Mary Ann Louise Kong Meng (1839 – 1900s), Chinese-Australian family
My name was Mary Ann Prussia (you can call me Annie) from Tasmania, before I married wealthy Chinese merchant Lowe Kong Meng in 1860. We raised 12 children in grand homes in South Melbourne, East Melbourne and Malvern. Our ornate warehouse, Sum Kum Lee, still stands at 112-114 Little Bourke Street. In 1867 I attended the fancy dress ball honouring the Duke of Edinburgh’s royal tour. My hubby dressed in mandarin’s robes and I dressed as a Grecian lady! We didn’t scrub up too bad!

John Chun Sai So 中国奔西; Chinese-born Lord Mayor of Melbourne
In 2001, I served as the 102nd Lord Mayor of Melbourne. I was the first person ever to be directly elected by the people - previously they were elected by councillors - and the first of Chinese descent. When re-elected in 2004, I became the longest-serving Mayor in history – 7.5 years! I made people happy. They formed for me my own fan club – ‘John So, he’s my Bro!’ In 2006, I also won the World Mayor Award.

Steve Bracks 44th Victorian Premier (Lebanese descent), (1954 - )
When I first ran against Jeff Kennet in 1997, no-one expected me to win. Yet I went on to become the second longest-serving Labour Premier in Victorian history. I went on to win two more elections, only the second time in history for the Labor Party! I was always prepared to talk to people and was careful about the finances! I never lost an election because I resigned to focus on my family life in 2007. Some say I spent too much time consulting with people. You can’t consult too much!

Nino Borsari, Italian Olympic cyclist (1911 –1996)
I won the gold medal in the 1932 Summer Olympics in the team pursuit event. I was competing in Australia in 1939 when World War II broke out and unable to return home, I created Borsari's bicycle repair shop - Corner - on the corner in 1941 with the help of Sidney Myer. Known as ‘The Mayor of Little Italy’, I became the unofficial spokesperson for Australian Italians, president of the Australian Boxing Federation, a founder of Juventus Soccer Club and a delegate for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic games. My shop is still there after 70 years!

Derrimut, Indigenous leader 1810c - 1864
I was an elder and leader of the Boon wurrung clan of Melbourne. I saved the settlers from attack on the settlement in 1838 by telling John Fawkner of a planned assault by another tribe. The settlers still took my land from even though I complained about the injustice. I am buried in Carlton Cemetery with a tombstone acknowledging that I once saved the settlement.
Lowe Kong Meng (1831-1888) and Mary Ann, Chinese community leaders.
Speaking English and French I was admired by contemporary Australians as 'cultured', 'superior', ‘generous’, 'influential' and 'highly esteemed'. I had business interests in tea, gold mines, insurance, sugar, owned six ships and was elected a Melbourne Exhibitions commissioner I took an active part in protesting against anti-Chinese legislation. I married Mary Ann from Tasmania in 1860 with whom we had 12 children.

Naum Smorgon Industrialists, and philanthropists, Jewish-Ukrarian (1884–1956)
We came to Australia from Ukraine to flee harassment when the Russians seized our butcher shop. Our family opened a kosher butcher in 1927 in 366 Lygon Street (its still there!), then expanded to meatworks and the vast Smorgon Consolidated Industries: plastics, glass, steel and recycling. In 1997 we divested over 1.2 billion in assets to seven Smorgon families. We have given funds to charitable enterprise across Australia. If you can make sausages, you can make anything. Our family motto: ‘Carry On Regardless!’

Vera Smorgon Industrialists, and philanthropists Jewish-Ukrarian (1884–1956)
I was born Vera Naumovna Feldman. We came to Australia from Ukraine to flee harassment when the Russians seized our butcher shop. We opened a kosher butcher in 1927 in 366 Lygon Street (its still there!), then expanded to meatworks and the vast Smorgon Consolidated Industries: plastics, glass, steel and recycling. In 1997 we divested over 1.2 billion in assets to seven Smorgon families. We have given funds to charitable enterprise across Australia. If you can make sausages, you can make anything. Our family motto: ‘Carry On Regardless!’

Trugernanner, Freedom Fighter 1812–1876
When the settlers arrived in Tasmania, my family was massacred so I went to war against them. I survived and eventually came to Melbourne assisting the new Aboriginal Protector George Robinson. Here I joined a rebel band in 1840 again to fight against white occupation south of Melbourne but we were captured. I was tried at the Magistrates Court in Russell Street. They expelled me and my two women fellow fighters - Fanny and Matilda - back to Tasmania. I had a very adventurous life but I survived!

William Barak, Wurundjeri Leader
I was just a boy when I attended the signing of the Melbourne Treaty with John Batman in 1835. Later I became the leader of the Coranderrk Mission and led many protest marches to Melbourne to seek justice for my people. Many of the paintings I have done are in the National Gallery at Federation Square. They tell me a giant image of me 30 storeys high is being engraved on a building in Swanston Street in my memory. Nice of them to go to the trouble but I would prefer if they hadn’t kicked us out of Coranderrk.
Simcha Baevski, Jewish founder of a retail empire (1878-1934)
I was born in Russia, youngest of eleven children. When I came to Melbourne I was just a street peddler with no English. I still managed to build up a great store in Bendigo with 200 employees. In 1914 I changed my name to Sidney Myer and opened Myers - Melbourne’s greatest department store in Bourke Street. In 1957 our family created the Bourke Street Xmas windows to celebrate the Olympic Games. Our family has given huge donations to Melbourne arts, science, medicine and culture. We believe in everything Melbourne!

Julia Gillard, Welsh-born 27th Prime Minister of Australia (1961 - )
I migrated with my family to Australia in 1966 and graduated from Melbourne Uni in 1986 as a lawyer. I was elected the 27th Prime Minister of Australia when Kevin Rudd resigned. The 2010 federal election saw the first hung parliament since in fifty years so I was forced into minority government with bitter battles against many opponents. Perhaps some people didn’t want a female PM in a common law marriage and without children, but I worked hard and got a lot of reforms done. My rant ‘I will not be lectured on misogyny by this man’ is still popular on YouTube! On 26 June 2013, I lost the leadership of the Labor Party to Kevin Rudd.

Effie/Mary Coustas, Greek actress, personality, comedian (1964 - )
I invented Effie the outrageous Greek Australian character for the comedy program Acropolis Now (1989 to 1992) but she has gone on to greater things such as Greeks On The Roof and my successful TV variety show. My favourite phrases are ‘How embarrassment!’ and ‘Hello, good thanks’. My book ‘Effie’s Guide to Being Up Yourself‘ was published in September 2003. You should definitely get it!

Vanessa Amorosi, Italian singer-songwriter (1981 - )
I was born in Melbourne. My father was Italian singer Frank Amorosi. When I was four, my sisters and I went to tap, jazz and ballet with my uncle. I went to Emerald Secondary School. One day I was performing at Matrioshka, a Russian restaurant in Carnegie, when I was seen and signed for a record deal. Since then my album and single sales have reached over 2 million worldwide and I have been voted Most Popular Australian Artist. I still have to pinch myself its true.

‘MR CHEONG’: Civil rights activist, missionary, businessman, anti-opium reformer, (1853-1928)
I was born Cheong Cheok Hong in the See Yap district, China. My family arrived in Ballarat in the 1850s. I went to Scotch College and Melbourne University. Later I become a prominent businessman, Reverend and advocate for the Chinese across Australia against the White Australia Policy and the Opium Trade. I begged Prime Minister Edmund Barton to spare Australia ‘a double yoke of national ignominy and dishonour’. My church mission is still at 123 Little Bourke Street.
‘Madam Ghurka’, Russian Fortune Teller 1872-1953
My name was Julia Glushkova but I called myself ‘Madam Ghurka’. I claimed I left Russia because I was wounded by the Tsars guard as a British spy. Actually I was accidentally shot by my husband Zac in our circus. In Melbourne I was known as the ‘Queen of Fortune Tellers’ at the Eastern Market in Bourke Street. They banned fortune telling so I became a ‘phrenologist’ telling people’s futures from the bumps on their heads.

Walter Burley Griffin, American architect (1876 -1937)
I was an American architect credited with the designing the L-shaped floor plan, the carport and ingenious reinforced concrete Most people remember I designed Canberra, Australia’s capital city. They forget that I designed the Palais Theatre and the Capital Theatre in Bourke Street. Did they have to tear down the ground floor? With my wife Marion Mahony Griffin, we designed 350 buildings, landscapes and projects as well as designing construction materials, interiors, furniture and other household items. Only took us 28 years!

Marion Mahony Griffin, American architect (1871 – 1961)
I worked with the great Frank Lloyd Wright but he got the credit for my beautiful watercolours of buildings! I married Walter Burley Griffin in 1911 and we worked together for 28 years including coming to Australia to design Canberra, Australia. Our famous Capitol Theatre is still in Swanton Street. I lived to 90 and once oversaw the design of 100 buildings in India in less than a year!

St Joan of Arc, French Military leader 1412 – 1431
I was the national heroine of France known as the Maid of Orleans. I was just a teenager when I was inspired by God to lead the French army to heroic victories over the English. Unfortunately I was captured and burned at the stake when I was only 19 years old. However the Pope later pronounced me a Saint of France - so all is good. My statue is at the State Library, corner Lonsdale and Swanston Streets. Go girl!

Eliza Callaghan, English Convict and City founder 1802-1852
In 1820 I was caught using counterfeit money and was sentenced to Australia for 14 years. My jail report describes me simply as ‘Bad’. Rubbish! I escaped into the bush in 1823 and met John Batman who hid me. Together we helped found the City of Melbourne. We had six daughters and one boy who tragically drowned in the Yarra. We built a house for our children where today Young and Jacksons pub stands opposite Flinders Street Station.
**Kate Kelly, Irish public figure 1863 – 1898**

I was the sister of bushranger Ned Kelly. They wrote many newspaper articles, books, bush-songs and ballads about me as I was a skilled rider and played an important part in the Kelly saga. In 1880 I campaigned in Melbourne to save my brother Ned Kelly but Judge Redmond Barry hung him anyway as a bushranger. That night I held open audience with the public at Apollo Hall in **Bourke Street**. They criticised me because I charged people a shilling each but I just wanted to put our side of the case and pay for the hall.

**Baron Von Mueller, German explorer and scientist (1825 –1896))**

I was born in Germany but came here for my health and was famous for the long scarf I always wore. They buried me with it. I loved getting medals and honours. I broke off my engagement to scary Euphemia Henderson and had to pay her and apologise in the press. I collected plants from thousands of kilometres of Victoria, collected untold plants, published books and helped to found the Herbarium, the Royal Society and the Melbourne Botanical Gardens where I had a zoo! Losing that job broke my heart! Our Bourke and Wills expedition was a stuff-up – I never liked Bourke.

**John Monash, German/Jewish General (1865-1931)**

I was raised in a Jewish German family in country Victoria and became an engineer. They say my command of the Australian Army WW1 won brilliant victories in France. I created a new form of warfare to win battles and to save as many Australian lives as possible. After the war I was a leader of civic institutions such as the SEC and Luna Park in Melbourne. During the Great Police Strike of 1923 I took control of Melbourne with vigilantes or ‘specials’ at the **Melbourne Town Hall** on Collins Street.

**Peter Lalor, Irish Rebel (1827-1889)**

As Eureka stockade leader in December 1854 I took the oath of the rebel miners: ‘**We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other to defend our rights and liberties**’. I lost my arm in that battle yet later became the only outlaw ever elected to parliament! On 24 Nov 1857 all men received the right to vote. Our Southern Cross flag is now the Australian flag. Down with tyranny!

**Ned (Edward) Kelly, Irish Bushranger (1855–1880)**

I have been described as a horse thief, bushranger and rebel and was captured in my home-made armour at the siege of Glenrowan. I was sentenced to death by Judge Sir Redmond Barry for the murder of three policemen but after they put my mother in jail, they had to pay! I cursed the Judge ‘I will see you where I go!’ and he died 12 days after my execution at **Old Melbourne Gaol**. Every man must come to judgement some day. Many films and books are about my controversial life.
Sir Redmond Barry, Irish founder library and university (1813–1880)
I was a hard-working young man who arrived just after settlement and rose to the very top of Marvellous Melbourne. I helped founded Melbourne University and the State Library and became a judge of the Supreme Court. I worked long hours and endured the arduous travel by coach, train or horseback to country courts. I died only not long after Ned Kelly cursed me when I sentenced him to death for murder. Go see my statue is on the front lawn of the State Library, corner Lonsdale and Swanston streets.

Ron Barassi, Football player and coach, 1936 –
I am a descendant of one of the Swiss Italians of Australia. I began playing VFL football at the age of 17 for Melbourne Football Club. I’ve been involved in 17 premierships and won ten! I captained Carlton to a premiership in 1968 and coached North Melbourne to two premierships. A couple of years ago I tackled a guy on the street who struck a woman in St Kilda. Even if I’m over 70, I’ll give you some free advice: NEVER give up and NEVER say die!!

Sir Isaac Isaacs, Jewish Judge and reformer (1855–1948)
I was the son of a Jewish tailor, born in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. As a young man I was a passionate supporter of social reforms such as the Factories Act to stop worker exploitation and supported the vote for women. I helped design the Australian Constitution and rose to be Australian Chief Justice and the first Australia-born Governor-General in 1931. The British royal family opposed it because of my religion but my friend Prime Minister Deakin told them too bad!

Anastasia Hayes – Irish Eureka rebel (1818 - 1892)
On October 1852, I arrived at the Ballarat Diggings. Ever tried to raise 6 children in a tent? I began teaching children (90 of them!) in another tent at Bakery Hill. They say I was blue-eyed, red-haired, good looking, fiery temper and politically active. They were right! I sewed the giant Eureka flag with Anastasia Withers and Anne Duke. When Peter Lalor was shot at Eureka, I helped to amputate his left arm and then threw it down a mineshaft. When my husband was arrested I told those damned troopers: ‘If I had been a man, I wouldn’t have been taken by the likes of you.’

Nonda Katsalidis, Architect, Greek-Australian, (1951 - )