



14 October 2013

## Downton Abbey star for Melbourne Cup

Allen Leech, who plays chauffeur turned estate manager Tom Branson in the hit British drama *Downton Abbey*, will be Seven's special guest at the 2013 Emirates Melbourne Cup.

The 32-year-old Dublin-born actor will be hoping to leave the luck of the Irish at home when he travels to Melbourne next month for Cup Day on November 5 and press duties for the upcoming fourth season of *Downton Abbey*, set to premiere on Seven in 2014.

Commenting, Allen said: "From an early age horse racing has been a major part of my life, from my grandfather's tips to my mother's own horses. The Melbourne Cup has always been spoken about in the same way as the Gold Cup, the 1000 Guineas and the King George. I'm very excited to be able to be there and witness it first-hand."

Allen has wowed *Downton* fans across the world for his portrayal of Tom Branson, the chauffeur and political activist who won the heart of rebellious Crawley daughter, Lady Sybil, only to be left a grieving widower after her shock death during childbirth last season.

He is currently in England filming the Alan Turing biopic, *The Imitation Game*, which also stars Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley.

Season 4 of *Downton Abbey* got off to a roaring start in the UK last month, enjoying its best ever ratings for the first two episodes of any season.

In Australia, the series has consistently won its timeslot each year and was the #1 drama of 2011, the #2 drama of 2012 (behind *Revenge*) and in the year-to-date is the #1 regular drama of 2013.

The fourth season picks up six months after the untimely death of *Downton* heir Matthew Crawley. The family are still reeling from this terrible tragedy but with new life, in the form of babies George and Sybbie, comes new hope, as the much-loved characters take tentative steps into the Roaring Twenties.

On what's ahead for Branson in Season 4, Allen said: "The world is still a place of constant change and Branson finds himself trying to deal with his lack of identity both socially and politically. In this world, his new responsibilities also mean he has to relive past sorrows to help the Crawley family."

For further information on Allen Leech's Australian publicity tour, please contact:

**Kate Amphlett**

Channel Seven Publicity

P: 02 8777 7257

M: 0412 527 065

E: [KAmpflett@seven.com.au](mailto:KAmpflett@seven.com.au)