



## 12 top acts to follow in new year

New television shows will give already popular stars a chance to shine even more

### Julia Morris

Since winning *Celebrity Apprentice Australia*, the mother of two has never been hotter or more in demand. The Channel 9 reality program revealed Morris was more than a one-trick pony and allowed viewers to see a more serious side to her funny-girl persona. Morris, who until recently was living in Britain, is yet to cash in on her career renaissance. Whether she remains hot in 2012 depends on her next TV project, which is rumoured to be as **Chrissie Swan's** replacement on *The Circle*. The morning chat show would be a good fit.

### Andrew Denton

As host of a chat show, variety program and sketch comedy series, Andrew Denton has triumphed. He even succeeded in TV's toughest gig — hosting the Logies. Now, after a short break from the spotlight, Denton is poised to take on another genre, the game show, with *Randling* on ABC. With his acerbic wit, Denton is sure to be a formidable host.

### Keith Urban

Finally, we get to see what **Nicole Kidman** sees in country music star Keith Urban. Sure, we've heard him sing and seen him on the arm of his Hollywood star wife, but until now we've heard very little from Mr

Urban. As a judge on Channel 9's new singing competition, *The Voice*, Urban will be able to reveal more of his personality.

### Sonia Kruger

**Dan MacPherson's** *Dancing with the Stars* sidekick is going it alone this year. Channel 9 has lured the bubbly blonde to host a revamped *Big Brother* and take over **Kerri-Anne Kennerley's** morning show. With her quick wit and live-TV experience, Kruger is a good choice for *BB*. It will be interesting to see how she fares stepping into daytime queen Kennerley's shoes.

### Shaun Micallef

As host of Channel 10's *Talkin' 'Bout Your Generation*, Shaun Micallef has won legions of fans. Now he's been given the chance to return to his comedic roots as host of his own news-comedy program, *Shaun Micallef is Mad as Hell*, for the ABC. Micallef's last project for the ABC was the under-appreciated *The Micallef Program*. The popularity of *Talkin' 'Bout Your Generation* will hopefully ensure *Shaun Micallef is Mad as Hell* reaches a wider audience.

### Brooke Satchwell

**Matthew Newton's** ex-girlfriend is back on TV, joining the cast of *Packed to the Rafters* to fill the void left by mum-to-be **Jessica Marais**. Finding fame on *Neighbours* as a teenager, the actor has been almost a recluse since her acrimonious split with Newton in 2006. An appearance on *Talkin' 'Bout Your Generation* this year reminded the industry of Satchwell's talent, and word is her guest role on *Rafters*

has been extended after her performance impressed the bosses at Seven.

### Ajay Rochester

Ajay Rochester's TV career has been in freefall ever since she was dropped as host of *The Biggest Loser*. A move to the US, and hopes of being the next **Oprah Winfrey**, came to nothing. Now Rochester is back as a contestant on *Excess Baggage*. Nine's reality show spotlights celebrities and ordinary people with weight and emotional issues. **Julia Morris** turned her fortunes around on *Celebrity Apprentice Australia*. Rochester will be hoping *Excess Baggage* will do the same.

### Shane Jacobson

Jacobson has made a living out of playing the Aussie knockabout guy. Think hit movie *Kenny* and TV's *Top Gear Australia*. *Beaconsfield* is set to show a very different side to Jacobson, one that could establish him as a top-flight dramatic actor. Jacobson plays **Brant Webb** in Nine's telemovie based on the 2006 Beaconsfield mine disaster. **Lachy Hulme** co-stars as **Todd Russell**. We know Jacobson can do funny. *Beaconsfield* will show he can do serious, too.

### Rob Mills

Rob Mills has shone on stage in *Wicked!* and *Grease: The Musical*, but his TV career is a shambles. The *Australian Idol* finalist has starred in three TV shockers — *Stooged*, *The Mint* and *The Singing Bee*. *Young Talent Time* could turn all that around.

Mills seems like the ideal choice to host the re-booted youth talent show. If he gets this right, it will be his TV

breakthrough, and he'll have a job for years.

### Andrew Rochford

You've got to give TV medico Andrew Rochford points for bravery. The doctor, and former contestant on *The Block*, has been a welcome regular on *The Panel*. Now Rochford is set to go to the next level, as co-host of Ten's new brekkie show, *Breakfast*. Taking on Seven's *Sunrise* and Nine's *Today* is no easy matter. Along with controversial New Zealand broadcaster **Paul Henry**, he can expect to get smashed early on.

### Lisa McCune

McCune has been Australia's TV darling for almost two decades. Now the four-time Gold Logie winner takes on a new challenge. McCune is producing, as well as starring, in new Channel 10 drama *Reef Doctors*. McCune plays GP Sam Mitchell, who runs a remote island medical clinic. *Reef Doctors* is her baby. She has played a key role in all the major casting and scripting decisions. She needs it to be a ratings hit.

### Shane Bourne

Will Shane Bourne be the next **Erik Thomson/Dave Rafter**? That is the question being asked after the actor/comedian was cast as patriarch Jim Christie in *Tricky Business*. Nine's family drama looks like *Packed to the Rafters* meets NZ comedy/drama *Outrageous Fortune*. We've seen how *Rafters* boosted the careers of Thomson and **Rebecca Gibney**. Bourne, last seen on *City Homicide* and *Thank God You're Here*, will hope *Tricky Business* can do the business.