, a community-owned Production company in Broome, WA. She has produced a number of productions including short films *Telling Our Story*, *In the Air*, the WASA nominated *Maap Mordak*, *Fishing*, *Yulleroo*, *Doug the Human*, *First Time Home*, the Award winning short documentaries *Naji*, *Marrimarrigun* and *Saving Seagrass*, as well as the well-received documentary series, *Characters of Broome* and the *Riiiji Carver* for NITV.

Jodie was Co-producer on the CinefestOZ 2015 film of the year, feature documentary *Putuparri and the Rainmakers* and in 2019 she joined the Cinefest OZ team as the Indigenous film coordinator. Jodie is currently in various stages of development on a number of film projects including a documentary series, a feature film and a television series, as well as producing *FIFO* with Yirra Yaakin, the first of what she hopes will be many more theatre productions.



Mari Lourey
Dramaturg
& Creative
Producer

Mari Lourey (Dramaturg/Creative Producer) is an award-winning playwright, dramaturg, educator and theatre maker based between Broome and Melbourne. Her training and studies have included John Bolton's Theatre School (Le Coq method), RMIT Prof Writing and Editing Course and VCA Masters in Performance Writing.

Mari's critically acclaimed plays include *Dirty Angels*, *The Bridge*, *Bare Witness* and most recent work in development, *Dirt Cloud*. She has been Writer-in-Residence at University of Melbourne's Union House Theatre in 2018 and 2020 and was Artistic Coordinator of innovative multi arts project Homeless Not Artless for The Big Issue between 2007-9. She has been guest lecturer at Monash, Victoria and Swinburne Universities, and facilitated numerous arts and theatre projects over the years, including for La Mama Theatre and the Victorian Writers Centre. As a freelance dramaturg, she has worked for many companies and on numerous award-winning independent projects. Mari has been co-facilitating Goolarri Media's Writing Program in Broome alongside Dot West since its inception in 2014.



Dot West
Dramaturg

Dot West is originally from the Henry and Davis families in the south west of Western Australia but she has been living in the Kimberley region since 1977. In 1998, Dot graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies and received an Honorary Doctorate with Swinburne University in 2014. Over the years, Dot has been recognized by the industry and her peers for her work as a writer and her broader role in the Indigenous media sector. Some of the awards she received are Tudawai Award (2005), WASA for Outstanding Contribution to the WA Screen Industry (2008), AWGIE (2009) and a First Nations Media Lifetime Achievement Award (2019).

Her current tenure includes the SBS board, Director of Goolarri Media Enterprises and Ramu Productions in Broome and the Chairperson of the national peak body, First Nations Media Australia.

Dot works freelance as a scriptwriter, accredited trainer and consultant and also serves on Screenwest's Industry Advisory Group and WA's Screen Industry Diversity and Inclusion leadership group. Since 2014, she has been the co-facilitator of the Goolarri Writers Program.

| PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



Neil Sheriff
Set & Costume
Designer

A migrant kid, raised in Australia, Sheriff grew up in a diverse environment that allowed his passion for design to flourish. A high-school design scholarship ensued, culminating in his acceptance to WAAPA, graduating in design. From here, Sheriff moved to London, embarking on his career in stage design and education, designing sets and costumes for productions with Almeida Theatre, The Courtyard, Victoria & Albert Design Museum, Channel 4 and Bath Festival, among others.

After retraining in Business and Marketing at London College of Fashion, to round-out his skill-base, Sheriff took on work with Paul Smith, Nicole Farhi and Saxony, counting Naomi Watts, Alan Rickman, Rufus Sewell and singer Adele among his clients.

Upon returning to Australia in 2012 to be closer to family and put down roots, Sheriff launched directional fashion brand, Hoodedwept. Within 3 years of launch the brand had shown in Paris and was stocking internationally. Most recently, Sheriff has Art Directed a campaign project for Black Swan State Theatre Company of WA and designed *FIFO* for Yirra Yaakin.



Ella Portwine
Sound Designer

Ella is a freelance sound designer and engineer. She graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2017 and since then she has designed for multiple youth theatre productions in Perth, working predominantly with Midnite Youth Theatre Company on shows such as *Into the Woods*, *Big Fish the Musical*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* and the original work *Silas Marner*. Born into a theatre family Ella has grown into a designer and lover of musicals and plays as well as developing keen interest in immersive sound experiences. From working regularly as a sound technician in theatres and small bars across Perth and Fremantle she has developed a well-rounded taste for both the technical and creative sides of the arts industry.



Peter Young
Lighting Designer

Peter Young is a lighting designer based in Perth, Western Australia. Growing up in the state's South West, Peter developed a keen interest for theatre design and later moved to Perth to study at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, graduating in 2019 with a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Lighting & Design).

Peter is versatile and has a number of credits with companies such as the West Australian Ballet, WA Youth Theatre Company and Perth Festival in both creative and technical roles across a range of live performance styles including theatre, dance and music.



Karen Cook
Stage Manager

Karen is a stage manager, lighting designer and technician. With Yirra Yaakin, she has previously stage-managed *Ice Land*, *Mother's Tongue*, *Honey Spot*, and *I Don't Wanna Play House*, assistant stage managed *Skylab* (co-production with Black Swan State Theatre Company), and lit *Cracked*, *Mother's Tongue* and *Windmill Baby*. Other frequent collaborators include The Last Great Hunt, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Regional Arts WA and Curtin University's Theatre Arts course.

Karen has toured regionally, nationally and internationally as a tour/stage manager on multiple productions, working in venues ranging from regional town halls and primary schools to major performing arts centres.

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES



Bruce Denny

Assistant
Director

Bruce Denny's heritage is Yamatji down his mother's side and Native American down his father's. Bruce started his acting career in the late 1980s, firstly in Community Theatre and then progressing to professional work.

Bruce's screen work includes *The Decadent and Deprived* (2018), *Bad Girl* (2016) and *Death Bet* (2008). He won Best Actor Award for short film *Speed Date* at the 48 Hour Film Festival in New Zealand and a theatre award for his role in *Frankenstein* produced by Garrick Theatre. His role in *600 Seconds* at the Blue Room as part of the Fringe Festival was Critics Choice for the Best of the Best night.

Other theatre credits include *Cracked* and *If I Drown I Can Swim* workshop with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, several productions with WA Opera including *Macbeth*, *Tristan & Isolde*, *Nabucco*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto* and *Aida* and *Do You Know Me* with Epiphany Productions presented at Guerrilla Fest. Film and television credits include *Paper Planes*, *Gallipoli*, *Cloud Street*, *Bran Nue Dae*, *Leather*, *Mickelburgs Stitch*, *Leaky Boat*, *Sundowner*, *Speed Date*, *Storm World*, *Two Fists One Heart*, *Bush Patrol* and *The Hero*.



Keira Gentle

Costume
Assistant

Following an early introduction to design and clothing via a beloved Auntie, Keira pursued her passion for costume and fashion throughout her teenage years, assisting at numerous Perth Fashion Festivals and making her own clothes, culminating in a 3-year Advanced Diploma in Fashion & Textile design & merchandising at North Metro TAFE.

A proud Whadjuk-Noongar woman, Keira teaches Noongar language to school groups, performing regularly with Koorlong and Songroom as a vocalist and songwriter, styling their onstage shows and performing. This work extends to her current role working with the Yirra Yaakin design team on *FIFO* as Costume assistant. Keira plans to broaden her career, spanning fashion and costume, incorporating culture into both.



Goolarri Media Enterprises is a unique, wholly Indigenous owned and run multi arts organisation operating a range of programs under Broome Aboriginal Media Association. Our artistic vision is to establish a sustainable Indigenous performing arts/media industry in northwest WA by creating and developing opportunities for Indigenous artists to build viable careers in performance writing, film and music. By empowering the community through communication and the arts, we retain agency over our stories at every stage.

3 – 7 Blackman St
Broome WA 6725

Phone: (08) 9194 9999
Email: reception@goolarri.com
Website: www.goolarri.com

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ABOUT YIRRA YAAKIN THEATRE COMPANY

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company was established in 1993. Since then, the company has evolved into a respected cultural leader and artistic hub for Aboriginal people from all over WA, Australia, and around the world. Yirra Yaakin produces award-winning, world-class theatre, sharing Aboriginal stories through exciting, entertaining, educational and authentic new works. The company has commissioned and premiered more than 50 new major Festival presentations. We have worked with and nurtured prestigious Aboriginal writers including David Milroy, Sally Morgan, Derek Nannup, Mitch Torres and Dallas Winmar, among many others.

YIRRA YAAKIN THEATRE COMPANY

Subiaco Arts Centre
180 Hamersley Road
Subiaco WA 6008

Phone: (08) 9380 3040
Email: yy@yirrayaakin.com.au
Website: www.yirrayaakin.com.au

Tickets: Visit our website or call (08) 9380 3040

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Goolarri Media Enterprises and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company would like to thank all of our partners and donors for their support in helping us to share Aboriginal stories through the art of theatre.

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