

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# Fame Games

## The Production of Celebrity in Australia

The areas of publicity, public relations and promotions have been considered to be on the periphery of the media. Yet this revealing new book demonstrates that they form a fundamental component of the media industries, with the decline of hard news being accompanied by the rise of gossip and celebrity.

In addition to making a substantial contribution to our understanding of the cultural function of celebrity, *Fame Games* outlines how the promotion industry has developed and how celebrity is produced, promoted and traded within the Australian media. While their analysis will inform academic debates on media practice internationally, the authors have taken the unique step of investigating the workings of the Australian promotion industry from within. Interviews with over twenty publicists, promoters, agents, managers and magazine editors have provided a wealth of information about the processes through which celebrity in Australia is produced.

All three authors work at the University of Queensland. **Graeme Turner** is director of the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies and has published many influential books in media and cultural studies, including *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (1996) and (with Stuart Cunningham) *The Media in Australia: Industries, Texts, Audiences* (1997), the standard media studies text in Australia. **Frances Bonner**, Department of English, is a co-editor of *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender* (1992). **P. David Marshall**, Department of English, is the author of *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (1997) and *Modes for Cultural Analysis: Media in Cultural Studies* (in press).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# Fame Games

## The Production of Celebrity in Australia

*Graeme Turner*

University of Queensland

*Frances Bonner*

University of Queensland

*P. David Marshall*

University of Queensland



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521794862](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521794862)

© Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall 2000

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data*

Turner, Graeme.

Fame games: the production of celebrity in Australia.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 79147 2

ISBN 0 521 79486 2 (pbk.)

I. Mass media – Australia. 2. Public relations – Australia.

3. Fame. I. Bonner, Frances. II. Marshall, P. David.

III. Title.

302.230994

ISBN 978-0-521-79147-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-79486-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

*List of tables and illustrations* vii

*List of interviewees* viii

*Acknowledgements* x

### **1 Celebrity and the Media** 1

Flashpoints, the everyday and ‘junk journalism’ 2

The meaning and significance of celebrity 8

Celebrity coverage: Media survey results 16

Filling the gap in media research 23

### **2 The Rise of Promotional Culture** 29

Public relations in Australia 34

Promotion, publicity and the celebrity 43

Spreading the word: The normalisation of publicity 55

### **3 Producing Celebrity** 60

The agent 61

The manager 69

The publicist 79

The everyday: The media feeding the media 85

The networks: Australia’s Hollywood 86

Column inches: Public relations and value 91

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*vi Contents*

- 4 Managing the Media** 93
- Product enhancement 95
  - Damage control 100
  - There's no such thing as bad publicity 105
  - Accidental heroes 110
  - Regulating the 'mad dogs' 114
- 5 Core Territory: Celebrities and the Women's Magazines** 116
- Women's magazines in Australia 117
  - The enduring value of scandal 124
  - The personal, the new and the exclusive 126
  - Magazines and the celebrity industry 141
  - Celebrity and gossip 144
  - Training the reader: Teen magazines 153
- 6 Changes in the Media Landscape** 160
- The red carpet treatment 160
  - The meanings of celebrity 164
  - The critique of promotional culture 170
  - What do we make of all this? 177

*Notes* 179

*Index* 189

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Tables and Illustrations

### Tables

- 1 Celebrity stories in various media 17
- 2 Origin of celebrities in surveyed media 18
- 3 Celebrity stories in selected newspapers 19
- 4 Celebrity stories in selected magazines 21
- 5 Celebrity stories in television news bulletins 22
- 6 Celebrity stories in television current affairs programs 23

### Illustrations

- Newsagency windows advertising magazines 10
- Woman's Day* cover, February 1975 121
- The Sam Newman story in *New Idea*, August 1997 130–1
- Cheryl Kernot on *Australian Women's Weekly* cover, April 1998 134
- Kerri-Anne Kennerley on *Australian Women's Weekly* cover, June 1997 145
- Celebrity fashion shoot, *Girlfriend*, September 1999 155
- Pin-up of *Neighbours* actor Jansen Spencer, *TV Hits*, April 1999 157
- Actor Billy Zane and director Michelle White, Noosa Film Festival,  
September 1999 164
- Rupert Murdoch and Wendi Deng at Fox Studios opening, Sydney,  
November 1999 172

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia  
Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Interviewees

BUNTY AVIESON editor, *New Idea*  
WINSTON BROADBENT director, Saxton Speakers Bureau  
and Management Group  
GEORGIE BROWN Georgie Brown Publicity  
JUNE CANN June Cann Management  
LOUISE CARROLL Louise Carroll Publicity  
ANDREW FREEMAN publicity, Random House Australia  
REA FRANCIS freelance public relations consultant  
VICCY HARPER director, Hilary Linstead and Associates  
BARBARA LEANE theatrical agent  
SUZIE MacLEOD publicity manager, Village Roadshow Film Distributors  
TRACEY MAIR Tracey Mair Publicity  
HARRY M. MILLER Harry M. Miller and Co. Management  
MARK MORRISSEY Morrissey Management  
JANE NICOLLS deputy editor, *Who Weekly*  
KERRY O'BRIEN Kerry O'Brien Publicity  
KEVIN PALMER Kevin Palmer Management  
PETER RIX Peter Rix Management  
GARY STEWART Melbourne Artists Management  
LESNA THOMAS corporate relations, Southern Star  
SUE-ELLEN TOPFER editor-in-chief, *TV Hits*, *Smash Hits*  
HEIDI VIRTUE publicist, Nine Network  
BRIAN WALSH director of programming, promotions and publicity, Foxtel,  
and managing director, The Promotions Dept. Pty Ltd



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*Interviewees ix*

ANTHONY WILLIAMS Anthony Williams Management

REBECCA WILLIAMSON June Cann Management

Throughout the book, where there is no bibliographic reference supplied for a quotation from these practitioners, the extract has been drawn directly from the transcripts of the interviews. The interviews were conducted by David Marshall in Sydney and Melbourne in June, July and October 1997.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia

Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Acknowledgements

This book could not have been written without the assistance of the many people in the publicity and media industries who agreed to be interviewed and quoted. For their patience and generosity, as well as for the quality of the insights they provided into the playing of the fame games, we would like to thank Bunty Avieson, Winston Broadbent, Georgie Brown, June Cann, Louise Carroll, Andrew Freeman, Rea Francis, Vicky Harper, Barbara Leane, Suzie MacLeod, Tracey Mair, Harry M. Miller, Mark Morrissey, Jane Nicolls, Kerry O'Brien, Kevin Palmer, Peter Rix, Gary Stewart, Lesna Thomas, Sue-Ellen Topfer, Heidi Virtue, Brian Walsh, Anthony Williams and Rebecca Williamson.

For assistance in working out how to assemble the information collected in this book, as well as advice on how we should go about dealing with this topic in the first place, we owe thanks to a number of colleagues: they include Barbara-Ann Butler, John Hartley, Annette Henderson, Catharine Lumby, Louise McBryde, Susan McKay, Meaghan Morris, Tony Stevenson, Angela Tuohy, McKenzie Wark and Clara Zawawi. We would also like to thank our research assistants, Rebecca Farley, Megan Sandaver and Simone Murray, for their contributions to the project, and Ruth Delaforce, Susan Lochran and Cathrine Liebich, who transcribed the interview material. Phillipa McGuinness at Cambridge University Press has had a guiding interest in this book for some years, and we are grateful to her for seeing it through (almost) to the end.

Permissions for the reproduction of illustrations were kindly granted by Australian Consolidated Press, *Girlfriend*, *TV Hits*, Pacific Publications,

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-79486-2 - Fame Games: The Production of Celebrity in Australia  
Graeme Turner, Frances Bonner and P. David Marshall  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Acknowledgements xi*

*New Idea*, Louise McBryde and Jon Reid. We gratefully acknowledge their cooperation and assistance.

For permission to quote from Don Walker's 'Ita', we acknowledge the assistance of Rondor Music (Australia) Pty Ltd; and we also acknowledge the kind permission of Exile Publishing Ltd. for permission to quote lyrics from 'New Biography' by Van Morrison.

Finally, the research that went into this book would have been impossible without the support of the Australian Research Council, which funded the project between 1997 and 1999.