



# BARRACUDA

WINNING IS EVERYTHING







#barracuda





Melbourne 1996. The Golden Age of Australian swimming is beginning and a scholarship to an exclusive boys school brings 16-year-old Danny Kelly one step closer to his ultimate goal - winning Olympic gold.

Initially, Danny struggles to find his place in the prestigious social circles of the private boys school. However under the charge of highly regarded coach Frank Torma and a friendship/rivalry with teammate Martin Taylor, Danny is soon on track to become Australia's youngest swimming champion, the unstoppable '*Barracuda*'.

Soon, everyone has a stake in Danny's success and as he swims closer towards gold, he finds himself being drawn into a world where the only thing that matters is winning. When he gets his shot at victory, with all of Australia watching - can the '*Barracuda*' live up to everyone's expectations and realise his dream?

Based on award-winning novelist Christos Tsiolkas' book and adapted for television in four parts, *Barracuda* is a moving story about identity, obsession, desire, the dizzy heights of success and the terrifying risk of failure.

**PREMIERES SUNDAY 10 JULY  
AT 8:40PM ON ABC.**

**Full series available on iview  
directly after premiere.**

The ABC and Screen Australia present in association with Film Victoria a Matchbox Pictures production.

**WRITERS**

Blake Ayshford  
Belinda Chayko

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Christos Tsiolkas

**PRODUCERS**

Tony Ayres  
Amanda Higgs

**DIRECTOR**

Robert Connolly

**ABC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Carole Sklan  
Brett Sleigh

For further information,  
please contact:

**Tracey Taylor**  
**ABC TV Publicist**

**03 9524 2313**  
**0419 528 213**  
**[taylor.tracey@abc.net.au](mailto:taylor.tracey@abc.net.au)**

**For images please visit**  
**[abc.net.au/tvpublicity](http://abc.net.au/tvpublicity)**

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## EPISODE 1

Ambitious young swimmer Danny Kelly wakes before dawn to workout before his first day at the exclusive Blackstone College where he has won a scholarship.

With its grand buildings and fancy school uniforms, Blackstone is highly intimidating and worlds away from Danny's previous school. The school swim squad – Wilco, Scooter, Tsitsas and the handsome leader of the gang, Taylor are not keen on integrating Kelly into their team – either inside the classroom, nor the pool.

However, after Danny comes a close second to Taylor in training, swimming coach, Frank Torma reminds everyone what is at stake and only four of the five can make the squad for the schoolboy championships.

Danny's entire world is changing rapidly. He is thrown into a very privileged setting, yet he grew up in a close knit, hardworking, community of supportive friends and loving family.

After finally beating Taylor in the state final, the squad admit to needing Danny to win their relay, however, given the relentless taunts, Danny isn't keen to help them reach their goals. They've not only insulted him, but also his family.

Can Danny rise above it all and prove he's stronger, faster and better than all of them in the place it really matters - the swimming pool.

## EPISODE 2

After Danny's success in Albury, he trains hard with the swim squad. And he's finally earned their respect. However coach Torma unsettles Danny by insisting he change his stroke to butterfly. He believes Danny will never win gold with freestyle.

Danny's new best friend, Martin Taylor invites him for a weekend away at the family beach house. The opulent home impresses Danny as does Martin's sophisticated older sister, Emma and his mother Mrs Taylor.

Taylor confesses his fears about qualifying for the Nationals to Danny and the two make a pact they'll do it together.

Returning home, Danny is keen to share details of his weekend in the spectacular home however

Danny's father Neal is concerned he is putting the Taylor family on a pedestal. Danny retorts with a hurtful response in front of his entire family.

At the qualifying meet, Danny smashes his race to qualify for the Nationals. Wilco also wins but devastatingly, Taylor doesn't qualify.

In Brisbane, Danny and Wilco get their first taste of the elite world of competitive swimming and they are also introduced to Ben Whitter from the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS).

Will Danny win at the Nationals with his newly mastered butterfly stroke?

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## EPISODE 3

Fresh from his world record-breaking swim, Danny's dreams come true when he is accepted into the Australian squad for the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. He celebrates with Taylor but their developing relationship takes a turn when Taylor introduces Danny to someone new.

Danny enjoys his celebrity status at school, but struggles to get back his world record pace in the pool. Convinced he's not getting the support he needs and terrified of failure, Danny takes up Ben Whitter's offer and joins the VIS.

Along with his new life at the Vic Institute, Danny is soon seduced into the glossy world of elite sport. He feels like he's finally getting the attention he deserves.

The Taylor's are supportive of Danny's new trajectory at the VIS whilst adding salt to Martin's wounds. Taylor confesses how much he misses swimming and the peace he found in the water.

But on the eve of the Commonwealth Games swim, Danny is far from peaceful. Martin is not coming to see him swim and the angry noise in Danny's head builds as the race approaches.

## EPISODE 4

It's the opening night of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the nation is buzzing with excitement. It's been two years since Danny's public loss and humiliation at the Commonwealth Games and he is still consumed with overwhelming disappointment and anger. He finishes his day at his dead-end job and returns home to the Kelly house where the family feels more fractured than ever.

Lifelong friend Demet persuades him to join their friends at the pub but there's no escaping the Olympic fever taking over Melbourne. The final straw comes when he sees a familiar face on the TV parading proudly in the opening ceremony – Wilco. He's made the Olympic team.

Danny departs wanting to drown his sorrows. He heads uninvited to the Taylor residence where he's heard there's a party. It soon becomes apparent this is not an Olympic celebration, but Taylor's engagement party. The night takes a turn for the worse and Danny leaves the Taylor home in the back of a police car.

When Danny hits rock bottom, Stephanie enlists Torma's help. He offers a helping hand but Danny refuses.

Torma finally catches up with Danny and forces him to face one of his greatest fears. He also shares a moment which totally puts life into perspective for the broken young man.

Can Danny find redemption for the shame and humiliation of two years ago? And can Torma help him back into the water to swim again?

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## DANNY KELLY

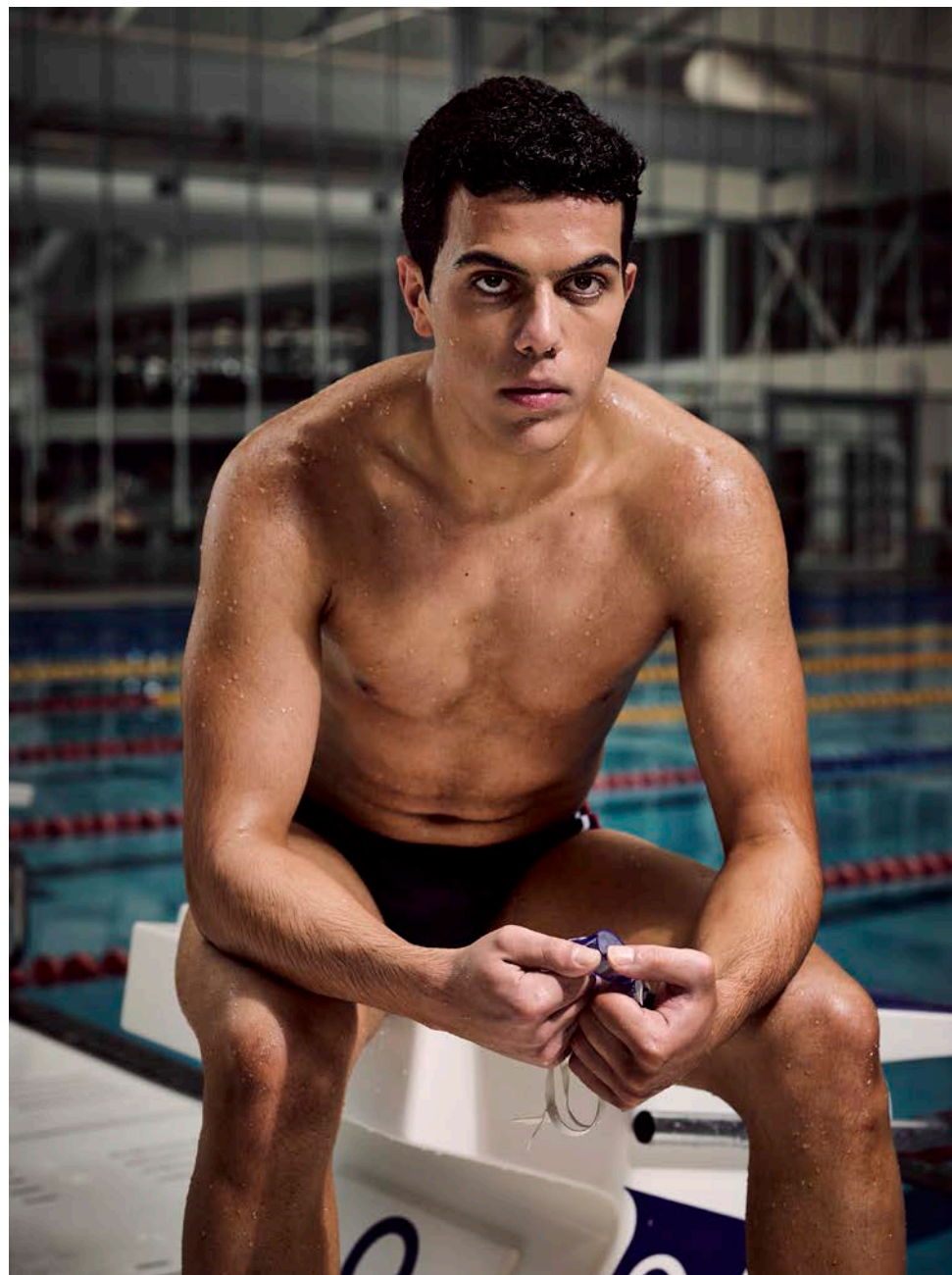
PLAYED BY ELIAS ANTON

Danny is a young man, consumed by his desire to become a champion Olympic swimmer.

When awarded a swimming scholarship, Danny is thrust into the prodigious world of an elite private school in Melbourne. He never really fits in, not at school or at home and the only place he feels true to himself is in the swimming pool. He becomes fiercely determined to be the best. His entire identity becomes wrapped up in his sport.

Danny is completely self-centered in his determination to make the Olympic team, which soon alienates his family and old friends. His only distraction comes in the form of his connection with teammate Martin Taylor. Handsome and wealthy, Taylor is everything Danny is not. Danny is seduced by Taylor's world and their developing relationship becomes inextricably linked to Danny's road to success.

**ELIAS ANTON** makes his television debut in the title role of *Barracuda*. He won the role of Danny Kelly whilst in Year 11 and is currently studying for his VCE.



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## COACH FRANK TORMA

PLAYED BY MATT NABLE

Hungarian-born Frank Torma is a passionate swimming coach with an eye for talent. He is blunt, direct and has an old school method of training his boys. It's his pool, his rules. But in his own tough way, Torma will do anything to support the young men and nurture their skills. Torma has never coached an Olympic swimmer before, although truly believes Danny will be his first.

Torma's greatest pleasure is watching Danny swim but coaching his young star is challenging – Danny is arrogant, impatient for success and often unwilling to follow Torma's direction. As Danny's wins accumulate, Torma struggles to keep Danny on track. He fears that Danny is losing his sense of self in his obsessive pursuit of Olympic gold.

**MATT NABLE** is one of Australia's most versatile actors. He has starred in the international award-winning series *East West 101*, *Underbelly: Badness, Bikie Wars* and the mini-series *Gallipoli*.

Soon Nable will be seen in feature films *Incarnate*, *In Cold Light*, *Hacksaw Ridge*, *Jasper Jones*, as well as the US television series *Quarry*, *Arrow* season 4 and *Legends of Tomorrow*.



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## SAMANTHA TAYLOR

PLAYED BY RACHEL GRIFFITHS

Samantha is Martin's refined and sophisticated mother. Behind her immaculate façade however, Mrs Taylor is somewhat bored and frustrated with her socially constrained life and unappreciative husband. She compensates by channelling all her energies into her son's success. Samantha believes in Martin's talent and is often frustrated by what she perceives to be his lack of drive and hunger for success. At first, she's surprised at Taylor's friendship with the working class Danny and recognises that Danny is serious competition for her son. However, her good breeding and manners insist that she welcome Danny into their world and she soon believes that Danny's unstoppable ambition could be a good influence on Martin.

**RACHEL GRIFFITHS** is an Academy Award nominated actress. She burst onto the international scene in 1994 in her role as Rhonda in *Muriel's Wedding*. Her other film credits include *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *The Hard Word*, *Blow*, *Burning Man*, *Ned Kelly*, *Saving Mr Banks*, *Beautiful Kate* and *Hilary & Jackie*, a performance which earned her an Academy Award Nomination.

In 2002 Rachel won a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Brenda in the critically acclaimed US series *Six Feet Under*. She also received an Emmy Award Nomination for her role in *Brothers & Sisters*. Other television credits include; *Camp*, *Underground*, *House Husbands*, *Paper Giants: Magazine Wars* and *Deadline Gallipoli*.



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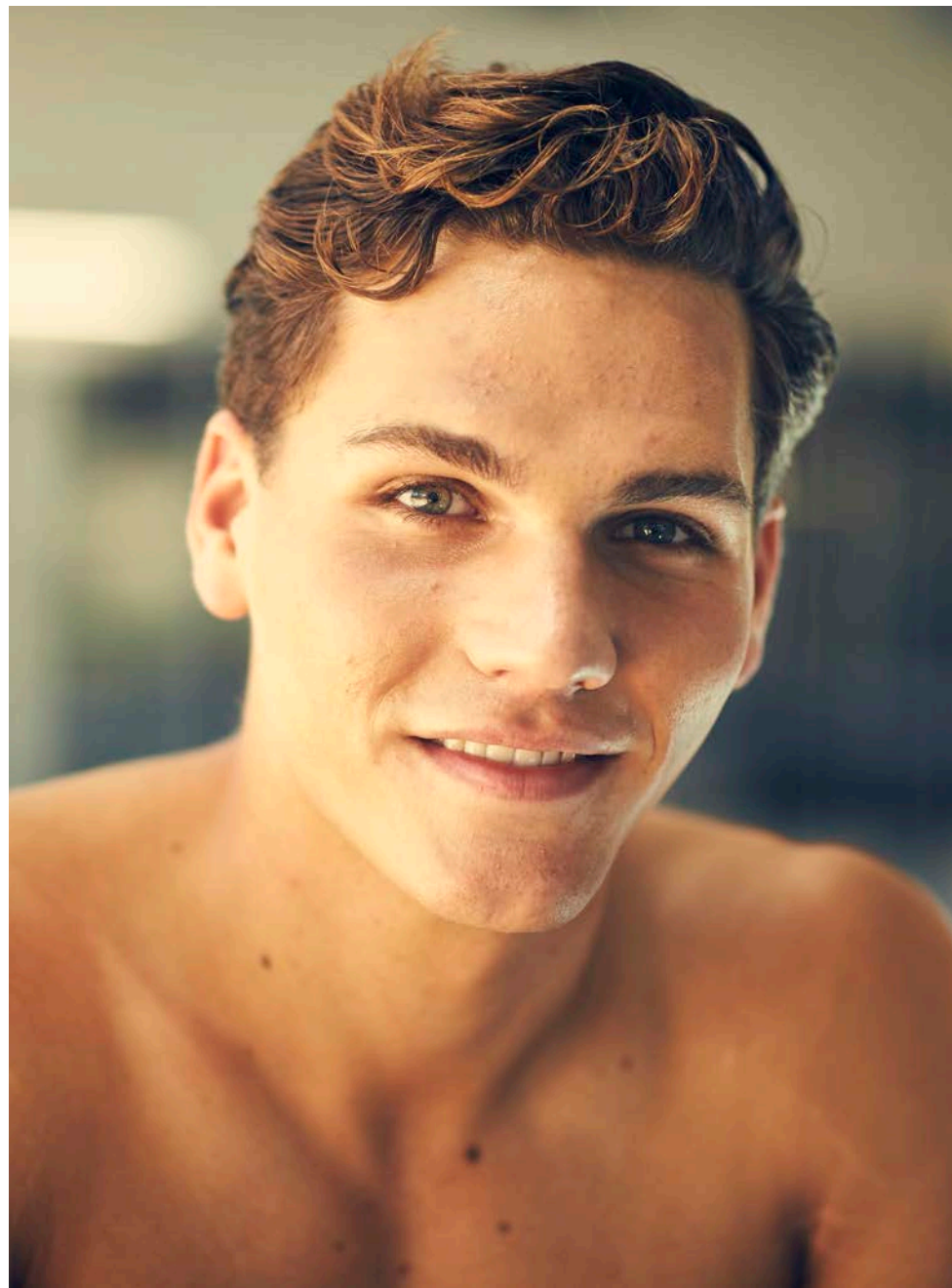
## MARTIN TAYLOR

PLAYED BY BENJAMIN KINDON

Martin comes from a very wealthy family. He is handsome and privileged – a ‘golden boy’. Initially Taylor is Danny’s biggest rival in and out of the pool, and he’s threatened by Danny’s natural ability. He soon becomes best friends with Danny, as Danny’s swimming earns the respect of his peers and the two boys come to rely on each other’s support.

Outwardly confident and charming, Taylor struggles with his own demons of self-belief. He’s a natural leader and a good swimmer – but is he good enough? Does he even want to win for himself or is it just what’s expected of him? Taylor is attracted to Danny’s raw honesty and singular ambition as it equates to a kind of freedom that Taylor can’t have in his privileged world, full of pretence, social constraints and expectation.

**BENJAMIN KINDON** graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2015 and this is his television debut.



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## STEPHANIE KELLY

PLAYED BY VICTORIA HARALABIDOU

Danny's mother Stephanie is extremely supportive of his swimming, wanting to give him the best opportunities; she dutifully drives him to training every morning and afternoon. She is passionate though never quite fits in with the other mothers, whom she aspires to be friends with.

As Danny's swimming obsession increases, so does Stephanie's investment in her son's success. She is unwavering in her belief that Danny will one day make it and this often causes friction between her and her more pragmatic husband, Neal.

**Born in Russia, VICTORIA HARALABIDOU made her film debut as the lead in the Martin Scorsese's feature *Brides*. Her credits include *Blessed* and *With Heart and Soul* (Greece). Her most recent work for Australian television was in both seasons of the award-winning ABC TV series *The Code*. Other television credits include; *The Informant*, *My Place*, *East West 101*, *Home and Away*, *All Saints* and *The Strip*.**



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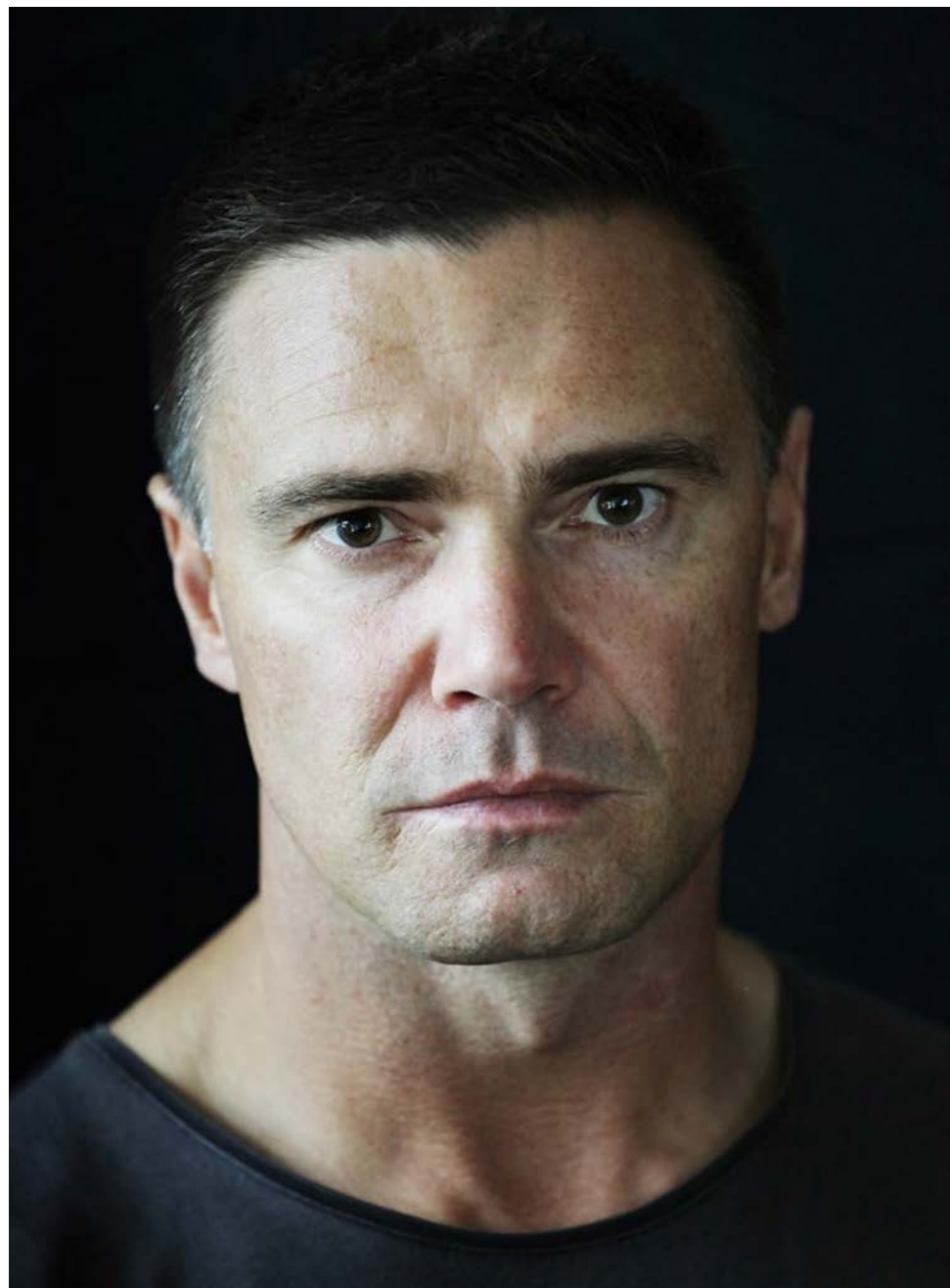
## NEAL KELLY

PLAYED BY JEREMY LINDSAY TAYLOR

Danny's father Neal is a long distance truck driver. Neal is a loving father, but frequently butts heads with Danny; resenting his son for taking up all the energy in the family. He is passionate about his working-class roots and curses the upper classes with which Danny begins spending all his time. He's the only one in the family to worry about Danny not succeeding, though Danny sees this as a lack of support.

**JEREMY LINDSAY TAYLOR** has appeared in many of Australia's favourite television programs including; *Gallipoli*, *Puberty Blues*, *Bikie Wars* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. Jeremy's feature film credits include *Manny*, *Tom White*, *Em 4 Jay* and *Bad Bush*.

Nominated for the 2012 AACTA Choice Award for his outstanding portrayal of Norman Bruhn in *Underbelly: Razor*, Jeremy previously received an AFI Award nomination for his role in *False Witness*.



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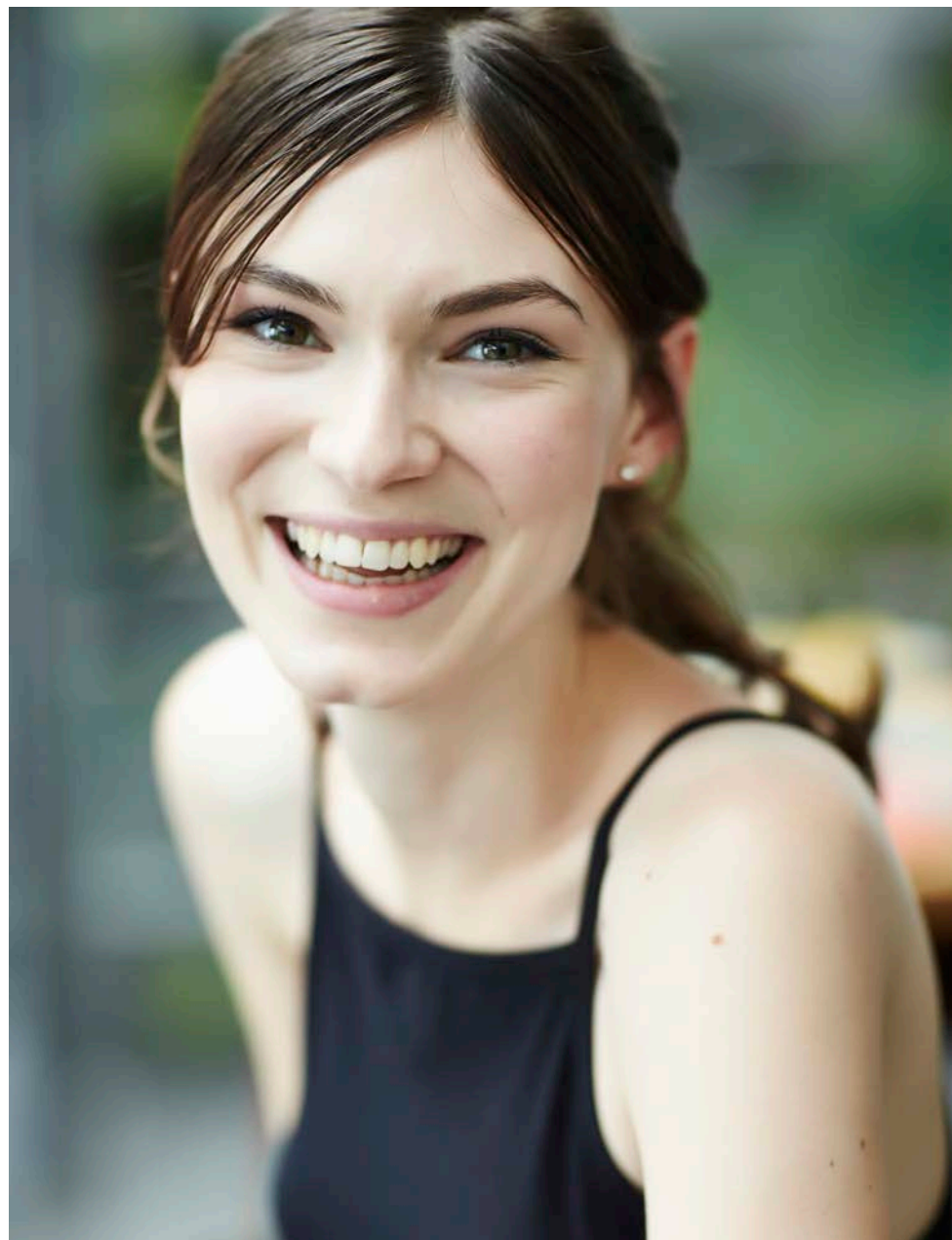
## EMMA TAYLOR

PLAYED BY TILDA COBHAM-HERVEY

Martin's older sister, Emma is sophisticated, cultured and more socially conscious than the rest of the Taylor clan. She's sickened by the pretensions of her family and their high-class world and finds Danny's rough edges intriguing and attractive. Emma appreciates Danny's honesty and his fearlessness with her family and there's an easy intimacy between them.

**TILDA COBHAM-HERVEY's** portrayal of Billie in the feature film *52 Tuesdays* is widely considered one of the breakout performances from 2014's Sundance Film Festival. Tilda's second feature, *One Eyed Girl*, saw her playing the title character in this cinematic thriller.

Tilda will next appear in feature film *Girl Asleep*, as well as the television mini-series, *The Kettering Incident*. Tilda recently made her theatre debut for the State Theatre Company of South Australia in the world premiere of the new Andrew Bovell play *Things We Know To Be True*.



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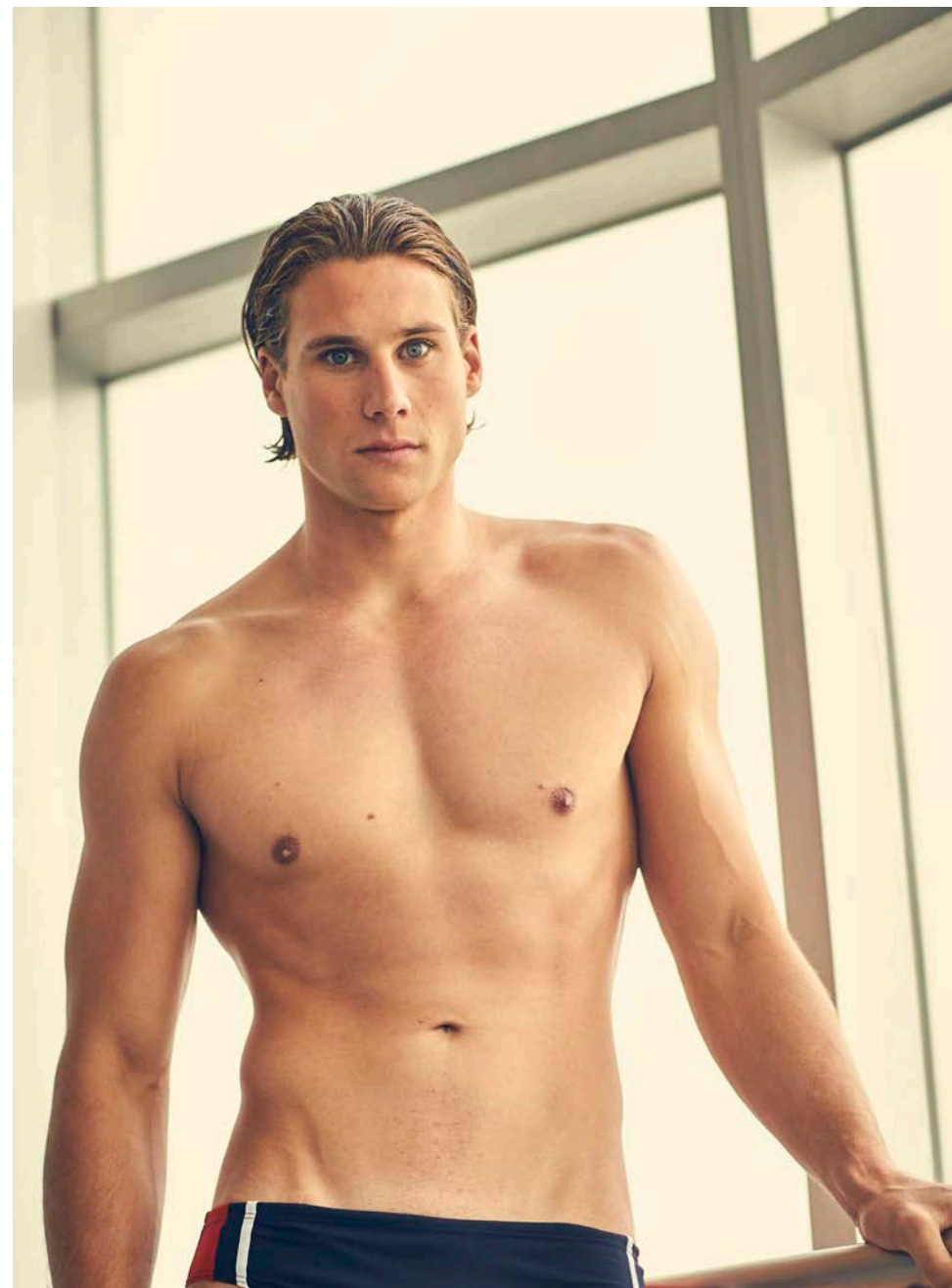


## WILCO (JOHN WILKINSON)

PLAYED BY ANDREW CREER

Taylor's friend, and one of the 'golden boys' in the school swimming club, Wilco is cocky, self-assured and entitled. A talented swimmer with a big mouth, Wilco often manages to get Danny offside but from his end, there's not much menace behind it. Wilco sees Danny as a teammate, Danny sees Wilco as the competition and a pain in the neck.

**ANDREW CREER** recently graduated from the prestigious Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and was immediately offered a lead role in the ABC3 television series *Tomorrow When the War Began* in which he played the role of Kevin Holmes.



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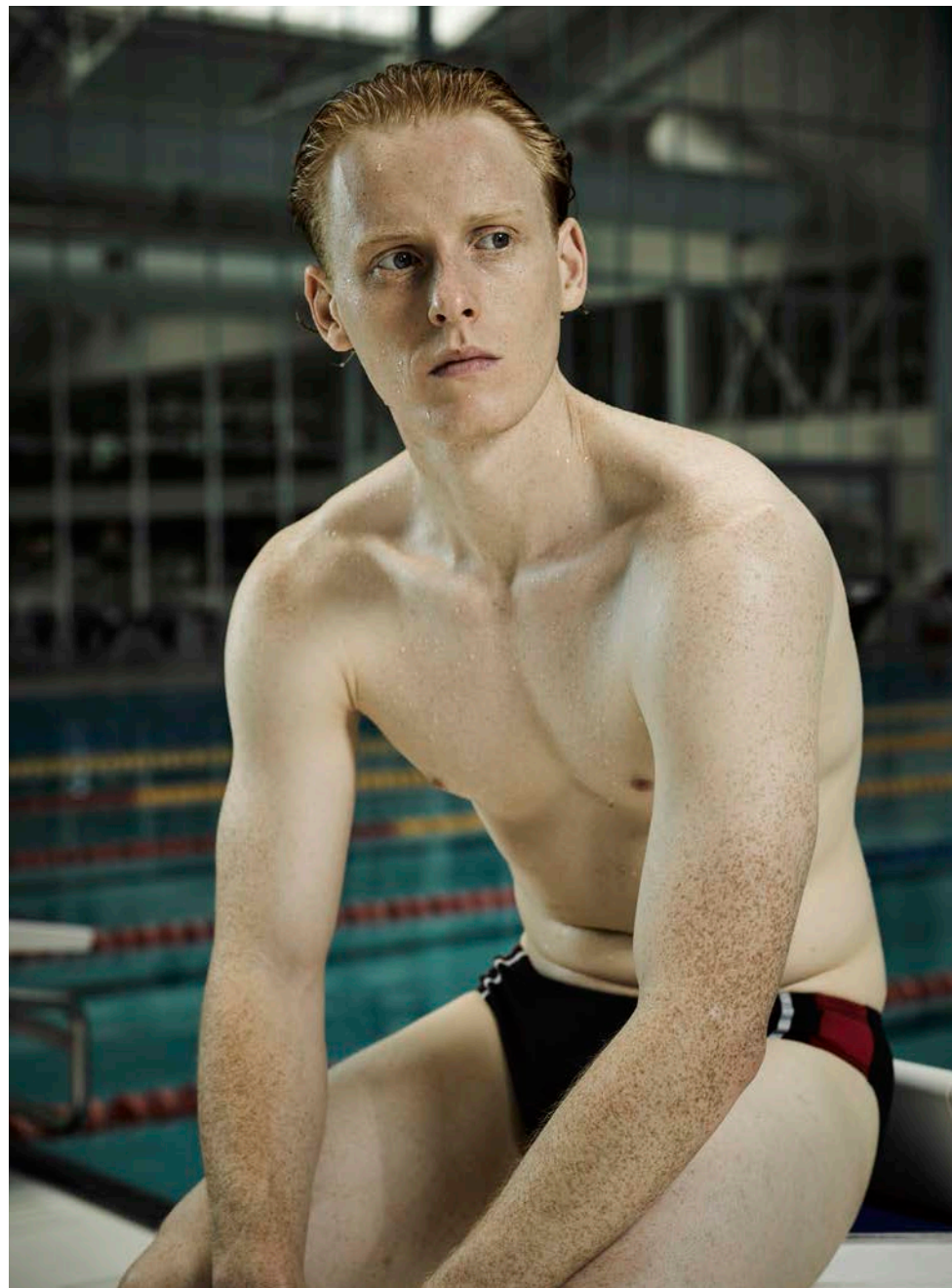
## SCOOTER

PLAYED BY RHYS MITCHELL

Scooter is a member of the swim club and the smart Alec of the group. When Danny first arrives, he doesn't miss an opportunity to put Danny down or wind him up. But behind all the wise cracks, Scooter is just being loyal to his mates, and as the boys come to accept Danny as part of the team, Scooter genuinely throws his support behind Danny – wanting the "Barracuda" to win.

**RHYS MITCHELL** is an Australian actor, filmmaker, visual artist and musician. Rhys is best known for playing Kayne Wheeler in ABC's hit comedy series, *Upper Middle Bogan* and has just completed filming season three. In *Deadline Gallipoli*, Rhys played young soldier William Perry.

**Rhys** was a key creative in the development of the web-series *Movement*.



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## TSITSAS

PLAYED BY JOE KLOCEK

Tsitsas is the fourth member of the school swim team when Danny begins at Blackstone College. Tsitsas doesn't have the entitled confidence of his teammates and isn't the strongest swimmer so he's quick to get on board when the others start giving Danny a hard time. Tsistas may have been swimming with the other boys for years, but is fully aware he could easily be pushed outside the circle.

**JOE KLOCEK** makes his television debut in *Barracuda*. He appeared in the Melbourne Theatre Company production *The Distance* as well as *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore* for Queensland Theatre Company. He will be seen in the next instalment of ABC3's *Nowhere Boys* series.



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## LUKE TRAN

PLAYED BY JOEL LOK

Luke Tran is Danny's first friend at his new school. A dedicated student, more interested in studying than sport, Luke is also an outsider. Luke is highly intelligent, kind, and loyal. He plays by the rules and does his best to support Danny.

**JOEL LOK's talent was brought to the public eye at a very early age following his standout performance in the feature film *The Home Song Stories* in which he played the lead role of Tom. This performance saw Joel receive the IF Award for Best Actor, as well as being nominated for the AFI for Best Young Actor and the Golden Horse Award for Best Supporting Actor.**

Since that time Joel has made appearances in television shows such as *Tangle*, *Thank God You're Here*, and guest lead roles in *Sea Patrol*. He is perhaps best known however for the lead role of Andy in *Nowhere Boys*. Joel recently reprised the role for the feature film *Nowhere Boys: The Book of Shadows*.

## DEMET

PLAYED BY NICOLE GULASEKHARAM

Danny's best friend from his previous school, Demet is brash, outspoken, politically conscious and denigrating of Australian culture/class systems. She loves Danny loyally but is never afraid to question Danny's obsession with swimming.

As Danny gets drawn further and further into a world where winning is everything, Demet tries her best to "keep him real" and hold onto him. After all, they are soul mates.

**NICOLE GULASEKHARAM's has featured in *As the Bell Rings*, *Small Time Gangster* and *Bed of Roses*. She appeared in Nadia Tass' feature film *Matching Jack* and has had guest roles on *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Wentworth*, *Blue Heelers*, *Neighbours*, *Lowdown* and *Rush*.**

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## PRODUCTION CREDITS

### TONY AYRES PRODUCER

Tony Ayres is a celebrated creative force in television and film, and one of the founding members of Matchbox Pictures. Tony is Executive Producer of the awarding winning series *The Slap*, *Glitch*, *The Devil's Playground* and *Nowhere Boys* which won the 2015 International Emmy for Best Kids Series. His other tv producing credits include *Wanted*, *The Family Law* and *Old School*.

Tony directed the 2015 feature film, *Cut Snake*. Previously, Tony was the showrunner on *Nowhere Boys* Series 1, which won an AACTA, Logie, and a Prix Jeunesse International 2014 award. Series 2 won a 2015 International Emmy. Upcoming projects include *Seven Types of Ambiguity* for the ABC and feature film *Ali's Wedding*.

### AMANDA HIGGS PRODUCER

Amanda was the co-creator and producer of *The Secret Life of Us*, which was the most watched Australian drama in the 16-39 year old demographic, winning the series three Logies for most outstanding drama for three consecutive years. She also produced two series of *The Time of Our Lives*, was Executive Producer on *SLiDE* and script edited *The Slap*.

She is currently the Producer of Matchbox's new drama series *Seven Types of Ambiguity* for ABC TV.

### BLAKE AYSHFORD & BELINDA CHAYKO WRITERS

This is the first collaboration between writers Blake Ayshford (episodes 1 and 3) and Belinda Chayko (episodes 2 and 4).

Blake is an award winning writer on series such as *The Devil's Playground*, *The Code* and *The Straits*. He also produced *The Devil's Playground* for Matchbox Pictures. Other television credits include *Tomorrow*, *When the War Began*, *Nowhere Boys* and *An Accidental Soldier*. He also wrote the feature film *Cut Snake*.

Belinda is also an award winning writer and credits include; *Secret City*, *Old School*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *Saved*. She also wrote and directed the feature film *Lou*. Her first feature *City Loop* debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival.

### ROBERT CONNOLLY SERIES DIRECTOR

Robert Connolly is an award winning producer, screenwriter and director.

He is best known as the director and writer of the feature films *Paper Planes*, *Balibo*, *Three Dollars* and *The Bank*, and the producer of high-profile Australian films *Romulus*, *My Father*, *The Turning* and *The Boys*.

His television directing credits include *The Slap* and *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* and in 2014 Robert co-produced the eight part miniseries, *Gallipoli*. He has also executive produced the films *Chasing Asylum*, *Spear* and *These Final Hours* and is a director of celebrated production and distribution company, Arenafilm.



# BARBARACUDA