

## A new short documentary exploring the history behind film Finding Miss Almond has been released

A new short documentary sharing the history behind upcoming biopic Finding Miss Almond – set mostly in Alice Springs – has been launched.

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The new documentary focuses on a famous group of Aboriginal boys – mostly from Central Australia. Picture: Supplied

A new short documentary uncovering the history behind the upcoming biopic *Finding Miss Almond* – set mostly in Alice Springs – has been launched.

The documentary – *Glanville Hall: a House of Hope and Glory* – unveils the history behind Hollywood movie director Mark Webber's film *Finding Miss Almond*.

*Finding Miss Almond* is based on the life of Isabel Smith, an empathetic music graduate who cared for Aboriginal children from the time she married Percy Smith in Alice Springs in June 1943.

The new documentary reveals the history behind a famous group of Aboriginal boys – mostly from Central Australia – who were sent to Adelaide for further education at St Francis House under the care of the Smiths.



Despite her father's failing health and concern for her safety, Mrs Smith left her life behind in Adelaide. Picture: Supplied

The “appalling” living conditions for Aboriginal children in the Red Centre led Mrs Smith to leave her suburban Adelaide home in the summer of 1940.

In 1945, the Smiths took six boys from Alice Springs, with the permission of their mothers, to Adelaide and soon after established St Francis House at the beach-side suburb of Semaphore.

Sixty-six boys called the St Francis House home across its life from 1946 to 1960.



The original six boys were eventually joined by others, some at the request of their mothers and others who had been removed from their families. Picture: Supplied

Former St Francis House resident John Moriarty, who became the first Aboriginal Australian Soccerero in 1960, said he was “right behind” the film.

“Mr and Mrs Smith cared for me at St Francis House in Adelaide after I’d been forcibly removed from my Yanyuwa mother from Borroloola,” he said.

“I found only kindness from them, and they helped to shape my values and understanding of the world I lived in.”

Other sporting stars from the house include VFL player Vincent Copley, three-time Port Adelaide Football Club Premiership player Richie Bray, and sprinter and Port Adelaide footballer Ken Hampton.

Seven of the boys have been recognised by Queen Elizabeth II with an Order of Australia.



Mark Smith and Ms Dixon at the filming of the new documentary. Picture: Supplied

Mark Smith, grandson of the Smiths, said it was a privilege to learn about the St Francis House boys.

“They have enriched my life,” he said.

“I want their stories and achievements to be better known, because they were heroes and proof of what Aboriginal people can achieve if given the chance.”

Glanville Hall: a House of Hope and Glory can be viewed [on YouTube](#).

*Link: <https://www.ntnews.com.au/news/a-new-short-documentary-exploring-the-history-behind-film-finding-miss-almond-has-been-released/news-story/baef176fe3ebdc99ad806e185bda802f>*