

This was published 7 years ago

## Such reality as dreams are made on



By [Ben Pobjie](#)

August 7, 2014 – 3.00am

Moving out of home is, for most people, a big moment in life, but an inevitable one. It's just something you do, as you move from childhood to adulthood. It's expected, and assumed you'll move on smoothly to life sans parents.

But what if moving out of home meant challenging the views of many who believed you wouldn't be able to handle life out there in the world? What if you were an adult, but had to fight to convince others to treat you like one?



*The Dreamhouse*: A reality series that deals with reality.

Thus are the questions thrown up by *The Dreamhouse* (ABC1, 9.25pm), a reality series that differs from most reality series inasmuch as it deals with reality. The show, narrated by Adam Hills, follows three young adults with intellectual disabilities, embarking on a great adventure by moving into a share house together.

The oldest of the group is Justin, AKA "the chick magnet", a 32-year-old champion powerlifter determined to prove his independence, who takes to his new home with worldly-wise confidence. Next is Sarah, a 23-

year-old dancer who quickly slips into the habits of a mother hen around Justin and the third member of the household, Kirk, a hyperactive 21-year-old whose nervous energy and non-stop chatter are likely to entertain and get on his housemates' nerves by turns.

The first episode shows the trio moving into their new home and dealing with domestic challenges such as shopping, cooking, and perhaps most of all, learning to get along. We also see the varied reactions of their supportive parents: as Kirk's mum laughs about the newfound peace and quiet, Sarah's reflects on the new stage her life has entered, and Justin's struggles with the emotional fallout of a change that needed to happen, but has nevertheless taken a toll.

*The Dreamhouse* is, no mistake, a heart warmer and a tear jerker. But it's more than that. It's so easy to see people with disabilities in stereotypical terms. To see them as victims, overgrown children, helpless innocents in need of saving or burdens on the community. *The Dreamhouse* instead shows them as people with abilities, flaws, hopes, desires and dreams the same as any of us. These are just three of thousands of people trying to build their own lives in the face of our prejudices, but by watching them, maybe those prejudices can be lessened. And that's what makes that rarest of beasts: important television.

It's lighter fare over on 7Mate, where people struggle with a different kind of challenge: how to get rid of embarrassing tattoos. *Tattoo Nightmares* (7Mate, 8.30pm) kicks off the digital channel's two-hour all-bad-tattoos block, with *Bad Ink* to follow. The first ep, titled "U-F-OH NO!" (see what they did?) sees Tommy have flashbacks when asked to conceal a past alien encounter. Sounds far-fetched, but after watching *Tattoo Nightmares* it's hard to disbelieve in anything any more.



**Ben Pobjie** is a columnist. Connect via [Twitter](#).

---