Tina calls out sports mad Aussies

Jackie Epstein

Aussie pop icon Tina Arena has hit out at tall poppy syndrome and the focus on sport in Australia, saying it comes at the expense of the arts and culture.

The Chains singer, who is celebrating 50 years in the entertainment industry this year, was last night awarded Entertainer of the Year at the Marie Claire Women of the Year Awards.

"There's too much focus on sport in Australia; it's a big drinking culture," she told the December edition, on sale on Monday. "There's no philosophy; nobody speaks about philosophy, and the humanities and arts take a back seat. They're the things that make us human and make us feel alive, and the arts are what keep us connected, what keep us dreaming, what give us an opportunity to reflect."

The award-winning singer said bringing down people striving for success was a nationwide problem.

"It's no wonder people in the public eye suffer from extraordinary bouts of insecurity," she said. "You're not allowed to be proud; you constantly have to be a shrinking violet. Australia has a real problem with tall poppy syndrome."

The winners of the 2026 Women of the Year Awards will be featured in the December issue of Marie Claire.



Tina Arena features on the cover of Marie Claire, named Entertainer of the Year at the Women of the Year Awards.

New pill to save memory

Alzheimer's trial hope

Ike Morris

A drug aimed at reducing Alzheimer's symptoms has shown promising results in older Australians, the biotech company behind the medicine says.

Australian firm Actinogen released the results of its phase 2 trials of the drug emesteda-stat, which works by blocking the production of the stress hormone cortisol in parts of the brain, on Thursday.

Developed under the brand name Xanamem, the trial involved 247 patients in Australia and the US with mild to moderate disease, taking a daily pill over a 36-week treatment.

While it slowed the progress of the disease by 30 per cent in those over the median age of 75 – representing half the trial group – it did not record a statistically significant benefit in the overall trial group.

Chief executive Steven Gourlay said a $10.8m research and development tax incentive rebate from the federal government put it in a strong position.

"It encourages companies like us to do as much research in Australia as we can," Dr Gourlay said.

"So it's been good for Australian jobs, it's been good for Australian science, and it's been great for helping companies like us to do the work that we need to do to answer important questions like, 'Does this drug that controls cortisol work in Alzheimer's disease?'"

The next trial is expected to involve 700 patients and begin in mid-2027. The company hopes to get the drug to market in 2030.

Dr Gourlay said if that trial succeeded, he hoped it would be in a position to mass-produce the drug, pending approval by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

He would also welcome it being listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

"We would obviously be developing a lot of economic data to show the PBS when the drug gets approved, as you do in Australia and a lot of European countries – less so in the US – that the drug really is creating value, preventing people from going into nursing homes, improving quality of life, reducing system costs," Dr Gourlay said.

"And hopefully that would be convincing, and that would then bring forward the day that PBS would give us an approval."

Dementia – an umbrella term for a raft of neurological conditions of which Alzheimer's is one – is the leading cause of death in Australia.

According to Dementia Australia, 446,500 Australians are living with dementia, with that number expected to increase to more than one million by 2065.

News of Xanamem's trial results came on the same day Dementia Australia released No Time to Lose: A United Call for National Dementia Reform, asking for decisive action on "one of the nation's greatest health, social and economic challenges".

"The National Dementia Action Plan provides an important foundation, but sustained action and investment are needed to improve outcomes," its chief executive Tanya Buchanan said.

'Cayman Islands of AI': Labor risks cutting artists adrift over copyright

Ellen Ransley

The federal government has been accused of setting Australia up to be the Cayman Islands of AI, amid growing expectations copyright protections for creatives will be watered down.

Under a plan being considered by the government, AI giants would have to buy a permit to train their models on Australia content unless a direct licensing deal was struck with rights holders, but music would be carved out and deals would have to be struck with groups. Greens communications spokeswoman Sarah Hanson-Young said Labor had "belled the cat".

"If it's so bad that musicians need to be carved out, it's dodgy," she said. "We need to make sure that copyright is protected for all creators.

"Let's not allow Australia to be the Cayman Islands of AI."

The Cayman Islands are famous as a global tax haven.

Changing the copyright regime to allow AI models to train here could position Australia to be Anthropic's second home outside the US.



Elton John performs in Rio de Janeiro in September.

Senator Hanson-Young said that would undermine the ability for countries to stand strong for their creators. "This is not just about the work that's created here," she said.

English star Sir Elton John took aim at the government in a video played at Wednesday night's ARIA Awards, saying it had a duty to protect Australian artists and their work.

A spokesman for Attorney-General Michelle Rowland said the existing copyright regime was not working, and creatives were having their work used without choice or compensation.

"The Albanese government is committed to delivering certainty and strong protections for Australian artists," he said.

"The government has long advocated for tech companies to strike commercial deals with Australian artists, and we will continue to do so."

Patient charged over hospital nurse rape

Police have charged a 29-year-old man after he allegedly raped a nurse while being treated at Melbourne's high-security Thomas Embling Hospital this month.

The woman was reportedly working the night shift at the psychiatric hospital on November 2 when she was sexually assaulted by the male patient. "It's understood a woman was working at a health facility on Yarra Bend Rd when she was approached by a patient in the facility and sexually assaulted," a Victoria Police spokesperson said.

The man was on Thursday evening hit with a string of charges including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated assault of a female.

Fairfield's Thomas Embling Hospital is Victoria's sole forensic mental-health hospital, providing inpatient psychiatric treatment for mentally unwell people involved in the criminal justice system. According to The Age, the alleged rapist had reportedly been held in the forensic hospital for years under a court order after being found not guilty of sexual offences due to mental impairment.