

# An Epic Australian Story...

### FROM THE CREATOR OF PACKED TO THE RAFTERS COMES THE SWEEPING AND ROMANTIC DRAMA A PLACE TO CALL HOME.

It tells the story of a mysterious woman perched between the harsh legacy of World War II and the hope of a new life in Australia and of a wealthy family forced by her to embrace the winds of social change.

It's 1953 and the horrors of World War II are still raw and alive in many memories. Graceful yet enigmatic nurse Sarah Adams (Marta Dusseldorp) learns of the death of her half-brother and returns to Australia from London to care for her estranged mother.

She carries with her the secrets and scars of her wartime suffering.

In returning, she finds another country from the one she left behind. She finds an Australia perched on the verge of the social changes of the post-War boom.

Working her passage home aboard an ocean liner, Sarah becomes involved in the lives of the Blighs, a wealthy Australian pastoralist family.

She develops an immediate connection with gentle and charming widower George (Brett Climo), as well as his modern young daughter Anna (Abby Earl) and withdrawn daughter-in-law Olivia (Arianwen Parkes-Lockwood). But it is when Sarah unwittingly discovers a potentially scandalous Bligh family secret that her future becomes forever linked with theirs.

Only the uncompromising matriarch of the family, Elizabeth (Noni Hazlehurst), and her grandson James (David Berry), know Sarah has uncovered this family skeleton. Elizabeth is determined to keep it that way – and Sarah at arm's length.

But Sarah's involvement with the Blighs only intensifies when, after her attempt at reconciliation with her mother goes awry, she accepts an offer from George to come and work in Inverness, the picturesque country town near the beautiful estate of Ash Park where the family resides.

Ever fearful of the dark secret coming out, and George's warm relationship with Sarah developing further, Elizabeth resolves to sabotage Sarah's prospects of work at the local hospital. Despite being able to circumvent the forces working against her and prove her worth to the laid-back head doctor Jack Duncan (Craig Hall), the feeling for Sarah of being set-against is an unwanted echo of her dark and haunted past.

But it is time for Sarah to face life again and begin her journey towards healing and hopefully finding a place to call home.

A Place to Call Home is created by Bevan Lee, the man behind iconic Australian shows such as Packed to the Rafters, Always Greener and more recently Winners & Losers. Executive Producers are John Holmes and Channel Seven's Head of Drama Julie McGauran with Chris Martin-Jones serving as Producer.



# SARAH ADAMS PLAYED BY MARTA DE SELDORP

SARAH ADAMS, UNTIL RECENTLY A NURSE IN A LONDON HOSPITAL, IS A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN WHO KEEPS HER PAST AND SECRET'S CLOSE.

A fascinating combination of tendemess and suppressed darkness and violence, she lives for her job and the care of others. "She's a woman looking for a place to call home," Marta says. "She has a great sense of herself because of where she's been. Because of what she's been through, she appreciates life. But she's not a victim. She's incredibly courageous and speaks her mind."

Born in 1912, she was the youngest of three children in a working class Sydney family. She has her first taste of tragedy when her father is killed in battle at Fromelles. She has the second when both her brothers die in the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, an illness to which she almost succumbs herself.

Her mother Grace channelled her grief into a deep and unyielding devotion, promising her daughter to God as a nun. While this was not a choice Sarah would have made for herself, she lacked the strength to voice her misglvings.

Fate intervened in the form of her Aunt Peg. Furnishing Sarah with both the money and the motive, Peg convinced her to visit her father's grave before entering the convent. She wanted the girl to be away from the hold of Grace and the Church long enough to form a true decision about her future.

So Sarah left Sydney to visit the continent for a few months. It would be 20 years before her return.

Tragic news from her beloved Aunt in Australia causes her to make that long delayed return journey to a country inhabited by the mother who rejected her for her life choices. And she now carries the secrets and scars of her suffering in World War II.

In returning, she finds another country from the one she left behind. She finds an Australia perched on the verge of the social change of the 50s.

Working her passage home aboard an ocean liner, Sarah becomes involved in the lives of the Blighs, a wealthy Australian pastoralist family.

Despite developing an immediate connection with gentle and charming widower George, it is only when Sarah discovers a Bligh family secret that her future becomes forever linked with theirs.

It is time for Sarah to face life again and begin her journey towards healing and hopefully finding A Place to Call Home. "It has has all the romance, glamour and beauty of a period drama, but it also looks at the really ugly and shameful side of Australia in the early 50s," Marta says. "It has incredible integrity, humour, tragedy and wit."



## MARTA DUSSELDORP

STARS AS SARAH ADAMS

DISTINGUISHED ACTRESS MARTA DUSSELDORP HEADS THE TALENTED A PLACE TO CALL HOME CAST AS THE ENIGMATIC SARAH ADAMS.

The award-winning actress gravitated towards performing early in life. She took ballet lessons from the age of four but it was her first speaking role in a school play which sparked her interest in acting.

"I would have been about 10 or 11," she recalls. "I did my first play and got my first laugh. I remember hearing 300 people who were in the school hall laugh out loud and I thought, 'This is brilliant to be able to bring joy to people.'

"When I started using my voice, I realised the power of narration. I became addicted to telling stories – initially it was with my body through dance and then I discovered my voice."

After finishing school, she studied at the University of NSW for two years, majoring in theatre and film, before being accepted into the Victorian College of the Arts.

Soon after graduating in 1996, she received her big break in Bruce Beresford's Paradise Road, acting opposite Glenn Close, Frances McDormand and Cate Blanchett. Since then she has worked extensively in theatre, film and television. Her film credits include the critically acclaimed Praise, Innocence and Burning Man.

On the small screen, Marta has starred as Detective Sam Lawson in six Blackjack telemovies. Her other TV credits include the telemovie Hell Has Harbour Views, the award-winning mini-series After The Deluge, the lead role of Senior Crown Prosecutor Janet King in the ABC legal drama Crownies and most recently the telemovie Jack Irish opposite Guy Pearce.

Regarded as one of the country's best stage actors, she was one of 12 actors who, in 2005, were offered exclusive contracts by the Sydney Theatre Company to form The Actors Company.

During her three years with the STC, she appeared in The War of the Roses, which won her a Helpmann Award for Best Supporting Actress in 2009; Serpent's Teeth, Mother Courage and Barrie Kosky's eight-hour The Lost Echo, where she played a spider among other things.

Her other notable theatre credits include Melbourne Theatre Company's Three Sisters and The Balcony, Company B's national tour of The Underpants, an international tour of Cloudstreet and Like A Fishbone for the STC/Griffin Theatre: the STC production Victory opposite Judy Davis and most recently Never Did Me Any Harm, a dance theatre work by acclaimed choreographer Kate Champion.

With a career spanning more than two decades, her resume is teeming with highlights but she counts her theatre credits as her most memorable. "Playing to an audience is exhilarating and dangerous, one of the truest forms of human contact you have," she says.

However, she's relishing the opportunity of sinking her teeth into a complex character she can develop over the course of a series.

"That's the beauty of television; you have the opportunity to explore an amazing character over however many episodes and you don't get that with a play," she says. "Right now I'm in heaven. This is something I used to dream of."

Marta, 40, is married to actor/director
Ben Winspear, whom she met 10 years
ago when they were both working
at the Sydney Theatre Company.
They reside in Sydney with their
two daughters. When she's not
acting, Marta enjoys spending
time with her family.



# ELIZABETH BLIGHT

BORN TOWARD THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY, ELIZABETH IS A VESTIGE OF A RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING AUSTRALIA, ONE DEFINED BY ITS TIES TO ENGLAND AND HER SOCIAL MORES.

To her, tradition is commensurate with security – security that has seen her family endure two World Wars and the Great Depression. Tradition is something she sees as being in the family's best interest to defend.

"She's fiercely protective of her family," Noni says of her character. "Everything she does is to preserve the family's unity, position and wealth."

Elizabeth married into the Bligh family at the age of 17; a match decided upon by her parents. A clever, serious young woman, she would prove to have more of a head for the running of Ash Park than her own husband.

She used her influence in the subtlest way, through discussion with her husband, preferring to remain out of the spotlight. As such, when her husband passed away, there was no thought of upending tradition and attempting to run the property herself. Her son George was named the new head of the family business.

But old habits die hard; and so it is that Elizabeth's habit of "suggestion" – so appreciated by her husband – has well and truly continued. Not that she is a tyrant. Too clever to wield her considerable power overtly, Elizabeth knows well the benefit of a well-chosen word in a well-chosen tone at a well-chosen moment. Some might call it controlling. She would call it contributing. "She's a stickler for manners, etiquette and doing the right thing," Noni says.

The dual benefit of this approach is that it also allows her to be actively involved in many traditionally male dominated worlds. One is the hospital her husband's parents built in inverness. It is her role on the Hospital Board that allows her to make a contribution to its functioning.

In this role, she recognised the talent of a poor local boy Jack Duncan and became his patron through medical school. In him she sees two things that impress, fierce intelligence that doesn't intimidate easily and an ability to make hard decisions.

Though capable of great affection towards her children, George and Carolyn, and grandchildren James and Anna, her love is tempered with the old English spirit of keeping one's chin up and making the tough choices in spite of any personal misgivings.

"She has a great belief in keeping up a façade of managing well and maintaining a stiff upper lip," Noni says.

It is her generation's ability to sacrifice the personal for the sake of the many that sets her apart in an era that is increasingly ruled by the notion that one should love as one sees fit whatever the consequences. Her only daughter Carolyn, who followed this dictum, is the black sheep of the family. The estrangement between the two women represents Elizabeth's only genuine "failure" as a matriarch.

She is determined to protect her family from anyone or anything she sees as a threat to them or their interests. When Sarah learns about one of the family's darkest hidden secrets, it immediately puts her at odds with Elizabeth.

"There are a lot of secrets in the family," Noni says. "Elizabeth is the keeper of most of these because for them to be revealed would compromise the family's position and reputation."



APLACE CALL HOME on

NONI HAZLEHURST

STARS AS ELIZABETH BLIGH

### NONI HAZLEHURST'S NUMEROUS TALENTS HAVE MADE HER A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

She is one of Australia's most distinguished and respected actors with a career spanning nearly 40 years.

Bom in Melboume in the 1950s to vaudevillian parents, show business was the natural choice for Noni. "It never occurred to me to do anything else," she laughs. "Once they realised I had the ambition and talent, they encouraged me and made sure I was well prepared."

She learned how to sing, dance, act and play plano; her versatility serving her well throughout her long career.

After finishing school, she began studying drama at Flinders University in Adelaide in 1971.

She graduated three years later and landed her first role as Sharon Lewis in The Box in 1975 before joining the cast of The Sullivans as Lii Duggan in 1976. More roles followed in the critically acclaimed telemovies The Shiralee and Nancy Wake.

In 1978, she became a presenter on iconic children's show Play School, becoming one of their most loved faces for the next 24 years. In a career bursting with highlights,

it's a role she still considers her favourite and in 1998 she was honoured with an Order of Australia (AM) for her services to children and children's television.

In the 1990s, Noni hosted Better Homes and Gardens. During her 10 years with the program, it won five Logie Awards for Most Popular Lifestyle Show.

Noni herself has received two Logies for her performances in the mini-series Waterfront and Ride on Stranger as well as four AFI Awards for Little Fish, Waiting At The Royal, Fran and Monkey Grip. She's also received three AFI nominations for her roles in Fatty Finn, Bitter & Twisted and Candy, acting opposite Heath Ledger and Geoffrey Rush.

Her recent screen credits include the telemovies Stepfather of the Bride in 2006 and Curtin (2007) and the gritty drama City Homicide, where she played Detective Superintendent Bernice Waverley from 2007-2011.

In 2007, she added another notch to her impressive list of awards when she was bestowed an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy from Flinders University in South Australia. Other notable awards include a Variety Club Award for Achievement in Television and two Film Critic's Circle of Australia Awards.

Her theatre credits are extensive, working not only on London's West End but across the country. Most recently she played a straighttalking scientist in the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of The Heretic.

As National Ambassador for children's charity Barnardos, Noni thrives on her charity work and is also an in-demand writer, penning articles for newspapers and magazines, as well as contributing to several books. "I love it all," she says. "I don't really care what I'm doing as long as it's a story worth telling and I'm working with people I respect."

Her most prized role is as mother to sons Charlie and William, who are both musicians.

When she's not working, Noni enjoys gardening, cooking and teaching drama at the 16th Street Acting Studio. "It's wonderful and rewarding," she says of her role as mentor and teacher.

In the future, Noni's keen to do more directing. Her directorial debut The Fish Are Safe garnered an AFI nomination for Best Achievement in Direction in 2005. "There is plenty of wonderful work still to be done."



### GEORGE BLIGH

PLAYED BY BRETT CLIMO

DESCENDED FROM FREE SETTLERS WHO ARRIVED IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLONY, THE BLIGHS OVER FOUR GENERATIONS ESTABLISHED ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST PROSPEROUS WOOL RUNS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

Theirs is a family synonymous with wealth and industry. In a young country, they are an old name.

And George is the current head of the family business and its estate, Ash Park, in the country town of Inverness. It's a role he was groomed to play from childhood. George took on his responsibilities with a dedication that would come to be a defining trait.

"He's a decent, hard-working man,"
Brett says of his character. "I rarely read
scripts that portray men like my father and
stepfather; a generation of gentlemen who
are inherently good."

George fell in love with and married Elaine Walker, a true beauty, and perhaps the first person he had met who was indifferent to his status.

They met at the University of Sydney and married in 1928, the year George graduated. Elaine came from a well-respected family in the NSW legal system.

Within a year they saw the birth of their first child, James.

On the death of his father, George found himself head of the household and business. As his bohemian sister Carolyn distanced herself from life at Ash Park and chose to live in the city, George's typical dedication saw the estate flourish under his care.

The demand for wool during the war years saw the Bligh family wealth swell dramatically. But the Second World War brought very mixed blessings. Now a family of four, with Anna born in 1932, George and his family found themselves stationed in Darwin as part of the war effort.

Considered more valuable for his other skills, George was denied the right to fight and was asked to administer the supply lines to the Allied troops. But the conflict found him regardless when the Japanese bombed Darwin in 1942, killing 243 people, including his wife.

The end of the War brought George and the children back to Ash Park. His deep grief expressed itself through an even deeper commitment to the business and to his family. He refused to consider remarrying, despite the efforts of many women to catch the eye of this most eligible widower.

When George meets Sarah Adams, for the first time since the loss of his wife he finds himself drawn towards a woman. "She's a woman not part of the world he's used to and he's attracted to that," Brett says. "it's the first time he's really allowed himself to entertain the thought of life with another woman after the death of his wife."

But if they are to have any real future, he must see his way past family and social barriers. "He's torn between two women; one woman, his mother, whom he loves very much, and another woman, Sarah, whom he could potentially fall in love with. With his mother at war with Sarah, it will be interesting to see which path he chooses."



## BRETT CLIMO

STARS AS GEORGE BLIGH

BRETT CLIMO MAKES A
WELCOME RETURN TO
CHANNEL SEVEN, THE
NETWORK WHERE HE MADE
HIS TELEVISION ACTING
DEBUT THREE DECADES
AGO ON THE CLASSIC SOAP
SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

"it's a dream come true," he says. "It's wonderful having an opportunity like this to be part of a brand new show especially one which is so expertly crafted."

Brett began acting lessons when he was in high school. His mother was concerned he wasn't performing academically so enrolled him in classes, where he showed talent. "I needed something to spark my interest and one thing led to another."

After finishing school, he began doing TV commercials and extra work before landing his first TV role. His big break came in 1987 in the critically acclaimed mini-series Vietnam. "I'm still very proud of my work in that. I worked with such talented and respected people like John Duigan and Chris Noonan."

Brett then scored a permanent role in the much-loved A Country Practice as nurse Michael Langley, which he played from 1987-1989.

"it's lovely to think you've made something that someone has watched and enjoyed," he says of his most recognisable role. "It gave me a healthy idea of what acting is. It was my first full-time role and I really wanted that security."

He'd just met chef Michelle Louis, who would go on to become his wife. "We'd just begun dating and I remember really wanting to provide us with some sort of stability."

More TV appearances followed in Embassy, G.P, mini-series Tracks of Glory, Snowy and Body Melt before he landed a role on The Flying Doctors as Dr David Ratcliffe, which he played from 1987-94.

After roles in Pacific Drive, Snowy River: The McGregor Saga, Murder Call and Halifax f.p: Without Consent, he returned to Channel Seven in Blue Heelers playing Lisa McCune's bad boy brother Robbie Doyle, from 1997-98.

He's worked consistently since then landing parts in Water Rats, Stingers, Something in the Air, City Homicide, The Elephant Princess, Cops LAC and All Saints, playing Dr Malcolm Pussle, a love interest of Georgie Parker's character Sister Terri Sullivan.

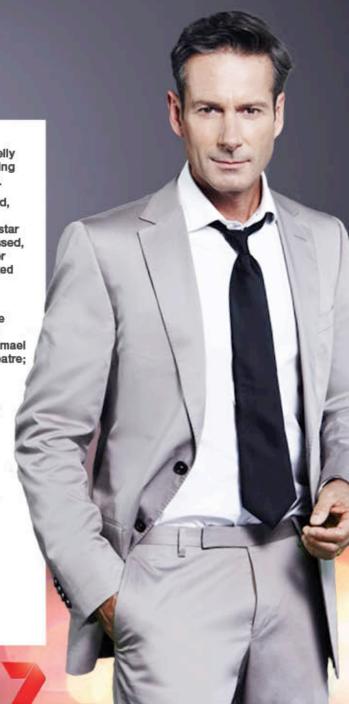
More recently he was seen in Underbelly Files: Tell Them Lucifer Was Here, Killing Time and the docudrama Myall Creek.

His film credits include Lost and Found, where he starred alongside Rebecca Gibney and A Place To Call Home co-star Frankie J. Holden, Ana Kokkinos' Blessed, Wild Poppies, Double Vision, The Inner Sanctuary, Blackwater Trail, The Wicked and Going Sane.

Brett has performed on stage in The Lady in the Van for the Sydney Theatre Company; Fred and Hay Fever for the Melbourne Theatre Company; The Ishmael Club and Crazy Brave for Playbox Theatre; and A Hard God for the Queensland Theatre Company.

In his spare time, his interests include travelling as well as home renovation and design. "If I wasn't an actor, I would have loved to have been an architect."

Originally from Sydney, Brett, 48, now lives in Melbourne with Michelle, a hospitality/training manager.



# JAMES BLIGH PLAYED BY DAVID BERRY

THE HEIR APPARENT
OF THE WEALTHY
PASTORALIST BLIGH
FAMILY, JAMES IS A YOUNG
MAN WITH THE WORLD
AT HIS FEET. HE IS
HANDSOME, INTELLIGENT
AND AS CAPABLE IN SPORT
AS HE IS SCHOLASTICALLY.
THE FUTURE OF THE
FAMILY LOOKS TO BE
IN GOOD HANDS.

"I feel very privileged to be playing this role," David says. "He's a multi-layered, three dimensional character."

After the tragedy of losing his mother during the bombing of Darwin, the young man turned to his studies for solace, graduating dux of his boarding school.

With his grandmother Elizabeth's encouragement he decided to complete his education – unlike his father before him – in England.

With one eye on a possible future in politics, he set sail in 1948 to study at Oxford.

After travelling to England for his graduation, Elizabeth picked up on her grandson's reticence to return home. She decided marriage would settle him and looked around for a socially suitable spouse.

Elizabeth delivered her ultimatum: he marry well and quickly and return to Australia before it should become clear to others.

James reluctantly agreed to do the latter. He chose Olivia as his bride, the youngest sister of his good university friend William.

And so it was that, James and Olivia married on her family estate and journeyed home to make their life in Inverness.

Gone is James' characteristic wit and appetite for life. The man who returns to Inverness in his mid-20s is struggling not only with his personal demons but also the demands of his family name.

"He's married to Olivia but he's not happy with life for reasons that will become apparent during the series," David says. "He's struggling to deal with the pressures of being in a wealthy family and living in the time he is born and within the restrictions of society."

For someone as genuine as James, the act of dragging Olivia unwittingly in to his deception is one that weighs increasingly heavily. And his growing despair leads him to consider there is only one way out.



APLACE CALHOME on 7

### DAVID BERRY

STARS AS JAMES BLIGH

WHILE DAVID BERRY'S ALWAYS HAD A KEEN INTEREST IN ACTING, THE ROAD THAT'S LED HIM TO HERE HAS BEEN LONG AND WINDING.

"I've always been searching for the thing I wanted to do. I think I might have found it," he smiles, acknowledging his fortune in landing the complex role of James in A Place to Call Home.

Born in Toronto, Canada, to Australian parents, David Berry moved to Sydney when he was seven. While at school, he developed a passion for music and the arts and was awarded a full scholarship for singing and violin.

Throughout school, David balanced his studies and professional commitments to Opera Australia and other independent production groups.

After finishing high school, he was awarded an academic scholarship to study at one of the world's top ranked universities, McGill in Montreal, where he completed a B.A. in Political Sciences and Cultural Studies.

Returning to Australia, he began his Masters in Media Practice at the University of Sydney, while also working as a researcher in the newsroom for Channel Seven.

Shortly after, David decided to abandon a career in media and return to his true passion, the performing arts.

He was accepted into the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 2008, where he performed in several theatre productions: A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Threepenny Opera, Medea Material, Assassins and Lost Illusions.

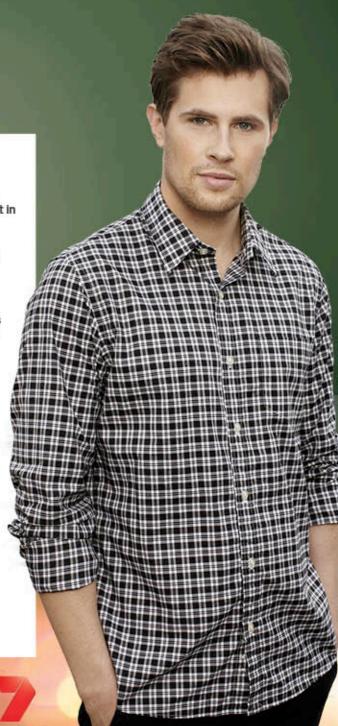
After completing his studies in 2010, he landed parts in Home and Away playing Logan in a love triangle storyline opposite Samara Weaving (Indi) and Luke Mitchell (Romeo) and Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries.

A Place to Call Home is his first major television role. "It's a terrific opportunity," he says. "This has got real dimensionality to it. The stakes are real and strong. It's wonderful to be part of something that's so ambitious."

Last year David married law student Kristina, whom he met whilst studying in Canada. When he's not working, the Daniel Day Lewis fan has a keen interest in music and singing.

As a member of the all-male singing group Jersey to Motown, he's toured all around Australia performing with two of his best friends.

David, 29, isn't the only member of his family in the entertainment industry. His younger sister, WAAPA graduate Caitlin Berry, is an accomplished performer, who's toured the country in Doctor Zhivago and South Pacific.



# OLIVIA BLIGH (nee Brackley)

PLAYED BY ARIANWEN PARKES-LOCKWOOD

OLIVIA IS THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE BRACKLEY FAMILY, AN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY FEELING THE PINCH IN POST WAR ENGLAND.

As sweet as she is sheltered, Olivia's life has been one of an enduring charade, the charade of keeping up appearances in the face of adversity.

"Olivia is a very loving person and someone who aims to see the best in everybody," Arianwen says of her character.

As with many in the English upper class, hers is a family emptied of true wealth by the depression and two World Wars.

What privilege they still enjoy is a function solely of their family title. But a title alone cannot sustain a grand house and four children, so when James Bligh surprised the family by asking for Olivia's hand in marriage, it seemed the answer to at least one of their prayers.

If the proposal was a shock, it was of the happiest kind. Despite her undoubtedly good nature, Olivia is no society belle and this, combined with the family's increasingly limited prosperity, made it look likely she would become an old maid or make a less than stellar marriage.

Olivia had steadily grown smitten with the dashing young Australian James Bligh during his four years of friendship with her adored brother William. But James had never seemed to show her anything more than polite interest.

And then came the proposal out of the blue. "She'd been secretly, desperately in love with him for years but he never seemed to notice her," Arianwen says. "Suddenly he proposes and it's as if her dreams have come true."

She didn't think twice about her answer. He was her Prince Charming and she the unlikeliest of Cinderella's. She would be happily married and the wealthy Blighs could well help her family's fortunes. For the first time in her life, Olivia was genuinely happy.

But her genteel education and years of learning how to behave in polite society left her naive to the world. Although there is much in her situation to question, Olivia's nature is to ignore the unpleasant. "She's left her entire family behind and arrived in Australia where everything is foreign to her," Arianwen says. "She's embarking on this completely new life as a married woman. Initially, she's terribly uncertain of how to fit in and filled with self-doubt."

In a world where the goal is to become a good and loving wife, regardless of the personal sacrifice, James' behaviour could be explained away by some fault of her own. Believing in the good of the world, and her own imperfection, Olivia ultimately sees all failings as hers - hers to be owned, or remedied.

"With James, Olivia senses something is not quite as it should be between them as a married couple," Arianwen says. "She assumes he's disappointed in her as a wife and she struggles to work out how to make James love her the way that she loves him."



APLACE CALL HOME on

### ARIANWEN PARKES-LOCKWOOD

STARS AS OLIVIA BLIGH

A PLACE TO CALL HOME IS THE FIRST MAJOR TELEVISION ROLE FOR ARIANWEN PARKES-LOCKWOOD.

Scoring the part of Olivia Bligh is a dream come true for the talented 25-year-old. "I've always loved period dramas," she says. "I fell in love with this show straightaway. The 50s was such an exciting time because society was on the cusp of a new era and there was a sense of hope and possibility."

The name Arianwen, Welsh for silver-white, was chosen by her parents as she was born on a cold, snowy night in her hometown of Armidale, in the Northern Tablelands, NSW.

The acting bug hit when she played the title role in Hamlet in a school play when she was just 11 years of age. "I had this wonderful primary school teacher, Mr Grant, and he decided that for our end of year concert we were going to tackle Hamlet," she remembers. "I just loved it. That was the big spark for me."

She began attending classes at Stage One Theatre for Young People in her local area. Through her "wonderful mentor", Astrid Blake, she learned the beginnings of stagecraft and storytelling, and developed a love for the world of acting.

After finishing high school, having received the NSW Premier's Award for All-Round Excellence in the HSC, she scored her first professional role – again in Hamlet, but this time playing Ophelia – with the Shakespeare Globe Centre in Sydney.

It meant moving to Sydney at age 17. The following year she successfully auditioned for the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

During her three years at NIDA, she performed in a variety of works including The Wood Demon (early draft of Uncle Vanya), The Servant of Two Masters and Julius Caesar. "Being at NIDA really developed my instincts," she says. "It was an incredible learning experience and an opportunity to make acting my profession as well as my love."

After graduating in 2008, Arianwen played Abigail in the Sydney Theatre Company's production of The Crucible, alongside cast mate Marta Dusseldorp.

She went on to appear in Underbelly:Razor, playing Dolly Green, wife of notorious gangster Frank 'The Little Gunman' Green as well as Foxtel's Tough Nuts and The Kangaroo Gang for BBC.

She has also become a busy voice-over artist, featuring in many national radio and television campaigns. Arianwen is married to actor/writer/ director Marcello Fabrizi, with whom she runs the production company Marshmallow Films.

Formed in 2010, their company has released a number of short films including The Filmmaker, which was a huge hit on the international festival circuit winning Best Short Film at the 2011 New Jersey Film Festival.

Following its success, she received the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for acting and filmmaking, established by the late John Chisholm Marten to support talented Australian artists achieve their dreams. Marshmallow Films is currently working on a stop-motion animation series in the spirit of Wallace and Gromit.

A young woman of many talents, Arianwen enjoys cooking vegan foods, yoga and learning French and Italian in her spare time.

She looks up to versatile actresses like Carey Mulligan and Anne Hathaway as well as her co-stars, particularly Noni Hazlehurst, whom she grew up watching on Play School.

"I love this job," she smiles. "I remember shooting the scene at the banquet table in the ship's ballroom; I was sitting there thinking, 'I can't believe this is my job'. It's so wonderful I get to do this every day!"



# ANNA BLIGHT

ANNA IS THE YOUNGEST OF THE BLIGH CHILDREN AND THE MOST INHERENTLY 'MODERN' OF THIS PRIVILEGED PASTORALIST FAMILY.

There is a force to the girl that looks to the future with a confidence bordering on the reckless. "She has this incredible fire to her," Abby says.

"She's brave and fun; and calls it like it is.
She's very honest and uncensored. I see her
as this fabulous exotic bird in the middle of the
Australian bush, with brown and green colours
all around. Anna is bold and vibrant and wild,
and a complete force to be reckoned with.
That's what makes her a dream to play!"

George Bligh has given his daughter her freedom in growing up. It is a freedom her grandmother Elizabeth is wary of because Elizabeth is more aware than anyone that Anna's rather tomboy days of being free to make all her own choices should be over. The girl has become a woman and a beautiful one at that. It is time for her to make an advantageous marriage.

"Anna represents a new wave that is about to come in the world," Abby says. "There is so much hope and joy to her. She's going through that delicate and beautiful time when a young girl is becoming a woman." School held little to interest her; except for the world of literature. Her reading choices, hidden from those around her except for her bohemian Aunt Carolyn, reflect her sense that there is life outside the social circle and moral attitudes of her family.

It is not only in her choice of reading matter that she goes against the family grain. For, unbeknown to all, she has fallen in love with her childhood friend Gino Poletti. Gino was born to local Italian farmers, who were interned as enemy aliens in the war.

During this period, the Bligh's looked after him. And it was at this time that he and Anna were playmates. And this childhood friendship has blossomed into a recognised, but unconsummated love.

Neither can resist their growing feelings towards each other, despite knowing that any future together would require the demolition of huge social barriers. Anna keeps their budding feelings concealed from the family.

"They both know the reality of their situation, neither of their families would ever allow them to be together," Abby says. "Anna hopes they will end up together but given their different class and religion, she knows it's something her grandmother will never see past."

After watching her older brother get married off to a 'suitable wife', and the misery it seems to have brought him, Anna has decided to make her own choices when it comes to the heart. But she knows that her choice of Gino, when voiced, will bring a whole raft of turmoil with it.

Never rebellious for its own sake, Anna believes in the freedom to choose a destiny - a freedom she happily points out men have had for centuries. The luck of her birth has given Anna a privileged position from which to view the world, and while her intentions are inevitably good, this gentle naivety will be the cause of some ill-informed decisions.

Having only one person in her life she thinks might understand her true self, her Aunt Carolyn, Anna yearns for a friend she can be more her true self with.

Despite their age difference, she thinks she may have found that friend when she meets the enigmatic, independent spirited Sarah Adams. "There's a huge hole in Anna's heart from when her mother died," Abby says. "She aches for the love of an older woman, that maternal love. So when she meets Sarah, who, like her, is strong and opinionated, she believes she's found a kindred spirit."

Anna yearns for another life, a life other than that she sees pre-ordained for her by her accident of birth. But Anna is about to find out that real change never comes easily. If it is to be gained, it is never without a price.



### ABBY EARL

STARS AS ANNA BLIGH

ABBY EARL MAY HAVE
ENDED UP A DANCER HAD
IT NOT BEEN FOR HER
ASTUTE BALLET TEACHER.
"I REMEMBER MY TEACHER
SAYING TO ME, 'AAAGH ABBY!
YOUR FACE MOVES MORE
THAN YOUR FEET. YOU
SHOULD BE AN ACTOR."

Abby was only six at the time but her teacher's words rang true. "She was absolutely right. That's when I thought, 'I like the sound of that!"

Throughout school, the awkward teenager found solace in drama. "My drama teacher would give me monologues and plays to read. Every lunch time I would take refuge in the drama room and read these characters and inhabit their world."

At the age of 15, Abby begged her parents to let her audition for Newtown's High School of Performing Arts. She got in but it meant a move to Sydney from her hometown of Broulee, on the south coast of NSW. "I was pretty innocent coming from the country," she says. "A small town girl moving to the heart of a busy city, it completely opened my eyes. It felt like I grew up overnight; each day brought new experiences, some good and some bad, but I grew because of them all."

For the next two years, she majored in drama and dance and represented Australia at the United Nations as a Global Youth Leader.

After finishing high school, she scored her first television role in Love My Way. Working alongside such accomplished performers as Asher Keddie and Dan Wylie was a great learning experience. "They just treated me like an equal," she remembers.

In 2009 she began a three-year acting course at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), during which she starred as Anna in Anna Karenina, Clytemnestra in The Orestela and Masha in The Seagull.

Whilst still at drama school, during her third year, she scored a lead role in The Great Mint Swindle, playing Diana, the love interest of Todd Lasance's character Peter Mickelberg. Her other co-star Grant Bowler became a mentor to her during the shoot and long after. "He instilled me with confidence and a sense of self-worth on set," she says.

After graduating from WAAPA – where she won two awards for Best Female Actor in Theatre and Best Female Actor in Film – she landed a role on Underbelly: Badness before winning the part of Anna Bligh. "I wanted the role so badly, after reading the script I realised Anna was by far the most interesting character I had read since graduating, so I knew I had to tell her story," she says.

All it took was one audition and the part was hers. Acting opposite the likes of Noni Hazelhurst, Marta Dusseldorp and Brett Climo is a dream come true. "You can't ask for better mentors when you're just out of acting school."

Along with her co-stars, Abby lists Oscar winner Cate Blanchett, Kate Winslet and Tilda Swinton among her favourite actors along with veterans Meryl Streep, Helen Mirren and Jackie Weaver. "I like careers that have endured; actors who have gone through what Streep calls the 'age of disappearance' where they just drop off our screens once they turn 50. These women have come through that no man's land and made it to the other side. All too commonly female characters aren't written well, and I want a career where at 80 years old I am still telling inspired stories of women, of all ages. because they are all valid. And I believe Anna Bligh is the first step."

Abby, 24, still enjoys dancing in her spare time, along with reading and has an interest in international politics and humanitarian issues.

Her next role will be in the Bell Shakespeare's production of Phèdre opposite Catherine McClements.



# GINO POLETITI PLAYED BY ALDO MIGNONE

GINO POLETTI WAS BORN TO PARENTS AMO AND CARLA, WHO MIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA IN THE LATE 20S TO ESCAPE RURAL POVERTY IN ITALY. THEY SETTLED IN INVERNESS AND WORKED ON THE BLIGH PROPERTY.

During World War II, Amo was interned as an enemy alien, just as Carla found herself pregnant with daughter Gilda.

It did not help with government authorities that their eldest son Marcello had returned to Italy, attracted by Mussolini and the rise of Fascism.

The Blighs, knowing Amo and Carla to be loyal to their adopted country, tried to make redress for the actions of the country by taking in Carla and Gino and giving her a job in the house. It was at this time that Gino and Anna forged a close friendship as childhood playmates. This childhood bond blossomed into a recognised, but unconsummated love.

When Amo returned after the war, Elizabeth and George Bligh sold him a plot of land cheaply as recompense for the way he had been treated by his adopted homeland.

Gino left school at 15 to help his father work this land, eager to assist in the cultivation of vines and the development of their own wines, alongside other more usual crops and herds.

Gino has always been a polite, hardworking, intense romantic eager to make the most of himself in life. Deeply connected to his family and his culture, he has always done what he thought was right - according to his Roman Catholic upbringing. "Gino is a very humble, loving young man who wants to do right by his family," Aldo says of his character, who like him shares Italian heritage.

Living in a house across the valley from the Bligh residence, Gino is in constant contact with Anna. Neither can resist their growing feelings, despite knowing the unlikelihood of having a future together. Neither their social status nor their difference of religion would logically allow it.

But young love does not always follow the rule of logic. They know they face major obstacles from both their families to find a long-term future together.

But this is 1953 and perhaps change is possible. "Gino and Anna are from opposite worlds," Aldo says. "They're trying hard to conceal their relationship because given their different backgrounds and religion it's considered taboo for them to be together. But love doesn't listen to reason when you're head over heels."

Like Anna, Gino is somewhat of a free spirit. He is a lover of music, particularly the new and developing genre of rockabilly, soon to be rock'n'roll. But he also loves the music of his heritage. He is at home hitting a high tenor note on 'O Solo Mio' as he is bouncing along to the exciting new group Bill Hayley and the Comets singing 'Crazy Man Crazy'.



### ALDO MIGNONE

STARS AS GINO POLETTI

FOR ALDO MIGNONE, THERE WAS NO LIGHT-BULB MOMENT WHEN HE KNEW HE WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR. HOWEVER, ROLE PLAYING WITH HIS FOUR OLDER SISTERS WAS A BIG PART OF HIS CHILDHOOD GROWING UP IN ADELAIDE.

"I've seen videos of us on Beta tape putting on performances with my sisters," he recalls. "I remember seeing a tape of me as a little cowboy not having any lines and being quite bored with it all. And then another one where I'm dressed as a woman by the fire place!"

After finishing school, Aldo dabbled in furniture design and toyed with the idea of becoming a chef but acting won out after his sister Louisa ventured into drama. "She was stoked and really supportive of my decision," he says.

He did several courses at Flinders University Drama Centre before moving to Sydney at the end of 2008 to study further. Two years into his acting studies, he won a role in the SBS action comedy series Danger 5, where he played Pierre, one of five international spies on a mission to kill Adolf Hitler. "That was so much fun to work on," he says. "It was ridiculous action and comedy mashed together."

Aldo's other credits include the popular web spoof Italian Spiderman. His theatre experience includes roles in As You Like It, The Crucible, Waiting for Lefty and The Winter's Take for NIDA.

Scoring a role on A Place to Call Home is a dream realised for Aldo, who lists Geoffrey Rush and Vincent Gallo among his acting idols. "Bevan Lee has created something amazing and I'm thrilled to be part of it," he says. "We've got an incredible cast and it's fantastic to be working with actors like Noni, who I grew up seeing on TV."

Working on the drama has been a family affair for Aldo. His real-life girlfriend Jacinta Acevski also guest stars in the series as Alma Grey, a nurse at the Inverness Hospital. And his sister Louisa, who's appeared in Rake and the film Two Fists One Heart, was part of the casting process and encouraged Aldo to try out for the part of Gino. "I owe this to her," he says.

Away from the cameras, Aldo is an ardent foodle who enjoys cooking and trying out new restaurants, especially Italian and Spanish. "I'm not the best cook but I love to cook and watch other people cooking," he says.

In the future, the 28-year-old hopes to establish a production company with his acting friends. "There are so many great performers, directors and writers out there and it's a struggle to get projects off the ground," he says. "So I'd love to form a creative hub where we write and create our own films and theatre shows. That would be amazing."



### JACK DUNCA PLAYED BY CRAIG HALL

BORN IN 1914, JACK IS THE SON OF A LOCAL INVERNESS MAN WHO HAD WORKED ON THE BLIGH ESTATE BEFORE HIS BIRTH.

Both his parents went to early graves, his father from drink and his mother from a broken spirit and heart.

Juggling his schoolwork and his farm duties, Jack came to the attention of Elizabeth Bligh.

Elizabeth took a shine to him, and her interest only deepened when she learnt that his true passion was for medicine; but whilst he had the grades and the intelligence for the vocation, it was a future his means denied him.

Elizabeth took the shrewd step of offering to pay for his medical education, in return for his assurance that he would return to Inverness to work at the hospital she and her husband had built.

It was an offer he could not refuse. Thus it was through Elizabeth's generosity that Jack began studying medicine.

Jack excelled in medical school and graduated in 1938, when the world was teetering again on the edge of war. He decided to enlist. Should he survive, it would also mean seeing the world before returning to Inverness to fulfil his promise to Elizabeth.

See the world he did, the best and the worst of it.

He spent much of World War II in a Japanese internment camp, having been captured during the fall of Singapore.

In the camp, Jack was the man who would take on the punishment for others unable to bear it, who kept their spirits up, who seemed unbreakable by the place that destroyed so many.

But Jack Duncan wasn't unbreakable. If he was strong in that period in his life, it was because he knew he needed to be.

But despair and grief are sometimes simply deferred, as Jack would discover on his return to Australia.

Elizabeth saved him from his demons and offered him the job of head doctor at the hospital in 1948.

The man most locals know as simply Doctor Jack is very different to the man he was. Never one to mince his words or beat around the bush, he is still a man of secrets. "He's an incredibly complex character," Craig says. "There are so many layers which will slowly begin to peel away."

There is great passion in him also, a passion he has submerged as he has dealt with his damage, and it's something that will start to be revealed as he gets to know Sarah – a woman who in the truest sense can understand his pain.

"Jack owes a lot to Elizabeth," Craig says.
"He feels indebted to her so her obvious disdain for Sarah puts him in a difficult position. Sarah is highly skilled and he finds her intriguing. But he's caught between his loyalty for Elizabeth and his developing feelings for Sarah."



## CRAIG HALL

STARS AS JACK DUNCAN

#### CRAIG HALL IS AN ESTABLISHED ACTOR OF BOTH THE SCREEN AND STAGE.

Bom and raised in Auckland, Craig remembers vividly the moment when he first decided to become an actor.

It was Michael J Fox's star-turn as Marty McFly in Back to the Future which convinced the then 10-year-old acting was for him.

"I remember seeing that film and thinking, 'Wow! I'd like to do that!" he laughs.

He convinced his dad to take him to an agency after spotting an advertisement for film extras in a newspaper. Nothing came of it at that point because, as Craig puts it, he "had braces and looked a complete mess" but the budding actor didn't give up.

A workshop in 1993 with acting coach Kenneth McGregor, who was in New Zealand working on The Piano, opened doors for him after Kenneth recommended him to an agency.

It led to parts in short films and ad work before he scored a role on the TV series Hercules in 1996. More TV roles followed. Craig's recent TV work includes: Outrageous Fortune, East Of Everything, Underbelly: Razor, Tricky Business, Rake and the telemovie Bloodlines, in which he won the 2011 AFTA for Best Supporting Actor. Most recently he was seen in the mini-series Howzat! as Gavin Warner.

Craig made his feature film debut in 1998 in Savage Honeymoon and further movie roles continued in King Kong, The World's Fastest Indian, The Water Horse, Boy, Love Birds, The Devil's Rock, Show Of Hands, 30 Days of Night, Eagle vs Shark and the yet-to-be released second instalment of The Hobbit, his second film with Peter Jackson. "He's amazing," he says. "He's awesome to watch as he's across everything."

Craig also has a strong theatre background having performed in various stage productions with his most recent performances being Killer Joe in 2009 and The Lover in 2010. Craig, 38, moved to Sydney in 2011 with his wife, actress Sara Wiseman, whom he met over a decade ago whilst working on a short film. He lists Sara, who is also a household name in New Zealand, as one of his favourite actors. "My wife is an amazing actress," he says proudly. "She's very inspiring to me."

Away from work, Craig enjoys riding motorcycles, martial arts and yoga.



# ROY BRIGGS PLAYED BY FRANKIE J. HOLDEN

FOLLOWING A LONG LINE
OF ANCESTORS WHO LIVED
OFF THE LAND, IT WAS
ONLY RIGHT THAT
ROY BRIGGS WOULD BE
A FARMER.

"I've based Roy on my recollections on my uncles because they were true rural Australian characters," Frankie says.

"My mother was born on a farm in Bendemeer, which is in the New England ranges between Tamworth and Armidale. I used to go there a lot as a boy. All my uncles were all great horsemen and I learnt to ride there. They were sheep farmers and they knew all the Banjo Patterson poems, they played guitar and harmonica, and they all wore hats just like Roy does.

"Roy represents the rural Australia more viewers will recognise as opposed to the Bligh's. When people think of the 1950s in rural Australia, they would think more of guys like Roy than the landed gentry."

Roy is a rugged, unbreakable man capable of charm, good humour as well as a crusty grumpiness, depending on whether he takes to you or not.

Having lived in the same home his whole life, he established a close relationship with his neighbours and an ongoing pride in his hometown of Inverness. But life has not always been a happy one.

He has been the father of two sons. His wife, with whom he had an up and down relationship, has been dead for some time.

His boys' eagerness for adventure took them to war early for their country. Roy could not have been more proud. As his boys always said - they were loyal, respectful and dignified because of one person - their father.

Roy's optimistic outlook on life took a battering with the news that his eldest boy had been shot down over France. The second of Roy's sons was gunned down on the Kokoda trail.

As Roy's pain lingered, he turned to his work to escape. Then his wife died. Emotionally, Roy increasingly adopted a cold, intimidating exterior. But his mask of discontent will be disarmed when he meets Sarah Adams. He recognises some of his own pain in her.

A man who deep down loves a laugh, Roy will find solace in Sarah's arrival. With much in common, they are destined to help one another overcome the tragedies of the past.

"At the start of the series, Roy is damaged emotionally which is quite appropriate because Sarah is as well," Frankie says. "In her he finds a kind spirit. And maybe with her friendship, he will return to the fellow he once was."



FRANKIE J. HOLDEN

STARS AS ROY BRIGGS

FRANKIE J. HOLDEN IS RECOGNISED AS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST VERSATILE AND POPULAR PERFORMERS.

He was born in 1952, the same year the FJ Holden was manufactured, which he adopted as his stage name.

The 1950s enthusiast is thrilled to be part of the cast for A Place to Call Home, a show he believes will enjoy intergenerational appeal. "It's an era I've researched and feel like I know a lot about," he says. "I love shows about Australia. I love hearing genuine Australian stories and I love the fact this is set in the period in which it's set. I also love the fact my 10-year-old daughter will be able to watch as well as my 29-year-old daughter."

Frankie began his show business career in the 1970s with the legendary rock group Ol' 55, alongside Wilbur Wilde.

After disbanding in 1981, Frankie went on to forge a successful television and film career. He has created some of Australian television's most memorable characters through leading roles in shows such as Police Rescue, Round the Twist, Something in the Air, Underbelly and Embassy.

He has also played guest roles in virtually every drama and sitcom on Australian television such as Prisoner, A Country Practice, The Strip, All Saints and Blue Heelers. In 1990, he was awarded Best Actor in a Telemovie by the Australian Film Institute for his performance in Police Crop.

He's also a successful television presenter. From 1993 to 1996, he roamed the world as a reporter on The Great Outdoors. In the mid-1990s, he hosted his own live variety program in Melbourne Tonight for three years, which he lists as one of his career highlights.

He's also appeared in more than 30 films both here and overseas. His film work includes High Tide, Evil Angels, The Big Steal, Proof, Hammers Over The Anvil, Fortunes of War and Clubland, where he earned an AFI Best Supporting Actor nomination. His 1989 film Return Home earned Frankie the Best Performance in a Feature Film award at the AFI's, an event he has hosted on three occasions.

In theatre, Frankie has appeared in The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (1981), The Rocky Horror Show (1992), Grease (1994), Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (1995), Daylight Saving (2001/2002) and Don Parties On (2011). Frankie says the key to his career longevity has been his versatility. "I think being able and willing to try different things. I have a broad range I can draw on."

Well versed in singing, presenting, acting, he's loathe to pick a favourite. "I love them all," he says. "I enjoy the variety. It keeps you fresh."

Frankie is married to actress Michelle Pettigrove, best known for her long running role as Kate Bryant in the much-loved series A Country Practice.

The pair, who are parents to 10-year-old Georgia Rose, hosted their own travel/caravanning show Discover Downunder in 2010 and currently appear as a family on What's Up Downunder.

It's a passion close to their hearts as owners of Tathra Caravan Park, situated close to their home on the Sapphire Coast of NSW.

He recently turned 60 and shows no signs of slowing down. "I have been blessed to have had a career that has been fun and in the process entertain people," he says.

When he's not working, he enjoys surfing and playing golf. He also still performs corporate gigs around the country.



# Family Tree



Craig Hall as Dr. Jack Duncan

District doctor who Sarah seeks employment with; Elizabeth paid for his medical tuition



Noni Hazlehuest as Elizabeth Bligh Bligh family matriarch



Marta Dusseldorp as Sarah Adams

Mysterious nurse who returns to Australia after 20 years abroad



Brett Climo as George Bligh

Widowed son of Elizabeth who takes a shine to Sarah



Frankie J.Holden as Roy Briggs

War veteran who bonds with Sarah.



Arianwen Parkes-Lockwood as Olivia Bligh

Wife of James



David Berry as James Bligh Son of George

Abby Earl as

Anna Bligh

Daughter of George



Aldo Mignone as Gino Poletti

Anna's secret love; his family works for the Blighs

