



2013 - 2014

Top 50

Australian 'Pop Culture' Icons



The Subscriber's Plate.

*With few social activities available in Sydney, Governor Lachlan Macquarie began a new era in **Australian popular culture** when he approved the establishment of an annual racing carnival.* In October 1810, Governor Macquarie inaugurated the first official race meeting at the new Sydney Racecourse. Macquarie saw the racecourse as a perfect neutral meeting place for colonists of all classes: military, convict, emancipist and immigrant. Funded by public subscription, in August 1810 soldiers of Macquarie's 73rd Regiment cleared and levelled ground on the eastern edge of the town and marked out the course. The straight commenced at the turn from Park Street into Elizabeth Street, with the grandstand (erected in 1813) and the winning post at the junction of Market and Elizabeth Street, on the present day site of St James Railway Station.

The Etymology of 'Pop'

Origin

late Middle English (in the senses 'a blow, knock' and 'to strike'): imitative.

"having popular appeal," 1926, of individual songs from many genres; 1954 as a noun, as genre of its own; abbreviation of **popular**; earlier as a shortened form of *popular concert* (1862), and often in the plural form *pops*.

Pop art first recorded 1957, said to have been in use conversationally among Independent group of artists from late 1954.

Pop culture attested from 1959, short for **popular culture** (attested by 1846).

[Etymology of the word "Pop"](#)



The Etymology of 'Culture'

Cultura

'a cultivating, agriculture'

Figuratively:

'care, an honouring'

From Latin:
past participle stem of

Colere

'tend, guard, cultivate, till'

Culture

Middle French

Culture

Mid C15

'The tilling of the land'

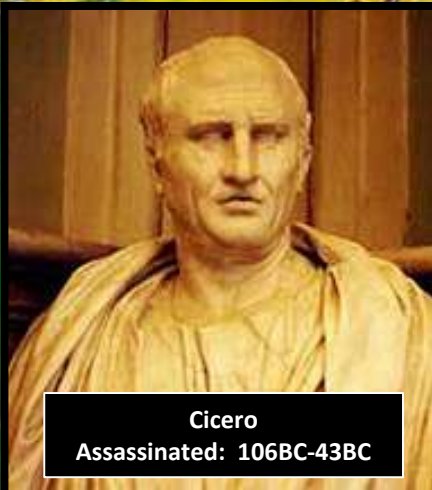
- The figurative sense of "cultivation through education" is first attested **c.1500**.
- "The intellectual side of civilization" is from **1805**.
- "Collective customs and achievements of a people" is from **1867**.

The Etymology of 'Culture'

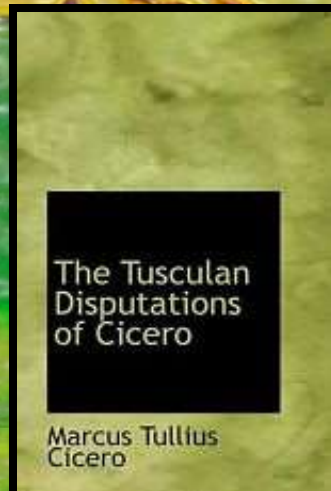
The etymology of the modern term "**culture**" has a classical origin. In English, the word "culture" is based on a term used by **Cicero**, in his ***Tusculan Disputations***, who wrote of a cultivation of the soul or "**cultura animi**", thereby using an agricultural metaphor to describe the development of a philosophical soul, which was understood teleologically* [*the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by assuming or suggesting the causes*] as the one natural highest possible ideal for human development.

Samuel Pufendorf took over this metaphor in a modern context, meaning something similar, but no longer assuming that philosophy is man's natural perfection. His use, and that of many writers after him, "*refers to all the ways in which human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice* (clever or cunning devices in order to deceive), become fully human*".

[The Etymology of Culture](#)



Cicero
Assassinated: 106BC-43BC



Marcus Tullius
Cicero



Samuel Pufendorf
1632-1694



The Etymology of 'Culture'

The term "**culture**", which originally meant the cultivation of the soul or mind, acquires most of its later modern meanings in the writings of the eighteenth-century German thinkers, who on various levels developing Rousseau's criticism of modern Liberalism and Enlightenment. Thus a contrast between "**culture**" and "**civilization**" is usually implied in these authors, even when not expressed as such.

Two primary meanings of culture emerge from this period:

- culture as the folk-spirit having a unique identity, and
- culture as cultivation of inwardness or free individuality.

The first meaning is predominant in our current use of the term "culture," although the second still plays a large role in what we think culture **should** achieve, namely the full "expression" of the unique of "authentic" self.

[The Etymology of Culture](#)

"Culture is the name for what people are interested in, their thoughts, their models, the books they read and the speeches they hear, their table-talk, gossip, controversies, historical sense and scientific training, the values they appreciate, the quality of life they admire. All communities have a culture. It is the climate of their civilization."

Walter Lippman

[Who is Walter Lippman?](#)

'Culture' interpretations

A culture is a specific group of people during a particular time — like the hippie culture of the 1960's. *Culture* can also imply exposure to the arts. Visit a museum if you are in need of a dose of *culture*.

"A useful thing to remember about *culture* is that it is closely related to *cultivate*, whose root meaning is "to till the soil." Even in Latin, the source language, *cultura* was used metaphorically (Cicero said philosophy was *cultura animi*, the "cultivation of the soul"), and in English it moved from the agricultural sense to training, development of language and literature, mental development through education, and finally the ideas, customs, and intellectual and artistic conditions of a society or group."

Culture: Vocabulary.com



Categorization of 'Culture'

High Culture, Low Culture, Popular Culture

High Culture most commonly refers to the set of cultural products, mainly in the arts, held in the highest esteem by a culture. *It is the culture of an elite such as the aristocracy or intelligentsia.* The exquisite frescoes inside the Sistine Chapel illustrate an example of the 'high culture' of the elite aristocracy of the times.

Low Culture refers to that of the *less well-educated or the masses*, encompassing such things as gossip magazines, reality television, popular music, yellow journalism, escapist fiction, and camp. The detective series featuring the character Sherlock Holmes, in its debut, would have been considered a kind of "low," or popular, culture.

The CLASS division between HIGH and LOW CULTURE is assimilating and the distinctions are more political than defensible aesthetic or intellectual ones.

Popular culture, traditionally used synonymously to mean **Low Culture**, is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images, and other phenomena that are within the *mainstream of a given culture*.

[High and Low Culture](#)

"Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future."

Albert Camus

[Who is Albert Camus?](#)

Categorization of 'Culture'

High culture became an important **concept in political theory on nationalism** for writers such as Ernest Renan and Ernest Gellner, who saw it as a necessary component of a healthy national identity.

Ernest Gellner's concept of a high culture extended beyond the arts; he used it to distinguish between different cultures (*rather than within a culture*), contrasting high cultures with **simpler, agrarian low cultures**.

Pierre Bourdieu, on the other hand, used a much broader, class-based, definition of high culture or "**taste**", which includes *etiquette, appreciation of fine food and wine, and even military service*, but also references different social codes supposedly observed in the dominant class, and that are **not accessible** to the lower classes.



"Culture is a sham if it is only a sort of Gothic front put on an iron building -- like Tower Bridge -- or a classical front put on a steel frame -- like the Daily Telegraph building in Fleet Street. Culture, if it is to be a real thing and a holy thing, must be the product of what we actually do for a living -- not something added, like sugar on a pill."

Eric Gill

[Who is Eric Gill?](#)

Counterculture

The prefix COUNTER means 'against'; from the Latin.

"A **counterculture** is one that reacts against the prevalent culture in place and swings the pendulum in the opposite direction. In fact the term **counterculture** *has a political implication that it is working directly against the mainstream culture in place to cause societal change.*

A **counterculture** is different to the mainstream culture in their politics, norms, social beliefs, way of dress and social structures. A **counterculture** generally develops a large enough following to challenge the dominant culture of the time and they actively work at odds with the mainstream culture." *Examples: Mafia, Hells Angels, Klu Klux Klan, Neo Nazis, Skinheads, Militias.*

A clear example of **countercultures** throughout the last century might be the *suffragettes and feminists, hippies and punk movements*. All of these **countercultures** have specific beliefs and values that fought to affect some kind of essential change to mainstream culture.

- The suffragettes fought to have the vote for women and later equal rights;
- the hippies broke down previously held gender stereotypes and protested against the Vietnam War and
- the punk movement of the seventies and early eighties sought to be anti-establishment and anti-capitalist."

In summary, remember:

- *Countercultures are large movements that cause social change.*
- *Countercultures are against mainstream cultures.*

Subculture

The prefix SUB means 'under'; from the Latin.

"A **subculture** can have its own beliefs, norms and values, but they are generally able to exist within mainstream culture. That is, their political beliefs and social structures may not be as outspoken as those of a **counterculture**. Their beliefs or manner of being may be different enough to make them stand out, but they are not at odds with society.

Examples of sub cultures might be goths, emos, surfies, homies etc. Many sub cultures are based around aesthetics or common interest.

- Goths for example tend to identify themselves by dressing in black or dark colors and wearing pale makeup.
- Homies wear loose clothing and baseball caps or afro wraps.

Subcultures tend to also share common interests and experience.

For example you cannot be accepted as a homie if you don't listen to rap music.

Surfies like obsessing over weather and wave conditions and are often environmentalists.

Other subcultures include:

- Any Ethnic Group [Hispanics, Greeks, Italians, Australians, and like]
- Teenagers;
- Vegans;
- Religious groups: [Greek orthodox, Jewish, Mormons and like]

In summary, remember:

- *Subcultures can exist within mainstream culture.*
- *Subcultures are united by common aesthetics, interest and experience.*

Pop Culture' interpretations

Pop Culture: An Overview

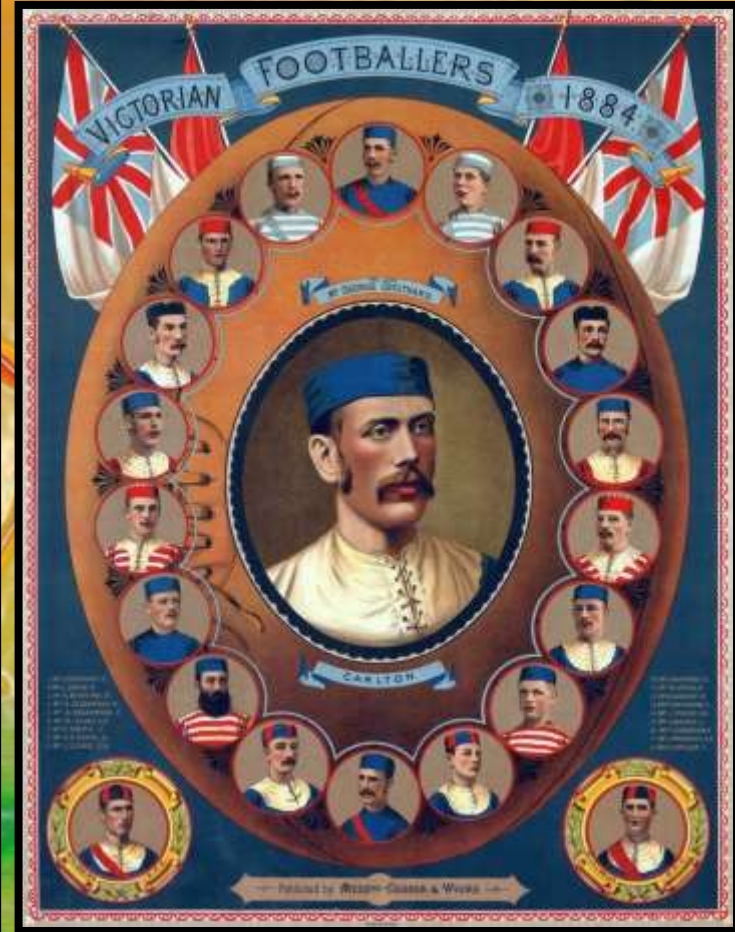
Tim Delaney sets the scene for our philosophical consideration of popular stuff.

The term '**popular culture**' holds different meanings depending on who's defining it and the context of use. It is generally recognized as the *vernacular* or *people's* culture that predominates in a society at a point in time.

As Brummett explains in *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*, pop culture involves the aspects of social life most actively involved in by the public. As the '*culture of the people*', **popular culture** is determined by the interactions between people in their everyday activities: styles of dress, the use of slang, greeting rituals and the foods that people eat are all examples of popular culture.

Popular culture is also informed and fuelled by the mass media (**mass culture**).

[Pop Culture: An Overview](#)



What constitutes 'Pop Culture'?

What constitutes Pop Culture?

Where does 'popular culture' belong? In 'High Culture' or in 'Low Culture'? This is frequently debated.

Traditionally it denotes the lack of education and general 'culturedness' of the 'lower classes as opposed to the 'Official Culture' of the elite – the higher educated dominant class. But even in saying this there is a problem as much 'High Culture' (*eg television dramatizations of 'high class' authors like Jane Austen*) is 'popular'.

'Pop Culture' is also defined as the culture that is '*left over*' when we have decided what **'High Culture'** is but even in saying this, many works are borderline such as Shakespeare's and Charles Dickens'.

A postmodernist would say that the 'distinction lines' have blurred. One of the first literary institutions that assisted in this unwittingly were the 'Book of the Month' Clubs of the 1920's that offered a platform where the 'High' and 'Low' cultures – 'serious' fiction and 'common' detective stories, adventure stories, popular nonfiction – could coexist.

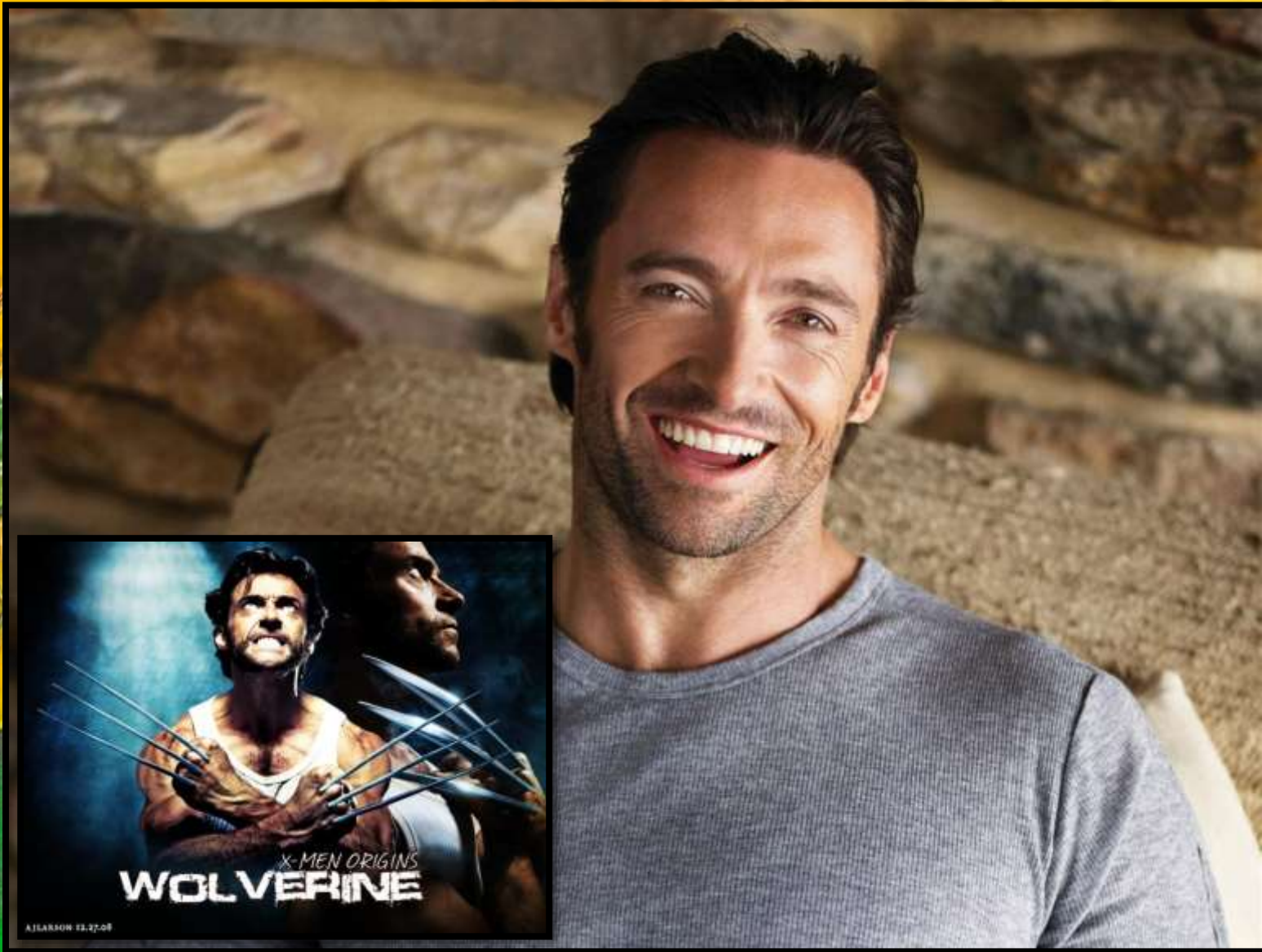
Mass Culture (disseminated by mass media) enabled by publishing, broadcasting, Internet and modern technologies further blurs the initial distinctions.

"No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive."

Mahatma Gandhi

[Who is Mahatma Gandhi?](#)

Hugh Jackman



1.

Miranda Kerr



2.

Underbelly



3.

Playschool



Strictly Ballroom



5.

Nicole Kidman



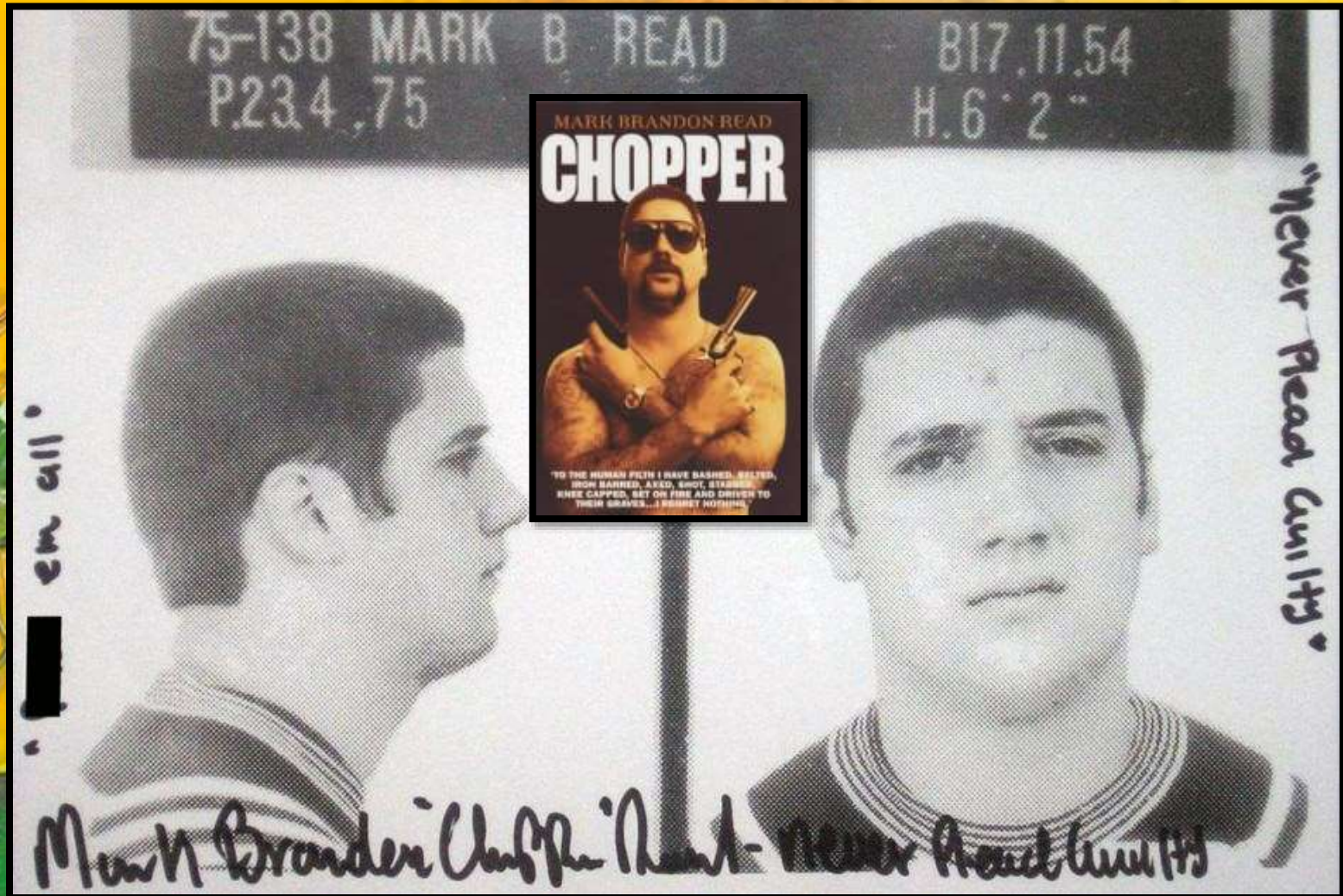
6.

Silverchair

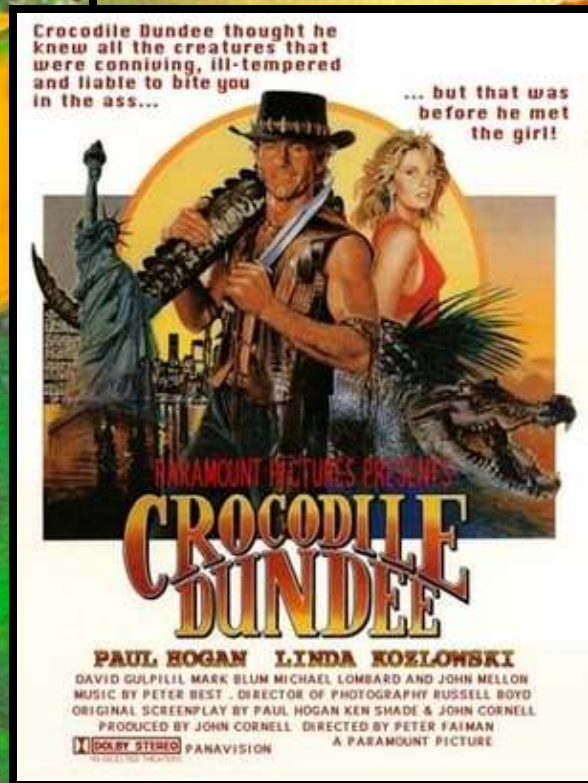


7.

Chopper Read



Crocodile Dundee



9.

Mad Max

**WHEN THE
GANGS TAKE
OVER THE
HIGHWAY...**



**...Remember
he's on
your side**

10.

Neighbours



11.

Russell Crowe



12.

AC/DC

AC/DC



13.

Kerri-Anne Kennerley



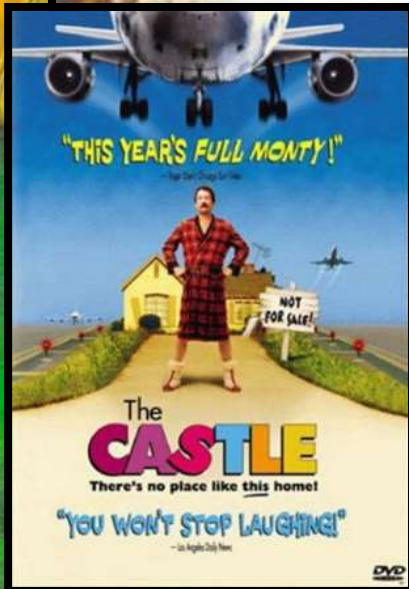
14.

Home and Away



15.

Castle



16.

Kylie Minogue



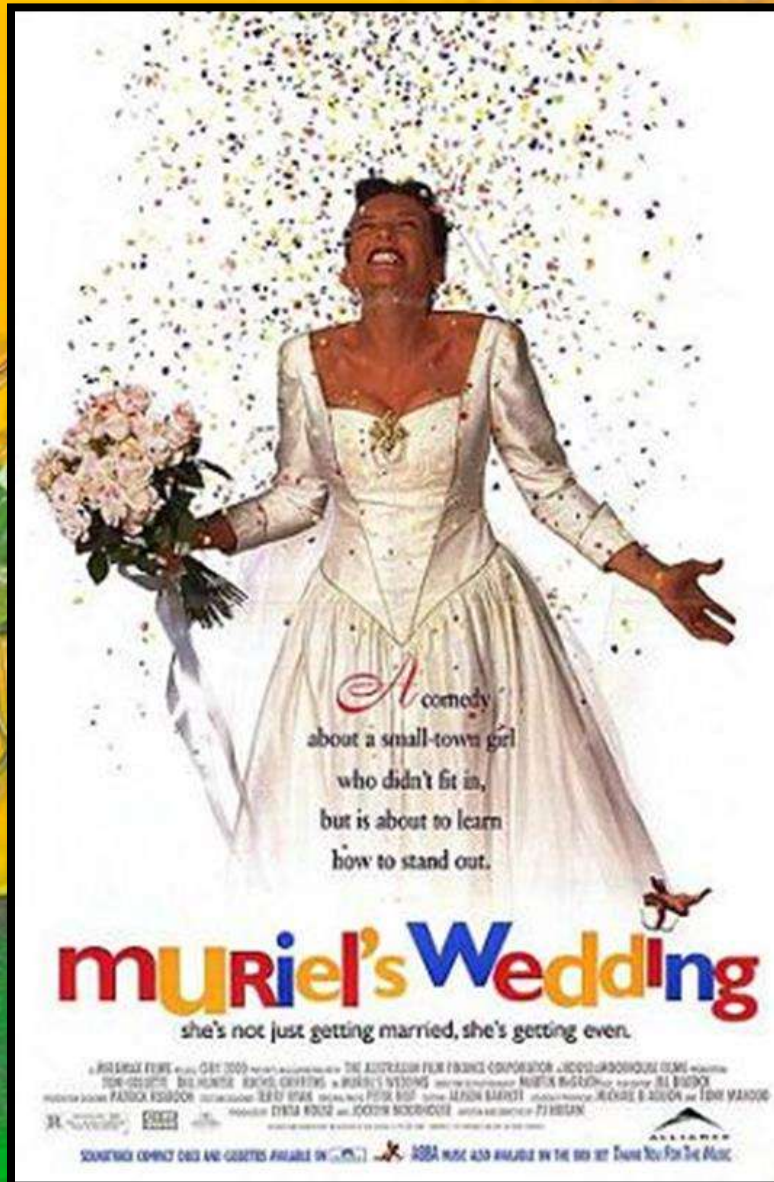
17.

Dame Edna



18.

Muriel's Wedding



19.

Rebel Wilson



20.

Ian Thorpe



21.

Hamish and Andy



Prisoner



3 2 9 4 6 0



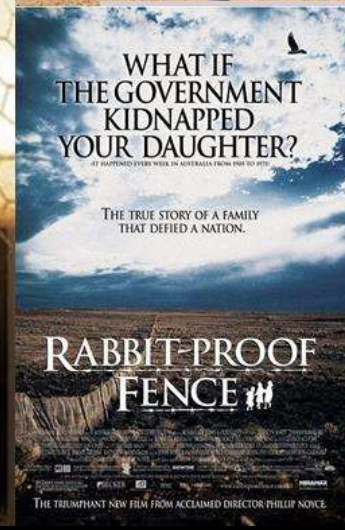
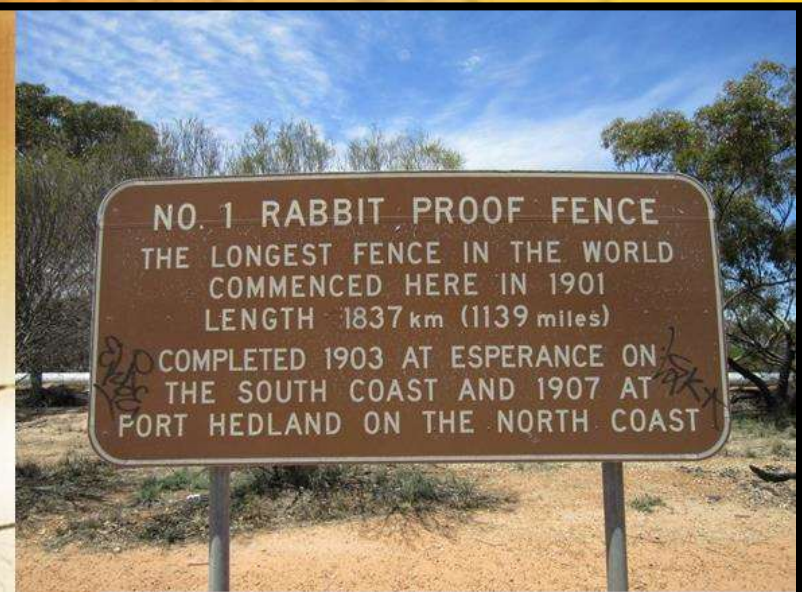
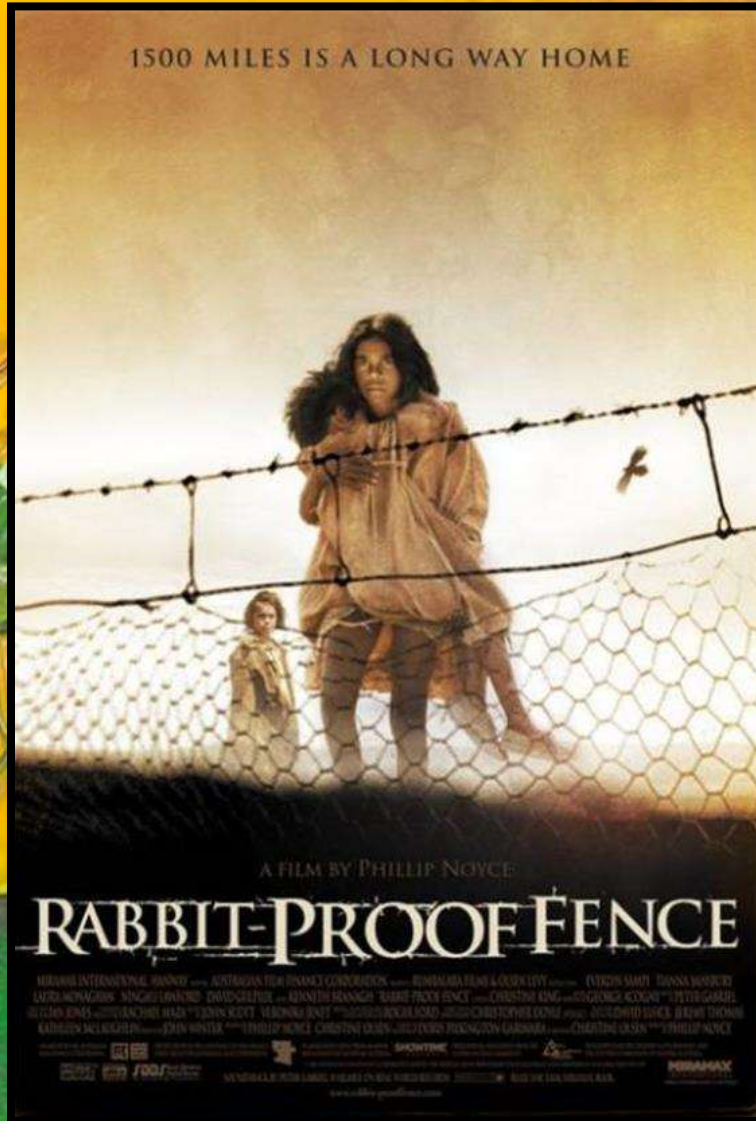
23.

Jennifer Hawkins



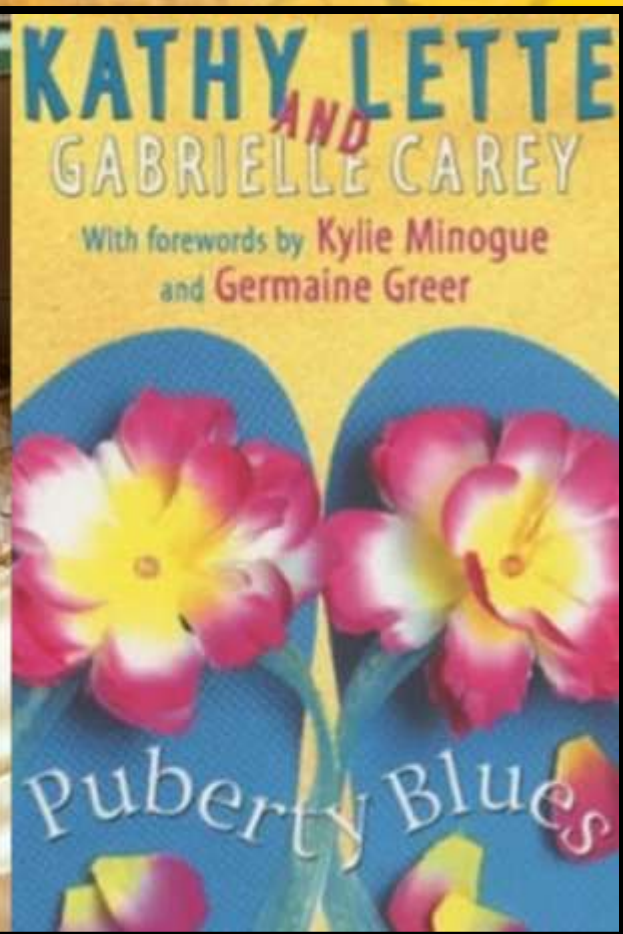
24.

Rabbit Proof Fence



25.

Puberty Blues



26.

Lara Bingle



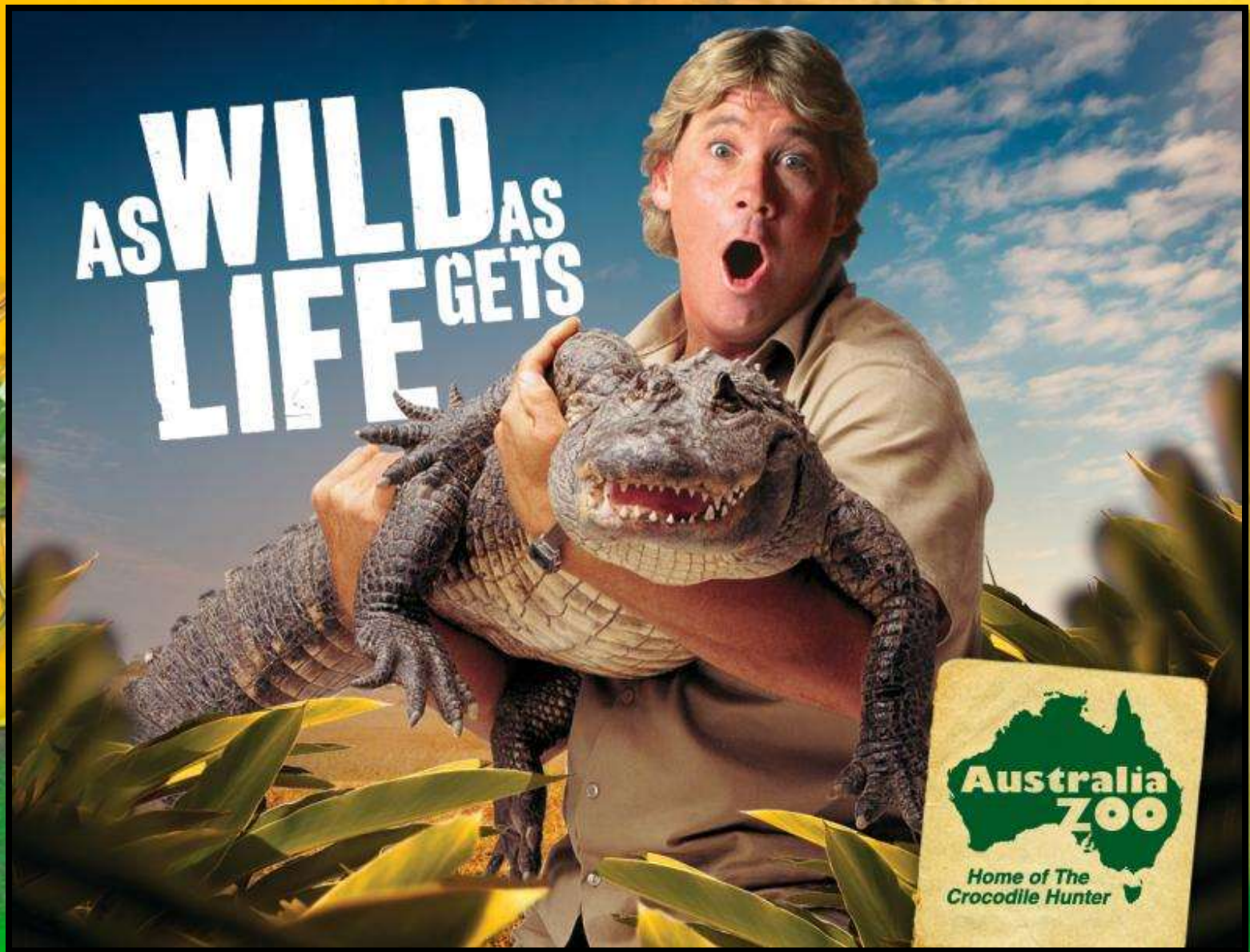
27.

Olivia Newton-John



28.

Steve Erwin



Powderfinger



30.

Australia



31.

Packed to the Rafters



32.

Gotye



33.

Bert Newton



Picnic at Hanging Rock



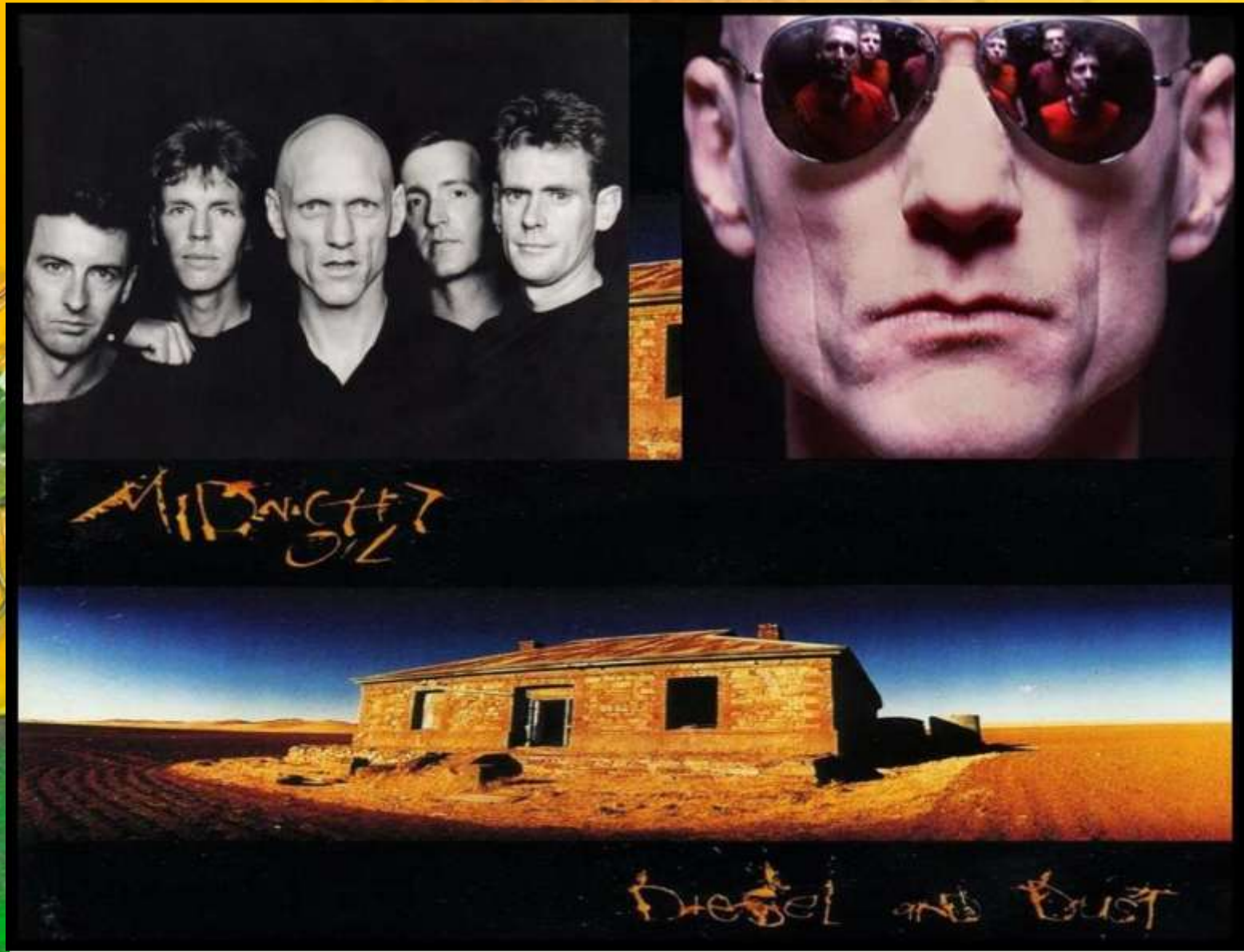
35.

Elle Macpherson



36.

Midnight Oil



37.

Hey! Hey! It's Saturday



38.

The Wiggles

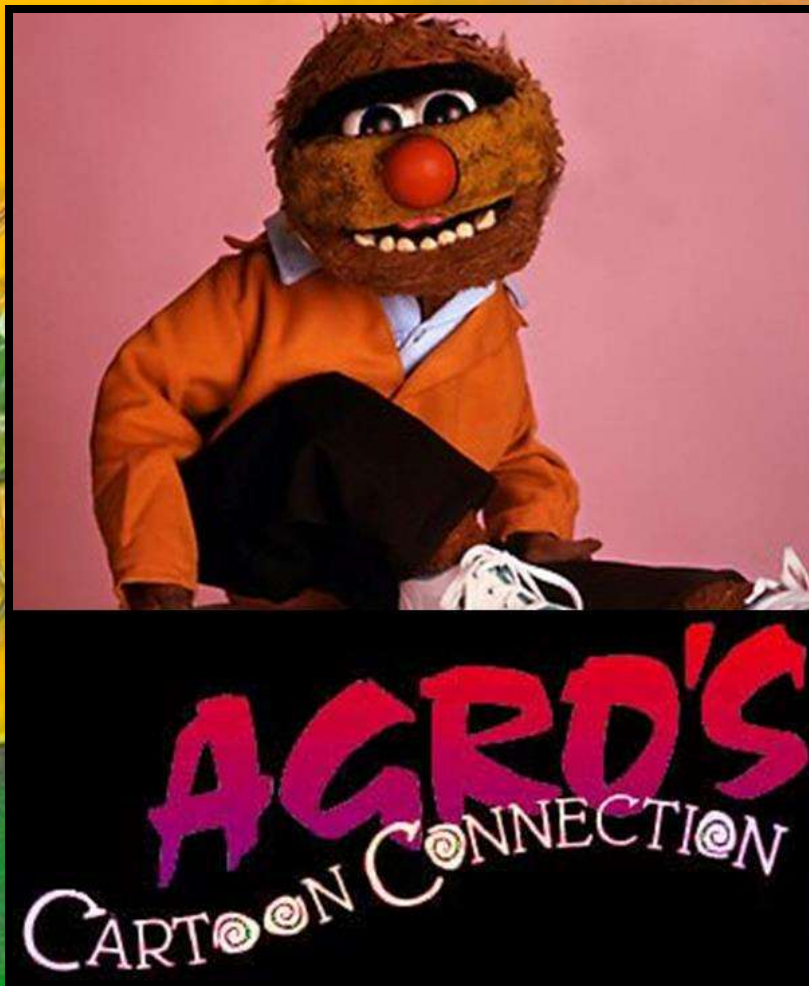


39.

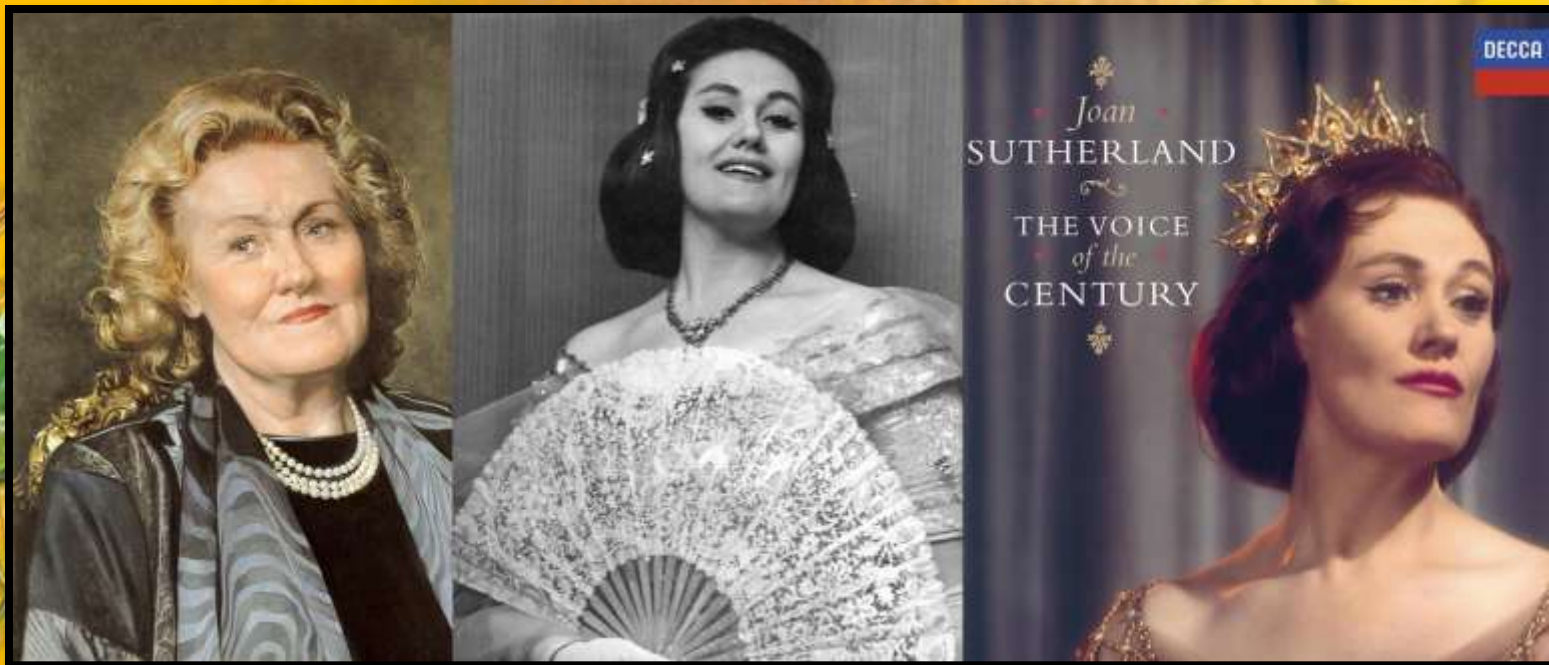
Molly Meldrum



40.



Joan Sutherland



42.

The Secret Life of Us



43.

Chris Lilley



Cold Chisel



45.

INXS



46.

John Farnham



Moulin Rouge



48.

Cathy Freeman



49.

Kath and Kim



50.

References & Sources

- [Australian Geographic's 100 Aussie icons](#)
- [About Australia: National Icons](#)
- [Bond University: Australia Popular Culture](#)
- [Cultural Subsets: High Culture, Popular Culture, Subculture, Counterculture & Multiculturalism](#)
- [Difference Between Counter culture and Sub culture](#)
- [National Treasures: 50 Australian Pop Culture Icons](#)
- [Ten Random Facts about 'Playschool' Australia](#)

assembled by: Angela Ballas