



Media Release



Celebrate 50 years of *Play School* with ABC

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In 2016, iconic Australian television program *Play School* celebrates 50 years on air as the nation's most respected, trusted and longest-running children's series. To mark this momentous milestone, the ABC will present a variety of special content throughout the birthday month of July, celebrating the occasion with three generations of Australians who have grown up with *Play School* as an essential part of their childhood.

Since its initial broadcast on July 18, 1966, *Play School* has been entertaining Australian preschoolers, providing them with new experiences and learning opportunities through music, crafts, stories, games, ideas and information. The series aims to encourage a child to wonder, to think, to feel and to imagine, and strives to reflect a modern, diverse Australian society.

Fellow national TV treasure **Kate Ritchie** will present *Big Ted's Excellent Adventure: 50 Years of Play School*, a documentary that takes a nostalgic journey through Aussie childhood, reliving the laughter and delights of half a century of *Play School* while charting 50 years of the nation's social history. Well known Australians, including, **Mikey Robins, Hannah Gadsby, Nazeem Hussain, Craig McLachlan** and members of the original **Wiggles**, share their personal memories of the show, alongside anecdotes from past and present *Play School* presenters, including **Benita Collings, John Waters** and **Justine Clarke**.

Young and old alike will enjoy an exciting series of *Play School Celebrity Covers*. The mini-episodes feature a star-studded line up of popular Australian personalities turning their hand at being a *Play School* presenter, entertaining viewers with a familiar *Play School* song or story. The episodes will be broadcast daily on ABC KIDS from 4 July, with episodes available to view on ABC iview throughout the month.

Featuring in the *Play School Celebrity Covers* are: **Adam Goodes, Annabel Crab** with **Leigh Sales, Architecture in Helsinki, Benita Collings** with **Don Spencer, Bernard Fanning, Carrie Bickmore, Costa Georgiadis, Dami Im, Dan Sultan, Delta Goodrem, Emma Wiggle, Guy Sebastian, Hamish and Andy, Jeremy Fernandez, John Hamblin, Josh Thomas, Kate Ceberano** with her daughter **Gypsy, Kate Miller-Heidke, Katie Noonan, Kurt Fearnley** with **Rachael Coopes, Lee Lin Chin** with **Takaya Honda, Magda Szubanski**, players from the **Matildas, Missy Higgins, Molly Meldrum** with **Charlie Pickering, The Umbilical Brothers, Tim Minchin, Tim Omaji** and **You Am I**.

The *Play School* episodes airing daily at 9:30am throughout the birthday week on ABC KIDS will centre on the theme of celebration, kicking off the week with an extra special birthday episode sure to delight young fans. Join beloved presenters **Alex Papps, Karen Pang, Teo Gerbert** and **Miranda Tapsell** as they dance, sing, make and decorate in preparation for a party. We'll find out why the toys are jumping for joy when there's a knock on the *Play School* door and will take a look through the windows to see what's making some viewers very happy. It's an occasion not to be missed!

Richard Finlayson, Director of Television, says, "The ABC is extremely proud to celebrate the impressive milestone of 50 years of Play School and wish to congratulate everyone who has been involved in bringing the show into the homes of families around the country who have so warmly embraced it."

Play School holds a unique place in the hearts of generations of Australians and this is largely down to the fact that it strives to represent contemporary society so that children from across the community can see themselves as part of this special show."

Play School airs at 6:00, 9:30, 12:30 and 15:30 weekdays and 9:30 and 15:30 on weekends on ABC KIDS and is available on ABC iview and ABC KIDS iview.

Look out for more exciting ABC announcements about Play School's 50th birthday during 2016 and celebrate with us by sharing your own Play School memories #PlaySchool50

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Notes to Editors:

Please note: *airdate information for Big Ted's Excellent Adventure: 50 Years of Play School and each of the Play School Celebrity Covers episodes is to be confirmed*

For more information, images and interviews please contact Safia van der Zwan, Publicist, ABC TV, vanderzwan.safia@abc.net.au / 02 8333 3846

In 2016, iconic Australian television program *Play School* is celebrating 50 continuous years on air as the nation's most respected and trusted children's program. The ABC is marking this momentous milestone with a range of special events and content designed to help celebrate the occasion with generations of Australians who have grown up with the program as an essential part of their childhood.

Play School is supported by numerous brand extensions, including books, DVDs and video content, music, apps and a full merchandise range. 45% of Australian parents with preschoolers own a Play School product*. Since 2001, more than 1 million children have experienced the magic of a live Play School Concert.

About Play School:

- *Play School* is a 27 minute program for preschool children made by ABC's Children's Television in Sydney
- *Play School* airs on ABC KIDS, weekdays at 6:00am, 9:30am, 12:30pm and 3:30pm and weekends at 9:30am and 3:30pm, and is available on ABC iview
- *Play School* was first broadcast in Australia on July 18, 1966
- The ABC has made approximately 2250 episodes of *Play School*
- With an emphasis on "learning through play", *Play School* aims to reflect a modern, multicultural Australian society with a range of family situations and experiences
- Together, *Play School* apps *Art Maker* and *Play Time* have had over 90 million sessions and 550 million screen views since their release in 2011 (*Art Maker*) and 2013 (*Play Time*)

*Jigsaw Research, August 2015