

Daily



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1994

Mail

32p

The Sheila who gave Sir Les the elbow



Grotesque: Sir Les Patterson

SHE is stepping into large and rather badly stained shoes.

But Rebecca Hossack will finally lay the image of Sir Les Patterson to rest when she becomes Australia's first 'cultural attache'.

The elegant Melbourne-born art dealer has edged the fictitious Sir Les out of the job he made his own — along with drunken innuendo, appalling table manners and an unfortunate habit of spitting as he speaks.

Yesterday it was said that Sir Les's creator, entertainer Barry Humphries, who is also responsible for Dame Edna Everage, would be 'highly amused' at the real-life appointment.

'He is in the Far East at the moment but he will laugh when he hears about this,' a spokesman said.

Miss Hossack, who is in her thirties, hopes to make Britons more aware of the cultural riches Australia has to offer when she starts the job in December.

'A lot of Australians have had a big impact on culture over here,' she said.

'It's a matter of shifting the balance away from Neighbours.'

She will be based at the Australian High Commission in London, where staff yesterday were playing down the job's associations with the outrageously repulsive Sir Les.

'He does not represent a typical view of the Aussies,' a spokesman said.

'I think that view has just been dreamt up because it's easy to use stereotypes.'

'People are beginning to realise Australia has a lot to offer culturally, particularly in the performing arts area.'

'Specialists in the worlds of art and theatre have known this for a long time. We want the public to know as well.'

Thanks to Sir Les, they're off to a beaut start.



Glamorous: Rebecca Hossack shows off Aboriginal art