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## Unit 3 The globalising world (1945–the present)

# Popular culture

Popular culture includes a wide range of activities that a large number of people in a society engage in. Since World War II, Australia has developed strong industries in four key areas of popular culture: music, film, television and sport.

Television and rock'n'roll music both arrived in 1956 and have had a strong influence on all groups within Australian society – this continues today. Sport has retained an important role in Australian life and has become closely tied to our sense of identity. The Australian film industry has also emerged to tell uniquely Australian stories that entertain and inform.

While British, American and, more recently, European and Asian cultures have influenced us, Australia has developed its own distinct culture. Music, film, television and sport have not only become ways of reflecting who we are, but have also enabled Australia to engage with the rest of the world.



# chapter 13

## 13A

How did developments in popular culture influence Australia after World War II?

- 1 In what ways do you think popular culture was different in 1946 compared to today?
- 2 The introduction of television and rock 'n' roll changed Australian culture and society forever. Can you brainstorm some of the immediate effects that these changes would have had on people at the time?

## 13B

How have the music, film and television industries in Australia changed since World War II?

- 1 How have developments in the music, film and television industries during the last 60 years changed the way that Australians access popular culture?

## 13C

What contributions has Australia made to international popular culture?

- 1 List as many Australian songs, bands, sporting teams, films or television shows you can think of that have made a significant contribution to popular culture around the world?

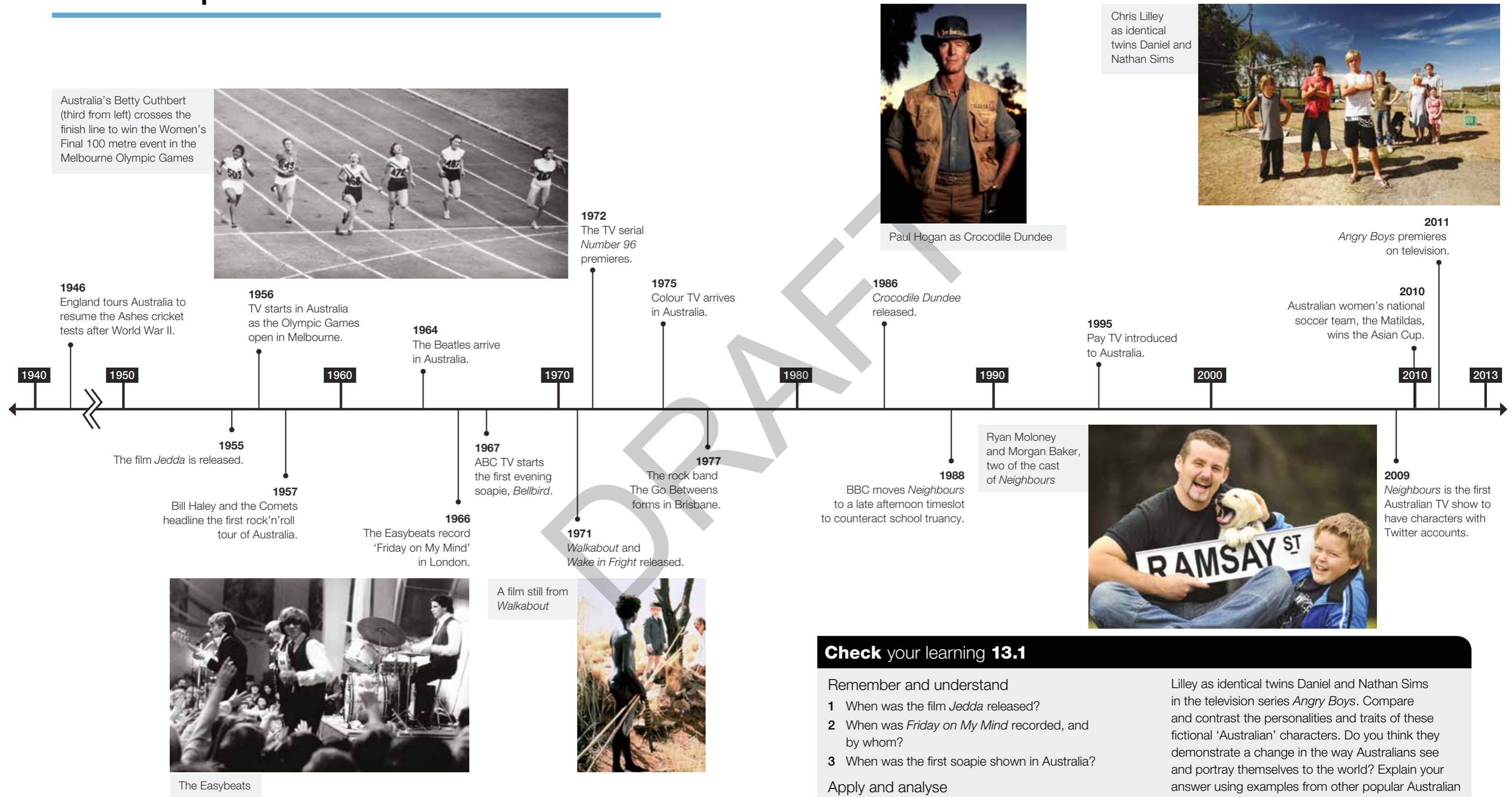
**Source 1** 'Hello possums' – one of Australia's many contributions to international popular culture is Barrie Humphries as Dame Edna Everage.

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# 13.1 Popular culture: a timeline



Source 1 A timeline of some key events and developments relating to popular culture

### Check your learning 13.1

Remember and understand

- 1 When was the film *Jedda* released?
- 2 When was *Friday on My Mind* recorded, and by whom?
- 3 When was the first soapie shown in Australia?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Consider the pictures of Paul Hogan as Mick Dundee in the film "Crocodile" *Dundee* and Chris Lilley as identical twins Daniel and Nathan Sims in the television series *Angry Boys*. Compare and contrast the personalities and traits of these fictional 'Australian' characters. Do you think they demonstrate a change in the way Australians see and portray themselves to the world? Explain your answer using examples from other popular Australian films and television series.

Lilley as identical twins Daniel and Nathan Sims in the television series *Angry Boys*. Compare and contrast the personalities and traits of these fictional 'Australian' characters. Do you think they demonstrate a change in the way Australians see and portray themselves to the world? Explain your answer using examples from other popular Australian films and television series.

## 13.2 Defining popular culture



**Source 1** Young men and women dancing in 1950s Sydney – American youth culture became popular in Australia after the end of World War II.

Culture is the ‘glue’ that binds any society together. The values, beliefs, ideas and artefacts that give meaning to any society are its culture. Culture takes in a wide variety of human activities including language, food, religion and art, as well as values such as a belief in democracy or equal rights.

By comparison, popular culture has a slightly narrower definition. The term was first used in the 19th century to describe the ‘unofficial culture’ of the lower classes in society as opposed to the ‘official culture’ of the higher classes. Over time, however, the meaning of the term evolved to describe more widely accepted ideas, attitudes and practices transmitted via mass media and aimed particularly at younger people.

People can access popular culture easily, and it lasts for a period of time. When defining popular culture it is important to not simply describe it as ‘culture that is popular’. If that simplistic definition is used, it is difficult to tell the difference between cultural activities that are popular for a brief historical moment and those that have a major influence on a society.

Four distinguishing characteristics can be used to recognise an activity as popular culture:

- the activity moves from local to national to global significance
- the activity is associated with commercial products
- the activity continues to change and evolve over time
- the activity allows consumers easy and widespread access through mass media.

### Check your learning 13.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Define the term ‘popular culture’ in your own words.
- 2 List four characteristics that distinguish popular culture activities from those that fall under a wider definition of culture.

## 13.3 Changes to radio and film

The link between technology and popular culture was clearly established in the 1920s. In the period before the arrival of television and rock’n’roll, radio and film were the main sources of popular culture. The impact of technology on popular culture became a consistent theme throughout the second half of the 20th century. Ongoing developments in technology also help to explain the ways in which popular culture is able to change and evolve.

### Radio

By 1946, radio was established as the most accessible form of communication in Australia. All capital cities and most regional centres had one or more radio stations, which helped overcome the great distances involved in communicating across the country. Radio first took off during the 1930s, and was the perfect medium for introducing audiences to new forms of recorded music coming from the USA.

The increasing popularity and accessibility of radio led to change. Until World War II, pianos and pianolas (self-playing pianos) were the centrepieces of home entertainment. Sales of sheet music boomed as families gathered to entertain themselves at home. When radio station 2GF in Grafton, New South Wales, first went on air in December 1933, it was the 63rd radio station in the country. When the World War II broke out, radio became a crucial means for Australian people to keep updated with military news from overseas and at home. Apart from war-time news and updates from the troops, radio stations broadcast music and drama programs which were important for entertaining the Australian public and keeping up morale.

By the 21st century, radio had split into AM and FM, community and digital broadcasting. Contrary to some expectations, the medium of radio continues to thrive as an important means of entertainment and information.



**Source 1** This photograph was taken in the late 1940s and shows a group of young friends sunbaking at Bondi Beach, Sydney, while listening to the radio.

## Film

In 1906, the world's first full-length feature film was produced in Australia, titled *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. Until governments banned bushranger films in 1912, Australia led the world in feature film production. The federal government set high import **tariffs** on films during World War I. When they lifted them in 1918, the Australian film industry was destroyed by American imports. There was a brief revival in Australian films in the 1930s, when the influence of Hollywood and the introduction of 'talkies' (films with sound) began to dominate the film industry.

A newsreel documentary, *Kokoda Front Line*, won Australia's first Academy Award in 1943, but the Australian film industry struggled in the years after World War II. Although major Australian stars such as Errol Flynn, Peter Finch and Chips Rafferty became famous in Australia and experienced success overseas, as a general rule American actors were far more successful internationally. American magazines played a major role in this. Around this time, magazines became a

popular medium through which popular culture was transmitted and advertised. As a result, Australian actors began to travel to Hollywood to further their careers. Although films were made in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s, these were usually co-productions with American and British film companies. The 1955 film *Jedda* stands out as a significant milestone in Australian cinema because it had two Indigenous lead actors. It was also the first Australian film to be shot in colour (see Source 13.5). By introducing a mainstream audience to Indigenous issues, it also showed the potential of film to generate debate and stimulate social change.

The Disney studio became the main source of children's entertainment. The animated films *Dumbo* and *Bambi* had been major hits during the war, and by the 1950s Disney films were clearly established as 'must sees' for Australian children. American serials and cartoons also emerged as staples of Saturday afternoon picture shows, and ensured that Australian children in the post-war period were introduced to a constant diet of American popular culture.



**Source 2** *Jedda* was the first Australian film to star Aboriginal actors in lead roles.



**Source 3** *Smiley* was one of the films that featured the Australian star 'Chips' Rafferty. Like many films made in Australia around that time, it was a US-UK co-production.

These animated cartoons and serials merged different American popular culture influences. They frequently drew on printed comic strip heroes such as Batman, the Phantom and Green Hornet for ideas.

It must be remembered that before television, newsreels at picture theatres were the only way people could actually see major news events in moving pictures. Serials and newsreels were the main reasons why people in the post-war period kept coming to the cinema week after week. As a result, local picture theatres became major sources of popular culture. It also explains why newsreels remained popular even after the Australian film industry went into decline after World War II. In fact, newsreel production continued until television was introduced to Australia in the mid-1950s.

### Check your learning 13.3

#### Remember and understand

- 1 When radios were introduced into Australian homes during the 1930s, what other forms of home entertainment did they replace?
- 2 How did Australians see news items before the arrival of television?
- 3 Why was *Jedda* such an important film?

#### Apply and analyse

- 4 Explain the significance of radio for Australian popular culture in the 1940s.
- 5 Why do you think older Australians in the 1950s would have worried about Disney films and serials becoming so popular with Australian children?

#### Evaluate and create

- 6 Conduct research on the Internet into the career of *one* of the following Australian actors: Errol Flynn, Peter Finch or Chips Rafferty. Write a 250-word historical description outlining the contributions your chosen person made to the film industry both in Australia and internationally. Include at least one primary source and reference it.

## 13.4 Changes to sport

Sport was very popular in Australia in the post-war period, much as it is today. Many historians argue that sport played a key role in restoring normality after the traumas of the war. Cricket was the most widely played sport at the time, perhaps because it provided a strong link with England. The Ashes series with England developed into one of our great sporting traditions. These contests had been disrupted by the war. Both England and Australia were keen to see the contest resume as a sign of life returning to normal.

An English team toured Australia in the summer of 1946–47 on a goodwill tour. Australia played with a determination to show the ‘mother country’ how strong they were. The result was a 4–1 series win to Australia, a superiority that was confirmed when Don Bradman led the team to England in 1948, and his team (which became known as the ‘Invincibles’) remained undefeated for the entire tour.

Rugby league was another form of popular culture drawn from Britain. It was popular in New South Wales and Queensland, and the most prestigious competition was the New South Wales rugby league premiership. Unlike many sports, rugby league continued throughout World War II. Balmain won the 1946 grand final against St George in a match marred by refereeing controversies.

Rugby league was matched in the southern states by Australian Rules football, a truly home-grown sport. Like rugby league, it had been played throughout the war, providing some sense of normality, as many young men went off to fight. Unlike rugby league, however, Australian Rules football at the time could not technically be classed as a form of popular culture due to the fact that it failed to gain popularity at a global level.



Source 1 Australian cricketer Sir Donald Bradman, 1930s



Source 2 The first Australia vs England Rugby League test, 12 June 1950

### keyconcept: continuity and change

#### The changing face of sport in Australia

Sport provides a strong cultural continuity in Australian society. Cricket, the football codes, tennis, golf and horse racing are all easily recognisable as cultural activities that continue to engage the Australian public to this day. Cricketers still play regularly for the Ashes, the MCG is still the venue for the Australian Rules grand final, and the Melbourne Cup remains the ‘race that stops a nation’.

Beneath those continuities, however, are changes that reflect a more modern society. Professionalism has been a major change. In many sports today, playing at the top level is a full-time job. Time required for training and rehabilitation means that maintaining other work is no longer practical.

The racial and ethnic backgrounds of Australia’s multicultural society are now also reflected by our sporting men and women.

Domestically, Australian Rules and rugby league have moved towards national competitions that are financed by lucrative television and sponsorship deals. Rugby union was the last football code to go fully professional,

and has focused on international competition. In 2005, soccer (known as football in most other countries around the world) established a national competition known as the A-League. In addition to this national league, Australia has participated in FIFA World Cups for both women and men.

For more information on the key concept of continuity and change refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.



Source 3 Quarter-final match of the FIFA women’s football World Cup in Canada, Japan vs Australia, on 28 June 2015

### Check your learning 13.4

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why did England send a cricket team to tour Australia so soon after the end of World War II?
- 2 What is the name of the cricket test series between Australia and England? Why do you think it became one of our greatest sporting traditions?
- 3 In which states was rugby league most popular in the late 1940s?
- 4 In which states was Australian Rules football popular?
- 5 Why was Australian Rules football technically not regarded as a popular culture activity? Do you believe that this is still the case today? Justify your response.

#### Apply and analyse

- 6 Conduct research on the Internet to collect evidence on the role Don Bradman played during the immediate post-war period in Australia.
  - a Use the information you have gathered to write a short response outlining the contributions he made to the sport of cricket as well as the importance he played in broader Australian society.
  - b Prepare an argument for or against the case to name Don Bradman as the most important Australian sports person of the post-war period.

## 13.5 Changes to music

On the surface, Australian society in 1956 did not appear to be too different from Australian society 10 years earlier in 1946. Cricket, rugby league, Australian Rules football, tennis and horse racing were all popular sports that showed the influence of our largely British cultural heritage. Radio continued to be the most popular and important medium for communication. In addition to this, most city suburbs and country towns had a picture theatre showing American and British

films along with newsreels and serials. Then something changed – rock'n'roll arrived in Australia.

*The Sun*, a Sydney-based newspaper, reported on 21 June 1956 that 'rock and roll raised no more than a flutter' in Australia. Three weeks later, Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel* was released locally, and the same newspaper published the first rumour that Elvis was to tour Australia. By December, Bill Haley's *Rock Around the Clock* had established an Australian sales record of



**Source 1** Saxophone player Len Austin and the Recaps band perform at a rock'n'roll dance in the Manly RSL Hall organised by the Salvation Army, in 1959.

175 000 45s and 78s, and 12 000 LPs (all are types of vinyl records). On 20 December, a 'rock dance' was held at Sydney's Redfern Oval, and within six months rock'n'roll had become part of popular cultural for good.

There is no doubt rock'n'roll brought about many changes in 1950s Australia. Teenagers had a different outlook from the generation that had experienced the **Great Depression** and World War II. Attending rock'n'roll concerts became a symbol of the fact that teenagers were different from earlier generations and

signalled a break with their parents. It also showed how enthusiastically they adopted American popular culture. As Australian musicians such as John Manners and Johnny O'Keefe absorbed these influences, they also started practising playing rock'n'roll and developing their skills in this new form of popular culture. Eventually these artists would start writing and performing uniquely Australian rock songs to sell-out crowds, but in 1957 rock'n'roll was only just starting to bring about social change in Australia.

### keyconcept: significance

#### Bill Haley's tour

Rock'n'roll became one of the most distinct products designed specifically for teenagers. Radio, television and film all helped spread the music, and tours by live acts were the next step. Although Australia was geographically isolated in the 1950s, an American promoter living in Australia called Lee Gordon realised the potential of rock'n'roll. He organised the first rock'n'roll tour outside North America when he booked Bill Haley and the Comets, Big Joe Turner, The Platters, LaVern Baker and Freddie Bell and the Bell Boys on a package tour of Australia.

As an indication of just what a major undertaking this first tour was, in January 1957 it took Bill Haley six days to travel from the east coast of the United States to Sydney. There were three stops on the trans-Pacific flight for this first ever tour that included mixed races and genders – both certain to attract controversy in a 'white' Australia where women were yet to achieve any kind of equality.

The tour was a huge success, playing to 330 000 people at a time when Australia's population was still under 10 million. Teenagers danced in the aisles before ushers made them sit down. A reviewer called it 'the noisiest show to ever hit Sydney'. It was reported that 'plates rattled half a block away, dogs cringed in their kennels and the boxing stadium at Rushcutters Bay loosened its nails'.

A second tour including Little Richard, Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent and Alis Lesley arrived in

October 1957, and it was clear that rock'n'roll was creating a wide generation gap.

For more information on the key concept of

significance refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



**Source 2** A poster promoting the Bill Haley tour of 1957



**Source 3** Police hold back Beatles fans at Sydney airport in June 1964, as Ringo Starr and Brian Epstein (manager of The Beatles) arrive – the pair missed the early part of the Australian tour because Ringo needed to have his tonsils removed.

## The Beatles tour Australia

On 11 June 1964, The Beatles arrived in Australia for their first and only visit. By June 1964, The Beatles were the most famous people on the planet. Concerts in Adelaide had been added because of public demand, and 350 000 people lined the entire drive from the airport to the centre of Adelaide. The crowds were repeated wherever The Beatles went. For two weeks, Australia was the centre of the popular culture universe.

The Beatles' tour had a direct impact on Australian society. Teenagers disobeyed authority for the first time in their lives, ignoring police instructions as they massed anywhere that The Beatles might appear. The mobilisation of so many teenagers was an early sign of the mass movement that went on to play an important role protesting against the Vietnam War.

The tour also showed that Australia retained very strong cultural links with Britain. The Beatles entered the Australian charts six months before the American charts. British migrants arriving in Australia would bring their records with them, ensuring that Australia was kept up to date with the pop boom that was exploding in England.

The Beatles' tour changed the face of Australian music. Groups replaced singers almost instantly, and pop music became the quickest way for many migrants to assimilate into Australian culture. The Easybeats in Sydney and The Twilights in Adelaide were two bands who formed in the aftermath of The Beatles tour, and both consisted mainly of migrants. These bands would go on to create original Australian music, as well as to tour England.

### Check your learning 13.5

#### Remember and understand

- 1 What evidence is there to suggest that rock'n'roll became an almost instant success in Australia?
- 2 Who staged the first rock'n'roll concert tour of Australia? In what year was the tour staged?

#### Apply and analyse

- 3 Explain why Bill Haley's and The Beatles' tours of Australia were important developments in Australian popular culture.
- 4 In which ways did Australian teenagers during the 1950s adopt aspects of American culture? How different do you think this is from the way American popular culture influences Australian teenagers today?

#### Evaluate and create

- 5 Listen to the music of some of the artists who toured Australia in the 1950s. Create a line-up for a concert by some of these artists.
  - a Design a poster to advertise the concert.
  - b Write two reviews of the imaginary concert – one for a daily newspaper and one for a teenage magazine – demonstrating the different attitudes held by older and younger generations of Australians towards rock'n'roll.
- 6 Research an Australian pop group from the 1950s or 1960s and one current Australian pop artist. Write 2–3 paragraphs comparing their careers and impact on the international music scene.

## 13.6 The impact of changing technology on television and film

Television had proved critical in the United States in allowing rock'n'roll to develop from local to national acceptance. Regardless of distance, television meant that teenagers across the country could turn on their sets and see Elvis Presley on nationally broadcast shows such as *The Ed Sullivan Show* (originally called *Toast of the Town*) and *The Milton Berle Show*.

Television had the same potential in a country the size of Australia, especially because of its small population, vast distances and physical isolation from the rest of the world. Legal and political arguments in Australia about the ownership model of television stations delayed introduction of television here. After much discussion it was finally decided that Australia would have a joint government (based on the British model) and private (based on the American model) television station ownership model. This compromise between British and American influences was typical of Australian society in the 1950s.

The Melbourne Olympic Games in November 1956 were the main motivation for the introduction of television. Government and commercial stations were operating in Sydney and Melbourne in time to televise the games, and by 1960 Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth also had stations. As with many new technologies, television sets were expensive in the beginning. In 1956, a new set could cost more than \$400; this at a time when the average weekly wage was around \$30 a week. As a result, it is estimated that only about 5 per cent of households in Melbourne and 1 per cent of households in Sydney had television sets by 1960.

To encourage investment in television stations, the Menzies Government had decided not to have a local content **quota** for programming. As a result of this decision, the early years of television in Australia were dominated by American programs. There were few television studios and other facilities to produce local programs in Australia at the time and very little equipment to record and broadcast material. Therefore, most local content had to be broadcast live. It consisted mainly of quiz and game shows that had been popular on radio. When a Senate Committee reported on Australian television content in 1963, it estimated that

97 per cent of all television drama shown between 1956 and 1963 was American. These programs had a significant influence on Australian society over the period.

With rock'n'roll and television established in Australia by the end of the 1950s, they became major vehicles for social and cultural change around the country. Both enabled the transmission of American popular culture in a more immediate and direct way than either film or the visits of American troops during World War II had been able to achieve.



**Source 1** A family watches a television in the television lounge at a department store in Sydney on 24 November 1956



**Source 2** The Melbourne Olympics, held in 1956, were one of the main motivating factors for the introduction of television in Australia. The games were broadcast as a test transmission by all three television stations operating in Melbourne at the time.

**keyconcept:** contestability**‘Welcome to television’?**

For historians, one of the difficulties in studying the early years of Australian television is that so little primary source material survives. With no videotape or equipment to record television shows, live broadcasts were unique events lost to time. There is even controversy surrounding the historic first words spoken on Australian television.

On 16 September 1956, Bruce Gyngell greeted the Australian people in the first television broadcast from TCB 9 in Sydney: ‘Good evening and welcome to television.’ Although these are the first words spoken on Australian television, if you were to watch this footage today, the chances are you’d be watching a fake. According to Gerald Stone (a respected Australian television and radio journalist), the original kinescope film of the event was lost. The version we see today showing Gyngell standing in front of a world map (see Source 3) was recreated a year after the original broadcast. As a result, it probably looks quite a bit more rehearsed and professional than the image that originally went to air on 16 September 1956.

For more information on the key concept of contestability refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.



**Source 3** Bruce Gyngell shown re-enacting his introduction to the first regular television broadcast service that aired in 1956

**The great film revival**

Australia has had a vibrant film industry at various times throughout its history, and film has become a significant way for Australians to reflect on their national identity and confront aspects of Australian life. The early 1970s saw the emergence of what has been called the ‘new wave’ of Australian film.

The timing of the new wave reflected a growing interest in Australian culture and had the political support of two Australian prime ministers. The Liberal MP John Gorton was prime minister from 1968 until 1971, and Labor’s Gough Whitlam from 1972 until 1975. These two politicians laid the groundwork for Australian film to emerge as a major contributor to a national popular culture in the early 1970s.

Gorton established the Australian Council for the Arts, the Australian Film Development Corporation, and the National Film and Television Training School. Whitlam continued the support by creating the Australian Film Commission to help finance and produce films that could reach an international market. This was the first time film had received such specific government support and the result was a boom in Australian films.

The 1970s saw films as diverse as *Walkabout* and *Wake in Fright* in 1971, *Alvin Purple* in 1973, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* in 1975 and *Mad Max* in 1979. Directors such as Peter Weir, Gillian Armstrong, George Miller and Bruce Beresford got their start during this

period. Actors also thrived under the system. Future international stars such as Mel Gibson, Jacki Weaver and Judy Davis all got their start in the 1970s new wave.

The themes the films in this period covered also signalled a new confidence in Australian culture. *Stork*, *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* and *Alvin Purple* celebrated the larrikin Australian spirit. Uniquely Australian stories such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Caddie* and *Sunday Too Far Away* all received overseas attention. The vastness of the Australian outback was captured in *Walkabout*, which introduced Australians to the Indigenous actor David Gulpilil. *Wake in Fright* focused on the darker side of country life. This theme was taken to apocalyptic lengths in the *Mad Max* series, which led to international success for the *Mad Max* films, actor Mel Gibson and director George Miller. The sinister depiction of the Australian countryside was a recurrent theme throughout the 1970s, and paved the way for 21st-century successes such as *Wolf Creek*.

Australian literature also became a rich source for film makers, and showed the capacity of Australian culture to change and evolve. *Walkabout*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (see Source 4), *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* and *My Brilliant Career* were all 1970s films that were based on great Australian novels. Playwright David Williamson had two plays turned into successful 1970s films, *Don’s Party* and *The Removalists*, and continued that trend into the 1980s.

Since then, the Australian film industry has continued to build on this success – both at home and internationally. In 1986, the film ‘Crocodile’ Dundee became the highest-grossing Australian film of all time, banking US\$328 million worldwide. In fact, the highest-earning Australian films have all been

made since 1986, including *Strictly Ballroom*, *Babe*, *Red Dog* and *The Dressmaker*. All of these films have told distinctly Australian stories. In 2015, ‘Crocodile’ Dundee was replaced by *Mad Max: Fury Road* as the highest-earning Australian film ever – taking home US\$375 million at the box office (see Source 5).



**Source 4** A film still from *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, 1975



**Source 5** In 2015, the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* became the highest-earning Australian film ever made.

**Check your learning 13.6**

## Remember and understand

- 1 Explain how television helped the development of rock’n’roll in America.
- 2 Why was the introduction of television in Australia delayed?
- 3 What event was the main motivating factor for the introduction of television in Australia in 1956?
- 4 Which Menzies Government decision allowed television to introduce American culture into Australia?

## Apply and analyse

- 5 Select an Australian film that has been released since World War II. Analyse it to explain the image of Australia it portrays. Discuss the ways in which the film you have chosen has contributed to Australian popular culture.



## 13.7 The birth of Australian soapies and mini-series

The term 'soap opera' was originally used in reference to ongoing radio serials. They were called soap operas because they were usually sponsored by soap companies and featured commercials for soap throughout. Over time in Australia, soap operas simply became known as 'soopies'. These serials were aired during the day when housewives were the main audience. The idea transferred to television originally in the United States in the early 1950s. Television soapies are characterised by an ongoing storyline that runs across a number of episodes. Soapies often try to depict 'real life', but require viewers to suspend reality. Cliffhanger endings are frequently used to end individual episodes or

seasons to encourage the audience to tune in again for the next instalment.

Australia's first television soapie was *Autumn Affair*, which ran on Channel 7 for 15 minutes a day in 1958 and 1959. In 1967, the ABC launched the first early evening soapie, *Bellbird*, dealing with life in a fictional rural town of the same name (see Source 1). The 15-minute episodes were the lead-in to the ABC news. *Bellbird* drew a large and loyal following at a time when the ABC was the only network to broadcast nationally. It was broadcast until 1977 when it ended abruptly as a result of government budget cuts to the ABC.



**Source 1** The locals gather in a pub in *Bellbird*. From 1967 to 1977, Australians were glued to their television sets watching the first early evening soapie in Australia on the ABC.

### Soapies in the 1970s

The 1970s can be seen as a time of social, political and cultural change in Australia. By this time, there had been 23 years of conservative government by the Liberal–Country Party coalition. Australia at the end of the 1970s was largely unrecognisable from Australia during the 1960s – the 1960s were a time of black-and-white televisions, conscription of young people to fight in Vietnam, and a refusal by the government to allow most Asians to settle here.

The sense of excitement and social change of early 1970s Australia was reflected in television programs at the time. *Number 96* was launched in 1972. The series explored the relationships of the residents of a small, inner-city apartment block named Number 96. It caused a sensation by dealing with issues that had previously been considered taboo (offensive and distasteful) and unsuitable for showing on television. Topics such as nudity, divorce, homosexuality, racism and drugs were explored in the storylines.

*Number 96* brought previous cultural barriers crashing down (see Source 2), and it was followed in 1974 by *The Box*. Set in a television station, *The Box* tried to take the sexual themes and nudity of *Number 96* a step further.

The first soapie aimed at teenagers, *The Class of '74*, was launched in the same year, and attracted considerable attention. Set in a high school, it suggested that teenagers had an interest more in social activities than schoolwork. This meant that the program was subject to intense legal scrutiny. The Broadcasting Control Board would often demand script changes to make it more 'acceptable' for early evening viewing.

The first Australian soapie, *Bellbird*, had produced a film version as early as 1971, and films based on *Number 96* and *The Box* soon followed. Film versions of television soapies had several advantages – they could be filmed in colour and they were able to show more nudity than was allowed on television at the time. The arrival of colour television to Australia in 1975 took away some of the advantages held by movie theatres before then.

A new style of soapie was introduced in 1976 when *The Sullivans* was launched. Set in World War II-era Melbourne, it ran until 1982, and drew viewers into following the lives of its fictional family. *The Sullivans* echoed the success of Australian films in the 1970s, and reflected an interest in Australians exploring their own culture. Its success was echoed in the 1980s by



**Source 2** Actors Abigail and Joe Hasham in a scene from the television show *Number 96*

*A Country Practice*, which revived a *Bellbird*-style of storytelling set in a country town. *Prisoner* and *Sons and Daughters* also found long-running success in the 1980s, and reinforced the dominant position of television in Australian popular culture.

### Mini-series in the 1980s

The election of Bob Hawke in 1983 returned the Labor Party to power. Hawke portrayed a down-to-earth Australian image. He had won a beer-drinking competition while a student at Oxford University, and was able to draw a wide following in the community. He still holds the record for the highest approval rating of any prime minister. He was re-elected in 1984, 1987 and 1990.

The Hawke years were characterised by economic reform and a confidence in Australian popular culture. Television launched a number of mini-series that showed aspects of Australian life. Mini-series were longer than traditional films, but limited to a single, self-contained story rather than an open-ended narrative that had previously been the basis of long-running television series.

Mini-series boomed during the 1980s as Australian history and culture became hot topics for the producers to explore. These included *Bodyline*, which looked at the events behind the 1932–33 cricket series between Australia and England; *The Dismissal*, which examined the sacking of the Whitlam Government; *The Cowra Breakout*, a famous incident from World War II; and *Vietnam*, which was a major examination of a war that was still a hotly debated topic in Australian society.



**Source 3** A still from *Bangkok Hilton* starring Nicole Kidman which aired on Australian television in November 1989



**Source 4** Morag Bellingham (Cornelia Francis), Alf Stewart (Ray Meagher) and Eric 'Ric' Dalby (Mark Furze) in the long-running Channel 7 soapie *Home and Away*



**Source 5** Scott Robinson (Jason Donovan) and Charlene Robinson (Kylie Minogue) in a wedding scene from *Neighbours*, 1987. This episode remains one of the most watched in the history of the show. It aired to an audience of 20 million in the UK in November 1988.

Australian novels such as Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* and *Poor Man's Orange*, memoirs such as Albert Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, and novels about Australia such as *A Town Like Alice* all provided material for successful mini-series. Indigenous issues were firmly placed on the television agenda with the acclaimed *Women of the Sun*, while *Bangkok Hilton* starring Nicole Kidman (see Source 3) fictionalised the experience of young Australians caught smuggling drugs from Asia.

## Neighbours and Home and Away

Australia's interest in gathering around the television to share the lives of fictional soap characters culminated in two extraordinarily long-running shows that aired for the first time in the 1980s – *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* (see Sources 4 and 5). When *Neighbours* was first shown in 1985, Ronald Reagan was president of the United States, the Cold War still pitted the United States and Soviet Union against each other, and Bruce Springsteen was touring Australia for the first time. A 15-year-old who watched the debut episode of *Neighbours* turned 40 in 2010. *Home and Away* followed shortly after, premiering in January 1988 – the same year that Australia celebrated its bicentennial (200th anniversary) of British settlement.

These two television soapies have, between them, aired more than 14 000 episodes. As with the mini-series boom, they emerged from an Australia that was becoming increasingly confident in using popular culture to explore its own stories. As the bicentennial of Captain Cook's landing in Australia approached, there

was a focus on national reflection, and a questioning of what being Australian meant. The lives of 'ordinary' Australians shown in fictionalised settings such as Erinsborough (*Neighbours*) and Summer Bay (*Home and Away*) were now seen as a valid source of entertainment. Teen audiences emerged as a major target for advertisers. This helped both soapies to dominate Australian and international ratings throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

They have proved a rich training ground for aspiring actors and musicians. Among the talent to have emerged from *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* are Guy Pearce, Kylie Minogue, Jason Donovan, Natalie Imbruglia, Delta Goodrem, Melissa George and Julian McMahon. All played recurring roles in the soaps before moving on to major international success.

Although celebrating the life of average Australians, both shows have been criticised for focusing on a 'white' view of Australia. And while both series have dealt with controversial social issues such as drugs, sexuality and teen pregnancy, race and ethnicity have rarely featured. Token attempts at introducing minor characters have failed to challenge criticism that the racial composition of Erinsborough and Summer Bay fails to reflect that of modern Australia.

Both series project a vision of Australia that has proven extremely attractive to overseas viewers. *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* have had extraordinary success being sold internationally. The image of Australia as a country of sunshine, surf and white faces proved irresistible in many markets. *Neighbours* was so

successful in Britain that, in 1988, programmers were forced to move it from early to late afternoon because so many school students were failing to return to school after going home at lunch. *Neighbours* has been shown in countries as diverse as Kenya, Barbados, Iceland and Ireland. In the 1990s it was even shown in the prized United States market. *Home and Away* has been popular throughout Europe, as well as Israel and Canada.

Each show has enthusiastically embraced social media as a way of interacting with a new audience, necessary to sustain such longevity. In 2009, *Neighbours* became the first Australian television show to establish Twitter accounts for its characters and, in 2011, was the first television show to be available on an iPhone app for an increasingly tech-savvy young audience. Both shows offer viewers the opportunity to catch up on missed episodes and preview forthcoming stories through their websites.

## Check your learning 13.7

### Remember and understand

- 1 Explain where the term 'soap opera' comes from.
- 2 What are the main characteristics of soap operas?
- 3 What was the first Australian soapie?
- 4 How did Australian soapies change during the 1970s?

### Apply and analyse

- 5 Why do you think Australian soapies have become so popular overseas?

### Evaluate and create

- 6 Do you think Australian soapies such as *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* should include characters from a broader range of racial/ethnic backgrounds? Explain your response.

## 13A rich task

## The influence of popular culture in Australia

Many of us today have a television in our bedroom and watch movies online. It's hard to believe that only 60 years ago radio was the main way Australians accessed news and entertainment. The nature of entertainment has evolved radically over that time. The growth of television and new forms of music reflect upheavals in values and culture that our society has undergone since the end of World War II.

For the generation who grew up before the 1950s, the only way to watch moving images was to visit a cinema. The arrival of television in Australia in the 1950s relocated the movie screen into people's living rooms and fundamentally changed the ways in which people accessed popular culture.

**Source 1**

When television itself first started in 1956, because television sets were, I suppose, very expensive, most people didn't have one, and all of the major department stores would have a television set in their window ... People would actually gather outside the department stores at night-time, children in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, adults would bring their own seats and sit there and watch the television in the store windows.

Extract from a 2006 special episode of the *Science Show* on ABC Radio National, 'Celebrating 50 years of television'

With the birth of rock'n'roll around the same time, popular music was undergoing a revolution of its own. Rock'n'roll became more than just another music trend – it came to influence fashion, lifestyle, language and attitudes, especially among teenagers and young people.

Popular culture in the 1950s would come to exemplify the gap between the culture of youth and that of their parents. Older Australians were concerned that the popularity of rock'n'roll through television and radio was encouraging young people to challenge boundaries around taboo topics, such as sex.



**Source 2** Bill Haley on tour in 1957 – this and other tours by famous rock'n'roll bands not only influenced music but also fashion, language and attitudes

This letter to the editor appeared in *The Sun* newspaper in January 1957, while Bill Haley was touring Australia. It was printed under the heading 'Menace of rock and roll':

**Source 3**

It will be interesting to note the effects of the visit to Sydney of a band of American entertainers. Reports of the way 'rock and roll' has been received by overseas audiences, coupled with the almost unanimous acceptance of Elvis Presley who, despite his repulsive antics, is now the current idol of the younger set, lead one to believe that the arrival of Mr Haley could be regretted for years to come.

We have only to glance through the daily papers to read the shocking manner in which teenagers of today, throughout the world, carry on.

The morals of the modern generation, with the exception of a small minority, have nearly reached an all time low, and 'rock and roll' has done nothing to improve them.

Already the general outlook of the Australian teenager has begun to deteriorate rapidly and to such an extent that something must be done to prevent the low level which they are gradually approaching, being attained.

Strongly opposed by most leading musicians, both modern and classical, 'rock and roll' represents a serious threat to the community.

In both Britain and the United States riots are prevalent where this form of entertainment is played. We must see that it is not given the same opportunity to take a grip on our own youth.

Letter to the editor by John J Sutton, *The Sun*, Sydney, January 1957 (reprinted in *My Generation. Growing up in Australia 1950s to 1980s*, Bernie Howitt, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 25–6)

**skilldrill: historical sources as evidence**

## Identify and analyse different historical interpretations

As explained earlier, historians use two types of sources to gather evidence about the past:

- primary sources – objects or materials created or written at the time being investigated, for example during an event or very soon after
- secondary sources – accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated and which often use or refer to primary sources and present a particular interpretation.

Much of the historical study and research you will complete in secondary school will involve you reading secondary sources (for example, textbooks and websites about the historical period you are studying). While these secondary sources at first glance may appear to provide an objective, unbiased and balanced view of the historical events or periods they are writing about, this is not always the case. All historians write from a particular perspective. There is no objective 'truth' that historians uncover; rather, all historians must interpret historical events and issues using their own perspective. Of course, historians must use evidence to justify their interpretations, but there is no absolutely 'correct' way of interpreting evidence, and historians can also use (or disregard) different sources of evidence to support many different interpretations. For example, many historians writing in the early 1900s about the British settlement of Australia presented it in a very positive light, and virtually ignored the negative experiences of Indigenous Australians.

It is therefore very important that you are able to identify and analyse different historical interpretations. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- What historical event is being interpreted?

- What particular features, incidents, actions or behaviours are seen as important in this interpretation?
- What particular features, incidents, actions or behaviours are seen as positive in this interpretation?
- What particular features, incidents, actions or behaviours are ignored or left out of this interpretation?
- What particular features, incidents, actions or behaviours are seen as negative in this interpretation?
- What motives or characteristics are being attributed to the humans involved in this interpretation?
- What primary sources are used to support the interpretation? How?
- What primary sources might have been left out or ignored by this interpretation?
- Does this interpretation involve a critique of other interpretations? If so, what is being said about other interpretations?

## Apply the skill

- 1 Use the questions above as a guide to prepare a 250-word report explaining the changing nature of popular culture in Australia since the 1950s. Explain how each of the sources presented in this section offer different interpretations of the changes.

**Extend your understanding**

- 1 Consider how the sources in this section provide such different interpretations of the arrival of rock'n'roll in Australia. What technology or trends do you see in society today that might compare to the upheaval older generations of Australians faced when television and rock'n'roll emerged?
- 2 Prepare a presentation for your class on a modern trend or technology of your choice (such as Facebook or Twitter), describing:
  - a what benefits the trend is bringing to society
  - b what problems the trend could have for society
  - c what effects you believe the trend might have on society in 15 years' time.

## 13.8 Changes in the music industry



**Source 1** Rock icon 'Molly' Meldrum, host of the influential television music show, *Countdown*, which screened from 1974 to 1987

From its earliest days in Australia, rock'n'roll was branded as rebellious music for teenagers. The link between rock'n'roll and teenage misbehaviour was established even before there were any rock'n'roll bands in Australia. The first rock'n'roll film, *Rock Around the Clock*, was released in Sydney on 14 September 1956. Ten days later two youths were fined for dancing in Pitt Street after viewing the film.

### The origins of Australian rock

In the early years of the Australian rock industry most songs were covers of American artists and bands. The first original Australian song was probably *Rock'n'Roll Washboard* by the Schneider Sisters, written in November 1956. The Schneider Sisters came from a country music background. This was typical of the early Australian rock acts, with established artists from other music genres attracted to rock'n'roll because of its novelty value and links to the emerging teenage market.

#### keyconcept: contestability

#### George Assang – Australia's first rock'n'roll star?

To this day there is considerable debate about who released Australia's first rock'n'roll record. The unlikely pioneer of Australian rock'n'roll was an Indigenous Australian called George Assang. He was born on Thursday Island, and his smooth singing voice got him regular work fronting jazz and swing bands on the Australian circuit. On 12 July 1956, under his stage name of Vic Sabrino, he released a version of *Heartbreak Hotel* simultaneously with Elvis Presley's version. There is still some debate about when he recorded an earlier cover of Bill Haley's *Rock Around the Clock*. Whether it was 1955 or 1956, the Vic Sabrino jazz/swing version of *Rock Around the Clock* could make a case for being Australia's earliest attempt at rock'n'roll.

For more information on the key concept of contestability refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

#### Johnny O'Keefe

Johnny O'Keefe is remembered as one of the most significant Australian rock'n'roll performers of all time. O'Keefe was born in 1935 and began his singing career in the 1950s. His life changed forever in 1955 after seeing and hearing Bill Haley singing *Rock Around the Clock*. O'Keefe met Bill Haley at his 1957 tour and impressed Haley so much that Haley gave him a song to record. From that point onwards, O'Keefe knew that he wanted to perform this style of music and dedicated himself to becoming a rock'n'roll singer and star. From humble beginnings, O'Keefe went on to have national and international success with songs such as *Wild One*, *Shout!* and *She's My Baby*.



**Source 2** Johnny O'Keefe performing on stage in 1963

One riotous night of partying was the inspiration for O'Keefe's 1958 release, *Wild One*. This was the first genuinely Australian rock'n'roll hit record. After hearing it performed on tour with O'Keefe, Buddy Holly and the Crickets took it back to the United States where it was released as *Real Wild Child*. It has subsequently been recorded by artists as diverse as Jerry Lee Lewis, Joan Jett, Status Quo and most famously Iggy Pop. In fact, the Iggy Pop version has been used as the theme to ABC TV's *Rage* for more than 20 years.

In his 20-year career, O'Keefe released more than 50 singles, 50 EPs (extended play records) and 100 albums. To this day he remains Australia's most successful chart performer, with 29 Top 40 hits to his credit in Australia between 1959 and 1974.

#### Surf music

The massive popularity of surf music that started around 1962 launched the next phase of Australian music. Sydney band The Atlantics created a huge local hit, *Bombora*, which was released internationally, even receiving the US *Cashbox Magazine's* Record of the Week award. Suddenly surf bands were everywhere, playing suburban dances and sending teenage boys in search of guitars so they could imitate their favourite band and be 'cool'.

The classic rock line-up of guitars, bass and drums emerged at this point, and major international recording labels such as CBS and HMV began investing in the local Australian music industry. As The Beach Boys made the charts, vocals started to influence surf music. A 14-year-old Australian singer by the name of Little Pattie entered the charts with *He's My Blonde Headed Stompie Wompie Real Gone Surfer Boy* late in 1963. The summer of 1963–64 was the highpoint of the surf music craze in Australia.

#### The beat boom

The 'beat boom' was a period during the early 1960s when a style known as beat music became popular in the charts. Put simply, beat music was a fusion of rock'n'roll and rhythm and blues (R&B) that developed in Britain at this time and led to a 'British invasion' of the music charts around the world. The overwhelming popularity and success of The Beatles was one example of the British invasion. Their Australian tour in June 1964 revolutionised the Australian music industry (see Source 13.32). Overnight it seemed as if instrumental groups and solo singers were out, and rock'n'roll bands were in. Smaller, independent recording companies such as W&G in Melbourne, Clarion in Perth and Alberts in Sydney prospered in the wake of Beatlemania. Teenagers across the country were hungry for new records and live concerts. As a result, many new Australian rock bands formed and the music industry in Australia boomed from 1964.



**Source 3** The Beatles arrived in Adelaide on 12 June 1964.

A vibrant national scene made up of suburban dances in the major cities and concerts in country towns, gave a number of performers the opportunity to make a career in music. Some of these performers and bands were The Easybeats, and Ray Brown and the Whispers (from Sydney); The Twilights and Masters Apprentices (from Adelaide); Bobby and Laurie, The Loved Ones, and Normie Rowe and The Playboys (from Melbourne); Tony Worsley and The Blue Jays, and The Five (from Brisbane); and Johnny Young Kompany (from Perth).

By 1966, The Easybeats and Normie Rowe, two of the biggest names on the local scene, had moved to England in search of international fame and success. The Easybeats recorded *Friday on My Mind* in London in 1966. It reached the Top 20 in the US and Top 10 in the UK, and would go on to be voted best Australian song of all time in 2001. Normie Rowe recorded a number of songs in London that were huge hits back in Australia.

## The 1970s: Countdown and Double J

Australian music became much more diverse in the 1970s as a new range of acts replaced the bands popular during the beat boom. Experimental acts such as Tully, Tamam Shud and Levi Smith's Clefs reflected changes in society as drug use and alternative lifestyles mirrored similar trends overseas. Festivals such as Ourimbah and Sunbury were where the young gathered. Music was growing with the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1965). And then the ABC launched a television show that brought young people's music to an even wider audience.

Television had played a significant role in allowing access to rock music since Johnny O'Keefe was given a show called *Six O'Clock Rock* in 1959. Because the ABC was the only national broadcaster at the time, any show on the ABC was key in broadcasting information to the more remote areas of Australia.

When a new music program called *Countdown* started on 8 November 1974, its host, Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, became a household name – and he is still one of Australia's most famous television personalities. *Countdown* provided a national stage for promoting new Australian acts to young people. Sunday evenings became primetime viewing for teenagers wanting to know what was happening in Australian music. The show made stars of acts such as Skyhooks, Sherbet and John Paul Young. The show went to air from 1974 until 1987 and became the most popular music program in Australian television history.

In 1975, the Whitlam Government granted the ABC the first new radio licence in an Australian capital city since 1932. The ABC used the licence to set up Australia's first non-commercial rock radio station – known as Double J. Double J started broadcasting in January 1975. Committed to alternative music and challenging the commercial monopoly on rock, Double J started broadcasting with Skyhooks' *You Just Like Me 'Cos I'm Good in Bed*, which had been banned by commercial radio.

Double J changed its name to Triple J in 1980 when the FM band was opened for radio broadcasting. The dream of a national youth radio network was finally realised in 1989, when Triple J became a national network. Since its first broadcast, it has played a



**Source 4** Countdown provided a national stage for promoting new Australian acts to young people.



**Source 5** Radio presenters Adam Spencer and Helen Razer in the Triple J studio in Ultimo, 1998 – both Spencer and Razer moved from Triple J to careers in more mainstream media and Triple J continues to give new young radio presenters an opportunity.

crucial role in championing Australian music, often playing music that commercial radio programmers deemed unsuitable. The annual Triple J Hottest 100 has become a staple of Australian music. It gives Australian bands the opportunity to compete with international artists. The 2010 Hottest 100, for example, was topped by Australian acts Angus and Julia Stone and Little Red and the number one track in 2011 was by Gotye. Perhaps the greatest indicator of Triple J's contribution to the Australian music industry is its support for emerging independent Australian bands. Sydney band The Jezabels reached number 16 with *Mace Spray* and number 49 with *Easy to Love* in the 2010 Hottest 100. This was despite being a totally independent band without the backing of a major label. Providing opportunities for bands such as The Jezabels and thousands of others over the years indicates why the government's support for a youth radio network was such a critical decision in the development of the Australian music industry.

By harnessing new technological developments such as colour television (*Countdown*) and FM broadcasting (Triple J), Australian music was able to enter an era of genuine international acceptance.

## Australian music goes global

From Johnny O'Keefe's attempt to get into the American market in 1959 to The Jezabels' independent assault on Europe and North America in 2011, Australian acts have always attempted to test themselves against the rest of the world. The 1980s saw an explosion of Australian acts that had a genuine global impact on the music scene. From the early 1980s, bands such as Brisbane's The Go-Betweens developed a cult following across Europe and North America. Following their path were bands such as INXS, Midnight Oil, AC/DC, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Jet, The Vines and Savage Garden who have achieved global recognition representing a diversity of sounds. Australian artists such as Gotye and Sia have achieved international fame and won a host of awards – an indication of the wider success and acceptance of Australian music on the world stage.

Australian popular music is critical for Australia's cultural life. It allows for a range of Australians to express views and opinions, and establishes an understanding of modern Australia on a global scale. It has also grown from a cultural form that was despised by an older generation into a major contributor to the Australian economy. It was estimated that music-related activities added \$1.55 billion value to the Australian economy in 1984–85, and \$6.82 billion in 2005–06.



**Source 6** Australian singer and songwriter Sia Furler began her career in Adelaide in the 1990s. Today, she is one of the most internationally recognised recording artists in the world. In 2014, her single 'Chandelier' charted in the top 5 in more than 20 countries around the world and the video of the song has been viewed more than 1.2 billion times on YouTube.

That is an enormous change from the days when Vic Sabrino recorded a cover of *Rock Around the Clock*.

The next step in securing the future of rock music as an Australian popular culture came on 5 October 2011, when Triple J launched Triple J Unearthed, a new station devoted entirely to promoting the music of unsigned Australian bands. The digital and online station was set up to help the next generation of musicians prepare to follow in the footsteps of artists ranging from Johnny O'Keefe to The Jezabels.

## Check your learning 13.8

### Remember and understand

- 1 When was surf music popular in Australia?
- 2 What impact did The Beatles' tour of Australia have on the local music industry?
- 3 How did the Whitlam Government help the Australian music industry?
- 4 Name at least three Australian acts that have achieved musical success overseas.

### Apply and analyse

- 5 How do artists like Gotye and The Jezabels highlight the importance of the Triple J to Australian music scene?

### Evaluate and create

- 6 Create a digital museum exhibition that highlights the changing nature of the Australian music industry since World War II.

## 13.9 Changes in the film industry

By the 1950s most Australian cities and suburbs had access to a picture theatre. Going to the 'flicks' was a popular pastime for people of all ages and generations. Signs of change were apparent in 1954 when the first drive-in cinema opened in Melbourne. This reflected the emergence of the private car as the main means of transport, as suburbs expanded in the post-war baby boom era. The most significant change for the Australian film industry at this stage was the emergence of television from 1956. With families able to stay at home to watch entertainment, many suburban theatres had closed by the end of the decade.

Liberal Prime Minister John Gorton was responsible for saving the Australian film industry. His introduction of a Film Development Corporation and National Film and Television Training School encouraged a new wave of film makers. The Whitlam Government built on Gorton's work with the Australian Film Commission, and these two prime ministers ensured that the 1970s would be a boom period of Australian film.

The 1970s generation of Australian film makers and actors repaid the government's investment in culture many times over by making a major impact on the international film industry. Directors such as Peter Weir, Gillian Armstrong and Bruce Beresford, and actors

such as Mel Gibson, Judy Davis, David Gulpilil and Jack Thompson have gone on to win awards and attain international success.

### The "Crocodile" Dundee phenomenon

On 30 April 1986, the film "Crocodile" Dundee premiered in Australia. It was produced on a budget of about \$10 million and starred the Australian comic actor Paul Hogan, who had risen to prominence after winning on *New Faces* – a popular talent contest broadcast on television. Two versions of "Crocodile" Dundee were released at the time – an Australian version and an international version that replaced Australian slang with more easily understood words.

Hogan's Mick Dundee became a huge hit in Australia with his 'blokey' humour and 'no worries' attitude. The international appeal of such an obviously Australian character was put to the test when "Crocodile" Dundee was released in the USA on 26 September 1986. It proved a sensation, eventually becoming the second highest grossing film of the year in the United States, taking more than \$174 million at the box office. Hogan also won a Golden Globe award for his performance,

and the film was shown worldwide, from Argentina to Zimbabwe.

It placed Australian film firmly on the world stage, and was arguably the greatest boost to the Australian tourist industry ever. Hogan became the face of Australian tourism with his 'put another shrimp on the barbie' campaign. "Crocodile" Dundee remained the highest grossing Australian film of all time until 2015, when it was eclipsed by *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Even though the two sequels, "Crocodile" Dundee II and "Crocodile" Dundee in Los Angeles, failed to achieve anything like the success of the original film, it remains the most popular Australian film series of all time in terms of international success.

### Towards a global film industry

The American film industry – often referred to simply as 'Hollywood' after the Los Angeles suburb where their modern film industry started – is the most dominant force in world film. Its sheer financial power and deals with distributors mean that independent theatre owners in Australia are often disadvantaged financially if they do not show major Hollywood films. The power exerted by Hollywood has meant that government support and financial assistance has become essential for the Australian film industry to survive.

The success of small-scale films such as *Animal Kingdom* prove that this ongoing support for the Australian film industry is not wasted. *Animal Kingdom* won the 2010 AFI award for best film, and saw Jacki Weaver receive an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actress. Government support has allowed Australia to retain a viable and relevant film industry, essential for genuine cultural expression in the 21st century.

An alternative to Hollywood domination has emerged in the 21st century with the development of Australian links with India's thriving Bollywood film industry. The term Bollywood is a combination of two words: **Bombay** (the city at the heart of the Indian Hindi film industry – now known as Mumbai) and **Hollywood** (a reference to the similarities between the industries in India and the USA). Indian film producers have prepared a handbook for working with Australian film producers and media, and many Bollywood films have started using Australia as an exotic backdrop during filming. By late 2006, major Indian films such as *Love Story 2050*, *Heyy Babyy* and *Chak De! India* were being filmed in Australia, and crews were routinely moving between Australia and India.

The development of major film production studios in Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland has meant that



**Source 2** A still from Bollywood movie *Love Story 2050*, shot in Australia in 2008

Australian studios have developed a high skill level, and major blockbusters such as *The Matrix* series and *Star Wars* episodes 2 and 3 have been made in Australian studios.

Australia's increasing cultural links with Asia have also seen *anime* (Japanese animated cartoons) emerge as an important element of the film scene. The Japanese *anime* film *Akira* (1988), became a cult hit in Australia, and was the predecessor of an art form that has gained increasing attraction in popular culture through the rise of video and computer games.



**Source 1** Paul Hogan as Mick Dundee in "Crocodile" Dundee, 1986

### Check your learning 13.9

Remember and understand

- 1 What caused the slump in the Australian film industry from the 1950s?
- 2 What roles did John Gorton and Gough Whitlam play in changing the Australian film industry?
- 3 What is Australia's most successful film? How successful was it?
- 4 Why has government support been so important for Australian film makers?

Apply and analyse

- 5 What evidence is there from the film industry that Australia is moving closer to Asia?
- 6 How important is film in promoting Australia as a tourist destination? What films would you show overseas to promote Australia?

# 13.10 Changes in the television industry

The arrival of television in Australia in 1956 was a major catalyst for change. It ensured easy access to American popular culture, and the Menzies Government's decision not to apply any local content requirements meant that early television was dominated by American shows. Australian children grew up with the *Mickey Mouse Club* and *The Wonderful World of Disney*, while cowboys such as Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy meant Australians became more familiar with the Wild West than with the outback. Crime-based shows such as *Perry Mason* and *Dragnet* were popular adult fare, and situation comedies (**sitcoms**) such as *Father Knows Best* and *I Love Lucy* also attracted large audiences.

## Television expands

The early 1960s saw the expansion of television into more markets with the introduction of regional stations in places such as Gippsland in Victoria in 1961, and Newcastle in New South Wales the following year. The ABC also continued to expand nationally, and in 1964 a new commercial station 0 (Melbourne) and 10 (Sydney) commenced broadcasting. The introduction of a coaxial cable between Sydney and Melbourne paved the way for closer networking between stations in the two major Australian markets. This allowed for such innovations as a split screen that would allow Graham Kennedy in Melbourne and Don Lane in Sydney to appear simultaneously on the Nine network's *In Melbourne Tonight* (see Source 2).

The other major change to television in the 1960s was the development of satellite broadcasts. Perhaps more than any other technological development, this helped bring the world to Australia. In 1964, *Everybody's Magazine* had boldly predicted that Australians would be able to watch the 2000 Ashes series live on television from England. By 1967, they were watching The Beatles recording *All You Need is Love* live from Abbey Road studios as part of the historic *Our World* broadcast. Broadcast to the largest worldwide audience of the time (400 million) on 25 June, it linked the world by satellite, with contributing countries showing the world an aspect of life in their country. While Britain gave



**Source 1** A still from *Father Knows Best*, a 1950s US television program shown in Australia

The Beatles, and Italy had Franco Zeffirelli directing his groundbreaking film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, Australia's contribution was a shot of trams leaving their Melbourne depot in the pre-dawn.

## Television and sport join forces

The 1967 Sydney Rugby League Grand Final between South Sydney and Canterbury Bankstown was the first sporting event to be broadcast live in Australia. Channel Nine paid \$5000 for the rights to a game that was won by Bobby McCarthy's famous intercept try. This telecast proved that sport was the perfect product for television.

By the 1970s, major sports events were regularly televised. The importance of the link between television and sport was shown in 1977 when Kerry Packer



**Source 2** Graham Kennedy hosting the television show *In Melbourne Tonight*, 1973

launched a raid on the sport of cricket, creating a private World Series competition in a successful bid to force the Australian Cricket Board to allow him the right to broadcast test matches. The 1976 Olympic Games from Montreal had its opening and closing ceremonies broadcast live, and by the 1984 Los Angeles Games, a wide range of popular events were being broadcast live into Australian homes. The 1977 Australian Rules grand final between Collingwood and North Melbourne was the first shown live in Melbourne. The exciting draw showed that all football codes could be major drawcards in attracting viewers.

## Multicultural programming

The composition of the Australian population had changed significantly since World War II, and the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) in Melbourne and Sydney in 1980 under the Fraser Government was the first real mainstream media recognition of this. Broadcasting in a wide range of languages, it played a crucial role in helping immigrants adjust to Australian life. By the mid-1980s, SBS had expanded throughout most of the country.

Children growing up in 1960s Australia had been watching **multicultural** television without the term ever being used. Channel Nine had started showing a Japanese series called *The Samurai* in 1964 to cash in on the interest generated by the forthcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo. They invited viewers to write in if they



**Source 3** The late Kerry Packer

wished to see more episodes and were deluged with positive replies. *The Samurai* became a massive hit in Australia.

The sight of children jumping from trees while flinging imaginary star knives became commonplace, as Australian viewers were introduced to the intricacies of medieval Japanese society. The success of *The Samurai* revealed the generation gap as vividly as had rock music. For the older people in Australian society, World War II had finished fewer than 20 years earlier, and inviting Japanese culture onto Australian television was unimaginable. For children brought up in the **Cold War**, the communist Russians were a more logical enemy than the Japanese; and Shintaro, hero of *The Samurai*, became a major popular culture figure in Australia.

Japanese *anime* was also introduced to Australian television viewers in the 1960s. *Astro Boy* was a mid-1960s favourite, and the Japanese-style drawing marked it as significantly different from the traditional American cartoons that were the staple of most afternoon television (see Source 4). Its futuristic plot where robots and humans coexist peacefully had resonance with the post-Cuba Cold War-influenced world Australian children were growing up in. The cooperation theme was echoed in the other Japanese cartoon series to be a 1960s hit in Australia, *The Adventures of Kimba the White Lion*. By the time *Sailor Moon* arrived on Australian television screens in the 1990s, Australian viewers had long accepted *anime* as a form of television popular culture.



**Source 4** A scene from *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atomu* or 'Iron Arm Atom'), 1963

## Pay TV

The early 1990s saw two major changes to the Australian television landscape. A policy introduced by the Hawke Government meant that regional areas suddenly had access to three commercial channels rather than one. This meant that for the first time regional Australia was able to view virtually the same programs as people living in major cities.

The other change was the introduction of subscription (pay) television. The idea of paying for extra services was a major change to the way Australians viewed television. Paying for something that had always been free (except for television licenses, which had been removed in 1974 by the Whitlam Government), went against the general Australian understanding of the medium.

The first pay TV provider was Galaxy, which commenced operation in 1995. Foxtel, Optus and Austar were introduced to the market in 1995, and by 1998 Foxtel had absorbed Galaxy. The first major impact of pay TV was the Super League rugby league war. Rugby league had proved a popular sport on television, and Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd realised it would be a key to their investment in Foxtel being profitable. In an attempt to secure exclusive broadcast rights, News Ltd secretly signed clubs and players to create a breakaway competition. Court action during 1995 and 1996 failed to resolve the dispute, and two competitions existed in 1997. The warring parties came together in 1998, with News Ltd gaining a 50 per cent partnership in the running of rugby league as well as obtaining broadcast rights for most games for their Foxtel network.

Sport has been the main driver in encouraging people to sign up for pay TV, but numbers have stabilised. By the end of 2010, Foxtel had 1.63 million subscribers. The desire of pay TV companies to monopolise sports broadcasting to drive up the purchase of subscriptions has led to heated debate over which sporting events should be guaranteed access to free-to-air television.

## Online streaming TV and movie services

In 2015, a number of new video-on-demand services launched in Australia – once again changing the media landscape. Providers such as Netflix, Quickflix, Stan, YouTube Red, and Foxtel Play offer a different kind of pay TV experience to more established pay TV models. These services enable viewers to stream video content via TV and a range of other devices (like tablets and mobile phone) and access a large bank of content for a single monthly fee. Many of these services also do not require customers to sign up for a minimum contract period.

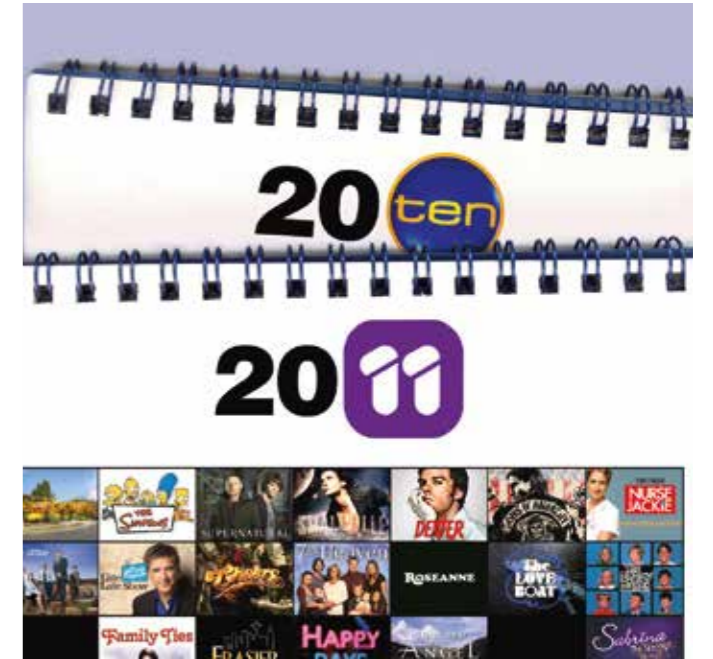
The introduction of streaming TV and movie services in Australia has been extremely popular and is beginning to challenge existing pay TV services. For example, between April and December 2015, 2.7 million Australians had signed up to Netflix – a greater number of subscribers than established services like Foxtel had managed to build up over more than 15 years. Demand and competition in this area is predicted to grow rapidly, with many similar services set to launch over the coming years.



**Source 5** Sport has been the main driver in encouraging people to sign up for pay TV

## The free-to-air TV revolution

The Australian Government committed the country to a digital-only television platform by mid-2010. This was a new means of broadcasting which was slowly implemented across the country from 1 January, 2001. Digital broadcasting meant higher quality of image and sound, as well as additional channels. Free-to-air stations were given the opportunity to broadcast smaller niche channels, and each commercial network has developed a number of spinoff channels. The Ten network for example, launched One, (a lifestyle



**Source 6** In Australia there are five major networks that broadcast digital television.

channel), Eleven (a comedy channel) and TVSN (a shopping channel). At the same time, the Seven network launched 7mate (aimed at males aged from 16 to 49), as well as 7TWO and 7flix (a movie channel). The ABC launched a 24-hour news channel, and ACD Kids (a channel aimed purely at children).

The impact of the variety of free-to-air options on pay TV is one of the big questions facing Australian television.

## Check your learning 13.10

### Remember and understand

- 1 Why was the development of communication satellites so important for Australian television?
- 2 What was the first sporting event broadcast live in Australia?
- 3 What was the 1960s television show that looked at Japanese medieval history?
- 4 Name the two sports that had major splits over the purchase of television rights.

### Apply and analyse

- 5 Why is sport so important to Australian television? What examples could you use to prove this?
- 6 Explain why 1960s Australian children's television indicates that there was a generation gap in Australian society.

### Evaluate and create

- 7 Which events do you think should be guaranteed free-to-air television broadcasting?



## 13B rich task

## Singles charts

Singles charts have been around for almost as long as there has been recorded music. Rock'n'roll record charts are a valuable primary source for historians. They can give a valuable insight into what was popular at a particular time, the origin of popular culture influences, and names of significant individuals and groups that had an impact in a specific time and place. Like all sources, they then have to be interpreted.

In 1966 the Melbourne pop music newspaper, *Go-Set*, introduced the first national Top 40 song charts in Australia. By doing so, *Go-Set* helped young people stay entertained and informed about the latest news in the pop culture scene.

The *Go-Set* charts were succeeded in 1974 by the Kent Music Report, which published national top 100 charts. In 1988 these charts were taken on by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA), which continues to publish today.

By using sales data from radio stations and retail stores, singles charts are an accurate way of keeping track of the most popular music from a particular time in history. However, songs that were extremely popular in their time do not always seem so significant years later.

In 1980, Australian singer Joe Dolce's single, *Shaddap You Face*, went to Number 1 on the Australian pop charts. It eventually sold more than 350 000 copies Australia-wide and was the most successful Australian-produced single for 33 years. Despite this, many people born in the years since *Shaddap You Face* was released have never heard it played.

By contrast, rock band Cold Chisel's song, *Khe Sanh*, peaked at 41 on the national charts when it was released in 1978. In the decades since, *Khe Sanh*'s significance as a song about a Vietnam War veteran trying to cope with Australian life has been increasingly recognised. In 2001 the Australian Performing Rights Association ranked *Khe Sanh* eighth in its Top 10 Australian Songs of All Time. It is commonly heard in music venues and on the radio.



Top 20	
1	Billy Don't Be A Hero – Paper Lace (UK)
2	Evie – Stevie Wright (AUS)
3	Would You Lay With Me In A Field of Stone? – Judy Stone (AUS)
4	The Streak – Ray Stevens (USA)
5	The Loco-motion – Grand Funk (USA)
6	The Entertainer – Marvin Hamlisch (USA)
7	Slipstream – Sherbet (AUS)
8	My Girl Bill – Jim Stafford (USA)/Cash Backman (AUS)
9	Sugar Baby Love – The Rubettes (UK)
10	Devil Gate Drive – Suzie Quatro (USA)
11	Waterloo – Abba (Sweden)
12	You Make Me Feel Brand New – The Stylistics (USA)
13	Candle In the Wind/Benny and the Jets – Elton John (UK)
14	Emma – Hot Chocolate (UK)
15	Sundown – Gordon Lightfoot (Canada)
16	Hooked on a Feeling – Blue Swede (Sweden)
17	Can't Stop Myself From Loving You – William Shakespeare (AUS)
18	I Get A Little Sentimental Over You – The New Seekers (UK)
19	I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen – Lieutenant Pigeon (UK)
20	Long Live Love – Olivia Newton-John (AUS)

Source 1 *Go-Set* Australian Top 20, 17 August 1974

1	This Is What You Came For—Calvin Harris Feat. Rihanna	(USA)
2	One Dance—Drake Feat. Wizkid & Kyla	(USA)
3	Can't Stop The Feeling!—Justin Timberlake	(USA)
4	Just Like Fire—P!nk	(USA)
5	Me Too—Meghan Trainor	(USA)
6	Say It—Flume Feat. Tove Lo	(AUS)
7	Don't Let Me Down—The Chainsmokers Feat. Daya	(USA)
8	Cake By The Ocean—DNCE	(USA)
9	Panda—Designer	(USA)
10	No Money—Galantis	(SWE)
11	Too Good—Drake Feat. Rihanna	(USA)
12	I Hate U, I Love U—Gnash Feat. Olivia O'Brien	(USA)
13	Home—Topic Feat. Nico Santos	(GER)
14	Work From Home—Fifth Harmony Feat. Ty Dolla \$ign	(USA)
15	I Took A Pill In Ibiza—Mike Posner	(USA)
16	Into You—Ariana Grande	(USA)
17	Sex—Cheat Codes Feat. Kris Kross Amsterdam	(USA)
18	Faded—Alan Walker	(UK)
19	Be The One—Dua Lipa	(UK)
20	Secret Love Song—Little Mix Feat. Jason Derulo	(UK)

Source 2 ARIA Australian Top 20, June 2014



Source 3 Joe Dolce's 1980 single, *Shaddap You Face* went to number 1 on the Australian pop charts.

## skilldrill: continuity and change

## Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past

Primary and secondary sources reflect and represent many different perspectives, points of view, attitudes and values. People who create sources are influenced by their gender, age, family and cultural background, education, religion, values and political beliefs, their life experiences and the time in which they live. It is the historian's job to make sure that they consider a range of perspectives in their investigations, allowing more voices to be heard and a more complete picture to be formed. Identifying and analysing the perspectives of different people is a very important historical skill. To do this, you need to understand the social, cultural and emotional contexts and factors that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.

Follow these steps when applying this skill:

- Step 1** Identify the historical issue around which there may be different opinions or interpretations.
- Step 2** List the various groups and people who may have been involved in or affected by this issue.
- Step 3** Identify their role or position in society.
- Step 4** Locate some primary sources that provide evidence about their point of view or opinion on the issue.

**Step 5** Analyse each source, using the following questions as a guide:

- Why was the source written or produced?
- Who was the intended audience of the source? Was it meant for one person's eyes, or for the public? How does that affect the source?
- What was the author's message or argument? What were they trying to get across? Is the message explicit (obvious), or are there implicit (subtle) messages as well? What can the author's choice of words tell you? What about the silences – what does the author choose *not* to talk about?
- How does the author try to get the message across? For example, do they give a detached, balanced account, or is it biased for or against the issue?
- Compared to what we face today, what relevant circumstances and experiences were different for the author of the source in the past? (Some examples might include religion, economy, family life, technology etc.) How do you think these factors and experiences influenced their thoughts and actions?

Apply the skill

- In one paragraph, explain why the Top 20 charts are primary sources.
- Select and listen to three songs from each of the two Top 20 charts provided in Sources 1 and 2. In one or two paragraphs for each question, use the steps shown above to answer the following:
  - How can music charts help us to learn more about the perspectives of people from the past?
  - What limitations do music charts present to anyone seeking to make conclusions about cultural perspectives?

## Extend your understanding

Refer once again to the two Top 20 charts provided in Sources 1 and 2 and use the information you have learned in this chapter to complete the following:

- Identify the elements of continuity and the elements of cultural change that have occurred between the two charts.
- Explain how a historian investigating the impact of American and British popular culture on Australia could use these sources.

# 13.11 Australian music goes global

Rock'n'roll established itself as a significant part of Australian popular culture by the late 1950s. Rock'n'roll quickly became associated with teenagers, and the challenge would be whether it could change and adapt as these teenagers grew older.

The first wave of Australian rock'n'rollers, who followed Johnny O'Keefe's example in the 1957–63 period, stayed in Australia. Rock'n'roll was still considered a novelty, and many musicians were amazed they could get paid for having such fun. The Beatles and other bands made famous during the beat boom of the 1960s made rock'n'roll an international business and broke the American monopoly on originality. The explosion of Australian acts after The Beatles' tour of Australia in 1964 developed a uniquely Australian take on rock'n'roll.



**Source 1** Melbourne singer-songwriter Courtney Barnett – artists such as Barnett are taking Australian popular music to the world

## Widespread success

The significant contribution that Australian music has made to international popular culture could not always be measured in record sales. Brisbane band The Go-Betweens became the favourite band of music lovers across three continents without ever having a major hit record. Bands such as Men at Work, INXS and Midnight Oil certainly sold more records internationally, but The Go-Betweens, whose music was described as 'striped sunlight sound', took Brisbane to the world.

Despite this, the desire to achieve overseas success has continued to drive Australian acts to this day.

This type of success can be measured in record sales, as was the case with Savage Garden, who dominated

### keyconcept: significance



**Source 2** Australian rock band The Easybeats photographed on 17 November 1966

## The Easybeats

The Easybeats are regarded by many as the greatest Australian rock'n'roll band of the 1960s. The band formed at Villawood Migrant Hostel in Sydney. After becoming the biggest band in Australia in 1965, they travelled to England in search of international success. They recorded their song *Friday on My Mind* in London in 1966. Not only did the song reach the Top 10 in England and Top 20 in the USA, but it made The Easybeats major European stars. The song is still played regularly on many classic hits radio stations across America, and was a feature of the 2009 British film, *The Boat that Rocked* about a pirate radio station in the 1960s. Arguably the greatest recognition of the song's impact on a global stage was a tribute found on Bruce Springsteen's 1980 album *The River*. At the end of the second verse of the popular song *Out in the Street*, Springsteen sings, 'I've already got Friday on my mind'. For an artist with Springsteen's deep understanding of rock'n'roll history, this showed just what a major contribution The Easybeats made to international popular culture.

For more information on the key concept of significance refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

late 1990s charts in the USA and Britain. A sell-out concert at a key venue is another measure of cultural achievement. INXS at Wembley Stadium in London in 1991 and the John Butler Trio in 2010 at Red Rocks in Colorado are two examples. It has been a continuity in Australian cultural life that overseas success is widely regarded as the measure of 'making it'. A study of the tour itinerary of Melbourne singer-songwriter Courtney Barnett to launch her debut album in 2015 reveals how strongly that desire still burns. Between March and July 2015 she toured extensively in the UK, Europe and North America and well as in Australia.

Australian music continues to make a significant international contribution to the popular culture of rock'n'roll.



**Source 3** Daniel Jones and Darren Hayes of Savage Garden perform on stage at the Melbourne Glasshouse in 1998

### Check your learning 13.11

#### Remember and understand

- 1 What evidence is there that Australian musicians achieved international success in the 1960s?
- 2 Which Bruce Springsteen song is linked to The Easybeats' *Friday on My Mind*?
- 3 In what ways can international success for Australian musicians be measured?

#### Evaluate and create

- 4 Research the career of *one* of the following: The Easybeats, The Twilights or Normie Rowe. How important do you think your chosen subject is in Australian cultural history?
- 5 With a partner, debate the suggestion that music is Australia's most significant cultural export since World War II.

# 13.12 Significant individuals: The Go-Betweens

The Go-Betweens' story started in Brisbane when university students Robert Forster and Grant McLennan met in 1977. A shared interest in popular culture, particularly American music and film, led to the formation of a band in 1978. Brisbane at this time was quite conservative. The atmosphere contributed to the band's decision to move overseas.

## Political climate in Brisbane

The Queensland Government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen (Premier from 1968 to 1987) was well-known for suppressing opposition political activity. As Premier, Bjelke-Petersen extended the rights of police to deal with any dissent. Youth and Indigenous Australians were specific targets, and creative artists such as The Go-Betweens found it easier and safer to leave Brisbane.



**Source 2**  
The Go-Between's second single, *People Say*, released in 1979

(A number of police and government ministers were later found to be corrupt in the Fitzgerald Inquiry.)

## Early successes

In 1980, The Go-Betweens were joined by Lindy Morrison on drums, Robert Vickers on bass guitar and Amanda Brown on oboe, violin and guitar. The group



**Source 1** The Go-Betweens in 1988 – from left to right Amanda Brown, John Wilsteed, Grant McLennan, Robert Forster and Lindy Morrison

initially moved to Melbourne, and then England, where their second album, *Before Hollywood*, was recorded in 1983. A series of critically acclaimed albums followed in the 1980s. Based in London for most of the decade, the band toured constantly, expanding their base of supporters from Europe to include North America. The final album of the original band was *16 Lovers Lane*, released in 1988, which saw their greatest commercial success with the single *Streets of Your Town*.

The group disbanded in 1989, but Forster and McLennan continued to occasionally perform together at a variety of venues around the world. A new line-up of The Go-Betweens emerged in 2000, and a further three albums were released. *Oceans Apart* finally won mainstream recognition with an ARIA award in 2005. The band formally disbanded after Grant McLennan died in 2006 in Brisbane.

## Impact of The Go-Betweens

In terms of record sales, The Go-Betweens had minimal impact on world popular culture. Yet there were messages from 18 different countries on the band's website after the death of McLennan. That alone shows the impact they had on the lives of individuals on a global scale.

To understand the true impact of The Go-Betweens, however, it is important to consider their influence on artists. Obvious tributes included a Swedish rock band called Kent playing *Quiet Heart* as a tribute to McLennan at a Swedish festival, the Splendour in the Grass Festival naming one of its performance sites the GW McLennan tent, and a new bridge opened in 2010 across the Brisbane River being named the Go-Between Bridge after a public competition.

All these examples indicate a band that had a major effect. However, Robert Christgau's proclamation in New York's influential *Village Voice* that 'Robert Forster and Grant McLennan are the greatest song writing partnership working today' indicated their ongoing contribution at the highest level. Christgau is widely regarded as an important rock critic, and no Australian musical act had ever received such extravagant praise in such an important publication. Even the American television show *24* included a company called McLennan-Forster as a tribute to the band.

When U2 started the final leg of their *Vertigo* tour in Brisbane in 2006, they dedicated the show to Grant McLennan. Bono sang *Streets of Your Town* twice during the band's concert, moving smoothly into the song during both *Elevation* and *Where the Streets Have*

*No Name*. U2 have also named The Go-Betweens' 1982 song *Cattle and Cane* on their list of the greatest rock'n'roll songs of all time.

As a popular culture, rock'n'roll has to change and evolve to survive. U2 have been able to do that, and the contribution of bands such as The Go-Betweens to inspire U2 is part of the global evolution of rock'n'roll as a popular culture.



**Source 3** Surviving members of The Go-Betweens with Brisbane Mayor Campbell Newman (second from left) in 2010 walking across the Go-Between Bridge in inner-city Brisbane, named in their honour

## Check your learning 13.12

Remember and understand

- 1 What did Robert Forster and Grant McLennan have in common?
- 2 What made The Go-Betweens leave Brisbane?
- 3 With which song did they have the greatest success?
- 4 Explain why U2 dedicated their 2006 show in Brisbane to Grant McLennan.

Apply and analyse

- 5 What evidence is there to support the view that The Go-Betweens had a major impact on popular culture on an international level?

Evaluate and create

- 6 What makes The Go-Betweens significant?

## 13.13 Australian film goes global

Australian film since the new wave of the 1970s has helped establish a vision of Australia for many people overseas. The use of “*Crocodile Dundee*” star Paul Hogan in tourism ads ensured the connection between film and a national image.

As discussed, in 1986 “*Crocodile Dundee*” became the highest grossing Australian film of all time because of its international success. Its celebration of Australia as a laid-back culture with a vast outback full of strange wildlife and interesting characters became a highly marketable vision of Australia. This was followed up with 1994’s *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (see Source 1). Although also bringing Australia’s outback scenery onto the screen, the film has been both praised and condemned for its

presentation of a variety of sexual preferences and approaches. Its positive depiction of cross-dressing entertainers certainly helped to make it a significant film, and contributed to its international success.

The film gave rise to a musical version, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* in 2006. This was another example of popular culture changing and evolving over time, and marked a further Australian contribution to international popular culture. The show, based on the film, has mounted successful productions in London, Toronto and New York, with plans for a further American and an Italian tour. The film won an Academy Award for costume design, and the stage versions won a further award on New York’s Broadway in 2011.



### Check your learning 13.13

Remember and understand

- 1 What image of Australia have the films mentioned here portrayed?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Argue whether you think the film *Gallipoli* did or did not change attitudes to the Gallipoli campaign.

Evaluate and create

- 3 Is historical accuracy important for a film such as *Gallipoli*?
- 4 Develop an advertising campaign to attract visitors to Australia using images from *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

**Source 1** A still from *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, 1994, starring Hugo Weaving, Terence Stamp and Guy Pearce

### keyconcept: contestability

#### *Gallipoli* (1981)

The 1981 film *Gallipoli* was a major example of the revival of the Australian film industry. Directed by Peter Weir, and starring Mark Lee and Mel Gibson, it not only dramatised the role of Australian troops at Gallipoli, but also linked the Australian soldiers to Australian cultural values such as mateship, larrikinism and a disdain of authority.

The film focused on Western Australian members of the Australian Light Horse enlisting, training in Egypt and finally participating in World War I. The film shows the attempt to capture The Nek on the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Turks. Written by playwright David Williamson, it placed the blame for the needless slaughter of Australian troops firmly on the shoulders of the British leadership. Criticisms of the factual content of the film have been made. These include: The Nek was a diversion for New Zealand troops, not the British; other groups such as the Royal Welsh Fusiliers also suffered losses trying to support the Australians at The Nek; the failure to call off the attack was an Australian, not a British decision.

The film has proved just how influential popular culture can be. Historical inaccuracies have been shrugged off, and it has become a staple of high school history lessons since its release. It has contributed to the elevation of Gallipoli to almost mythical status in Australian history. Since 1981, successive curriculums have focused on Gallipoli as the most significant campaign of World War I for Australia. This is despite its unsuccessful outcome and the far greater losses and higher stakes on the Western Front in France.

By linking the Gallipoli campaign so closely to Australian identity and values such as ‘mateship’, the film also fostered the politicisation of the Gallipoli campaign. Before 1981, it was an important part of Australia’s historical story, but was not politicised or mythologised. In 1990, Prime Minister Bob Hawke travelled to Gallipoli for a Dawn Service with veterans and called the site ‘a part of Australia’. John Howard visited there in 2000 and



**Source 2** A still from *Gallipoli*, 1981, starring Mel Gibson

2005, although his 2005 visit attracted criticism because of his decision to attend a barbecue with Australian soldiers on the beach rather than attend the New Zealand service. The downplaying of the New Zealand contribution to the Anzac legend and the criticism of British leaders have been two aspects of the politicisation of the Gallipoli campaign since the release of the film in 1981. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating ignited further controversy in 2008 when he said, ‘the truth is that Gallipoli was shocking for us. Dragged into service by the imperial government in an ill-conceived and poorly executed campaign, we were cut to ribbons and dispatched – and none of it in the defence of Australia’. Keating was roundly condemned for expressing a sentiment that was common in the 1970s.

Perhaps the best evidence of the lasting impact of the film is that it was denied government funding because it was seen as ‘uncommercial’. A decade later the Australian government started the process of linking Gallipoli, Anzac Day and Australian identity tightly together with the Dawn Service.

For more information on the key concept of contestability refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.

# 13.14 Australian television goes global

Australian television suffered initially because of the Menzies Government's decision to not require a **quota** of locally produced shows when television was launched in 1956. As a result, Australian television was filled by American, and to a lesser extent, British popular culture. Despite occasional hit shows, and moments of real originality, such as *The Mavis Bramston Show*, it is difficult to talk about an Australian industry with the potential to contribute globally until the 1980s.

## Skippy the Bush Kangaroo

Australians had finally accepted Australian stories on television with the success of *Bellbird* from 1967, and the great soapie boom of the 1970s with *Number 96*, *The Box*, *The Sullivans* and *The Restless Years*. *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*, which had been made in Sydney between 1966 and 1968, went international. The stories of the adventures of an incredibly perceptive kangaroo that guided his human friends to safety and captured



**Source 1** Actor Garry Pankhurst as Sonny Hammond with Skippy in a scene from the television show *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*

baddies with ease presented a distinctly Australian vision to the world.

*Skippy's* international success was unique at the time. It was sold to the United States and Canada, was translated into Spanish and sold throughout Latin America, where it gave many people their only knowledge of Australia. It was sold in countries as culturally diverse as Spain and Iran. The one country *Skippy* could not get into was Sweden, where authorities refused to show it because they were afraid it would give children false ideas about the capabilities of animals.

## From Prisoner to Wilfred

While Australian music and film had made inroads into the American market, Australian television had traditionally been more closely linked to Britain. Culturally the links to Britain had always been strong, and a shared sense of humour often meant that British and Australian shows were incomprehensible to American audiences.

The premiere of *Prisoner* in 1979 was the start of Australia producing shows that had some potential to influence the global marketplace. *Prisoner* ran from 1979 to 1986 in Australia, but developed strong audiences in Britain and Sweden particularly. By being set in a women's prison it often dealt with controversial social topics such as sexuality, drugs and domestic violence. Despite its often grim content, *Prisoner* generated at least two different stage productions in Britain, and provided employment for many of its actors on the British theatre circuit.

The success of *Prisoner* paved the way for the *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* phenomenon that began in the 1980s. The attractiveness of the Australian lifestyle depicted in these two shows helped boost their popularity in the gloomier climates of northern Europe.

At the start of the 21st century, the hit comedy *Kath and Kim* was remade for American audiences. The show's success in European markets had alerted the Americans to its potential, but they felt the Australian slang and humour would make it incomprehensible in the United States. The American version lasted only a

season, and was a failure both in the USA and when shown on Australian television.

A more recent Australian export to the United States is *Wilfred* (see Source 2). An American version of the SBS comedy series premiered on American television in June 2011. Unusually, its Australian creator, Jason Gann, also starred in the American version, which debuted to strong ratings on the cable channel FX. *Wilfred* had a successful first season in the USA, exporting Australian humour to the most important television market in the world.



**Source 2** A still from the television program *Wilfred*

## keyconcept: significance

### Chris Lilley

Chris Lilley started parodying Australian life in 2005 when *We Can Be Heroes* appeared on Australian television. It was followed in 2007 with *Summer Heights High*. Both shows created controversial but memorable characters that reflected aspects of the Australian character. Both shows were also sold to overseas markets, including the USA and UK, and *Summer Heights High* reached markets as far afield as Togo and Kenya.



**Source 3** Actor comedian Chris Lilley as character Ja'mie King from the television program *We Can Be Heroes*

The internationally financed third program *Angry Boys* premiered in Australia in 2011. The Sims twins from *We Can Be Heroes* returned along with new characters such as their Gran, a warden in a young men's correctional institution. Never one to shy away from controversy, Lilley tackled race, localism, sexuality, exploitation and juvenile incarceration in the 12-part series. Even the size of the viewing audience was controversial, with the ABC arguing that new technologies such as iView and ABC2 meant that repeat showings should be included in ratings figures.

The sense of anticipation for the show was highlighted by the emergence of *Angry Boys* and 'Gran' as worldwide trending topics on social media network Twitter as the first episode went to air. With guaranteed airplay in the major markets of the United States and Britain, as well as New Zealand, *Angry Boys* was an important contributor to international popular culture. Lilley has since created two more shows featuring characters from *Summer Heights High*. The rich characterisations ensured that Lilley will continue to be a pivotal figure in the contribution of Australian television at an international level.

For more information on the key concept of significance refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

## Check your learning 13.14

### Remember and understand

- 1 What was the first Australian television show to have any real impact internationally?
- 2 Why did Sweden refuse to show *Skippy*?
- 3 Which two Australian shows have been remade in the United States in the 21st century?
- 4 How have the settings of Chris Lilley's series changed as he has moved from *We Can Be Heroes* to *Angry Boys*?

### Apply and analyse

- 5 Why would *Summer Heights High* sell in Togo and Kenya?

### Evaluate and create

- 6 What do you think Chris Lilley has contributed to international popular culture?
- 7 Select one of Chris Lilley's characters and prepare a Facebook page for them.

# 13.16 Australian sport goes global

Sport has often been seen as one way Australia can 'make a splash' on the world stage. It has been suggested that Australians are much more interested in sport than politics, and Indigenous sportsmen such as Doug Nicholls (Australian rules) and Charles Perkins (soccer) used sport as an entry into broader public life.

The Australian cricket team dominated international cricket for much of the 1990s and 2000s, and contributed a great deal to the sport in terms of preparation, professionalism and developing technology. After the television-driven split of the late 1970s, Australia has led the world in presenting cricket as a television sport to a mass audience. These innovations had a particular influence in South Asia, where the broadcasting of cricket is a highly valued marketing opportunity.

The major football codes have all struggled to establish a strong national foothold in Australia. State rivalries have seen different codes have stronger appeal in specific states. Australian Rules has its heartland in the southern and western states, while the two rugby codes have traditionally been strongest in New South Wales and Queensland. Australian Rules has proved particularly popular with Indigenous Australians, with such illustrious names as Doug Nicholls, Graham 'Polly' Farmer, Adam Goodes and Lance 'Buddy' Franklin establishing outstanding reputations as footballers.

## Australia plays 'the world game'

Football (traditionally known in Australia as soccer) is often referred to as 'the world game', and for good reason. The Fédération Internationale de Football (FIFA) has more than 200 member associations. Football's World Cup is only rivalled by the Olympics for global interest, and estimates of more than 3 billion followers worldwide allow it to claim the title of the 'world game'.

Football in Australia has a long history, with the first recorded game being played in 1879. This was only 20 years after Australian Rules football became organised in Melbourne, and 15 years after Sydney University established the first rugby union club in Australia. Rugby league, in contrast, did not start until 1908.



**Source 1** Members of the Australian Cricket team celebrate their victory in the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2015 – once again proving Australia's dominance in international cricket.

Football in the 20th century has largely been regarded as a 'migrant sport', meaning that only people from overseas played it. Former Australian football captain Johnny Warren, who played in Australia's first World Cup finals team in 1974, called his memoir *Sheilas, Wogs and Poofers*. This reflected the way many mainstream Australians mocked football for most of the 20th century.

The irony of football being perceived as mainly a game for migrants in the 20th century was that the composition of the various football leagues was a much more accurate reflection of post-World War II Australia than any other sport. As a nation built on migration, football represented the greatest opportunity for any single sport to truly represent modern Australia.

World Cup finals qualification has traditionally been the greatest prize in world football, and Australia qualified only once in the 20th century – in 1974 in West Germany. The team failed to score a goal during those finals, with a draw against Chile providing its only point. Subsequent campaigns promised much, but ultimately failed as Australia was drawn to play against teams in Europe, Asia and South America in the final stages of qualifying.

## The Soceroos

In 2005, a new national competition, the A-League, was launched as part of a rebranding of Australian football. 'Old soccer' became 'new football', and even the term 'Soceroos' was briefly abandoned. However, the public refused to let the name go and it was as the Soceroos that Australia attempted qualification for the 2006 World Cup finals – again held in Germany.

To reach the World Cup finals, Australia had to defeat Uruguay in a two-legged qualification final. As two-time World Cup winners, Uruguay had a proud footballing heritage, and had knocked Australia out at the same stage of qualification in 2001.

Australia lost the first leg in Montevideo 1–0. The team flew back to Australia to play the game that would decide the final qualification spot for the 2006 World Cup. In front of more than 82000 fans at Sydney's Olympic Stadium, Australia took an early lead with a goal to Mark Bresciano. After extra time, a penalty shootout saw John Aloisi score the most famous goal in Australian football history. It secured Australia a spot in the World Cup finals.

The squad that represented Australia against Uruguay mirrored the audience that cheered them on in the stadium and on television. Although all proudly Australian, the team represented the post-war Australian migration boom. There were Australians of Croatian, German, Slovenian, Italian, Samoan, English, Greek and New Zealand heritage.

The joy that greeted Australia's qualification represented recognition of the unique role football plays in Australian society. As the most popular sport to play, it also captured the aspirations of a multicultural Australia in a way no other component of Australian society has.

In 2015, Australian football came of age as the Soceroos became Asian Cup champions beating South Korea 2–1 in the final at Stadium Australia in Sydney.

## The Matildas

The Matildas is the name given to the Australian women's football (soccer) team. Formed in 1978, it was named after the famous Banjo Patterson lyric 'Waltzing Matilda'. Like many women's sporting teams, it has struggled for mainstream media attention. This was highlighted by the decision of the 1998 Matildas to compile a nude calendar as an attempt to raise funds and lift the team's profile. Although it did generate media coverage to support its qualification for the 1999 World Cup, in some circles it was seen as demeaning and a setback for women's sport.

The World Cup has been a much more achievable target for the Matildas than it has for the Soceroos. The team has qualified for each World Cup since 1995, and in 2015 they ranked 7th in the FIFA Women's World Cup. This followed its success in winning Australia's first major international football trophy, when the team won the 2010 Asian Cup. In 2014, they also placed second in the Women's Asian Cup in Vietnam (see Source 3). In the one genuine world team sport, the Matildas were the first Australian team to make such a significant impact by winning a major trophy.

Like their male counterparts, the Matildas reflect a modern, multicultural Australia. With exciting young players such as Servet Unzular, Leena Khamis and Samantha Kerr taking Australia onto the world stage in the world's game, it is a very different Australia to the one commonly portrayed in soapies. The heritage of these players represents the Australian story of migration, opportunity and achievement that our commitment to migration and multiculturalism has produced.



**Source 2** Members of the Soceroos celebrate their first victory in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup



**Source 3** Members of the Matildas, playing against Japan in the final of the Women's Asian Cup in 2014.

## Check your learning 13.15

Remember and understand

- 1 What has Australian cricket contributed to the sport internationally?
- 2 When did Australia first qualify for football's World Cup? How long did it take to qualify again?
- 3 Name some of the backgrounds represented in the Soceroos team that defeated Uruguay in 2005.

Apply and analyse

- 4 In what ways do the Soceroos and Matildas represent a modern Australia?
- 5 Explain why Johnny Warren called his memoir *Sheilas, Wogs and Poofers*.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Design a campaign that could convince FIFA to award a future Women's or Men's World Cup to Australia to host.

## 13C rich task

# 'Ozploitation'

The Australian New Wave movement of the early 1970s through to the mid-1980s marked the revival of Australian cinema. Nearly 400 movies were produced during these years, more than had ever been made in the history of the Australian film industry. The Australian New Wave movement is best remembered for critically acclaimed movies such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and *Gallipoli* (1981). However, at the same time, a series of low-budget B-grade movies were being produced.

These films exploited controversial themes such as sex, horror, adrenalin-fuelled action and ocker comedy in order to excite audiences and become hits at the box office. Hollywood director Quentin Tarantino became a fan of these Australian 'exploitation films' like *Patrick* (1978) and *Mad Max* (1979). In a 2008 documentary, *Not Quite Hollywood*, Tarantino used the term 'Aussiesploitation' to describe these films. This was later shortened to 'Ozploitation'. Tarantino even cited *Patrick*, the 1978 Australian horror film about a coma patient with psychic powers, as influencing his own blockbuster *Kill Bill* films (2003–04).

Today, 'Ozploitation films' are remembered as some of the most defining artefacts of Australian popular culture.

Violence, car chases and nudity were common themes in these films. The films were frequently R-rated. Many critics also viewed them as having less 'artistic merit' than other mainstream Australian films being made at the same time. In a 1979 article titled 'The Pornography of Violence', film maker and commentator Phillip Adams expressed his reaction to the new post-apocalyptic road movie, *Mad Max*.

### Source 1

I saw a preview of *Mad Max* one Friday morning and was still feeling shaken with revulsion 12 hours later. My first reaction was to ring Ken Watts at the Australian Film Commission for fear there may have been government money in this diabolical opus.

*The Bulletin*, 1 May 1979, pages 38–41

### Source 2

I always remember that actor. I thought he was amazing looking, with his eyes wide open and everything, and in the original script I had it written like that. I showed it to Uma, and she goes 'I'm not gonna do that', and I go 'Why?' She goes 'You wouldn't have your eyes wide open like that if you were in a coma. That's not realistic.'

And I go 'Actually, I never thought was it realistic or not, it's just Patrick did it, and it looked really cool!'

An extract of an interview with Quentin Tarantino from the documentary *Not Quite Hollywood*, 2008

Despite their often poor reputation at home, many Australian action films did well overseas. *Mad Max* was immensely successful, earning \$100 million worldwide and spawning a trilogy of high-budget films. It also launched the international careers of lead actor Mel Gibson and director George Miller.



**Source 3** Director Quentin Tarantino was heavily influenced by 'Ozploitation' films like *Patrick* (1978) when writing and filming the blockbuster *Kill Bill* films (2003–04).

## skilldrill: historical sources as evidence

### Identify and locate relevant sources using ICT and other methods

Being able to locate relevant primary and secondary sources using the Internet is an important historical skill. However, you need to keep in mind that not all information you find on the Internet is necessarily true, accurate, reliable or credible. So, in addition to being able to find source material online, you need to be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of the information you find. Use the following steps to apply this skill:

**Step 1** Identify key words related to your topic and type these into a search engine such as Google. (Use only key words – do not type in whole sentences or questions.)

**Step 2** Add further relevant key words to refine your search if you cannot find what you want on your first attempts.

**Step 3** Look beyond the first page of results. The best results do not always appear first.

**Step 4** Assess the reliability of each site by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who is the author or creator? If it is an individual, does this person have credentials listed (for example, a degree, title?) If it is an organisation, is it a reputable organisation such as a government or university department?

- What is the purpose of the website? Is it trying to inform, persuade or sell?
- Is the site objective? Is the author's point of view biased?
- Is the information accurate? Can the information be verified if you cross-check it with other sources of information?
- Does the site contain spelling mistakes or grammatical errors? (If so, this is usually an indication that the site is not particularly reliable.)
- Is the information current? Can you find evidence of recent updates?

### Apply the skill

- Using the steps outlined above, conduct an Internet search to find relevant, credible and reliable source material about the making and reception of:
  - three Australian action or thriller films created and released between 1971 and 1985
  - three other more famous Australian films of the new wave era.
- Copy the data chart in Source 4 into your notebook. Read the source material you have located and record the key points in the appropriate column. Make sure you also record the URLs of the sites you have used.

### Source 4

Action films						
	URL	Title	Budget	Distribution	Reception	Earnings
Source 1						
Source 2						
Source 3						
Mainstream new wave films						
Source 1						
Source 2						
Source 3						

## Extend your understanding

Refer to the information about Australian New Wave cinema in this chapter and use the Internet to find posters of two highly acclaimed films from this era (for example, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* or *My Brilliant Career*).

- Write a report explaining how the different ways the films were promoted can help draw historians conclusions about the different perspectives of audiences at the time.