

Welcome to the ninth 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: Gillard's Misogyny Speech Goes Global—ABC \(10 October\)](#)

In response to comments made by Opposition Leader [Tony Abbott](#) in reference to the [Peter Slipper](#) scandal—that people who hold sexist views are not fit for political office—Prime Minister [Julia Gillard](#) retorted with a powerful 15-minute speech attacking Abbott for being a misogynist himself, and cutting down his arguments with a bountiful list of offensive comments Abbott himself has made in the past. The speech was global news and trended highly on social media sites.



### [ECONOMICS: NSW Budget Surplus After Accounting Error Discovered—ABC \(31 October\)](#)

The Auditor-General has revealed that the New South Wales Government made a series of accounting errors totaling up to \$1 billion in the State Budget forecast that was delivered by NSW Treasurer Mike Baird in June, meaning that instead of a predicted deficit of \$337 million there will in fact be a surplus of \$680 million. Controversially, the Government justified massive public sector cuts with the need to save money, money which was actually already there.

### [SOCIETY: Australia In The Asian Century—Economist \(31 October\)](#)

On 28 October, Julia Gillard launched the "[Australia in the Asian Century](#)" White Paper, hailing it as a turning point in Australia's engagement with Asia and committing to expanding Asian language education and relaxing visa requirements. However, large cultural and political obstacles lurk before success can be claimed.

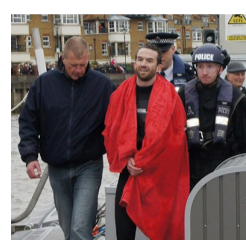
*"Do Australians want more Asia engagement?"*

### [CULTURE: The Story Of Vegemite After 90 Years—BBC \(17 October\)](#)

[Vegemite](#), a dark and salty spread made from yeast extract that large numbers of Australians consume on toast for breakfast, is as iconic to Australia as the kangaroo or the Sydney Opera House. Almost ninety years since it was first invented by Cyril Callister, the first official history of Vegemite has been published. After initially modest sales, its place in Australian culture was cemented when it was chosen as a staple food for Australian soldiers in WWII.

### [SPORT: Australian Interrupts "The Boat Race"—BBC \(19 October\)](#)

Trenton Oldfield, the Australian man who interrupted this year's [University Boat Race](#), has been jailed in the UK for six months for causing a public nuisance. Oldfield targeted the race because he believed it to be elitist and wished to protest against UK government cuts to public spending. However, the trial judge questioned whether his actions did anything to help equality at all.



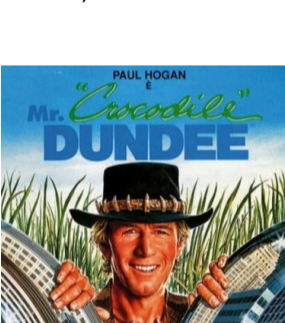
### [TRAVEL: Snow Wreaks Havoc In Eastern Australia—ABC \(12 October\)](#)

Australia is not always the sun-drenched land of beaches and surf that many believe it to be, as over the course of only a couple of days the entire Great Dividing Range region running down the eastern coast of Australia was buffeted by wild winds, rain, and snowfalls of up to 15 centimetres. Thousands of homes were without power, hundreds of cars were stranded on inaccessible roads, and dozens of hikers had to be rescued by State Emergency Services.

## Culture Watch

### [ARTIST OF THE MONTH—Cold Chisel](#)

Cold Chisel is an iconic Australian rock band renowned for its classic pub-rock music, pounding live shows, and reputation for hard drinking and wild partying. Most active during the seventies and eighties, the band has reformed many times since and prominent members such as lead singer [Jimmy Barnes](#) and guitarist [Ian Moss](#) going on to have successful solo careers. Their most famous song is the iconic (and at the time controversial) "[Khe Sanh](#)", but other well-known songs include "You Got Nothing I Want", "When The War Is Over", and "Saturday Night".



### [MOVIE OF THE MONTH—Crocodile Dundee \(1986\)](#)

Crocodile Dundee is perhaps the most famous "Australian" movie of all time, being shot as a deliberate attempt to make a commercial film about Australia that would appeal to American cinema-goers. Based loosely upon the life of [Rodney Ansell](#), the movie tells the story of Australian bushman Mick "Crocodile" Dundee (played by [Paul Hogan](#)), who is visited in the Outback for a story by American journalist Sue Charlton, who then invites him back to experience life in New York, with often hilarious results. The movie was filmed on a budget of less than \$10 million but was a worldwide smash and went on to gross over \$300 million at the box office.

### [HISTORY OF THE MONTH—Operation Slipper](#)

Operation Slipper is the name of the [Australian Defence Force](#) operation in Afghanistan, which commenced in October 2001 and is still ongoing. Following the 9/11 attacks, Australia entered the Afghanistan conflict in support of its close military ally the United States, dispatching Special Air Service Regiment battalions as well as troops, ships, planes, logistics units, and a reconstruction taskforce. This Operation is notable for incurring Australia's first military combat deaths since the Vietnam War, with 39 dead and 242 wounded to date. Public opinion was initially very supportive of Australia's presence in Afghanistan (as high as 60%) but as the war dragged on and casualties mounted this has reversed.



### [QUOTE OF THE MONTH—2000 Sydney Olympics](#)

"They could not have been better. Therefore, I am proud and happy to proclaim that you have presented to the world the best Olympic Games ever."

Juan Antonio Samaranch  
President of the International Olympic Committee  
Sydney Olympics Closing Ceremony

1 October 2000

Hailed by many as one of the most successful events of any kind held on the world stage, the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games were a highlight of modern Australian history and extolled by commentators all over the world for their professionalism, organisation, and the welcoming nature of the Australian people. After the United States, Russia, and China, Australia came fourth in the medal table with 16 gold medals and 58 medals total, one of its best Olympic performances ever. Notable features of the Games include [Cathy Freeman's](#) historic triumph in the women's 400 metres, [Ian Thorpe's](#) rise to swimming fame, the featuring of wheelchair racing and chess as exhibition sports, and Opening Ceremony star [Nikki Webster](#).

## Language

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

Larrikinism is a much-loved and distinctly Australian term that refers to the centuries-old folk tradition of irreverent humour, casual attitudes towards people and institutions of authority, and disregard for rigid norms of propriety and etiquette. A larrikin is someone who does not take anything or anyone (especially themselves) particularly seriously, does not care much for trying to impress others, has a cheeky sense of humour, and is always trying to enjoy themselves. It is theorised that this important pillar of Australian culture has its roots in the country's convict past as a reaction to and rebellion against the strict mores enforced by British authorities. At present, it furthermore can be seen as the societal flipside to the often conservative norms of the Australian bourgeois, as one of two polar attitudes that simultaneously reinforce each other. Notable larrikins include former PM [Bob Hawke](#), swimmer [Dawn Fraser](#), cricketer [Shane Warne](#), comedian [Dave Hughes](#), and AC-DC singer [Bon Scott](#).



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

- **"Dropkick" (noun):** Calling someone a dropkick is a colloquial way of calling them an idiot, moron, loser, etc. It can be used lightheartedly or seriously. E.g. "He is such a dropkick!"
- **"Daks" (noun):** Can refer to underwear (also known as "underdaks") or pants. Hence the verb "to dak", which means to pull someone's pants down to their shoes, a popular prank amongst young Australian schoolchildren. E.g. "When Steve daked Dave he didn't realize that Dave wasn't wearing any underdaks!"
- **"Dunny" (noun):** One of the all-time favourite words of the Australian slang vocabulary, the term dunny most accurately refers to any type of outside toilet without modern plumbing—basically consisting of a toilet seat placed over a deep hole in the ground. But it can now also be used casually to refer to any type of toilet. E.g. "I'm just going to the dunny, be right back!", "Bruce is a massive dropkick, I went to his dunny and his dirty daks were all over the floor!"



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