

EPONA

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING AND MEDIA STRATEGY

BUILDING AN AUDIENCE FROM THE FIRST DAY OF DEVELOPMENT



Prepared by
VAM Paddock Productions Pty Ltd
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**We do not simply build campaigns around films.
We invite people into journeys they want to share.**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Producing an exceptional film is no longer enough to guarantee it will be seen. Audience attention must be earned through connection, trust and participation.

VAM Paddock Productions believes audience development begins when a project enters development. It shapes how people discover, understand and connect with a film throughout its lifecycle.

The audience journey can begin long before the film reaches the screen.

EPONA has a compelling story behind it. Leila McDougall and Shannon Green grew up together in Walcha and are now bringing different experiences, cultural perspectives and creative skills together to create a film about connection, healing and the future we choose.

Audiences will be invited into the people, horses, cultural collaboration, landscape and community behind EPONA from development through to release and legacy. This strategy builds on the model proven through Just A Farmer, which reached 80 Australian cinemas, 600,000 television viewers, a direct audience of more than 50,000 Australians and approximately \$900,000 in gross community screening revenue.

The objective is simple: build an audience with EPONA rather than waiting until the film is complete to find one.

TRADITIONAL MODEL

Development
↓
Production
↓
Marketing
↓
Release
↓
Audience

EPONA MODEL

Development and audience
↓
Production and audience
↓
Release and audience
↓
Community and legacy



2. OUR AUDIENCE PHILOSOPHY

The traditional film marketing model begins near completion, with trailers, posters, publicity and paid advertising. In today's media environment, that is no longer enough.

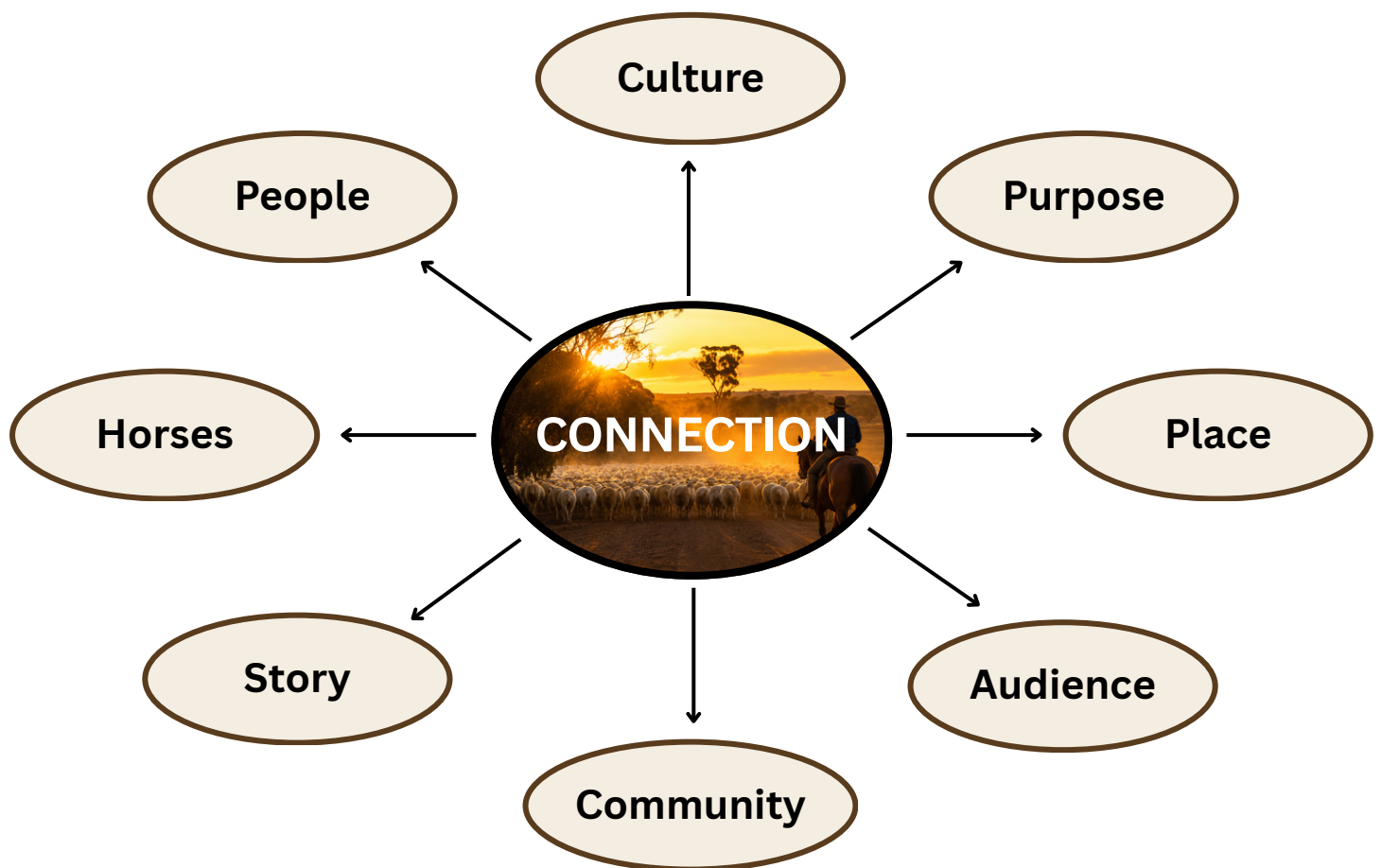
At VAM Paddock Productions, we begin with a different question:

How do we create genuine human connection around a story worth sharing?

That question shapes development, production, content creation, community participation, distribution and release.

For EPONA, audience development is built on connection rather than promotion alone. Audiences will be invited to engage with the stories of the people, place, culture, horses, purpose and community behind the film and to form their own relationship with the story.

By the time EPONA reaches cinemas, many audience members will already feel they have travelled alongside it.



WE DO NOT ASK AUDIENCES TO WATCH FROM A DISTANCE. WE INVITE THEM TO BECOME PART OF THE JOURNEY.

3. TARGET AUDIENCE AND AUDIENCE EVIDENCE

EPONA has the potential to reach a broad audience, but the campaign must begin with clear priorities. The following audience groups are working hypotheses that will be tested and refined during development

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Women aged 35 to 64, particularly in regional and outer metropolitan Australia, who connect with emotionally driven Australian stories about family, belonging, healing, courage, horses, landscape and community.

They are likely to discover EPONA through trusted recommendations, community networks, regional media, direct email, cast and creative stories, horse related content and meaningful publicity.

The desired actions are cinema attendance, recommendation, community screening participation and continued engagement with the project.

SECONDARY AUDIENCES

Equestrian audiences

Riders, trainers, horse owners, equestrian families and people interested in horse welfare, behaviour and performance.

Regional communities

People who value Australian places, local identity, regional stories and community led cultural events.

Adult fantasy and prestige drama audiences

Adults drawn to mythology, emotional spectacle, history, landscape and distinctive Australian storytelling.

Community and education partners

Schools, councils, community organisations, cultural organisations and screening hosts who can extend the life and impact of the film.

WHAT WE KNOW

- VAM Paddock Productions has a direct audience database of more than 50,000 Australians.
- Just A Farmer demonstrated strong demand for regional screenings, community participation and direct audience communication.
- VAM has established relationships with cinemas, community hosts and regional networks.

WHAT DEVELOPMENT WILL TEST

1. The level of audience overlap between Just A Farmer and EPONA.
2. Which themes create the strongest response.
3. Whether people enter through horses, mythology, landscape, culture, cast or the real journey behind the film.
4. Which audience groups are most likely to attend cinemas, host screenings and recommend the film.

4. WHY EPONA IS DIFFERENT

EPONA carries two connected stories: the film audiences will experience on screen and the real journey of the people bringing it to life.

At the centre are Leila McDougall and Shannon Green, two women who grew up together in Walcha and are now returning to the place that shaped them to create a feature film grounded in friendship, cultural collaboration, history, horses and landscape.

Their lives followed different pathways, but their connection to each other and to Walcha remained. They are now bringing those different experiences together to create something ambitious.

Ash Barnett adds another essential layer. Also shaped by Walcha, Ash brings deep horse knowledge, practical skill and an intuitive understanding of animal behaviour. The preparation of the horses will become an audience journey in its own right, showing how they are selected, trained and cared for with authenticity and welfare at the centre.

Together, Leila, Shannon and Ash create a distinctive story behind the film: lifelong connection, regional ambition, cultural collaboration, horses as creative partners and a community helping build something larger than itself.

The audience connection will come from real people undertaking a meaningful and visible journey together.

BEFORE AUDIENCES MEET EPONA ON SCREEN, THEY WILL UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE, PLACE AND PURPOSE THAT BROUGHT HER STORY TO LIFE.



LEILA

Story, Producing,
Director Creation,
Impact, Audience



SHANNON

Writing, Culture,
Community, Place,
Collaboration



ASH

Horses, Training,
Performance, Welfare,
Intuition

WALCHA

Three women shaped by the same community, bringing different strengths together to create EPONA.

5. PRODUCER LED AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Audience development will be integrated into the producing process from the beginning.

This does not mean allowing publicity or social media to control creative decisions. It means recognising that every stage of filmmaking creates opportunities to build trust, curiosity and connection.

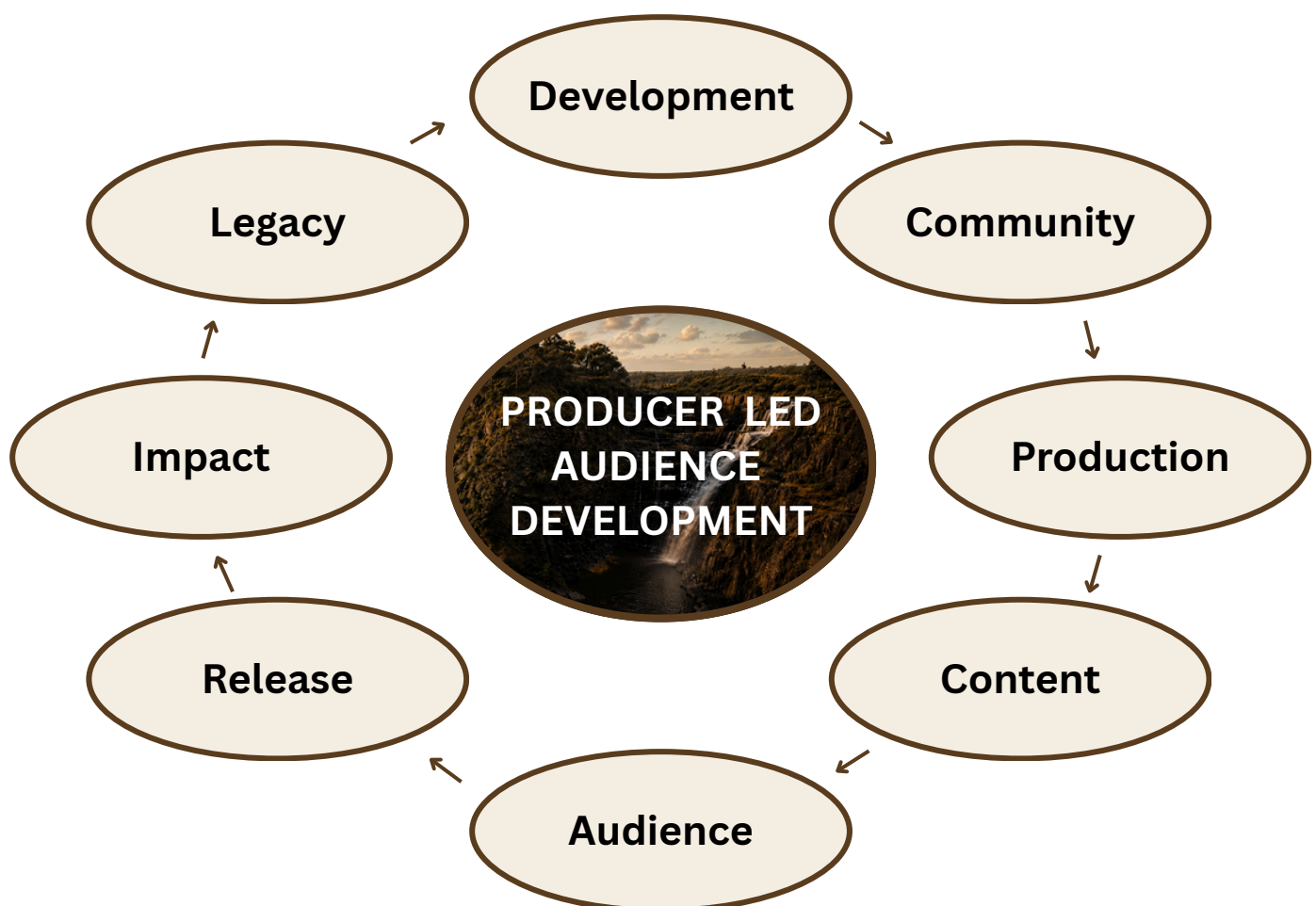
During development, audiences may be introduced to the origins of the story, Leila and Shannon's relationship, Walcha, mythology, approved cultural collaboration, horse preparation and the developing creative team.

During production, this will expand through cast and crew stories, professional photography, production diaries, location stories, horse training, local suppliers and approved community participation.

The campaign will not focus only on actors and senior creatives. Every department, business and community contributor helps shape the film and its production culture.

When the values expressed by the story are also reflected in the way the film is made, that authenticity becomes part of the audience relationship.

THE MAKING OF THE FILM MUST HONOUR THE SAME VALUES THE FILM ASKS AUDIENCES TO CONSIDER.



6. MARKETING AND MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

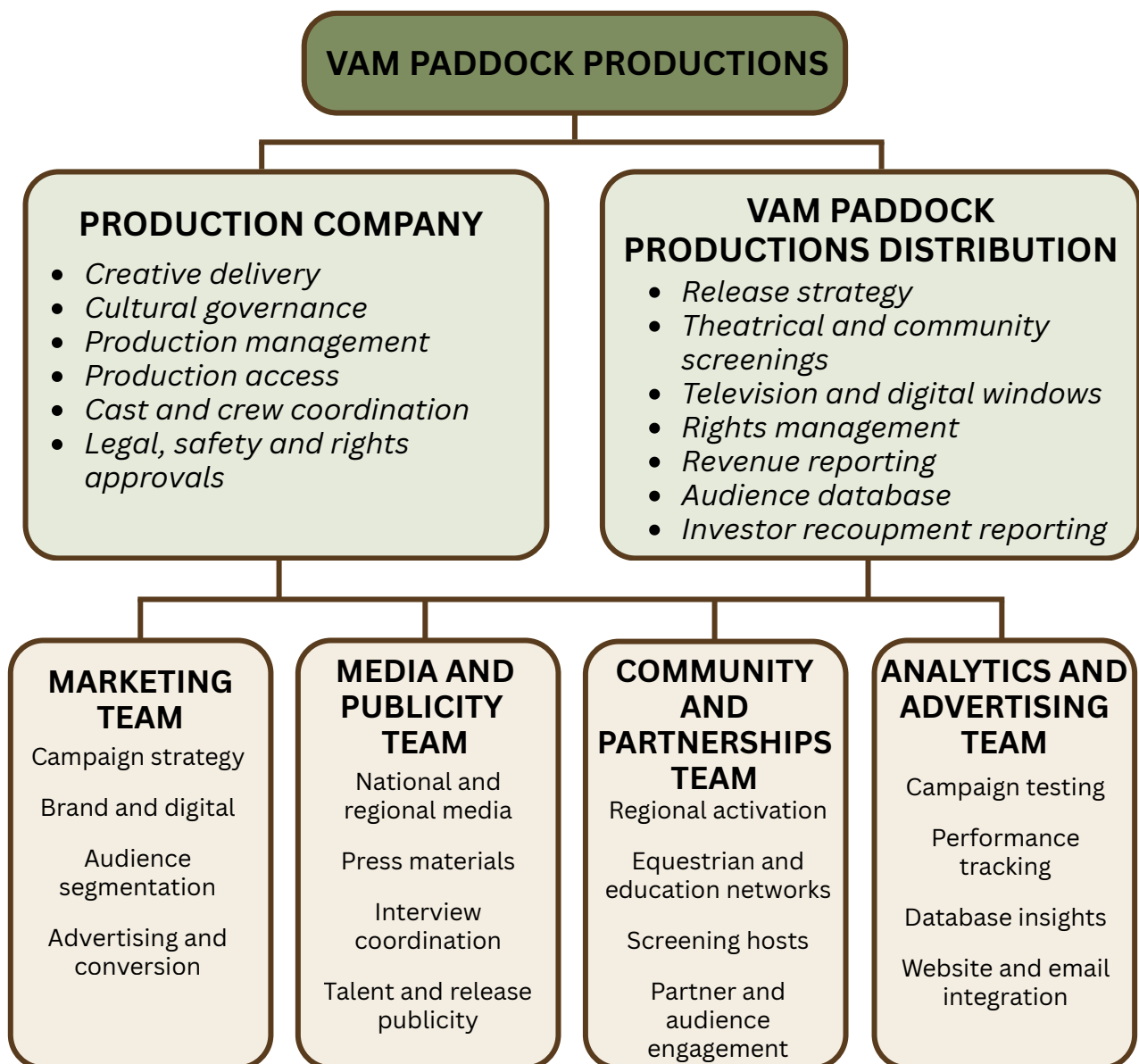
EPONA will be produced by VAM Paddock Productions Pty Ltd, which will retain responsibility for creative delivery, cultural governance, production management and underlying rights.

Distribution will be managed through VAM Paddock Productions Distribution, operating separately from the production function within the broader company structure.

This separation supports clear financial reporting, professional release management, rights control and transparent recoupment.

Marketing, media and community engagement will operate across both functions through defined responsibilities, approval pathways and specialist expertise.

“ *Marketing is not a single campaign. It is a coordinated business function connected to production, distribution and audience.*

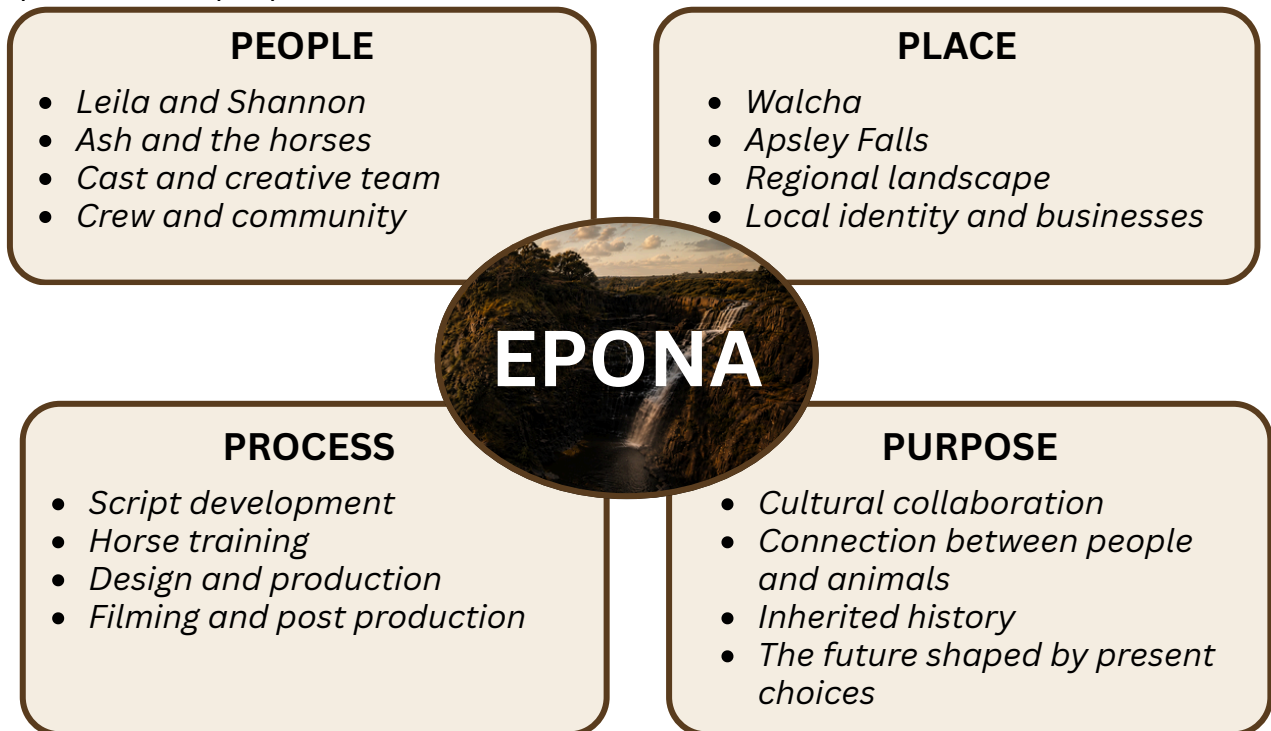


Specialist positions will be confirmed and appointed in line with the development, production and release schedule.

7. CONTENT AND PUBLICITY STRATEGY

EPONA will create more than a trailer, poster and release campaign. From development through production, the project will build a library of professional content and media assets that can engage audiences consistently over time.

The strategy will communicate through four connected pillars: people, place, process and purpose.



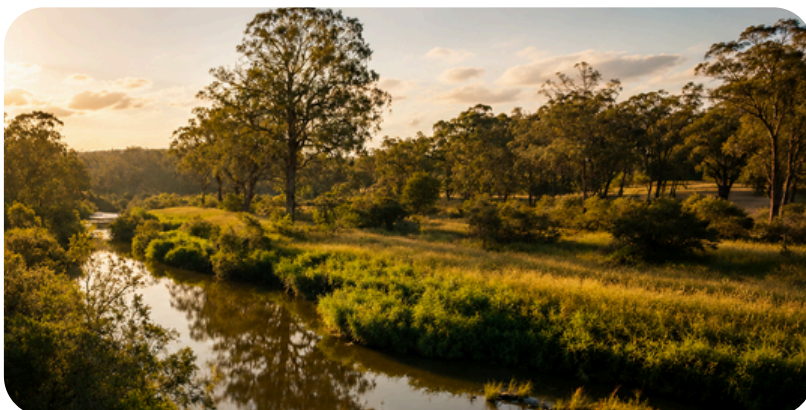
MEDIA PATHWAYS

Publicity opportunities will be pursued across mainstream, regional and specialist media, including television, radio, print, digital publications and podcasts, with particular relevance to rural, equestrian, cultural, education and impact audiences.

CAST AND CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

Cast and key creatives will be invited to participate in planned interviews, reflections, photography, media opportunities and release activity, subject to contractual agreement and availability.

All public communication involving First Nations cultural material, language, history, consultation or cultural themes will be managed through the project's cultural governance and approval process.



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8. AUDIENCE JOURNEY

EPONA's audience journey will begin in development and continue beyond the initial release.

Rather than meeting the film at one moment, audiences will encounter it through a series of meaningful connection points across its creative, release and legacy life.



EPONA will begin this journey with an existing audience database of more than 50,000 Australians. Subscribers will receive purposeful updates across development, production and release, including milestones, creative progress, community stories, horse preparation, approved content and opportunities to participate.

Audiences will not encounter EPONA at a single release moment. They will experience a series of meaningful connection points over time.

9. MEASUREMENT, GOVERNANCE AND RISK

The audience strategy will be measured throughout development, production and release.

The purpose is not simply to report large numbers. It is to understand whether audiences are becoming more aware, more engaged and more likely to act.

KEY MEASURES

AUDIENCE GROWTH

Email database
Social audience
Website visits
Geographic reach
Audience segments

ENGAGEMENT

Content reach
Meaningful comments
Shares
Video completion
Email response
Community enquiries

MEDIA

Editorial coverage
Broadcast reach
Podcast participation
Regional media
Audience sentiment

CONVERSION

Ticket sales
Event registrations
Community screening bookings
Education enquiries
Digital transactions

COMMERCIAL

Theatrical revenue
Community screening revenue
Education licensing
Digital revenue
Broadcast income
Investor recoupment

CAMPAIGN TESTING

Paid activity will be tested and adjusted using evidence from audience behaviour.

- Creative formats
- Audience groups
- Locations
- Messages
- Platforms
- Timing
- Cost per action
- Conversion

APPROVAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Marketing and media activity will operate through defined approval pathways.

- Production
- Distribution
- Cast and talent
- Legal review
- Cultural governance
- Privacy and safety
- Community permissions
- Animal welfare

CAMPAIGN TESTING

The audience strategy will be measured throughout development, production and release.

Paid activity will be tested and adjusted using evidence from audience behaviour.

Testing will include:

- Creative formats
- Audience groups
- Locations
- Messages
- Platforms
- Timing
- Cost per action
- Conversion performance



10. DEVELOPMENT DELIVERABLES AND CONCLUSION

During funded development, the audience strategy will be expanded through the following deliverables.

AUDIENCE

- *Refined audience profiles*
- *Audience research and testing*
- *Audience segmentation*
- *Database analysis*
- *Audience growth targets*

CONTENT

- *Detailed content calendar*
- *Production content capture plan*
- *Talent participation strategy*
- *Social media framework*
- *Email communication plan*

MEDIA AND PARTNERSHIPS

- *Media target list*
- *Podcast strategy*
- *Partner engagement plan*
- *Community screening pathway*
- *Education pathway*

GOVERNANCE AND MEASUREMENT

- *Marketing governance framework*
- *Cultural approval protocol*
- *Approval and risk process*
- *Campaign measurement framework*
- *Preliminary marketing budget*

CONCLUSION

EPONA is not approaching audience development as a final stage activity. It is being built into the project from the beginning.

VAM Paddock Productions has demonstrated through Just A Farmer that it can create direct audience relationships, generate sustained community demand and convert audience engagement into meaningful commercial returns.

EPONA will build on that experience through a professional structure connecting production, distribution, marketing, media, community engagement and analytics. The campaign will not rely on one cast announcement, trailer, media appearance or advertising platform. It will grow through authentic stories, repeated connection points, professional content, community participation and disciplined measurement.

The film must be strong enough to hold the audience once they arrive. The audience strategy exists to ensure people know the film is there, understand why it matters and feel invited to become part of its journey.

EPONA's audience strategy does not assume that attention will come. It establishes a disciplined process for earning it, testing it and converting it into lasting audience and commercial value.

We do not simply want audiences to hear about EPONA. We want them to feel that they helped carry the story into the world.