Articles

The Bloke is back

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The idea of the ocker Aussie male has flourished for decades and is characterised in all forms of media – advertising, movies and news. In the 1980s there was the beer-swilling character Norm in government commercials about getting fit, and tough guy Paul Hogan in the movie Crocodile Dundee. More recently cricketer Shane Warne’s penchant for extra-martial sex has had everyone in a tizz.

Like it or loathe it all of these characters, real and imagined, embody our understanding of the ocker male.

It is not surprising that the more recent versions of masculinity - SNAGS, metroversal or mirls (‘men girls’ or ‘guy chicks’ for those not in the know) - have ruffled a few manly and womanly feathers.

An entrenched conservative political climate in Australia – hopefully on the verge of a turnaround under the newly installed federal government - has reignited the desire for a bygone era when gender roles were (apparently) clearly defined: men were men and women were women and nasty, humorless feminists hadn’t interfered in the natural order of things.

Today, tired of trying to fit into the perceived whimpish ways of SNAGS, metroversal and mirls, the bloke is back – but with a new facade.

Recent media articles have given blokiness a new vocabulary. Blokes now have holidays together (mancations), Facebook groups (MAN-ernoon) ponder and chat about “the inner man in all of us”, and revelation of all revelations “guys nights out” where men are encouraged to spend time with each other – most often at the local pub. This all equates to ‘Guy pride’ suggests the head line in the Mercury.

What these words do offer is a way of shoring up a masculinity perceived to be under attack from metroversals and the like.

Surely we can see ‘mancations’ in the usual fishing or footy weekends that most men have cherished since the world began.

‘Guy’s nights out’ are, let’s face it, any excuse to drink with mates, but when has this been any different?

The MAN-ernoon Facebook group is just a more progressive and technologically savvy way of phoning all your mates and organising a game of cricket. We are told women can be included because without them the ‘blokey jokes’ just wouldn’t work.

“They’re [women’s] reaction to the sometimes out-there blokey jokes and antics helps us know that we’re on the right track,” says Travis Tiddy the founder of the Facebook group in a recent article in the Mercury.

No one would deny that both men and women should spend time with their friends but we don’t have to create a new lexicon for men to feel that it is okay (masculise even) to do so.

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‘MANCATIONS’, ‘MAN-ernoon’ and ‘guy pride’ are words that have recently been flung into the media vocabulary to describe men getting together for a good time, but are these new words just hiding the desire for a return to the comfort of the good old-fashioned ocker male so cherished and admired in Australia?