



Great moments in
Australian television
1956–2006

Australian TV: what we watched and what we didn't

Peter Cox

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WHAT WE WATCHED...

A select list of favourite Australian variety, comedy, music, drama, children's programs and game shows.

VARIETY

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
In Melbourne Tonight	Live anarchy with Graham Kennedy	1957-69	GTV-9	GTV-9
The Bobby Limb Show	Music and comedy	1958-61	TCN-9	TCN-9
Sunnyside Up	Melbourne-based family variety show	1960-66	GTV-9	GTV-9
Revue 61/Revue 62	Digby Wolfe's high class variety show	1961-62	ATN-7	MCA Australia and ATN-7
Bobby Limb's Sound of Music	Musical variety for older viewers	1963-70	Nine/Ten	NLT Productions
Girl Talk	Hazel Phillips' daily national chat show	1967-68	Ten	TEN-10
Hey Hey It's Saturday	Daryl Somers, Ossie Ostrich and company	1971-99	Nine	Somers Carroll
The Mike Walsh Show	Daytime variety chat show with Walsh and Jeanne Little	1973-1985	Ten, Nine	Hayden-Price Productions
The Don Lane Show	Don Lane with Bert Newton	1975-83	Nine	GTV-9; Peter Faiman producer
Midday	Hosted by Ray Martin, then Derryn Hinch and Kerri-Anne Kennerley	1985-98	Nine	Nine network
The Big Gig	Stand-up comedy	1989-91	ABC	Ted Robinson producer
Tonight Live	Steve Vizard's Melbourne-based chat show	1990-93	Seven	Media Arts
Ernie and Denise	Sigley and Drysdale's mid-morning show	1992-98	Nine	Shauna Kane and Paul Staff producers
Good Morning Australia	Bert Newton's mid-morning chat show	1993-2005	Ten	Ten network
Denton	Andrew Denton's chat and comedy show	1994-95	Seven	Eastway Communications
The Footy Show	Football-based variety in AFL and NRL versions	1994-	Nine	Nine network
Rove Live	Live Melbourne-based chat show	2000-	Ten	Roving Enterprises
Dancing with the Stars	Celebrity dance contest with Daryl Somers	2004-	Seven	Granada



COMEDY

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
The Mavis Bramston Show	Ground breaking topical satire	1964-68	Seven	ATN-7
The Aunty Jack Show	Absurd and irreverent burlesque	1972-73	ABC	Maurice Murphy and Ted Robinson producers
The Paul Hogan Show	Sketches and monologues from Hoges	1973-81	Seven, Nine	John Cornell, Peter Faiman, James Fishburn producers
The Norman Gunston Show	Garry McDonald as the Logie-winning Norman	1975-76, 1978-79, 1993	ABC, Seven	John Eastway producer, Bill Harding original writer
The Naked Vicar Show	Revue-style comedy	1977-78	Seven	RS Productions, written by Gary Reilly and Tony Sattler
Australia? You're Standing In It	Sketch comedy featuring Tim and Debbie	1983-84	ABC	John Eastway, Kris Noble producers
The D-Generation	Sketch comedy	1986-87	ABC	Kris Noble producer
The Comedy Company	Sketch comedy with characters like Con the Fruiterer	1988-91	Ten	Media Arts, Southern Star
Fast Forward	Sketch comedy and impersonations	1989-92	Seven	Artist Services
The Money or the Gun	Andrew Denton's humorous take on serious subjects	1989-93	ABC	Mark Fitzgerald producer
DAAS Kapital	The Doug Anthony All-Stars	1991-92	ABC	Ted Robinson producer
The Late Show	The D-Generation's Saturday night hit	1992-93	ABC	ABC; written by the D-Generation
The Glass House	Panel comedy show	2001-	ABC	ABC
CNNNN	News spoof from The Chaser team	2002-03	ABC	Crackerjack Productions
Comedy Inc.	Sketch comedy	2003-	Nine	Crackerjack Productions

SITCOMS

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
My Name's McGooley, What's Yours?	Working class couple with pesky father-in-law	1967-69	Seven	Seven network
Our Man in Canberra	Political satire about a Member of Parliament	1972 (cancelled after first episode)	ABC	John O'Grady writer
The Last of the Australians	Alwyn Kurts as a bigot	1975-76	Nine	Crawford Productions
Alvin Purple	Alvin's sexual escapades	1976	ABC	Maurice Murphy producer
Bobby Dazzler	Johnny Farnham as a pop star	1977	Seven	Crawford Productions
Kingswood Country	Ross Higgins as suburban bigot Ted Bullpitt	1979-84	Seven	RS Productions; Gary Reilly and Tony Sattler writers
Hey Dad!	Madcap household of a widowed architect	1984-94	Seven	Gary Reilly Productions
Mother and Son	A man cares for his absent-minded mother	1985-94	ABC	Geoff Portmann producer, Geoffrey Atherden writer
Acropolis Now	Humour based on ethnic differences	1989-92	Seven	Crawford Productions
Newlyweds	Domestic comedy	1992-94	Seven	Crawford Productions, Media Arts
Frontline	Behind the scenes of a TV current affairs show	1994-97	ABC	Frontline Television Productions
Funky Squad	Spoof of 1970s cop shows	1995	ABC	Frontline Television Productions
The Games	Send-up of Olympic Games bureaucracy	1998, 2000	ABC	Finishing Touches Productions
Grass Roots	Send-up of local government	2000, 2003	ABC	Eastway Communications
Pizza	The lives of three pizza delivery guys	2000-	SBS	Paul Fenech writer/director
Kath and Kim	High-rating sitcom of a suburban mother and daughter	2002-05	ABC	Riley Turner Productions
We Can Be Heroes: Finding the Australian of the Year	Chris Lilley's clever mockumentary	2005	ABC	ABC

POP MUSIC

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Bandstand	Brian Henderson's showcase for local pop talent	1958-72	Nine	TCN-9, Warwick Freeman (1958-64), Ray Newell (1964-70), Brian Morelli (1970-72) producers
Six O'Clock Rock	Johnny O'Keefe's lively rock 'n' roll show	1959-62	ABC	ABC
The Go!! Show	Melbourne-based pop show	1964-67	0/10	DYT Productions
Kommotion	Teenage pop show	1965-67	0/10	Willard King
Uptight	Saturday morning pop show with Ross D. Wylie	1968-70	Ten	Jardine Productions
Happening 70-72	Saturday morning pop show	1970-72	Ten	Lewis Young Productions
Young Talent Time	Johnny Young and his team of talented juniors	1971-88	Ten	Lewis Young Productions
Sound Unlimited/ Sounds	Donnie Sutherland's Saturday morning video clip show	1974-87	Seven	Seven network
Countdown	Pop with Molly Meldrum	1974-87	ABC	Michael Shrimpton and Robbie Weekes producers
Rage	All-night video clip show	1987-	ABC	ABC
Australian Idol	Singing contest where viewers vote	2003-	Ten	Grundy/ Fremantle Media

DRAMA SERIES

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Stormy Petrel	Colonial drama about Governor Bligh	1960	ABC	ABC
Whiplash	Adventure in the goldrush era	1960-61	ATN-7	Associated Television, ICS
Consider Your Verdict	Courtroom drama	1961-64	HSV-7	Crawford Productions
Homicide	Murder in Melbourne	1964-76	Seven	Crawford Productions
You Can't See Round Corners	Vietnam war era love story	1967	Seven	Seven
Contrabandits	Customs agents investigate smugglers	1967-68	ABC	ABC
Hunter	Spy drama	1967-69	Nine	Crawford Productions
Division 4	Drama at Yarra Central police station	1969-1975	Nine	Crawford Productions
Matlock Police	Police in a country town	1971-76	Ten	Crawford Productions
Spyforce	World War II spy drama	1971-72	Nine	Roger Mirams Productions
Seven Little Australians	Ethel Turner's tale of a Sydney family in the 1890s	1973	ABC	Ethel Turner Productions
Pig in a Poke	A doctor in inner-city Sydney	1975, 1977	ABC	ABC, Brian Bell producer
Power without Glory	Frank Hardy's historical novel	1976	ABC	Paradine Productions
Bluey	Lucky Grills as a tough detective	1976-77	Seven	Crawford Productions
Cop Shop	The goings-on in a police station	1977-84	Seven	Crawford Productions
Carson's Law	Period crime-legal drama	1983-84	Ten	Crawford Productions
The Flying Doctors	Adventures of the Royal Flying Doctor Service	1986-92	Nine	Crawford Productions
GP	Medical drama	1989-96	ABC	Roadshow, Coote and Carroll
Police Rescue	Action series about rescue squad	1991-95	ABC	Southern Star Xanadu, BBC
Phoenix	Gritty cop drama	1992-93	ABC	Alison Nisselle writer
Banjo Paterson's The Man from Snowy River	Inspired by the poem	1993-96	Nine	PRO Films
Halifax f.p.	Rebecca Gibney as a forensic psychiatrist	1994-2002	Nine	Simpson Le Mesurier
Blue Heelers	Policing in Mount Thomas	1994-2006	Seven	Southern Star
Water Rats	Water Police on Sydney Harbour	1996-2001	Nine	Southern Star, Hal McElroy

Wildside	Set in an inner-city crisis centre	1997-99	ABC	Gannon-Jenkins
SeaChange	A divorced lawyer moves to a coastal town	1998-2000	ABC	Artist Services
Stingers	Undercover police	1998-2004	Nine	Beyond Simpson Le Mesurier
Love is a Four Letter Word	Set in an inner-city pub	2001	ABC	ABC
Changi	Aussie POWs in World War II	2001	ABC	John Doyle writer
The Secret Life of Us	Young people living in an apartment block	2001-04	Ten	Southern Star
McLeod's Daughters	Romance and life on the land	2001-	Nine	Millenium Television
Love My Way	Life of a single working mother	2004-	Fox8	Southern Star
RAN: Remote Area Nurse	Bilingual drama set in Torres Strait	2006-	SBS	Chapman Pictures

MINI-SERIES

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Against the Wind	Colonial convict drama	1978	Seven	Pegasus Productions
The Last Outlaw	John Jarrett as Ned Kelly	1980	Seven	Pegasus Productions
Water Under the Bridge	Life during World War II	1980	Ten	Shotton Productions
Nevil Shute's A Town Like Alice	World War II love story	1981	Seven	Alice Productions, BBC
Return to Eden	Lavish revenge tragedy	1983	Ten	McElroy & McElroy, Hanna Barbera
The Dismissal	Dramatisation of Whitlam's fall	1983	Ten	Kennedy Miller
Bodyline	1930s cricket controversy	1984	Ten	Kennedy Miller
The Cowra Breakout	Japanese POWs escape during World War II	1985	Ten	Kennedy Miller
ANZACS	A group of Australians in World War I	1985	Nine	Burrowes Dixon
The Harp in the South	Life in post-war, working class Sydney	1987	Ten	Buckley Productions
Nancy Wake	Noni Hazlehurst as the war heroine	1987	Seven	Simpson Le Mesurier
Vietnam	Vietnam War drama	1987	Ten	Kennedy Miller
Captain James Cook	Cook's voyages of discovery	1987	ABC	Revcom
Great Expectations: the Untold Story	A spin-off from Dickens' classic tale	1987	ABC	BBC, Hemdale Films
True Believers	The Australian Labor Party splits	1988	ABC	Roadshow, Coote and Carroll
Come In Spinner	Women working in wartime Sydney	1990	ABC	Jan Chapman producer
Brides of Christ	Girls train as nuns in changing times	1991	ABC	Roadshow, Coote and Carroll

DRAMA SERIALS

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Autumn Affair	Middle-aged love	1958-59	Seven	ATN-7
Bellbird	Life in a country town	1967-77	ABC	ABC
Number 96	Strange characters live in a block of flats	1972-78	Ten	Cash-Harmon Productions
Certain Women	Modern life with the Stone family women	1973-77	ABC	ABC, Glyn Davies producer
The Box	Set in a TV station	1974-77	Ten	Crawford Productions
Class of '74	Schoolroom teenage drama	1974-75	Seven	Grundy
The Sullivans	Nostalgic drama about life during World War II	1976-82	Nine	Crawford Productions
The Young Doctors	Hospital drama	1976-83	Nine	Grundy
The Restless Years	School leavers face the world	1977-81	Ten	Grundy
Prisoner	Life is tough in a female prison	1979-86	Ten	Grundy
A Country Practice	Life in a rural community	1981-94	Seven, Ten	JNP Productions
Sons and Daughters	Separated twins fall in love	1982-87	Seven	Grundy
Neighbours	Suburban life in Ramsay St	1985-	Seven, Ten	Grundy
Home and Away	Life in Summer Bay	1988-	Seven	Seven network

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Mr Squiggle and Friends	The pencil-nosed man from the Moon	1959-1999	ABC	ABC
Why Is It So?	Science with Professor Julius Sumner Miller	1963-73	ABC	ABC
Romper Room	Do-bees, don't bees and a magic mirror	1963-88	Seven	Seven network
Here's Humphrey	The accident-prone four year old bear	1965-	Nine	Banksia Productions
Play School	Aimed at the under 5s	1966-	ABC	ABC
Skippy	Adventures of a clever kangaroo	1966-68	Nine	Fauna Productions
Adventure Island	Fantasy adventure	1967-73	ABC	Godfrey Productions
The Curiosity Show	Scientific experiments	1972-90	Nine	Nine network
Fat Cat and Friends	Morning show with Fat Cat and Patsy Briscoe	1975-92	Seven	Seven network
Shirl's Neighbourhood	Magazine-style show with Graeme 'Shirley' Strachan	1979-83	Seven	Puppetstuff Productions
Wonder World	Simon Townsend's grown-up style magazine show	1979-86	Ten	Townsend Productions
Round the Twist	A family lives in a lighthouse	1990, 1993, 1998, 2000	Seven, ABC	Australian Children's Television Foundation
Johnson & Friends	A group of toys comes alive	1990-95	ABC	Film Australia
Bananas in Pyjamas	The adventures of B1 and B2	1992-	ABC	ABC
Hi- 5	Singing and dancing for kids	1999-	Nine	Kids Like Us, Nine Films & Television
The Saddle Club	Three girls and their love for horses	2001-03	ABC	Crawford Productions, Protocol Entertainment

GAME SHOWS

PROGRAM	SUBJECT	DATES	NETWORK	PRODUCTION
Pick-a-Box	Bob and Dolly Dyer's quiz show	1957-71	Seven	Seven network
The Price is Right	Contestants guess the values of prizes	1957-	Seven, Nine, Ten	Grundy
Wheel of Fortune	Quiz and word puzzle	1959-62, 1981-	Nine, Seven	Grundy
Concentration	Memory game	1959-67	Nine	Grundy
The Great Temptation	Quiz show that replaced Pick-a-Box	1970-76	Seven	Grundy
Blankety Blanks	Celebrity game with Graham Kennedy	1977-80	Ten	Grundy
Sale of the Century	Classic quiz, revived in 2005 as Temptation	1980-2001	Nine	Grundy
Perfect Match	Dating show with Greg Evans	1984-89	Ten	Grundy
Good News Week	Comedy game show with Paul McDermott	1996-2001	ABC/Ten	Good News Week Productions
Who Wants to be a Millionaire?	Intense quiz show that gave two contestants \$1 million in 2005	1999-	Nine	Celador
Spicks and Specks	Pop music quiz with Adam Hills	2005-	ABC	ABC

WHAT WE DIDN'T WATCH ...

1966-75

Hey You (1967) – ‘odd couple’ style sitcom written by John-Michael Howson
Good Morning Mr Doubleday (1969) – school teacher sitcom adapted from an American original
A Guy Called Athol (1968) – variety series hosted by former Seeker Athol Guy
The Long Arm (1970) – this cop show, the 0/10 network’s first drama series, lasted 19 episodes
The Link Men (1970) – short-lived action cop drama remembered for car chases with Holden Monaros, lasted 12 episodes
The Spoiler (1972) – Bruce Barry as a tough discredited detective on a vendetta, lasted 13 episodes
Ryan (1973) – private eye drama series starring Rod Mullinar and Pamela Stephenson
Shannon’s Mob (1975) – Robin Ramsay as Dave Shannon takes charge of FIASCO (The Federal Intelligence and Security Organisation), lasted 13 episodes

1976-85

Kings Men (1976) – drama set in Kings Cross police station
Cuckoo in the Nest (1978) – Jeanne Little sitcom that lasted four episodes
Arcade (1980) – expensive and over-hyped soap set in a shopping mall
Holiday Island (1981) – set on a tropical island, filmed in Melbourne, lasted six months
Punishment (1981) – the male *Prisoner* without the humour with Mel Gibson as an inmate, Barry Crocker as Superintendent
Taurus Rising (1982) – local attempt at a lavish *Dynasty*-like soap with a title nobody understood
Waterloo Station (1983) – police soap with young trainee cops, lasted three months
Special Squad (1984) – big budget action series about a crack major crime squad
The National (1985-86) – the ABC’s national one-hour news and current affairs bulletin

1986-95

Willing and Abel (1987) – adventure comedy about two conmen living on a houseboat
Page One (1988-89) – commercial current affairs program that lured big names in TV journalism but failed to hit the mark
The Family Business (1989) – sitcom by Gary Reilly about married sisters who live next to each other
Family Double Dare (1989) – adult version of a children’s game show, lasted four weeks
Superquiz (1989) – game show with Mike Walsh & Deborah Hutton, lasted three months
Skirts (1990) – drama comedy about female police with Mary Coustas struggled in its time slot against *60 Minutes*
Hampton Court (1991) – Betty from *Hey Dad* with 4 men and a baby, lasted 13 episodes
Boney (1992) – Cameron Daddo as a detective with mystical powers, raised by Aborigines
Bingles (1993) – panel beater sitcom with Shane Bourne, lasted 13 episodes
The Comedy Sale (1993) – sitcom set in a shopping mall with Mikey Robins, lasted 3 episodes
Paradise Beach (1993-94) – glam soap with Gold Coast setting and lots of swimsuits
Wedlocked (1994) – sitcom produced by Steve Vizard
The Bob Morrison Show (1994) – family sitcom with a dog as the hero and innovative use of doggie cam
Alan Jones Live (1994) – lasted 49 nights
After the Beep (1995) – low budget ABC sitcom
Pacific Drive (1995) – glam soap
Echo Point (1995) – sun-and-surf soap took on *Home and Away* and failed

1996-2005

I Do I Do (1996) – ahead of its time reality game show where the winning couple was married at the end of the program; hosted by Lisa Treloar
Talking Telephone Numbers (1996) – phone-in game show, lasted four weeks
The Late Report (1999) – chat show similar to *The Panel*, with Emma Tom, John Safran
Dog’s Head Bay (1999) – David Williamson’s sitcom about a city couple’s weekend
Celebrity Big Brother
Greed (2001) – complicated quiz show with Kerrie-Anne Kennerley
Marshall Law (2002) – comedy drama about two sisters who are lawyers, lasted 17 eps
The Chat Room – another copy of *The Panel*, died after 3 eps

The Cooks (2004) – competing restaurants and relationships

Let Loose Live (2005) – sketch comedy that dented the reputations of some *Fast Forward* regulars, lasted 2 eps

The X Factor (2005) – new talent show similar to *Australian Idol*

Last Man Standing (2005) – a series about men and mateship

Our Place (2005) – lifestyle renovation show that replaced *Burke's Backyard*

Aussie Queer Eye (2005) – makeover show, lasted six episodes