



- *At What Cost?* is written by palawa playwright Nathan Maynard and was developed at Belvoir as part of the Balnaves fellowship. This production, directed by Isaac Drandic, opened at Belvoir on Wednesday 2nd February 2022.
- *At What Cost?* runs for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, with no interval.
- *At What Cost?* takes place in Tasmania in an area known to the Aboriginal community as *putalina*. *putalina* is also known as Oyster Cove, and is located to the south of Hobart. The action of the play takes place across three sites: a hut, a tent and a funeral pyre and is set in present day.
- There are four actors in this production who each play one character. The characters are Boyd Mansell (Luke Carroll) - a palawa man and the caretaker of *putalina*, a leader of the community and representative to the land council. Boyd's wife, Nala Mansell (Sandy Greenwood) - a palawa women who is pregnant with their child. Boyd's cousin, Daniel Mansell (Ari Maza Long) - a palawa man who was born at *putalina* but grew up on the mainland and has only recently returned, and an outsider, Gracie Ranson (Alex Malone) - a PhD student visiting *putalina* for research.
- The play references historical events that took place in Tasmania in the 1800s. References are made to William Lanne(y) and William Crowther. Lanne, also known as King Billy, was a whaler who lived at *putalina* for a time. After his death, his body became part of a scientific battle that led to the remains of his body being mutilated and stolen. Crowther was the 14th Premier of Tasmania, who was also a doctor and anthropologist who committed unethical acts in the name of 'science'. He is infamously known to have stolen from the graves of Aboriginal peoples, including the remains of Lanne, which he sent to the British Museum in a jar of pickles.
- *At What Cost?* is about a palawa man taking care of country as a caretaker of *putalina*. The action of the play centres around the reclaiming of the remains of William Lanne from the British Museum and the ceremony of his return to the ancestors.
- The play explores themes of identity politics and cultural identity for Aboriginal people in a contemporary context. It depicts a conflict between palawa who grew up within community - with a connection to country and bloodline, opposed to those who claim to have Aboriginal lineage but little connection to the existing community. In the play the palawa community refer to the latter as 'tick-a-box' or 'claimers' - meaning people who identify as Aboriginal although lack a specific connection to the culture or proven bloodline.
- The play discusses strong themes such as genocide and trauma, and mentions the names of Aboriginal people who have died. In one scene Boyd shares stories of deaths in custody, police violence and suicide due to racial injustice. For example crying out "*Where were they after my 16 year old cousin walked into the Launceston trades hotel, pulled a sawn-off shotgun out of her back pack, and blew her head off?*"
- The production contains frequent strong language. Characters swear as part of everyday, colloquial speech and in moments of humour and emotion. Students should be prepared for some characters to use derogatory language at points in the production in emotionally heightened moments, for example "*tick-a-box c**t*" or "*claimer-dog*".
- The play contains some sexual references. In one scene a fully clothed Boyd and Nala engage in playful intimacy and banter - Nala jests to her husband that if he continues to forget to tell her important things then he will need "*to go down on me. You'll either learn to how be a really good remember-er' or learn how to be a really good licker out-er-er*".
- This production includes a brief moment of female nudity at the end of a scene in which Gracie removes her t-shirt to suggest she and Daniel go back to her tent. She stands topless for approximately 10 seconds before the two run off stage.
- The production contains one moment of physical violence where Daniel punches Boyd at the end of a heated argument.
- **[Spoiler]** The play infers death by suicide. The act occurs in the final moments of the play at the site of the cremation pyre. In a moment of emotional distress and connection to Lanne's spirit, the character pours petrol on the pyre and then himself before sitting in the middle of the pyre and setting it alight. The fire is represented with light and smoke, the death is not enacted.
- The production contains alcohol. Some characters are seen drinking alcohol on stage, drinking beer and wine while socialising or referencing drinking in the park as teenagers.
- The production contains haze and simulated fire and haze.
- The production contains a representation of a deceased person's skull (William Lanne).