



THE BEST BRITISH DRAMA AND COMEDY IN ONE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME **BBC First launch titles and talent revealed**

From August, BBC First on Foxtel will be the new home of premium British drama and comedy in Australia, showcasing the best award-winning, world-renowned programmes and talent in one place for the very first time.

BBC First offers programmes with a uniquely British perspective - stories that challenge, immerse and entertain, as well as celebrate humanity in all its fascinating complexity. From features to sweeping series and every configuration in between, BBC First will give its audience more exceptional British shows than ever before, many that would not otherwise make it to Australia, and their viewing experience will always be ad-break free. There will also be the opportunity to marathon-view great new shows, with programme stacking a special feature in the BBC First schedule.



Launch titles include recent British hits *The Musketeers* and *Peaky Blinders* along with *The Politician's Husband*, single drama *Burton and Taylor* and the new *Alan Partridge* mockumentaries. Talent from Helena Bonham Carter, Daniel Radcliffe and David Tennant to Ricky Gervais, Steve Coogan and Dawn French are all lined up to appear on the channel. While off screen talent, including Andrew Davies, Jimmy McGovern and Paula Milne, who are renowned for creating truly groundbreaking series, are also behind some of the forthcoming titles.

Big returning series, including *Call The Midwife* and *New Tricks*, are already secured for the channel from 2015 as they enter production for series four and series twelve respectively. As new dramas and comedies hit TV screens in the UK, they will be available in Australia on BBC First faster than ever before.

BBC First offers Australian viewers the chance to see British drama singles and short series that would not otherwise make it to our networks, such as *Playhouse Presents* – a star-studded collection of contemporary one-offs featuring leading talent both on and off the screen. In addition, none of the programmes on BBC First will be available on terrestrial television for at least 12 months.

Australia is the first territory to launch BBC First, one of three new global brands announced by BBC Worldwide in October 2013. It will also benefit from the extra investment BBC Worldwide has pledged for content, an additional £30million across the company for a range of genres, taking BBC Worldwide's total content investment commitment to £200million pa from 2014/15.

It was recently announced that *Banished*, written by Jimmy McGovern, will be the first local production for BBC First. Co-commissioned with BBC Two in the UK and produced by RSJ Films/See-Saw Films, this epic seven part series is loosely inspired by events in 1788 when Britain established a penal colony in Australia.

Jon Penn, Managing Director of BBC Worldwide ANZ said: 'The BBC has always been pioneering and the launch of BBC First in Australia continues in this spirit, offering something totally unique to the market. British drama and comedy has a world-renowned reputation for being clever, complex and immensely enjoyable, attracting top talent on and off the screen. For the first time in Australia, all the very best new British dramas and comedies will be available in one place, giving viewers the opportunity to indulge and immerse themselves in world class creativity.'

Richard Freudenstein, Foxtel Chief Executive said: 'The partnership between Foxtel and the BBC marks a significant milestone in Australian television. BBC First will enable our customers to see every major new BBC series first on Foxtel. This further consolidates our brilliant offering for subscribers and our pledge to bring the best television from around the world to Foxtel homes.'

BBC First joins existing BBC channels – UKTV, BBC Knowledge, CBeebies and BBC World News – on the Foxtel platform from August. It will also be available on Foxtel GO and in high definition. Drama and comedy fans will be able to check what's coming up on BBC First via the programme page bbc.com/First.

Programming highlights:

- *The Musketeers* – a thrilling world of action, adventure and romance inspired by Dumas' legendary characters, starring Luke Pasqualino, Tom Burke, Santiago Cabrera, Howard Charles and Peter Capaldi.
- *Peaky Blinders* – acclaimed epic gangster family saga set in the lawless streets of post-war Birmingham on the cusp of the 1920s, starring Cillian Murphy.

- *The Politician's Husband* – a gripping drama about the shifting balance of power in a political marriage, starring David Tennant and Emily Watson and created by Paula Milne.
- *Quirke* – a mesmerising drama full of mystery, secrets and intrigue, starring Gabriel Byrne as a consultant pathologist in a Dublin city morgue in the 1950s and co-written by Andrew Davies.
- *The Game* – a stylish spy thriller set in the Cold War, where enemies and allies can't always be separated, starring Brian Cox.
- *Burton and Taylor* – starring Helena Bonham Carter and Dominic West and telling the story of Hollywood's original 'it' couple Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, acting together in Noel Coward's 'Private Lives'.
- *Derek* – season two of Ricky Gervais' bittersweet comedy drama about a group of outsiders living on society's margins.
- *Alan Partridge* – his two new mockumentaries *Welcome To The Places of My Life* and *On Open Books With Martin Bryce*, starring Steve Coogan.
- *A Young Doctor's Notebook* – a wry comedy drama about a young doctor's fledgling career in a small, backwards Russian village, starring Jon Hamm and Daniel Radcliffe.
- *The Fall* – series two of the hugely popular psychological thriller, in which Detective Superintendent Stella Gibson continues her pursuit of serial killer Paul Spector, played by Gillian Anderson and Jamie Dornan.
- *Dead Boss* – a slick comedy about a woman falsely imprisoned for murdering her boss, starring Jennifer Saunders and Sharon Horgan.
- *Playhouse Presents* – a star-studded collection of contemporary short dramas, from leading talent both on and off screen, including Emma Thompson, Brenda Blethyn, Stephen Fry, Richard E Grant and Sheila Hancock.
- *The Crimson Field* – marking 100 years since the start of the First World War, a compelling and emotional drama set in a tented field hospital, starring Oona Chaplin, Hermione Norris and Suranne Jones.
- *Banished* – Jimmy McGovern's epic series charting the lives, loves, relationships and battle for survival in an 18th century Sydney penal colony. The first local commission for BBC First, starring David Wenham and Russell Tovey.

Press contact: Laura Dumbrell, Head of Communications, BBC Worldwide ANZ on 02 9744 4502/4501 or laura.dumbrell@bbc.com.

Materials:

- For a full press pack [click here](#)
- For an embeddable trailer go to `<iframe width='560' height='315' src='http://www.bbcmedia.com.au/e/4227CE57' frameborder='0' allowfullscreen></iframe>` (note, this video is geo-blocked and will only be available for three weeks)
- Pictures available. Email bryony.willis@bbc.com.