



Hatch, Match & Dispatch

STORIES OF LIFE, LOVE & LOSS



Thursdays 8pm



#HatchMatchDispatch

8 Part Series

FROM THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 AT 8PM



Synopsis

The Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) is the place where the most momentous events of our lives happen. We go there when the stakes are highest and when we're at our most joyful and vulnerable. Emotions run high and stories of love, life and loss surface.

This remarkably human place is a microcosm of life - and through the eyes of the registry officers, we'll share the love, laughter and tears of ordinary Aussies.

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...

Families are reunited over tears and testaments. And in death, we'll also find laughter as everyday Australians reminisce about the special times. But for every dispatch, there's a hatch: stories of conception, birth, and young mums doing it tough. What's in a name? Everything.

The BDM also creates the data that shapes Australia. Governments use BDM birth stats to help decide the location of new suburbs, roads, schools and hospitals, and the trending causes of death influence policies on everything from healthcare and housing to superannuation.

A dramatic rise in the number of civil ceremonies over the last 20 years has seen marriage change from the days of lavish Christian church weddings to low budget multicultural weddings.

But beyond the data and the personal journeys, the office of BDM is a place where there's a wider unfolding social and cultural context: racial tolerance and intolerance; loss and betrayal; sexual prejudice; the changing face of marriage; identity; multiculturalism; family conflict and adoption.

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.





Birth, Death & Marriage 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 **William and Charlotte** ranked first 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.
- **2,255 babies are stillborn every year** in Australia. That's 6 Australian families who experience the devastation of stillbirth every day.⁽³⁾
- **Early pregnancy losses are not registered as either a birth or a death.** Registrar Amanda introduced the **'Certificate of Loss'** four months after becoming registrar in 2014. NSW, SA, QLD offer the certificates. WA and TAS were due to start in October this year and Vic & NT & ACT don't currently offer this certificate.

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

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

⁽³⁾ <http://www.sands.org.au/images/sands-docs/SandsAnnualReport201415LR.pdf>

Episode 1

Thursday February 11 8pm

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. Jared's so nervous he can't stop shaking and Renee is due any day now. Are they ready for parenthood?

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.

The Office of Births, Deaths & Marriages 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.





Episode 2

Thursday February 18 8pm

Monika, the Registrar's Assistant, and her fiancé Duane are getting hitched. Duane thinks it's cool getting married at Monika's workplace with Amanda, the Registrar, officiating.

The Registry is the country's largest celebrant – more than 12,000 Australian couples get married in registry offices every year. But for bride-to-be, Monika, it all feels a little too close to home. Perhaps that's because she's planning a lavish wedding reception overseas. Her work colleagues are determined to make this a day to remember as long as the electrician can get the lights back on - the city has been hit by a power failure. Will the wedding even go ahead?

At the front counter, Client Services Officer, and the Registry's resident 'Origami Master', Gary is dealing with a distressed funeral director who's come in to collect a death certificate. Wendy wants to honour her late father's dying wish to have his body repatriated to his birth country of Argentina. But there is a serious problem - Jose's body may be contagious.

What's in a name? Ask transgender, ballet dancer, Julia, and she'll say everything. Julia, (birth name, Tibor), was a world-renowned ballet dancer. She's come in to Registry today to apply to change her name. But Registry Officer, Alize, must prove this is not a case of identify fraud.



Amanda

REGISTRAR

Amanda has 20 years experience at the Registry and is passionate about the staff, customers and keeping the records for the people of NSW. Amanda's grassroots beginning with the Registry was as Team Leader, Manager and Assistant Registrar. She's now the 17th NSW Registrar since 1856, and only the second female to hold the post. In her time as Registrar, Amanda has seen many changes and has overseen the implementation of major projects. Amanda's focus is on driving change and improving business processes, internally for staff and externally for clients.

Amanda has a vivacious personality and a booming laugh. She wears her heart on her sleeve and is not afraid to cry. But come crunch time, she's as tough as nails. Amanda is married with one child.

Gary

CLIENT SERVICE OFFICER

Gary loves mathematics, chess and origami. He'll often be seen handing out his own hand-made origami pieces to unsuspecting members of the public. It's a sure fire way to put a smile on the saddest of faces. Gary often wears a bowtie, which befits his status as an amateur theatre actor.

Gary joined the Registry in 2010 making the move from high school mathematics teacher. For the past five years, Gary has enjoyed the ebb and flow of customer service because he feels he can make a difference.

Aila

MARRIAGE OFFICER

Aila started working with the Registry as a Client Service Officer; in that capacity for over two decades, she holds the record for most marriage ceremonies performed in a day (19). Over the last four years she's married more than 3,500 couples and is known as the Registry's 'Queen of Hearts'. She has an infectious laugh and unbridled enthusiasm for the tradition of marriage. She comes from a Filipino Catholic background and the act of marriage is something she takes seriously. Aila is married with three children.

Alana

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR, CLIENT SERVICES

As Assistant Registrar, Alana is the self-proclaimed pragmatist at the Registry. She keeps the peace behind-the-scenes and is often called to the front desk when matters with the public need a helping hand. She's the Registry's voice of reason and understands of the macro shifts that have occurred in the Australian birth, death and marriages landscape over the last century.

Alana has been with the Registry for just over a decade. Six months ago, Alana changed roles from the Marketing Manager to become the Assistant Registrar of Client Services, where she's now responsible for 70 staff working at the Chippendale and Parramatta offices. Her team produces hundreds of thousands of certificates for customers every year. Alana enjoys the challenges of her role and working with the staff and managers.

Harish

CLIENT SERVICE OFFICER

Harish has worked at the Registry for over eight years in various sections of the Client Services Division. Harish enjoys working to a high professional standard to provide the best service to customers with a calm nature and patience, flavoured with humour.

Production

Craig Graham

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/WRITER

Craig Graham is recognised as one of Australia's leading producers of wide audience appeal factual entertainment. Over the past 20 years, Craig has created and produced over 200 hours of programming for the local free-to-air and PAY TV markets. In 2009, Craig formed Fredbird Entertainment, an award-winning supplier of original Australian documentary content. Fredbird Entertainment's recent productions include, *Once Upon A Time In Cabramatta*, *Air Rescue*, *The Embassy*, *My Great Big Adventure* and *Maurice's Big Adventure*.

Marc Radomsky

SERIES PRODUCER/ WRITER

A versatile storyteller and observational specialist, Marc Radomsky is able to build trust, gain access to sensitive environments, and realise engaging, innovative and compelling programs told with dignity, empathy and emotional sensitivity. *Struggle Street* sparked a controversial media debate on the issue of poverty. With over 1.6 million viewers per episode, the series is the highest rating locally commissioned documentary in the history of SBS. *Kids on Speed* was a competing finalist in 2014 SPAA Awards and 2014 Jackson Hole Science and Media awards, *Outback Kids* was nominated for Best TV Series in the inaugural 2012 AACTA awards, *Law & Disorder* won the 2010 Logie for Most Outstanding Factual Program. *Tackling Peace* won the 2010 Provincia Di Milano Award at the FICST International Festival in Milan, and received a 2009 AFI nomination for Best Documentary and Honorary Mention at the Gold Panda awards in China.

Rachel Hardie

SUPERVISING PRODUCER

With over 15 years experience producing television across a wide variety of genres, Rachel Hardie started her TV career at Channel 9 researching for *The Sunday Program*, *A Current Affair* and *Getaway* before moving to London. Sponsored by RDF Media, for four years, she developed and produced a range of factual and formatted programs including *Bed & Bardsley's*, *Wild Thing I Love You with Bill Bailey*, *Kitchen Showdown with Rosemary Schrager* and four series of *Wife Swap*. Returning to Sydney her recent accomplishments include the multiple award and Emmy winning series *Go Back To Where You Came From 1 & 2*, *What's the Catch*, *Destination Flavor Scandinavia* for SBS and *Married at First Sight* for Channel 9. Throughout her career she's maintained fresh creative talent working across a variety of genres and platforms from observational documentary, factual, reality and entertainment series.



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.

Editors Karl Rees, Teresa O'Mara & Lukasz Termer.

ABC Commissioning Editor Matt Scully.

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abc.net.au/tvpublicity

