

Down River The Wilcannia Mob Story

Wilcannia kids

BUY-IN

In August 2002 the song 'Down River' became an overnight hit. Five boys, aged 8 to 12, had recorded their own rap lines to a simple didgeridoo beat. Music lovers across Australia were rapt.

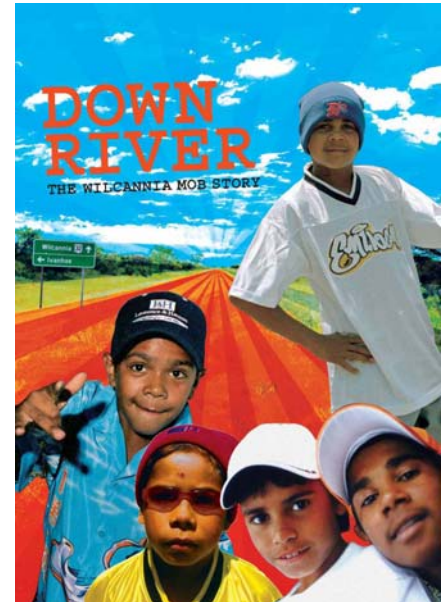
Known as the Wilcannia Mob when the song hit high rotation, the media came looking for the new 'boy band' from far western NSW. Till then they'd been just a bunch of passionate kids having fun at a holiday workshop.

Down River is an illustrated version of the journey taken by those five young boys, their families and their community. It traces their origins from a makeshift recording studio in a town long forgotten, to centre-stage in front of 20,000 fans at the Homebake Music Festival in December 2002. In doing so it gives us privileged insights into Barkandji country and some of the people living there.

Down River shows us how fame and success can come to anybody, anytime and that when hearts are open and people work together, anything is possible.

AUTHORS

Melinda Collie-Holmes was the Artistic Director of Shopfront Theatre for Young People when she visited the community as part of an outreach project. The idea for the book began there. *Down River* contains interviews with the boys, their families and community.



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SELLING POINTS

- 'People must get very lonely here, lots of people but nobody talks to each other', one of the boys visiting the city, longing to get back home.
- The only story of how these boys moved from a holiday workshop to performing at the Homebake music festival.
- Some Homebake-goers came just to hear the boys, who won a Deadly Award.
- Music has been played in nightclubs around the world. Song has been remixed and released by international hip-hop artist, MIA.
- Will play on the media interest generated when they won a Deadly Award.
- It's not a strident, lobbying message, but the books reveals the state of the river and how the local people feel about it: 'Without the river we are a lost people.'