



A film by Andrew Garton

# Forged from Fire

The Making of the Blacksmiths' Tree

GABRIEL SINIS



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## SYNOPSIS

On Black Saturday, 7 February 2009, townships north-east of Melbourne were engulfed by fire-storms. Considered our worst ever natural disaster, these fires resulted in the highest loss of life peacetime Australia has ever known. After the horror of immediate losses, people embarked on various journeys of repair and recovery. The Blacksmiths' Tree was one of them.

Designer and metal artist Amanda Gibson gathered a team of seasoned blacksmiths from around the world to create a life-size stainless steel and copper gum tree. This happened within a community traumatised by the Black Saturday Fires. The Blacksmiths' Tree would not be without its challenges, but what it became for the people involved is something no one could have imagined.

The Blacksmiths' Tree was an instinctive response to the devastating effects of loss and the inspired flourishing of life that followed. *Forged from Fire* charts the valleys and peaks of this heart-warming project. It documents the remarkable social history of a tragic but important moment for Australia and its people.

## VISION

*Forged from Fire* is intended as a feature-length, non-fiction, commercially broadcast film documenting the personal and emotional journeys made by community members since the Black Saturday Fires. An extensive community screening program is envisaged as an opportunity for people to discuss the film, share their experiences, and reflect upon the healing process now occurring.

## TARGET AUDIENCES

In collaboration with Country Fire Authority chapters and the Uniting Church, we plan rural and regional screenings, taking *Forged from Fire* from township to village, from community halls to local theatres.

*Forged from Fire* is a film that will unite audiences across regional Australia. It will bring together those from the fire-affected communities and those who bore witness to the terrible events of Black Saturday and its aftermath.

## KEY POINTS

A budget of \$38,000 will complete post-production of the film.

Financed with the assistance of the Australian Documentary Foundation through which tax deductible donations can be made.

The soundtrack will be licensed from music composed by musicians from Black Saturday fire-affected communities.



## POST-PRODUCTION CREW

### **Andrew Garton - Writer, Director, Editor**

Andrew's work spans the genres of non-fiction film-making, short-format documentary, non-linear radio documentary drama, projected video and sound installations. He is a producer, writer and director at Secession Films and Adjunct Industry Fellow, Communications and Media, Swinburne University. Andrew had been the inaugural Program Director at Open Channel and Operations Manager at EngageMedia; former Creative Producer with City of Melbourne and Creative Director and co-founder of Toy Satellite. His most recent film is Ocean in a Drop - India's internet avant garde.

### **Laura Emerick - Film Production Assistant**

Laura hails from Panama. She was the former Director of the Panama Film Commission where she lobbied on behalf of the country's film industry professionals for international and local co-production and funding opportunities. Laura was a founder and President of the Academy Awards' Best Foreign Language Film Committee of Panama. She has varied experience working at international film distribution companies, film productions and film festivals and is currently working at Palace Cinemas as National Festivals Production Coordinator.

### **Simon Polinski - Post Sound Mix and Mastering**

Simon is an Aria award winning producer, engineer and musician with over three decades experience in the music, film and television industry. He has worked with hundreds of great local and international artists including The Church, Paul Kelly, Ollie Olsen, Stephen Cummings, Yothu Yindi, George Telek, David Bridie and Tim Finn.

*There was a real desire to do something positive and not make this just about destruction, but to make it about creation.*

**- Amanda Gibson, Project Manager, The Tree Project**

*It's given people a way of being involved. I think that's a big difference, it's a grassroots creation that's come from an idea and thousands of people which to me gives it so much more validity than a static memorial.*

**- Shane Pugh, Strathewen, Artist**

## CONTACT

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Images by Amanda Gibson, Mike Wilkins and Neil Grant

