33 See Whannel, 'The Lads and the Gladiators', for an extreme example of this tendency in critical writing.
34 Wark, *Celebrities*, p. 35.
36 Hardey, 'Public Address'.
37 Cited by Gripsrud, p. 49.
38 Ibid.
39 Frow, p. 90.

**Pls ON TV:**
**INTELLECTUALS, PUBLIC CULTURE AND AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION**

**Tania Lewis**

When local comedians-cum-sports commentators Rampaging Roy Slaven and H. G. Nelson appeared on an episode of Robert Hughes’ television show *Australia: Beyond the Fatal Shore* (2000), they did what they do best. Wandering into an art gallery—Hughes’ site of expertise as an art historian—they offered a critical analysis of one of the works displayed while flamboyantly lampooning Hughes’ role as expert commentator on Australian national culture. Examining Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles*, an artwork purchased for $1.4 million by the National Gallery in Canberra in 1974 under a cloud of controversy, Roy Slaven waxes lyrical about its impact at the time on Australian culture:

The nation wasn’t sure whether it had been conned or not. Once we saw it we knew we’d got it cheap. Here we had an Australian government that was pioneering the cause of modern
art. It dragged Australia into the modern era. We were at the vanguard of what was happening in America in the fifties.

Figures such as Hughes, ‘Australia’s starriest intellectual’, can be seen as representing a new breed of public intellectual (PI) on television: the celebrity intellectual. In the past, the figure of the expert or PI on TV has, like the news anchor, largely been portrayed as a disembodied presence—a rational, distanced ‘talking head’. In contrast, *Australia: Beyond the Fatal Shore* was not authorised by the traditional ‘objective’ voice-over; rather, Hughes’ larger-than-life persona and awkward lumbering form (the series was shot after he had suffered major injuries in a car crash) were as much the focus of the documentary as the various Australian icons and archetypes analysed in the series. Celebrity intellectuals like Hughes represent a complex new *embodied* mode of intellectual authority.

But perhaps Rampaging Roy Slaven’s satirical take on Hughes’ role as cultural commentator represents an even more profound shift in the way in which intellectual authority is defined in contemporary Western nations like Australia. While *Beyond the Fatal Shore* interwove its documentary-style narrative with Hughes’ own personal biography as a way of offering up a kind of humanised and personalised form of televisual expertise, the series still presented Hughes as, first and foremost, an intellectual. In contrast, Roy Slaven’s self-conscious *performance* of intellectual authority highlights how in the world of television the distinctions between intellectuals, celebrities and ordinary people are increasingly blurred. While Roy and H. G.’s own ‘mock’ expertise supposedly lies in the field of sport (and includes an apparently infinite knowledge of everything from Aussie Rules to synchronised swimming), in their various appearances on television and radio they continually cross into other fields, blurring the boundaries between the ‘ordinary’ knowledge of the sports fan and the world of the expert or intellectual. As John Doyle notes in an interview about his alter ego Rampaging Roy Slaven, ‘Roy is lucky enough to have represented Australia in a number of disciplines … he is qualified to give insights into what it is like being out there, to provide expertise.’

Similarly, in their television show *Club Buggery* (which ran on the ABC in a 9.30 Saturday night slot from January 1995 to January 1998), Roy and H. G. offered up a bizarre mix of cabaret-style entertainment and satire that brought together popular and expert knowledge in often anarchic ways. While Roy and H. G. had originally made their names as comic sports commentators, *Club Buggery’s* variety show format involved ‘interviewing’ a wide range of celebrity figures, from politicians to opera singers, in front of a live television audience. Much of the show’s humour came from mocking their own roles as authoritative talking heads. This sense of reflexivity towards their roles as authorities on whatever subject they were dealing with also extended to the celebrity guests and experts they interviewed on the show. Thus sports celebrities were challenged with philosophical questions while Roy and H. G.’s interviews with experts or intellectuals often involved them imitating and thereby undermining the authoritative discourse of their guests.

In mocking the role and persona of the expert on TV, Roy and H. G. work to highlight the fact that, as the British media studies academic Nicholas Garnham argues, ‘the figure of the expert is now a deeply ambivalent one’. But rather than signalling the death of the expert, TV personalities like Roy and H. G. mark an opening up of the concept of the public intellectual. Increasingly the people playing a role in directing and shaping Australian public culture today are television personalities, the new PIs. If we think about the public spaces in which controversial issues such as the government’s treatment of refugees or other questions of national import are
discussed, more often than not these debates are taking place on television.

While traditionally we associate the discussion of 'serious issues' on TV with news and current affairs, television increasingly presents these issues within program formats which blend the styles of educational and entertainment TV. The personalities directing the debates and discussion in these crossover programs include figures such as Andrew Denton, who, as I argue later in this essay, can also be seen as representing a new kind of public intellectual. By claiming the title of PI for TV identities like Denton and Roy and H. G., however, I am not suggesting the complete disappearance of those figures traditionally associated with public critique. Obviously cultural commentators such as Robert Manne and Phillip Adams continue to play a major role in shaping public debate and speaking in 'the national interest'. But we need to broaden our definition of what counts as 'legitimate' public culture and who can take on the role of the PI in Australia today.

Within both academic and public debates, discussions of television as a site of intellectual activity in contemporary Australia have been few and far between. Robert Dessaix's 1997 radio program for Radio National on 'Intellectuals and Public Culture' in Australia is a case in point. Although in one episode entitled 'An Australian Cultural Life?' Dessaix briefly interviewed Catharine Lumby about television and how it functions in Australian public culture, the other twelve episodes of the series were devoted to more traditional conceptions of public intellectuals. Thus, Dessaix's Australian 'canon' was drawn from the literary sphere (Helen Garner and David Williamson), the field of history (Henry Reynolds and John Hirst), the area of academic/cultural commentary (Dennis Altman and Robert Manne) and broadcast radio (Phillip Adams). Television was not recognised as a major site of public culture and intellectual activity. Dessaix's definition of public culture was perhaps broader than most, but as in much academic writing on the topic of intellectuals and public debate, television was left at the margins, relegated to the (sub)cultural sphere of youth and Generation X.

This failure to deal with the role of television represents a major blind spot in debates about public culture and the role of the intellectual. What follows is an attempt to think about the meaning of public intellectuals and public culture in Australia in a broader, more inclusive way, one that, rather than purely celebrating television or including it as a groovy 'add-on' to traditional forums, acknowledges it as a major contributor to a complex Australian culture.

A TELEVISUAL PUBLIC SPHERE?

In 'new' settler nations like Australia, intellectuals have traditionally played an important role in moulding and contributing to a sense of a national identity, and to creating a lively public sphere. The cultural work performed by intellectuals has been traditionally associated with literary forms such as the novel, the essay and the poem, as well as other print media. In contemporary Australia, however, our stories of nationhood and national identity have increasingly been represented through visual rather than print means. As Graeme Turner has argued, from the 1970s onwards, film began to challenge literature's status as the "cultural flagship" for the nation. More recently, television has played an increasingly significant role in forging a national culture. While newspapers such as the Australian still strive to represent themselves as having a national reach and authority (and are, of course, highly influential in shaping public debate), television remains 'the main platform on which whatever passes as public debate and collective sense-making in today's society takes place'.

But if intellectuals have for the most part drawn their authority as public figures from literary or print-based culture, where are they placed in relation to a medium like television?
The influential German sociologist Zygmunt Bauman offers one way of thinking about the changing role of the intellectual in a media-saturated society. He argues that in contemporary Western cultures, intellectuals and experts no longer have the power and authority they once had. In a postmodern era where knowledge is no longer possessed only by a privileged few, intellectuals are now moving from a primarily legislative towards a more interpretive role. What he means by this is that intellectuals are no longer able to make sweeping, authoritative claims on behalf of ‘the public’. Instead he contends that today’s societies are marked by a permanent and irreducible pluralism of cultures, which is in turn mirrored by a pluralism of truths and knowledges.8 In a situation where intellectuals are no longer the sole bearers of knowledge and expertise, their role is increasingly one of facilitating the transfer of knowledge and encouraging dialogue between different cultural spheres; that is, being interpreters and translators.

An argument closely related to Bauman’s that is also useful for thinking about the changing status of the contemporary intellectual is found within the ‘public sphere’ debate. In his widely cited book The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1962), the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas provided the classic definition of the public sphere as a space where people could freely communicate and debate ideas in a rational, equitable fashion. While Habermas was referring to a particular moment in nineteenth-century Enlightenment culture, his definition of the public sphere has had a major impact on the way we think about notions of public debate, democracy and freedom of speech today. Whenever we use the term ‘public culture’, or that often abused phrase ‘the Australian public’, there is an assumption that they embrace a notion of democratic representation, one that encompasses all Australians.

A number of contemporary commentators, however, have argued that such assumptions are naive and that Habermas’s model is an essentially conservative one that needs to be radically revised if it is to have any relevance to contemporary realities. They argue that Habermas’s depiction of the nineteenth-century public sphere as a place where everyone’s voice or opinion could be heard misrepresents what was essentially a space exclusively occupied by bourgeois white males and, in particular, by Bauman’s legislative intellectuals. Women and the working classes, for example, were by and large excluded from this ‘gentlemen’s club’.9

If Habermas’s nineteenth-century public sphere represented in reality only one elite part of society speaking on behalf of a fictional ‘public’, these commentators argue, in today’s globalised, multicultural world, the notion of a unitary public sphere is even more problematic. Like Bauman, they depict today’s society as a complex, fractured space in which it is no longer possible to speak on behalf of one coherent public. Instead, the contemporary public sphere is a space crammed with images and voices, all vying for the attention of the media-savvy citizen. In this setting, PlS find themselves not only competing for airspace with a range of other media figureheads but also competing for authority with speakers from a range of populist discourses, reflecting in turn the increasingly blurred boundaries between ordinary and expert knowledge in what John Hartley terms ‘the postmodern public sphere’.10 Given the changing role and status of the intellectual in the public sphere, what of television and its contribution to the changing nature of public culture?

**TALK TELEVISION: AUTHORISING THE AUDIENCE**

Although the dissolution of traditional distinctions between expert and ‘ordinary’ forms of knowledge is under way in a range of media spheres in Australia—including ‘old’ media forms such as newspapers, where the boundaries between broadsheet and tabloid genres have been steadily eroded over
the past decade—television offers a particularly useful lens through which to examine these broad social shifts. It is, as I’ve noted, one of the few sites that can still lay claim to representing a ‘national public’, however culturally constructed that category may be. At the same time, it is also marked by a particularly pluralistic approach to culture, embracing a range of cultural values from ‘high’ arts programming to ‘trash’. In this sense television contains an odd and at times uncomfortable mixture of both older, more traditional conceptions of the public sphere (as representing ‘elite’ culture) and newer, more populist ones marked by a breaking down of cultural hierarchies.

A form of TV programming that has received a lot of attention from media studies academics in this regard is the popular talk show format. More than any other television genre, talk shows are seen as potentially offering a new model of public discourse. With their focus on personal experience and their often active inclusion of the audience within the program format, talk shows can challenge the conventions of traditional public culture where experts get to speak on behalf of ‘the public’. In other words, ‘talk television’ represents an important cultural site where what counts as knowledge and expertise in contemporary society is debated and negotiated.11

In *Talk on Television* (1994), a book that focuses on audience discussion programs on commercial British television, Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt argue that ‘participatory television’ is concerned with enabling the voices of ‘diverse publics’ to be heard rather than attempting to represent ‘a common unified public’.12 They contend that such television genres work to challenge the opposition between the privileged sphere of expert knowledge and the denigrated realm of popular or ordinary culture. In the audience discussion programs they analysed, not only are ordinary people allowed to speak, but their opinions and experiences are treated as valid forms of knowledge. Supporting Bauman’s claim that the role of the intellectual has shifted from a legislative to an interpretative one, Livingstone and Lunt argue that participatory television involves ‘a repositioning of the media’s construction of the relationship between expertise and common knowledge from the dissemination of critical, elite knowledge to a presentation or management of public opinion’.13 In other words, participatory television is concerned with representing the beliefs and knowledge of ordinary people as having as much validity and authority as those of experts and intellectuals.

Likewise, in her discussion of the public-sphere debate in relation to American talk shows like *Oprah*, Jane Shattuc argues that such TV programs challenge the authoritative role played by intellectuals and elites in the public sphere by producing a tension between rational educated forms of evidence and the direct “authentic” experience of the audience.14 In the world of the talk show, modes of evidence traditionally marginalised within the wider public sphere such as ‘personal experience, physical evidence, and emotion’ are validated and authorised.15 While the format of talk show programs often involves framing the show with an opening and closing comment from a relevant expert, Shattuc argues that the ‘distant evidence’ of the expert has a less significant role in a framework that privileges the ‘truth’ of personal experience.

What these studies suggest is that, on US and British television at least, the once hierarchical relationship between ordinary and intellectual knowledge is being challenged. Compared with the layperson, the figure of the intellectual and/or expert is still granted a privileged position within television genres such as news and current affairs, particularly on public television, which has traditionally had a more ‘educational’ charter. At the same time, current representations of the intellectual on TV are a far cry from the image of the rational, disinterested talking head once associated with intellectual authority. But what of the Australian context? Are we seeing a similar shift in the treatment of expert and ordinary
knowledge on Australian television, or are there different processes at work in this national setting?

**TALK TELEVISION AUSTRALIAN STYLE**

As in the USA and Britain, television in Australia has in recent years moved away from formal program styles towards more participatory, talk-based shows. While the US talk show and the British audience discussion program have not figured as prominently in Australian programming, chat shows such as Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*, variety shows such as *Micallef Tonight*, and panel discussion programs such as the ABC's *The Fat* and Channel Ten's *The Panel* together represent a distinctly local form of popular, talk-based television.¹⁶

The panel format, in particular, represents a kind of hybrid or transitional genre that lies somewhere between entertainment-oriented, talk-based television and more 'serious' current affairs programming. While not strictly an audience discussion program (it has a live audience but no question time), *The Panel* offers a form of chat-based television that both imitates the panel format of a current affairs program and at the same time undermines the notion of rational, objective debate. Thus, rather than a panel of talking heads, the discussants are popular media figures with no particular expertise or specialist knowledge. Indeed, they often point out their own ignorance of subjects under discussion, thus mocking the notion of informed debate that has traditionally provided the rationale for panel discussions. As regular panellist Tom Gleisner states:

Television is FULL of experts ... Everyone is posturing and giving out a considered opinion. One of the things that we celebrate on *The Panel* is that none of us is claiming to come from the point of view of expertise. We're coming from a genuine reaction: 'I was watching CNN last night and this is what I thought.' And, of course, that's open to 'Well, you got that wrong.'

Fine, people get things wrong, we don't celebrate ignorance. We feel that we're reasonably informed and connected, but we're not experts.¹⁷

On one level *The Panel* seems to challenge the privileged status of the expert or intellectual by representing public debate on television purely as a reflection of the kinds of conversations viewers might have in their own lounge rooms. At the same time, however, the guests on the show are often experts or public intellectuals who are brought on to provide a more 'informed' perspective on particular issues. Like the use of experts to open and close discussion on talk shows like *Oprah*, the regular appearance of such figures on *The Panel* suggests a continued reliance upon the notion of the expert or intellectual as the final arbiter of truth claims. Nonetheless, the experts on *The Panel* tend to present themselves in a manner far removed from that of the traditional talking head, while the format of the program (with discussants frequently talking over the supposedly more informed discourse of the intellectual) works to weaken the experts' authoritative power.

Public broadcasting tends to adhere to the traditional hierarchies of knowledge and expertise, hierarchies that identify public television as being located on the educational 'BBC' end of the education-entertainment continuum. Nonetheless, in Australia, the 'talk television' genre, along with its stars, has been characterised by a remarkable degree of mobility across the public-commercial divide. Over recent years Australian viewers have watched Sean Micallef move from the ABC to Channel Nine, *Good News Week* move from the ABC to Channel Ten, Roy and H. G. move to Channel Seven to host *The Monday Dump*, and John Clarke and Brian Dawe shift from the Nine Network's *A Current Affair* to the ABC's *7.30 Report*. For the most part, the ABC continues to offer traditional current affairs programming, such as *Lateline*, still heavily reliant on the talking-head mode of presentation. However,
the recent emergence of talk-based programs like *The Fat* and *The Glasshouse* represents a significant cultural shift for the ABC. Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*, in particular, reflects an attempt by the ABC to incorporate some of the facets of talk television into its traditionally education-oriented format. Hailed by the *Herald Sun* as a 'talk show about nothing', *Enough Rope* has seen Denton reprise his now familiar TV role of tackling ‘the big issues’ within the comedy chat show format, with the show receiving excellent ratings of around 900,000 viewers. A figure who crosses a number of boundaries on television between the roles of presenter, producer, TV icon, satirist and sometime intellectual, he has long been associated with a deeply cutting brand of satirical humour that is also marked by a strong sense of a social conscience. If one of the roles of the intellectual is, as Edward Said has stated, 'to speak the truth to power', then surely the now-iconic moment when, during his hosting of the 1999 Logies, Denton 'sent up' media mogul James Packer while sitting on his knee was a case in point.

Denton's hybrid persona, however, does not fit comfortably into the category of intellectual or expert. Indeed, in *Enough Rope*, as on British participatory television, Denton works to question the distinctions normally made on television between experts, celebrities and ordinary people. As he notes in an interview with the *Herald Sun*, 'I'm interested in so-called ordinary people and I have a theory that everyone is interesting.' While Denton talks on the show to the usual range of actors, politicians and TV personalities, he also interviews a variety of so-called ordinary people, from truck drivers and school teachers to ICU nurses, using a mixture of humour and informed debate as a means of telling 'their stories' to the television audience. In a recent interview with three psychiatrists, for example, Denton opens with a comic showbiz-style introduction before shifting rapidly into serious interview mode:

If movies are to be believed, psychiatrists are people with little round glasses, thin, cruel lips and white, pointy goatee beards ... and that's just the women. Never has a profession been more misrepresented or stereotyped. Tonight we're going to go inside the minds of three psychiatrists, find out more about the profession. [Introduces the three psychiatrists] Michael, what do people expect to find when they come to see a psychiatrist?

Michael Epstein: Well, they're a bit frightened, understandably, and they're hoping that they're going to find somebody who gets what they're on about: 'He's not judging me, he's not giving me a hard time. He's actually really listening to what I'm saying.'

By bringing ordinary people up on stage and placing them in the position of the TV celebrities and experts he otherwise interviews, in *Enough Rope* Denton draws attention to—and at the same time undermines—the conventions of the traditional chat show. Why should the experiences of the celebrity or expert interviewee be privileged over those of the ordinary person? the show seems to ask. This destabilisation of the conventions of authority is taken further by Denton's regular breaching of the imaginary boundary between the stage and the seated audience. As in the US talk show format, in Denton's 'Show and Tell' segment the authentic experience of the ordinary audience member is valued. An audience member might relate a funny or bizarre anecdote, but they also often choose to discuss a highly personal problem or issue as a way of 'educating' the TV audience. For instance, in one of these segments, Denton talks extensively to a transsexual woman who has undergone sexual realignment surgery and works as a prostitute. In another show he talks to a young man with schizophrenia, opening with the line 'Tell us about schizophrenia. What's it like from the inside?'

While talk shows have been criticised for exploiting the personal problems and afflictions of ordinary people, *Enough Rope* again attempts to utilise and at the same time undermine
these talk-show conventions. Just like Denton’s celebrity and expert interviews, these segments are both educational and entertaining, mixing the ordinary and the extraordinary in ways that suggest an acceptance of difference rather than an attempt to present it as exotic. Members of the audience with extraordinary stories to tell are represented not as freaks or social misfits but, like the celebrities and experts who appear on the show, as contributors to a diverse televus public sphere.

Part of this process of constructing the participatory chat show as a space for communication, dialogue and respect involves giving ‘ordinariness’ credibility and authority. Frances Bonner, in her recent book Ordinary Television, notes that on UK, US and Australian television celebrities and celebrity presenters have to make themselves appear ‘ordinary’ so that the audience can identify with them. Thus, in his interview with actor Russell Crowe (whose ordinariness, it could be argued, is intrinsic to his appeal as an Australian celebrity), Denton spends as much of the interview asking questions about Crowe’s private life and impending fatherhood as he does asking questions about his acting. At the same time, Denton’s own ordinariness is also foregrounded in the interview when he steps out of his role as ‘celebrity presenter’ and offers his personal advice to Crowe ‘as a father’. While the authority of experts and intellectuals on television has traditionally had its source in their not being ordinary, on Enough Rope the ‘disinterested’ discourse of expertise is often displaced by the discourse of ordinariness. Thus, in an interview with paediatrician and Australian of the Year Fiona Stanley Denton moves between encouraging Stanley to address serious issues for Australian children’s health today and getting her to discuss her own role as a mother, going so far as to ask Stanley’s daughter (who was also in the studio) what it was like being raised by a high-powered paediatrician. Rather than privileging expertise, knowledge gained from experience and ‘theoretical’ knowledge obtained by study are granted a kind of equivalence.

The Intellectual in Transition

Much of Australian talk television today, from Mr. Alegre Tonight to The Panel, is marked by a playful, mocking and sometimes subversive take on both television’s own conventions and those of the traditional public sphere. While some might read the rise of the genre of participatory television as prefiguring the death of ‘serious’ public culture and with it the role and status of its privileged representative, the public intellectual, I have argued that the contrary that the rise of this genre creates new space for public debate and new ways of envisaging the role of the public intellectual. Participatory chat shows such as Enough Rope attempt to model a form of ‘public-ness’ in which some of the hierarchies that mark ‘official’ public culture are broken down. Although intellectuals and experts continue to have a presence, their roles on TV are played out against the backdrop of a democratization of knowledge, where the experiences of ordinary people are taken as seriously as the specialist knowledge of experts.

As Catharine Lumby notes in a discussion of ‘popular politics’, the world of contemporary media culture is marked by a different kind of ‘sense making’ from that of ‘serious’ intellectual culture. Unlike the contemplative mode of analysis and rational discourse traditionally associated with the figure of the intellectual, contemporary media forms such as television are marked by a greater willingness to include the discourse of experience. Rather than marginalising media culture, we need to recognise that it represents ‘a world where various politics and ways of living can make sense simultaneously’. Rather than judging public debate and communication on television according to the standards of official public culture, which fails to recognise beliefs and perceptions that fall outside the boundaries of disinterested rationality, we need to understand this mode of discourse on its own terms.

As Bauman’s thesis suggests, it is increasingly difficult for
intellectuals and experts to claim a legislative relationship to knowledge, particularly on television, where a range of different kinds of evidence and knowledge circulate. While some programming, such as traditional current affairs formats, still pays tribute to the authority of the rational intellectual or talking head, increasingly experts are taking on the role of Bauman's interpretive intellectual—translating and mediating between cultures and 'knowledge systems' rather than privileging any particular point of view over others.

Related to this shift is the blurring of boundaries between intellectuals, experts, presenters and celebrities on television. Ordinary people are also being given the authority to speak on television, although this authority tends to be passed to them by a TV personality, either an expert or a presenter. Figures such as Andrew Denton thus can be seen to be playing the role of interpretive intellectual, translating between expert and ordinary knowledge and providing the space for different voices to be heard within the televisual public sphere. Rather than buying into gloomy pronouncements about the death of a critical, public culture, then, we need to rethink what constitutes appropriate or useful public debate in a complex society such as Australia. TV personalities like Denton, I would argue, should be taken seriously as popular figures who, rather than presenting themselves as public intellectuals, often 'smuggle' their political and cultural critique into satirical sketches or celebrity interviews. In other words, we need to recognise that the concept of the 'intellectual' is increasingly a floating one, as likely to circulate within the populist realm of talk television as in the more rarefied world of broadsheet newspapers, literary debates and academic journals.
Although it was one of the more interesting and experimental programs on Australian television, *Micallef Tonight* was axed by Channel Nine after only three months on air—perhaps because Shaun Micallef's at times almost Brechtian style of performance sits rather uncomfortably within the commercial TV format. The fact that it was broadcast at the same time as Denton's *Enough Rope* probably also didn't help its ratings.

17 Quoted in Eaker, 'Panelists'.
18 Dudley, 'Talk is Cheap'.
20 Dudley.
21 Bonner, *Ordinary Television*.
23 Ibid.

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**The Black Market of Ideas**

Marcus Westbury

It's the October long weekend in Newcastle. The first sniff of summer is in the air and thousands of young people are spilling out of the cafés, bars, and the City Hall. From the slightly inebriated party atmosphere, the line-up of hip-hop and electronic musicians, the street clothes and the obvious hangovers, comedowns and underseeped audiences, you could easily be forgiven for thinking that this was a small-scale Big Day Out, Homebake or Livid festival. They have come from every state in Australia, New Zealand and a scattering of other international locations to spend a few days not just to party but to talk, to discuss, to argue and to promote their own particular projects to a large collection of like-minded souls. This Is Not Art (TINA), as the event is known, is a very different kind of gathering that falls somewhere between a pop culture festival, an academic conference, a bit of high art and a cultural insurgency.