

Take Heart

The Quest To Rid Australasia of Rheumatic Heart Disease

Winner, 9 Awards at the 2016 Global Independent Film Awards including Gold Medal, Best Featurette, Silver Medal, Best Documentary

Release date: Thursday 10 March, 2016



World Premiere, Melbourne • Thursday 10 March, 7pm • ACMI Cinemas, Melbourne
Liddywoo Mardi, Dr Bo Remenyi and Director Mike Hill in attendance
Darwin Premiere • Thursday 17 March, 8pm • BCC Cinemas Darwin
Tiwi Island Premiere • Monday 20 March • Wurrumiyanga
Brisbane Premiere • Tuesday 22 March • RHD Australian, Menzies School of Research

This March, in the lead up to the national Closing The Gap Day, Moonshine Movies will premiere screenings of **Take Heart: The Quest to Rid Australasia of Rheumatic Heart Disease**, a powerful and provocative documentary that lifts the lid on this largely invisible disease that threatens the lives of over thirty million young people around the worldⁱ, and is 100% preventable. The film will be released via the Tugg Platform and will screen on NITV (SBS) in 2016.

The first peoples of Australasia have among the highest rates of Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) globallyⁱⁱ, highlighting the gap in health services between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Directed by **Mike Hill** and narrated by **Stan Grant**, *Take Heart* follows the stories of four Indigenous Australians – Brooklyn (7), Trenton (8), Carlissa (16) and Liddywoo (17) – over two years. The one-hour feature film accompanies them through harrowing open-heart surgery, long-term hospital stays, and the reality of daily life with RHD, examining the complexities involved in balancing traditional lifestyles with the demands of the modern medical system.

Take Heart explores the social, environmental and health factors that place young Indigenous Australian, Māori and Pacific Islander children in Australasia at such high risk, together with a roadmap to prevent future generations of children from being impacted by RHD.

Director Mike Hill said, “*Take Heart* tackles the big subject of ‘Closing the Gap’ on Indigenous disadvantage through the story of RHD, stepping into the shoes of the young Australasians affected by the epidemic. The young people’s choices and insights reframe the largely misunderstood issue of Indigenous health from a fresh perspective, while their visible chest scars remind us that this wholly preventable disease has literally scarred these children for life.”

The documentary is one part of an international initiative to put RHD on the global media and public health agendas in Australasia, Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. In Australia, a community outreach program, supported by Bupa, will complement the film, providing local communities with access to an educational tool kit, interactive apps and website including essential information to recognise symptoms and access treatment for RHD.

Bupa National Medical Director, Dr Rob Grenfell, said, “Take Heart shines a light on a disease that simply should not exist in this country. Through the outreach program, we want to enable communities to identify symptoms early and seek treatment. By addressing the factors contributing to the prevalence of Rheumatic Heart Disease, we can take a significant step towards closing the gap.”

The film includes interviews with experts in the field Dr Bo Remenyi (Paediatric Cardiologist), Dr Yves D’Udekem, (Paediatric Heart Surgeon) Dr Lance O’Sullivan (GP), Dr David Jansen (GP), Associate Professor Dr Andrew Steer (Paediatrician), Associate Professor Nigel Wilson Paediatric (Cardiologist) and Professor Bart Currie (Tropical and Emerging Infectious Diseases Expert).

Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) starts with a sore throat or infected skin sores, symptoms of a common bacterial infection (Group A Streptococcus) common in children 5-15 years of age. If left untreated, this can develop into Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and the permanent heart damage known as RHD, which can lead to open-heart surgery, permanent disability, stroke and premature death. Key risk factors include poverty, overcrowding and reduced access to medical care.

The global profile of RHD has increased over the past decade but still remains in the shadow of other communicable diseases such as malaria, HIV and TB, despite being the most common acquired form of cardiovascular disease in children, adolescents and young adults in the world. Indigenous children and young adults are up to eight times more likely than other groups to be hospitalised and nearly 20 times as likely to die from RHD. ⁱⁱⁱ currently affecting over thirty million people globally and 2% of Indigenous Australasians living in the Top End.

Take Heart director, producer and DOP **Mike Hill** is an award-winning Australian filmmaker passionate about crafting incredible screen stories that inspire change. Hill’s past credits include *Little Stars* (2015), *LIFE Before Death* (2012), *The Man Who Souled The World* (2007), and the television series *Jokes On You* (2011) and *Jailbait* (2008).

Take Heart producer **Sue Collins** is an experienced documentary film producer, drama film production manager and skilled researcher committed to creating work that directly benefits others. Her films have been honoured with a multitude of awards, including her role as First Assistant Director to Academy-Award winning filmmaker Adam Elliot on *Mary & Max* (2009), and her work has reached millions around the world, shaped government policy and led to the development of several important social initiatives.

Take Heart Narrator **Stan Grant** is a Wiradjuri man, a Logie and Walkley Award winner and Guardian Australia’s Indigenous News Editor. He is the presenter of NITV’s *Awaken* and Sky news, and previously appeared on *Real Life*, *SBS World News Australia* and *CNN*.

For more information visit www.takeheart.tv.



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