

Welcome to the eighth 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](mailto:neil.thomas@acya.org.au).



## Media Watch

### [POLITICS: Super-Trawler Debacle - Economist \(22 September\)](#)

On 19 September the Australian government rushed through legislation that banned the Dutch-owned fishing super-trawler *Abel Tasman* from operating in Australian waters for two years pending further assessments, in response to fears of over-fishing raised by environmentalists. However, the move has been decried by many as populist, as the ship had already cleared stringent fisheries authority approval processes and the action is likely to harm long-term fisheries investment.



### [ECONOMICS: Real Estate Prices Soar in Remote Mining Communities - BBC \(5 September\)](#)

Following the influx of both permanent and temporary "fly-in, fly-out" (FIFO) mining workers, the resource-rich town of Port Hedland in north-west Western Australia, now the largest bulk export port in the entire world, records average rent prices that rival the most affluent suburbs in Sydney, with basic houses renting for over A\$3,000 per week. This has had a devastating effect upon non-mining sectors of the local community and led to social tension.

### [SOCIETY: Religious Protests in Sydney - ABC \(18 September\)](#)

Following deadly protests in the Middle East, Sydney also experienced violent protests by extreme elements of local Muslim communities over the YouTube publication of an amateur US film that denigrates Islam. Six police officers were injured but Muslim leaders were quick to renounce the incident as unrepresentative.

*"The Australian Muslim community values religious freedom"*

### [CULTURE: Profile of Young Asian Communities in Australia - BBC \(17 September\)](#)

People of Asian descent now account for 12.4% of the Australian population, with particularly large groups of Chinese and Indian descent that are now moving into their second or third generation in Australia. Whilst Asians are still not proportionally represented in Australian Parliament and very real elements of racism still linger in Australian society, the experience of Asian immigration into Australia is more and more becoming a global model of integration.

### [SPORT: Minister Follows Through With Bet - BBC \(2 September\)](#)

After losing a bet with the UK Sports Minister over whose country would win the most gold medals at the London 2012 Olympics, Australian Sports Minister Kate Lundy showed true Australian sportsmanship in following through with her promise of rowing a length of the Eton Dourney rowing course whilst wearing a Team GB shirt. Team GB won 29 gold medals whilst Australia only managed seven!



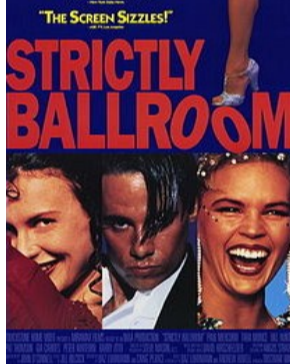
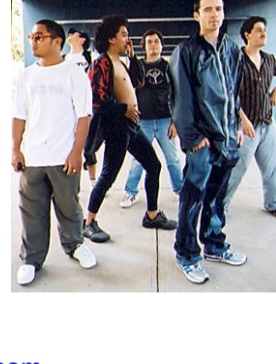
### [TRAVEL: Australia-NZ Currency Union Not Feasible - ABC \(18 September\)](#)

One of the great conveniences of traveling in Europe is that the single Euro currency usually eliminates the need to change money at national borders. However, travellers to Australia and New Zealand are unlikely to experience this anytime soon, as a joint government study has found that a monetary union would result in monetary policy in NZ being driven too much by economic conditions in the seven-times-larger Australian economy.

## Culture Watch

### [ARTIST OF THE MONTH—The Avalanches](#)

The Avalanches are an Australian electronic music group formed in 1997, who are best known for their groundbreaking 2000 debut album *Since I Left You*, the infectiously "mashed-up" songs of which contain in excess of 3,500 vinyl samples from various sources. It was voted the #1 Australian Album of All Time in a [Triple J](#) poll. Rumours of a second album have been circulating ever since, but after over a decade of delays it has been slated for release later this year. Recommended tracks include "Since I Left You", "Frontier Psychiatrist", and "Stay Another Season".



### [MOVIE OF THE MONTH—Strictly Ballroom](#)

*Strictly Ballroom* is a renowned 1992 Australian romantic comedy written and directed by the now world-famous [Baz Luhrmann](#), and constituting the first installment in his "Red Curtain Trilogy" of theatre-motif based movies, completed by *Romeo + Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge!* The plot revolves around the struggle of an Australian ballroom dancer to establish his own personal style (which is not "strictly ballroom") and choose a suitable dance partner in trying to win the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Dancing Championship. The movie was one of the most successful Australia productions of all time and cemented into pop culture the John Paul Young song "[Love Is In The Air](#)".

### [HISTORY OF THE MONTH—Founding of SEATO](#)

The South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was created on 8 September 1954 by the signing of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in Manila by Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, France, the UK, and the USA. Created as part of the American [Truman Doctrine](#), it was designed primarily to block further communist gains in Southeast Asia following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Despite being relied upon heavily in Australian and US foreign policy rhetoric surrounding the [Vietnam War](#), SEATO is widely regarded as a failure because internal conflict constantly hindered effective cooperative action. It was eventually disbanded on 30 June 1977.



### [QUOTE OF THE MONTH—East Timor Crisis](#)

"Driving through Dili is like a scene from a *Mad Max* movie. Complete destruction, there are no people around, just a few mangy dogs. They've driven the entire population out and destroyed all their property".

Patrick Burgess, UN Official

Darwin, 14 September 1999

20 September 1999: Australian-led UN peacekeeping task-force [INTERFET](#) begins operations in East Timor.

After the East Timorese population overwhelmingly voted for independence from Indonesia on 31 August 1999, following the release of the result on 4 September anti-independence militias supported by the Indonesian government and military began a campaign of violence directed against the East Timorese population, which left thousands dead and led to as many as half a million East Timorese fleeing the territory as refugees. The severity of the situation led to the deployment of peacekeepers under the command of Australian Major General [Peter Cosgrove](#) through the authorization of UN Security Council Resolution 1264, a mission that was successful in restoring order and paving the way for [East Timorese independence](#).

## Language

### [AUSTRALIAN TERM OF THE MONTH — "Underdog"](#)

In English parlance the term "underdog" refers to an individual or team in a competition that is popularly expected to lose—as opposed to the "favourite" who is expected to win. The fundamental egalitarian tradition of Australian society, birthed from Australia's convict past, has led to Australians' tendency to support underdogs and admire the "fighting spirit" of the underdog who gives their best despite facing overwhelming odds of defeat—just as early settlers overcame brutal conditions to establish the independent and thriving country of Australia. A classic example of an underdog being rewarded for never giving up was Australia's first gold medal at the Winter Olympics, when [Steven Bradbury](#) came from last place to win the 1000m speed-skating final after the other finalists all collided and fell just before the finish line. Respect for the underdog also manifests itself in support for courageous non-Australian athletes like [Eric the Eel](#) and societal demands for [modesty from Australian sporting figures](#).



### [AUSTRALIAN SLANG OF THE MONTH](#)

- **"Go walkabout"** (verb): If a person or a thing "goes walkabout" then it disappears or cannot be found. The term is derived from the Aboriginal [rite of passage](#) during which male adolescents would live in the wilderness for many months. E.g. "Argh, my keys have *gone walkabout* again, I can never find them!"
- **"Deadly"** (adjective): A popular term originating from [Aboriginal English](#) that is used to mean "excellent" or "very good". E.g. "*Deadly*, unna?" [Very good, ain't it?], or "It was all going *deadly* till Dave went *walkabout* again!"
- **"Mob"** (noun): Another term that is characteristic of Aboriginal English, it refers to a group of people, but does not necessarily have any connotations of disorder, often being used to refer to family groups. E.g. "His *mob* are all really great guys!", "Hey bro, tomorrow party at my place, bring your whole *mob* along, it's gonna be real *deadly*, so don't go *walkabout* on me this time!"

Questions or comments? Please email [neil.thomas@acya.org.au](mailto:neil.thomas@acya.org.au)

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