Political correctness robs childhood of carefree fun

WHAT it means to be an Aussie kid has been sabotaged by political correctness and the safety Stasi.

When I was growing up, sunbaking and slip 'n' slides weren't contraband; they were part of our “kulcha”.

In-ground trampolines, out-ground pools and riding your bike without a helmet were not frowned upon, they were the definition of a carefree summer.

But the fun police have crashed this party and stuff we considered part of our identity has been booted or banned.

What a shame.

Take the ubiquitous annual sunburn. What's an Aussie summer without a second-degree skin peel? Back in the good old days there was no such things as Sun Protection Factor. It was called sun-tanning lotion; Reef Deep Suntan Oil if you were posh.

Today kids have to be slathered in SPF 70+, wrapped in head-to-toe rashies and never be exposed to the evil sun between 10am and 4pm.

They will never know the joy of multiplying freckles, flaking noses and blistered shoulders.

Before quinoa and kale, “takeaway” was just yummy food your mum didn’t cook.

Chiko rolls were considered a legitimate food group. Aussies scoffed 40 million of the deep-fried mystery tubes in the ‘70s.

Egg Flip and honeycomb Big Ms were sculled by the pint. Sugar-filled Tang was a water substitute.

Polly Waffles were a regular treat.

Diabetes, childhood obesity and tooth decay weren’t even on our radar.

Today you’d be lynched by the diet dictators. The sugar and fat content in these ace foods now makes them extinct.

Which brings me to FAGS, the confectionery pretend cigarettes; wrong on so many levels. I loved getting off the 42 tram after school, buying a packet and pretending to smoke. So cool. Of course, the name alone was seen as an affront and was changed to FADS.

Also extinct is the 10m diving tower at the Balwyn Baths. I was pushed off it in the ‘70s by some pimply teenager, losing my bathers — and my dignity.

But it was a rite of passage. An adolescent thrill.

Too dangerous too is riding a bike without a helmet. I hooned around the 'burbs on my brother's dragster sans helmet for a decade.

Today riders must wear protective headgear that has been properly fitted and safely fastened.

They will never know the joy of feeling the wind in their bowl-cut hair as they race downhill in third gear.

Those were the days when you could play out on the street not returning home until dinner (or when it was dark — whichever came first).

And when did parents get so conscientious about their children's foot health?

Today’s little ones visit a podiatrist before being fitted with the latest Premier x New Balance 996s (RRP $220).

We scuffed around in clapped-out Dunlop Volleys and hand-me-down thongs.

So as we adults now hobble off to the doctor on crippled feet for our high blood pressure and ballooning weight, the dermatologist for our sunspots and the dentist for our decaying and chipped teeth, let’s not forget how much fun we had getting into this state.

Let’s remember how being an Aussie kid was unbridled fun before it was bleached boring by the good-time assassins.

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