

Magda Szubanski

Human Rights Advocate, Writer, Actor and Keynote Speaker

Magda Szubanski is one of Australia's most loved and respected actors, writers and activists. In 2017 she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for her distinguished service to the performing arts and as a campaigner for marriage equality.

She has written and performed in some of Australia's most iconic films and TV shows including Babe, Kath and Kim, Fast Forward, D-Generation, Full Frontal, Something Stupid and Big Girl's Blouse, winning her the Fred Parsons Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Comedy at the 2019 AWGIES.

In addition to her acting work, in October 2015 Magda released her hugely successful first book, Reckoning, which has won several major awards including the 2016 ABIA Book of the Year.

In 2017 Magda became the unofficial public face of the Marriage Equality debate. She campaigned fiercely on this issue on TV, radio and in newspapers and magazines as well as appearing at rallies across the country. Her contribution was deemed "crucial" and she was named the most talked about person of 2017. She was awarded the Liberty Victoria "Voltaire Award" for Free Speech.

She is a regular contributor to several television shows including The Project, The Today Show, Sunrise, ABC Breakfast, A Current Affair, The Morning Show, Mornings and Studio10 among others.

In 2019 she was made a member for the Advisory Board of the Australian Institute of Human Rights at UNSW.

More about Magda Szubanski:

Magda knew she was gay when she was five years old in 1966 - however it took until 2012 for her to overcome her "internalised homophobia" to announce that she was gay - live on national TV! Since then she has become one of the most effective campaigners for LGBTI+ rights in Australia.

Magda's long standing fame led to her playing a key role in achieving same sex marriage in



Australia During the campaign to achieve same sex marriage, Magda spoke at numerous marriage equality fundraisers, and advocated tirelessly, with reason and dignity, for equality. Her most notable appearances included a pivotal debate on the ABC's Q&A, interviews on *A Current Affair* and an address she gave at the National Press Club, 'What it feels like to be an unwilling human guinea pig in a political experiment'.

Magda completed a Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University, majoring in Philosophy and Fine Arts. After early training with the ABC-TV cult show *D-Generation*, Magda shot to fame in 1989 in response to the huge variety of comic characters she created. For over thirty years Magda has survived and thrived at the top of the show business tree - a notoriously fickle and competitive industry.

She was a key player in some of this country's most successful, iconic and groundbreaking shows - *Kath and Kim*, *Fast Forward*, *D-Generation*, and *Big Girl's Blouse*, sketch comedy *Fast Forward*, which played for several seasons and became one of Australia's highest-rating comedies. She had an emotional journey when the SBS television show *Who Do you think You Are?* did a story on her family's heritage.

Film credits include *Babe*, *The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course*, alongside the late Steve Irwin and *The Golden Compass*, with Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig. Australian films *Dr Plonk* directed by Rolf de Heer, *Bran Nu Dae* by Rachel Perkins and starring alongside Ronan Keating in the musical comedy, *Goddess* in 2013. In 2017 she starred opposite Michael Caton in Ben Elton's *Three Summers*.

Magda's many stage appearances include hit productions of *Guys and Dolls*, the late Nora Ephron's *Love, Loss and What I Wore*, The Melbourne Theatre Company production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, the national tour of *Grease: The Arena Spectacular* with John Farnham. In 2012 she performed alongside Geoffrey Rush and Hugh Sheridan in Simon Phillip's *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

Magda is also a best-selling, award-winning author, following the release of her internationally acclaimed memoir *Reckoning*. Released late 2015, *Reckoning* won a slew of literary awards including winner of the 2016 ABIA Book of the Year, Biography of the Year, Booksellers Choice Award, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Indie Award for Non-Fiction; Winner Victorian Community History Award and was shortlisted for several more awards including the National Biography Award.

Relating the story of her father's activities as an assassin in Nazi-occupied Poland, Szubanski's story of intergenerational trauma, migration and coming-of-age as a young gay woman received rave reviews.

The Australian described it as "a riveting, overwhelmingly poignant autobiography by a woman of genius...Every library should have it, every school should teach it."

The Sydney Morning Herald wrote, "This is documentary writing of the highest order...Anyone



who doesn't adore Magda Szubanski the clown will be awed by Szubanski the A-grade non-fiction writer."

She is a frequent guest on several television shows including *The Today Show*, *Sunrise*, *ABC Breakfast*, *The Project*, *A Current Affair*, *The Morning Show*, *Mornings*, and *Studio 10* among others.

Over the years Magda has campaigned for several charities including Very Special Kids, Starlight Foundation, Oxfam, and Royal Children's Hospital.

Magda Szubanski speaks about:

How I taught myself to be more courageous - Magda uses lessons from her Nazi-fighting family to explore where courage originates. She asks if there is such thing as intergenerational courage, and if so, did it help her to help win a 21st-century civil rights battle?

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