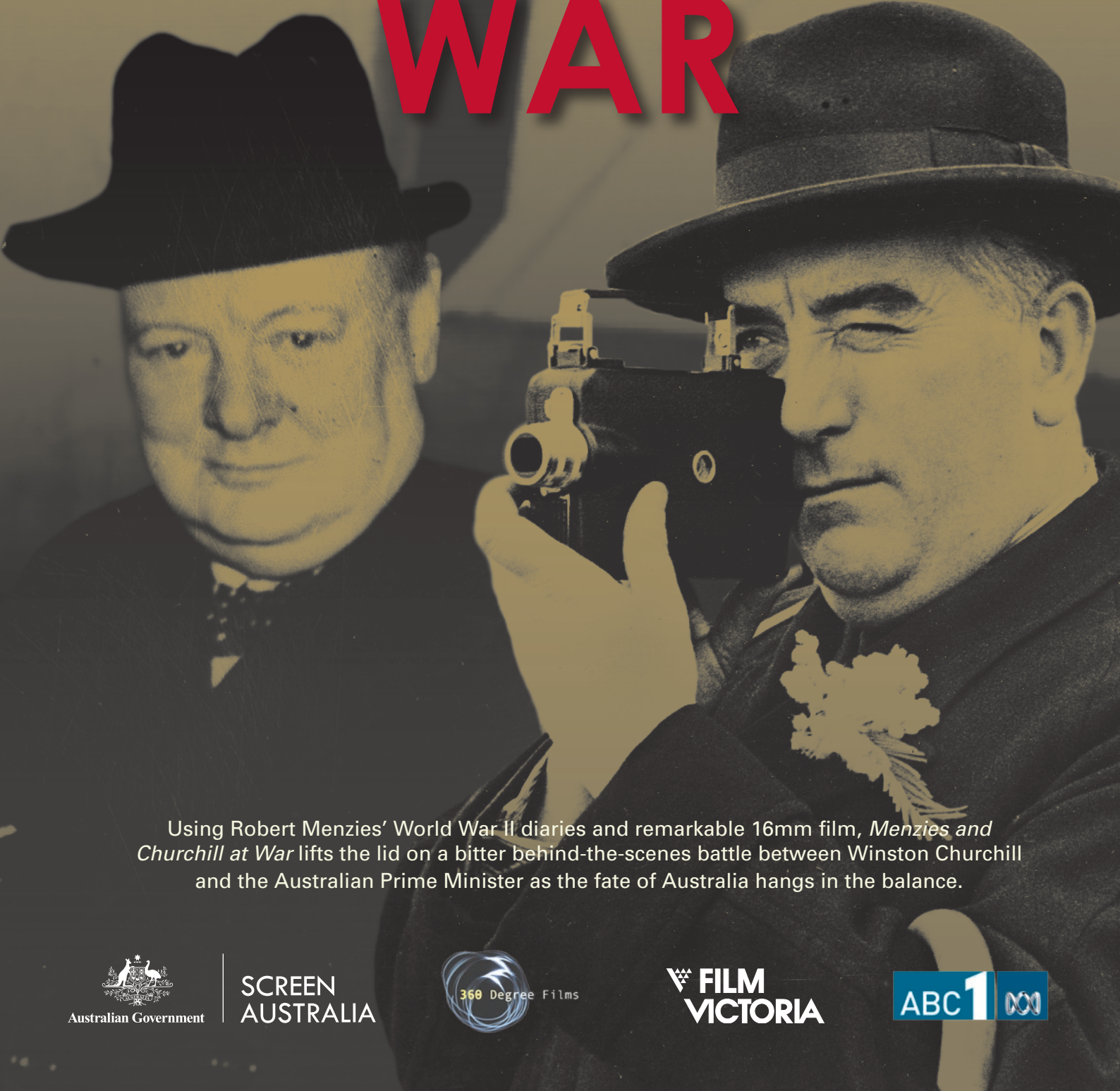


PREMIERES THURSDAY 30 OCTOBER AT 8.30PM ON ABC1

MENZIES & CHURCHILL AT WAR



Using Robert Menzies' World War II diaries and remarkable 16mm film, *Menzies and Churchill at War* lifts the lid on a bitter behind-the-scenes battle between Winston Churchill and the Australian Prime Minister as the fate of Australia hangs in the balance.



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Key Credits

Menzies and Churchill at War is a Screen Australia Making History Production in association with 360 Degree Films. Produced with the assistance of Film Victoria. Developed and produced in association with the Australia Broadcasting Corporation. © Screen Australia and Film Victoria 2008.

Producer **JOHN MOORE**

Writers **JOHN MOORE, MICK CUMMINS, STEVE JODRELL**

Director **STEVE JODRELL**

Director of Photography **DARRELL MARTIN**

Editor **STEVEN ROBINSON**

Composer **JOHN CLIFFORD WHITE**

Production Designer **NEIL ANGWIN**

Sound Recordist **MARK TARPEY**

Executive Producers **MARK HAMLYN, ALEX WEST**

Narrated by **JENNIFER VULETIC**

Duration **55 minutes**

Key Cast

Robert Menzies (Australian Prime Minister) **MATTHEW KING**

Winston Churchill (British Prime Minister) **CHARLES 'BUD' TINGWELL**

Fred Shedden (Head of the Australian Defence department) **DENNIS COARD**

Pattie Menzies (Robert Menzies' wife) **MARGOT KNIGHT**

Lord Beaverbrook (British Minister for Air Supply) **CHRIS WATERS**

Archibald Sinclair (British Minister for Air) **IAN MCTEAR**

Colin Bednall (Australian Journalist) **RICHARD ASKIN**

Rab Butler (British Parliamentary Secretary) **ADAM CROUCH**

Alexander Cadogan (British Permanent Under Secretary, Foreign Affairs) **JOHN DICKS**

Maurice Hankey (past member of the War Cabinet) **WILLIAM GLUTH**

Lord Cranborne **SIMON ROGERS**

Clement Attlee **NOEL HERRIMAN**

General Dill **BARRY FRIEDLANDER**

Anthony Eden **TIM HUGHES**

Admiral Pound **PETER NICHOLLS**

Sir Kingsley Wood **TIM BELL**

Interviewees

Professor Joan Beaumont (Deakin University)

Professor Judith Brett (La Trobe University)

Professor David Day (University of Aberdeen)

Heather Henderson (Robert Menzies' daughter)

Menzies and Churchill at War was produced under the Making History initiative of the Government-owned production company Film Australia which merged with the Australian Film Commission and Film Finance Corporation on 1 July 2008 to become Screen Australia. Making History will continue through the Commissioned Production unit of Screen Australia.

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Synopsis



Using Robert Menzies' World War II diaries and remarkable 16mm film, *Menzies and Churchill at War* lifts the lid on a bitter behind-the-scenes battle between Winston Churchill and the Australian Prime Minister as the fate of Australia hangs in the balance.

It follows Menzies to London during the dark months of 1941 as he takes on the British Prime Minister over the strategic direction of the war, telling the story of Menzies' political epiphany from his own point of view.

The film introduces the controversial theory that Menzies became so alarmed by flaws in Churchill's leadership that he considered taking over himself.

With Australia under threat of a Japanese attack, Menzies struggled to convince the autocratic British leader to send reinforcements to Singapore.

The unequal struggle eventually cost Menzies his prime ministership, but out of it he developed a new vision for Australia and built a constituency of middle-class voters who swept him back to power to become Australia's longest serving prime minister.



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

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Production Story



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

When he set out several years ago to research a biographical film about Australia's longest serving prime minister—the late Sir Robert Menzies—producer John Moore had no idea how much he would be assisted by the man himself.

It was by chance that he stumbled upon a controversial and largely unknown story, that took place during a four-month period in 1941 when Menzies travelled to London in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to convince British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to bolster the defence of Australia against a feared attack by the Japanese during World War II.

When things turned nasty for the Allies in North Africa and Greece, Menzies became embroiled in an argument with Churchill over the strategic direction of the war.

"I accidentally discovered this book called *Menzies and Churchill at War* written by the Australian historian, David Day," Moore says.

According to Day, "Robert Menzies developed the idea that perhaps he could take over from Churchill as Prime Minister of England because Churchill was doing such an atrocious job. It was a shock to me that people in England could seriously consider Robert Menzies as a rival for the 'man of the century', Winston Churchill."

It was not just a ripping political yarn, a colossal battle of wills between an old bull and a young bull set against the backdrop of the world at war, but

the events were captured on film by Menzies himself using his early-model 16mm camera.

For the filmmakers, the footage kept by the Menzies family was a dream find, setting the tone of the film, which seamlessly blends archival material, voiceover and dramatised scenes to capture a pivotal moment in Australia's history.

"It's a hinge in the middle of the 20th century between Australia's relationship with Britain and its growing and developing relationship with the United States," Moore says. "It was the turning point between an Australia that looked to Britain for its defence and was turned down and an Australia that was then forced to turn to the Americans."

While the initial idea was to create the documentary in a traditional way blending Menzies' diary, films and archival materials, the filmmakers realised that many key moments—documented in detail in War Cabinet minutes and correspondence—had happened behind closed doors.

"We realised that to make a really interesting film we'd need to dramatise those events."

Steve Jodrell, one of Australia's most experienced drama directors, stepped in to largely unfamiliar territory.

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"This has been a voyage of discovery," Jodrell says. "I'm more used to dealing with fiction. Being historically accurate is at times challenging but ultimately very rewarding. All dialogue is researched and faithful to its source. Our actors say what was actually said—in many cases the truth is more compelling than any fiction."

Close attention was paid to detail, including look-alike casting of even the most minor roles and accuracy in costume, hair and makeup, and location.

"The casting of Matthew King as Menzies was a major coup," Jodrell says. "His similarity in looks and his prodigious talent as a mimic allowed us far more freedom to cut between archive and reconstruction than we ever had originally hoped. Charles 'Bud' Tingwell as Winston Churchill bought the gravitas and authority that was vital to the interplay between Churchill and Menzies."

The story humanises Menzies, a polarising figure revered by the Right and reviled by the Left, who presided over Australia at a time of economic wealth and prosperity, stood firm against unionists and resisted changing the White Australia policy.

"We actually get inside the man's head. We get to see a man who goes over to England to fight for Australia's position during the war, who fails, who comes back and resigns, who goes into the wilderness politically until he discovers the 'forgotten people' and builds a new party, the Liberal Party, and who then goes on to triumph," Jodrell says.

"We get to see the man in his highs, we get to see the man in his lows and we get a personal insight into Menzies from his own words."

"The more I investigated the background and values of this famous Australian, the more I came to identify and understand the man and his passion for Australia. I have been forced to re-evaluate many of my preconceptions... I've come to really respect Menzies. I don't necessarily agree with him, but I respect him."

While Menzies' family, including his daughter Heather Henderson, cooperated with the filmmakers by granting them unfettered access to his footage, photos and correspondence, they disagree with the assertion that Menzies undermined Churchill during the war.

"Maybe there's a hint of betrayal in him working away behind the scenes to white-ant Churchill," Moore says.

"Some people think that that's just a load of rubbish and it could never have happened but we're quite convinced that there's ample evidence to support it. Lots of people knew about it; Churchill certainly found out."

"But in a way the film has become a character piece about Menzies and about the way the Menzies that he became later was shaped by these events in 1941 and shaped by his relationship with Churchill.

"It shows what he learnt from Churchill and what he learnt about himself by being defeated by Churchill," Moore concludes.



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

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About the Characters and Cast



Photograph by Hay Wrigthson. Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

Robert Menzies (played by Matthew King)

Robert Menzies was Australia's longest serving Prime Minister. He held the office twice, from 1939 to 1941 and from 1949 to 1966. Altogether he was Prime Minister for over 18 years—still the record term for an Australian Prime Minister.

Born into humble circumstances, Menzies obtained a first-class secondary and university education by winning a series of scholarships. He entered Victorian parliament in 1928 after establishing himself as a leading constitutional lawyer, and won a seat in the federal parliament in 1934, serving as Attorney-General and Minister for Industry in the United Australia Party government of Joseph Lyons.

Menzies was Prime Minister when World War II began in 1939. In 1941 he lost the confidence of members of Cabinet and his party and was forced to resign. As an opposition backbencher during the war years, he helped create the Liberal Party and became opposition leader in 1946. At the 1949 federal election, he defeated Ben Chifley's Labor Party and again became Prime Minister.

Menzies was often characterised as an extreme monarchist and 'British to his bootstraps', but as Prime Minister he maintained Australia's strong defence alliance with the United States.

Menzies retired as Prime Minister and from parliament in 1966 and died on 15 May 1978.

Matthew King

Best known in the film and television industry for his work as a top voiceover actor, Matthew King was bitten by the acting bug at a young age, training with Barbara Brandon (ABC) and John Forgenham (Royal Shakespeare Company) while completing seasons at the Viaduct Theatre, St Martins and the Melbourne Theatre Company.



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

He has appeared in numerous television series, including *Homicide*; *Division Four*; *Prisoner*; *The Sullivans*; *Rush*; *Embassy*; *Carson's Law*; *The Games*; *Blue Heelers*; *Stingers*; *Hey Hey It's Saturday* and *Bellbird*, in which he had an ongoing role as a teacher having an illicit affair with a student, played by Sigrid Thornton. Matthew has appeared in hundreds of corporate and training videos for clients including *Telstra*; *BP*; *Ford*; *National Mutual* and *NAB*. His voiceover roles include everything from animated characters in children's programming such as *L'il Horrors*; *Silver Brumby*; *L'il Elvis*; *Pig's Breakfast* and *Dog Star*, as well as the adult animated series *Quads*.

In 2008 he is touring with Alan Hopgood's play *Six Degrees of Diabetes* and starring in a short film, *Big Bad*.

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Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

"People seem to either love him or hate him. It was 'Pig Iron Bob'. He saved us or he was a total bastard. It's going to be controversial, no doubt, because there will be people who will agree and disagree, but it's important that we do all that, it's important that we celebrate all our history."

King immersed himself in research, watching film and newsreel footage and trawling through reams of written material about the former Prime Minister.

"There was a lot of stuff to wade through which was great, and it all builds up to a picture that you can base the character on," he says. "To go through his diary, which is quite extensive, and to look at the footage he shot—Menzies shot a lot of 16mm stuff when he went over to England—was really useful."



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Interview with Matthew King

For actor Matthew King, being cast as Robert Menzies—a man who looms large in the memories of many Australians—presented a very real challenge.

"It's very daunting because you are never going to satisfy everybody," King says. "When you play someone famous there are people who are going to believe it and say 'oh yeah that's a good representation of the person' and others will go, 'oh he wasn't like that at all'. It's a risk."

"You have to decide, along with the director, the producer and the writer, where you're going to place your performance so it's believable enough without sending it into caricature."

Before landing the role, King had little knowledge of Menzies or his role in wartime politics, having himself been saved from being sent to fight in Vietnam because Prime Minister Gough Whitlam "came in at the right time".

"Prior to that, I didn't have a lot of interest in politics so it required a fair bit of research."

But the archive also brought challenges for King, who has an extensive background in voice acting.

"Newsreel footage from the 1950s is all very high, it's all pitched up. That's a bit daunting because you can't possibly maintain a character and have conversations at that level. It's just going to look silly. A lot of his quieter speeches are very monotone and quiet. So it was a matter of finding a balance between those two areas and getting a feel for how he moved and how he presented himself and how he carried himself, and the sort of things that he was saying in those speeches."

But while King believes the film will divide opinions, he hopes the audience will be convinced. "I hope they believe what we have done is real enough for them to accept the story and not be distracted by my appearance or the way I do the voice. I hope they can enjoy it as being a piece of entertainment, but also informative."

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Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Winston Churchill (played by Charles 'Bud' Tingwell)

The son of a prominent Tory politician, Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born on 30 November 1874 and attended the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, before embarking on an army career.

In 1900, Churchill became Conservative Member of Parliament for Oldham. But, disaffected with his party, he joined the Liberal Party in 1904. When the Liberals won the 1905 election, Churchill was appointed Undersecretary at the Colonial Office. In 1908 he entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, becoming Home Secretary in 1910. The following year he became First Lord of the Admiralty. He held this post in the first months of World War One but after the disastrous Dardanelles expedition, for which he was blamed, he resigned.

He joined the army, serving for a time on the Western Front. In 1917, he was back in government as Minister of Munitions. From 1919 to 1921 he was Secretary of State for War and Air, and from 1924 to 1929 was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In May 1940, Churchill became Prime Minister and his refusal to surrender to Nazi Germany inspired England. He worked tirelessly throughout the war, building strong relations with US President Franklin Roosevelt while maintaining a sometimes difficult alliance with the Soviet Union.

Churchill lost power in the 1945 post-war election but remained leader of the opposition, voicing apprehensions about the Cold War and encouraging European and trans-Atlantic unity. In 1951, he became Prime Minister again. He resigned in 1955, but remained an MP until shortly before his death on 24 January 1965.



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Charles 'Bud' Tingwell

Charles 'Bud' Tingwell is one of Australia's most experienced actors. His career began in radio in Sydney but after flying Spitfires in World War II, he moved to the movies, scoring a role in Hollywood by age 30. A short stint in London television extended to 16 years and made him one of Britain's most famous faces.

As an actor then director and producer, Bud has many credits to his name. While working in the United States for *The Desert Rats* in 1953, he turned down a seven-year contract in Hollywood to return to work in Australia. He produced TV series *The Sullivans*, *Newlyweds*, *The Flying Doctors* and *Col'n Carpenter* and directed many TV series including *The Sullivans*, *Prisoner* and *Acropolis Now*.

He has been the voice of various characters in *Thunderbirds* as well as playing lead roles in films such as *Breaker Morant* (1980); *A Cry in the Dark* (1988); *The Castle* (1997); *Innocence* (1998); *Inside Story* (2000); *Ned Kelly* (2003); *Jindabyne* (2005); *Irresistible* (co-starring with Susan Sarandon) (2005) and the teleseries *Changi* (2001).

Bud won the Best Actor Award for his role in *Innocence* at the Las Palmas International Film Festival in 2001. Since 1999, Bud has been touring nationally in his acclaimed one-man play *The Carer* and written his memoirs *Bud a Life* followed by a national tour of *An Audience with Bud Tingwell*.

He has won several awards including Membership of the Australian Hall of Fame, the Raymond Longford AFI Award and the Honoured Artists Award for the City of Melbourne.

In 1999 he was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia.



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Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Interview with Charles 'Bud' Tingwell

As a young Spitfire pilot stationed in England during World War II, Charles 'Bud' Tingwell was known among his colleagues for his impersonations of wartime Prime Ministers Winston Churchill and Robert Menzies.

Both leaders, known for their "flowery" speeches, were very "imitate-able", Tingwell recalls, while conceding their treatment by the young pilots was less than flattering.

Some 65 years later, that practice has paid off with Tingwell playing the famous British Prime Minister in *Menzies and Churchill at War*.

"I was one of millions of volunteers who joined the Australian Air Force," Tingwell says. "I was a Spitfire and Mosquito pilot on long-range photographic reconnaissance—we would fly out over the enemy and take pictures of them and annoy them.

They used to shoot at us a lot!"

The impersonations arose from a need to blow off steam after dangerous missions.

"When we'd had a few grogs in the mess at night, we used to be very rude and imitate them badly, both of them. Looking back, we were all a bit trivial about it all," he says.

While portraying the famous leader on film created a great sense of responsibility, Tingwell says it was a dream role. He spent weeks listening to Churchill's oration.

"I've been bombarding myself at home. Not that I particularly want to do an imitation of him, but he's a very interesting guy, Churchill. And he wasn't all that popular all the time with all sorts of people, including his own colleagues in the House of Commons. But he was really forthright with what he wanted and he is credited with sort of winning the war—though I'm not sure that he did it all."

Tingwell believes the film's strength lies in the script, which reveals the divided loyalties of the two leaders—Menzies lobbying Churchill to release troops for the defence of Australia while Churchill focused on England and the northern hemisphere.

"I think it explains a lot about the ongoing relationship between Britain and Australia which has been changing subtly ever since the war. Looking back you can see this sense of us moving towards a sense of independence that we thought we always had."

"I love this genre. It's a good way of saying things that are historically accurate while telling another generation a bit more about ourselves."

And while his primary focus was on his own performance, Tingwell was particularly impressed by that of co-star Matthew King, who plays Robert Menzies.

"It was slightly disconcerting working with Matthew King—in his gear, in his proper suit and everything, he looks so like Menzies! It's extraordinary! I met Menzies a couple of times back in the old days and he just looks exactly like him."



The Making History Initiative

Menzies and Churchill at War is one of 10 dramatised documentaries financed under the Making History initiative, which is committed to making high quality history documentaries. The initiative was first implemented by the Government-owned production company Film Australia which merged with the Australian Film Commission and Film Finance Corporation on 1 July 2008 to become Screen Australia. Making History will continue through the Commissioned Production unit of Screen Australia.

Introduced in 2005 when the Australian Government committed \$7.5 million over three years to fund quality history documentaries, and extended this year, the Making History initiative is run in association with ABC Television to produce films that inspire, surprise and enthuse viewers with rich, exciting, and challenging stories, connecting Australians with their past.

The histories investigate Australia's origins and development and explore Australian identity. They tell of ordinary Australians in extraordinary circumstances, covering subjects such as Australia's convict beginnings and European settlement in the two-part miniseries *Rogue Nation*, its early engineering and exploration achievements in the three-part *Constructing Australia* series, and its identity, through a collection of biographies of 20th century leaders, including Robert Menzies, Harold Holt and Ben Chifley.

The documentaries use innovative filmmaking techniques including dramatic recreation of original sources and high-level computer animation to bring engaging and significant historical stories to audiences, drawing on exacting research and made to the highest standards of international programming.

The continuation of 'Making History', beyond the original Australian Government commitment of \$7.5 million over three years, allows filmmakers to contribute to a growing body of landmark documentaries that explore who we were and what we have become," says Mark Hamlyn, Screen Australia's Director of Commissioned Production.

A hit with Australian viewers, the initiative has produced high rating and critically acclaimed documentaries including the *Constructing Australia* series—*The Bridge*, *A Wire Through the Heart* and *Pipe Dreams*—and *Mawson: Life and Death in Antarctica*.

Upcoming Making History documentaries that will screen on the ABC Television: *The Prime Minister is Missing*, *Rogue Nation*, *Infamous Victory: Ben Chifley's Battle for Coal* and *Monash - The Forgotten Anzac*.



Photography by Simon Cardwell, Mark Rogers, Ian Barry and David Johns. © Screen Australia

For publicity images and interviews please contact: Kim Bassett at ABC, 03 9524 2580, bassett.kim@abc.net.au



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About the Filmmakers



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Steve Jodrell — Director

Steve Jodrell is well known as a drama director with considerable experience in theatre, film and television. He has directed episodes of popular television series including *Around the Twist*; *A Country Practice*; *The Man From Snowy River*; *Halifax fp*; *Good Guys Bad Guys*; *Sea Change*; *Something In The Air*; *Stingers*; *Crash Burn*; *Last Man Standing*; *McLeod's Daughters* and *The Circuit*.

Steve directed the critically acclaimed feature *Shame* in 1987 starring Deborah Lee Furness, which won awards at film festivals in New York, Seattle, Chicago and Milan. Steve started his career as an actor, appearing in TV shows such as *Clowning Around*; *A Fortunate Life*; *Blue Heelers*; *Phoenix*; *Embassy* and *Halifax fp*, and feature films including *Fran*, *Fragments of War* and *Lake Mungo*.

Steve lectured for 10 years in film, television and drama at what is now Curtin University (WA). He sat on the evaluation board for Film Victoria from 1999-04 and was a board member of the Australian Screen Directors Association from 1999-01.

John Moore — Producer, Writer

A partner with Sally Ingleton in the Melbourne production company 360 Degree Films, John Moore has made programming for ABC Television, SBS, Channel 4, ARTE, the Canadian History Channel and TV Ontario.

John has worked in the film industry for more than 20 years, producing many award-winning films and series. His awards include an Australian Film Institute Award for Best TV Documentary for *Guns & Roses* (1991); best documentary at the Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals for *Black Man's Houses* (1993) and a United Nations Peace Award for *Barefoot Student Army* (1994).

In 2001, John produced and directed *Thomson of Arnhem Land* for Film Australia, which won the NSW Premier's History Award, an AFI Award for editing and was nominated for awards at both BANFF and Shanghai TV Festivals. Another Film Australia project, *Abortion, Corruption & Cops – The Bertram Wainer Story* was nominated for an AFI award in 2005.

John has produced two history documentaries for Film Australia this year—*Menzies and Churchill at War* and *Monash - The Forgotten Anzac*.


About 360 Degree Films

360 Degree Films is an energetic new company based in Melbourne, Australia.

At the heart of the philosophy of 360 Degree Films is the belief that it is possible to make insightful, entertaining films that inform, empower and inspire people to make better decisions about their lives and to understand a world beyond the headlines.

The company is driven by a belief in the basic principles of democracy, equal opportunity and a secular approach to politics and government.

360 Degree Films use history as a vital way to understand the past and better predict the future and science as a method for identifying and solving social and environmental problems. In essence the company produce programs to surprise, entertain and provoke audiences to think and care.



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Mark Hamlyn — Executive Producer

During his time at Film Australia, Mark Hamlyn has worked as an executive producer on a slate of programming. His credits include the *Australian Biography* series; the three-part AFI Award nominated series *Air Australia*; the ATOM Award winning docu-drama *The Floating Brothel; Road to Tokyo*; the four-part Logie Award-nominated epic *Captain Cook – Obsession and Discovery* (winner of the 2007 Manning Clark House National Cultural Award); *The Winners' Guide to the Nobel Prize* (winner of the Gold Dragon Award at the Beijing Scientific Film Festival) and Gillian Armstrong's multi-award winning *Unfolding Florence – the Many Lives of Florence Broadhurst*, which premiered In Competition at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

His latest project was the much-anticipated documentary *The Hunt for HMAS Sydney* which the followed the world's top shipwreck hunter, David Mearns, as he found the sunken wreck of HMAS Sydney II.

As Screen Australia's Director of Commissioned Production, Mark is also overseeing the Making History initiative—10 dramatised history programs to be screened on ABC. Upcoming Making History programs include *Menzies and Churchill at War*, *Infamous Victory - Ben Chifley's Battle for Coal*, *The Prime Minister is Missing* and *Rogue Nation*.

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Menzies and Churchill at War

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Menzies Virtual Museum

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