

# Unspeakable eaters

TOO many Australians are using forks as spades and knives as forks, according to etiquette expert Gill Harbord.

Eggleston Hall headmistress and co-judge of popular TV series *Ladette to Lady* Gill Harbord said Australian table manners were atrocious.

"Unfortunately, Australians are not alone — this is a habit I observe wherever I travel in the world, including my home, England," Ms Harbord said.

"We have got to the point where things are totally out of hand. Why must people push everything to the limit of being revolting?"

Ms Harbord has been watching diners during her present trip to Australia and has noticed many eti-

## CATHERINE LAMBERT

quette crimes such as eating off a knife, licking plates and holding the fork face up rather than face down.

Her Australian tour is sponsored by McDonald's, which is about to launch its new Angus Beef range in an effort to offer more premium foods on its menu.

McDonald's held a survey of 1000 Australians that found 74 per cent of Victorians admitted to burping and 91 per cent rested their elbows on the table during meals.

"McDonald's get a lot of young people through their doors and they're trying to fancy things up a bit," Ms Harbord said.

"Young people are the main culprits of bad manners, but it all starts

at home in the family. It's the parents' job to teach a child what not to do and what to do. If the parents don't seem able then we have to go to the schools."

Ms Harbord also blamed modern lifestyles — where food was eaten on laps in front of television and eating was not enjoyed, but seen as a task to complete rapidly — for the decline in table manners.

"They just spoon the food in without thinking, when really eating at a table should be a time to share good conversation and good food," she said.

The etiquette queen feared young people who did not eat properly would be disadvantaged as adults in the corporate world.



**Horried:** Gill Harbord, of *Ladette to Lady* fame, says the Australian lifestyle leads to atrocious table manners. Picture: ROB LEESON

# Help us catch hoonos

POLICE have called on citizens to film hoon drivers in action and for authorities to crush their cars.

Sunbury residents have been urged to use their mobile phones against reckless drivers.

And Ballarat police have backed a South Australian proposal for the cars of hoonos who reoffend to be crushed.

Sunbury police have called for community policing, saying residents often hold the key to catching hoonos because police cannot be everywhere.

Sunbury Police's Sgt Andrew Hunting said camera-phone footage could bolster residents' testimony in court.

"We can't prosecute without a licence plate number and a member of the public does need to get up in court and be prepared to give evidence of what they saw," Sgt Hunting said.

Incriminating footage

## LIAM HOULIHAN

could also help police compile profiles on local road race menaces.

The Ballarat Traffic Management Unit said a "three strikes and your car is crushed" scheme should be considered.

However, Victoria Police has not officially adopted the schemes.

"While using mobile phones to take photographs and record video to assist police may be helpful in some circumstances... Victoria Police does not encourage this," a spokesman said.

"(And) from an organisational perspective, crushing vehicles is wasteful.

"A three-time hoon offender may be forced to surrender their vehicle, permanently, by a court."

This year South Australian Premier Mike Rann announced the state's Police Commissioner would get the power to destroy cars forfeited by the court.

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