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***Cleverman*** is an Australian-New Zealand-American television drama series based on an original concept by Ryan Griffen. The series premiered on 1 June 2016 on [SundanceTV](/wiki/SundanceTV) in the United States and on [ABC](/wiki/ABC_(Australian_TV_channel)) in Australia the following day.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The six-part drama series reimagines several stories of the Aboriginal [Dreaming](/wiki/Dreamtime) in a modern, superheroic context, and reflects on racism, asylum seekers and border protection.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Its central story revolves around two estranged indigenous brothers who are forced together to fight for their own survival when one of them is passed the mantle of the "Cleverman". Creatures from the Dreaming also feature in the series' real world [dystopian](/wiki/Dystopia) landscape.[[3]](#cite_note-3) The series was renewed for a second season on 2 June 2016,[[4]](#cite_note-4) and received [Template:AU$](/wiki/Template:AU$)450,000 in funding from [Screen NSW](/wiki/Government_of_New_South_Wales).[[5]](#cite_note-5)

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## Cleverman[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The Cleverman is an important figure in many [Australian Aboriginal](/wiki/Australian_Aboriginal) cultures. Series creator Ryan Griffen describes the Cleverman as "like the Pope of the [Dreamtime](/wiki/Dreamtime) ... the conduit between the present and the Dreaming".[[6]](#cite_note-6) The version in the television series combines many Cleverman traditions from different Aboriginal nations to create a superheroic version, with powers relating to the Dreaming's connection to past, present and future.[[7]](#cite_note-7)

## Hairypeople[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

The Hairypeople or "Hairies" are designed by Jacob ("Jake") Nash, production designer for the Australian Aboriginal dance company [Bangarra](/wiki/Bangarra), and realised by the [Weta Workshop](/wiki/Weta_Workshop), known for their work on [*The Lord of The Rings*](/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_(film_series)) and other fantasy and science fiction films. The Hairypeople in *Cleverman* are inspired by [stories](/wiki/Aboriginal_Australian_mythology) of hairymen handed down by Aboriginal Australians over the last 60,000 years, drawn from multiple Aboriginal countries, including the [Gamilaraay](/wiki/Gamilaraay) and [Bundjalung](/wiki/Bundjalung) people of northern [New South Wales](/wiki/New_South_Wales). In the series, they speak [Gumbaynggirr](/wiki/Gumbaynggirr), another language from northern New South Wales.[[7]](#cite_note-7) In the world of *Cleverman*, Hairies are stronger and hardier than humans, covered in thick facial and body hair, and have tough, sharp fingernails. They share some things with [Aboriginal](/wiki/Aboriginal_Australians) people, including a knowledge of land, culture and [the Dreaming](/wiki/Dreamtime). They are a different [species](/wiki/Species) from [humans](/wiki/Humans) and they do not share the same [DNA](/wiki/DNA). They came to the notice of modern human society six months prior to the beginning of the series, in an event known as "Emergence Day". Those who choose to live their lives as they always have - covered in a coat of hair and speaking their traditional languages - are confined to "The Zone" by a fearful government. To escape, some Hairies become "shavers", learning to speak English and removing their body hair in order to blend in with human society.

## Cast[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

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Series Regulars

* [Hunter Page-Lochard](/wiki/Hunter_Page-Lochard) as Koen West
* Rob Collins as Waruu West
* [Deborah Mailman](/wiki/Deborah_Mailman) as Aunty Linda
* [Iain Glen](/wiki/Iain_Glen) as Jarrod Slade
* [Frances O'Connor](/wiki/Frances_O'Connor) as Charlotte Cleary
* [Ryan Corr](/wiki/Ryan_Corr) as Blair Finch
* [Tasma Walton](/wiki/Tasma_Walton) as Araluen
* [Tony Briggs](/wiki/Tony_Briggs) as Boondee
* [Stef Dawson](/wiki/Stef_Dawson) as Ash Kerry
* Jada Alberts as Nerida
* Tamala Shelton as Alinta
* Rarriwuy Hick as Latani
* Tysan Towney as Djukara
* [Andrew McFarlane](/wiki/Andrew_McFarlane_(Australian_actor)) as Geoff Matthews

Recurring Guests

* [Leeanna Walsman](/wiki/Leeanna_Walsman) as Belinda Frosche
* [Jack Charles](/wiki/Jack_Charles_(actor)) as Uncle Jimmy
* [Adam Briggs](/wiki/Briggs_(rapper)) as Maliyan
* [Lynette Curran](/wiki/Lynette_Curran) as Virgil
* [Robyn Nevin](/wiki/Robyn_Nevin) as Jane O'Grady
* Josh McConville as Dickson
* Mansoor Noor as McIntyre 2IC
* Rhondda Findleton as Frankie
* Isaac Drandic as Harry
* [Katie Wall](/wiki/Katie_Wall) as Rowena
* [Marcus Graham](/wiki/Marcus_Graham) as McIntyre
* [Miranda Tapsell](/wiki/Miranda_Tapsell) as Lena
* Rahel Romahn as Ludo
* Sam Parsonson as Taki

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## Episode list[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

### Season 1 (2016)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

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## Critical reception[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

The show has been met with critical acclaim on review aggregator [Rotten Tomatoes](/wiki/Rotten_Tomatoes), it gave the first season a rating of 88% based on 8 reviews, with an audience score of 83% of people liking it.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Whereas the first season of Cleverman received generally favorable reviews on [Metacritic](/wiki/Metacritic) scoring a rating of 61 out of 100 based on 7 reviews.[[9]](#cite_note-9) One of the reviews of Cleverman, from the [*Boston Herald*](/wiki/Boston_Herald), which said "Cleverman is unlike any other TV miniseries you've seen before. The gritty Australian production uses a sci-fi backdrop to test notions of racial identity and integration with a twist of supernatural terror." and went on to say "The first episode is confusing, introducing a multitude of characters and agendas. Stay with it. The second episode brings several of the characters and the conflicts into focus."[[10]](#cite_note-10) Mike Hale of the [*New York Times*](/wiki/New_York_Times) stated that "Cleverman has a rough immediacy in its pacing and cinematography that helps to make up for its deficiencies elsewhere, and if you have an appetite for sci-fi conspiracy thrillers, it's worth sampling."[[11]](#cite_note-11)