

PĀKEHĀ

A FILM BY MANA HIRA DAVIS

PRODUCTION NOTES

Written and Directed by
Producers
Production Company
Country of Production
Date of Completion
Shooting Format
Screening Format
Ratio
Duration
Genre

Mana Hira Davis
Larissa Allen, Sarah Oemcke & Melissa Mae
Eddie Page Productions
New Zealand
February 2025
Sony Venice PRORES422HQ 24fps
DCP
16:9
15:23
Drama

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TRAILER HERE](#)



LOGLINE

In 1980s, New Zealand, a young Pākehā mother's determination to learn Te Reo Māori, exposes her struggles, resilience, and courage, in an inspiring true story of cultural reconciliation.

SYNOPSIS

PĀKEHĀ is a powerful and intimate drama set in 1980s New Zealand, following Catherine, a young Pākehā mother who joins a Te Reo Māori class, hoping to better connect with her Māori son and create a safe haven from the pain she endures at home.

Surrounded by a group of strong Māori women, Catherine struggles to find her place in a world she deeply admires. But as she fumbles through pronunciation and navigates cultural divides, her quiet resilience begins to shine.

Through language, community, and the aroha (love) of her classmates, Catherine finds unexpected strength and healing.

A heartfelt true story of identity, love, and the power of language to bridge even the deepest divides.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Tēna koutou e te whanau whanui!

Our film Pākehā is about uniting us all as children of Papatūānuku and Ranginui. Mother Earth and sky father and to honour those around the world who have lost their culture and language, a recognition of those who have faced family abuse and mental health struggles, and a tribute to the resilience of single mothers - especially my own courageous and loving mum.

Originally titled Thank You Mum, Pākehā is a deeply personal reflection of my childhood memories and imagination.

I poured every ounce of my heart into this project, hoping that those who experience it will find healing, transformation, and growth.

Aroha ki te Aorangi



DIRECTOR'S BIO - MANA HIRA DAVIS

Mana is a proud father of two boys and lives in the stunning Bay of Plenty, New Zealand. His heritage is a rich blend of Irish, English, Scottish, and Māori ancestry, with tribal affiliations to Ngāti Maniapoto and Ngāti Koroki-Kahukura.

With over 27 years in the screen industry, Mana is a seasoned filmmaker who has contributed to more than 50 international and domestic film and television productions. As he prepares to release his short film Pākehā, he is turning his focus to a new slate of projects - original stories deeply rooted in the land and spirit of Aotearoa.

His filmmaking combines a love of action cinema with a strong commitment to authentic, culturally grounded storytelling that is entertaining, fun, and inspirational. Throughout his work, Mana explores enduring themes of identity, heritage, healing, and transformation.

With Pākehā soon to premiere and an ambitious slate of bold, Te Ao Māori, character-driven films near ready for production, Mana is poised to connect with audiences both in Aotearoa and around the world.

PRODUCER BIO

SARAH OEMCKE



Sarah Oemcke is a multi-award-winning creative force with over 35 years of experience in the entertainment industry. A dynamic director, writer, actor, and producer, Sarah's prolific career includes more than 30 theatre and film credits in the past decade alone.

Her talents have been recognised both in the UK and New Zealand, earning accolades for art direction, acting, and most notably the prestigious WIFT Award for Outstanding Female Filmmaker. Sarah is the co-founder of Film Bay of Plenty Screenwriters and Eddie Page Productions, through which she continues to shape and champion bold, original storytelling.

Sarah has penned ten short films in the past five years and is currently developing four major projects: Cracken, an eight-part television series; Tui, a compelling short film; Tuesday at Barry's, a situational comedy series and Dot, a limited series. Her recent projects include Petrified (2024), and the acclaimed documentary Taking Back Our Beach (2023), as Associate Producer.

PRODUCER BIO

MELISSA MAE

Melissa Mae is an accomplished producer, director, and writer with over 40 years of experience in media, film, and theatre. With a background in over 40 stage productions and screen performances across New Zealand and the U.S. After a successful 20-year career in the mental health sector, she shifted into film full-time in 2010, earning a diploma from South Seas Film & Television School.

Since then, Melissa has built an impressive body of work across film, television, and commercial projects. She has produced and directed for major platforms including TVNZ OnDemand and Māori Television, and has earned multiple accolades from the 48 Hour Film Festival and the 50 Kisses Film Awards in London.

Her credits include producing for Bryan & Bobby and Sticky TV (TV FOUR) and Kā TV (Māori Television). She also produced the seven-episode web series In the Rainbow (TVNZ OnDemand) and was Production Manager on the award-winning series Attitude TV (TV ONE).



PRODUCER & CAST BIO

LARISSA ALLEN

Larissa Allen is a New Zealand-based actor and producer known for her emotionally grounded performances and passion for authentic storytelling. Recent screen credits include lead roles in the short films Pākehā (2025), Exposure (2025), and Love Ya Face (2022), as well as a supporting role in the supernatural drama Petrified (2024). She also voiced the lead character in Death of a Star (2024), showcasing her versatility across mediums and genres. She has trained extensively with industry leaders, including at the Atlantic Acting School in New York as the 2023 Equity Foundation Scholarship recipient.

A graduate of the University of Waikato (BComm, Public Relations & Marketing), Larissa blends sharp business acumen with creative flair. She is the Co-Founder and Creative Director of Eddie Page Productions. Combining a sharp eye for story with a background in strategic marketing, Larissa is committed to developing unique, globally resonant content from Aotearoa (NZ) and was proud to production coordinate feature film, Ka Whawhai Tonu (2023).

A recent breast cancer survivor and proud mother, she is especially passionate about supporting wāhine-led projects and bringing underrepresented voices to the screen.

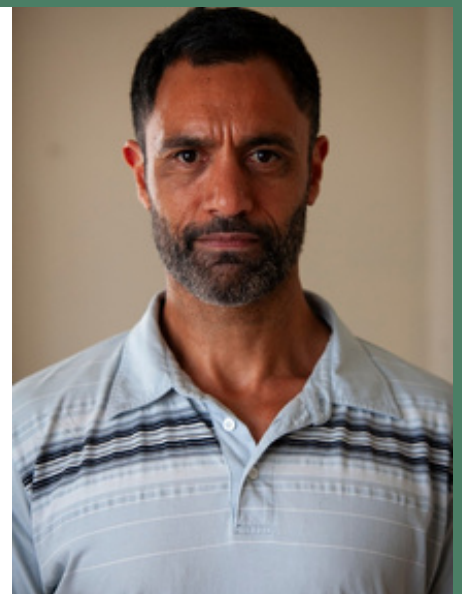


CAST BIO – JADE DANIELS

Jade is New Zealand Māori (Ngāpuhi) and is proficient in a variety of accents and sports.

He played Aka Hale in The Enemy Within, alongside Joseph Naufahu (Game of Thrones) and Beulah Koale (Bad Behaviour, Next Goal Wins), and Ted in the film, Eruption. Jade is a major recurring guest on New Zealand's beloved soap Shortland Street playing the role of Julian Jonas for South Pacific Pictures.

Jade has worked widely in theatre, in shows including Macbeth, A Streetcar Named Desire, Blood Wedding and was part of the cast for Clybourne Park, at Circa Theatre, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2011.



CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

Mana Hira Davis

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Larissa Allen
Sarah Oemcke
Melissa Mae
Mana Hira Davis

PRODUCED BY

Larissa Allen
Sarah Oemcke
Melissa Mae

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Grant McKinnon

EDITED BY

Joel Corbett

COMPOSED BY

Stephen Gallagher

CAST:

CATHERINE

Larissa Allen

DAVID

Jade Daniels

TAMA

Carter Downey

KAIAKO

Kahurangi Poa

TUNGIA

Jerrie-Lee Ngareta Hill

SUSAN

Claudette Kora

PUTI

Kelly Egan

HERA

Sarah Webb

SOPHIE

Mihi TeHau

MERE

Mariana Morrison

JANE

Camille Houia

HARATA

Sarah Teki

BIG TAMA

Mana Hira Davis



CREDITS

CREW:

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Melissa Mae
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR	Sarah Oemcke
PRODUCTION DESIGN/ ART DIRECTOR	Jannine Spiers
PROPS MASTER	Linda Campbell
ART ASSISTANT	Isaac Bishop Sequoia Trass
1st ASSISTANT CAMERA	Rayne Mokaraka
2nd ASSISTANT CAMERA	Theresa Barnes
CAMERA ASSISTANT	Taika Davis
STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER/ BTS CAMERA	Theresa Barnes
KEY GRIP	Michael Graham
BEST BOY	Declan Lang
SOUND	Robert Pendergrast
MAKEUP DIRECTOR	Sara Fitzell
HAIR STYLIST	Jason Davies
WARDROBE DIRECTOR	Kerry Funnell
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	Elsa Alexander Loui Alexander



CREDITS

CREW:

WELLBEING COORDINATOR	Tamar Courtney
UNIT MANAGER	Kate Pollock
TRANSPORT	Chris Power
CULTURAL CONSULTANT	Leah Mikaere
POST PRODUCTION/ COLOURIST	Joel Corbett
SUBTITLES ASSIST	Theresa Barnes
VOCALS	Briar Prastiti
GUITARS & CELLO	David Long
SYNTHESIZERS & VOCALS	Stephen Gallagher

SONG

Te Aroha

Written by Morvin Te Anatipa Simon



BOOSTED SUPPORTERS

Nicola Smith, Paula Whetu Jones, Sarah Backhouse-Smith, Shaun Michael, Lesley Heyblom, Amanda Aitken, Sharlene George, Vicki Lee, Oscar Ramirez, Nicholas Riini, Janet Peters, Jonny Harding, Alison Rayner, Philly Moses, Dan Allen, Dan Urrizaga, Pamela Kaval, Simone Ashton, Simon Ward, Mel Tahau, Tui Stone, Les Geraghty, Rawinia Phillips Smith, Tawa Armstrong, Aroha Kapi, G & T Hanrahan, Ana Smith, Greg Hata, Laura Nicholson, Maree Sheehan, Rhonda Lepper, Jason Vytlačil, Debbie Caterer, Bridget McKinley, Chelsea Grootveld, Susan Rutene, Bj Thocolich, Stevie Greeks, Opape Cousins, Bobby Dazzler, Nigel Nally, Hineani Melbourne, Henare Mato, Taratoa Stappard, Rowena Wainohu, Dave Emslie & Family, and to the many who supported anonymously.

CREDITS

SPECIAL THANKS TO

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PĀKEHĀ IS MADE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF



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