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## **ABC's *My Year 12 Life* challenges whether one number can define our future**

### **New Australian vlogumentary series in production**

This week, 200,000 Australian students nervously await their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) results. Fourteen of those have documented their final year of school, all its challenges and its fun, for the ABC's upcoming series *My Year 12 Life*. The stress the ATAR is putting on kids was the inspiration for the extraordinary series which examines how this one number impacts the lives of young Australians and their families.

At the start of 2016 Princess Pictures gave cameras to a diverse group of 14 teenagers across Australia to film the most dramatic twelve months of their lives – Year 12. The resulting self executed 'vlogumentary' series is emotional, often hilarious and full of suspense – what will their number be and what do they go through to get there?

There were no film crews, no producers on the ground, just 14 teenagers telling their own stories to their own cameras in their own way. They have documented the raw drama of their final year of school, and remind us how important Year 12 is to those living through it, what the future looks like at 18, and how that's changed over the years. The series aims to create a national conversation about the pressures of life in Year 12.

During each episode the students talk about the issues they're facing: the ATAR – and how they feel this will define their future; parental and cultural pressures; family support; school pressures; body image; stress and anxiety; expectations; school and life balance; and much more. The vlog diaries give the students an avenue to vent about these issues – their honest, open, often humorous and sometimes heartbreaking confessions will hit a nerve with all viewers. They also provide the perfect opportunity for viewers – whether they're students, teachers, parents, guardians or grandparents – to talk about these issues together.

"I'm feeling so much pressure, and so much stress and expectations to do the best I can, and I can't, I can't. I'm not superman.... I'm not going to let four letters and a number on a piece of paper at the end of it all tell me what I can and can't be. I refuse to let something tell me what I can and can't be," vents Shianna during one of her vlogs.

As the students' final year comes to an end, so too does filming. The cast have captured thousands of hours of vision, with each student delivering on average 30-60mins of footage every week for the entire year. The series also weaves in media from their social platforms including Instagram and Snapchat to give viewers a more intimate and engaging experience.

"It's time we talked about the stress we're putting on teenagers, and the effect of telling them they should be judged by one number, the ATAR. We wanted to hear their stories, told their way. Since teenagers are hilarious, dramatic, and brutally honest, so is our series," says Creator and Executive Producer Laura Waters.

Michael Carrington, Head of Children's and Education said, "As we stay true to our core public service values, we are thrilled to be working with Princess Pictures on this intimate and insightful vlogumentary series. I believe it's important for the ABC to reflect and celebrate real children's lives and I hope by featuring *My Year 12 Life* across ABC platforms (ABC, ABC ME, and ABC iview) we will stimulate families, high school students and teachers to discuss their experiences and expectations of Year 12".

*My Year 12 Life* is created by Laura Waters. Series Producer: Karla Burt. Executive Producers: Laura Waters, Emma Fitzsimons and ABC's Libbie Doherty. Produced in association with Screen Australia and Film Victoria, *My Year 12 Life* is a Princess Pictures production for ABC Television.

*My Year 12 Life* (26 x 30mins) will screen on ABC, ABC ME and ABC iview in early 2017, with over 400 additional clips available across ABC ME's digital platforms, ABC iview, Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram.

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