



# OUT OF THE HANGAR

**NEWCASTLE'S DEBUT ROCK EXPORT THE SCREAMING JETS HAVE BEEN GROUNDED FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS. MATT O'NEILL SPOKE TO FRONTMAN DAVE GLEESON ABOUT RETURNING TO THE SKIES WITH NEW ALBUM *DO YA!***



Age is a relative concept in the realms of rock. Steve Coogan once observed that, to modern adolescents, The Sex Pistols, Pink Floyd and Chuck Berry were all of a piece. A band like Jet, meanwhile, despite having released only two albums, sits comfortably alongside both the Rolling Stones and Oasis with ease. If one wants a prime example of just how much 'age' is a matter of perspective in contemporary music, however, look no further than Australian rock mainstays The Screaming Jets.

A staple of Australia's music scene, The Screaming Jets have only been touring and releasing classic rock albums since the late 80s but, over the past five years, have been continually criticised as old, tired and over-the-hill, despite the band enjoying a lifespan as ancient and long-winded as media darlings Nine Inch Nails. Dave Gleeson, outspoken vocalist of the group, is, however, unfazed by such clichés and criticisms.

"It's one of those things you just have to take it with a grain of salt – but, when I say take it with a grain of salt, I mean bag the shit out of those people! I actually said to Jess, our manager, 'Make sure you keep all these emails from people saying the band's too old or irrelevant'," Gleeson confides, cackling conspiratorially. "Because when we get a No.1 album, I'm going to pay for a full-page ad in every major national newspaper and I'm going to put in all these guys' quotes and the bottom of it will have, 'So stick that up your arse, mate', because that's the vindictive kind of guy I am!"

Gleeson's laughing manner and public naming-and-shaming scheming may smack of rock star excess and braggadocio,

however his subtly indignant manner is one difficult to begrudge him. The Screaming Jets, almost from the outset of their career, have been combating misunderstandings and misapprehensions at every turn, from the band's subtly varied classic rock music to Gleeson's socially conscious lyrics.

"I guess, over the years, the Jets have been written off as a bunch of yobbos with nothing to say," reflects Gleeson. "If you look back through the lyrics of the songs, however, that's clearly not what the band's about; right from the very beginning, [1991 single] 'Better' was a song about other people's perceptions of you and how irrelevant those perceptions are to how you live your life. All our songs have been about relationships, whether it be relationships on a personal level or relationships with life and social structure in general.

"I think it's become more prevalent on this record because the world is in such a shit state at the moment and to not write songs that reflect our views on those types of things would be a bit of a cop-out," Gleeson continues. "It's all well and good to say 'I'm only in a rock band' but if you're in a position where people are listening to your songs and your words, you have a responsibility to not look like a vacuous nutter singing '1, 2, 3, take your hands and come with me!'"

Which is a noble sentiment, but one somewhat contradicted by the apparent bluntness of the band's latest album title. How does such a title fit into The Screaming Jets?

"*Do Ya!* just says it all, really. 'Do ya wanna rock?', 'Do ya love the Screaming Jets?', 'The Screaming Jets wanna do ya!' We just thought it was a really Australian challenge and Izzy [Osmanovich, guitar] says it stands for 'Don't Owe You Anything';" Gleeson explains. "I'm all for making social statements, on stage and on record, but I always have fun while doing it!"

WHO: The Screaming Jets  
 WHAT: *Do Ya!* (StockXchange)  
 WHERE & WHEN: Villa Noosa Hotel Friday Oct 24, Hard Rock Cafe Surfers Paradise Saturday Oct 25