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Hatch, Match & Dispatch coming to ABC TV in February

ABC TV announces that the eight-part documentary series **Hatch, Match & Dispatch**, will premiere on Thursday February 11 at 8pm.

Narrated by Marta Dusseldorp (*Janet King, Jack Irish*), **Hatch, Match & Dispatch** steps inside the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM), for an intimate look at the milestones that unite us all.

People from all walks of life rely on the BDM. Births, Deaths and Marriages affect us all, and we'll witness firsthand the funniest, most romantic, emotional and sometimes unhinged moments. The BDM is a melting pot of tradition, culture and religion: an institution where landmark events unfold every day: young lovers get hitched on a budget; marriage parties roll in and out like clockwork, and intimate personal moments get thrown around like confetti. And then there's death...

While our narrative unfolds through the eyes of a core cast of registry officers, we'll follow stories to maternity wards and hospitals, family homes, funeral parlours, cemeteries, and beyond.

Hatch, Match & Dispatch brings us stories of life, love and loss.

In episode one, screening Thursday February 11 at 8pm on ABC, 22-year old Jared from Mt Druitt is head-over-heels in love with his pregnant bride-to-be, Renee. They've come into the Parramatta Registry office with their family and friends to tie the knot. But Jared's so nervous he can't stop shaking - Renee is due any day now. Are they ready for marriage? Are they ready for parenthood?

The BDM acts as a kind of bookend to life. More than 140,000 birth and death certificates are issued in NSW each year. Pauline comes into the Registry to apply for her official birth certificate because just two days before her mother died, Pauline was told she was adopted. It's a shocking deathbed confession but Pauline's biggest bombshell is yet to come.

According to the Australian Marriage Act, Marriage is not for everyone – and that's a concept, Social Justice Activist, Norrie wants to change. Norrie recently won a High Court battle to be classified as sex non-specific, meaning Norrie is legally neither male nor female. Norrie, partner Sam and a group of students storm into the city office of the Registry demanding an official Marriage Interview. But in Australia, marriage can only take place between a man and a woman. And Norrie is sex non-specific. The Registry is set for a showdown.

Hatch, Match & Dispatch is a Fredbird Entertainment production for ABC TV and supported by Screen Australia and Screen NSW. Executive Producer: Craig Graham, Series Producer: Marc Radomsky, Supervising Producer: Rachel Hardie, Producers: Sandra Welkerling, Colin Thrupp & Faye Welborn. ABC Commissioning Editor: Matt Scully.

For further information and to organise interviews - contact:

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BDM FACTS

- The First Fleet of British ships arrived at Botany Bay in January 1788 – however the first ‘Australian’ birth and death were recorded the previous year.
- The first recorded birth was William Tilley on board the First Fleet ship the Lady Penryn on 20 April 1787.
- The first recorded burial was James Bradley on board the First Fleet ship the Alexander on 3 February 1787.
- The first recorded marriage was between William Parr and Mary MacCormick at the corner of Bligh and Hunter Streets in Sydney on 10 February 1788.
- The Reverend Richard Johnson, Chaplain to the First Fleet, recorded these events. His successors continued to perform and record baptisms, burials and marriages.
- From 1788 to 1856 the only birth, death or marriage records kept in NSW were the registers maintained by the established churches. The Registry holds transcriptions of these early church records. Any surviving original registers are located in the NSW Archives.
- Civil celebrants have overseen the majority of marriages since 1999 and the proportion of marriage ceremonies overseen by a civil celebrant increased again to 74.1 per cent of all marriages in 2014. (1)
- In 2012 there were 123,244 marriages registered across all states and territories. In the same year, there were 49,917 divorces granted. So in 2012, more than twice as many people married as divorced.(2)
- Top baby names for 2015 in NSW are Charlotte and Oliver, while its William and Charlotte in the ACT and Oliver and Charlotte in SA.
- When naming a baby in Australia you legally can’t chose a name that is: obscene or offensive, is too long, contains symbols without phonetic significance, such as an exclamation or question mark or one that is contrary to public interest or a name that contains an official title or rank recognised in Australia such as King, Lady, Father, Sir or Admiral.

(1) <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3310.0>

(2) ABS Stats published in 2014 from 2012 & 2013