



Commonwealth Bank

Intro

It's not often that I get the chance to work on a story that feels this important. Create a subtle, yet powerful commercial that is capable of genuinely moving audiences. And promote a product that brings light and hope to the lives of others.

And it's that light that will illuminate our character's world, both literally and metaphorically, as we transition from dawn to day. From darkness to light. From concern and anxiety to hope. With a wave of positivity that begins with Next Chapter.

Approach

This sense of hope is at the core of my intimate, yet cinematic directorial style which eschews flashy visual gimmicks and finds beauty in simplicity. A visual, emotive, character-driven storytelling that audiences can connect with on a deeper level.

This doesn't feel like your typical ad. So I don't want to treat it like one. Instead, let's create a short film that uses natural lighting to give it a cinematic realism and a beautiful, organic aesthetic, striking a balance between an authentic, almost documentary-like feel and something that looks considered and intentional.

Our images will have a textured, grainy quality that is reminiscent of film. With a range of hues from the deep blue of dusk to dusty pink skies and golden morning light, creating a rich, yet natural colour pallet that complements the world our characters inhabit.

And we'll tell this story with restrained camera work that subtly responds to our characters, moving in an instinctive, reactive way that accentuates their humanity and brings a softness and sensitivity to the film. That said, each frame will be carefully composed to best communicate our message and we'll often hold on shots to sit in the emotion of a moment. With this in mind, I envision no more than two shots per scene to establish each character and tell the story of how Next Chapter changes their lives.

Voice Over

I love the idea that the VO is read allowed by people who have experienced coercive control and financial abuse first-hand. But to do this we need to create an intimate, supportive process that allows me to work closely with these contributors and put them at ease, so they can access their most emotionally truthful and powerful readings.

This lived experience will imbue their words with an authenticity and emotion which is difficult to replicate. And that rawness will give the VO a humanity and vulnerability, but also convey their strength in overcoming these experiences, reinforcing our message of hope.

Sound and Music

The first few seconds of your Bon Iver *Heavenly Father* reference pretty much sums up how I want this film to sound and feel. No instrumental. Just the stripped-back emotional power of a few distinctive human voices harmonising to create that spirit and sense of overcoming. The same way that our scenes move from darkness into light, the music will move from a tone that is sombre to uplifting, infusing our serious message with that hope and optimism.

The sound design should have a filmic texture that immerses us into the worlds of our characters so that we don't just hear it. We feel it. This realism is crucial, whether that's the ebb and flow of the undulating ocean. The birdsong and gentle traffic of a city at dawn. Or the soft wind and chirping crickets in the countryside.

Typography

I love your suggestion for typography. Cutting to a phone, tablet, or laptop screen often kills the drama and emotion of a scene, so to have the words appear in the same shot as our characters with a white glow is a simple, understated solution. Of course, these will appear in frames with a carefully considered aesthetic that ensures the words and the images work in synergy.

Film

What follows is my interpretation of the script using the characters I've developed. In most cases, I've expanded on scenes and gone into greater depth, but I've also made some changes to visual cues such as the light coming first from the device rather than outside, highlighting the idea that Next Chapter is triggering the changes in our characters' lives.

Script

We open on a WIDE shot and slowly PUSH IN on the Australian coastline at dawn. The sky a deep blue. The sun hidden behind the horizon. The waves breaking with a gentle power.

We cut to a CLOSER WIDE still PUSHING IN on a sedate city. The sky is a little bit brighter. The sun is just about visible through the built-up skyline, reflecting off the glass windows.

Now we're in the Australian countryside as the camera continues PUSHING IN. The dusty ground in stark contrast to the soft pink sky.

We continue PUSHING IN on an empty street. The world is still asleep, despite the faint hum of electric power lines. We move through the street, past the soft glow of street lamps, like fuzzy stars in the now powder blue sky. Past buildings with the odd apartment lit up.

A MID-SHOT that captures the silhouette of a saloon parked on a pier, set against the backdrop of a dark blue morning sky with a pinkish tinge. Inside, an artfully dishevelled YOUNG WOMAN wearing a snug, comfy jumper dozes in the reclined driver's seat. A mobile sitting in the cupholder lights up. She wakes with a start, glancing over at the passenger seat where her boyfriend would be sitting if they hadn't fought the night before. She rubs her eyes, reaches for her mobile, and reads the message on screen. A sense of relief washing over her as she looks up from the phone and out the windscreen at the rolling waves below and bright blue sky above.

ALT: We're on the rooftop of an apartment block. It's early morning and the sky is dark blue with a pinkish tinge. An artfully dishevelled YOUNG WOMAN wearing a snug, comfy jumper sits on a chair, nursing a cup of coffee as she anxiously ruminates. The mobile phone on the floor next to her foot lights up. She bends over, picks it up, and reads the message on screen. A sense of relief washing over her as she looks out at the city below and the brightening blue sky above.

VO: This is The Next Chapter Commitment.

The VO also appears as white glowing text in frame.

Our young woman lifts the arm and leg of her boyfriend off her and reaches over to pick up her phone.

We CUT to a WIDE of a young guy in a tracksuit, running HARD through the city at dawn. Only his silhouette is visible against the blue and pink blur of the sky. His phone pings with a text. Then another. And another. With each ping, he runs faster and harder until he

stops, bent-double and panting. Out of breath. He straightens up. Looks out at the city below with concern. Then the phone in his pocket lights up and he reaches inside. CLOSE UP HANDHELD of our guy reading his phone. The glow illuminating his face.

VO: CommBank believes that everyone should have a bright financial future.

The sky brightens as the sun peeks over the horizon. A subtle, but noticeable shift in the world and our character as he relaxes.

We're in a CLOSE UP as the camera FLOATS through the early morning sky. The first ray of sun hits a crinkled bedsheet in a city apartment.

CUT TO a MID SHOT of a YOUNG QUEER GUY with shaved peroxide blond hair and Adidas pants sitting on the sofa in a plush North-facing penthouse, lacking in natural light. He fiddles nervously with his hands. Completely at odds with the sparse interior. The phone resting on the cushion next to our guy lights up, illuminating his face with a golden glow as he picks it up and begins to read. His anxiety giving way to relief. The light from outside filters into the room.

VO: That is why we stand against financial abuse.

The text appears in frame.

Any customer who is financially controlled, tracked, or abused will have access to Next Chapter.

A WIDE SHOT SLOWLY PUSHES IN on a big bay window. The other side of which is an elegant older woman looking out at us. We move through the glass and into her beautiful, opulent home while the woman sits on a chair watching the birds outside gliding through the sky with all the freedom she lacks. The camera continues PUSHING IN as her iPad lights up and she gazes down at the screen with curiosity. Her sense of longing replaced with a hopeful smile.

VO: Next Chapter offers one-on-one financial coaching, tools or referrals for more assistance.

POV through the window as the sun peeks over the ocean, turning the sky a soft gold and red.

We cut to a HANDHELD MID-SHOT of a MUM lying wide awake on a single bed in a kid's bedroom. The curtains are drawn, blocking out the light. She cradles her son who is sound asleep, nestled beneath a pale pink duvet, while she clutches her mobile phone in her hand. She stares up at the ceiling with a sense of hopelessness. Then the mobile lights up and so do her eyes as she reads the message. A hopeful smile spreads across her face as

she exchanges a tender look with her son who gradually comes to. The morning sun now seeping through the slight gap in the curtains.

You can call a community Wellbeing specialist on 1800 222 387 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

CLOSE UP HANDHELD back to the young woman from the start. Now propped up in bed reading her phone. Her eyes wide with hope. The sun streams into her room which is not only brighter but feels larger. Less cluttered. Like her world has opened up.

The Next Chapter commitment appears in frame.

EXTREME CLOSE UP on the phone as the young woman taps 'Agree' on the screen.

VO: By pressing "I agree" you stand with us against financial abuse. It will also give you opportunities to be part of the solution.

This triggers a ripple effect as we cut back between all of our previous scenes, now filled with light and hope as our empowered characters each tap 'agree'.

We end on the sun now high in the morning sky. A bright new day.

Art Direction

Our characters are unified in their struggle for financial freedom but come from different worlds and lifestyles. Their homes should reflect that difference. As should the clothes they wear. So while the elegant retiree might wear pearls as she sits in an expansive living room with a refined interior, the struggling mother of two might be dressed in faded, poorly-fitting clothes.

And when it comes to depicting their financial struggles we should opt for subtle clues, such as the empty milk bottle on the table, rather than cliched shots of calculators and bills.

Cast

We want people to see themselves in these characters and be moved by their stories, so we're looking for subtle, nuanced performances from actors who can emote through action and expression rather than words. Who can make us feel what they're feeling as Next Chapter triggers their emotional transition out of darkness and into light. To achieve this we might need to look beyond the pool of commercial actors and seek out a cast with film and television experience.

This cast should represent the diversity of Australia when it comes to gender, body shape, ethnicity, and relationships. They should be natural, unique-looking individuals from different walks of life that seem as though they have been plucked from the street, rather than a casting audition. This is important to us and our audience who will connect with the film on a deeper level if they see themselves reflected.

Edit

We'll use the natural peaks and valleys in the narrative arc of our five different characters and their stories to vary the texture and tempo of the edit. Starting with a slow, contemplative style as we establish our characters, their world, and their situation, then gradually picking up the pace as we get a sense of what unifies them. Moving from dark to light. Again. And again. And again. Until we return to the young woman we opened on then cut quickly back between all the optimistic shots of our characters in what feels like a stream of light and hope.