



Party turned pear-shaped

By **JANENE CAREY**

SMASHED, a seven-minute film made by students at TAS, NEGS and PLC for the Just One Less project, tells the story of an alcohol-fuelled party that has a transformative effect on a group of teenagers.

Josie, played by Emily Strachan, goes along to the party hoping to impress the host, Johnno (Jason Wright).

Drinking makes Josie more flirtatious and impulsive, but it also brings out an unflatteringly selfish and inconsiderate side of her as well, demonstrated when she fails to respond appropriately to a friend in trouble.

This friend, Anna (Anneliese O'Sullivan), who doesn't drink, is initially attracted to suave Dan (Tex Packer) but she is placed in an awkward position when he consumes too much alcohol and becomes physically threatening towards her.

It's left to Johnno to step in and

resolve the situation.

Without preaching, the film explores the consequences of 'getting smashed' on the relationships between the four main characters, and shows how attraction can morph into disgust when people are under the influence of alcohol.

The story's characters and plot emerged from ideas tossed around during a class workshop, and then three students - Meridee Eagar, Emily Strachan and Joss Guyer - refined it into a fictional script with the help of writer Nick Duhigg.

Emma Buzo, who teaches the combined class of TAS, NEGS and PLC Year 11 drama students, said she specifically devised a unit of study around making this film.

The students focused on learning to perform all the functions of a film crew, including producing, directing and editing, drawing on the expertise of independent filmmaker Sarah Watson, who was contracted to work with them by Beyond Empathy.

Producer Bronte Thomson-Sparrow from NEGS and director Georgia Thompson from PLC said the drama class purposefully chose to delegate most of the acting to other students and friends.

"We wanted our experience to be as the film crew," Bronte said. "It was really interesting, but also a bit bizarre because I'm used to being the person acting, not the person telling people what to do."

Georgia said her role as director was so all-consuming that being an actor as well would have been impossible.

"I was constantly behind the camera, saying 'Come from this angle, go here, go there'," she said.

Ms Buzo noted that the age of the characters in the film was deliberately left ambiguous - they were young adults who could be at university or high school.

"We didn't want to focus on the politics of underage drinking; it was more about the effect of alcohol," Georgia said.