

Hissy Fit Nation

by Kerry Cue

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That's it. Right. I'm over it. I'm not putting up with this idiocy anymore. If I have to deal with this nonsense one more time - just ONE more time - I think I might take an axe and smash ... no, not an axe. I'll pepper spray them... look, you can only take so much of this ridiculous, mind-numbing incompetence before you snap. Snap! Just like that!

Damn! That feels good. What's my problem? Nothing really. Everything, maybe. I was just practising being a Drama Queen. Have you noticed that we Aussies have turned into a nation of hissy-fit throwing Drama Queens? Even if you're not a main contender, the other 22 million Aussies are up for it. There is always someone on the tellie, in a crowd, in a shop, in a restaurant or in a queue somewhere, who is annoyed, outraged, spitting the dummy, stamping their feet and/or generally getting really pissed off with the service, the government, the universe and everything.

We Aussies haven't always been Drama Queens. Back in the 1960s we were a laidback and easy-going lot. The average Aussie was tanned, tough and laconic. Aussie blokes, that is. Aussie women - sheilas back then - flew under the political radar until Germaine Greer threw a giant hissy fit, stomped off to England and generally gave the one finger salute to the establishment and male-dominated hierarchies everywhere. Good one, Germaine.

Meanwhile, in the sixties everything Aussies did was understated. A night out was 'beaut'. A pav was 'lovely'. The answer to 'How ya goin'?' was 'Not bad' or 'Couldn't complain'. Back then parents hoped that each of their kids would 'get a good job, find a nice boy or girl and settle down'. The settle down package include a nice house in a nice suburb with a few little tackers and, eventually, a nice car, the basic necessities of suburban life.

But, even as your average Aussie bloke pushed his Victa mower under the Hills Hoist and his better half whipped up a passionfruit pav in the kitchen, change was afoot. The black and white TV set

flickered in the lounge room. Kids sat mesmerised watching cool American TV shows like *Dennis the Menace* and *Leave it to Beaver* where the kids were smart and full of sass and wore cool clothes like jeans and sneakers and said cool things like 'Hey, you guys, we oughta split.' Significantly, a new language arrived with these TV shows and ads. We saw housewives with maniacal grins gushing over toilet bowls that sparkled and kitchen sinks that gleamed. We wanted that 'taste sensation', the 'dazzling finish' and the 'ring of confidence' (from Colgate's toothpaste).

Suddenly, things were no longer beaut but FANTASTIC and FABULOUS. The Brits could only manage BRILLIANT or BRILL. But the Americans hyperventilated over everything. Hair was FABULOUS (Add a Yankee drawl here). A movie was FANTASTIC. A movie star was DROP DEAD GORGEOUS.

This language heralded new expectations. We wanted FABULOUS hair. We wanted to watch FANTASTIC movies. We wanted to be DROP DEAD GORGEOUS. Nobody wanted to be ordinary any more, not even the average man.

Of course, it took some years and bags of money to morph from average Aussies into hissy-fit throwing divas. Nevertheless, if you take the mocking and bullying attitudes of Reality TV, combine them with bitch-slapping mob mentality of social media and marble in the hard won rights of minorities, women, religious and racial groups, what do you get? Our It's-all-about-MOI culture. Bugger anyone else (To use some old Australian.) All those civil rights have somehow morphed into my RIGHT to be FABULOUS.

We seem to live in some sort of hyper-reality where everything about MOI is so God-Damn important including my house, hair, car, kids, social life, indoor/outdoor patio, holiday and whiteness of teeth that nothing else matters. Pregnancy is a major drama. If you are carrying a genius, you cannot be too careful. The birth experience is astronomical. It merits a choir of heavenly angels and three wise men. Kinder is, like, going to an Ivy League university. There are even graduation ceremonies for kinder now. Primary School is like being in-training for the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize and the Archibald Prize all at once. And if my child, the genius, doesn't live up to expectations, it's the schools fault. It must be.

Year 10 is so, like, special, we must have a red-carpet style Formal. Year 12 is so, like, demanding we have to reward

ourselves with Schoolies Week. Weddings. OMG. Weddings are bigger than Ben Hur and Gone With the Wind combined. You cannot overdo a wedding. Playing football is so demanding we have to indulge in a boozy post-footy season trip with a Strip Club crawl. Girl's lives are so exhausting they just must have a boozy, giggly girl's night out /weekend indulgence.

And if anyone gets in MY way, god help them because 'I'm special. So special. I gotta have some of your attention. Give it to me.' All right. I didn't write the song, but I'm so special, I could have if I wanted.

The problem is, in a country of 22 million demanding, foot-stamping, hissy-fit throwing divas, no one is actually paying attention to anyone else and that is truly ironic (Take note Alanis Morissette.)