

BYRON
BAY
FILM
FESTIVAL 10

The Great Forest by Gail Knight

Beginning with what seems like an eagle's eye view of Victoria's Toolangi State Forest, it soon becomes apparent that it is the grace of an indigenous spirit that takes us through *The Great Forest* – a short and powerful documentary.

With the measured narration of Joy Murphy Wandin, a senior Wurundjeri elder, the microscopic world of a snail drinking droplets of water gives way to the graceful *Bullen Bullen*, more commonly known as the lyre bird, and its dextrous mimicry and dance.

The Leadbeater's Possum also takes a starring role, carefully manicuring its bed from the bark of the over 300-year-old eucalypt it inhabits. Director/writer Marli Lopez-Hope ensures that by the film's end, we are very clear on the tenuous clutch on existence that the possum holds on the planet.

The final, calamitous threat of logging within the forest takes your breath away. The future seemingly resting in the mandibles of an ant as it transports a dislodged ant egg back to the hole in the ground where a tree once stood.

We have a lot to thank drone cameras for and it's in this documentary that we can appreciate the out-of-the-way places they can take us. Here, invaluable indigenous knowledge and modern-day filmmaking combine to present the very best and worst on show in the lands belonging to the Wurundjeri and Taungurong People of the Kulin nation.

