

A heart-warming series that follows a group of singles as they step into the dating world for the very first time

Better Date Than Never



ABC TV | ABC iview

Premieres 20 February 2024 at 8.30pm

Watch weekly on ABC TV or stream all episodes on ABC iview

Press Kit



Index.

Better Date Than Never	1
Why make this series?.....	2
Participants	3
Episode 1.	10
Episode 2.	11
Episode 3.	12
Episode 4.	13
Episode 5.	14
Episode 6.	15
Episode 7.	16
Director’s Statement.	17
Producer’s Statement.	18
Language Guidelines.	19
The Team	20
Credits.....	21



Premieres Tuesday, 20 February 2024
Watch weekly on ABC TV at 8.30pm + stream all episodes on ABC iView
#BetterDateThanNever

Better Date Than Never

Following the endearing and popular first series, BETTER DATE THAN NEVER returns with more stories of a diverse group of single love seekers as they take their first step into the dating world.

Looking for love this season will be some returning characters who are continuing their search for that special someone, as well as some new singles ready to step into the dating world for the very first time.

Kento (25) is an I.T. worker and self-confessed geek, who hasn't had much opportunity to meet women IRL (In Real Life). Seventh Day Adventist, Asher (22), is navigating the rulebooks of her religion and culture to find a pathway to her first ever date. Jack (21) has held back pursuing romance as he believes his Cerebral Palsy may be perceived as a burden. While Allycia (28) has never dated but desperately wants the full fairy-tale. Particularly if it's with Chris Hemsworth!

These new daters join returning characters Charles (28) Chinese International student, Dianne (68) transgender farmer and loved up couple Liv and Ben, who found love in Series One.

With a little help from the producers, the participants launch themselves into a world they've always found daunting but wanted to explore. They are matched with a potential suitor, and ready themselves to meet them on a blind date. We are with them as they experience the most important moment of their dating lives: the beginning.

From the whirlwind of speed dating, to romantic candlelight dinners and playful theme park dates, we follow our participants on the sometimes-rocky road to finding love. As their stories develop – connections will be made, hearts will break, love will blossom.

Refreshingly real, honest and diverse, BETTER DATE THAN NEVER is a warm-hearted series exploring the world of dating and relationships, from the creators of LOVE ON THE SPECTRUM.





Why make this series?

BETTER DATE THAN NEVER was born from a desire to tell inclusive stories of love and relationships.

We believe that the realm of the dating show shouldn't belong only to the young and the instagrammable. There is a hunger from audiences to see a more diverse range of people of all shapes and sizes, abilities and sexualities, as they navigate the universal experience of looking for love.

Who appears on screen in shows about love and dating can have a real-world effect on how audiences feel about themselves. Who is deserving of love? What makes someone desirable?

If you were to turn on your television to look for an answer, it would surely be: the best looking, most confident, cis-gender, able-bodied people. This is not just a problem of representation; it affects our collective beliefs and understandings of who is valued and who isn't. Yet no matter how we identify sexually, what our bodies look like or how our brains work, we are all worthy of finding love.

BETTER DATE THAN NEVER aims to create positive outcomes for both the participants and audiences alike. It's a series celebrating difference, embracing uniqueness, and having a lot of fun along the way.



Di

"I'm running out of time to find the love of my life"

Di is a transgender woman and farmer from Tamworth, NSW. At age 68 she feels time is running short to find a life companion and her true love. Exploring the dating world after transitioning to become a woman in her sixties has been a challenge.

In addition to farming, she is an active member of the local agricultural associations as well as the LGBTQI groups in her regional NSW community for which she has been recently recognised as 'Tamworth Woman of the Year'. Despite having a full rich life, she yearns to fulfill her dream to meet someone who she can grow old with.



Kento

"It's like going on a roller coaster, even though I don't like roller coasters"

Kento is a 25-year-old I.T. worker from Wollongong who loves all things anime – an interest blossoming from his Japanese heritage.

Living in the world of computers, manga figurines and remote-controlled cars, Kento hasn't had much opportunity to meet women IRL (In Real Life). Now that he has completed his studies, is working full time, and has his driver's licence, he is finally ready to take on the roller coaster world of dating.



Liv

"I think I'm most happiest when I'm with Ben... He just makes me feel really good and safe"

Liv is a 21-year-old self-confessed romantic who had her first ever kiss in Series 1 of BETTER DATE THAN NEVER when she was introduced to the handsome Ben.

She was born with Cerebral palsy and believed it was her disability that had kept her from dating... until now!

Since meeting Ben she's hardly looked back. He officially asked her to be his girlfriend, he met the family and was there to meet her at the airport after her three months away in her homeland Greece.



Asher

"I do wish there was a rulebook for dating"

Asher is an adventurous and driven 22-year-old political science student from Brisbane who was born in Papua New Guinea.

A thrill seeker with a thirst for knowledge she is constantly looking for ways to better herself while staying true to her Seventh Day Adventist faith. With her mind and soul accounted for, it's time for the next chapter – her heart. Asher hopes to meet someone who can accept her for all that she is, faith included.



Charles

"Love is the essential, necessary part of human life"

Charles is a 28-year-old international student from China who came to Sydney looking for more than an education.

A nature lover, gaming nerd and keen home cook, the proudly gay Charles is researching how algae might combat climate change.

Charles has completed his master's degree and embarked on a PhD, marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of World Pride, and invested in a new hotpot – all since filming Series 1 of BETTER DATE THAN NEVER. Love has continued to allude him but he's now open to new approaches he's not tried before.



Jack

"It's hard for me to believe I can have love"

The charismatic and debonair Jack is craving connection with someone special. He has Cerebral palsy causing constant muscle stiffness in his limbs and has had more surgeries than he can count. His concerns that romantic interests will see him as a burden have held him back.

As a child, Jack took part in telethon fundraisers for disability and now works as an advocate for youth living with disabilities. He loves reading sci-fi & fantasy and currently writing his own sci-fi novel. A gym regular and skilled Segway rider, he has a modified car that he is learning to drive.

Jack thinks his disability has been the reason he hasn't yet dated but it's time to take on his fears.



Allycia

"I like the idea of being in love, but I don't know what love is"

Allycia is a fun-loving 28-year-old from Brisbane who wants a fairytale ending of her own.

She lives with a condition known as 'Chromosome 18', a deletion of the 18th chromosome that results in epilepsy, low muscle tone and neurodevelopment disorders. She is in a band, a performance troupe and MCs events with her best friend and Series 1 participant, Olivia. She loves Olivia almost as much as she loves her amazing Mum and wants to find love, just as Olivia did in Series 1. Particularly if it's with a Hemsworth!



Airs Tuesday, 20 February 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iView from 8.30pm

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 1.

Kento is a 25-year-old I.T. worker who loves all things anime – an interest blossoming from his Japanese heritage. Living in the world of computers, manga figurines and remote-controlled cars, Kento hasn't had much opportunity to meet women IRL (In Real Life). But now he is ready to take on the rollercoaster world of dating and steps out on his first date ever.

Di is a transgender woman and farmer from Tamworth in NSW. At age 68 she feels time is running short to find a life companion and her true love. Since appearing in series 1, Di has continued her challenging search for 'The One'. She is bracing herself for what she feels could be her last throw of the dice on the dating scene.

Liv, a 21-year-old self-confessed hopeless romantic, had her first kiss in Series 1 of BETTER DATE THAN NEVER when she was introduced to the handsome Ben. She was born with Cerebral palsy and believed it was her disability that had held back her confidence from dating. The new relationship with Ben has Liv swooning, but there are still a few hurdles for her and Ben to negotiate including an introduction to some loved ones.

Asher is a driven 22-year-old political science student from Brisbane who was born in Papua New Guinea. She is navigating the rulebooks of her family culture and religion to find a pathway to her first ever date.



Airs Tuesday, 27 February 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iView from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 2.

Kento struggles with interesting topics to engage his date with as he navigates the awkward silences. The specifics of his Hot Wheels car collection could be a deal breaker for Madeleine.

Jack is a humorous 21-year-old living in Perth, WA. He is craving a genuine connection with someone special and has never dated before. He has Cerebral palsy and describes himself as resembling a “praying mantis cowboy man”. His belief that any romantic interests would see him as a burden has held him back and he has never been on a date. It’s now time to take on those fears headfirst as he steps out on a blind date.

Di’s long-awaited date finally happens. She is enthralled as she meets Alida, who regales her with stories of her adventurous life, far from the quiet world of Di’s farm. Di is so taken by Alida’s company that she spills her wine. Though it looks like it will take more than a spilt drink to deter a smitten Alida and it seems there is hope on both sides.

Liv survived her ‘meet the parents and the neighbours’ moment and has relaxed into her special date with Ben at a local Greek restaurant. Now the young couple need to consider how they will cope with a temporary separation. Liv instructs Ben on how to put his arm around her, but they both feel very comfortable leaning into a kiss by the moonlight.

Asher has put aside her textbooks and bible momentarily to take some time to focus on another part of her life. She is well on track with goals for her mind and soul but it’s time for another chapter – her heart. Bolstered with encouragement from her Papuan sisters who are at her side to help with makeup and wardrobe, Asher is ready to set foot into the completely new and novel world of dating.





Airs Tuesday, 5 March 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iview from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 3.

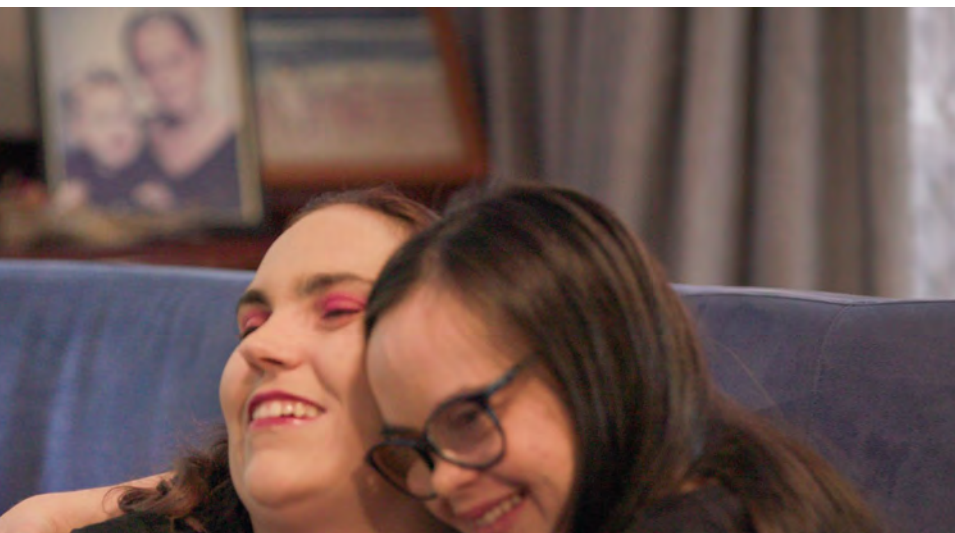
Charles is a 28-year-old student from China who came to Sydney looking for more than an education. A nature lover, gaming nerd and keen home cook, the proudly gay Charles is researching how algae might combat climate change.

Since embarking on his first ever date in Series 1 Charles has completed his master's degree and embarked on a PhD, marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of World Pride, and invested in a new hotpot. Love has continued to allude him, but he's considering new approaches. He's always found dating one on one intimidating so the idea of several dates in one location at a speed dating event has him reaching for his cologne and his best collared shirt.

Jack and his first date Phoebe have a lot in common, including a tummy full of butterflies. They agree small talk is difficult and awkward, so they cleverly turn their anxiety into a game where neither of them ends up feeling a winner.

Allycia is a high energy, fun-loving 28-year-old from Brisbane who wants a romantic fairy-tale of her very own. She has a condition known as Chromosome 18 – a deletion of the 18th Chromosome which she explains means “her brain works a bit differently to other peoples”. Though dealt this card she remains a true-life enthusiast. Allycia is best friends with Series 1 participant, Olivia. Olivia comes over for a visit, and they talk about Allycia finding her True Love Prince. She wants to experience romance and love, just as her best friend Olivia has. Particularly if it's with Chris Hemsworth!

Kento is not dissuaded after his first ever date ended with an offer of friendship. He is open and ready to try again.



Airs Tuesday, 12 March 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iView from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

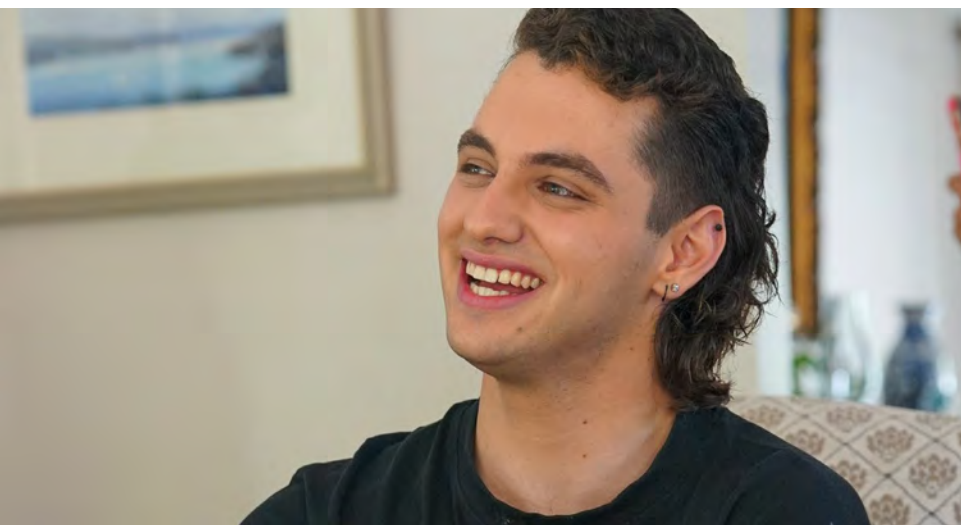
Episode 4.

Allycia gets ready for her first ever date. She picks an outfit to be noticed in and glittering makeup to match her exuberance. The date kicks off well. Her dream has always been to go on a date at a theme park and while this part comes true, her wish that her first date would be her True Love Prince will soon be revealed.

Kento heads out on second date with someone new. He is surprised she finds him funny and he is quickly smitten with the like-minded Rebecca. Though just meeting for the first time they chat and laugh and exchange gifts like a pair of great old friends. Could there be more? After saying goodbye, Kento is left hopeful it won't be the last time he sees Rebecca.

Charles's big day has arrived. Having never been to a Speed Dating event before, he looks for some support and advice from his friend Jimmy who encourages him just to be himself, plus 10%. This encouragement sets Charles off with an open attitude and as the rounds of dates kick off, he is clearly enjoying meeting so many new possible beaus.





Airs Tuesday, 19 March 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iView from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 5.

Allycia's theme park date with Cameron is action packed fun. As in all true romance stories, he even wins a giant plush toy and presents it to her. After the date wraps up, Allycia's devoted Mum has some emotional expectations and tears to manage.

Charles has been in a whirlwind of bell ringing and personal information sharing at his first Speed Dating event. Forms need to be filled and boxes need to be ticked before Charles will know if he has made any matches from the evening.

Asher is about to meet her first date. Her mind is whirring with thoughts of what and what not to talk about with a sense of excitement and anticipation. The setting is romantic, her date Matt is handsome and he arrives with beautiful flowers. There are a lot of things going right and Asher feels safe enough within the positive vibe to steer the conversation into the danger zone of politics and religion.

Jack goes on a second date, this time with Claire. He claims he can tell within 10 minutes if he is interested in someone. On this date however, he appears smitten at first sight, and unsure what to do with the emotions he's feeling.

Airs Tuesday, 26 March 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iview from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 6.

Asher finds the wind-up to her date with Matt a bit of a surprise. She feels positive that it was a good first date experience and she hopes to take what she learnt into her next one. Larry is different to Matt and this time it seems it might be more her heart than her head that's leaning into the potential of a relationship.

Jack and Claire wrap up their date as the sun sets over the ocean. They agree it's been a great date, and the sparks between them are flying.

Charles has been waiting for the news about matches from the Speed Dating event he attended. The long-awaited call comes through with some unexpected outcomes.

Kento knows that if he doesn't find the courage to follow up with Rebecca his chances of finding a partner will be zero. He is aware she loves Cosplay and decides to message her with an invitation to go with him to an upcoming Cosplay Ball.





Airs Tuesday, 2 April 2024 | 8.30pm on ABC TV

All episodes available to stream on ABC iView from 8.30pm on Tuesday 20 February

#BetterDateThanNever

Episode 7.

Kento goes all out with his costume for the Cosplay Ball. He is thrilled Rebecca accepted his invitation to go with him. They dance the night away and at the end talk about their feelings for each other and what the next steps might be.

Di and Alida meet again for another date. Is love in the air!?

Jack and Claire settle into a dreamy gondola ride on the Swan River. Their connection is obviously strong, and Jack is hopeful it might be the beginning of something special.



Director's Statement.

Like many of us, I thoroughly enjoyed binge-watching BETTER DATE THAN NEVER Series 1. Each episode left me with a warm glow and smile on my face, as the participants generously brought the audience along with them on their search for love. I was delighted to take the director's reins for Series 2. The format gives an opportunity to share very different life stories and perspectives through the common experience of dating for the first time.

Working with established characters from Series 1 was a particular highlight. Charles and Di are such refreshingly unique people, unlike anyone seen on TV before and it was a privilege to continue following both of them on their dating journeys. I was also pleased to be able to share the ongoing romances from Series 1, capturing the joy of Liv and Ben's relationship was pure romantic joy.

For me and the team I work with, our duty of care and our collaboration with participants and their families is of utmost importance. I believe our attention to this care and our sensitive process allows a sense of trust to build and that trust results in unprecedented 'access' delivering our beautiful stories.

The team and I cast the net far and wide to find genuine matches for our participants. Unlike other styles of dating shows we never set anyone up to fail and we always looked for couples we thought would have a real connection and interests in common. If the blind date led to romance, that was a bonus, as anyone who's been out there dating would know.

I am so grateful to the participants for their openness, sense of fun and vulnerability in sharing their personal stories. I hope the audience enjoy spending time with the participants as much as myself and the team did.

– MARIEL THOMAS

Producer's Statement.

BETTER DATE THAN NEVER is born from a desire to broaden onscreen representation and tell inclusive stories of love and relationships. It comes from the belief that the realm of the dating show shouldn't belong to only to the hot and instagrammable. Love is a universal theme, and diverse experiences of love should show us more about what it means to be human. At its core, the aim of this series is to give visibility to diverse and under-represented people.

This being a factual series, we are not creating fictional characters or telling fictional stories. We are giving voice to the characters on screen, allowing them to tell their own truths. To us as documentary filmmakers, the participants themselves are the most important collaborators. It is vital the participants feel safe and supported throughout the process, so that the experience of dating feels less intimidating for our first timers.

With all this in mind, our focus is to get to know individuals who are complex, interesting and have something to say for themselves. We don't place a burden to somehow represent their whole community or culture. To do that would be an impossible over-simplification. Their stories are being shaped around their own unique personal experience and not under a specific label or to an expected stereotype.

The first series of BETTER DATE THAN NEVER was a smash hit for ABC in 2023, with reviewers calling the show 'heart-warming', 'impossible not to love', 'refreshingly real' and 'honest'. We hope the returning season builds upon the success and continues to promote the understanding that no matter who we are, we are all deserving of love.

– KARINA HOLDEN

Language Guidelines.

This series tells the individual stories of the participants, and some are part of a particular community where language guidelines can be important to get right. Below are some links to language guidelines:

- [Disability Language Guidelines](#)
- [Down Syndrome Language Guidelines](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Language Guidelines](#)
- [Transgender Language Guidelines](#)

Jack: Cerebral Palsy Spastic Diplegia

Jack has spastic diplegia cerebral palsy, a neurological condition that usually appears in infancy or early childhood and permanently affects muscle control and coordination. Symptoms include increased muscle tone which leads to spasticity, stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes in the legs. People with spastic diplegia might have difficulty walking because tight hip and leg muscles cause their legs to pull together, turn inward, and cross at the knees (also known as scissoring). Jack has had almost 30 surgeries to ease his CP. Jack's CP affects his walking, he can walk one kilometre comfortably but if longer than that, he will use a Segway.

Allycia: Chromosome 18 Syndrome

Chromosome 18q-syndrome (also known as Chromosome 18, Monosomy 18q) is a rare chromosomal disorder in which there is deletion of part of chromosome 18. Associated symptoms and findings vary greatly in range and severity from person to person. However, characteristic features include short stature; intellectual disability; poor muscle tone; malformations of the hands and feet; and abnormalities of the skull and facial region. Some affected people may also have visual abnormalities, hearing impairment, genital malformations, structural heart defects, and/or other physical abnormalities.

It is a rare disorder with incidence estimated at about 1:50,000 live births.

More info: www.huntershope.org/18q-syndrome

Dianne: Transgender

'Trans' and 'gender diverse' describe people whose gender differs from what was presumed for them at birth. Some trans people affirm their gender in social and legal ways, like changing their name or wearing new clothes and updating their legal identity, and some affirm their gender in medical ways, like being on hormones or having surgeries, but some trans people don't affirm their gender in ways that are visible to the outside world at all.

More info: www.transhub.org.au/101/what-is-trans

The Team

MARIEL THOMAS

Series Director

With two decades experience, Mariel has a strong career as a factual producer/director whether the subject matter is history, science, pressing social issues or the search for love, personal stories are always at the heart of Mariel's storytelling.

Mariel's breakthrough documentary SKIMPY (2014), which she developed, directed and shot for the ABC established her abilities. Field directing and story producing for the likes of Fremantle Media, Blackfella Films, Screentime and others followed. In recent years Mariel has been in demand as a series producer with credits including LOST FOR WORDS (SBS) series 1 & 2 at Endemol Shine, ABC's WAR ON WASTE series 3 at Lune Media and FURTHER BACK IN TIME FOR DINNER (ABC) at Warner Bros.

Mariel believes in the power of documentary to create lasting change. Her short film JUDGED was instrumental in changing laws around the treatment of sexual assault victims in the Northern Territory.

JENNI WILKS

Supervising Producer

Jenni Wilks has been an integral senior creative on many of the award-winning series to come out of Northern Pictures over the last decade. She managed the team on series 1 & 2 of CHANGING MINDS, filmed inside acute psychiatric units where access to locked wards was granted for the first time in Australia.

She then worked as the Supervising Producer on EMPLOYABLE ME and Emmy Award winning LOVE ON THE SPECTRUM. Jenni is responsible for casting and managing production teams to help them deliver beautiful human focussed stories and narratives while ensuring an absolute duty of care.

Jenni's other credits include Executive Producer of returning medical observational series RPA (Channel 9) and Series Producer of COUPLES THERAPY (SBS) which followed real couples in crisis during relationship counselling.

KARINA HOLDEN

Executive Producer and Co-Creator

Karina Holden is the Co-creator and Executive Producer of BETTER DATE THAN NEVER. Her role as Head of Factual at Northern Pictures since 2013 has allowed her to oversee content creation for broadcast television and feature release, as well as direct her own films. Overseeing a slate of diverse programs: from science to society, politics and power – the crux of her work is to create change, truth tell and find unlikely heroes who challenge our perceptions.

Karina was named the UNESCO Sydney City of Film, film maker of the year in 2021 as well as being recognised by the Australian Financial Reviews 100 Women of Influence. In 2022, LOVE ON THE SPECTRUM was awarded three Primetime Emmys and an International Emmy, of which she is the co-creator and Executive Producer. In the same year, the Producer's Guild of America awarded her the George Sunga Award for advancing the portrayal and employment of disabilities in media.

Credits.

A Northern Pictures Production. Developed and produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation with development support from Screen Australia.

Created by CIAN O'CLERY with KARINA HOLDEN

Series Director MARIEL THOMAS Supervising Producer JENNI WILKS

Associate Producers LAURA GRACE and MARY FINNIGAN

Cinematography AARON SMITH ACS and DAVID MAY ACS

Additional Camera MARIEL THOMAS

Editors PETER CROMBIE ASE and ZOE DAVIS Additional Editing TOBY STRATMANN

Production Manager RYAN MALYON Production Executive KATE BAILEY

Executive Producers KARINA HOLDEN and CIAN O'CLERY

ABC Commissioning Editor STEPHEN OLIVER

ABC Head of Factual SUSIE JONES

Sales & Distribution PASSION

© 2024 Northern Pictures and Australian Broadcasting Corporation.