

Australian Story  
**Mad World: Chris 'Douggs' McDougall**

In early 2010 Douggs was chosen as a subject in ABC's renowned 'Australian Story'. 'Mad World' was aired in May – to a predictably mixed response!

Missed it? Watch online now – and make up your own mind!  
<http://vimeo.com/11451497>

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Author **bradandy**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 10:31:49pm**  
Subject **Waste of good air Time**

Why on earth did aunty waste good air time promoting a tosser like "Douggs" the base jumper. When you spend most of your shows telling us about those among us who do real good in the world, why oh why do we need to know about some self opinionated boof-head like that.

Author **Bru**  
Date/Time **06 May 2010 11:22:35am**  
Subject **>Re: Waste of good air Time**

Like others here, I was hugely disappointed by this Aust Story. 'Douggs' is a selfish, shallow hedonist with contempt for his fellow citizens.

What's so praiseworthy about hurling one's self off high objects, anyway?

Try working and raising a family, Douggs. It's far more satisfying than the brief adrenaline charge of adventure sports. And, finally, show some respect for the rest of us, who work hard for our happiness, contribute to society, and live for more than instant thrills.

Author **Tom**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 10:31:51am**  
Subject **Dougie is part of the Australian Story**

Congrats to AS for showing this story. Keep on showing a wide slice of the Australian story. Tell all of our stories - we are not all celebrities showing "strength in the face of adversity" and the like.  
Be interested to revisit Douggie decades on to track the journey from young and hedonistic to who knows where...

Author **frank**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 11:07:30pm**  
Subject **>Re: Dougie is part of the Australian Story**

Right on brother. that base jumping fellow is no different than any other adventurer. We respect people like Sir Edmund Hillary for climbing a big dangerous mountain but some people here criticise Douggs for climbing one and then coming back down...the fast way. We idolise men like Peter Brock for driving dangerously or Dick Smith for flying around the world in a helicopter all for a name in a dusty record book. But gee they inspire the spirit of adventure and

amaze us. Douggs is amazing just like the old fashioned death defying trapeze artist or even Houdini...how will he get out of this one alive? And what about those footballers who entertain us every weekend by slamming their bodies into each other until they bleed or break are they also irresponsible. We are just accustomed or trained into accepting this as a legitimate sport. All I can say is go out and buy great wads of cotton wool you people and wrap yourself up, then sit and wonder a little more about the adventurous and daring ones that got us where we are today. The James Cooks, the early explorers and even your ancestors who jumped aboard a boat to a new world, all of them on a quest for a different life....but oh they took chances.

Author **anastasia**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 7:56:10pm**  
Subject **I want my eight cents back**

Douggs was so refreshing. It's great to hear about the forgotten Australians - those who are a waste of space and proud of it.

I note that when talking about his deceased partner he called not by her name but "the person I had been sleeping with for 3 years". It's true what they say ladies - all the best guys ARE taken.

Author **fifi la boom**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 12:26:33pm**  
Subject **Douggs**

I thought AS was about allowing interesting Australians to tell their story. Douggs is certainly interesting and he did warn viewers to tune out if they were easily offended. Yes there are many ways to live life, including his, so I'm not sure why some viewers are so defensive and quick to judge. I'm sure he's used to it though. What he does IS incredibly skilful so to those of you who say he's not an athlete, I say go find yourself a parachute and give it a go!

Author **Awed**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 9:56:44am**  
Subject **Douggs = awesome**

Congrats to Douggs for living his life all the way. Though if he spent his life on the couch complaining about people he saw on TV I wouldn't feel the need to insult him about it.

Author **eugene**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 11:00:56am**  
Subject **Mad World**

I was alarmed by this story, "Douggie" I am sure means no harm, but I believe he takes egotism to a whole new height, I dont think he should compare his life with others and say that his life is so much better and that everyone else has a boring existence, not fair and not true, and as for him commenting on climate change and then choose to work on an oil refinery, I think hypocrisy has now shown itself...

I wish him luck in his lost world.

Author **Simon\_Kennedy ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 10:36:16pm**

Subject **>Re: Mad World**

Eugene:

I'd say it would take a large-ish ego to reach the elite level of most sports, especially ones which Douggs' passion would be comparable to. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's all about pushing yourself to where others won't go, believing in yourself where others have given up. Sure, that takes ego. It's not a dirty word

This was an amazing Australian Story (thank you ABC for continuing the terrific variety of episodes in this time slot). This bloke is a legend; I just couldn't believe the things I was seeing him do. The footage of him tracking in close to the loong cliff was about the scariest thing I've ever seen.. I wish I had an ounce of what it must take, mentally, to overcome the intense internal resistance to do such things.

I don't think he's in a lost world at all; I think he's found something you and I can't see or feel. I'd reckon pushing yourself past the limits as shown in the story would reveal to folks like Douggs something quite unique about the human condition, and our place in the universe, that most of us might never understand.

Author **eugene**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 8:33:57pm**  
Subject **Mad World**

Now I have seen egotism at its best, how dare someone paint their life as being better than others.....working on an oil rig and then comments about concern about climate change....

Author **sambo**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 10:29:46pm**  
Subject **>Re: Mad World**

Douggs is a legend. He isn't saying that his life is better than anyone elses, he is saying that he is just trying to have the most fun out of anyone. Big difference. The guy is a legend , he is totally approachable . Living life to the full. Just because he works on an oil rig and mentioned climate change doesn't make him the biggest hypocrite out there. Wake up people and appreciate someone different from yourselves without being so critical.

Author **engadine**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 10:12:58pm**  
Subject **Mad World**

I was amazed that Australian Story aired this story. In doing so, I consider that you condone his hedonistic, irresponsible behaviour.

Author **RedAnt ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 10:04:14pm**  
Subject **Australian Of The Year**

When i initially tuned in (half way thru) I was a little skeptical.. "friends had died" etc.. But as the program went on Dougz's irrepressible human spirit and lust for life along a road less travelled just totally won me over 110%. Truth is that I'm

one of those suits he was talking about - Yeah ive done well within the machine but my soul is all but awol - I've lost sight of the goal and i was very ready for his profound and cheerful message... The inspiration in his wise words well beyond his (most excellently spent!) young years really woke me up and made me question the whole basis of the way i live. I think the program was nothing short of epic. Full marks to ABC & Australian Story for thinking it up and running with it. I somehow doubt that the sad zombies who criticise Dougz in this post could inspire me in anything like the way Dougz and cohorts did!

Author **Jill**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 9:42:24pm**  
Subject **Douggie**

I've been rather critical of base-jumpers in the past. But there was something rather refreshing about Douggie and I was impressed by his exceptional physical prowess on display in this show. I rather like a man with an over-riding passion, where the sacrifices to get there clearly didn't seem like sacrifices to him. I'm sorry his girlfriend died. I do hope he can afford some veggies and fruit sometime soon. May be he could plunge a spade into the ground and grow some.

Author **PEACE4208**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 7:47:04pm**  
Subject **FREEDOM**

i think good on him for living the life he wants to live, why live in the shadows of others when you can charge forward and push the boundaries of living life on the edge and doing what you want! good on ya Douggs ---

PEACE

Author **BrassnWood ®**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 9:10:24pm**  
Subject **PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

There IS an air of glorification threading through this week's episode. One really ends up asking the question "How selfish is this endeavour?". Totally illegal (and for good reason) and with some yank mocking the Australian Government for its stance on these very questionable antics. This is NOT sport.

Author **inspired**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 6:28:39pm**  
Subject **>Re: PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

I'm confused. HOW is basejumping more selfish than any other sport pursued to international level?

And why exactly is it illegal for 'good reason'?  
The rest of the world hasn't discovered those good reasons, clearly.

Author **merrian ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 8:55:48am**  
Subject **Cool but Crazy**

It's sad that Douggie and his gang - with healthy bodies and so many choices -

were prepared to literally throw their lives away - in the name of fun - when there are so many people with no choice - who are suffer lifelong or terminal illnesses who would do anything just to live a very boring but healthy life.

Douggie is a lovely guy and it's admirable that he wants meaning in his life, but there are plenty of ways of living a meaningful life without taking enormous risks.

Author **eugene**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 10:45:07am**  
Subject **>Re: Cool but Crazy**

I could not agree more, in addition however I believe the "Douggie" has just displayed to me the ultimate in egotism, how dare he judge others by what they do and crow that his life is so much better, what would he know....there are many exciting jobs in the world, also he works on an oil refinery and then crows about climate change...PLEASE!!!!

Author **Evan**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 12:56:13pm**  
Subject **>Re: Cool but Crazy**

I would have hoped that the values of the programme would have meant that those who so selfishly disregard the laws of the country and basically treat them with contempt, would forfeit such positive attention. When I consider the myriad of people who are inspirational in their contribution to society or their overcoming of adversity, it is a pity that their exposure has to make way for this particular programme.

Author **shamble**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 9:30:59am**  
Subject **Oh no, not another base jumping story!**

How many base jumping stories has Australian Story done now?

For a controversial 'sport' with less than 1000 participants world wide it seems over represented on your show.

Sure, the participants all have tales of tragedy, woe and death. But, as witnessed last night, these base jumpers are the most self-indulgent, immature, and utterly contrived 'rebels without a cause' you could ever find.

Author **kenward58 ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 5:30:45am**  
Subject **Mad Mad World**

Last week - Meagan Nay ... this week the opposite. What a mad world it surely is. I'm with the Meagan's of this world any day. They don't put other people's lives at risk, they care about other people's feelings and they love life. More programs about them please?

As Douggie tragically discovered, life is precious. Death if final.

Author **eugene**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 9:32:59pm**  
Subject **I am saddened**

I have now seen egotism at its best.....how dare someone say that their life is better and more fulfilling than most other Australians, reeks of ignorance, and then to comment on climate change and they work on an oil rig.....

Author **kenward58**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 8:34:30pm**  
Subject **Mad World**

The number of times I heard the word 'I' or 'me'. That guy is, at best, crushingly selfish. Keep the law as is against the sport of losers. Who benefits but the 'I's and the 'me's and for how long. What a waste of a life. Get a life mister ...

Author **sam patrick**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 8:33:20pm**  
Subject **Thank you for such an inspirational story**

Thanks for Douggie for being so honest, inspiring and cool. Very Cool.

Cheers Sam

Author **andrew**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 8:18:42pm**  
Subject **Music, half way through**

Does anybody know the name of that song about half way through the show just before they started on the danger of base jumping.

Author **ProudDad**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 1:16:42pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I recently lost a much loved son to an "extreme sport" accident. Like "Douggs" he had become a gypsy to his passion, travelling the world in search of adventure. He died exploring the limits of his skill and experience in a wild, remote and beautiful place in another land.

What he did was neither illegal nor immoral. It was unconventional and dangerous – but it was never irresponsible. He was magnificently fit, well prepared and highly trained – and his competence and attitude allowed the trust of commercial operators to engage him to introduce others to an experience they may otherwise never have safely encountered.

Society should never suppress or condemn people like "Douggs" – they are the adventures of our time; and like the explorers of old, their willingness to push the limits and to sometimes challenge rules is to the advantage of all. Most of use will never emulate there actions - but we can all be inspired and motivated by their freedom of spirit and enthusiasm for life, and by the certainty they have allowed themselves the privilege of not being bound by convention in order to pursue a dream.

It is true that when things go wrong, they can do so dramatically and tragically. However, our health and welfare systems support huge populations of those debilitated by inactivity, self-abuse, inattention, and the anxieties of a desire to conform and succeed. There should be no criticism when it is necessary at times

for such systems to come to the aid of a young man or women who is self motivated and engaged; and glowing with the certainty that every day is worth living because it can offer a new challenge or fulfillment.

Full marks to Australian Story for celebrating the renegades for they are among the people we should really admire.

Author **guest**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 1:20:36pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I have long been of the opinion that if these people who indulge in dangerous sports should, at the very least, have to pay the total cost of their rescue and any treatment they may require later.

They seem not to care that their rescue may very well endanger others' lives which indeed may be lost in the process, and that is not acceptable.

Author **drdr**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 2:27:16pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I was waiting for someone to spill the beans about that fellow having ADHD.

Author **Ozzisheila ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 6:28:33pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I found this week's Australian Story quite boring and switched it off. I am not interested in watching irresponsible people undertaking illegal acts. Also, I doubt if these people give any thought to those who have to pick up the mess when things go badly wrong.

Author **Stray ®**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 9:38:37pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I'm really sorry you lost your son proud dad, and thank you for taking the time to comment on this.

The health system does indeed support many who wreck havoc on their bodies at their own hand, cigarette smokers come to mind, and they are not challenged as to their right in receiving medical treatment when it is necessary. I agree with you, the same consideration should be extended to adventurers with no criticism from society.

Author **Roger**  
Date/Time **04 May 2010 9:50:41pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

Douggs is a reckless tool. i have no problems with base jumping and believe that it is a great sport, that when risk management is employed, is relatively safe and truly spectacular. I agree that only a base jumper will know what the feeling of human flight feels like even if you are falling like a brick. It is unfortunate that Douggs pushes the barrel so far and that his approach to the sport will ultimately

take him out - as he openly admits in his book (which does him no favours in enlightening the reader to an alternate or extreme way of living). In a fashion that so many of his friends have fallen by the way side , I see a man seeking attention in a world that requires the barrel to be pushed further and further in order to be recognised. Douggs, you really seem like a top bloke, but your attitude to life is a cheap one. There are many other avenues of seeking that thing the psychs call "Deep Play" without involving or encouraging others towards their early departure. Adam, Slim, Jimmy, Coombesy, Dwain, Jason et al were all at the top of their Aussie trees pushing the barrel to the limit when split second mis judgments and statistical bad luck finally caught up with them. you can't argue against history and headstones, it will happen to you. At the end of the day I am so glad I had children early This has made me see that because most of "it" has all been done before I don't need to put life on the line in order to satisfy myself or others. I look forward to a long and healthy life as there are plenty more avenues of pursuit to go down and experience. I don't need to be the best at these pursuits, but as long as I have fun along the way and enjoy the company I'm with, there'll be plenty to occupy my days to the end. Good luck Douggs !!!

Author **monica**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 8:48:47am**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

I am tired of Australian Story giving these people air-time. Talk about an under-responsible man! Crikey! How about giving us some truly inspirational people - and no they don't all have to be swimmers, bank robbers, rally car drivers or extreme sport fanatics. Not all of us need to perpetually push the boundaries and drive ourselves to extremes - perhaps it has something to do with being content with our lives - and there is much to be said in praise of that.

Author **iorarua ®**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 10:38:43am**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**  
Proud Dad

Thank you for your interesting and heartfelt post. I'm sorry for your loss and your son's unconventional lifestyle and sense of responsibility are certainly to be admired. However, I take issue with this quote (and my comments are to the general forum, rather than just to you):

"Society should never suppress or condemn people like "Douggs" – they are the adventures of our time; and like the explorers of old, their willingness to push the limits and to sometimes challenge rules is to the advantage of all."

I doubt if the peoples who suffered genocide and whose civilisations were shattered in the wake of being 'discovered' by the explorers and adventurers of old would agree on this last point.

Also, the 'no fear' glamorisation of physical risk takers particularly affects the psychological development of boys, often leading them into dangerous behaviours to assert their manhood.

As I said in my previous post, I think there is a double standard being practised at governmental levels, whereby some dangerous practices (like smoking and drink-driving) are being heavily shamed, prosecuted and fined, while other dangerous practices (like mountaineering, base-jumping, car racing, fighting in wars etc) are glamorised.



I'm not suggesting a total ban or ruthless suppression - just a bit more legislative consistency.

Author **tinnishlij ®**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 12:58:29pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

Sheeesh. Have we turned into such a nation of pathetic couch warmers that we can't even give a bloke who lives his life to the full some space? It is part of human nature (as opposed to couch potato nature) for some to seek thrills and explore avenues that 99% of the population shy away from. Good on them that can do it in my book.

It'll be a sad day for us all when the likes of Douggs find it all too hard to compete against the nanny-state mentality that is slowly pervading every corner of our existences.

Author **Mark**  
Date/Time **05 May 2010 1:18:14pm**  
Subject **Re: Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

A mate of mine crashed into a cliff while base jumping. He lives his parents who are now his permanent carers as he now suffers from mild brain damage. What a fate for their parents -just because their selfish uber cool son wanted an adrenaline rush. They were ready to retire and enjoy the spoils of their life, but now they are subject to a life a servitude to a disabled son, just because their son wanted a hit of adrenaline. I figure if you want to be a 'man' by having a rush of adrenaline. Stop jumping of cliffs like some sort of demented teenager and join the army and serve in Iran and Afganistan- at least you are doing something useful while you get your 'rush'. [Moderator: Edited].

Author **CharlesDarwin ®**  
Date/Time **03 May 2010 8:33:22pm**  
Subject **Australian Story - irresponsible "Douggs" episode**

Must the ABC glorify base jumping to a youth audience? Footage of Douggs skateboarding down a busy coastal highway with no helmet - let alone the illegal, dangerous basejumping.  
Add to that, product placement throughout, including Douggs's sponsor products featured on T shirts.  
And a shopping session clearly endorsing brands!