

GREAT AUSTRALIAN *STUFF*



SURPRISING, STRANGE, AND SOMETIMES DARK – THE HISTORY BEHIND AUSTRALIA’S MOST ICONIC STUFF IS ENDLESSLY FASCINATING

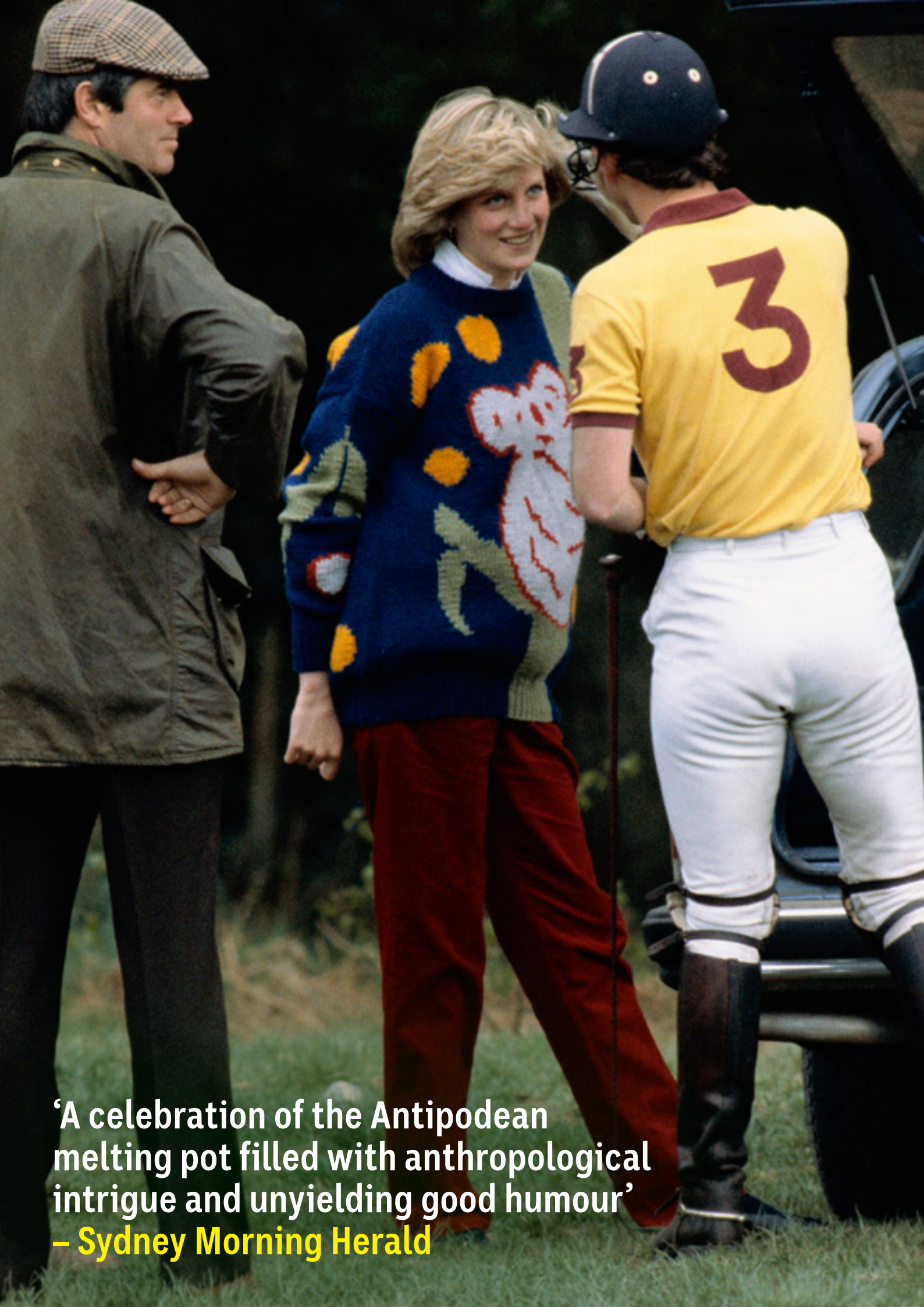
From the pioneering boomerang to one day cricket, bushfire management and the humble meat pie, this four-part series uses archive footage to uncover the surprising truths behind some of the country’s most loved – and loathed – iconic ‘stuff’.

Great Australian Stuff applies a contemporary lens to a fascinating collection of histories and stories exploring how the meat pie went from colonial staple to multicultural meal, how canny marketing turned an apple into the nation’s fruity favourite, how the boomerang went from First Nations tool to tourist must-have, how the Kelpie dog became a canine icon and how the Merino sheep went from pest to social media phenomena.

Fast-rising star Tony Armstrong (2022 Logie Award winner for *Most Popular New Talent*) lends his down-to-earth charm as host, with a plethora of diverse interviewees including historians, comedians and food experts weighing in with both knowledge and wit to unpack a history of great Australian stuff.

HD 4 x 60’
Wildbear Entertainment





**‘A celebration of the Antipodean
melting pot filled with anthropological
intrigue and unyielding good humour’
– Sydney Morning Herald**

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Famous Australian meat pie brand *Four'N Twenty*** pops out around 50,000 pies an hour, making them the biggest pie factory in the world
- **Macadamia nuts** are native to Australia
- Greek immigrants brought American culture to Australia, opening cafes and milk bars that sold sodas and sundaes; these iconic establishments helped to pave the way for multiculturalism from the 1950s through to the '70s
- **Boomerangs** can reach speeds of 100km/h once thrown, and display the **aeronautical principles that were used in making aircraft wings**
- Kelpies, aka Australian sheep dogs, **can fetch up to \$30,000 at auction** because they're an invaluable employee for a farmer
- Australian fashion went global in 1982 when Princess Diana wore designer Jenny Kee's iconic Koala jumper while pregnant with William
- **The *Granny Smith* apple originated in Australia** in 1868 through a casual cross planting of what is believed to be a crab apple and a domestic apple
- Australia's famous salty, black spread ***Vegemite* is made from leftover beer**
- Chris, **the world's woolliest sheep, set a new world record in 2015** when his fleece was shorn and weighed in at 42kg; a domesticated Merino, Chris had been found wandering near Australia's capital, Canberra, and likely had never been shorn in his life
- **Aboriginal people were the first bread-makers in human history**; a grinding stone used to make flour was found in New South Wales, Australia, and has been dated at 35-36,000 years
- Australians invented the dual flush toilet system



EPISODE SYNOPSES

EPISODE 1

Food

Australians love their food. But why is it that they've taken some things to their collective hearts and stomachs while others have been tossed in the cultural kitchen bin? With funny morsels from the likes of Benjamin Law, Jean Kittson and Nazeem Hussain, some smart-cookie commentary from experts, plus loads of archive, Tony Armstrong tucks into the stories behind some of Australia's most iconic and best-loved foods.

How did the meat pie go from colonial staple to multicultural meal? What happened when the Macadamia nut almost got snaffled-up by the South Africans? And what role did canny marketing play in turning the Granny Smith apple into the nation's fruity favourite?

Unwrapping the story behind the chocolate Freddo Frog reveals a story that goes from Melbourne to the Antarctic to early Australian aviation, whilst untwisting the story of Vegemite reveals how the advent of TV turned brewers' waste into the best thing for Aussie babies. This episode also uncovers why Greek milk bars served anything but Greek cuisine, and how the best of old and new combined to create the Chiko Roll.



EPISODE SYNOPSSES



EPISODE 2 The Land

With a history stretching back several millennia, is it any wonder so much iconic Australian stuff originates from the land? In the second episode, Tony Armstrong saddles up to find out how the boomerang went from First Nations tool to tourist must-have; how an ecological disaster literally divided the nation and simultaneously delivered an internationally recognised icon – the Akubra hat; how the Kelpie dog became a canine icon and how the Merino sheep went from pest to social media phenomena.

The episode then explores how the firestick is lighting the way for better bush fire management, how the land provided a tale of industrial intrigue, improved the national wardrobe by creating the permanent pleat and, finally, how the land inspired an iconic jumper which inspired a nation, which charmed a British Royal, and looks good on the program's host, too!

EPISODE SYNOPSES

EPISODE 3

Home

Home ownership has long been an Australian dream so, unsurprisingly, the home has been the birthplace of some iconic stuff. In this episode, Tony leafs through domestic bible, the *Australian Women's Weekly* – once the highest circulation magazine in the world – and its popular supplement, the *Children's Birthday Cake Book* where he discovers a cake even its inventor thought too difficult to make!

This episode also features the grinding stone, the world's first portable food processor, unscrews the cap on cask wine and uncovers the unsavoury truth behind every home's flexible favourite, the Hills Hoist. Peeking behind the net curtains, Tony discovers the tale of an amphetamine which killed 20,000 Australian housewives, tracks the demise of the dunny, and laments the icon that never was: the Lightburn Zeta – an Australian-designed and made car that never quite found a home in the hearts of ordinary Australians.



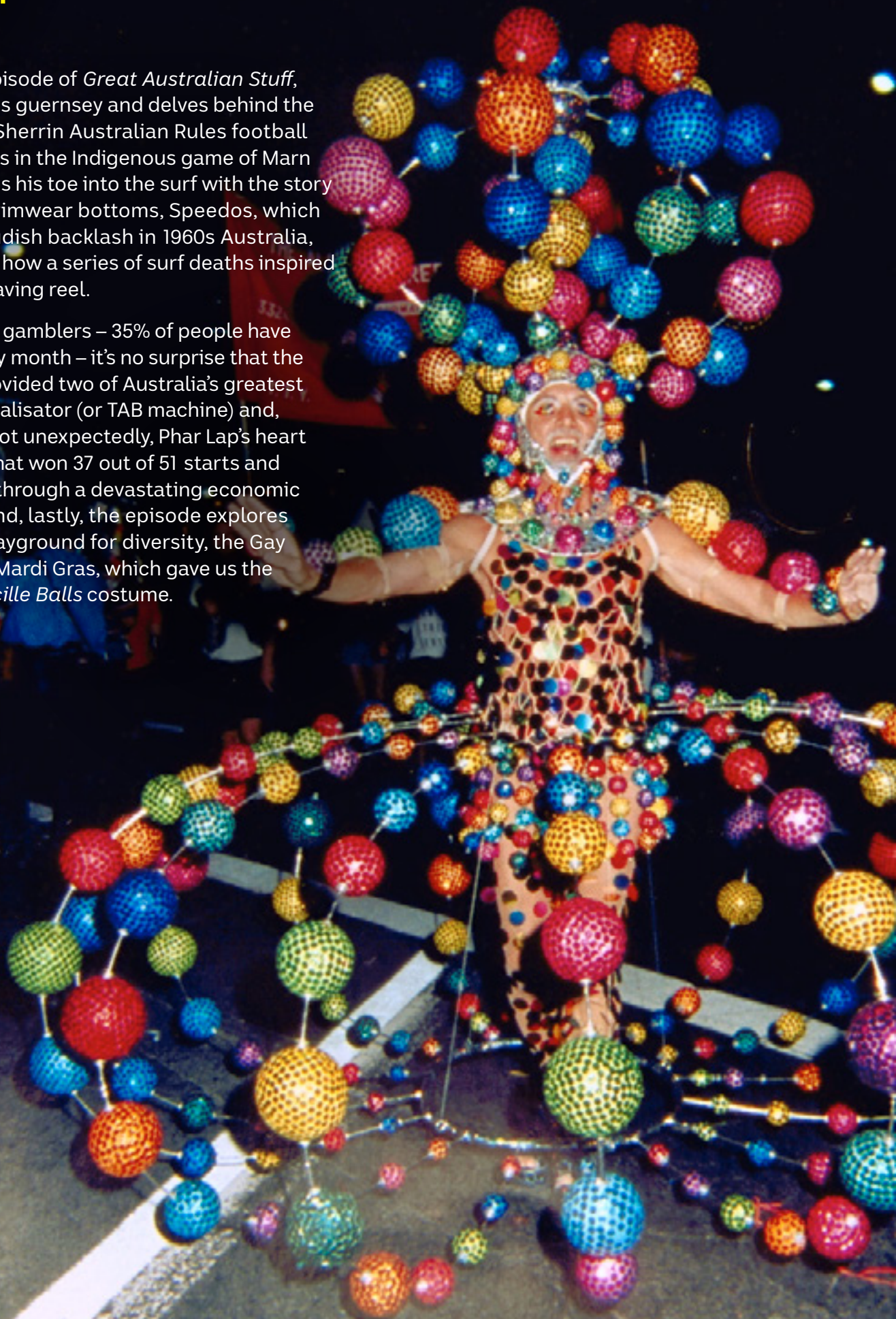
EPISODE SYNOPSES

EPISODE 4

Play

In the final episode of *Great Australian Stuff*, Tony grabs his guernsey and delves behind the story of the Sherrin Australian Rules football and its origins in the Indigenous game of Marn Grook. He dips his toe into the surf with the story of skimpy swimwear bottoms, Speedos, which caused a prudish backlash in 1960s Australia, and explores how a series of surf deaths inspired the surf lifesaving reel.

In a nation of gamblers – 35% of people have a flutter every month – it's no surprise that the racetrack provided two of Australia's greatest icons: the Totalisator (or TAB machine) and, weirdly but not unexpectedly, Phar Lap's heart – the horse that won 37 out of 51 starts and got a nation through a devastating economic downturn. And, lastly, the episode explores the iconic playground for diversity, the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which gave us the glittering *Lucille Balls* costume.



PRESENTER

Tony Armstrong

Tony Armstrong grew up in rural New South Wales and is a proud Barranbinya man. He is a former AFL (Australian Rules Football) player, and in 2019 became the first Indigenous person to call live action AFL on commercial radio. He also appeared on the *Marngrook Footy Show* and became a regular panellist on the online panel show *The Colour of Your Jumper*. In 2020, Tony became the co-host of the Indigenous comedy football chat show *Yokayi Footy* and then co-hosted ABC Melbourne breakfast radio with Sammy J. He became a sports presenter on the ABC News channel and hosted the 2020 summer series of *Offsiders*.

In 2021, the ABC announced Tony as the full-time sports presenter on *News Breakfast* and in 2022 he hosted the fun three-part series *A Dog's World*.

His other television credits include comedy segments on *The Weekly with Charlie Pickering*, regular appearances as a panellist on *The Project* and host of ABC 90 *Celebrate!*.

In 2022, he won the Logie Award for *Most Popular New Talent*.



KEY INTERVIEWEES

Assoc Prof. Michelle Arrow

Historian, Macquarie University

Michelle is an award-winning historian with particular expertise in cultural history, the history of popular culture, and the history of the women's movement.

Nornie Bero

Executive Chef and Owner, *Mabu Mabu*

Originally from Mer Island in the Torres Strait, Nornie has been a professional chef for over 20 years, and is on a mission to put First Nations ingredients in kitchens across Australia.

Damien Cave

New York Times Australian Bureau Chief

Journalist and author of *Into the Rip: How the Australian Way of Risk Made My Family Stronger, Happier ... and Less American*.

Jenny Kee

Fashion Designer

A pioneer of Australian style and internationally acclaimed artist and designer, Jenny Kee's vibrant art and design reflects her passion for the unique and precious Australian environment.

Nazeem Hussain

Comedian

One of the biggest stars of Australian comedy and a much loved TV and radio personality, Nazeem created and starred in the primetime comedy series *Orange Is The New Brown* and was a finalist in *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*

Benjamin Law

Writer and Broadcaster

Ben's book *The Family Law* was produced into the TV series of the same name, and he recently appeared on *Australian Survivor*.

Prof. Margo Neale

Head of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges, National Museum of Australia

Margo has published widely and curated major pioneering exhibitions including the multi-award winning *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*.

Dr Mathew Trinca AM

Director, National Museum of Australia

Under Mathew's leadership, the National Museum of Australia has developed strong national and international programs that focus on bringing alive the stories of Australia for audiences around the country and overseas.

Prof. Clare Wright OAM

Historian

Clare is an American Australian historian, author and broadcaster. She is a professor of history at La Trobe University, and was the winner of the 2014 Stella Prize.

