

Chris Radburn

True Blue Aussie comedy By Ruby Boukabou

Comedy headliner and MC Chris Radburn's goal when he started in the comedy circuit just over five years ago was to become a full time comic. On a rainy early evening in a city cafe, he tells Brag how that has come to be - not through developing a fictional character but by becoming more relaxed at being himself.

For Radburn, who grew up in Casino, a small town in the north (renowned for its meat industry- there's an annual Mr and Miss Meat award...) comedy was always in him: he loved to make people laugh, putting on skits in the back yard for his parents with his sister (now a Melbourne based contemporary dancer). But to find out that entertaining was what he could do as a living, he first had to get out of his system what he didn't want to do: Radburn followed in his father's steps and took a law degree, then practiced for four years. But "I didn't relate to the people I was dealing with," he says, "and felt annoyed at how people didn't appreciate the work... I guess it just didn't feel right." And so he packed it in and moved to the emerald city to become an actor.

While Radburn appreciated some skills and techniques he learnt in his two years at acting school, he dropped out of the final year not only from the costs but because it didn't gel with what he was discovering as his love of performance (he had started on the comedy circuit after working at The Comedy Store and realising he could do just as well if not better than some of the open mic-ers). "At acting school they tried to get rid of a real Australian accent," he says. "But I want to be an

Aussie actor. I want to play Australian because that's what I am. I'm not interested in learning an American accent. If I'm in a film I want to play an Australian character. I do Voice Overs and some ads now and it's all in my Australian accent."

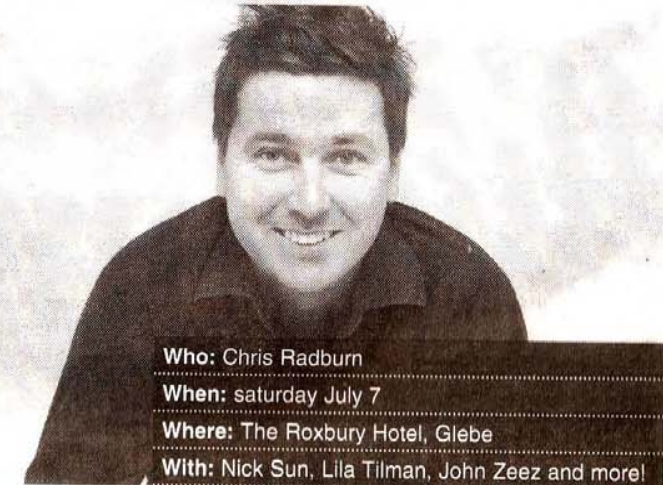
Radburn's genre of comedy is just that. "An Aussie bloke making observations... I love watching people. I just look at things that make me laugh and hope that that will make other people laugh too." As his material has developed it's still the same style and themes, "I just own the stage more and feel more comfortable."

As an MC, this 'Aussie Bloke' is the guy who needs to relax people, have all types of material and keep the night bouncing along. "You don't want to have glue on your feet as it's about the acts... but you still need to entertain," says Radburn. "It's a hard skill. You want to be a bloke that people feel they can just have a beer with while keeping it nice and tight." He's obviously pulling this off, as at a recent MC gig, someone thought he was just that. "Afterwards I was having a beer and this person said 'you were sooo funny. I can't believe how funny you were. You should be a comedian'. 'Ummm I am', I said."

Radburn's recent Melbourne International Comedy Festival show played on this idea of being just the guy who introduces the real comedian. *The Warm Up Guy* sprung from his job on TV shows such as *Joker Poker* where his job was to warm up a television audience before the show. "It's basically just telling

them what to do, where the cameras are ... but you've got to keep it entertaining and relax them." In *The Warm Up Guy* the fictional host never arrives. "It was the framework with my normal material in the middle," says Radburn.

But with all this Aussie bloke stuff... does he play it up? Just a bit? Is there a character of an Australian bloke at all that creeps in? Radburn takes a moment then says. "Well I guess my voice does become a liiiiittle more Aussie when I get on stage." He smiles. I laugh. His earlier comment rings back. "I just make people laugh and now I'm getting paid for it."



Who: Chris Radburn

When: Saturday July 7

Where: The Roxbury Hotel, Glebe

With: Nick Sun, Lila Tilman, John Zeez and more!