
THE STATE OF MAN
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THE STATE OF MAN

What does it mean to be a man in a world where an algorithm can shape your identity, relationships, ambitions and beliefs?



Award-winning journalist Marc Fennell (*Stuff The British Stole*; ABC Australia, BBC UK & CBC Canada) goes inside the rapidly expanding culture of modern masculinity, meeting the influencers, entrepreneurs, athletes, dating coaches, tech insiders and young men shaping - and being shaped by - the online world.

Immersing himself in the digital spaces where ideas about masculinity spread at extraordinary speed – effectively going undercover online – Marc experiences first-hand how seemingly ordinary content can lead users deeper into increasingly extreme communities and beliefs.

Across three episodes, Marc travels to other countries to meet the people behind these networks in real life, moving from the worlds of fitness, dating and self-improvement to the global manosphere - uncovering why these messages resonate with millions of men, and what happens when purpose, belonging and identity are increasingly framed by virtual communities.

Warm, curious and deeply immersive, *The State of Man* offers a clear-eyed, deeply human journey into why so many boys and men feel abandoned by the modern world, and what it might take to find a way back.

GENRE
FACTUAL

EPISODES & DURATION
3 x 60'

PRODUCTION COMPANY
HELIUM PICTURES

TX DATE
13 OCT 2026

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EPISODES



Episode 1

Marc sets up his ‘Young Marc’ burner phone and steps into the algorithm representing a young man.

Meeting a multimillionaire fitness influencer, a testosterone clinic doctor, and the rising star of a combat sport, he starts to piece together the huge impact these ideas of masculinity are having on men and boys across society but needs to know – why?



Episode 2

Marc goes further down the rabbit hole as the algorithm leads him to questionable relationship advice and the business of attention. Inside the world of self-styled dating coaches and ‘high-status’ gurus selling a formula for masculinity and success, Marc asks why these ideas are landing so hard with a generation of men looking for answers. He realises how much the algorithm, and the industries riding on it, profit from young men's misdirected grievance and insecurities.



Episode 3

Marc travels around the world, he meets three experts who give him a terrifying snapshot of the way the manosphere is pushing young men to sometimes violent extremes.

Venturing into to the darkest corners of the manosphere, he confronts racism, misogyny and Far Right extremism, before meeting men who escaped the manosphere and those battling to curb its toxic influence.

PARTICIPANTS

The State of Man features access to an extraordinary range of participants including:



ALEX EUBANK
Fitness Influencer
American fitness influencer Alex Eubank has built an online following of more than 7.5 million across Instagram and TikTok, sharing fitness content and insights into contemporary male identity.



STEPHEN SCHEELER
Former CEO, Facebook ANZ
Stephen Scheeler is the former CEO of Facebook Australia and New Zealand, bringing expertise in technology, social media and the influence of digital platforms on culture and behaviour.



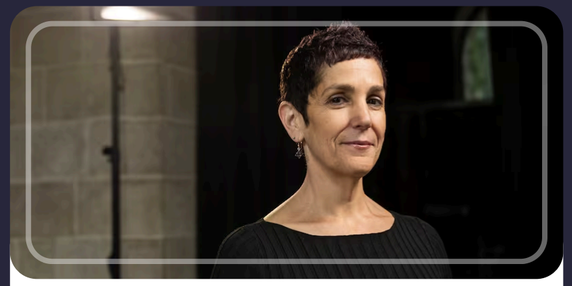
PROFESSOR STEVEN ROBERTS
Professor of Sociology
An internationally recognised sociologist (Monash University) whose research explores masculinities, gender, youth and how social expectations shape the lives of boys and men.



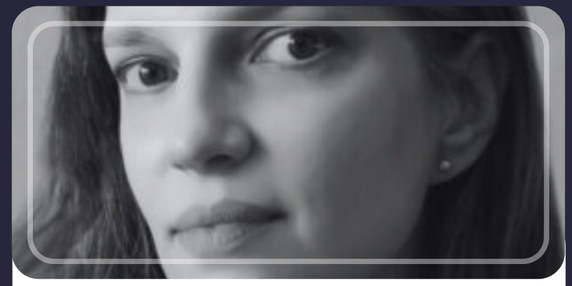
ALENA KATE PETTITT
Author & Traditional Lifestyle Influencer
a prominent 'tradwife' influencer and author known for advocating traditional femininity and homemaking, earning international attention including coverage in *The New Yorker*.



JULIA GILLARD
Former Prime Minister of Australia
Julia Gillard was Australia's 27th Prime Minister and the country's first woman to hold the office; she brings a significant political perspective to conversations about gender, leadership and equality.



YAËL EISENSTAT
Former CIA Officer & Disinformation Expert
Yaël Eisenstat is a former CIA officer and technology policy expert whose work examines online manipulation, disinformation, political influence and the impact of social media on society.



ZOE MANZI
Senior Analyst, Hate & Extremism
Zoe Manzi specialises in the analysis of hate and extremism, examining the online environments, ideologies and social dynamics that can contribute to radicalisation and harmful behaviour.



ZAC SEIDLER
Global Director of Research, Movember
Zac Seidler is Global Director of Research at Movember, where he leads work focused on men's mental health, suicide prevention and developing evidence-based approaches to improving men's wellbeing.

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PARTICIPANTING ORGANISATIONS

ANROWS

An organisation dedicated to building the evidence base to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. It works with researchers, governments, practitioners and communities to translate research into policy and practice, supporting safer, more equitable communities



JSS

A not-for-profit organisation working with people experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. Through *The Men's Project*, it addresses harmful attitudes and behaviours associated with masculinity, promotes respectful relationships and develops programs to prevent violence.



BETTER BLOKES PROJECT

An initiative supporting men to build stronger relationships, improve their wellbeing and seek help before reaching crisis point. Led by men with lived experience, it creates accessible, relatable spaces for honest conversations about the pressures of life, encouraging connection, accountability and practical action.



MAN CAVE

A preventative mental health charity that works with boys and young men to develop healthier understandings of masculinity. Through workshops, education and positive role models, it creates safe spaces for conversations, helping young men build emotional intelligence, empathy and respectful connections.



CONSUMER LAW ACTION CENTRE

An independent legal organisation providing free advice and financial counselling to vulnerable consumers. Its work addresses financial disadvantage, exploitative business practices and the pressures that can affect individuals and families.



STEP TOGETHER

A support service that helps individuals, families and communities respond to concerns about someone potentially becoming involved in violent extremism. It provides information, guidance and connections to appropriate support services, with a focus on early intervention.



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HELIUM PICTURES

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Launched in 2021, HELIUM Pictures is a premium production label built squarely around ambitious, internationally resonant scripted storytelling. In just four years, HELIUM has established itself as a scripted powerhouse, with standout titles including *Last King of the Cross* (three seasons), *Paper Dolls, The Killings at Parrish Station*, and the feature film *6 Festivals*, cementing the company's reputation for bold, contemporary drama with global reach.

Alongside its scripted success, HELIUM continues to expand strategically into premium factual and feature film, with an ambitious slate of new projects in advanced development and production. Upcoming factual titles include *The State of Man* and *Tina Arena: Unravel Me*, while HELIUM's feature film pipeline signals the next phase of the company's growth into cinematic storytelling.

Now entering its fifth year, HELIUM is firmly positioned as one of Australia's most dynamic and prolific production labels – a creative engine delivering premium scripted drama at scale, backed by a growing slate of feature films and high-end factual content, and driven by a clear international ambition.

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KEY CREATIVES

‘The cheerful Aussie version of Louis Theroux’
– The Times (UK)



Marc Fennell is a Walkley-winning journalist, AACTA-nominated director and creator and host of *Stuff the British Stole*, which screens on ABC Australia, BBC Select and CBC Canada.

He has presented more than 500 episodes of SBS’s *Mastermind* and spent nine years reporting for *The Feed*, interviewing international figures including Al Gore, Tom Cruise, Julian Assange and Jennifer Lawrence. His interviews have attracted more than 30 million online views.

Marc has created award-winning *Audible Original* investigative series, including *It Burns, Nut Jobs, This Is Not a Game* and *Unreal: When AI Becomes Us*, a BBC Studios collaboration exploring the human consequences of artificial intelligence.

A three-time Rose d’Or nominee, Marc is an eight-time New York Festivals medallist and recipient of a Canadian Screen Award, the James Beard Foundation Food Journalism Award, an Association for International Broadcasting Award, two AWGIE Awards and multiple Webby Honours.

KEY CREATIVES



MELISSA MACLEAN

Executive Producer | Director | Showrunner

Melissa Maclean is an award-winning executive producer, director and showrunner whose credits include international format successes *Travel Guides* and *Parental Guidance*, adapted in the US as *The Parent Test*. She is showrunner of Logie Award-winning series *The Assembly* and has contributed to the development of *Gogglebox* and *The Zoo*. Her feature documentary *Beyond Our Ken* screened at international festivals including Hot Docs, MIFF and IDFA.



LUKE CLARK

New Mac | Executive Producer

Luke Clark is a producer and writer who developed *Never Too Small*, a digital series that grew into an international media brand with more than 3.2 million subscribers and a television adaptation spanning three seasons. His credits include *Small Footprint* and *Wonderful Waste*, exploring housing and urban futures. Working across factual, documentary and scripted formats, Luke's screenwriting and produced work have received awards at the Austin Film Festival and Byron Bay International Film Festival.



MARK FENNESSY

Helium Founder | CEO

Mark Fennessy is one of Australia's leading producers, with a career spanning internationally recognised scripted drama, factual entertainment and major television formats. A founding force behind Fremantle Australia and Shine Australia, his credits include *Lambs of God, Offspring, The Beautiful Lie, INXS: Never Tear Us Apart* and *Last King of the Cross*. He founded HELIUM Pictures in 2021, producing premium scripted titles including *Paper Dolls* and *The Killings at Parrish Station*.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

MELISSA MACLEAN

When a significant percentage of young men believe in gender equality less than their grandfathers, we need to collectively sit up and ask, 'what is going on?' Thus the idea for this series was born – and very quickly we realised how challenging and complex this issue is.

The obvious thing is to look at what is different about Gen Z men and blame what is unique to their upbringing, namely social media, specifically the niche known as the 'manosphere', a loose collection of grifters and aggrieved opinion makers pedalling salves and artificial community. But there is a lot more to it than that. At some point, we have lost many young men from the cause of gender equality, and we need to know why.

Because the problem is compounding – if young men believe they have lost, then they will more easily accept and propagate the false promises of the manosphere and drive towards hollow 'solutions', including optimised bodies, ostentatious displays of wealth, controlling and abusing women and maximising their sexual interactions. This affects all of us.

Through Marc Fennell's uniquely compassionate and incisive lens, we set out to unpack the complexity of modern masculinity. Not to condemn, but to understand. The series follows the typical path of a young man seduced by the manosphere.

In each episode Marc moves deeper into the forces shaping men – from cultural confusion and economic uncertainty to the confusion and iolence around gender roles and finally, the digital echo chambers that promise purpose but deliver isolation, anger, and fear.

We approach this issue with empathy and rigour which means listening to the stories behind the statistics and the voices on the front line – experts, teachers, parents, and the men themselves. They are not just talking about a gender crisis; they're describing a generational one. The State of Man is for anyone who cares about what happens in society when men believe that vulnerability is weakness, that dominance is power, and that connection is unnecessary.

This is a call for a new kind of conversation. One where young men are not shamed into silence or radicalised into anger by opportunistic operators leveraging off their insecurities or developing character, but invited into something better: real community, healthy manhood, and a future built on shared understanding rather than fear and grievance. We need to break down the rigid walls of the 'Man Box' and offer a rich palette of choice of what it is to be a man, all aspirational and valid.

Two parts of my identity were often at war during the making of this series – as a mother of two teenage boys, I would die for my sons. Yet as a feminist, if they hurt a woman, I would kill them. Which is where the third, relevant, part of my identity comes in – as a director, we seek to understand. Seeing polar opposite perspectives writ large in the culture wars erupting around me, I can see this division is not useful and the only people profiting are those who are responsible for our collective addiction to the attention and rage bait machine of social media. We are sleepwalking our way through the most culturally impacting issues of our time.

It is a big ask in a 10 second attention economy for anyone to watch a three part series unpacking the manosphere and masculinity – which is why I urge you to watch it with your sons, your brothers, your fathers and your daughters, your sisters, and your mothers. Please stay to the end - this is big, the stakes are high and whilst we don't have all the answers, by simply watching together, we can start to have a language and understanding that will enable us as a society to regroup...and I choose this word not lightly: we need to regroup.

THANK YOU



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