

BEFORE **SHENHUA** BEFORE **ADANI**  
THERE WAS THE **MAULES CREEK COAL MINE**

# BLACK Transforming a Forest into a Coalmine HOLE

AN INDEPENDENT FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

OPTICAL ALKEMI PRESENTS **BLACK HOLE** A FILM BY JOAO DUJON PEREIRA

WWW.BLACKHOLEMOVIE.COM.AU

Check the Classification



OPTICAL ALKEMI





# BLACKHOLE

A film by João Dujon Pereira

## PRESS KIT

### **Media Contact:**

João Dujon Pereira

[dujon@opticalalkemi.com](mailto:dujon@opticalalkemi.com)

+61 413 119 119

### **Distribution:**

OPTICAL ALKEMI

João Dujon Pereira

[dujon@opticalalkemi.com](mailto:dujon@opticalalkemi.com)

+61 413 119 119

OPTICAL ALKEMI.com

Melbourne | Australia

## **C O N T E N T**

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Short Synopsis</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Long Synopsis</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Interview with Jo ã o D u j o n P e r e i r a</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Protagonists</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Credits</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Collaborators</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Biography</b>	<b>11</b>

## OVERVIEW

### GENRE

Documentary

### COMPLETION DATE

2015

### BUDGET

\$85,000 aud

### RUNNING TIME

104 mins

### SHOOTING FORMAT

HD, 25 fps

### SCREENING FORMAT

DCP, 24 or 25 fps

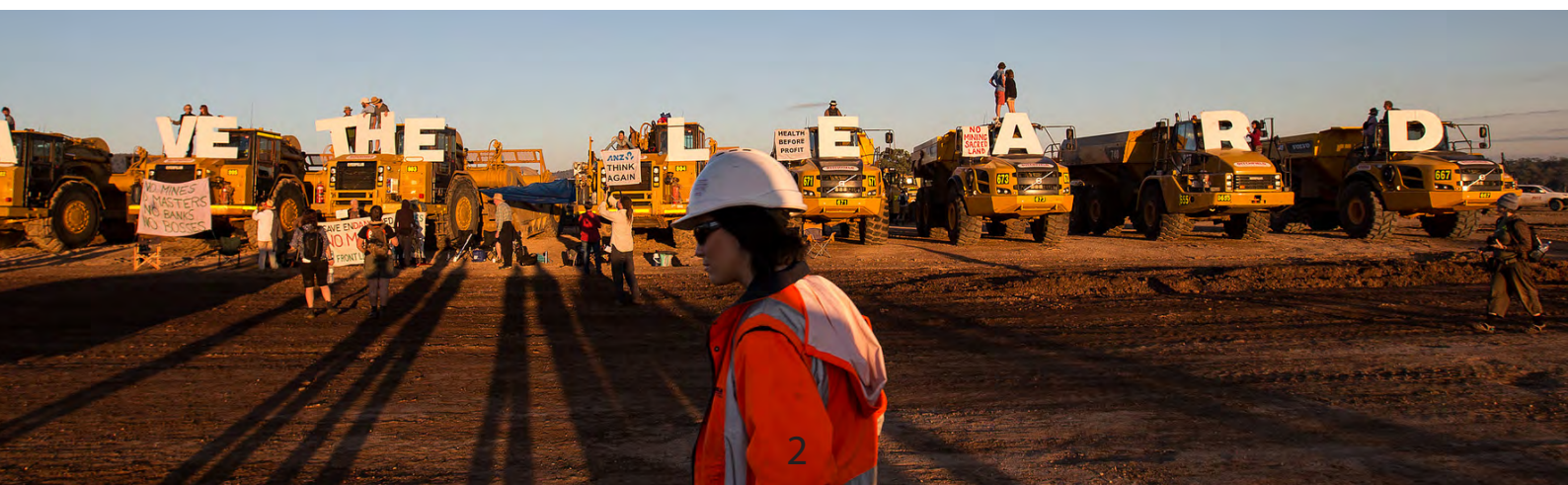
## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Set against the backdrop of an ever increasing thirst for fossil fuels by the extractive industry and the Australian government. *Black Hole* is an intensely riveting exposé of the ongoing battle to save the last of an endangered woodland forest from being cleared to make way for the most controversial largest open cut coal mine in production in Australia.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

One Mining Company, a 965 day blockade, over 300 voluntary arrests a, a State Forest home to 396 Species of native fauna and flora, 34 of which are endangered. What is this all about?

Told in a collective narrative of first person accounts with characters that thread throughout the film. *Black Hole* is told over the period from 2013 to the present moment.





*Black Hole* begins with highlighting the concerns of the approval process through State and Federal Government. The stakes are high; water security, agricultural land, endangered flora, fauna and significant indigenous cultural sites. We meet key figures in the establishment of the campaign against the mine and their overview sets the tone.

The narrative expands through Murray 'Muz' Dreschler. Along with Muz, Jonathon 'Jono' Moylan establish Front Line Action on Coal (FLAC). They serve to bridge the once tense relationship between local farmers and the Gomeroi.

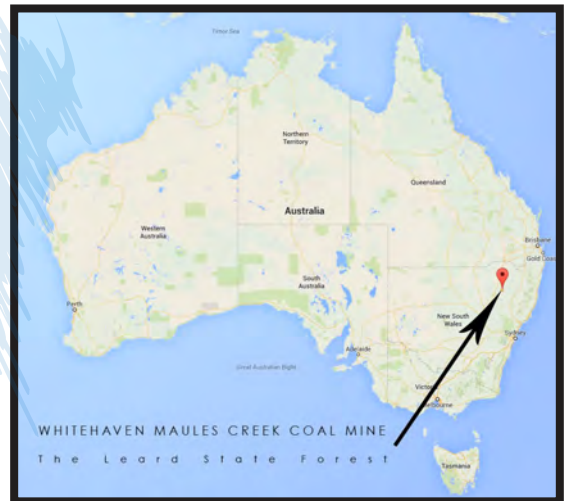
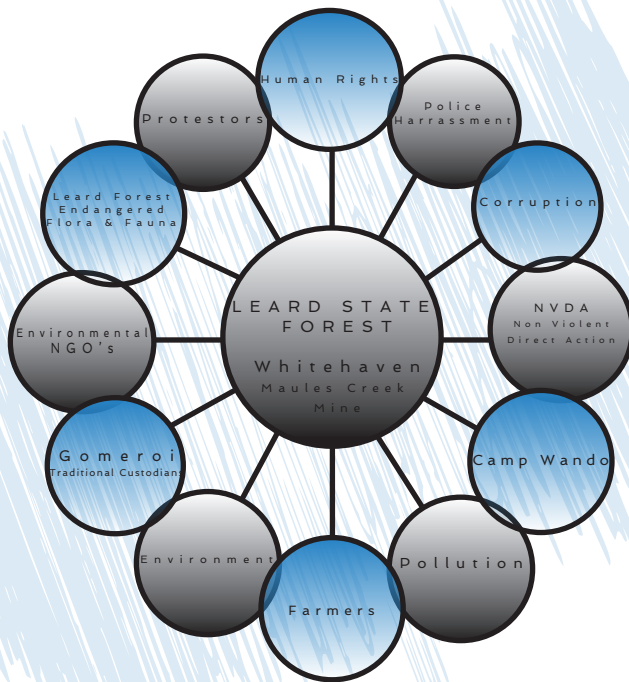
After 560 days embedded in the forest, the now growing number of campaigners are given a move on order by local council. Local farmer Cliff Wallace invites the blockade onto his farm called 'Wando'. Cliff knows what's at risk and the impact of how a coal mine can change the fabric of a once quiet community.

The intensity of FLAC's ongoing civil disobedience is in contrast with the ways of the Gomeroi Indigenous Community. The Gomeroi battle Whitehaven Coal through ongoing court actions and political lobbying. Their plight of being denied access to country has fractured the Gomeroi nation.

The grief and loss that we see of the Gomeroi, farmers, locals and campaigners does not diminish an ultimately successful campaign. It becomes greater than saving the Leard State Forest. The birth of a divestment campaign has created a movement that questions our addiction to coal and continual approval by State and Federal Governments in allowing the construction of greenfield coal mines in Australia.



## CONTEXT OF STORY



### ***INTERVIEW with João Dujon Pereira***

#### ***Dujon, how did you find out about the Leard State Forest and Maules Creek Mine?***

One of my housemates had been to the blockade in January of 2014. On his return I saw a considerable affect the experience had on him. He explained what he had experienced and what the issues were. He had seen some of my previous film work and suggested that I take a trip up to have a look for myself. A month or so later I did just that. I only intended to make a short film, but once I arrived and began to understand more about the issue and observing what was developing I was completley intrigued with so many diverse people coming together to stand for a common cause.





### ***Once you decided to make a feature, how did it all unfold?***

The timing of my entry into filming the campaign could not have been better. In February 2014 the campaign against the Whithaven Maules Creek mine went into overdrive and since then has not alleviated. This gave me the optimal window to truly capture the essence of this land mark campaign and to capture it in the various styles I imagined would be most compelling and engaging. It all happened so quickly. Within three (3) weeks I decided if this was going to happen, I needed to raise some money to sustain filming full time. I created a crowd funding campaign and within four (4) weeks I raised \$20,000 to begin principal filming.

### ***So apart from the crowd funding how else was Black Hole funded?***

It was a clear choice early on that I wanted to be as stand alone as possible and not serve the agenda of any persons or organisations. I really wanted to be open to tell both sides of the story, so I never approached either the environmental organisations or the extractive industry for funding. I applied to quite a number of national and international funding bodies, but filmmaking is a competitive business and there are many compelling stories to be told. I had promising interest but unfortunately I was unable to secure any financing. So the rest of the budget was self financed with personal savings and loans.

### ***What was your concept for the style and structure of the film?***

The initial concept was to create a film that would have the traditional elements of raw observational documentary, but to also create a cinematic experience. From the outset my vision has been to engage the emotion that makes us human. I have seen the rawness, but also the softness of the human spirit and by capturing these moments observationally. With the more intimate conversations it has allowed me the opportunity to take the audience on a journey into a world which is often hidden from society.

### ***What size crew did you work with on Black Hole?***

Well a crew of one, it has just been me. It certainly was not an ideal situation, it can make for a quite a lonely experience. As a filmmaker you sit on the peripherals observing and when you are creating by yourself it is difficult to find someone to bounce ideas off and make decisions together. In saying that I had the incredible support of my partner who visited on occasions during the filming, but was always a major support no matter the distance between us. Due to a long and extensive filming schedule, I really had to learn to trust myself and trust my abilities. It was at times a very brutally difficult film to make. Being on the frontline embedded with the Leard Blockade camp, interacting with police, security, lack of sleep and always on edge not knowing what was going to happen next.

***Did working alone compromise your production values?***

It did to a point, as I was responsible for doing everything and that is challenging especially in the conditions I was filming in. But overall, no I don't think so. I am quite fastidious in general, so I had a good base to start with. I knew from the beginning I was going it alone and I had a very clear mindset that I wanted to have the best production values I could. I can look at it all now and know that I did the best that I could and that it holds up well on a professional level.

***Were you able to capture interviews and insights from both sides of spectrum?***

Unfortunately I wasn't able to. Every effort was made to engage with Whitehaven management, Politicians and Gomeroi representatives who signed off on the Maules Creek mine. A personal invitation in writing was extended for their participation in *Black Hole*. Subsequent follow up phone calls were made to those who did not respond via email. It was really quite a tough film to make as both sides were quite guarded in exposing themselves, as there has been a lot at stake. It was a real battle ground and strategic chess game. It was also a very clear decision that I wanted the film to be factual and I worked really hard to make sure that is portrayed within the film.

***It is notable that in Black Hole there is no voice over or narration?***

Yes, thats right. I knew early on I wanted the story to be told from the characters point of view. Narration has its place, but I feel it is often overdone in documentary and I felt *Black Hole* would be stronger without. Having no narration does make the editing process more difficult. As a storyteller it means you have to have the content and therefore increase the amount of footage that needs to be captured in order to seamlessly tell the story.

***The Maules Creek Mine is a very complex issue, was it difficult to edit?***

Yes, you are right about the complexity of the issue . With such complexity, it was definitely difficult to edit. There are really 3-4 documentaries that could be made on different issues within this story. But it also gave me a diversity of narrative arcs to work with. By the end of production I had over 700 hrs of footage and over 50 interviews. There was such diversity in the alliance and agendas of groups and organisations in their approach to the campaign. For this reason, I felt it was important to give the opportunity for all the voices to be heard rather than just one group or perspective.







### ***Is this an anti-mining film?***

No I personally don't think it is an anti-mining film. I went to great length to capture the opposing opinions and views surrounding the Maules Creek project. Unfortunately, there were people in the community including mine workers who were not prepared to speak on camera. Ultimately I think it is a film that has captured a piece of Australian history. It is a very humanistic film, looking at the effects mining can have on a community. It demistifies the misconceptions of who, what and why people are opposing this particular project.

## **THE PROTAGONISTS**



**Murray 'Muz' Drechsler**  
Front Line Action on Coal



**Jonathon Moylan**  
Front Line Action on Coal  
ANZ Hoaxer



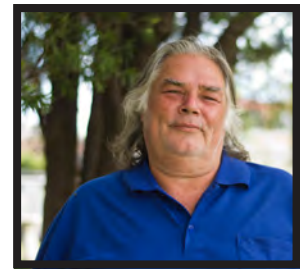
**Uncle Neville Sampson**  
Gomerioi Indigenous Elder



**Cliff Wallace**  
Maules Creek Farmer



**Carmel Flint**  
Campaign Co-ordinator  
Lock the Gate



**Mitchum Neave**  
Gomerioi Indigenous Custodian



**Phil Spark**  
Ecologist | Activist



**Dolly Talbott**  
Gomerioi Indigenous Custodian



**Ros Druce**  
Maules Creek Land Owner  
MCCC



**Ben Solity**  
Front Line Action on Coal



**Helen War**  
Front Line Action on Coal



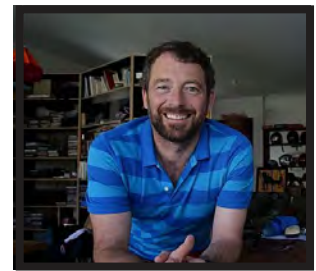
**Graham Lee**  
Maules Creek Farmer



**John Clements**  
Former Narrabri Councillor



**Peter Watson**  
Maules Creek Farmer  
MCCC



**Paddy Manning**  
Author  
Nathan Tinkler Biography



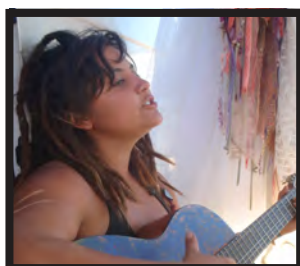
**Jane - Delaney John**  
Blood sister Gomeroi Elders



**Luke O'shea**  
Country Music Musician



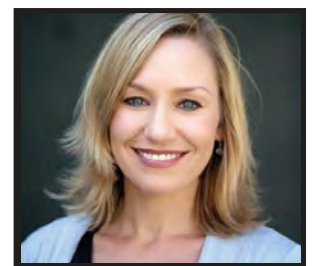
**Jon Maree Baker**  
CEO - Namoi Water



**Elise Turtles**  
Front Line Action on Coal



**Scotty Mackenzie**  
Front Line Action on Coal



**Larissa Waters**  
TheGreens Federal Senator QLD





## **C R E D I T S**

### **Main Crew**

#### **FILMMAKER**

João Dujon Pereira

#### **PRODUCER**

João Dujon Pereira

#### **ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS**

Tania Haimon

Alfredo Pereira

Sharon Hart

#### **CINEMATOGRAPHER**

João Dujon Pereira

#### **EDITOR**

João Dujon Pereira

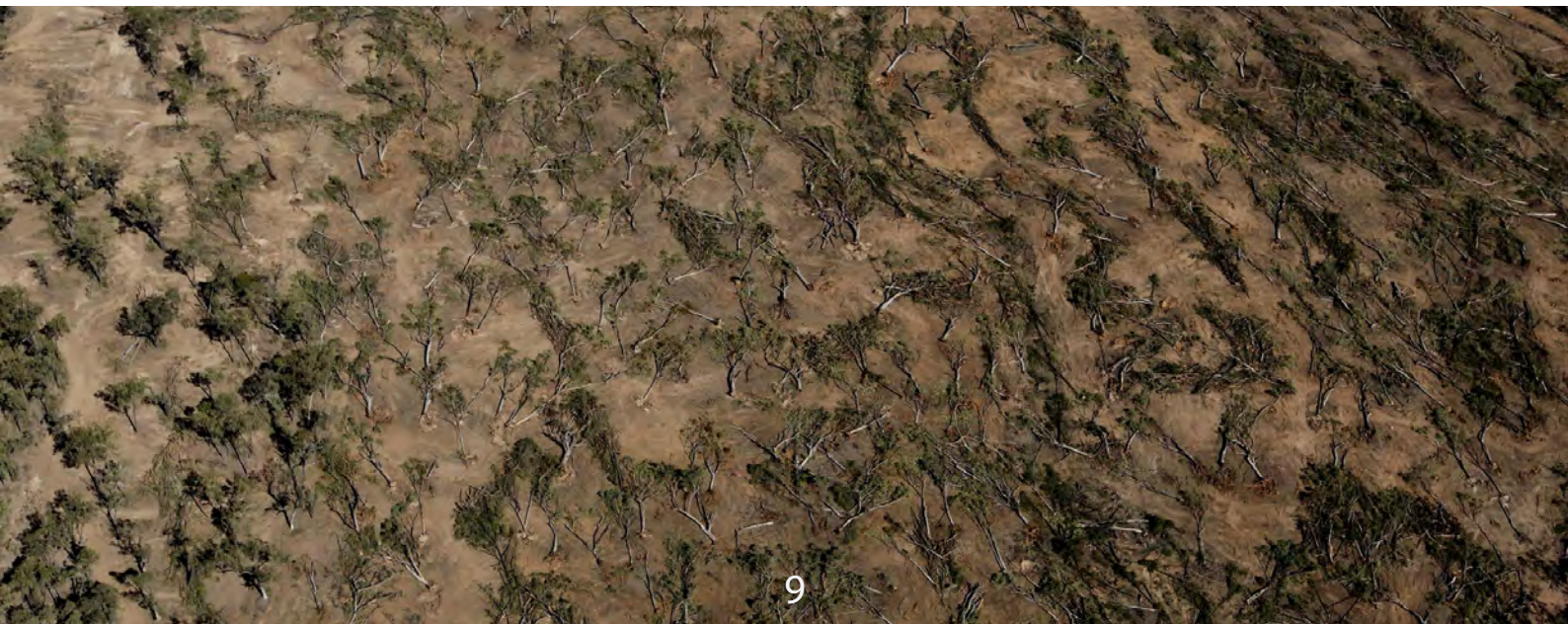
#### **POST SOUND**

Doron Kipen

Brendan Croxon

#### **COLOURIST**

Keiran Watson-Bonnice





## COLLABORATORS



OPTICAL ALKEMI.

[www.opticalalkemi.com](http://www.opticalalkemi.com)

---

Mining Eye in the Sky

[www.miningeyeinthesky.com](http://www.miningeyeinthesky.com)

---



[www.musicandeffects.com.au](http://www.musicandeffects.com.au)

---



[www.shaumillerlawyers.com.au](http://www.shaumillerlawyers.com.au)

---



[www.tugg.com.au](http://www.tugg.com.au)

---



[www.chuffed.org/Crowdfunding](http://www.chuffed.org/Crowdfunding)

---



[www.hivestudio.com.au](http://www.hivestudio.com.au)

---



[www.documentaryaustralia.com.au](http://www.documentaryaustralia.com.au)



# BIOGRAPHY

## FILMMAKER

João Dujon Pereira

Dujon is a Melbourne based filmmaker. As well as freelancing as a cinematographer and editor, Dujon has produced and directed a number of documentaries, including his first feature documentary *La Segunda Conquista* filmed in Argentina in 2006. He has also created a range of other media content including short documentaries, music videos and short films under Optical Alkemi. Many of Dujon's personal productions have had distinct leanings toward environmental, arts and human \_focused pieces.



*Black Hole* is the most ambitious project to date for Dujon. A fully independent production, it has presented a multitude of challenges, but has also provided insight into one of the most significant issues in Australia's history.

A fourteen month journey from inception, *Black Hole* has taken him on a remarkable adventure into the inner workings of the political and corporate structures at work within Australia. Dujon went to great length to capture all opinions and views surrounding the Maules Creek coalmine project. Unfortunately, there were people in the community including mine workers who were not prepared to speak on camera. For him, this is not an anti mining film, from the outset his vision was to engage human emotion. During filming, Dujon was embedded on the frontline in the groundswell of opposition from the community far and wide at Maules Creek, Leard State Forest. This has left an indelible mark on him as a filmmaker, citizen and ultimately a human being.

His passion for storytelling through film increases each day. The ability to entertain, educate and emotionally touch a person is addictive, and it is certainly an addiction he will happily carry for the rest of his life.

### **Portrait of an Artist - Mystery - Short Doco**

*"A rare and very intimate insight into the work of an exceptional artist, beautifully filmed and weaved together in the edit"*

-Glenn Todd-

### **Cloth Mother - Short Film**

*"Loved this short thriller. Very tense. Well shot."*

-Simon Goyne-

### **Not in our Name- Short Doco**

*"WOW This is amazing.....gave me goose bumps and brought tears to my eyes....Thank you so much for creating and sharing it...very powerful"*

-Aquarian Humanitarian-

### **RSF - 2015 Retrospective - Short Doco**

*"Absolute Art!!! What an awesome snap shot of rainbow Serpent Festival 2012"*

-Emma Powell-

### **La Segunda Conquista - Feature Doco**

*"A documentary imperative to understanding the functions of land mafia in the Patagonian Andes"*

-Festival de Cine-

### **RSF - 2014 Retrospective - Short Doco**

*"Watching this brought that loving rainbow vibe welling up to the surface! Brought a tear or two to my eye"*

-Lorna Elizabeth-