



## We The People

Program 85

The Mad Tea Party

The word anthropomorphic is a word you don't hear too often. Anthropomorphic applies when we give human characteristics to things other than people and that's often the case with animals. Now around 180 years ago a boy child entered the world of the English Dodgson family. He would be christened Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and became one of the world's famous writers we all know and admire. Charles Dodgson took on the pen name of Lewis Carroll and his books *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* became internationally acclaimed and loved to this day in part because of the anthropomorphic animals which feature with Alice. Incidentally, Lewis Carroll actually created the story for a young girl named Alice Liddell in 1864 and did this in a row boat on the River Isis near Folly Bridge in England.

Now the characters that appear include the all important very nervous White Rabbit who insists he's always late and the fantasy story evolves from there with the most delicious characters imaginable. At the Mad Hatters tea party we meet the sleepy Door Mouse and the Mad Hatter and later the Dodo, the Caterpillar, the Queen of Hearts, the Gryphon, the ominous Cheshire cat and many more. A wonderful array of nutters all set in a dream like fantasy land full of colour and vigor, living a life of utter self indulgence and madness.

All this brings me to the point. I just can't help seeing the parallel with government and the bureaucracy in Australia today. No one could argue it seems like we are living in a fantasy world at the moment where money grows on trees and we all have a place at the mad Hatters tea party. We have characters so utterly fictional yet they appear real. Foreign Affairs has a Dodo in charge while Tweedledumb and Tweedledee are actually running the country and how funny is that. The Queen of Hearts hates the previous King of Hearts and the Wild Slipper provides us with endless laughs as the Green Bob scuffles with the Wongwong bird. Don't you just love the Bouffant Bishop or the Mad Abbott or the Ferguson Tractor who can't say Australia. These are all loveable characters who give our families so much pleasure and their stories and exploits enthrall our children. Of all the players I must admit I have a special place in my heart for some including the Dancing Garrett who of all unlikely things used to sing in a rock band. The hairless Garrett does nothing all day and but talk while the Wily Wilkie sits independently and always looks very, very serious. This union of unlikely Alice characters is headed by Jabberwock Howes and the Looney Ludwig who both play a major role in the fairy tale government. In fact it was they who taught the Queen to say.... "Off with their Heads" and mean it.

Hey, remember *Wonderland's* Cheshire Cat sitting high on a branch and looking down menacingly on everyone. The cat has a permanent cynical smile on its face and can disappear at will and only speaks when it wants to and its air of superiority reminds me of a local politician. The Cheshire cat of Lewis Carroll is very odd being able to reshape its body to either amuse or frighten its visitors and is very mysterious and cruises in and out of Alice's story any time it chooses.



What a wonderful writer he was creating so many delusional characters and so many enthralling stories to tell, yet so little time. There's plenty more tales to come in political *Wonderland* but for now just listen to the news most days for your political fantasy fix. Oops, sorry, I have to run now as I'm late, I'm late for a very important date..... so **until next time this Kent Bayley.**

