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HOME RUN

Can Channel Ten's relationship
drama Five Bedrooms be the
next Offspring?



inside

**YOUR WEEKLY
7-DAY
TV GUIDE**

COVER STORY

Sharing the load

Ten is confident its ensemble cast experiment *Five Bedrooms* will be a ratings winner like its other hit relationship dramas, writes Colin Vickery

Two of Channel 10's most popular dramas of all time are *Offspring* and *The Secret Life Of Us*.

Now *Five Bedrooms*, with a cast headed by Kat Stewart and Stephen Peacocke, is mining similar territory with hopes of a ratings bonanza.

The set-up is simple. Five singles meet at a wedding and decide to buy a house together as a way to get a foot in the overheated property market.

Liz, played by Stewart, is a lawyer struggling with a messy divorce and spiralling debt. Ben (Peacocke) is a tradie who has lived in a caravan for the past two years.

Heather (Doris Younane) has been trapped in a dull marriage for 25 years. Ainsley (Katie Robertson) and Harry (Roy Joseph) also jump on board. Hugh Sheridan is part of the cast as real estate agent Lachlan.

Call it a *Married At First Sight*-like social experiment. Can these five people from very different walks of life manage to live harmoniously when they are suddenly thrown together under the one roof?

Offspring, with Asher Keddie as Nina Proudman and Stewart as sister Billie, lasted seven years and chalked up 85 episodes.

The Secret Life Of Us, with a cast including Claudia Karvan, Samuel Johnson and Deborah Mailman, just pipped that with 86 episodes.

If Ten gets its way, *Five Bedrooms* will make it a trifecta.

"It (*Five Bedrooms*) is a little bit *Offspring* but when we show it to people they say it feels more like *The Secret Life Of Us*," Ten program chief Beverley McGarvey says.

"It has a really good cast, is really watchable, and the lead-in audience we get for *MasterChef Australia* will really help the show get going."

Having Stewart on board is an obvious win. The key creatives, Michael Lewis and Christine Bartlett, were writers on *Offspring* and had her in mind from the start.

"Liz is 42 and I don't think in her wildest dreams she thought she would be in a share-house," Stewart says.

"Although the show is different to *Offspring* it has a similar generosity and warmth which I really like. It is inherently optimistic.



SOME OF THE FIVE BEDROOMS CAST ROY JOSEPH, STEPHEN PEACOCKE, KAT STEWART, KATIE ROBERTSON AND HUGH SHERIDAN ON SET, AND BELOW, STEWART AND PEACOCKE

"THEY'RE NOT THE TYPE OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE DINNER TOGETHER LET ALONE LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF"

"They're (characters) a motley crew. They're not the type of people you would expect to have dinner together let alone live under the same roof.

"Liz has a lot of status anxiety. She is someone who is really accomplished and smart but is caught up in the world of success.

"She had many properties and a lavish lifestyle but after an awful divorce she has to downscale enormously.

"This is an opportunity to live with her best friend (Harry) and it seems like a sound short-term stepping stone.

"*Offspring* was very much through Nina's perspective but this is a true ensemble piece.

"Billie was someone who didn't have a filter but Liz is all about filters. She is all about the mask. She has got a lot of walls up."

Peacocke flirted with Hollywood stardom (*Hercules*, *Whisky Tango Foxtrot*) after his years portraying Darryl "Brax"

Braxton on *Home and Away*.

But it is Australia that has provided him with his meatiest roles of late — Detective Josh Levine alongside Rebecca Gibney in *Wanted*, Lieutenant Adrian Roberts in *Danger Close: The Battle Of Long Tan*, and now Ben.

"When I read the script, I really

liked it and my wife (Bridgette Sneddon) said 'is there anyone attached?'" Peacocke says.

"I said Kat was and also Doris and she said 'there's your answer'. She loves both of them as actors and she said 'anything that Kat does she is excellent and it is always popular'.

"Ben looks for the best in people. He doesn't judge, and he is a bit of a larrikin.

"I'm used to being in a share house. In my first year at Newcastle University, I'd moved from Bourke and had

no money so I just had my swag rolled out on my floor for the first eight months."

Five Bedrooms gives Younane a chance to shine in a central role after recent supporting turns in *The Wrong Girl*, *Janet King*, *Catching Milat* and *Party Tricks*.

Younane sprang to fame as school psychologist Yola Fatoush in 1990s drama *Heartbreak High*. The following decade she played Moira Doyle across 94 episodes of *McLeod's Daughters*.

"For me, Heather resonates. Women of her age group watching this are going to absolutely get it.

"Women of Heather's age group (50s) can feel invisible. They want to redefine themselves after their kids have grown up.

"Heather comes into this at a point in her life where she's just not happy with who she is.

"She is looking for a change and this happens to come up. A lot of women act on it and others are too scared to.

"I remember reading it (first script) thinking 'I've got to play this role'. The writers have created such a complex, interesting dynamic character for me."

WATCH FIVE BEDROOMS, Channel 10, tonight, 8.40pm



HOT

GAME OF THRONES FINALE

Prepare for the bitter end. And then the prequels and sequels



KATE MILLER-HEIDKE AT EUROVISION

Is this the year we pull it off? Pending usual Euro block voting nonsense



JACK VIDGEN ON THE VOICE

Good to see his familiar face on the TV. Well, it's a vaguely familiar face these days



NOT

CELEBRITY NAME GAME

If you think 6pm TV news is dumbed-down, try this brain drain. Sheesh



ELECTION CAMPAIGN ADS ON TV

Good news: we only have to endure it for a few more days



ED SHEERAN AND JUSTIN BIEBER'S I DON'T CARE

Well ... it's better than that new Taylor Swift song

