

# Model co-workers

Jennifer Hawkins and Megan Gale have dismissed rumours of a rivalry as they join forces on *Australia's Next Top Model*, writes **SHANNON MOLLOY**

FROM the moment they began climbing the modelling-industry ladder, almost side-by-side, word emerged that Jennifer Hawkins and Megan Gale couldn't stand each other.

They were said to be bitter rivals who barely spoke, and who would launch into a fit if the other had the semblance of a leg-up such as a better table at a function or first walk down a red carpet.

Neither ever acknowledged the rumours, fuelling speculation it was true. But, in reality, Gale and Hawkins say they simply refused to dignify the baseless nastiness with a response.

"I never wanted to buy into it," Hawkins says. "There was nothing to respond to. At all."

So how did the whispers start and continue for so long? Gale suspects if she and Hawkins were blokes, they wouldn't have been faced with such "petty, catty and bitchy" insinuations.

"I didn't so much find it annoying as I found it disappointing," Gale says.

"It would be fair enough



No dramas: Jennifer Hawkins and Megan Gale.

if it was true and something had actually happened."

There seems to be something of a hunger to pit successful women against each other, to feed a narrative that they can't work together, Gale says.

"When it's fabricated out of absolutely nothing and we're painted as these women who hate each other, it's disappointing," she says.

"I don't think people do this sort of thing to men."

That the pair could "band

together" professionally for the first time, on hit Foxtel reality series *Australia's Next Top Model*, was a great opportunity, Gale says.

The shoot for this *TV Guide* cover is one of only a handful of times the models have been photographed together in a significant capacity, outside of the occasional party snap.

Not because they despise each other, but because for much of their careers they were signed as ambassadors

to competing department stores – Hawkins for Myer and Gale for David Jones.

As it turns out, the two work quite well together.

"We've known each other a long time but doing *Next Top Model* was probably the most amount of time we've spent together," Gale says. "It was great. Jen's a lot of fun."

Hawkins echoed the sentiment, saying this year's panel – her, Gale and fashion designer Alex Perry – form the foundation for the best

season yet. "The girls this year are really special, too," she says.

"I'm really proud of them. They're so passionate and driven, they really grow throughout. We get to see all sides of them – it's not just a constant confidence, but also vulnerability, learning."

Appearing on the show, now in its 10th season, has the ability to catapult a fresh face on to the world modelling stage, as has been the case many times before.

But it's not a free ride. "That's what I love about it. We give them a great opportunity but they have to work hard," Hawkins says.

"And the challenges we set are so relevant – it's not just silliness for the sake of TV, but stuff to help them with their careers."

Gale says there are some remarkable transformations. They emerge with a sense of self, new confidence and tips on carving a path through the industry that's healthy and sustainable, she says.

"I couldn't have done this when I was their age. But then I think being 15 and 16 these days compared to when I was, back in the 1990s, is very different," she laughs.

**AUSTRALIA'S NEXT TOP MODEL**  
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## GOING AGAIN, IN THE NAME OF LOVE

AS the saying goes, there's no rest for the wicked.

But as Osher Gunsberg prepares to launch straight from the hectic shooting schedule of *The Bachelor* into *The Bachelorette*, featuring the appropriately named Georgia Love

(pictured, with Gunsberg), he says nothing could be further from the truth.

"I'm not going to lie to you, I did ... purchase a self-inflating single bed and a couple of blankets so I can steal an hour or two of sleep on set," he laughs.

While sceptics scoff at the

premise of the dating shows, it speaks volumes that many of the relationships survive.

"There's a line in the Pixar film *The Incredibles* where the kid says, 'If everybody is super, no one is'," Gunsberg says. "When the room is full of men who are all tall and handsome with muscles ...

if everyone is like that, then no one is. So all you've got is who you are. And ... nothing beats kindness."

**THE BACHELORETTE AUSTRALIA**  
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By Tiffany Dunk