

WINNERS & LOSERS



SERIES PREMIERE

INTRODUCTION

A NEW AUSTRALIAN DRAMA FROM THE CREATORS OF PACKED TO THE RAFTERS



Ever felt like a loser at school? Ever dreamt of revenge on those who pulled you down? Ever wished you could win the lottery and change your life forever?

Enter the world of *Winners & Losers*, a switched-on drama series that takes us into the hearts and homes of four very different women.

Melanie Vallejo (*Packed to the Rafters*) and Virginia Gay (*All Saints*) star alongside newcomers Melissa Bergland and Zoe Tuckwell-Smith as Sophie, Frances, Jenny and Rebecca; four old friends with little in common except a bond from the old school days.

Thrown together in high school to avoid the attentions of school bully Tiffany Turner (played by guest star Michala Banas), the girls, now 27 years old, believe they have moved on from their high school days.

But a surprise invite to their "Ten Year Class of 2001 Reunion" throws into question just how far they have really come.

Does a successful career or a hot fiancé make them one of life's winners? Or are they still the same as they were in high school?

The girls attend the Renwood Girls High School Reunion determined to prove they are no longer the losers they were once dubbed. But Tiffany Turner hasn't changed and the women remember the solace they once found in each other's friendship.

As fate would have it, they soon discover what it really means to be a winner. But does the prize equal happiness? Or will the women be faced with the challenge of re-evaluating their lives?

Winners & Losers is created by Bevan Lee (*Packed to the Rafters*). Executive producer is Channel Seven's Head of Drama, John Holmes with MaryAnne Carroll serving as Producer.



MELISSA BERGLAND

PLAYS JENNY GROSS

MELISSA BERGLAND MAKES HER TELEVISION ACTING DEBUT AS JENNY GROSS, A CHARACTER SHE FEELS SHE WAS BORN TO PLAY.

"I'm very much like her and my best friend in real life – Meredith – is very much like Bec," the 25-year-old says. "She's tall, thin and beautiful. The experiences Jenny and Bec go through are very much like what Meredith and I went through. But I like to think I'm a bit cooler than her...just a bit."

An only child, Melissa knew early on she was destined for a career in show business. "I've been dancing since I was two-and-a-half," she says. "I was always like, 'Everyone look at me! I'm going to do a play now. You all have to sit there and be entertained.'"

A musical all-rounder, she started playing piano at four and flute at the age of seven. She also sings and possesses a mezzo alto vocal range. "I was a geek at high school but I was a left alone geek," she says. "I really enjoyed it. I was never home before 8.30 every night as I was always doing extracurricular activities. I was in two bands, two choirs and two orchestras."

Her parents - mum Kathy and her late father Brendon - were very supportive of her

theatrical pursuits. "Mum sewed on every sequin on my outfits and dad is the one who started teaching me piano. He played the guitar and sang; he was very musical."

Originally from Adelaide, she completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree at Flinders University majoring in drama before relocating to Melbourne to study at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2007.

She then studied acting for six months in New York, where she was run over by a car! "I was on my bike and got side swiped by a taxi driver and broke my hand. I had the worst three months of my life followed by the best three months of my life."

After recovering from the accident, she secured an agent and performed in the New York Community Festival's production of Fat Camp.

When she returned home to Australia, she toured her self-devised cabaret show Blue Eyed Soul at the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

She was in the final stages of Hairspray The Musical auditions when she was asked to audition for Winners & Losers. "My brief was to dress daggy," she recalls. "So I went in with my own glasses. I'm blind as a bat. I wore

what looked like an oversized tent and track pants covered in cat hair. I got a call a couple of days later saying, 'Congratulations you've got the role.'"

For Melissa, scoring the role of Jenny is a dream come true. "It's daunting and overwhelming but fabulously fun at the same time."

She admits the journey to get this point hasn't been easy. "There's been a lot of knock backs and setbacks. A lot of, 'You're not right because...' In many ways Jenny is the perfect character because I've been hired because of the way I look and the way I am."

In her spare time, Melissa enjoys watching live music, seeing movies and flying kites. "Some of my best friends in Melbourne are in a band called 'Society of Beggars' - They're just starting out. They're like, 'Wear one of our shirts on the show!'"

Melissa is a big fan of actresses Ginnifer Goodwin and Amanda Seyfried who star in her favourite TV show Big Love. "I'm really into new wave actors; actors who have been chipping away at little roles and are now starting to come into their own."



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

Buy my mum a new house. The house my mum lives in is the one my dad built. She's there by herself and cracks have begun appearing. If I won the money, it'd be nice to knock that one down and build something new. And I would probably fund the release of my friends' album.



JENNY GROSS

While not exactly a 'born loser', there are qualities about Jenny Gross, 27, which put her in a category that makes her less socially successful than most young women her age.

She's bright, bubbly and lots of fun but deep down a bit of a dag. Dismissing her isn't easy, though – Jenny is nothing if not thick-skinned and she'll bounce back from many a rejection to put herself out there again and again, never quite 'getting' what it is about her that lacks appeal.

"She is loud and opinionated," Melissa says of her character. "She's really brash and bold, funny and fiercely loyal."

Being loved unconditionally by her large family has been Jenny's saving grace. Her parents, Trish and Brian, would walk over hot coals for her.

And her siblings – older sister Deidre, younger sister Bridget and younger brother Patrick – are fiercely protective, even if they do still manage the occasional ribbing.

Having such a close knit and supportive family has meant Jenny's rarely had to fend for herself. This is one of the main reasons she lacks the worldliness of her peers.

That's not to say Jenny can't stand up for herself. She can and she does...often. She

is gutsy, strong and not afraid to share her opinions. But she's lacking the knowledge and intricacies of life in the big wide world.

And that is why a lot of people, upon first meeting her, find it difficult to warm to her. Her social naivety can easily grate.

Lucky for Jenny, in addition to her family, she has a fierce and loyal supporter in her best friend Bec. It's been that way since they met in the sandpit in kindergarten – when Bec stepped in to save Jenny from the bullies. They became best mates from that day forward.

Nicknamed 'Gross-out' by the kids at school, she never ran with the popular crowd, and spent most of her high school days in the refuge of the school library and toilets.

"Bullying is a major issue Jenny has to deal with," Melissa says. "She has to show resilience against being an outcast and not quite fitting in."

No matter what else anyone may say about Jenny, one thing you can't deny is her massive heart and generosity of spirit.



Although not the smartest girl in the world, Jenny's awesome at certain things. She's got a grasp of IT that puts her at the forefront of all the new communication technology.

She spends so much time on her computer that she knows what's going on in cyber world before any of her friends.

This fact would also help to explain why Jenny is still a virgin. She's had some interest and the occasional party pash but nothing of great significance. An added hurdle to love for romantic Jenny is that she has her mum and dad as models for the perfect relationship. That's what Jenny wants for herself and nothing less is acceptable.

Channelling her knowledge of IT into a technical support job keeps Jenny employed – albeit unhappily. She wants something more from her life, but she doesn't know what.

"Jenny is the underdog," Melissa says. "For her, life is about turning lemons into lemonade. It's how you deal with your problems that count; it either makes you a stronger person or it breaks you."



VIRGINIA GAY

PLAYS FRANCES JAMES

THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF SHOW BIZ BECKONED EARLY FOR VIRGINIA GAY. "MY POOR PARENTS HAD NO CHOICE," SHE SAYS. "THEY WERE SURROUNDED CONSTANTLY BY THIS SCREAMING, PERFORMING LITTLE THING."

"I remember being six and I was doing some show for my family. They laughed in unison and I went, 'Wow! That feels really good.'"

Virginia, 29, grew up in Sydney's inner west and spent a good part of her time in England.

Like her character Frances, school was an awkward time for the vivacious actress.

"There were the braces and the glasses and, at some point for some reason unbeknownst to me, I got a crew cut.

"I also played the trombone. Now that's a sexy instrument you'd have to agree."

After graduating from Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, she went on to study English literature and performance studies at Sydney University. When she decided to make acting her full-time pursuit, she enrolled at Perth's esteemed Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).

While at WAAPA, Virginia auditioned unsuccessfully for the role of Ricky on *All Saints*. However, she impressed producers to such an extent she was called back to

audition as Nursing Unit Manager Gabrielle Jaeger in 2006.

During her three-and-a-half years in the role, she managed to find time to take part in Seven's *It Takes Two* in 2008. She was a huge hit with audiences and placed third with partner Ian Moss.

After *All Saints* wrapped, Virginia trod the boards in a string of productions including *Gentlemen Prefer Blokes*, for which she won a DIVA Award. Looking forward she will perform 'Dirty Pretty Songs' which is about to be part of the 2011 Melbourne International Arts Festival in the famous Speightent.

The latter is her own creation where she takes pretty songs and sings them dirty, and dirty songs and sings them pretty. "The idea behind the cabaret show is that any pop song you've ever heard, especially if it's cheerful and upbeat, can sound incredibly dirty if you slow it down and funk up the base line."

She recently spent six months touring with the Sydney Theatre Company's *Wharf Revue* in the production 'Pennies from Kevin'. In the hit show, she polished her impression of Julia Gillard and bounded about in a fat suit as Amanda Vanstone. "Performing to a live crowd is amazing," she says. "There is nothing like the feeling of having 600 people laugh to

something you've set up and delivered. It's like being a kid again."

Virginia makes a welcome return to Channel Seven in *Winners & Losers*. "It's great to be back in the bosom of Channel Seven. I'm very happy indeed. It's great to see some familiar faces and lots of new ones."

Virginia, who has relocated to Melbourne from Sydney, says she was immediately attracted to the show. "I just read it and thought that's me and everyone I know. It's funny and it's about women. It walks the line between laugh-out-loud funny and heartbreaking."

Playing a corporate heavyweight in Frances, Virginia is grateful to be swapping the hospital garb for more glamorous attire.

I had one outfit for the first two years on *All Saints*," she laughs. "It was the patterned blue shirt and blue slacks. I loved that outfit, don't get me wrong, but it was one outfit for two years."

She's a big fan of Madeline Kahn and *The West Wing*'s Alison Janney, whom she watched in preparation for her current role. "I did watch a lot of *The West Wing* as I thought it might be useful to understand Frances' world. It was also a good excuse to stay indoors during winter!"



In her spare time, she enjoys seeing theatre and live music and has just started learning the ukulele.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I'd follow James Spader around the world and become his full-time stalker. That's what I'd do.



FRANCES JAMES

Frances James, 27, is one of the smartest, most business savvy women you could ever meet. And she's also a complete social loser.

With a double degree in Economics and Law, plus an MBA from Harvard, Frances has uncommon intelligence. But when it comes to the stuff women usually excel in - the emotional and social side of life - Frances really has no idea.

Without guidance from women in her formative years, as a result of her mother's abrupt exit from her life when she was just seven, Frances moulded herself entirely on her bright, logical father.

And in doing so, has failed to learn the basic (but complex) language of being a girl. "Any kind of business stuff she's good at. But the social world not so much," says Virginia of her character. "She swings on a really big pendulum between someone who knows what's going on to someone who is so far behind the game that she's on another pitch."

In high school Frances discovered the social divide that existed between her and her peers. She found out several things quite suddenly including a) how you wear your socks does count; b) not everyone is rational; c) sticking up for people against those who are not rational makes you a target.

Witnessing pudgy and unhappy Sophie Wong being picked on by school bullies, Frances wasted no time in coming to her defence and thus sealed her high school fate.

She gained a formidable friend and study buddy in Sophie. And some formidable enemies intent on making her school years miserable.

Later, Bec and Jenny made up the numbers in 'The Losers' group and Frances found herself with a few loyal friends. But that didn't stop the bullies labeling her 'Frank the Lemon,' thanks to her tomboy appearance and lack of feminine qualities.

As partner in a management consultancy business, Frances is keen to establish herself while she's young and fresh and always works long hours in the hopes of bringing in big business.

She threw herself even further into work when her father died from a heart attack. He was the centre of her world and the loss left her completely and utterly shattered.

Frances considers her PA Jonathan Kurtiss and his long-term partner Chris Jones family now.



Jonathan is very protective of Frances and outside of work often feeds her and pushes her towards nice straight single men as regularly as possible. But Frances has eschewed romance.

It makes her feel silly and out of her depth. She doesn't like the way it makes her behave - because underneath that tough, self-confident exterior, Frances is just a bamboozled deer in the headlights when it comes to love.



ZOE TUCKWELL-SMITH

PLAYS REBECCA GILBERT

ZOE TUCKWELL-SMITH HAS ENJOYED ACTING FROM A YOUNG AGE. "I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A DREAMER – IMAGINATIVE AND CREATIVE," SHE RECALLS.

"As a child I loved putting on plays and making up stories to perform for my parents or my toys!"

Similar to Bec, Zoe had a close knit group of friends at school that she still remains close to today. "I had a very eclectic group of friends – we were kind of like the everymen. I was involved in a variety of extra curricular activities, including school plays, sport and music so I got a lot out of school."

After finishing high school, she was accepted into NIDA and graduated three years later.

Several theatre roles followed as well as guest roles on a number of TV shows including All Saints, Home and Away, The Cut and The Strip.

Some of her recent film credits include the lead role of Anja in the Australian film Primal, which screened in festivals internationally including the 2010 FrightFest in the UK.

"I've been very fortunate; working away steadily building on and learning from each

job," she says. "I've worked fairly consistently with moments of quite time in between which is very healthy. It gives you a sense of what's important in life and takes you away from the illusory world that is acting and just makes you a more rounded person."

Zoe's role in Winners & Losers is her first major television role. "I love that it's about friends," she says. "It has great pace; the dialogue is witty. It takes you on a journey.

As well as acting, Zoe has worked on the other side of the camera in a co-production directing and writing a yet to be named and released documentary filmed in Timor, Indonesia. "We have about 40 hours of footage we're still yet to cut," she says. "We were having one of those moments of, 'Where's the work? What do we do? We care about the world. So we started squireling away and cross referencing ideas that were dear to us and places we were drawn to. Timor just kept coming up."

Zoe, who grew up partly in Asia, is fluent in Indonesian. Originally from Sydney, she's relocated to Melbourne for Winners & Losers along with her actor boyfriend Damon Gameau.

The pair actually met in Timor while she was shooting her documentary. "It was his last day shooting Balibo," she says. "We were both staying at Hotel Turismo and we crossed over for one night."

In her spare time, she enjoys travelling, spending time with friends and family and watching films, especially ones featuring some of her favourite actors – Marion Cotillard, Meryl Streep and Maggie Gyllenhaal. "I admire Francis O'Connor and Kate Winslet too," she says. "I also like a lot of directors; people who try lots of different things."



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I'd help out my family and friends and probably give a lot of it away to charities or individuals who could make good use of it. I really trust I'd make money my own way and always have enough.

WINNERS &
LOSERS 



REBECCA GILBERT

Rebecca Gilbert is the kind of girl you'd want as your best friend. She's fair, rational and considered, with a mischievous sense of humour and a sexy smile that lights up the room.

"She's very warm, a really lovely character," Zoe says. "She's stable and considerate. I think it makes her good fun."

Of all the 'Losers' at school, Bec was the one who was never given a mean nickname. She's always known that if she'd refrained from hanging out with Jenny Gross, she might have been one of the cool girls.

But Bec was Jenny's friend in the sandpit, where she first came to her aid against bullies...and she'll be Jenny's friend forever.

Though at school she felt rejected by the in-crowd, in her late teens her good behaviour paid off when she landed the 'catch' of their local area – Matt O'Connor – a good-looking, up-and-coming builder, who went to school with her older brother Callum.

Lots of girls were after Matt, but Bec knew if she just stood back and let him waste his time with a few trashy chicks first, he'll turn around one day and see the girl standing coolly in the background, keeping herself nice for him. And, at last, he did.

Proving she wasn't the reject she felt at school, Bec's self-esteem soared after getting her man and she was thrilled when he finally proposed.

But they've been together nearly 10 years, engaged for four...and Matt's still resisting setting a date. He says they can't afford it yet – he wants to get his business established, get the deposit for a house, have enough for a big wedding without sending themselves broke.

Bec's happy enough to wait...for now. After all, the last thing she ever wants is to emulate her parents' angry, messy, horrible marriage.

Matt aside, the most important person in Bec's life is her best friend Jenny. Jenny is the one person who is dependable, always there for her, who gives generously to the extent she can.

All in all, everything in Bec's life is ticking along nicely. She has her Beauty Salon, good friends and the love of her life. Her world is nearly perfect and that's the way she likes it.





MELANIE VALLEJO

PLAYS SOPHIE WONG

HIGH SCHOOL MAY HAVE BEEN A NIGHTMARE FOR HER CHARACTER SOPHIE WONG BUT IT WAS A DIFFERENT STORY FOR MELANIE VALLEJO.

"I was Miss Extra Curricular," the 31-year-old remembers. "I was on the drama committee and was sport captain. You got out of school work. It was great!"

Originally from Adelaide, Melanie completed a Bachelor of Arts (Drama Performance) at Flinders University after finishing school.

"I don't ever remember thinking it was something I wouldn't do," she says of her decision to become an actor. "I didn't make a conscious decision to audition for drama school, I just did it. I didn't really have a backup plan."

Four years later she moved to Sydney and scored the role of Maddison in the Disney TV series Power Rangers: Mystic Force opposite Underbelly star Firass Dirani.

Since then, she has worked extensively in theatre and television. Her theatre credits include Gosling; Myth, Propaganda & Disaster in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America; and more recently Baghdad Wedding at the Belvoir St Theatre.

Her other TV appearances include All Saints, Secretary, Dance Academy, Cops LAC and Packed to the Rafters, where she appeared as Kat Ripley. Her film credits include Dying Breed and The Sculptor.

However, Melanie says she's most recognised for the television commercials she's done for products ranging from Stayfree, Rexona, KFC Twister and most famously Dare Iced Coffee. "Honestly once a day someone will say, 'Are you the Dare Ice Coffee girl?'" she laughs.

Melanie, who's relocated to Melbourne with fiancé Matt, was thrilled when she landed the role on Winners & Losers. "I really love that it's a show about friends," she says. "You really like the characters. Everyone loves an underdog."


It's her favourite role to date. "I think this is definitely the most fun I've ever had. It feels like our show. When you do a lot of guest appearances, you're happy to be part of it but you don't feel ownership over it."

While Sophie is born to a Chinese father and Irish-Australian mother, Melanie's ancestry is similarly exotic. Her dad is half-Spanish and half-Filipino and her mother's background is Ukrainian.

Like her three lead female co-stars, Melanie can also sing. Music runs in her family with her brother Christopher a music producer and recording engineer.

"I was in all the school plays and all the musicals."

In her spare time, she enjoys cooking and watching movies. She's a fan of Penelope Cruz and Julianne Moore as well as Australian actress Claudia Karvan.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

Buy a house and take my whole family around the world on a holiday.



SOPHIE WONG

Sexy and confident, Sophie Wong, 27, is HOT. And she knows it. “She is feisty and energetic and a bit crazy,” Melanie says of her character.

But that hasn't always been the case.

Sophie was teased throughout primary school and high school - nicknamed “So Wong”. Being part Asian wasn't the root problem, it was really all about her ability to run rings around everyone academically and her pudgy appearance - which didn't make for a good combination. Despite her strict Chinese father's praise for her grades and conscientious attitude, Sophie was miserable and lacked self-esteem.

High school was made bearable thanks to a great friendship and close rivalry with Frances and later with Bec and Jenny. The close bonds she formed with the girls made her feel safer to show more of the gung-ho girl inside her.

Finishing dux of the school, Sophie went off to study medicine, as was expected of her.

Here she soon found love with the brilliant and handsome Leo Chung. In Leo, she found someone who made her heart melt - a man who admired her brain, who saw her inner beauty and who delighted her father with his Chinese heritage. But when tragedy struck it sent Sophie on a downward spiral.

She dropped out of medical school and became a gym instructor. She lives above the gym where she works and spends her time partying and flitting through the world having casual sex with anyone she wants.

Her best friend is Doug Graham, who she met at medical school. He tries to help keep her life in order, but Sophie really has no idea who she is anymore. “I think what happens to her is what a reunion does to everybody; It makes you feel 15 again. All those insecurities you had - and she had a lot of them because of the way she looked - come flooding back,” says Melanie. “There's a big ripple effect for her that is quite a shock.”





BLAIR MCDONOUGH

PLAYS MATT O'CONNOR

BLAIR MCDONOUGH POSSESSES VERY SIMILAR KNOCKABOUT CHARM AS HIS WINNERS & LOSERS CHARACTER MATT.

While he moved around a lot during high school, thanks to his father's job with BHP, he was always popular amongst the lads and with the ladies. "I was the jock boy. Football captain and a bit of a terror. A loud smart a***. That's what I was, hopefully I've grown out of that," he adds with a laugh.

Blair, 29, became a household name in 2001 when he finished runner-up in the first series of Big Brother. "It's not something I shy away from," he says. "It was a brilliant stepping stone for me and I'm very thankful for it."

The national popularity he gained from the show and his keen interest in acting, which he'd dabbled in prior, was noted by casting agents.

After leaving Neighbours in 2006, he headed to London. "I did a lot theatre, drama and TV shows."

He played the role of Dan in a West End play called The Vegemite Tales for two seasons and competed in soccer trials for reality program The Match, set around a celebrity team.

He took part in BBC Two's Safari School, where he and seven other celebrities undertook a grueling, four-week ranger training course at Shamwari Game Reserve in South Africa.

He also appeared in the UK reality show Deadline in which various personalities work together to produce a magazine.

On returning to Australia in 2008, Blair appeared in several episodes of Sea Patrol and in a guest role on City Homicide.

He also returned to the UK to film a recurring role in the popular series Heartbeat.

In 2010, he also took part in series 10 of Dancing with the Stars, raising money for Variety in the process.

Despite his various pursuits, acting remains his number one passion. "Acting is where my heart is. I love the team-work and working with a crew. The camaraderie is a big part of why I enjoy it."

He's thrilled to be part of the cast of Winners & Losers. "It's a very real honest show," he says. "People always ask me, 'How do you remember lines?' The Winners & Losers scripts are so well written; they read as if its something you would actually say, therefore it makes it really easy to stick in your brain."

Born and currently residing in Melbourne, Blair enjoys keeping fit by running along Melbourne's foreshore and he also spends much time on his boat fishing for the elusive snapper of Melbourne's Port Phillip. He also spends time renovating his dream home, a two-storey townhouse he's been working on for the last five years. "That was on my bucket list," he says of his renovation project. "I'm in the best spot I've ever been in my life so I'm really happy."



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I wouldn't tell anyone and live with it for a while. As soon as you tell everyone, that's when you start to feel the burden. I'd like to sit back, and then have someone ask about the mortgage. And I'd say, 'Gone!' And just play God for a week. It'd be fun.



MATT O'CONNOR

Matt O'Connor, 29 is that good looking, good-natured, knockabout Aussie guy we all know.

He's the one who values his mates, works with his hands and sets all the girls' hearts racing with a ready made smile.

Blair describes him as "just a normal bloke; like a lot of guys I went to school with. There's a bit of Matt in all of us blokes."

His family is headed by parents Greg and Leanne - and with older (married) sister, Shelley - Matt has always been a popular guy.

Playing footy for the local first grade side has meant Matt's never lacked female admirers and has ensured a loyal set of buddies to drink and hang out with. He loves nothing more than getting out on the water to fish with his best mates Callum, Chugga and JB.

Matt is engaged to Bec Gilbert and has been with her for almost 10 years. He loves her, there's no question about that. He considers her a good woman - a decent, honest person who does right by him and who deserves to be treated right.

For the most part their relationship is a happy one, but like any relationship there are things that Bec does that he doesn't understand.

Like her friendship with Jenny Gross. He doesn't see what Bec gets out of the relationship and thinks Jenny puts too many demands on Bec's time and fills her head with disgruntled ideas about weddings. But he tolerates her - for Bec's sake. "The biggest thing is that Jenny has never grown up. She wears the same stuff. It irks him that she gets to the same sticking points all the time. There's no evolution. She's quite predictable. They probably have a lot more in common than they think," says Blair.

The reality is, Matt's in no hurry to be pushed into the wedding - in the end, he'll always make the decision that's right for him.





TOM WREN

PLAYS DR DOUG GRAHAM

TOM WREN MADE THE DECISION TO BECOME AN ACTOR WHILST STUDYING OVERSEAS IN MONTREAL.

He was in the final year of a commerce/arts degree when it hit him. "I was doing some theatre and the show I was doing was really well received," the 31-year-old remembers. "It was a moment where I thought, 'Can you imagine getting paid to do this!'"

After graduating from Melbourne University in 2003, he enrolled at the Victorian College of the Arts majoring in drama.

During his time at VCA Tom performed in shows such as Anna Karenina, Pericles and Saved.

Following his graduation, more theatre roles followed. He completed a tour with the Bell Shakespeare Company playing Cassio in Othello followed by The Little Dog Laughed, Lovers & Haters, A Man for All Seasons, and performed with the award winning Melbourne group The Hayloft Project.

He's appeared in guest roles on TV shows such as Bed of Roses, Saddle Club, City Homicide and Rush.

Winners & Losers is his first major television role. "It's good to see a network doing a

character-based drama," he says. "We all wait for each script to come in to see what happens next. You get emotionally invested and you want to know what happens to these people."

Tom's fellow cast member Stephen Phillips is also his future brother-in-law. Stephen is engaged to Tom's younger sister Edwina Wren, who also works as an actor. "Our paths haven't crossed before in acting but it's great," he says. "We laboured together during acting gigs. So it's nice to go full circle and work together on a project we're both wrapt about."

Tom credits sister Edwina for giving him the acting bug. "She was the actress first and I kind of followed her. She was the one doing it at high school. I broke my collarbone playing footy at uni. I was pretty bored and she was the one who said I should do some plays. That's how it started."

An admirer of the talents of Joel Edgerton, Heath Ledger, Alan Rickman and Ralph Fiennes, Tom says his decision to become an actor would surprise his high school friends. "Everyone thought I'd end up a lawyer," he says.

Unlike the four lead characters on the show, Tom had a great time at school. "I was a tragic, baggy pant wearing, hip hop loving teen much to the amusement of my folks," he says.

In his spare time, Tom enjoys swimming, keeping active and hanging out with friends.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I reckon I'd go traveling for a very long time and buy an apartment in New York.



DR DOUG GRAHAM

Doug Graham has not had an easy life, having faced adversity from an incredibly young age when both his parents died in a house fire when he was just five.

From then on living with his Nana, Doug started to heal becoming the man he is today.

A registrar, specialising in Emergency Medicine, he genuinely cares about the lives of the patients in his hands. He's cool in a crisis, calm under fire and completely dependable.

Once Doug makes up his mind about something, it's hard to shake it. Like a rock, he stands by whatever he believes in, whatever choices he makes and whomever he loves.

"He's a fairly low-key dude who works in a very high pressure environment. So in his social life and his interactions with everyone else he's very relaxed and he is loyal to a fault," says Tom.

Though he was Sophie's first lover he was never destined to be her last. He has hung in there as a friend, supporter and covert admirer through all the years, cleaning up after her and making sure she looks after herself.

Deep down he'd like to think one day Sophie will feel the same way about him as he does about her. But Doug has no intention of putting his life on hold and has no trouble attracting beautiful, intelligent women to date.





DAMIEN BODIE

PLAYS JONATHAN KURTISS

ENTHRALLED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK OF JIM HENSON, TIM BURTON AND THE CHARACTERS OF JIM CARREY, DAMIEN BODIE ASPIRED TO BE PART OF THEIR WORLD WHEN HE WAS ONLY NINE.

"My all-time favourite movies are Who Framed Roger Rabbit and The Great Muppet Caper. They created this world where you can co-exist with cartoons. I was like, 'How can I live that?' The only way is to act."

As a shy youngster, his parents were surprised by his keen interest in acting. "I was very shy growing up believe it or not," he says. "I remember telling my mum that I really wanted to become an actor. Mum was like, 'That's the worst thing for Damien because he's so shy. Why would he want to do that?' So she actually held me off for a couple of years."

After appearing in school productions, his parents finally relented when he was 12 and got him an agent. Within a week, he scored a guest role on Neighbours and later that year a part in series four of The Man From Snowy River. "It was like one of those out of this world experience. I'd been wanting to do it for so long and then suddenly there I was actually doing it."

Acting not only cured Damien of his shyness, it also taught him to read. "I could never understand novels. I don't know if it was a form of dyslexia or I was just lazy. It seemed backwards to me. When I discovered scripts, I learnt how to read. They made more sense to me. You have the character name, who's who in the scene and the scene header. You don't get that in a novel. And also the font is too close together. But in the script it's all spread out."

Dream roles followed over the years. ABC's Ben and the Alien Invasion saw him performing opposite himself as a talking wart. Next came the fantasy telemovie Balanced Particle Freeway opposite talking animals and puppetry. "It was a dream come true as I got to work with puppets. We had puppeteers that had worked on some of the Muppet movies. It skyrocketed me into discovering this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. There was no turning back."

Over the next few years he scored leading roles in Ocean Girl 4, Crash Zone, Short Cuts, Guinevere Jones, Bootleg, Elephant Princess and the sci-fi pilot Welcome to the Cosmos.

His guest roles have included The Saddle Club, Marshall Law, Blue Heelers, Fergus Mcphail and City Homicide. His feature film

credits include Hating Alison Ashley and Stephen King's telemovie Salems Lot.

In 1996, he scored a full-time role on Neighbours. While he'd appeared in guest roles at age 12 and 15, he finally scored a lead role aged 22 as Dylan Timmins. "Being pale and skinny, I never thought I'd be a long term Neighbours regular. I wasn't tanned or beachy. I thought that would never happen."

He remained on the show for two years and made lifelong friends with his co-star and on-screen brother Ben Nicholas and Kyal Marsh, who now flat with him in Melbourne.

After finishing up on the series, Damien headed to LA to develop his acting skills. Like his hero Jim Carrey, he undertook lots of improvisation workshops and performed at the famed Upright Citizens Brigade Los Angeles. "Actors like him have done a lot of improv training – I did a lot of that overseas. It's about getting up on stage and having a laugh. I wanted to experience what the people I love have done."



He returned to his hometown of Melbourne to accept the role on Winners & Losers. "I've never hit that prime time slot before," he says. "This is an exciting point in my career; something I've never done before."

In his spare time, Damien enjoys collecting Ninja Turtle action figurines and barracking for his beloved AFL team Collingwood.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

As much as I'd be told not to, I'd fund my own project. I'd write a script where basically I could become The Mask. I'd write my dream role – it'd have cartoons and puppets in it. It wouldn't be cohesive I'm sure. It probably wouldn't do well and I'd lose all my money and then I'd start again from scratch.

WINNERS &
LOSERS 



JONATHAN KURTISS

Jonathan, 26, is Frances' assistant and he loves his job.

"Jonathan adores Frances for who she is; he is in charge of not only what's happening in her work life but also her personal life," says Damien Bodie of his character in *Winners & Losers*.

He was born to be helpful, efficient, bossy and well - right. He knows the right clothes, the right venues, the right people to consort with. He's charming, erudite, a lover of good food and wine. And he has style.

Jonathan is gay. He's not high camp or effeminate, but he's well spoken and can turn on the sharp wit with the best of them.

A country boy from the Dandenongs originally, Jonathan comes from an accepting supporting family home - with his intelligent mother and gentle vintner Dad.

He considers himself lucky to be so loved, unlike his long term partner, Chris Jones, 33, who has not come out to his highly judgmental and disapproving family.

He's a genuinely nice guy - albeit a little shallow at times - but if anything's going to get him upset and emotional, it's one of his friends or family getting hurt.

Frances is near the top of the list of people he cares about and though he finds her hilarious and adorable most of the time, he secretly worries about her stunted emotional life.

He knows she's a little useless when it comes to 'reading between the lines' with anything that's not direct, and while she might be awesomely talented and clever when it comes to men in business, she's totally clueless about men in a romantic sense.

It's his mission in life to see her happy and fulfilled - even though that's not on his list of official job duties. "I think everyone needs a good Jonathan in their life. Someone to have a laugh with; someone who doesn't take themselves too seriously."





STEPHEN PHILLIPS

PLAYS ZACH ARMSTRONG

STEPHEN PHILLIPS' INITIAL MOTIVATION TO BECOME AN ACTOR WAS SIMPLE. "I JOINED THE DRAMA GROUP AT SCHOOL BECAUSE ALL THE REALLY CUTE GIRLS DID IT," HE LAUGHS.

His interest in acting grew from there. "A couple of years later when we were doing this school play – 12 Angry Men – that was the moment when I went, 'Wow! I'd love to keep doing this,'" Stephen, 36, says.

After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2002, Stephen began his love affair with the theatre appearing in a string of acclaimed productions.

He's worked extensively with the Melbourne Theatre Company starring in *Metamorphoses*, *Take Me Out*, *Boy Gets Girl*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, where he played Nick opposite Garry McDonald and Wendy Hughes. "It's such an amazing play; such a difficult role and it goes for over three hours in three acts. And we were performing eight times a week.

"It was exhilarating but completely exhausting. I got to the end of the week and got the wonderful feeling actors don't often get to feel a lot of time; I'd done a whole week

of work and worked really hard."

He's also toured with the Bell Shakespeare Company playing Orlando in *As You Like It*.

After guest roles in *Blue Heelers*, *Neighbours*, *Last Man Standing*, *Offspring* and *City Homicide*, *Winners & Losers* is his first major TV role. "It's very exciting and daunting," he says. "It's a big learning curve that happens with any new medium. I've done a lot of theatre but television is a different beast. I do most of my scenes with Virginia [Gay] and Damien [Bodie] and they've been doing it for years so I just watch them and go, 'Ok! That's how you do it.'"

Stephen has also appeared in several films including *Scratch*, *What's The Score*, *Love Letters* and the soon to be released thriller "X".

For acting inspiration, he looks up to esteemed American actor Willem Dafoe. "I grew up watching *Platoon* and *Mississippi Burning* and thought, 'Wow! There's something about this guy.' I saw his theatre company when they came over for the Melbourne Festival and saw him on stage. That was pretty amazing."

Stephen is engaged to actress Edwina Wren, the sister of his co-star Tom Wren. The pair recently became parents to daughter Elsie. "I love it," he says of being a new dad.

In his spare time, when he is not renovating his home Stephen enjoys running, swimming and teaching Pilates.

"It all started in the lean times," he says. "I was after a job that was going to be creative and involved people; something that I had to retrain in and something that had a professional bent to it. It's been the most wonderful job. I find it really fulfilling."



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I don't know. I don't think anyone really knows what they'd do until it happens. You have all these dreams about holidays but once you have the money I think you'd go whoa, what does my life and family need. I seriously couldn't answer it until I was faced with it. I like to think I'd do something exciting and daring but I don't know.



ZACH ARMSTRONG

Intelligent, witty and charismatic, with 'blue steel' looks straight out of a catalogue, Zach Armstrong, 31, has the world eating out of the palm of his hand.

"On the surface he's a very capable businessman," Stephen says. "He's someone who's very good in social situations; knows all the right things to say; he puts people at ease. Underneath, he's someone dealing with a tricky past. He operates on two different levels like a lot of us really. No one's ever who they really seem."

Born into a well-to-do family, Zach had an upbringing many dream of. An only child, Zach had the opportunity to tour the country - and much of the world - with his father, a prominent motivational speaker and his mother who was constantly by his side as she dutifully travelled to support her husband's burgeoning empire. Theirs was a family of 'talkers'. If a problem arose, they would sit down and 'talk it through'.

A focused and driven businessman, Zach has worked hard to forge a successful career in management consultancy.

He is extremely good at what he does, in no small part due to his extraordinary ability to schmooze clients - male or female - with an effortlessness that leaves many of his colleagues scratching their heads.

Working for large firm 'Fraser and Brown', Zach is getting itchy feet. The company doesn't have the best of reputations and Zach's career is being held back because of it. He's looking for something new, something of his own. Lucky for Zach, he's about to find it.





DENISE SCOTT

PLAYS TRISH GROSS

MUCH-LOVED COMEDIENNE DENISE SCOTT HAS OFTEN DRAWN COMIC INSPIRATION FROM HER REAL-LIFE FAMILY.

"Because I simply don't have the imagination to think of anything else," she laughs. "I have really tried not to use my family in my routines. But nothing else comes to mind! And it's also, I find, an endlessly fascinating topic."

Now playing the Gross family matriarch Trish, she's able to look back at her own experiences raising her children, Jordie and Bonnie.

Unlike her on-screen daughter Jenny, life at school was fun for the budding performing.

"I went to a Catholic girls' school - Our Ladies in Heidelberg - and we were always putting on concerts. I remember the first time I was in the school play. I was the bald-headed butler. I was disappointed I'd been given that role as there were all these other fabulous roles in this Noel Coward play.

"All I got to do was come on and give people drinks and go off. But every time I came on, the audience roared with laughter and it was not intended. All the cast and I were dumbfounded. That was the start of something."

Denise's first foray into show-biz came when she joined the clown ensemble in a performance group in Albury after bluffing about her juggling skills.

It was there she met skilled clown and street performer John Lane, who later became her partner.

Soon after she became part of the all-female comedy group, the Natural Normans, alongside Home and Away's Lynne McGranger, Sally Anne Upton and Lynda Gibson.

When the girls went overseas to tour, Denise, who was now a mother, decided to go solo, launching her stand-up career. "I thought I was going to be brilliant...until I stepped out on stage for that first gig. Twenty years later I've just figured out how you do it."

Her ability to make people laugh with her blend of personal stories and topical conversations has earned her much acclaim including a Barry Award nomination for Best Show at the Melbourne Comedy Festival for her sold out festival hit, *Scotty and Son*, in 2004.

She received a second nomination the following year for *Denise Scott Gives Good Council*.

Her stand up material has opened the door to a string of television appearances on *Big Gig*, *Full Frontal*, *Spicks & Speck*, *Rove [Live]* and more recently a regular Friday spot on *The 7pm Project*.

In 2006, she branched out into radio hosting Melbourne's Vega FM breakfast show on Vega 91.5 with Dave O'Neil and Shaun Micallef.

It was during her two years with the station that a book publisher, and avid listener, offered her a publishing deal. In 2008 she released her autobiographical book *All That Happened at Number 26*. "No. 26 is the first house that John and I ever bought, and we still live in it."

With over 20 years of experience under her belt, Denise puts her longevity down to "not knowing how to do anything else".



Although she's already achieved so much in her career, *Winners & Losers* is actually her first major acting TV role. "I'm 55 and that's brilliant," she says. "It's exciting to be part of a big team because usually I work in such isolation. And having a script I don't have to write just thrills me. I'm having a ball."

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I would buy both my kids a house. I've got what I need. John and I had our car written off and it's still sitting out the front. We just haven't got another one. Our dishwasher broke a year ago and we haven't bought another. We're hopeless.



TRISH GROSS

Trish is mother to four kids, Deidre 30, Jenny 27, Bridget 24 and Patrick 19.

She is the quintessential Catholic battler who knows how to be grateful for what she's got and how to put a positive spin on the hard things in life.

"She's the salt of the earth," says Denise of her character. "She's loving; a little old fashioned. She loves her family."

Trish somehow manages to laugh at almost everything - good and bad - that life throws at her. She's got a heart of gold, broad shoulders and a wonderful collection of home spun wisdom which she draws on for every occasion. There's nothing that can't be fixed by the words "you've got to laugh"; she'll tell you "you've got to bend a little, or you'll break"; and she'll observe that "there's no point crying over things you can't change." These things are true for Trish and helpful to her brood, who look to her for a never ending stream of support and love.

While Trish has never had high expectations for her life, she's far from disappointed at the way things have turned out.

Her husband, Brian, is a good provider and father, trustworthy and kind. Her kids all got through puberty without losing life or limb - something she prayed for every day.

True, she's having trouble with her youngest, Patrick, who seems to be on a permanent gap year after leaving school. And, yes, Deirdre is very bossy and disturbingly grasping at times. And she's a little worried about how lost Jenny seems to be - but Bridget is about to marry a nice fellow and the others will sort themselves out in time.



FRANCIS GREENSLADE

PLAYS BRIAN GROSS



PLAYING A FATHER TO FOUR ADULT CHILDREN ON-SCREEN HAS GIVEN FRANCIS GREENSLADE PLENTY OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

With three young children – Charlotte, 11, Isabelle, eight, and Edward, six – *Winners & Losers* has provided valuable insight into the future for him and his wife Lousie. “It’s good to go through all these issues and think, ‘Ok. This is what I’m going to be facing later on. This is how a nice man deals with it.’ It’s a nice example of what I should be doing.”

Francis, 48, started performing with Adelaide University’s Footlights Club. “I started a Law/Arts degree and after the first year got bored with the extreme tedium of the Law part and switched to pure Arts.”

It was here in 1981 he met comedian Shaun Micallef, with whom he went on to star alongside in *The Micallef Program*, *Welcher & Welcher* and *Micallef Tonight*.

Suddenly, acting became his career. “I had always been fascinated by the stage – my first role was the parlour maid in a school production of *Pygmalion*. I never thought that it was a realistic career choice but at university I did less and less work and more and more

theatre until I was completely unequipped for anything else. Not so much a deliberate decision as a refusal to do anything else.”

He went on to appear regularly in *SeaChange* as Simmo and in *Full Frontal*, *Blue Heelers* five times as different characters, *Water Rats*, *The Games*, *Pigs Breakfast*, *Introducing Gary Petty* and *Marshall Law*.

His role in *Marshall Law* is his favourite role to date. “I played a dotty lawyer. I really liked that. Normally I’d get the comic idiot role. But I got to wear a nice suit.”

His long list of theatre credits includes productions with the State Theatre Company of South Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, *Magpie*, *Playbox* and *Arena*.

Starring alongside Denise Scott, who plays his on-screen wife Trish, is a joy. “She makes me laugh. All she has to do is speak and I laugh.”

In his spare time, he enjoys reading and listening to music. He also plays the keyboard, clarinet, accordion, guitar, ukulele and the recorder, albeit “mediocrely”. “The only one I really play at all regularly is the piano. I find if I take out my accordion nowadays, my children start to cry.”

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I’d take the money and then I would leave my clothes at the beach with one set of footprints going into the water and then I’d go on a boat and leave. No I don’t know. I’d probably pay off the mortgage and go on a long holiday.



BRIAN GROSS

Brian Gross is happiest when he's watching and listening to his noisy family - and doesn't often feel the need to add to the cacophony.

He likes to follow current affairs, read his newspaper, do his crossword, and generally leave the fussing and rulemaking to his wife, Trish. His professional life as a manager for State Rail satisfies his quiet, patient personality.

For him, family life is beautiful. "He's a very nice man. They're quite a traditional family. He had a hard upbringing so he's very grateful to be where he is. He loves his family. He loves his life. He's just a happy, content, man. He's a good father," says Francis of his character.

His own mother died when he was young and Brian felt a great appreciation for his father's love and effort during his childhood. He believes a good work ethic is important and he takes pride in providing for his family and making a comfortable home to raise them in.

Trish might not be everyone's cup of tea - loud, funny and always one with an opinion - but to Brian she's everything. They met at a local pub while Brian was visiting his cousin in Renwood. Trish was the publican's daughter and she was helping her father raffle off the meat tray. He won the meat tray that night... and a whole lot more.





SARAH GRACE

PLAYS BRIDGET GROSS

SARAH GRACE CAN CERTAINLY RELATE TO THE ISSUES HER GEEKY ON-SCREEN SISTER JENNY FACES ON WINNERS & LOSERS.

"I was quite a chubby kid with braces," she recalls. "I was a bit of a nerd burger."

In Year 9, after "the weight fell off and the braces came off," Sarah suddenly began to get noticed. "I remember being in drama class and there was this boy I thought was really cute. His friend came over one day and said he liked me. I didn't believe it. I thought they were just being mean. But he ended up becoming my first boyfriend."

Sarah, 27, knew from an early age that acting was for her. "I was always showing off and putting on plays. When I was 12 I had a music teacher who was really supportive and he got a group of us together to audition for the local production of Les Mis. I just loved it."

Sarah is married in real life to fellow actor Paul Moore, who plays her on-screen husband Wes. Like her character Bridget, who's busily preparing for their wedding, Sarah and Paul married in September 2010. "In the audition I was thinking, 'C'mon this can't be any more like my real life.' Now Paul is playing my husband. It's like our life is on telly."

The pair met in Los Angeles in 2004. They both ventured over there with two female friends to study at the Stella Adler Acting Academy.

"These friends fell in love with the rock stars that lived downstairs so they moved out on us. So we hooked up and that was it."

The full-time course involved intensive training in acting technique, voice, improvisation and movement. This experience, along with the Bachelor of Education degrees they both attained at Deakin University, was the impetus in the MooreGrace Acting Studios in Geelong. "We thought the teaching degrees would be a great idea with our acting," she says.

Since returning to Australia Sarah has appeared on Neighbours, Blue Heelers and Canal Road. She also has a string of community theatre appearances under her belt in roles such as Annie, The Sound of Music and The Breakfast Club.

Winners & Losers is her first major acting role. "Every episode is a classic. I can't wait to read the next one. There's a good balance between humour and drama."

When she's not busy acting or teaching at her acting school, Sarah likes to relax at her nearby beach in Torquay.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

Paul and I always talk about this. We'd just buy a big house and travel a lot and keep doing the same thing we're doing now because we love it.



BRIDGET GROSS

Bridget, 24, is full of opinions and far from a wallflower. Being the middle child she was forced to speak more loudly and more often if she wanted to be heard. It's a trait she's carried through life.

"If something is going on in her world, she tells everyone about it so all the focus is to be on her," says Sarah. "She's a bit of a princess I guess."

In high school, Bridget was the one who laughed off the "Gross Out" family name more than anyone else. She couldn't give a rat's tail what anyone thought of her, so to be teased in such a silly way made her feel more sorry for the people saying it than anything else.

Bridget loves her family and is very protective of Jenny, who always seemed to be getting picked on. She always had young men chasing after her, she's pretty and she knows it and has never been short of a date. But those days are behind her now that she's met the love of her life – Wes Fitzpatrick. They are engaged and will soon be married.

With a love of all things "beauty" Bridget is hoping to one day become a make-up artist. It's a while down the track, however, because right now all that matters to Bridget is her upcoming wedding.





JACK PEARSON

PLAYS PATRICK GROSS

WHILE JACK PEARSON PLAYS THE ANNOYING BABY BROTHER ON-SCREEN, IN REAL-LIFE HE'S THE ELDEST OF THREE.

Growing up on the family property in Strathewen, Victoria, the Pearson's had plenty of room to roam. His younger siblings – sister Billie and brother Joe – are both champion equestrian riders but Jack preferred motorbikes. "They go faster and you don't have to feed them," the 21-year-old laughs.

When sister Billie returned home one day with a laptop from her school, Jack decided it was time to switch schools. "I was going to this rough as guts school; fighting at lunch time, that sort of stuff.

"My sister came home one day with this laptop. I was like, 'I want to go to that school.' But my parents couldn't afford it at the time so I had to apply for a scholarship."

Jack's perseverance paid off and he was accepted into Ivanhoe Grammar, a decision which changed his life forever. "I'll never forget the first assembly and we were all in chairs, which was a shock as we used to just all sit on the basketball court at my previous school.

"And this student performed a song from the Little Shop of Horrors. I was like, 'This kid is going to go down.' That's what would have happened at my last school. But here he sang this song and he got a standing ovation from the whole school. I thought, 'I want to be like that.' That was the point I decided I wanted to be an actor."

After performing in a string of school plays, his parents finally gave in and got him an agent while he was still at school in Year 12.

At his second audition, he landed a starring role in the Disney Channel's *As the Bell Rings*. Guest roles in *City Homicide* and *Rush* followed.

Winners & Losers is a dream role for the Hugh Jackman fan. "I love the fact it's about friendship," he says. "Friendship is the most important thing beside family."

Jack lives at home with his family, who have relocated to a 15-acre farm in Doreen.

In his spare time, he enjoys gymnastics, snow boarding, wake boarding and spending time with friends.

He's also fine-tuning his acting skills at the Centre Stage Performing Arts School in Brunswick.



WHAT YOU WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

I think I'd have to take my parents on a holiday; send them somewhere because dad works too hard and never takes holidays!



PATRICK GROSS

Like most 19-year-old boys, Patrick is happy doing as little as he can to get by.

"He's not fussed with growing up, he's very relaxed," Jack says of his character. "He's fun - doesn't have to do much except annoy his sisters."

On what is rapidly becoming the longest 'gap year' on record, Patrick is enjoying his downtime after graduating from high school, two years ago.

He works the occasional shift stacking groceries at the local supermarket - only so he's got a small amount of money to play with each week - preferring to spend most of his time bumming around at home playing video games, hanging out with his mates or working out at the gym. "Patrick is completely obsessed with his body; he's a gym junkie," says Jack.

With a slight sense of ADD about him - he's always got to be doing something, always fidgeting - he's in no hurry to grow up and find a real job.

He gets bored easily, so jumping from one time wasting activity to another suits him down to the ground.

Just like any little brother, he enjoys teasing his sisters - especially Jenny - and speaking the truth whenever it might cause a little good-natured discomfort. But, at the end of the day, he loves them to death. Just like he does his mum and dad.





JOHN HOLMES

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

The Head of Drama at Channel Seven since 1994, John Holmes has been behind many of Australia's most beloved series for the past 30 years.

John started work in the British television industry in 1969 as a trainee at ITC, the production and distribution arm of UK network broadcaster ATV.

He immigrated to Australia in 1971 and joined the Seven Network in Sydney in the film department. He progressed through the production department starting as a stagehand, then floor manager and in-house producer.

In 1982 he joined the successful Grundy Organisation, where he produced Sons and Daughters before setting up and producing Neighbours.

In 1987 he returned to the Seven Network to produce the pilot for Home and Away. With its success he stayed on as producer before joining the Nine Network in 1989 as executive producer in the drama department.

Heading across to Network Ten in 1991, he stayed as Head of Drama for four years before finally returning to the Seven Network where he remains today.

As Channel Seven's Head of Drama he has executive produced Blue Heelers, Home and Away, All Saints, Last Man Standing, Packed to the Rafters, City Homicide and now Winners & Losers.





BEVAN LEE

CREATOR OF WINNERS & LOSERS AND NETWORK SCRIPT EXECUTIVE

Bevan has been a central figure in Australian television writing for almost thirty years.

After achieving a degree in pure mathematics, Bevan discovered he had a talent for scriptwriting and chose this career over the world of numbers and symbols. He has never regretted that choice for a moment.

His early development took place with the Grundy organization, where he script produced the first four years of Sons and Daughters and one of the latter years of Prisoner.

The big break of his career came when he was chosen to write the opening telemovie of Home and Away and then went on to shepherd it to hit status as its script producer for the first eighteen months.

An eight year stint as Network Script Executive for the Nine Network Australia followed, during which time Bevan was an integral part of the reversal of that network's previously lacklustre drama record.

He was then lured back to Network Seven as Network Script Executive, overseeing the scripting of all their drama. In that role, he created the long running, multi-award winning hit drama All Saints and later the quirky International Emmy nominated hit Always Greener.

Bevan's instincts have proven right, resulting in the unparalleled successful drama Packed to the Rafters, and now the hugely anticipated drama Winners & Losers.

'I've always been fascinated by how everyone carries their inner loser inside them, however much of a winner they may appear externally. The timing seemed right to explore this theme through the lives of four female characters, focusing on their friendship as the ultimate win in their lives. I am very proud of the show we have all made and hope Australia thinks it is the breath of fresh air that we think it is.'



WINNERS & LOSERS 



MARYANNE CARROLL

PRODUCER

MaryAnne began her producing career in live comedy stage shows and festivals, including The Edinburgh Fringe and both the New Zealand and Melbourne International Comedy Festivals.

During this time she produced many of the festival's events for broadcast for Channel Seven and ABC. She also developed and associate produced ABC documentary What's So Funny?

After working for Beyond Productions as Associate Producer on Hessian's Shed with Paul Hester, MaryAnne crossed over to television as a full-time producer for Artist Services/Red Heart Productions. She developed and segment produced various projects and pilots, before being asked to stay on as the producer of Foxtel's The Comedy Channel, where she produced popular comedy, light entertainment and comedy drama programs, including AWGIE award-winning comedy-drama series Introducing Gary Petty.

MaryAnne worked as supervising producer of animated and live-action comedy shows for the internet, and consulted on a range of comedy shows for a variety of producers and production companies before accepting a position with Burberry Productions in June 2001.

At Burberry, MaryAnne produced the DVC unit of Short Cuts for Channel Seven and Disney Channel, the 42-week Saturday morning variety series sn:tv for Nickelodeon – as well as developing and pre-producing a number of other projects.

In 2004 MaryAnne moved to Sydney to take over Channel Seven medical drama All Saints after it moved into the Emergency Department, she then relocated back to Melbourne to take on City Homicide and now is heading Channel Seven's new drama Winners & Losers.





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