

NOWHERE BOYS



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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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‘Everybody who knows us has forgotten us.’

Nowhere Boys (2013), a thirteen-part Australian children’s television series and online game created by Tony Ayres for Matchbox Pictures, is the story of four teenage boys who return from a school excursion to discover they are stuck in a parallel world in which they were never born. A compelling combination of drama, adventure and the supernatural, *Nowhere Boys* develops and enriches its audience’s knowledge and understanding of the experiences of adolescence as Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam endeavour to resolve their differences, solve their dilemma and find a way home.

CURRICULUM LINKS

The *Nowhere Boys* study guide has been written for upper primary and lower secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English.

In English, students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They read and view, and also interpret and evaluate these texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic. As a classroom resource, *Nowhere Boys* is relevant to the teaching of the Literature strand, allowing students to respond to, examine and create literature. In Media, students view, analyse and evaluate media texts and the contexts within which they are made. As a classroom resource, *Nowhere Boys* is relevant to the teaching of how media texts engage audiences, draw on codes and conventions, and construct representations.

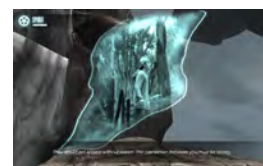
The tasks described in the *Nowhere Boy* study guide provide opportunities for students to complete a close analysis of the series and the key ideas and values on which it is based, and to engage in the processes of listening, speaking,

reading, viewing and writing. Teachers are advised to choose tasks that are age-appropriate.

In completing the tasks, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- identify personal ideas, experiences and opinions about texts and discuss them with others;
- describe and explain how events, characters and settings in texts are depicted;
- analyse, explain and evaluate the structure of a text and how the features of the text influence audience response;
- explain and analyse the ways in which stories, characters, settings and experiences are reflected in particular genres, and to discuss the appeal of these genres;
- create a wide range of texts, make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions;
- when writing, demonstrate understanding of grammar, select specific vocabulary and use accurate spelling and punctuation, editing their work to provide structure and meaning;
- use a range of software to create, edit and publish texts.

Stills from *The 5th Boy* online game



SERIES SYNOPSIS

When four very different teenage boys get lost while trekking through Bremin National Park, an already tiresome school excursion becomes even worse. After surviving a terrifying night and a twister that seems out to get them, Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam return to town expecting a heroic reception. Instead, they discover that they are now total strangers to their friends and families.

The alternate world the boys return to is identical to theirs except for one startling difference – they were never born. All public records of them have vanished and the world has reconfigured itself. Their families are living very different lives. Felix's disabled brother can walk. Jake's struggling parents are now leading successful lives. Andy's family – and in particular his sister – are less straight-laced. Sam is not pleased to discover that he has been replaced.

The 'nowhere boys' are forced to fend for themselves. They band together to find out what is going on, but as one bizarre situation after enough threatens their survival, Andy's scientific obsession with finding a rational explanation gives way to Felix's belief that they are up against something otherworldly. Felix comes into the possession of an ornate talisman through Phoebe, who runs the local new-age spirituality shop. He discovers that when all the boys are together, they possess magical powers that allow them to use the talisman to ward off the demonic force that is intent on destroying them.

In this strange new world, the boys are still drawn to their families. Jake meets the father he never had. Sam faces up to his self-indulgent flaws. Andy enjoys his first taste of independence. Felix is accepted by his family in a way never possible after the accident that injured his brother. Meanwhile, the demon grows ever more powerful, possessing animals and humans in its quest to wreak havoc. Convinced that Phoebe is behind it all, the boys confront her, but Phoebe just wants to find her sister, Alice. Phoebe believes the boys can help find Alice because Felix is bestowed with the gift of magic.

When the boys are presented with a chance to revisit the forest where they went missing, they grow hopeful of a return home, only to discover the demon is now stronger than ever. Having barely survived, the boys are back where they started and old tensions are renewed as they begin to see their chances of returning to their old lives fade away.

The demon takes advantage of Sam's frustration to trick him into destroying the talisman, leaving the boys vulnerable. To make matters worse, the boys' new-world mothers simultaneously succumb to mysterious ailments triggered by the boys themselves. The four must work together to cast a spell that reverses the effects before it is too late.



Determined to find a way home, their bond is threatened yet again when Felix is revealed to be responsible for their dilemma. He cast the spell that brought them to this other Bremin in an attempt to heal his brother Oscar. Felix has always blamed himself for the accident that put Oscar in a wheelchair. To work the spell, he needed the other three boys, to create a unification of the elements – Jake is earth, Andy is water, Sam is air and Felix is fire.

Despite their anger, the boys can only return home if they work together. The demon is now at the peak of its power and uses Oscar to capture Felix. The boys realise that Oscar represents the fifth element – spirit. Having unlocked the mystery, they repair the talisman and defeat the demon.

In a final confrontation, just as the boys are returned to their world, the demon is revealed to be Phoebe's sister, Alice. But something has changed. Each of the boys now possesses power over their respective elements and Alice has followed them home ...

In addition to the television series, *Nowhere Boys* has a truly unique online game hosted on the ABC3 website. This interactive online game unfolds as each of the six worlds (Earth, Air, Water, Fire, Spirit, and Darkness) are unlocked at key stages during the TV broadcast schedule. The user will take on the persona of a fifth boy who is lost between dimensions as he journeys through Negative Space, battles demonic forces, and gains elemental powers to help the Nowhere Boys return home. The online narrative runs parallel to the TV series until both stories converge, revealing a dramatic twist. This innovative, groundbreaking experience will give users an extra perspective on the TV series as it screens.

Each episode has a running time of 26 minutes

Stills from *The 5th Boy* online game





JAKE

THE REAL WORLD > Popular, athletic, and confident, Jake is a perennial winner who is capable of playing schoolyard bully, especially to Felix. However, his home life is far from perfect. His single mother struggles financially, working two jobs to pay the bills with little help from his father, who cannot manage his own life. Jake and his mother are very close and Jake is accustomed to taking responsibility.

NEW REALITY > Jake wonders if the world is better without him. His mother is now a Lexus-driving, successful real estate agent, and is married to Jake's science teacher, Mr Bates. Jake's father, now a police sergeant, has gone from loser to pillar of the community. Used to surviving on his own, Jake becomes the nowhere boys' 'den mother' and forges a genuine friendship with Andy.

SAM

THE REAL WORLD > Sam is the golden boy, effortlessly cool and naturally gifted. Everything comes easily to Sam and he takes everything he has for granted. His family is the epitome of happiness. His parents are supportive and understanding, and he gets along with his brothers. Even Sam's girlfriend Mia is perfect.

NEW REALITY > For the first time, Sam has to fight for something. Well, everything actually. Sam's place in his family has been taken by Sammy, whom Sam finds obnoxious. Sammy is even dating Mia. Sam focuses on trying to win back Mia. This time around he is attentive and interested. Sam's brothers are protective of Sammy and do not make life in this new reality easy for him. Of all the boys, Sam wants his old life back the most.

FELIX

THE REAL WORLD > Fifteen-year-old Felix is intelligent, sarcastic and inclined to cynicism. Very much a loner, with limited social skills, he has only one friend – Ellen, a fellow Goth. Felix has a brother – twelve-year-old Oscar – who broke his neck while the pair were playing and is now in a wheelchair. The family has collapsed under the strain of Oscar's disability and, although they are close, Felix feels responsible for Oscar's accident. He has developed an interest in witchcraft and hopes one day to use magic to help his brother walk again.

NEW REALITY > When Felix cast the spell that dumped the boys in a parallel world, he was not aware there would be consequences. The spell was cast to heal Oscar, which it did, but Felix did not expect it to erase his existence. Felix befriends Oscar, protecting him from schoolyard bullies, and his mother is nicer to him in this reality. He regains the family he lost after Oscar's accident and, demon aside, he is much happier. Felix's magic skills – aided by a talisman given to him by 'new-ager' Phoebe – grow stronger and help protect the 'nowhere boys'.

ANDY

THE REAL WORLD > A geek and unflinchingly logical, fifteen-year-old Andy's mind and imagination are second to none. While Andy has an extensive knowledge of facts, theories and Bear Grylls' survival skills, he has zero practical experience. The only boy in a Singaporean-Chinese family, Andy has been mothered three times – by his grandmother, mother, and older sister. He would do anything for some freedom.

NEW REALITY > In the new reality, Andy enjoys his first taste of freedom. Andy can now be the man of action he has always wanted to be – he becomes more outgoing and self-reliant. He even finds himself with a girlfriend for the first time – Ellen, Felix's friend from the real world. As a man of science, Andy is initially sceptical about Felix's 'magic', but he eventually accepts it and studies it with zeal. He hopes to combine science and magic to find a way home.



Episode 1

'We're officially nowhere'

– Sam

boy Sam – for whom nothing ever goes wrong – doesn't see the seriousness in their predicament.

SYNOPSIS

Four Year 10 students – Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam – are forced to buddy up for an orienteering exercise in the rugged Bremin Ranges, on the outskirts of their hometown, Bremin.

The boys are from very different friendship groups and do not really get along, so when they are expected to collaborate they are not happy. Halfway through the orienteering course, they decide to take a shortcut that very quickly gets them lost.

Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam must put aside their differences and work out how best to survive the night. As a freak lightning storm takes hold, the boys' fertile imaginations run amok. But there is really something out there. A ferocious, snarling thing stalks the boys from the undergrowth.

For Andy, a diehard nerd stifled by his family's over-protectiveness, getting lost is an opportunity to prove himself as a man of action and follow in the footsteps of his hero, Bear Grylls. Being an outsider is nothing new to Goth Felix, who is more than willing to embrace the weirdness of the situation. Alpha jock Jake uses a bullying demeanour to cover his vulnerability, while golden

The boys finally manage to make it out of the forest – alive and triumphant – with help from eccentric bushman Roland. Upon their return to Bremin, the boys discover that no one seems fazed by their disappearance. Where are their anxiously waiting families? Where are the TV crews? Something has changed. Felix is shocked and delighted to discover that his younger brother, Oscar, is no longer wheelchair-bound, but Oscar doesn't seem to know who Felix is. The others also return to their homes and families to find that things are not as they were.

Has something happened to Bremin while the boys were lost in the forest? Or has something happened to the boys?





*Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete Worksheet 1: Episode summary.

Before you begin discussing Episode 1, create a *Nowhere Boys* blog. Use this space to record your responses to the following questions and activities. You will be required to update your blog episode-by-episode. When you have finished watching the series, your blog will be submitted and assessed.



1 Watch the title sequence. Explain how the title sequence establishes the plot, characters and genre of *Nowhere Boys*. Your response should refer to the way the title sequence uses images, sound and typography.

2 The opening sequence of *Nowhere Boys* is set in the Bremin National Park. Sam is attempting to abate his hunger pains by eating pawpaw-flavoured crotch ointment. Andy enlightens him.



Felix and Jake wake to the rumbling of a gathering storm and the boys decide to make a move. Suddenly the boys find themselves running away from a ferocious twister.

- Why do you think the series begins in this way?

3 A protagonist is the main character of a narrative. The events of the plot revolve around the protagonist. The audience is meant to identify with the protagonist. The protagonists of *Nowhere Boys* are Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam.

- Discuss how the filmmakers communicate important information about the boys to the audience. Make sure that you spend time discussing the boys' physical appearance, costume, mannerisms, dialogue and actions. You should also consider how setting is used to establish the four protagonists.

- Do Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam have anything in common?

- A sociogram is a visual representation of the relationships of a group of people. Draw and annotate a sociogram that describes and explains the relationships between Andy,



Felix, Jake and Sam, as well as each boy's relationship with family and friends.

4 *Water, fire, earth and air.
Water, fire, earth and air.
Water, fire, earth and air.
Water, fire, earth and air.
Elements that we all share.
Walk upon this earth again.
Walk upon this earth again.*

Felix shares his new song with Oscar and Ellen, clearly pleased with his musicianship. Later on, he plays the song for Jake, Sam and Andy, hoping to lift their spirits. They fail to find it cheerful.

- Do you like Felix's song? Are the lyrics significant?

5 'Bear Grylls' mum would have let him go.'
'Bear Grylls would find a river.'

'Bear Grylls' mum would have let him go.'

'Bear Grylls drinks liquid squeezed from a camel's stomach.'
– Andy

Who is Bear Grylls? Can you explain Andy's fascination?

6 'She freaks me out.'
– Sam

- As the students listen to Mr Bates read their names and explain the orienteering course, a woman watches the Year 10 Science class from a distance. Later she is seen tracking





the movements of Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam through Bremin National Park.

- Who do you think she is?

7 Who is Roland? Why do you think he is living in Bremin National Park?

‘Oh, not much of a reception. Where’s the cameras and the newspapers?’



- Drawing on the scenes in which Roland appears, compile a character profile of Roland.

8 ‘Oh, not much of a reception. Where’s the cameras and the newspapers? Does our disappearance and miraculous reappearance seem like a bit of a non-event to you?’ – Sam

- What changes do the boys discover on their return to Bremin?

9 The words in the table below are part of the dialogue of Episode 1. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10 What will happen next? Finish your Episode 1 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 2.

WORD	MEANING
element	
insightful	
literally	
orienteer	
brawn	
proliferate	
metabolism	
sashimi	
scavenge	
superstition	



Episode 2

'Something's wrong, isn't it?'

– Andy

two-shoes older sister, Viv, is now a rock chick who has desecrated Andy's bedroom with girly paraphernalia.

SYNOPSIS

After their heroic survival, Andy, Jake and Sam return to their Bremin lives, but are shocked that their families and friends no longer recognise them or miss them.

Andy's scientific senses are in overdrive as he forms a hypothesis that their loved ones have experienced a collective amnesia as a result of the trauma of the boys going missing.

But Andy's high-concept theory isn't able to explain other strange goings-on. His goody

Once the wonder-child and most popular boy at school, Sam has to come to terms with his relative invisibility. His family and parents don't know him and his school friends have forgotten all about him.

Despite Felix's initial delight that his younger brother is no longer confined to a wheelchair, he must come to terms with being a true outsider when his best friend, Ellen – who has now apparently de-Gothed herself – pays him out as a freak.

But it is Jake who is hit the hardest. Before he got lost, he was the man of the house for single mother Sarah, who worked dead-end jobs to support the two of them without any help from Jake's good-for-nothing dad, Gary. Sarah is now a successful real estate agent married to Jake's science teacher, Mr Bates.

The bewildered boys have no choice but to work together to get to the bottom of their terrifying new predicament.

*Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete Worksheet 1: Episode summary.





1 Describe each boy's altered reality.

2 Use the descriptions of each boy's altered reality to complete the following collaborative task.

- Your task is to present tableaux – frozen images – of the families that are portrayed in *Nowhere Boys*. You will be expected to provide both a 'before' and 'after' tableau that shows the relationships between the members of each family. You will need to make decisions about how the family will be assembled; their facial expressions, stance and body language towards other family members. You may use a prop or a piece of costume to depict each family member. You will be expected to explain the decisions that have informed the tableaux and other students in the class may ask questions about your tableaux. The two tableaux will be photographed.

Andy's family: Nai Nai, Michael, Lily, Viv and Andy

Felix's family: Ken, Kathy, Felix and Oscar

Jake's family: Sarah, Gary, Jake and Mr Bates

Sam's family: Tom, Dee, Vince, Pete, Sam and Sammy

3 The boys live in a small town called Bremin, on the outskirts of a large city. The sign that welcomes visitors to Bremin reads: 'Welcome to BREMIN. POPULATION SMALL. WE LOVE THEM ALL.'



'We can't just separate. We just had a classic male bonding experience. Brief man hug?'



- The aim of this activity is to identify and reflect on the geographic setting of *Nowhere Boys* and the characters' connection to places. Make a list of all of the places that are featured in Episodes 1 and 2. Use this list to draw a map of Bremin. Add places to the map as you watch subsequent episodes of *Nowhere Boys*.
- Based on what you have seen so far, what type of town is Bremin?

4 At the end of Episode 1, Andy tells the other boys, 'We can't just separate. We just had a classic male bonding experience. Brief man hug?' Felix is ambivalent about such a gesture. Sam is content to say, 'See ya'. Jake refuses to admit that anything has changed. As far as he is concerned, Andy and Felix do not exist.

- Why do the boys reunite in this episode? Are they any more accepting of each other than before?



WORD	MEANING
biomechanical	
sanctum	
delusional	
probability	
theory	
hysteria	
collective	
amnesia	
circuit	
misfit	

5 Flashbacks in this episode narrate what happens when Andy, Felix, Jake and Sam go home. In Episode 1, flashback is used to narrate the events that precede the opening sequence of the series.

- Describe the way flashback is used in this episode and the previous as a storytelling device.

6 'Everyone who knows us has forgotten us.'

- Andy

'Well someone has to remember us.'

- Sam

'I'm no one'

- Jake

Andy's initial theory is that their families are so traumatised by their disappearance that they have experienced mass delusion hysteria. It would appear that everyone in Bremin is suffering from some form of collective amnesia given that Telly, Phil and Mr Bates do not recognise Jake and Ellen doesn't recognise any of the boys. Delusion hysteria and collective amnesia do not explain why Viv has turned rock chick, Mr Bates has married Sarah, Gary is no longer a no-hoper, Oscar can walk, Ellen has given up being a Goth and Sam has been replaced by Sammy.

- What's your theory?

7 At the end of Episode 2, Sam leads the boys to an old shack on the edge of town. It is somewhere for them to shelter and hide out while they work out why they have become anonymous.

- Are the boys safe?
- In your response, comment on the way the filmmakers use camera shots and angles, lighting and sound in the final scene to shape audience response.

8 The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 2. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

9 What will happen next? Finish your Episode 2 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 3.

'Well someone has to remember us.'





Episode 3

'We really don't exist. There's no trace of us here.' – Andy

SYNOPSIS

The boys' survival instincts kick into gear as they scavenge for food and set up a home in the derelict shack. What proves more difficult is coming to terms with their loss of identity. It's one thing to be forgotten, but it's starting to look like they never existed.

Andy, Felix and Jake break into Bremin High searching for proof of themselves in the school records. All they find is the dismaying confirmation that no evidence exists of them ever being

students there. Then the upside dawns: non-existence means absolute freedom. To celebrate this realisation, the boys run riot in the gym, unaware of a security camera filming their destructive fun.

Meanwhile, Sam finds a romantic carving made by himself and his girlfriend, Mia, only a month before. Buoyed by what he considers to be tangible proof that he exists, Sam searches for Mia to confirm his identity. His hopes are crushed when Mia doesn't recognise him. Nevertheless, the presence of the carving gives the other boys hope that there is still some semblance of them in the world. Perhaps the effects of their 'erasure', if that's what it is, can be reversed? Jake convinces Sam to show Mia the proof in the hope that it will jog her memory.



Sam returns to Mia and shows her a photograph of the carving. When Mia reveals that she made it with her boyfriend, Sammy, Sam is stunned to find himself facing off against a smarmy younger version of himself. A desperate Sam confronts his mother, Dee, but like everyone else, she still doesn't recognise Sam at all and, worse still, suffers a violent physical reaction to him. Gutted, Sam returns to their hideout to join his new, mismatched family.



If these setbacks aren't enough, the 'thing' that stalked the boys in the forest makes a scary return.

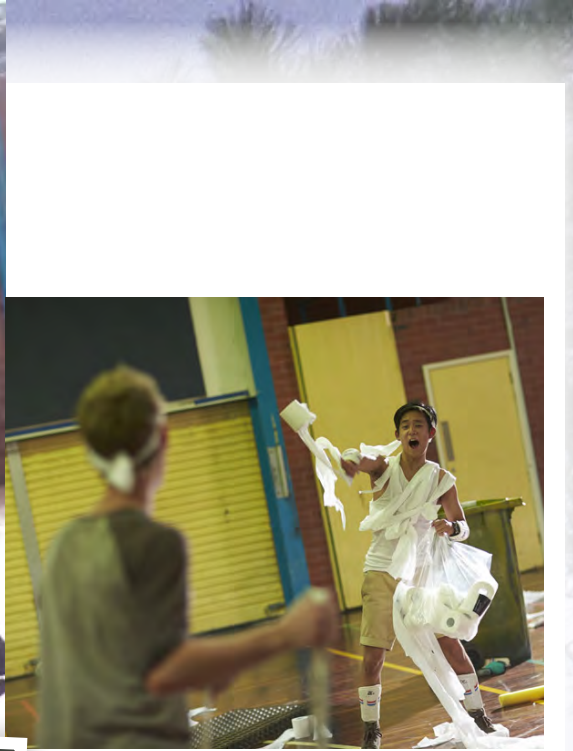
* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1 Sam: You really don't know who I am?
Mia: I've never seen you before.

Sam didn't seem to care about the wristband that Mia gave him as a one-year anniversary gift in Episode 1 but now it is proof that he exists.

- Why is the carving important not only to Sam but to all the boys?
- Mia can explain the carving but she can't work out why Sam is wearing a wristband identical to the one she made for Sammy. Dee is similarly confused by Sam's knowledge of details that a stranger could not know about her and her family.
- What sense do Mia and Dee make of Sam's claims?
- How does Sam react when he discovers that Sammy has replaced him?





- How would you feel if you were in Sam's situation?
- Like Sam, are you the 'baby' of the family? Are you the eldest or the middle child? What contribution do you make to your family? Why would they be lost without you?
- Write a personal response about your place in your family.

2 Felix: It's a lot more than people just forgetting us. It's like we don't even exist.
Andy: Irrational. We exist.

- Desperate to prove that they exist, the decision is made to break into Bremin High and find the evidence that will convince their families and friends that they are who they say they are.
- Is the mission a success?
- Make a list of times when you have to prove

'If we don't exist, how can we get caught?'

who you are? How do you prove who you are?

3 'Maybe someone's deliberately tried to erase our existences. Like identity theft.' – Andy

- What is identity theft? Is Andy's explanation logical?

4 Jake: If we don't exist, how can we get caught?
Felix: So then, if we don't exist, we don't have to follow any boring rules.
Felix: Go nuts, Sam. It will make you feel better.

When Jake, Andy and Felix's visit to the school to find evidence of their existence proves a waste of time they trash the gym.

- Is the boys' behaviour vandalism or is it an expression of their frustration at being forgotten?
- Working with a partner, describe and explain the use of production values in this scene.

5 Sam's presence makes Dee ill. In Episode 2,





Sarah and Kathy also felt ill when their sons were in close proximity.

- Can you explain this phenomenon?

6 Make a list of evidence from Episode 3 that proves that the boys are resourceful.

7 Sam: We'll work this out. I know it.

Felix: How do you solve a problem that you can't even understand?

- What have the boys worked out so far?
- Revisit the theory that you formulated after watching Episode 2. What's your theory now?

8 Felix: Something's out there! Something's coming! I think it's some kind of evil spirit!

- Who or what is watching the boys?

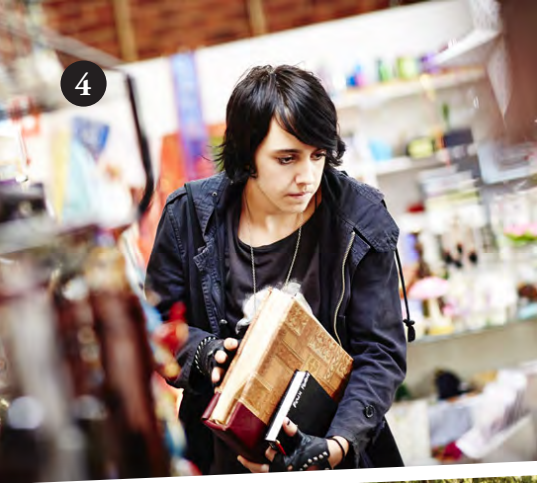


'Something's
out there!
Something's
coming! I
think it's
some kind
of evil spirit!

9 The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 3. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10 What will happen next? Finish your Episode 3 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 4.

WORD	MEANING
therapy	
bacteria	
distinct	
aroma	
inedible	
irrational	
amateur	
behold	
ultimate	
presumably	



Episode 4

'Not everything in this world has an easy explanation.' – Felix

SYNOPSIS

Huddled inside the hideout, the boys find themselves held captive by a freak storm. It is a terrifying night.

When the boys emerge the next morning, they discover strange configurations of debris scattered around their hideout. Andy's search for a scientific

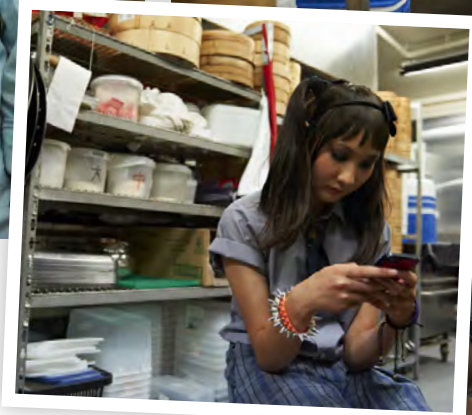
explanation and Felix's belief that magic is at play causes conflict and the group part ways: Andy and Jake head to Lily Lau's restaurant to obtain bait to trap the panther which Andy believes has caused the markings; Felix and Sam head to Arcane Lane in search of more mystical answers.

Using Sam to distract Phoebe, Arcane Lane's mysterious proprietor, Felix discovers an old tome that identifies the hideout configurations as a demonic centrifuge. Disturbed, he buys an amulet for protection – but will it work?

Andy's ninja aspirations fall flat when he is sprung and entrapped by his hostile family while trying to pilfer the bait. Despite his best efforts, Andy fails to convince his father, that he really is his son from another dimension, brought here via a wormhole. His Grandma Lily declares Andy to be the ghost of her unborn grandson. Jake helps Andy make a hasty escape before the police are called.

Andy desperately continues to search for other possible answers, only to convince himself that he and the other boys are actually in a state of unconsciousness. Driven to test his new theory, Andy sets out in search of a stimulus powerful enough to jolt them all back into a state of consciousness. Andy decides to throw himself in front of the local





school bus in an effort to “wake up”. The other boys race to stop him in time.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1 In the opening flashback scene, Andy is making dumplings for the Hungry Ghost Festival. Andy does not believe in ghosts but Lily, Andy’s nai-nai is superstitious.

- What is the significance of this flashback?

2 The action cuts to the altered reality. The boys huddle inside the hideout as a storm wreaks havoc outside.

- What words best describe the boys’ mood as they wait for the storm to pass?

The next morning, the boys disagree about what happened the night before. Felix thinks that there



‘Wormholes. Quantum mechanics. Matter can slip between space and time.’

are forces at play that are beyond their understanding. Jake jokes it was a zombie apocalypse but like Sam and Andy, he thinks that the storm was just a storm.

- Draw what the boys discover when they go outside.
- Is there a logical explanation for the configuration of debris that surrounds the hideout?

The boys unable to agree go their separate ways. Andy and Jake are going to set a trap to catch the panther or the possum that is stalking them. They head to the restaurant to find some bait. Felix and Sam visit Arcane Lane in search of a more mystical explanation of what is out to get them.

- Are Andy and Jake successful?
- How do Felix and Sam fare?

3 Andy: Wormholes. Quantum mechanics. Matter can slip between space and time. It’s just that in this case, we’re the matter, slipping between infinite variations of the same reality. That’s the answer.

Jake: Yeah, you lost me at wormholes.

- Like Jake, did you also get lost at wormholes?
- What are wormholes?
- Do they really exist?
- Create an annotated diagram of a wormhole and how it works that even Jake would understand.

WORD	MEANING
apocalypse	
digestive	
retention	
percentile	
arcane	
controversial	
delusional	
scoundrel	
amulet	
lucid	



This reality's horrible.

7 Andy: This reality's horrible.

- Why does Andy think this reality is 'horrible'? Do you think Andy felt this way in Episode 2 and 3?

8 Why do you think rational Andy resorts to the irrational solution of throwing himself in front of a bus?

9 The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 4. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10 What will happen next? Finish your Episode 4 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 5.

4 Phoebe doesn't recognise Felix and Sam.

- Describe Phoebe.
- Is she suspicious of the boys?
- Are you suspicious of Phoebe?

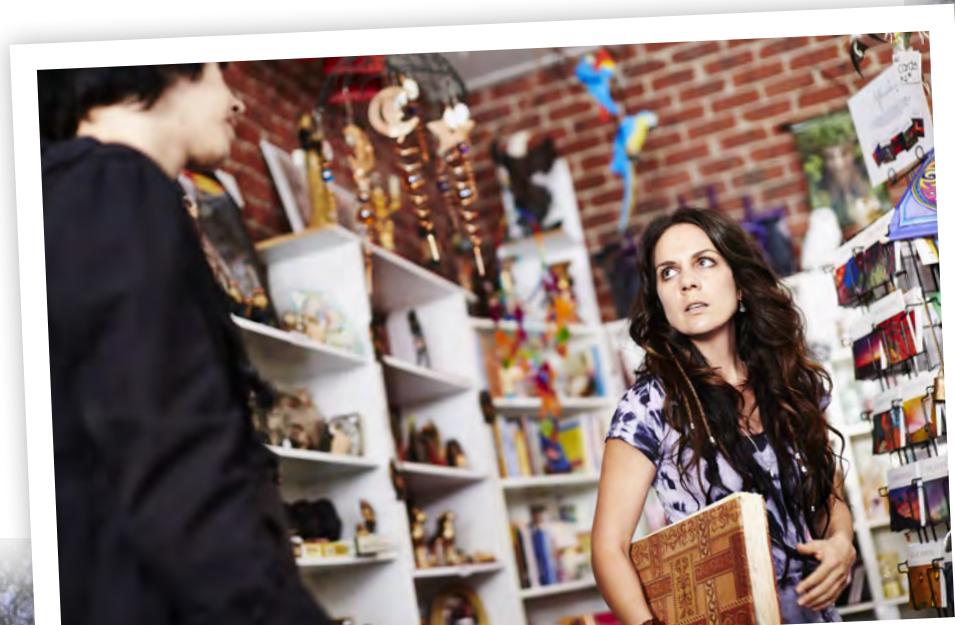
5 'Stick to the path. Or suffer what comes.'

'Rise above any random insults'. – fortune cookies

- Explain the use of the fortune cookies to comment on the boys' predicament.

6 Jake and Andy return to the forest without the bait but with rope and cans. Andy builds an early alarm system, while Jake looks on. Felix and Sam have also returned. Sam is moping about and Felix is outside doing what looks like jazz ballet.

- Why does Andy lose his temper?
- What is Felix doing?





Episode 5

'Earth, fire, water and air are the building blocks of everything that we know and for some reason they appear hell bent on ruining your day.'
 – Phoebe

Felix goes to hang out with his brother Oscar, only for them both to be attacked by a swarm of malevolent bees. Escaping to the relative safety of Arcane Lane, Felix searches for a spell to combat the swarm but his ability to interpret magic only makes Phoebe more suspicious of him.

Andy, Jake and Sam head into Bremin. They need food and so Sam tries his luck at skate busking. A jealous Sammy, dares Sam to prove just how talented he is. Sam does just that but his triumph is short-lived when Sergeant Gary Riles confiscates his beloved skateboard. Skateboarding on the foot-path is not permitted in Bremin.

Jake is shocked to realise that Sergeant Riles is actually the new world incarnation of his formerly deadbeat dad. He is forced to face the fact that both of his parents seem better off in this world where he doesn't exist, especially after Andy makes an insensitive comment saying as much. Interpersonal dealings aren't exactly Andy's strong suit and this is particularly evident when he finds himself struggling to comprehend the attention of a secret admirer.



Felix's first spell fails to stop the swarm, but his second attempt proves successful. Gathering traces of the elements that the other boys unwittingly possess and combining these with the power of the talisman that Phoebe has gifted to him, Felix's spell defeats the attacking bees. While the other boys remain none the wiser about Felix's actions, his magic wins the admiration and friendship of Oscar.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. Episode 5 begins with a flashback sequence that explains why Felix's brother Oscar is in a wheelchair.

- Does Felix blame himself for Oscar's accident?
- Do Felix's parents blame him for the accident?

Oscar is confused by Felix's sudden interest in him.

- What moments in this episode reveal that Felix wants to rebuild his relationship with his brother?

2. Why do Jake and Sam call Felix a freak?

- Why do Trent and Dylan call Oscar a freak?
- Is it dangerous to be different?



3. Andy: This is a terrible idea. We should be laying low.

Sam: No, no, no. We impress a few people, elevate our social status and then it's good-bye scavenging.

- Why is Andy worried about the boys hanging out in town?
- Is Sam's skate busking a success?



4. Jake's mother is a successful real estate agent. Jake's father is a diligent police officer.

- What does Jake think about his parents' new lives?

5. 'This is the second strangest thing that's ever happened to me.' – Andy

- If Andy is so intelligent, why does the love letter confuse him?

6. 'Things like this keep happening. Weird weather. Creepy things that go bang in the night. Now crazy bees.' – Felix

'No, no, no. We impress a few people, elevate our social status and then it's goodbye scavenging.'



A swarm of bees descend on the Ferne house. When the crystals that Felix has bought at Arcane Lane fail, Felix and Oscar attempt to defend themselves with insect spray. Later they don cardboard boxes to travel the short but dangerous distance from Arcane Lane to Phoebe's VW van.

- If you were in Felix and Oscar's situation what would you do?
- Given the crystals didn't help, why does Felix head to Arcane Lane?

Phoebe believes the strange happenings are 'elemental attacks'.

- Write a definition of an elemental attack.
- Why does Phoebe agree to help Felix?

7. 'Divinity of the elements. Earth. Water. Air. Fire. I invoke thee.'

Felix realises that the spell alone not will activate the elemental talisman. All four nowhere boys are crucial to the spell's success.

The ancient Greeks believed that there were four elements that everything was made of: earth, water, air, and fire. Modern science teaches that there are four states of matter: solid, liquid, gas and plasma. Astrology also relies on the four elements. Each of the four elements is associated with three signs of the zodiac. The elements are also used to describe personality types.

Each nowhere boy represents an element. Match the boys with the elements and then explain each match.

BOY	ELEMENT	EXPLANATION
ANDY		
FELIX		
JAKE		
SAM		



- Andy says nothing but what is he thinking?

9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 5. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 5 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 6.

WORD	MEANING
snooze	
telepathy	
scam	
elemental	
talisman	
divinity	
cretin	
organic	
superficial	
invoke	



Episode 6

'Out of every obstacle comes opportunity.' –
Sergeant Riles

SYNOPSIS

The boys salvage junk for their makeshift abode as the demonic force regains its strength – this time as a murder of crows. True to form, Sam doesn't pull his weight; preferring to stuff his face with food bought with money that should have been shared between all of them.

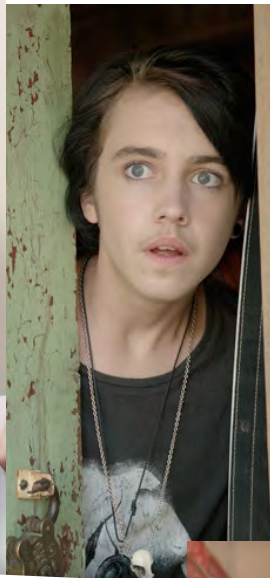
Jake and Andy decide to go shopping or rather shop lifting at the local milk bar. Jake seems to know what he is doing but Andy is criminally inept. The arrival of a love-struck Ellen only makes Andy even more awkward. When Sergeant Riles arrives, a chase ensues. Jake selflessly sacrifices himself to help Andy escape.

At the police station, Sergeant Riles questions Jake over his background. Tension builds as Jake is confronted with this respectable alternative to his real-world dad. Getting nowhere with Jake despite his desire to do the right thing, Sergeant Riles has no option but to call child welfare.

While Andy has escaped the law, eluding a murder of demonic crows proves more challenging. Reuniting with Sam, they head to the hideout. The boys are under siege but without Jake to complete the elemental foursome, Felix is powerless to act.

Back at the police station, Gary identifies his first suspect in his hunt for the bandits behind the school break-in, when the security footage reveals Andy. Phoebe, who has been following Felix, hears of Jake's predicament and offers to help. Still under attack by crows, they head for the police station





to try and get Jake back. To everyone's surprise, Phoebe claims that the boys are cousins and she is their aunt.

Sergeant Gary replays the security tape to Phoebe and the boys to prove he has caught his culprits. Science and magic combine to save the boys as Andy uses a magnet he salvaged earlier to erase the tape and Felix works his magic with the talisman. Gary is incredulous but without evidence he has no choice but to release the boys into the care of 'Aunt Phoebe'.

Jake is impressed with Andy's efforts to save him and back at the hideout, the boys are a picture of camaraderie; their rudimentary shelter is finally becoming a home.

* Teachers may choose to provide students with the episode synopsis or ask students to complete **Worksheet 1: Episode summary**

1. Andy: Better to reuse what we've already got.



'Yeah, well in the old world I had a mum, a dad, comfortable bed, access to a fridge full of food.'

It's a philosophy called Freeganism.

It is hard rubbish collection day in Bremin. The boys scavenge objects that their neighbours have discarded to make their hideout a home.

- Trash or treasure? Which member of your family likes hard rubbish collection day? What is the most interesting object that they have ever brought home?
- What is freeganism? Visit <http://freegan.info/> to learn more.
- What are the advantages of freeganism?
- Design an A4 magazine advertisement to persuade people to try freeganism.

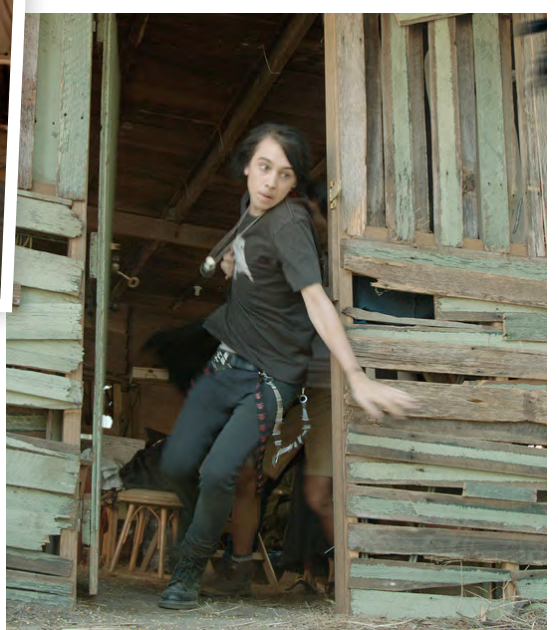
2. Sam spends the money he made skate busking on food that he does not share.

- Is Sam selfish?
- Does Sam regret his actions?

3. 'Yeah, well in the old world I had a mum, a dad, comfortable bed, access to a fridge full of food.'
- Jake

- The boys are missing the comforts of home.





- What are the comforts of your home? People aside, what would you miss?

4. Jake and Andy attempt to shoplift food. Jake steals some bacon. Andy helps himself to free popcorn samples.

Shoplifting is a criminal offence.

- Given the boys' predicament, can their actions be excused?
- Why do you think Sergeant Riles decides not to charge Jake and Andy even though he has enough evidence to do so?

5. Describe Jake's relationship with his father



'Why are you following me? Do you know how creepy that is'

prior to their encounter in this episode. Use evidence from previous episodes to prove your claims.

- What words best describe the relationship between Sergeant Riles and Jake? Match each word with evidence from Episode 6.
- What do Jake's father and Sergeant Riles have in common?

6. 'Why are you following me? Do you know how creepy that is?' – Felix

- Phoebe has been following the boys since Episode 1, not that she remembers.
- Is Phoebe creepy? Yes or No? When you have settled on an answer, find evidence to prove your stance.

7. 'You saved me so the least I could do is save you.' – Andy



- Why does Jake thank Andy for destroying the video footage?
- Shouldn't he be thanking Felix?
- Shouldn't they all be thanking Felix for warding off the kamikaze crows?

8. Write an analysis of the production values in the closing sequence of Episode 6. Your analysis should comment on the portrayal of: the boys' camaraderie; the comforts of their new home; and the dangers of the altered reality.



9. The following words are part of the dialogue of Episode 6. Write a definition of each word in the space provided. There is room for you to add other words to the grid.

10. What will happen next? Finish your Episode 6 blog entries by predicting what you think will happen in Episode 7.

WORD	MEANING
discarded	
philosophy	
relevant	
dire	
discount	
antiestablishment	
goth	
kamikaze	
contravene	
fantastical	

Worksheet 1 - Episode Summary

KEY SCENES	CHARACTERS	SETTINGS	THEMES
Make a list of key scenes. Write a brief synopsis for each key scene that you have listed.	Name the characters that appear in each key scene.	Identify the settings and write a brief description of the setting for each key scene.	Use a word to identify the most important theme of each key scene.

Genre

Genre is a term used to describe the style or category of a text. Each genre has its own conventions. Some texts can be easily labelled as belonging to one genre. Other texts fit into multiple genres.

RESPOND

Discuss your answers to the following questions as a class.

- Do you like stories like *Nowhere Boys*?
- *Nowhere Boys* is screening on ABC3. It can be labelled as a children’s television series. Do you think that *Nowhere Boys* is only for kids? Does the program have broader appeal?
The TV series *Nowhere Boys* is accompanied by an online game, with a narrative that runs parallel to the TV series. Do you think the TV audience will be interested in the online dimension and the story that unfolds there?

EXAMINE

Write your answers to the following questions in the space provided.

- ‘*Nowhere Boys* is an adventure for the audience as much as it is for the four protagonists.’ Do you agree?

- *Nowhere Boys* draws on several genres. What other words best describe the genre of *Nowhere Boys*? For each word that you offer, provide direct and indirect evidence from the series.

- Despite the seriousness of the boys’ predicaments, their story is told with humour. Identify examples of the humorous scenes and dialogue.
What function does humour serve in *Nowhere Boys*?

CREATE

- Working with a partner, storyboard and write the script of a scene to add to any episode of *Nowhere Boys*. Your scene should reflect one or more of the genres that you have indicated. Before you begin, research the genre that you have selected. What are the conventions of the genre? How will your scene make use of these conventions?



Adolescent identity

Themes are the subject of a story. A story may have several themes. A key theme of *Nowhere Boys* is adolescent identity.

The four teenage boys express their adolescent identity in very different ways. Some are more certain of who they are than others. Some find it easy to conform to norms and expectations, while others question and challenge the views and values of their family and peers. Some 'fit in' in Bremin but find themselves outsiders in the altered reality that they return to after the school excursion. The reverse is also the case, with some of the boys finding themselves no longer excluded but accepted in the new Bremin.

RESPOND

Andy is a geek. Felix is a Goth. Jake is a jock. Sam is the most popular boy in school. Are the boys individuals or are they just stereotypes?

EXAMINE

Finish the following sentence.

An adolescent is

What five words best describe **ANDY's** adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **FELIX's** adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.



What five words best describe **JAKE's** adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **SAM's** adolescent identity? Use direct and indirect evidence from *Nowhere Boys* to endorse your choices.

What five words best describe **YOUR** identity? Use experiences from your life to endorse your choices.

CREATE

'Feeling lost is a normal part of adolescence.'

Write a personal or imaginative narrative that explores this prompt.

Aim to write 250–350 words.

KEY CREATIVES

TONY AYRES | SERIES CREATOR, PRODUCER

AND SHOWRUNNER > Tony Ayres is an award-winning showrunner, writer and director. He is also one of the founding members of Matchbox Pictures. Ayres' scripted television credits include *Bogan Pride*, *Saved*, *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (Robert Connolly, 2012) and *The Slap*. His feature films include *Walking on Water* (2002), *The Home Song Stories* (2007) and *Cut Snake* (2014). *Nowhere Boys* is Ayres' first production for children's television.

BETH FREY | PRODUCER > Beth Frey is a multi-award-winning film, television and cross-platform producer. Her film and television credits include *Next Stop Hollywood*, *Dr Sarmast's Music School* (Polly Watkins, 2012), *Rollerboy* (Jayson Sutcliffe & Polly Watkins, 2011), *You Exposed*, *Once Bitten*, *The ABC of Dance For Film*, *Embedded With The Murri Mob* (Sophie Meyrick & Sarah-Jane Woulahan, 2008), *Stranded* (Stuart McDonald, 2006), *Vietnam Nurses* (Polly Watkins, 2005), *The Long Lunch* (Antony Redman, 2003) and *A Telephone Call For Genevieve Snow* (Peter Long, 2001).

DAINA REID | DIRECTOR > Daina Reid directs for both film and television. Her credits include *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo* and *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War*. Reid directed four episodes of *Nowhere Boy*.

CRAIG IRVIN | DIRECTOR AND WRITER > Craig Irvin's directing credits include *Best and Fairest* (2010) and *Tethered*. As well as writing and directing three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*, Irvin completed extensive research for the production.

PETER CARSTAIRS | DIRECTOR > Peter Carstairs' credits as a director include short films *Gate* (2000), *Afterwards* and *Little Blue* (2002), as well as the feature film *September* (2007). Carstairs directed three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*.

ALISTER GRIERSON | DIRECTOR > Well known for directing the feature films *Kokoda: 39th Battalion* (2006) and *Sanctum* (2011), Alister Grierson directed three episodes of *Nowhere Boys*.

NOWHERE BOYS

CREDITS

CREATED by **Tony Ayres**
PRODUCED by **Tony Ayres, Beth Frey**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Michael McMahon, Helen Panckhurst**
DIRECTORS **Daina Reid** (Episodes 1-4), **Peter Carstairs** (Episodes 5-7), **Craig Irvin** (Episodes 8-10), **Alister Grierson** (Episodes 11-13)
WRITERS **Roger Monk** (Episodes 1, 9, 12, 13), **Rhys Graham** (Episodes 2, 4), **Craig Irvin** (Episodes 3, 5, 10), **Elise McCredie** (Episode 6), **Polly Staniford** (Episode 7), **Shanti Gudgeon** (Episodes 8, 11)
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **Simon Chapman**
ACS
PRODUCTION DESIGN **Jo Briscoe**
COSTUME DESIGN **Louise McCarthy**
CASTING **Jane Norris, Mullinars Melbourne**
EDITORS **Mark Atkin**
ACS (Episodes 1-4, 10-13), **Jane Usher** (Episodes 5-7, 8-9)
ORIGINAL MUSIC by **Cornel Wilzcek**
LINE PRODUCER **Brendan Campbell**

CAST

Felix **Dougie Baldwin**
Andy **Joel Lok**
Jake **Matthew Testro**
Sam
Rahart Sadquizai
Oscar **Sean Rees-Wemyss**
Phoebe **Michala Banas**
Ellen **Darci McDonald**
Mia **Tamala Shelton**
Alice **Victoria Thaine**
Kath **Heidi Arena**
Ken **Ben Anderson**
Michael **Anthony Brandon Wong**
Nicole **Pearl Tan**
Lily **Cecilia Tan**
Viv **Michelle Gerster**
Gary **Damien Richardson**
Sarah **Libby Tanner**
Tom **Peter Stefanou**
Dee **Nicole Nabout**
Mr Bates
Nicholas Coghlan
Roland **Jim Russell**
Sammy
Jesse Williams
Peter **Lester Ellis**
Vince
Daniel Di Giovanni
Mike **Sam Sharwood**
Trent **Logan Phillips**
Dylan **Zelman Cressey-Gladwin**
Bus Driver
Roy Edmunds
Delivery Driver
Terry Carter
Personal trainer **Darren Cox**
Rocco **Jerry Barolli**
Paramedic
David Cormick
Janet **Elise McCredie**
Suzie **Tayla Duyal**
Dr Grant **Shash Lal**
Raquel **Stella Silagy**



MATCHBOX PICTURES

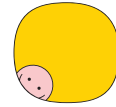
Formed in 2008 by Tony Ayres, Penny Chapman, Helen Bowden, Michael McMahon and Helen Panckhurst, Matchbox is one of Australia's most dynamic production houses. In May 2011, NBCUniversal took a majority stake in Matchbox Pictures and this has allowed the company to diversify its content. Matchbox produce television drama, children's programming, factual and entertainment content, animation and feature films for the domestic and international marketplace.

<http://www.matchboxpictures.com>

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AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION FOUNDATION



AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA

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