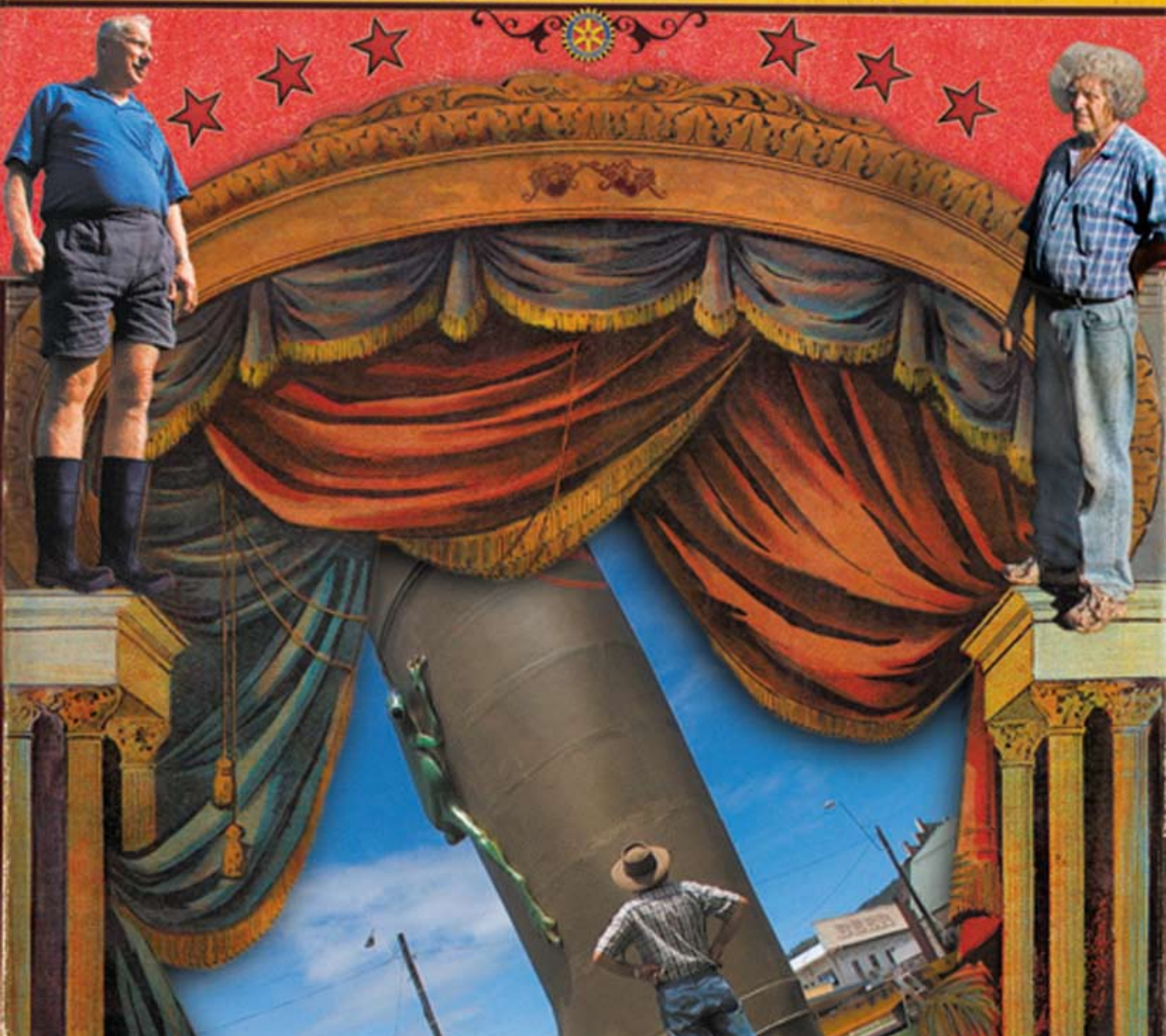


BarkingCat Productions and the Australian Film Commission present

# BIG DREAMERS

One Man's Quixotic Struggle to Build The World's Biggest Gumboot



A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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This study guide to accompany *Big Dreamers*, a documentary by Barking Cat Productions, has been written for secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in Art, Economics, English, Geography, SOSE and Media. *Big Dreamers* provides students with the opportunity to undertake both serious analysis and creative projects.

## Synopsis



When the local sugar industry in the Queensland town of Tully is crippled by Brazil's decision to dump its sugar on the world market in the 1990s, times became tough for the cane farmers and the traders in town.

Come 2002, the town decides it needs something big to economically reinvigorate the once prosperous town.

In an effort to boost tourism and the town's morale, Tully's Rotary Club commissions local artists to design and

build a big gumboot. Why a gumboot? Tully claims the distinction of being the wettest place in Australia, drenched by a record 7.9 metres in 1950.

While some are convinced the Big Gumboot is a massive waste of money they no longer have, and others doubt how tourism will be boosted by broadcasting the fact that it rains in Tully more than anywhere else on the continent, local Rotarian, town elder and life-long resident Ron Hunt believes that the boot will change Tully for the better.

Work begins, costs increase, construction is endlessly delayed by rain and

the question still remains, will the Big Gumboot actually save the town from financial devastation? When the finishing date keeps being extended, Ron starts to have misgivings not only about one of the artists, Bryan Newell, but his own motivations. Six months later the town wants to know, where is their boot? Ron's reputation is at stake.

Not being one to knock back a challenge and determined to prove his critics wrong, Ron rallies his fellow Rotarians and decides that come rain or shine the gumboot will be ready for its gala opening on April Fool's Day.

## The production team

*At first we had no idea how we were going to tell the story ... It was a lot of fun, but there was something missing from our interviews. All the stories were retrospective; they were about something that happened. I was looking for more, and somewhere out in this vast land we call Australia there had to be a big story. – Camille Hardman*

Camille Hardman and John Fink teamed up to travel Australia in 2002. Their challenge was to visit and film every single one of the 160 Big Things in Australia. Fink and Hardman travelled from Big Thing to Big Thing, interviewing the builders and owners along the way. Word soon spread about the filmmakers' adventures, and the two found themselves giving a weekly Big Things update on Triple J's afternoon drive time show.

And then one day, after thousands of miles of travel and way too much bad coffee, the story arrived. The pair learned that the Far North Queensland town of Tully was going to build the World's Biggest Gumboot. Hardman and Fink set up camp in a tin shed in the middle of a cane field and set to work filming the process.

While Hardman and Fink now also work separately as filmmakers, they still collaborate. Their next documentary feature film project *Pawlowski/Pawlowska* is a gritty, human story of survival and enduring love.

## Big Things

While Big Things often function as giant advertising billboards, they are also an essential aspect of Australian roadside culture, drawing visitors to something that represents and identifies the local community. They tell stories about Australia and its people.

Big Things are not just landmarks; they have symbolic value. They are monuments, marking the importance of and our appreciation of rural industry. Big Things further our understanding of



Australia and the experience of being Australian. Like them or not, they are culturally important. They also make a historical statement. Big Things were initially part of the changing economic base of small towns. The Big Banana shaped the way Big Things were developed in Australia: it was the model Big Thing and established the defining characteristics of these sites.

A Big Thing gives a place an identity. It puts a town on the map, proclaiming its significance to the nation and making it attractive to tourists. What makes Australia's Big Things unique on an international level is the number – at last count 160.

- International and national tourist sites are usually those that are big, both natural and man-made. Working as a class, make a list of tourist sites that fit this description.
- What Big Things can you name?
- How many Big Things do you think there are in Australia?
- Who has visited one or more of Australia's Big Things?
- Information about Australia's Big

Things can be found on a number of websites. Begin by visiting *The Big Dreamers* website at <http://www.bigdreamers.info>. Other websites worth visiting include <http://www.wilmap.com.au/bigstuff/default.htm> and [http://www.australianexplorer.com/australian\\_big\\_icons.htm](http://www.australianexplorer.com/australian_big_icons.htm).

- Where are Australia's Big Things located? Pin images of Australia's Big Things onto a large map of Australia.
- What's your favourite Big Thing?
- What other Big Things do you think Australia needs?
- Do you think our Big Things are valuable?
- What's your town famous for? Does your town need a Big Thing?
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in a town with a Big Thing.
- Become an expert on one of Australia's Big Things. When was the Big Thing built? Why? What does the Big Thing tell visitors about the town and about its past, present and future? Share your research with the class.



- *Big Dreamers* takes us to the site of other Big Things and interviews the people responsible for the icons. Read the following comments and then as a class discuss the significance of Big Things and how they are regarded.

## The Big Galah

*No, we're not artists, but in life if you want to do something and if you're determined enough you can do anything.*  
– Roger Venning

*The town didn't actually know until it was erected. There was only probably about ten or fifteen people in the whole town, because it wasn't built on the premises. It was built in our shed, and when it came along everybody kept saying, 'But nobody told us!'*  
– Dianne Venning

*Yeah, actually as we were buildin' it and when they found out they said, 'Well! It's like the Big Galah is building the Big Galah,' and that became a big talking point, but it certainly paid off in our business.*  
– Roger Venning

## The Big Abalone

*I feel great to ... [be] one of the owners of one of the great icons of Australia – probably the world. A lot of people come – especially Asian people ... when we get a tourist bus coming, just about everybody on the bus – women, children and men – they come here and they take photographs, and they take film because to them, it is just one of the most beautiful sights of all time.*  
– Fred Glasbrenner

## The Big Orange

*We seem to get more customers now that we have the Big Orange, and they can see the Big Orange coming in to town, and coming out of town, and we get lots of buses.* – Joyce Peterson

*We have a visitor's book in the Big Orange. They think it's wonderful ... They think the Big Orange is better than the Big Pineapple.* – Joyce Peterson



**Tully** > Tully, originally known as **Banyan**, was first settled in the 1870s as a sugar cane and cattle farming town. In 1927 the name was changed to Tully after William Tully, a surveyor. Located north of Brisbane and south of Cairns, Tully has a population of approximately 3400. Tully, with its mill and its main street, is essentially an inland sugar town. Natural features of interest include a freshwater swimming hole called Alligators Nest, and Tully Gorge, which provides opportunities for whitewater rafting. Tully receives over 4134mm of rain per year, making it the wettest place in Australia. It rains day in and day out for weeks, sometimes months. Floods are a common occurrence, and the locals have learned to live with them.

Visit the following websites to learn more about Tully:

<<http://www.cairnsconnect.com/region/tully.php>>

<<http://www.walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDTully.shtml>>

## The Big Banana

*The Big Banana must be a work of art, because it gathers at least a million photos taken every year, and if it wasn't a unique work of art that wouldn't happen. The Big Banana's not just a national icon. It's an international icon. It's recognized by people all over the world.* – Kevin Rubie

## The Big Koala

*Bruce is a work of art. This is Bruce. He was made out of nine tonnes of pine, and the head actually was made at the artist Jason Monet's place.*  
– Fran Myers

*Jason Monet, he was a distant relative to the famous French Impressionist artist Claude Monet ... I've enjoyed his works all my life, and I feel this is part of Claude, because Jason was inspired by Claude's work too, but he felt he could do his own artwork.* – Fran Myers

## The Big Potato

*Hi! My name's Jim Mauger, and I'm responsible for the building of this – which is supposedly the world's Biggest Potato. Now I built that somewhere in the order of 1977, '79. Some of the locals and some from outside the district would say it looks like a big turd, and my response to that of course is, 'Well did you ever build anything that's gonna be of that order of magnitude,' and that stops the argument. There is one thing that it has done, it's put Robertson on the map, and so many people will say, 'Oh Robertson! That's where the Big Potato is!' I think it's probably been worthwhile. I've got no regrets about building it at any rate.* – Jim Mauger

## The Big Lobster

*The Big Lobster was built in 1979 in Adelaide. It arrived here with three semi-trailers. Originally it was supposed to sit on top of the building, but ... there was a mistake made and the measurements were given to the sculptor in feet and inches and he took it in metric and therefore it is the size it is now. He'll stand for another fifty years without any shadow of doubt.* – Eric Peltz

- The Seven Wonders of the World was a list compiled by the Ancient Greeks because of their love of travel and thirst for knowledge. All of the Seven Wonders were exceptionally large structures, which made them easily identifiable landmarks. Since then various lists of the Wonders of the World have been compiled to catalogue the most spectacular man-made constructions and natural features in the world. Use the internet to find out more about the wonders of both ancient and modern worlds.
- *Big Things: Australia's Amazing Roadside Attractions* by David Clark (Penguin, 2004) is a tribute to the Big Things that Australia calls its own. An extract from the book can be found at <<http://www.penguin.com.au/lookinside/spotlight.cfm?SB N=9780143002000&page=extract>>.

USING *BIG DREAMERS*  
IN THE CLASSROOM >  
Teachers may select from  
the following activities to  
support students' viewing  
and close analysis of *Big  
Dreamers*.

### Before viewing *Big Dreamers*

- Are you a big dreamer?
- Is it good to dream big?
- Create an A4 collage of words and images that offers a personal definition of dreaming big. Invite students to explain their responses. Combine these collages to form a class mural.

### After viewing *Big Dreamers*

- What do you think of the Big Gumboot?
- Knowing what you do now about Tully and the Big Gumboot, review your list of advantages and disadvantages of living in a town with a Big Thing.
- Camille Hardman, the producer, director and cinematographer, speaks of *Big Dreamers* as a story with a capital 'S'. Do you agree?
- Could a story like this only happen in Australia?
- What does *Big Dreamers* tell us about the classic Australian notion of having a go?
- Is *Big Dreamers* an appropriate title for the documentary?
- Is *Big Dreamers* entertaining?
- Do you think *Big Dreamers* is educational?
- What are the central concerns of *Big Dreamers*?
- 'One man's quixotic struggle to build the world's biggest gumboot.'

Is this one-sentence synopsis an apt summary of *Big Dreamers*?



- What tagline would you use to promote *Big Dreamers*?

### Close Analysis

#### Sugar cane

*We've had three or four bad years weather-wise. We've had three bad years price-wise and we're almost at the end of our tether.* – Tip Byrne

Sugar is the second largest export crop in Australia after wheat, with a total annual revenue of around A\$2 billion. The Australian sugar industry produces raw sugar from sugar cane with Queensland producing around ninety-five per cent of all Australian sugar.

- Make a list of the images that the filmmakers use to convey Tully's investment in sugar cane.  
*I mean I can do this until now, but when I become an old man I can't lift any more watermelons to survive. You know what I mean?*  
– Cirino Quagliata

*It's a disappointment that we're reaching retirement age and thought we'd have enough to retire on, but because everything's gone haywire in these last five years, we don't know what our retirement's going to be like.* – Sera Quagliata

Sera and Cirino Quagliata are cane farmers. They have been on their cane farm for thirty-five years.



Rather than retiring, Sera and Cirino have been forced to diversify. They now grow watermelons, zucchinis and other small crops. How do they shape our understanding of the story told by *Big Dreamers*?

- Learn more about Australia's sugar cane industry by consulting both print and electronic texts. Begin your research by visiting <<http://www.sugaraustralia.com.au/Industry.aspx>> and <<http://www.queenslandnsugar.com/>>.

## The bottom line

*Well, we have empty shops in this town ... something which back in the ... mid-to-late '80s you couldn't find ... Now you've probably got ... eight or ten of them.* – Sam Pappalardo

*The economic situation is not good in Tully, as you know, with the farmers. And we need more tourists.* – Christine Boric

Tully decides to fight globalization with a giant gumboot.

- Discuss the impact of deregulation on a town like Tully.
- Do you think Tully's solution to its economic problems was economically sound?
- What other solutions do you think Tully should have pursued?

## The visionary

*Ron Hunt is an outstanding citizen for sure. He's a very successful businessman as well, and he came on the council and he is one of my best coun-*



*cillors without a shadow of a doubt.*  
– Tip Byrne

*He's a dynamo for this town.*  
– Roger Chandler

While there is conjecture about who originally conceived the idea of a Big Gumboot, there is no doubt that Ron Hunt deserves much of the credit for making the idea a reality.

- *Ron has an extremely strong personality. You gotta meet him to appreciate that. He generally gets what he wants.* – Roger Chandler

Do you agree with Roger's assessment of Ron?

- Why is Ron able to make the dream a reality?
- As the boot goes further and further over the deadline the town wants to know where their \$90,000 boot is. How does Ron respond? In what ways is his response revealing?
- 'Ron Hunt – heroic visionary'. Is this a fitting accolade for Ron?

## Meet the locals

*The feeling I got was that people thought it was a little bit foolish.*  
– Christine Boric

*Aesthetically I just cringe at the thought of a big golden gumboot with*



*a big green frog tacked on to the side of it.*  
– Pat Williams

*I had a couple of customers coming in doing the big cringe thing, 'It's so embarrassing. I can't believe our town is doing something like this!'*  
– Pat Williams

- Do you think the scepticism of the townspeople of Tully was justified?
- Hold your own Tully town meeting to discuss the proposal to build a Big Gumboot. Adopt a persona, either real or fictional, and express your view.

## The artist

*Actually we're pretty lucky we found this bloke in Millaa Millaa that's capable of building the boot.* – Ron Hunt

*You would expect an artist or sculptor*



*if you like to be concerned about getting it right and getting it so it would look good. Whereas a bricklayer might not have the same experience and ability in building a thing like this. So, I'd say while ... golden gumboots are perhaps are not normally considered to be works of art, this one is.*

– Bryan Newell

Bryan Newell is judged to have the expertise to build the boot. He has a background in fibreglassing. Roger Chandler's frog will be welded onto the boot. By 30 August 2002, Bryan is calculating the material he will need to build the boot. A marquee is constructed and work begins. The boot is going to be built beside the road to make it easy to lift and transport from Bryan's home to Tully.

- What do you think of Bryan's artistic abilities?
- Do you think Ron chose the best artist for the job?
- What role does Leo Hoffman, Bryan's neighbour, play in the building of the boot?

## The frog

Roger Chandler, a 'frogologist', has the job of carving the oversized frog to adorn the boot. It is not only Roger's 140th frog, but it's the biggest frog he has made in his life.

- Drawing on the following comments, discuss the pros and cons of Roger's frog. What do these comments tell a viewer not just about the frog but also about Roger and the people who are most involved in building the boot?

*...my particular frog has an arm up and an arm back like this. I really like to make them like that, because it just gives them a bit of character rather than just a frog sitting there going 'ribbert'. They're climbing. They're doing something positive.*

– Roger Chandler

*In all fairness to Roger he's a member of our club, and he's got a thing about frogs and we'd like to leave a mark there for him so they could look at it and say, 'Yeah,*



*Roger did that,' and I could look at it regularly and say, 'Yeah, Roger did that.'*

– Ron Hunt

*Roger's going to build the frog down here, and it's going to be transported in bits up to Millaa Millaa, which is about a 100 ks away I suppose. It's a bit awkward, but eh, they're the best people for the job. The frog will be put on up there, and hopefully it will all fit.*

– Ron Hunt

*I think if you stick a frog on the side of it, it's going to be distracting and I don't think it's aesthetically pleasing.*

– Bryan Newell

*I wasn't too keen about that idea, but I suppose if the frog was an artistic frog we could wear it. So, I said to him 'OK, make it out of polyurethane, it's a hell of a lot easier to work with polyurethane. So, make your frog out of polyurethane. Don't make it out of polystyrene!' He understood that. Ron understood that. They all understood that and off they went. It didn't turn out that way, did it?*

– Bryan Newell

*The colour is very, very important too, but I think this chap up in Millaa Millaa lives in the rainforest himself, so I think he's got a really good appreciation for just the finer aspects of frogs.*

– Roger Chandler

- Do you think Roger's frog is a worthwhile addition to the project?
- There is much debate about one of the frog's legs. Ron thinks that the foot is facing the wrong way. Roger is adamant that he has got it

right. Bryan looks to nature for an answer.

What were you thinking as this aspect of construction was negotiated?

## Artistic temperaments

*There's engineering involved in it and there's art involved in it, and you don't get too many people who are competent and used to handling both of those things. Artists are not engineers are they? Well, it just so happens that I've got experience building Big Things and I'm an artist and if there was anyone else like that in the north then I'd surely know about it, but I didn't know about Roger.*

– Bryan Newell

*If you get that bloke to do the boot and the frog and you don't consult with me, I don't want anything else to do with the project. Spat the dummy.*

– Roger Chandler

*I'm an artist, and I'm a three-dimensional artist, and I've created my three-dimensional thing which is going to go on this boot; in conjunction with this other artist who's up there, Bryan, and I'm really impressed with the work that he does.*

– Roger Chandler

- Do you think artistic temperaments and differences get in the way of the project's success?

## The critic

Bonny Bauer is a local political identity and the Big Gumboot's most strident critic.

*A Golden Gumboot won't pay my rates. A Golden Gumboot won't educate my children and a Golden Gumboot won't keep me or my neighbours on the land.*

*It was the citizen of the year's initiative. We can't retire without having our own kudos and our own pats on the back.*

*What hope do we have when [with] everything that is wrong in our industry, in our town, the best we can come up with is a Bata-sponsored frog on the edge of a tacky green gumboot?*

– Bonny Bauer



- Is Bonny right to be so cynical about the Big Gumboot?

### The politician

*These people have worked miracles. What they've done is unbelievable, but how imaginative to build a big gumboot.*

*The person that builds the gumboot – he's a patriot. In Australia today, he is the greatest patriot that figures out some way to provide jobs in his local community.* – The Hon. Bob Katter, MP

- Given Bob Katter's endorsement of the project, were you surprised by his final evaluation?  
*I would love to say that the Golden Gumboot will be Tully's saviour, but I have to say to you 'no'. I mean the maximum possible income that I could ever envisage from tourism would be 20 or 30 million [dollars] and that's wildly optimistic in my opinion. At the present moment maybe 150 million comes in from bananas and maybe another 100 million comes in from sugar, but at the end of the day we're talking*

*about filling a vacuum here the size of about 250 million dollars. That vacuum will not be filled when every other town and village in the world, most certainly in Australia, has exactly the same formula for success.*

### How to build a big gumboot

*Then I'm going to mix up the resin and cut the glass, and fibreglass all these beams to the panels and that will hold them ... in to position, and then after lunch Leo will help me put two more up and then we'll gradually move towards the foot.* – Bryan Newell

- Based on your viewing of every aspect of the process, make a step-by-step guide to building a big gumboot. The format is up to you. Your guide could be presented as a brochure, a poster or a PowerPoint presentation. Include both words and images to describe the construction process. Take the task seriously but don't forget to provide some humour along the way.

### The rain

15 November 2002

Two months and sixteen days into the project, it's raining.

*We've had two days of really torrential rain, but we get a lot of rain. We just don't make a fuss about it.*

– Bryan Newell

Ron is anxious. The rain means that deadlines aren't deadlines. Despite the delays, Bryan always looks on the bright side:

*I only need about two days, but you know we're within ten days of getting it finished anyway. But I think working night and day for eight days a week, we'll probably just get there.*

- Is Bryan too optimistic?

### Another delay

*I just got off the phone from talking to Bryan and the bad news is it looks like at this stage, we're not going to get our gumboot before he goes overseas.* – Ron Hunt



Bryan has bad news for Ron. Workshops in New South Wales mean that he will be away for about five weeks. Ron is disappointed but tries to put the delay into perspective. 'That's the trouble with having a guy that's such a famous artist, I suppose, if you like.' Bryan is sensitive enough to recognize Ron's reputation is at stake. 'I think it's going to be a bit difficult for Ron ... because he's had to battle all the way to get it done and to please everybody ... So, it might be a bit embarrassing for him, but he's tough.'

- Like Ron, did you start to doubt the Big Gumboot was ever going to be finished?

## How long is too long?

*It looks a bit like a patchwork quilt, and I'm afraid if it's gonna come down, it has to be the one colour. All the one colour and look schmick. As I said before when this thing arrives here, it has to look like a bride walking down the aisle with all the finery.* – Ron Hunt

Come 27 January 2003 – Bryan's seventieth birthday to be exact – Ron isn't happy. A few weeks later on 17 February, Ron is even more frustrated.

- Writing as Ron, make a 'Big Gumboot to-do list' to give to Bryan.

Bryan concedes to Ron's demands and everyone lends a hand.

Rather than dwell on all the deadlines that have been missed, Ron has decided that April Fool's Day will be a good day for the official opening.

- Did you agree?

## Bringing home the boot

Seven months and one day after the project was initiated, the Big Gumboot arrives in Tully.

- *I'm coming down from the Palmerston with a load of pork chops on the back, when it turned the corner and I'm thinking to myself, 'Oh, no! That's not that blooming gumboot thing.'* – Dave Teitzal



*Butterflies. Very large butterflies. They've been flapping round in there for two days. I'm like a blooming duck. I might appear calm on the outside, but believe me until this is stood up ...*

– Ron Hunt

*I don't know, I'm not convinced that advertising Tully as the wettest place in Australia is a great way to get tourists in.* – David Goodman

*Could have been a little bit brighter, I think.* – Sam Pappalardo

Does Ron's 'bride' make a good first impression?

Once the boot has been fixed to its footings, it's time for the finishing touches. A mechanical rain gauge running from the heel to the lip of the boot is installed. So too is a spiral staircase, leading to a viewing platform which enables photography of the sugar mill. Hung along the walls are photographs of past floods.

## The gala opening

*Bryan our artist. He's the guy that actually made the gumboot, and after twelve months of working together, Bryan and I are still talking, and I think that says something.* – Ron Hunt

*Roger Chandler. What can I say? Without Roger – the frog that you have there, wouldn't have been. Big hand for Roger. He's a frogologist.*

– Ron Hunt

Getting everything just right for the grand opening takes time. Adding the finishing touches proves to be a chaotic time for Ron and his fellow Rotarians. Ron is gracious as he gives credit to those who have made his dream for Tully come true.

- Review this sequence of *Big Dreamers*.

Drawing on both the vision and sound, write a newspaper report about the gala opening.

Or

Write the rest of Ron's speech.

## All said and done

*Twenty-twenty, hindsight vision is wonderful sort of stuff, but had I known that it was this big we probably would have skirted around it. Although the finished article makes you proud to be a part of it.* – Ron Hunt

*I think the gumboot has improved business in town slightly. We do get tourists coming through.*

– Sam Pappalardo







## Production values

- Examine the narrative structure of *Big Dreamers* and consider how the documentary charts the story of Tully's decision to build a big gumboot.
- As a class, discuss the demands of making an observational documentary like *Big Dreamers*.
- How does the opening sequence portray Tully?
- As a class, discuss how the filmmakers have decided to portray the people featured in *Big Dreamers*.
- *Ahh, when I first come here, it was a pretty wet place, Tully. Very wet, but then it eased up.*

– Andy Hart, Tully local

How do the filmmakers highlight the fact that Tully gets its fair share of rain? Did you find their approach effective?

- List those images that work in a symbolic way. How do these images inform your understanding of the key concepts of *Big Dreamers*?
- *Big Dreamers* uses cards to help tell the story of the Big Gumboot. Identify the different ways the filmmakers use the cards and discuss the effectiveness of this approach.
- List those moments of *Big Dreamers* that are visually humorous. Why do you think the filmmakers decided to use humour to portray the story?
- How do the filmmakers approach the more serious issues underpinning Tully's need to build a big gumboot?
- *Big Dreamers* closes with scenes from the Gumboot Festival. Is it an effective way to resolve the story?
- Sydney composer, performer and multi-instrumentalist Neill Duncan is responsible for the music used in *Big Dreamers*. How is music used to tell the story? Given the chance, what music would you have included in *Big Dreamers*?
- Do you think the production team of *Big Dreamers* were big dreamers themselves?

## Design

- Having followed the process of how Tully created something big, it's your turn to design your own Big Thing. Pick any town and find out more about the town's location, population, natural features, economy and man-made attractions. Design a Big Thing that would draw tourists to the town. Pitch

your idea to the local town council.

## Create

- Create a postcard from Tully. Design the front of the card and write a message on the back. When you have finished, pin your postcard to a class noticeboard for others to read.
- Tully is not only home to the Big Gumboot, it is also the UFO headquarters of Australia. Based on earlier research and the way Tully is portrayed in *Big Dreamers*, create a website for the Tully Visitor Centre highlighting the attractions of the town.

## Present

- Imagine you work for Tully's local television station. Present a news bulletin about Tully's Big Gumboot.
- Working in a small group, present a talkback radio program about Tully's decision to build a Big Gumboot. Someone in the group will need to adopt the persona of the host and others will need to provide the voices of those who support and object to the project.

## Respond

- '*Big Dreamers* is all about what a small community can achieve when they not only have a dream, but the courage to pursue it.' Discuss.
- '*Big Dreamers* is an affectionate and infectious portrait of small-town Australia.' Do you agree?
- '*Big Dreamers* tackles a serious issue from a comedic perspective.' Discuss.

## Review

- Use the following extracts from online reviews to initiate an evaluation of *Big Dreamers*:  
*Small town rivalries, dogged problem solving, sense of humour, sheer determination and its sister, bloody mindedness, help make this cheerful doco both entertaining and insightful. It's a perfect DVD to send overseas as a showcase of the Australian ethos, as found in country towns. Apart from the progress of making the boot – and its decoration of a frog in a controversial pose – the film offers vignettes of some of Australia's other large iconic statutes [sic], like the Big Banana, the Big Orange, the Big Potato, the*

*Big Lobster, the Big Koala, etc. The characters we meet are indeed 'characters' and the project is a good example of good intentions being snared by the inevitable Murphy's Law. But it's not only the oversize gumboot makers that deserve our admiration – it's the filmmakers, who recorded the highlights of over 9 months of its troubled creation.*

– Andrew L. Urban

<<http://www.urbancinefile.com.au/home/view.asp?a=13936&s=DVD>>

*Director Camille Hardman does a fine job capturing the spirit of small town Australia, and should be applauded for truly documenting and not exploiting the town's hardships or their eccentricities. It is not mentioned in the film, but Tully is the UFO headquarters of Australia, a fact which other filmmakers would have used to their advantage to paint the people of Tully as quirky, paranoid rednecks who happen to be constructing a giant boot. Yet Hardman does no such thing, keeping her camera squarely on the townspeople and the men behind their new attraction as a pipedream becomes a reality.*

– Matthew Pejkovic <<http://www.mediasearch.com.au/film/filmreviews/bigdreamers-filmreview>>

- Write a review of *Big Dreamers* that would appear in a television guide. Spend some time researching the qualities of a review by reading the television guides that are published in your state's daily newspapers.

## Going Further

- Camille Hardman and John Fink are constructing an Australia by Big Things booklet, a comic book of the story, a map and a family game for a package to go with the DVD. The filmmakers are also constructing an exhibition of Big Things for the State Library of Queensland with internationally renowned designer for stage and screen Brian Thomson, and developing a website to accompany the DVD release.

## Links

Film website:

<<http://www.bigdreamers.info>>

Production company website:

<<http://www.barkingcat.tv>>



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