

Welcome to the sixth issue of ACYA's monthly AustraliaBites, designed to give Chinese and Australian students a unique insight into Australian society and culture. If you missed them, please click [here](#) for previous issues. If you have any questions, suggestions, or contributions to AustraliaBites, please send an email to neil.thomas@acya.org.au.



Media Watch

[POLITICS: Bob Carr Says Turning Back Boats Is Illegal - 18 July \(ABC\)](#)

Australian federal politics continues to be dominated by the debate over asylum seekers, with Opposition Leader [Tony Abbott](#) declaring recently that if elected as Prime Minister next year he would implement a policy of forcing all boats carrying asylum seekers to turn back to Indonesian waters. Foreign Minister [Bob Carr](#) replied that this would be inhumane, dangerous, a severe blow to Australia-Indonesia relations, and likely declared unconstitutional by the [High Court](#).



[ECONOMY: Gina Rinehart Now The World's Richest Woman - 9 July \(BBC\)](#)

Australian business magazine BRW has named West Australian mining magnate [Gina Rinehart](#) as the richest women in the world, with a personal fortune of approximately A\$29 billion that grows at an estimated A\$600 per second. Rinehart is the daughter of iron ore prospector [Lang Hancock](#) and her earnings stem largely from the mining operations of [Hancock Prospecting](#). She is notably litigious and is increasingly seeking political and media clout.

[SOCIETY: Pokies-Addict Jailed Despite Pleas - 18 July \(ABC\)](#)

A woman has been jailed for two years after stealing A\$800,000 to feed her gambling habit, prompting independent Senator [Nick Xenophon](#) to lash out at the failure of staff at [pokies](#) venues to intervene in cases of problem gambling and at State Governments for profiting from gambling addiction through indirect tax levies.

"The State Government profited \$400K from her gambling alone"

[ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT: TV Show The Shire Causes Controversy - 18 July \(Daily Telegraph\)](#)

A Channel Ten reality TV show called [The Shire](#), ostensibly based around the daily lives of several residents of Sunderland Shire in South Sydney, has sparked a massive reaction amongst local Sydneysiders and across Australia. Many locals of the area were offended by the fact that many "stars" are not actually locals, whereas more generally Australians were put off by the somewhat cringe-worthy and artificial portrayal of Australian society.

[SPORT: Judd Banned For 4 Weeks By AFL Tribunal - 18 July \(ABC\)](#)

[Chris Judd](#), captain of the Carlton [AFL](#) team and two-time winner of the [Brownlow Medal](#), has been handed down a 4-week ban by the [AFL Tribunal](#) after a reckless tackle that dislocated the shoulder of opponent Leigh Adams. This case is notable in the unique and fascinating AFL legal system in that it is the first time in three years that there has not been the option of an early guilty plea bargain.



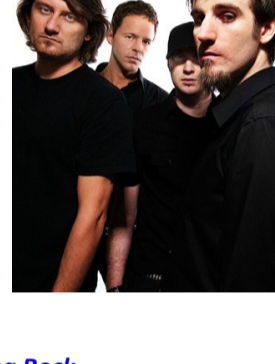
[TRAVEL: Palmer Unveils Plans For Titanic II—17 July \(ABC\)](#)

Controversial Queensland mining magnate [Clive Palmer](#) has just unveiled the construction plans for *Titanic II*, the cruise ship modeled on the original [Titanic](#) that he plans to build with his Blue Star Line shipping company, in cooperation with Chinese shipbuilder CSC Jinling Shipyards. The ship is expected to be commercially operational by 2016, with Palmer promising that *Titanic II* will improve upon the original by including a safety deck and proper lifeboats.

Culture Watch

[Artist of the Month—Pendulum](#)

Pendulum are an Australian/British band that was formed in 2002 in Perth, Western Australia. They are known for their impressive multimedia live performances and for fusing influences from several musical genres such as drum and bass, metal, house, electronic rock, and dubstep to create a unique sound that is both heavy and danceable, finding significant critical and commercial success in both Australia and abroad. Some of their most popular songs include "Propane Nightmares", "Salt In The Wounds", "Watercolour", and "Witchcraft".



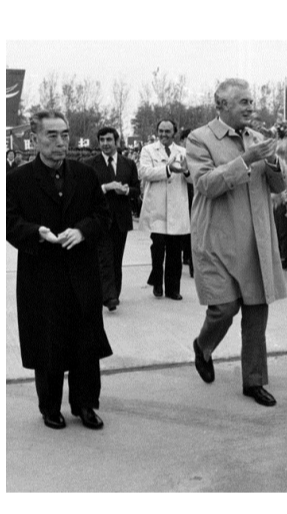
[Movie of the Month—Picnic at Hanging Rock](#)



Picnic At Hanging Rock is a 1975 film by renowned Australian director [Peter Weir](#), based upon the [eponymous book](#) by [Joan Lindsay](#). The movie is a lush and atmospheric period drama set in 1900 that purports to tell the "true" story of the disappearance of several schoolgirls and their teacher at a Valentine's Day picnic at Hanging Rock., and the subsequent descent of the local community into a state of supernatural paranoia, suspicion, and fear. By being the first internationally acclaimed modern Australian film not tied to the "Ozploitation" genre, it is often credited as kick-starting the so-called "[renaissance](#)" of Australian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s.

[History of the Month—Gough Whitlam Visits Zhou Enlai in 1971](#)

Even before the much-lauded secret meetings between [Zhou Enlai](#) and [Henry Kissinger](#) that led to [American recognition of the People's Republic of China](#), it was a group of Australian politicians, led by [Gough Whitlam](#) as leader of the opposition [Australian Labor Party](#), who first broke the Western diplomatic ice with Mainland China. (Correctly) Anticipating victory at the [1972 Federal Election](#) and realising the potential for a significant trade relationship with the PRC (heavily lobbied for by the [Australian Wheat Board](#)), Whitlam's unilateral request to visit Zhou was granted and meetings were held in Beijing on 5 July 1971, paving the way for [Australian recognition of the PRC](#) on 21 December 1972.



[Quote of the Month—WWII Prime Minister John Curtin](#)

Born: 8 January 1885 Died: 5 July 1945

Prime Minister: 7 October 1941—5 July 1945

"Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom".

New Year's message published in the *Melbourne Herald* on 26 December 1941.

John Curtin was Australia's Prime Minister during much of World War Two and remains to this day one of Australia's most respected and remembered leaders for his role in guiding Australia's involvement in the [Pacific Theatre](#) to counter Japanese advances that threatened to culminate in a full-blown Japanese invasion of Australia. Fearing Australia would be ignored by traditional protector the UK, almost fully occupied by the [European Theatre](#), Curtin executed a crucial turning point in Australian socio-political history by forging an [intimate alliance](#) with the much-stronger USA, initiating a pivot in Australian society from British to American influence. Curtin's Government also founded the Australian welfare system.

Language

[Australian Term of the Month — "Dob"](#)

In Australian parlance to "dob" or to "dob someone in" is to report someone's untoward behavior to the relevant authority in charge of regulating such behavior. As such, the term has a very large scope of use and can be applied to a wide variety of different situations. Almost all Australians are introduced to this word in the context of the schoolyard, where obedient pupils (perhaps too obedient—the so-called "goody-two-shoes") who "dob" on their classmates by telling the teacher about their misbehavior will be picked on because they are a "dobber". As the concept of "dobbing" somewhat violates the supposedly Australian traits of comradery and mateship, for many Australians the term "dob" has a slightly negative connotation associated with taking things too seriously. Though this is not always the case, as the word has been used in many government campaigns to promote informing on other people's rule-breaking, such as the [Immigration Dob-In Service](#) and [Dob In A Litterer](#)".



[Australian Slang of the Month](#)



- **"Esky" (noun):** Esky is an Australian registered trademark but has become a generalised term for an insulated box used to keep food and drink cool. The name derives from the Arctic-dwelling "Eskimos". Eskys are usually either full of meat for a BBQ or packed with ice and beer/champagne. E.g. "Could you please grab the sausages from the *esky*?"



- **"Going off" (adjective):** This term (and its various grammatical tenses) is a popular way of saying that a particular party, nightclub, event, or thing is/was especially lively and enjoyable. E.g. "This festival is *going off!*", "The uni tavern really *went off* last night!", or "As soon as they cracked open the champagne *esky*, things really started to *go off!*".



- **"Sook" (verb, noun):** A sook is a shy and timid person, who may also be a bit of a cry-baby or a coward. It is often used playfully between friends, but can be used offensively. The adjective is "sooky". E.g. "Stop being a *sook* and come to the party, the beer *esky*s are really *going off!*"

Questions or comments? Please email neil.thomas@acya.org.au

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