

Can we REALLY have it all

HERE, THREE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN OPEN THEIR DIARIES AND ENTER THE DEBATE. AS TOLD TO LUCIE MORRIS

We were told we could have it all. Our feminist foremothers said so and even our mothers agreed, suggesting we could be loving wives, caring mothers and kick-arse bosses if we wanted. We could be, they whispered, superwomen.

And so we tried. By the '90s, superwoman was in full flight. She cooked, she cleaned, she led board meetings and raced home for bedtime stories with the kids.

Journalist Allison Pearson wrote a best-selling novel about the experience (aptly titled *I Don't Know How She Does It*), and a slew of film and TV characters (*Sex and the City*'s Miranda Hobbes and *Brother & Sisters*' Sarah Whedon) followed suit.

For a while, it really did seem as if we had it all (hey, we certainly seemed to *do* it all), but times are changing. New studies show there are less women at the highest levels of the major professions, while increasing numbers of women say they'd rather stay at home than work.

The shift begs the question: Can we still climb the career ladder, maintain a marriage and friendships *and* play mum-in-chief too? We asked three high-flyers to share their diaries and show us exactly how they do it ...

Marketing director Janine Garner 38, works for Orotan Group and lives in Sydney with husband, Jason Garner (who works for the same company), and their three children, Flynn, five, Taya Rose, four, and Carter, 16 months.

MONDAY

5.45am: It's an early start, but that's normal when you have three children. Feel like a short order cook as we move from cereal to Weet-Bix, to porridge to toast. →

Janine Garner with children (from left) Flynn, Carter and Taya Rose.

JANINE WEARS TRENCH DRESS, \$1295, BY RALPH LAUREN, 1800 501 201. EARRINGS, \$145, BY OROTON, 1800 061 047. FLYNN WEARS SHIRT, \$59.95, TIE, \$99.95, BELT, \$89.95, AND TROUSERS, \$69.95, ALL BY RALPH LAUREN, 1800 501 201. CARTER WEARS SHIRT \$64.95, VEST, \$89.95, AND SHORTS, \$74.95, ALL BY RALPH LAUREN, 1800 501 201. TAYA WEARS DRESS, \$109.95, BY RALPH LAUREN, 1800 501 201.

I think I'm a better mother for working. It's just keeping the balance between work and family that can be a challenge sometimes

7am: Jason leaves for work. I get the children dressed and let them watch *Play School* while I get ready.
7.30am: Take the children to day care and school.
9am: Arrive at work and hit the ground running. Mondays are always a full day of internal meetings and grabbing lunch when I can – thankfully, I managed to bring lunch in with me today.
5pm: Leave the office to pick up kids.

6.15pm: Give Taya and Flynn dinner, then bathe Carter and put him to bed with milk and stories.
7pm: Cuddle on the sofa with Flynn and Taya.
7.30pm: Jason gets home to give them a kiss and tucks them up in bed. We make dinner, relax and talk about our days.

8.30pm: Catch up on emails from the day.
10.30pm: Bed.

TUESDAY

8am: Arrive at work and enjoy 30 minutes of quiet time in the office before everyone else gets in. I love my job and I think I'm a better mother for working. I enjoy the buzz and the mental stimulation. It's a challenge, sometimes, keeping the balance between work and family.

1pm: Work straight through lunch.

5pm: Leave the office to pick up the children.

7.30pm: The children are already in bed when Jason gets home. We grab dinner before I do the washing and tidy up, finally sitting down to relax for an hour.

10pm: Bed. Too tired to read.

WEDNESDAY

9am: Another busy day of back-to-back meetings and conference calls.

5.45pm: Head to the hairdressers to get hair done for a work event tonight. Enjoy the pampering and phone home to say goodnight to the kids and ask about their day. Thankfully, Jason supports me 100 per cent and helps as much as he can with the kids.

7.15pm: At the event. Good crowd, food and venue.

11pm: Finally home and kiss my sleeping children.

THURSDAY

5.45am: I haven't worked on Thursdays or Fridays since January 2006, which is great as it means I get

to spend quality time with the kids. Still, I'm not one of those people who can relax in bed. Instead, I get up early to do a training run for the City2Surf.

6.30am: Jason has to leave for work and I take over making lunch and snack boxes.

8.45am: I really enjoy dropping Flynn at school as it gives me a chance to catch up with the other mums, say hi to their kids, and obviously get those special Mummy hugs and kisses when the school bell rings.

10am: Taya has her ballet class. A couple of things are going on at work, so I sneakily grab a look at my BlackBerry. Even though it's not officially a work day, I like to see what's going on.

12.30pm: Taya has an hour rest and I log on to work again. There's a lot happening at the moment at work, so I feel like I need to be on top of everything.

7.30pm: Jason gets home, gives the kids a cuddle and then we sit down, have dinner and relax.

FRIDAY

5.45am: I somehow manage to get up and head out of the house for my run. It's still dark outside and cold, but I love this time of day – it's the only chance I get for "me" time.

8.45am: Drop Flynn at school and have a quick chat with the mums.

Noon: I spend an hour on the emails before enjoying time with Taya brushing My Little Pony's hair!

3.30pm: After swimming lessons, Friday night is always movie night for the kids. I watch the rest of *The Little Mermaid* until Jason gets home. Then I quickly change and head out for my 90 minutes of Bikram yoga. It's vital to keep me sane.

SATURDAY

7.30am: I love the weekends. They are precious to us and we make sure they are mostly just for us to have family time together. Late start, hanging around in my PJs, with a long breakfast ... I just don't get to read the papers over breakfast these days!

10.45am: We are off to watch Flynn play soccer. Jason gets dragged in to referee.

8pm: We treat ourselves to sushi and a glass of wine before sitting down to watch a movie before bed.

SUNDAY

7.30am: Head to Bikram yoga – I love having these 90 minutes of exercise and meditation to myself.

10am: We have a children's birthday party this morning, so I hurry back to get all the children dressed up. Our friends ask us to stay for lunch.

8.30pm: I head to the study to quickly prep for tomorrow and then Jason and I relax in front of the TV before going to bed around 10.30pm. It's a crazy, hectic life, but I wouldn't have it any other way.



Larissa Behrendt, 40.

Barrister, academic and writer Larissa Behrendt

40, is Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). She lives in Sydney with her partner Geoff Scott, the CEO of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

MONDAY

5am: A shockingly early start to the week with a drive to Canberra, where I have back-to-back meetings. Thankfully the roads are quiet, so I catch up on the news on the radio.

9am: Chair all-day meeting of the Humanities and Creative Arts panel of the Australian Research Council of which I am a member. During breaks, I make some calls about a couple of work commitments to UTS and the chair of the National Indigenous Television (NITV). We have a teleconference the next afternoon and I need to catch up. →

LARISSA WEARS JACKET, \$699, BY BIANCA SPENDER, 02 9331 5964; SKIRT, \$369, BY CARLA ZAMPATTI, 02 9260 9700; SHIRT, \$95, BY CUE, 1800 060 706; SHOES, \$1200, BY SERGIO ROSSI AT COSMOPOLITAN SHOES, 02 9362 0510.

5.30pm. Head to my hotel to relax. Call my partner and then my cousin’s wife to thank her for the birthday present she sent me last week.

7pm: Have dinner with the team I am working with.

11pm: Read for a while, call my partner, Geoff, then lights out.

TUESDAY

6am: Call Geoff before an hour of writing a speech for a conference.

9.30am: Grab breakfast on the go, then head to a three-hour meeting. As soon as it’s over, I drive back to Sydney. The long drive is a good time to think and make plans.

4pm: Arrive back in Sydney and take a NITV teleconference before spending 45 minutes on my treadmill while reading a magazine. I spend so much of the week in meetings and at my desk, I really have to create time in the day to do some exercise.

7.30pm: While my partner cooks dinner, I pay bills online. We decide no more work tonight and spend time together watching a DVD – the entire series of *Cranford*. My idea of heaven.

WEDNESDAY

7am: Head into the office early and start writing a long list of things to do for the week. I am involved in so many different organisations and projects that lists are vital, otherwise it all falls apart. Spend all morning ringing contacts on different projects and returning emails.

Noon: Have a quick catch-up lunch with Mum at the university before speaking to the editor of my novel, which is due out in October.

2pm: Back-to-back meetings with staff in the afternoon.

7pm: Work on research for a radio show tomorrow night then do 45 minutes on my treadmill while reading magazines. I find if I’m distracted, I can walk quite a long time.

THURSDAY

8.30am: Spend all morning at meetings in my role as director on a number of different boards including the Bangarra Dance Theatre, which I love. In a taxi on my way back from the meetings, I ring Cosmopolitan Shoes to see if they have a pair of Alexander McQueen heels I like in my size. They don’t, so it saves me a trip (and money).

3pm: Back at my office at university, I have meetings with students and staff for the rest of the afternoon. Go back home to relax briefly before heading out again to appear on a radio show.

8pm: Come home and watch *The Daily Show*, *ABC News* and *The 7.30 Report* (taped on Foxtel iQ), then brush my two cats, who are often quite perplexed by the mixed hours I keep. They prefer routine.

FRIDAY

8am: It’s a public holiday, so I sleep in and read the book Geoff bought me for my birthday, *40 and Still Fabulous*. Do another 45 minutes on

the treadmill while finishing my magazine, then watch old episodes of *Sex and the City*. Bliss.

1pm: A chatty, wonderful lunch with girlfriends that lasts all afternoon. In the evening, I sit down to watch the BBC version of Jane Austen’s *Emma*. I love a historical drama – it’s a world away from my frantic life in Sydney.

SATURDAY

8am: I start the day with a Pilates class and shopping for a friend’s baby shower. I also buy three birthday presents while I have the chance – weekdays are too frantic to do anything other than work.

Noon: I have to do some reading for various committee meetings next week, but feel deflated when I realise there are seven folders to get through. It takes all afternoon.

7.30pm: Geoff and I go out for Vietnamese. But the work continues when I get home and write an opinion piece for *The Age* newspaper.

SUNDAY

11am: Go to the movies with Geoff, Mum and a friend. We have yum cha and drive Mum home.

2pm: I spend 45 minutes on the treadmill while reading Frank Rich’s *The Greatest Story Ever Sold*. Continue reading files for next week before going out to a Japanese dinner with Geoff. It’s great spending time together at weekends, as the weekdays can go past in a blur because we’re both so busy. But when we get home I still have more reading to do. Geoff is used to it. I feel privileged to be able to work on matters that are close to my heart. I couldn’t work at the pace I do if I felt indifferent about it. I break briefly to put on a face mask, do my nails and put a treatment through my hair. But in bed, I find I’m reading again, getting ready for the week ahead.

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TRACY WEARS JACKET \$895, AND SKIRT \$495, BOTH BY WILLOW, 02 9358 4477, SHOES, \$169.95, BY TONY BIANCO, 1800 790 799, TAJ WEARS T-SHIRT, \$14.95, AND TROUSERS, \$29.95, BOTH BY COTTON ON, 03 5277 7000, SHOES, \$60, BY CONVERSE, 03 8878 3000, EYE PATCH, NECKLACE AND SWORD, FROM SNOG THE FROG FANCY DRESS AND COSTUME HIRE, 02 9690 2001, GRACE WEARS DRESS, \$89.95, AND WINGS, \$26.95, BOTH BY BIG BY FIONA SCANLAN, 03 9827 8002, WAND, \$19.99, BY EQUIP, 02 9479 7888, SHOES, \$85, BLOCH, 02 9360 9100. ALL ITEMS NOT CREDITED ARE TALENT'S OWN.

Broadcaster and journalist Tracey Spicer

42, lives on Sydney’s North Shore with her husband Jason Thompson, chief cameraman for Network Ten, and their two children, Taj, four, and Grace, three. Tracey is also a presenter on *Sky News*.

MONDAY

6.45am: As soon as the kids wake up, everything kicks off. I prepare breakfast, put the washing on and get the kids dressed. The dog needs walking, so I take Grace with us in the pram. Jason takes Taj to preschool.

9.30am: Do the grocery shop before settling down for a coffee meeting with a magazine editor while Grace watches *The Wiggles* DVD. Thank God for the electronic babysitter!

12.45pm: Manage to feed Grace and grab a salmon salad wrap for myself before she has her lunchtime sleep. Then it’s a race against time to get all my computer work done: magazine writing, research and writing a speech for an upcoming MC job.

5pm: Cook the kids’ dinner then set to work on an entrée and main course for a friend coming over. →

Tracey Spicer with children, Taj and Grace.



6.15pm: Get the washing off the line. Decide folding is overrated. Throw clothes in drawers before the usual bath, books and bedtime routine for the kids.

7pm: Hurrah! An adult dinner with friends, which is a rare treat. Enjoy great conversation, drink too much wine and overcook the pork.

10pm: Fall into bed. Exhausted.

TUESDAY

6.30am: Catch up on some reading before the kids wake up. I'm generally too tired to read before bed, so this is one of the few chances I get.

11am: Have a brainstorming meeting with World Vision, whom I help with raising the profile of maternal and child health in the developing world. Take Grace with me. It's tricky juggling the two, but somehow I manage to hold a professional conversation throughout.

1pm: Grace sleeps, so I start work on another article I have to get finished. Rehearse a couple of radio reads.

7.20pm: Dinner with Jason, then camp out in front of the TV once the kids have gone to bed.

9.30pm: Early to bed – tomorrow is full-on, so I need my energy.

WEDNESDAY

6am: Flick through breakfast TV news programs, then read the papers – keeping up to date with what's going on is an essential part of my job.

7.45am: Parent-teacher meeting to attend at preschool, then run back home before the nanny arrives.

10am: Go into the city to record some voice-overs for a new show. Meet friends for a quick lunch, then head home to write an 800-word newspaper piece on Schapelle Corby.

5pm: Nanny finishes. We are having a proper sit-down family meal tonight, so I put a chicken on to roast. Do yoga in the lounge room. Kids use my legs as a tunnel during the downward dog.

THURSDAY

7am: Almost put my back out pretending to be a character from *Transformers* while playing with the children.

8-9am: Do a phone interview for research on a news story I'm writing. Nanny arrives. Write a 1200-word travel story about a family trip to Morocco.

1pm: Take dog for a run, then make lunch before researching a potential story on Hunter Valley health issues. Write and practise speech for MC gig tonight. Argh! Too much to do!

5pm: Hairdresser comes over to help with transformation from tired Mummy to glamorous MC. Do my own make-up. Practise speech.

7pm: Walk on stage as MC for a fundraiser for the Queensland University of Technology Learning Potential Fund. It's a success and I really enjoy myself.

11pm: Shattered. Fall asleep before my head hits the pillow.

FRIDAY

7am: Have a small lie-in. Feels like a treat.

9am: Nanny arrives. Write speech on orangutans in Borneo for a

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film premiere. Finish writing a feature for another magazine. Respond to emails which have been building up.

4.30pm: Arrive at *Sky News* for night-time news-reading shift. I love the "escape" on the days I do *Sky*. But I know I'm incredibly blessed to be able to do 50 per cent of my work from home or while travelling with the kids. It makes the juggle harder, but the rewards are all the greater.

6pm: Call kids and Jase to say goodbye.

12.30am: Finally finish six hours live on air. Ready for bed.

SATURDAY

8am: I should try and just spend a few hours doing nothing, but instead I drop off dry-cleaning and then go to my weekly French lesson in the city. It doesn't go well. Decide I sound like Paul Hogan.

2pm: Saturdays should be for relaxing. I do that by reading the papers, weeding the garden and playing with the kids.

7pm: Babysitter arrives. Go to a friend's mum's 60th birthday party. Watch in admiration as the oldies party harder than we do.

Midnight: Bed.

SUNDAY

7.15am: Wake up to discover Hubby is already up with the kids. Put the washing on before taking the kids for a marathon bike ride.

1.30pm: Do a yoga session at home while the kids are sleeping. It's the only chance I get.

6.30pm: Heat up leftovers for kids. Prepare Taj's preschool stuff for tomorrow. Do a few hours' work – checking emails and researching and editing stories for a kids' magazine I work on.

9.30pm: Bed for a long sleep to get ready for the long and busy week which awaits me.

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STYLING BY JANE OGILVIE. PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAMIAN BENNETT/THE NAMES AGENCY.
HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY VICTORIA BARON/RP REPRESENTS.