

relax

READING
FOR YOUR
WEEKEND

Actor up for a laugh on book tour

Jenny Denton

WILLIAM McInnes is hard to keep on track. The popular actor and author, who will be in town on November 21-22 to discuss his new book *Yeah, Nah! A Celebration of Life and the Words That Make Us Who We Are*, is enthusing about the Bendigo Art Gallery. "I went and saw that Grace Kelly exhibition," he said. "That was fantastic. I went to see the Elvis one too. "The only problem with Bendigo is it hasn't got Kryal Castle. That place is like a Will Ferrell movie set. I just can't get over it." McInnes, who is talking by phone from the Barangaroo precinct in Sydney, is also distracted by former NSW premier Dominic Perrottet walking back and forth in his line of sight. Later he spies an actor working behind a coffee bar counter.

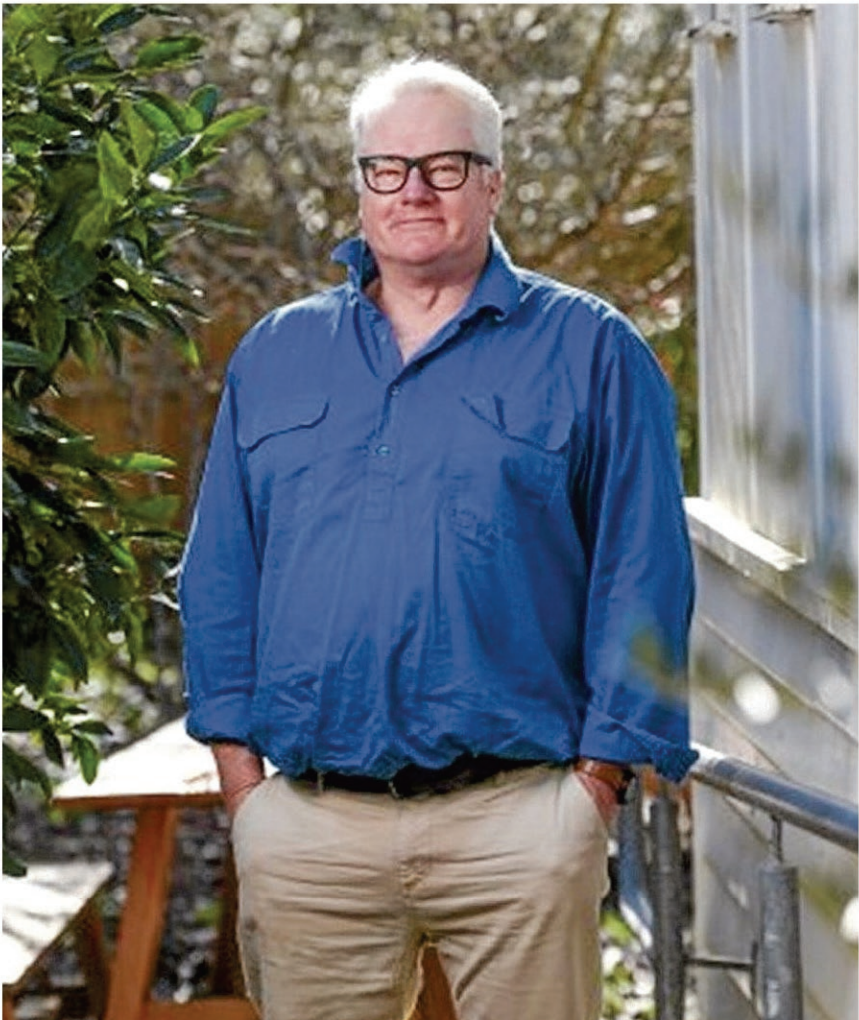
LARRIKIN WHO LOVES AUSTRALIANA

Best known for his acting roles in *Blue Heelers*, *SeaChange*, and, most recently, *The Newsreader*, McInnes is also a prolific writer, with more than 10 works of memoir, fiction and popular history to his name. The books, like his TV and cinema roles, draw on a quintessentially traditional Australian character and deep love of place. "In all honesty, it is a bit of one of life's lottery wins, growing up and living here," McInnes tells the *Advertiser*. His new book is a "memoir-cum-social history" that celebrates "the glory of the Australian language".

McInnes gave it its oxymoronic title, he says, because *War and Peace* was taken. "It is not a collection of definitions and words but more [a story] about the use of words and the people who use them who I've come into contact with over my life," he says.

A LIFE OF NICKNAMES

People, including his own children, have



Actor and author William McInnes will speak about his new book 'Yeah, Nah! A Celebration of Life and the Words That Make Us Who We Are' in Castlemaine on Tuesday night. Picture supplied

bestowed on McInnes some memorable nicknames over the years. "I've had a couple of beauties," he says. "My kids used to call me 'the big chooky' because I reminded them of that Looney Tunes character Foghorn Leghorn." A rugby coach called him 'the hardtop Cortina' on the grounds that he "looked good but ran like a piece of shit". "Anyone who knows anything about cars

from that era knows that the Cortina was the poor man's Torana, but I sort of took it," McInnes said. "Another coach called me 'By-pass' because he didn't think I played with much heart. I took exception to that because I was going out with his daughter."

A LOVE OF THE LINGO

The quirks of colloquial language were something McInnes was brought up appre-

ciating. "My parents loved mucking around with words," he said. "My mother used to call walking 'foot Falcon-ing', because we all loved Falcons in our family." While some people call the colourful local idiom "slang" or "vernacular", McInnes "just call[s] it Australian", he said. "And because we're constantly in a state of flux, our language stays the same but also changes. "That's dynamic and I love that about it, and it's worth celebrating I think. "That's why this book is definitely important to you," he added, with satirical self-promotion. Towards the end of the phone chat, McInnes sees Perrottet finally finding the person he has been looking for. "They're laughing because he was walking around for so long," McInnes said, laughing himself. "That was pretty funny."

IT'S TIME FOR A 'HEARTFELT FRUITY TALK'

With an eye for the latent humour and a tendency to freewheeling satire, the author is bound to generate more than a few belly laughs at his central Victorian appearances next week. The audience should expect "heartfelt fruity talk" from him, McInnes says, falsely claiming he has a Foxtel show of that name. Despite the hilarity and nonsense, he is genuinely looking forward to the visit. "They've got their own particular culture, regional centres and regional towns," McInnes said. "I love it. I love getting out to the sticks." **William McInnes will appear in conversation with Derek Guille at the Phee Broadway Theatre in Castlemaine on Tuesday, November 21; at the Bendigo Library in Hargreaves Street, Bendigo, at 1pm on Wednesday, November 22; and at the Gisborne Library, 8 Hamilton Street Gisborne, at 6pm on Wednesday, November 22, and will be signing copies of his new book *Yeah, Nah*. Tickets are \$25.**

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