

# star quality

Now a radio presenter, Richard Fidler recalls his time with the outrageous Doug Anthony Allstars



INTERVIEW  
phil brown

People have all sorts of memories of The Doug Anthony Allstars and my most enduring one is of squalor. Interviewing the edgy singing trio backstage before a gig in Melbourne once, I was horrified by the empty beer cans, the rancid pizza boxes and the air of dissipation in the minuscule dressing room.

Richard Fidler, one third of the famous comedy trio – along with Tim Ferguson and Paul McDermott – doesn't look at all surprised by my recollection.

"It was even worse when we were on the road," he recalls, when we meet for coffee at Mary Ryan's Books, Music & Coffee at Milton.

"We travelled around in this filthy Tarago filled with the stench of three-day-old McDonald's, smelly costumes and bodily secretions. It was a disgusting experience and it was amazing that we stayed together for 10 years."

Fans of the group, which broke up in 1994 and was once dubbed the "unholy trinity", knew

it simply as the acronym DAAS. Since DAAS called it quits, nothing quite like the iconoclastic threesome has turned up on the Australian entertainment circuit.

The three of them once claimed they wrote their material in the nude, were influenced by the nihilists (19<sup>th</sup>-century advocates of anarchy), and said they would happily make jokes about the Tiananmen Square massacre, if they could think of any.

Richard, the new evening radio presenter on 612 ABC radio, says that after years of pushing the comedic envelope, the group simply had to disband.

"Our costumes were out of fashion, so we just couldn't go on," he says, laughing.

"But it was an enormous amount of fun while it lasted. We thought it would be better to set it aside, rather than hang around and lose our intensity."

On one fan website, Tim Ferguson is described



as "the pretty but vacuous one", Paul McDermott, "the short nasty one", and Richard as just "the guitarist".

Actually, Richard, who is now 40, seemed like the nice one, even though the satirical material he and the others dished up was decidedly nasty at times (so nasty, they encouraged audiences to throw rubbish at them on occasion).

"Some people were worried that we were out-and-out fascists because we used cruelty in our comedy," Richard says.

"But a lot of comedy is rooted in cruelty."

They started out as buskers while students in Canberra in the early '80s, then progressed to playing indoors, eventually becoming a cult hit, particularly in the UK, where they were a sell-out act at the famous Edinburgh Festival Fringe seven years in a row.

They appeared on TV in the UK first and then back in Australia on ABC TV's *The Big Gig* and eventually, in the early '90s, in their own series – the anarchic *DAAS Kapital*.

Eventually, the squalor inside the aforementioned Tarago became too much for



Join the next generation of banking.

Here's how.

**5.40%\***  
Interest on  
sub accounts

**Suncorp Everyday Options Package<sup>^</sup>**

Suncorp now gives you the ease and access of a transaction account with the high interest of a savings account - all in the one package. You get up to three sub accounts each earning 5.40% p.a.\* linked to a transaction account, with unlimited Suncorp transactions all for a low monthly fee of \$6#.

- No minimum balance
- Freedom to access your money
- Unlimited Suncorp transactions
- Bpay®, direct debit from and direct credit to your sub accounts
- Low monthly fee - \$6 per month

Visit your local branch, [suncorp.com.au](http://suncorp.com.au) or call 13 1155



<sup>^</sup>Banking products issued by Suncorp-Metway Ltd ABN 66 010 831 722. Please read the Product Disclosure Statement before making any decision regarding this product. Contact us for a copy. \*Terms and Conditions apply and are available by calling 13 11 55. Fees and charges apply. Rate subject to change without notice. The interest rate only applies to funds in a sub account linked to the Everyday Options Account. #Unlimited fee free transactions only apply on the Suncorp Unlimited Transaction Plan, and exclude non-Suncorp ATM withdrawals in Queensland and non-Suncorp ATM enquiries. Y&R0095\_BN