

**THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD AND DRINK
IN THE POLITICAL AND PRIVATE LIFE
OF
DON DUNSTAN**

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The Importance of Food and Drink in the Political and Private Life of Don Dunstan

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I argue that food and drink were of central importance to Don Dunstan throughout much of his political and private life. The conventional view of Dunstan always proclaimed that his passionate interest in food and drink was merely peripheral to his life. Food and drink were simply an aberration, of the same idiosyncratic order of importance as his song and dance routine with Keith Michell, his piano playing, or his reciting poetry from the back of an elephant. These various accomplishments were merely confirmation that Dunstan was different from other politicians. I argue that Dunstan was indeed different, but that the difference was rooted firmly in his life-long love affair with food and drink. I argue that his fascination with food and drink drove much of his reform agenda, that it helped his day-to-day survival, and that it provided him with the means of expressing his love for others. Dunstan's 1976 cookbook announced his arrival as a devotee of gastronomy and furthers my argument that he helped to introduce and establish a new Australian cuisine. After Dunstan left political life in 1979 he tried to establish himself in other spheres, but it was his almost obsessive interest in all of the aspects of a gastronomic life that triumphed. In the final decade of Dunstan's life his long love affair with food and drink became a full-blown passion. I argue that, with his long-overdue adventure as a restaurateur, he finally became the complete Don Dunstan.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no other material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

I give consent to a copy of my dissertation, when deposited in the University Library, being available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

Peter Dale Strawhan

__10/11/04_____

Date

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