

KEMIRA - DIARY OF A STRIKE

IN September 1982, at the height of an economic recession, the Australian steelworks BHP announced its intention to close down some of its coal mines in the Wollongong area just south of Sydney. The worst affected was Kemira colliery where 300 workers were to lose their jobs. 20 days before the closure of the pit a group of 31 miners occupied the pit and established themselves 5 kilometres underground.

The occupation caught the imagination of the whole country. The miners received the backing of other unions, and the people of town of Wollongong swung-in behind them. The wives and supporters of the miners took over one of the company buildings and organised a kitchen, while fellow miners and supporters set up an embassy at the pit-top and kept vigil. A general local strike was organised which culminated in a train journey to Canberra, the national capital. On arrival, several thousand miners and steelworkers stormed Parliament House bringing the issue to the attention of the whole nation.

The film captures these dramatic events and then proceeds to follow the fortunes of some of the strikers and their families. The film also reveals the wider historical, economic and political context.

Made in 1982 KEMIRA - DIARY OF A STRIKE became the first Australian film which documented the organisation of a strike and how it unfolded over time from an inside perspective. It premiered at the Sydney Film Festival and went on to win several awards in Australia and overseas.

Producer/director: Tom Zubrycki
Cinematography: Fabio Cavadini
Sound Recordist: Russ Herman
Editor: Ray Thomas

Length: 62 mins