

# Psycho Oz!

by Kerry Cue

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Australians all let us freak out,  
For we are spooked you see;  
We've a scary land, we don't understand;  
Our home is so creepy.  
Our land's red heart is sort of weird  
There's freaking nothing there!  
We cling to the coast, a British outpost;  
Freak out Australia, yeah!

How is it that yet another national disaster has hit us and we are, yet again, shocked, stunned (like a mullet, I guess), and wandering around in dazed disbelief? What is it about our short-term/long-term memory loss that we have forgotten, willfully or accidentally, that it has all happened before? Is this, perhaps, some form of widespread Aussie Alzheimer's?

Moreover, what is it about our market-driven, managerial-cliché muttering mentality and our spin-swallowing, nanny-state, needy attitudes today that we think we are in control? Have we learned nothing from inhabiting this wide brown and savage land for 200-plus years or, in some cases, 40,000-plus years? We Aussies are cot cases. Honestly.

We love the idea of living in this wide brown land. Lots of us own 4WDs but we never actually take them off road. We dream of crossing the big, red heart of this country, but we never do it. Most of our big, macho 4WDs do duty taking the kids to school or sitting out their days in supermarket car parks. We don't even understand the opposing monkey-grip forces pulling on our Aussie souls. Chained to the desk/computer/tools-of-trade we want to own stuff, lots of stuff. Yet at the same time we want to face the open road, to be footloose and carefree.

Our rugged Aussie landscape and strange native animals shape our Aussie identity, yet most of us are city dwellers. The images of this savage land that we store in our memory banks are mostly digital- snatched from the nightly news, cut from live national-disaster broadcasts, pasted from TV nature shows and movies. Our memories are short because we watch, shocked, an unfolding natural disaster on the tellie then click over to -what?- Two and a

Half Men. Our response to national disasters is generous on one level, but psychotic on another.

The first thing we do is look for someone to blame someone. We don't blame fate or happenchance or nature or life. We look for a martyr to nail to the cross of our media outrage. Obviously, we are no longer a God fearing country, or we'd blame him. But we must find someone to blame. Who is it this time? The fickle-finger of scorn is currently being pointed at the Wivenhoe Dam management. The Brisbane floods were their fault. They should have released water in time for the flood.

Basically, the good citizens of Queensland want the Wivenhoe Dam to full fill two opposing roles. They want it to store water for a drought, but remain empty incase of a flood. That is a typical troppo demand of a psychotic electorate. Unfortunately, every electorate is a little bit looney. During each election, local or federal, we expect more government services and to pay less tax, right! Of course, we do. But unless our Prime Minister moonlights as Good Fairy Julia, who can wave a magic wand to bring about these two diabolically opposed demands, we're out of luck.

The next thing that happens following a disaster is the talkfest. Victoria's Black Saturday Royal Commission found, at a cost of \$40plus million, someone to blame. The Chief Commissioner of Police at the time, Christine Nixon. What did she do? She left the command centre and went out to dinner on the night in question. If Victoria's bushfire safety depends on one plumpish, middle-age woman in reading glasses, God - the one we don't really believe in - help us all. The cost of the Royal Commission recommendations, if implemented, was estimated at \$60 billion! They might as well put a smoke alarm in every gum tree in Victoria. (Not such a stupid idea!) But Victoria is safe now, isn't it? They have a report!

The one thing we Aussies can't quite accept is the wild, untamed temperament of this country: so harsh, so cruel, so unforgiving. Perhaps you should look up from your computer, take out your iPod earbuds and turn off the remote. Have some respect. It doesn't pay to turn you back on this country for a minute.

I love a psycho country  
A land of badass plains  
Of whacko mountain ranges  
Sick droughts and random rains  
I lover her weird horizons  
I lover her aggro sea  
Her tarty mad bitch manner  
The looney land for me!

