

Media Release

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The smash-hit series *The Hospital: In the Deep End* returns to shine a spotlight on the real-life heroes of our healthcare system

Matt Preston, Jelena Dokic and Ruby Rose step onto the frontline to see what it takes to save a life

Premieres Thursday 5 March at 8:30pm on SBS and SBS On Demand

Interviews available

First look [here](#)

Images [here](#)

Screeners [here](#)

In the compelling new season of ***The Hospital: In the Deep End***, three new iconic Australians step onto the frontline where the stakes are high, and compassion is critical. The series return expands its lens to explore a wider range of departments than ever before across not one, but two of the busiest and most well-known hospitals in the country.

Award-winning food journalist, best-selling cookbook author, radio presenter and international TV personality **Matt Preston**, former professional tennis player, broadcaster and public speaker **Jelena Dokic**, and Hollywood actor, producer, and activist **Ruby Rose**, each arrive with a deeply personal connection to the public health system, but nothing has prepared them for the emotional and eye-opening experiences ahead.

Don't miss the powerful stories that celebrate courage, compassion, and, above all, the strength of the human spirit. The three-part series airs weekly **Thursdays from 5 March at 8:30pm on SBS and SBS On Demand**.

Unmatched behind-the-scenes hospital access

Hospitals are being pushed to their limitsⁱ as demand continues to climbⁱⁱ. More patients are presenting to Australian emergency departments than ever beforeⁱⁱⁱ, and health workers are exhausted^{iv}. Reports of staffing shortages, nursing resignations^v, strikes^{vi} and high rates of burnout^{vii}, all point to a system that is on the brink. But what's it really like to work on the hospital frontline?

Returning to St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, and, for the first time, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, the series has unprecedented access to the inner workings of these two major public hospitals. It's an unfiltered, intimate glimpse beyond the hospital corridors, where raw vulnerability and

strength meet in life-changing moments, taking audiences inside the pressure points testing our health system. From the high stress environment of the operating theatre to the emotional toll of treating the critically ill to occupational violence, the series bears witness to the extraordinary challenges frontline staff face every single day.

Three Australian icons. Three powerful stories.

Although **Matt Preston** is best known to Australians as a food journalist and author, audiences are about to see another side of the beloved TV personality. Matt has a deeply personal interest in the public healthcare system due to a tragedy in his family. When he was in his 20s, his younger brother died from SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy). Matt wants to know how far we've come in preventing deaths through SUDEP and what options are available for treating epilepsy in the public health system. At St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, Matt observes a cutting-edge procedure in which electrodes are implanted into a patient's brain to discover the source of their seizures.

He also spends time in one of the most challenging areas of the hospital – the acute geriatric ward. There, he meets the extraordinary staff who care for those with dementia, a condition that affected his mother. Matt also observes a robotic prostatectomy but learns that essential services for men recovering from prostate removal can be hard to access in the public health system in Australia.

Matt Preston said: "Geriatrics, epilepsy and men's health are all departments I have personal experience with, and I wanted learn what workable solutions we have for our rapidly aging population, whether men are finally taking preventive health seriously (and how to address this) and why, 40 years after my brother died of SUDEP (Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy), we still lose over 170 largely young people to this scourge^{viii}."

Former tennis champion and broadcaster **Jelena Dokic** grew up under intense scrutiny during her sporting career, while enduring years of abuse from her father that tore her family apart. The trauma she endured through childhood abuse and public pressure has shaped her advocacy for speaking out about mental health, resilience and empowerment. In the series, Jelena faces confronting reminders of her own past, particularly when working with patients experiencing family and domestic violence trauma^{ix}. In Australia, it's believed that one in four women have experienced domestic violence^x. Jelena wants to know what services are currently being offered to those seeking out help with mental, physical and emotional abuse. How do health workers cope with hearing these stories?

Having never been to the emergency department (ED) before, Jelena has a startling first experience where the unit is at capacity after a build-up of patients over the weekend. Jelena is wondering how staff in the ED deal with these confronting situations when there is no reprieve, and their conditions are often critical. Jelena later travels to St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne to work in the oncology department. She wants to better understand what can be done for the early detection and treatment of lung cancer which continues to kill around 9,000 Australians each year^{xi}.

Jelena Dokic said: "I was truly honoured to be part of this experience. It was incredibly eye-opening and reinforced how important it is to continue raising awareness among and about our health care professionals.

"Seeing firsthand what they face each day in the workplace - often behind the scenes – was powerful. The dedication, care, and effort they give to every patient is remarkable. They carry one of the toughest jobs in the world, and if we can help shed light on their reality and do anything to make their work easier, we absolutely should."

Following the success of *Orange is the New Black*, Hollywood movie star **Ruby Rose** secured roles in a succession of blockbuster action films. However, when she broke her neck on set while doing a stunt, she thought she may never walk again. Ruby knows what it feels like to be a patient. But what's it like for those delivering care and for the surgeons performing life-changing operations? Ruby is granted extraordinary access to observe a spinal surgery very similar to the one she herself underwent.

In the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Ruby works alongside the professionals caring for patients with life-threatening conditions. Having spent weeks in ICU as a teenager after a near-fatal car accident, Ruby is eager to see intensive care from the other side. There, Ruby witnesses the emotional resilience required of ICU staff and the pressures that make burnout a big issue in this demanding field. The ICU is a notoriously challenging area of medicine. Only the critically ill are treated here, and in Australia, around one in 12 ICU patients will not survive^{xii}.

Ruby also spends time in the Aboriginal Healthcare Unit, an area she has a personal interest in due to her godfather, legendary Australian boxer and Gunditjmara man, Lionel Rose. She meets a patient on the wards who was part of the Stolen Generations who brings home to Ruby some of the reasons why the healthcare system is so distrusted among First Nations people, and how important the Aboriginal Healthcare Unit is in breaking down barriers and making public hospitals more culturally safe.

Ruby Rose said: "Hospitals have played a big role in my life. As a patient, I have seen what healthcare workers can do under pressure and with a smile. I used to regularly visit a children's hospital with a friend, a wonderful nurse. Then she hit burnout. That was over a decade ago and I am worried it might still be the healthcare workers holding up our broken system."

Challenged by what they experience inside the hospitals, **Matt, Jelena** and **Ruby** open up like never before. From reliving the loss of loved ones, exploring their mental health and confronting their own life-changing medical issues, they are emotional, vulnerable and insightful.

SBS Commissioning Editor Bethan Arwel-Lewis said: "This season takes the series to an entirely new level. We see Jelena, Ruby and Matt as we have never seen them before - at their most vulnerable and coming face to face with those life and death decisions that our health care heroes navigate on a daily basis. It's high stakes, drama and an unflinching look at the realities of our public health system today and raises those urgent questions about the future. Most of all it encapsulates SBS's ambition, to explore some of our biggest social issues in an impactful and engaging way."

Screen Australia Head of Documentary Richard Huddleston said: "Building on the success of the first season, audiences are once again taken on an eye-opening journey through our hospital system, following the heroic efforts of our medical professionals as they navigate saving the lives of everyday Australians. With great access, honest and raw responses from Ruby Rose, Jelena Dokic and Matt Preston, this is a surprisingly heart-warming series."

Screenwest Documentary Executive Caroline Douglas said: "We're so pleased to support another season of *The Hospital in the Deep End* from WA production company, Smashing Films. Dan Brown and the team have once again expertly crafted an honest and compelling look inside our healthcare system. We look forward to seeing audiences across the country embrace this touching documentary series."

Smashing Films Creative Director and Executive Producer Dan Brown said: "It has been an extraordinary privilege to return to *The Hospital: In the Deep End* and to once again shine a light on the remarkable work of the hospital and its staff. We were welcomed into an environment defined by compassion, expertise and resilience, and we are deeply grateful to the patients who trusted us with their stories at moments of profound vulnerability."

"I'm especially thankful to Matt, Ruby and Jelena for the courage they showed in going on this journey with us, and for sharing parts of their lives and histories that we would never have otherwise discovered. My sincere thanks to SBS for commissioning the series and believing in its importance, and to Screenwest and Screen Australia for their invaluable support in bringing this project to life."

The Hospital: In The Deep End is a Smashing Films production for SBS. Principal production funding from Screen Australia and SBS. Financed with support from Screenwest and Lotterywest.

The Hospital: In The Deep End will be available with closed captions and audio description, and subtitled on SBS On Demand in Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese.

***The Hospital: In The Deep End* premieres on Thursday 5 March at 8:30pm on SBS and SBS On Demand.**

The first season of *The Hospital: In the Deep End* with Melissa Leong, Costa Georgiadis and Samuel Johnson is available to stream free now on SBS On Demand.

Screners and images for media use are available on the SBS Screening Room

For media requests, please contact:

Clementine Zawadzki | 0432 751 119 | clementine.zawadzki@sbs.com.au

Nikita Jacka | 0425 171 192 | nikita.jacka@sbs.com.au

ⁱ <https://www.rmit.edu.au/news/all-news/2025/nov/health-digital-transformation-report>

ⁱⁱ https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20240529_01.aspx

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/hospitals/topics/emergency-departments/presentations>

^{iv} <https://grattan.edu.au/news/hospitals-are-under-pressure/>

^v Source: News grabs in ep 3 pre-title sequence

^{vi} Source: News grabs in ep 3 pre-title sequence

^{vii} <https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2024/small-rural-towns-are-suffering-critical-shortages-of-health-care-workers.php#:~:text=October%2016%2C%202024>

[Small%20rural%20towns%20are%20suffering%20critical%20shortages%20of%20health%20care,health%20outcomes%20for%20](https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2024/small-rural-towns-are-suffering-critical-shortages-of-health-care-workers.php#:~:text=October%2016%2C%202024)

^{viii} <https://www.epilepsy.org.au/leading-experts-call-for-greater-awareness-of-sudden-unexpected-death-in-epilepsy-to-help-save-lives/>

^{ix} [https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/types-of-violence/intimate-partner-violence#:~:text=According%20to%20the%202021%20E%20%9322,of%2015%20\(ABS%202023a\).](https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/types-of-violence/intimate-partner-violence#:~:text=According%20to%20the%202021%20E%20%9322,of%2015%20(ABS%202023a).)

^x [https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/topic-areas/domestic-violence.html#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%201,Survey%202021%2D22%20launch\).](https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/topic-areas/domestic-violence.html#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%201,Survey%202021%2D22%20launch).)

[https://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/cancer-types/lung-cancer/lung-cancer-australia-statistics#:~:text=persons%20in%202021.-,Deaths,or%202.5%20for%20females\).&text=In%202023%2C%20the%20age%2Dstandardised,expected%20to%20increase%20with%20age.&text=The%20number%20of%20deaths%20from,per%20100%2C000%20persons%20in%202023.](https://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/cancer-types/lung-cancer/lung-cancer-australia-statistics#:~:text=persons%20in%202021.-,Deaths,or%202.5%20for%20females).&text=In%202023%2C%20the%20age%2Dstandardised,expected%20to%20increase%20with%20age.&text=The%20number%20of%20deaths%20from,per%20100%2C000%20persons%20in%202023.)

^{xii} <https://intensivecarefoundation.org.au/about-intensive-care-units/survival-rates#:~:text=Since%20the%201990's%20survival%20rates,saved%20annually%20in%20Australia%20alone.>