



Film director Melanie Hogan is bringing Kinyani to the Guringai Festival.

Tracing black fella's journey

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She was offended at first but quickly realised he was right.

Very soon after, she started inhabiting the Australian history section of the Mitchell Library and later talking to urban Aborigines before discovering Bob Randall's book *Song Man*.

"I just thought there was so much wisdom on the page that I had to meet this man," she said.

She made contact through his publisher and he invited her to Uluru, then to stay in the Mutijulu community.

While there she was commissioned to make an educational film about petrol-sniffing and that's when the vision for a bigger project started to take shape.

"I realised that the petrol-sniffing was the young people's way of saying how hopeless things looked from their perspective," she said. "It gave me this insight to say to Bob, 'What if we could create a big, long, contextual story so that when people see these images they're not just seeing them at the superficial level?'"

"He was prepared to do anything that tried to shift negative attitudes, so then I had to teach myself to edit and I sat down for the best part of a year to make *Kinyani*, pretty much in the sunroom of my house."

Ms Hogan said she hoped non-indigenous people seeing the film would be inspired to re-examine negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people, realise there was much

they could learn from them and to make an effort to bridge the divide.

She echoes Mr Randall's sentiments that "we need to heal together".

"I put into the film that the earth is our mother and that makes us all brothers and sisters," she said.

"It was almost implicit within colonisation that there was nothing of value to learn from indigenous people. They have not changed the land, therefore they were not evolved, whereas if you accept that the land was already perfect and you fit in with that perfection, it is a totally different way of seeing it."

She said the most special insight she had gained from Aboriginal people was closely related to the film's title.

"Kinyani is a way of caring and taking responsibility for your spirit, your family, your land and your belief system," she said.

"It is a really beautiful way of caring and connecting. That word just leapt off the page at me when I first read it. It symbolised that there is an indigenous wisdom that we have just pushed to one side."

■ *Kinyani* will be screening at Manly Cinema at 6pm on Wednesday, June 27 (\$10). Bookings: 9976 1752; at Avalon RSL at 6.30pm on Thursday, June 28 (\$5 at the door). Bookings: 9970 1170; and at Collaroy Cinema at 9.30am on Friday, June 29 (\$5 at the door). Bookings: 9971 0735.

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