

# THE AUSTRALIAN **Women's Weekly**

**WORLD EXCLUSIVE**  
**NICOLE ON**  
**SUNDAY ROSE**

*"The baby I  
thought I'd  
never have"*

**FIRST PHOTOS**  
**HUGH & NICOLE**  
**IN AUSTRALIA**

**PRINCESS**  
**MARY**  
HAPPY AT  
HOME WITH  
HER FAMILY

**PRIME**  
**MINISTER**  
**KEVIN**  
**RUDD'S**  
**CONVICT**  
**PAST**

ROVE,  
MAGDA &  
DAME EDNA  
ACT UP

**ROS PACKER**  
LIFE AFTER  
KERRY

# **75<sup>th</sup>** **SPECIAL ISSUE** *Birthday*

**STARRING AUSSIE ICONS**  
Elle Macpherson, Terri and Bindi,  
Maggie Tabberer, Germaine Greer,  
Jamie Durie, Bert and Patti,  
Kerri-Anne, Dawn Fraser,  
Cate Blanchett, Naomi Watts,  
Russell Crowe and many more ...

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Nicole Kidman  
as Lady Sarah  
Ashley and Hugh  
Jackman as  
the drover in a  
scene from Baz  
Luhrmann's film  
epic *Australia*.

# LABOUR

**AUSTRALIA IS NOT ONLY** the movie that Nicole Kidman dreamed of making as a little girl. The Baz Luhrmann epic, due to be released next month, will now also be remembered as the movie that gave Nicole something much more unexpected and precious – her baby daughter, Sunday Rose.

“I never thought that I would get pregnant and give birth to a child, but it happened on this movie,” an emotional Nicole says. The 41-year-old actress is talking to us exclusively from London, where she is rehearsing the musical film *Nine*, inspired by the 1963 Fellini movie *8½* and starring Daniel Day-Lewis.

During our chat and previous interviews on the set of *Australia* in Kununurra, WA, and Sydney, Nicole touches on everything from her great Australian movie role opposite Hugh Jackman and the challenges that came with this labour of love, to the occasional revelation about her other new role as Sunday’s mum.

The fiercely protective and surprisingly shy actress can’t help but let us in on how she’s feeling at this blessed time in her life. “It’s exhausting,” she acknowledges, “but I think at this age it’s more like” – she lets out a huge, satisfied sigh – “spellbinding for me. To be given this again is a beautiful thing. To have raised Bella and Connor since I was 25 and now to be able to do it again at 41 ... wow!

“But I’m ready and I love children, and love the connection and to be needed. Who doesn’t want to be needed?” she muses. “And that’s the thing for my character, Lady Sarah Ashley, in the film, because she also finds there is a place in the world where she is really needed by these two males.”

The two males Nicole is referring to are her ruggedly handsome Aussie co-star Hugh Jackman, who plays the drover that sweeps her character off her feet, and 11-year-old Aboriginal actor Brandon Walters, who plays her surrogate son, Nullah, and became like a son to her during filming.

Set in northern Australia just before World War II, *Australia* follows the journey of Lady Ashley, an English aristocrat who inherits >>>

In the glow of new motherhood, Nicole Kidman speaks to **Jenny Cooney Carrillo** about her joy at being a mother and the pride she feels in her role in the much-anticipated epic *Australia*.

# OF LOVE

Clockwise from this page: Lady Sarah Ashley arrives in Australia; celebrating drought's end with the drover; and as the belle of the ball.



a sprawling cattle station in the outback and reluctantly makes a pact with a cattle drover (Hugh) to protect her new property from a takeover plot by cattle baron King Carney (played by Bryan Brown). The pair band together with an unlikely group, including her alcoholic accountant (Jack Thompson) and young Nullah, to drive 2000 head of cattle over unforgiving terrain to Darwin, where they experience the bombing of the city by the Japanese.

"As a kid, I grew up watching Australian films that were accepted around the world, like *Gallipoli*, *The Man from Snowy River* and *My Brilliant Career* – all those films and actors moulded and inspired me," Nicole reflects. "I really wanted to make a film like that as a kid, so when we were filming this one, I'd look at Baz and Hugh sometimes and go, 'Look, we're doing it!'"

"Hopefully, the next generation will watch our movie and feel the same way because it is very much a celebration of our country and our landscape, and the pain and love and survivor aspect of what we are as Australians."

Nicole has certainly had more than her fair share of pain, love and survival, and much of it she's experienced in the glare of the public eye as the world watched

the roller-coaster of her life unfold – her marriage to superstar Tom Cruise in 1990, the adoption of their two children Bella, now 15, and Connor, 13, her split with Tom in 2001, her Oscar for *The Hours*, her love story with singer Keith Urban, their fairytale Sydney wedding in 2006 and the arrival of Sunday Rose on July 7.

SO IT'S NO SURPRISE that Nicole relates to her film character in *Australia*, who discovers her inner strengths during tough times. "She's a woman who has no idea who she is and she comes to this country and sheds a lot of the walls she's built up to protect herself, and finds out what she's made of," Nicole explains.

"I relate to her because there are ways in which we all build up our own shields. It's about finding your own fortitude and that's a beautiful story I could relate to."

After *Moulin Rouge*, Nicole found fortitude in her work and the result was an Academy Award for Best Actress as Virginia Woolf in *The Hours*. Ironically, life and art have a strange way of finding each other in Nicole's world.

"When I worked on *The Hours*, I had the weirdest time because I was going through the worst place in my life, so

I understood everything Virginia was going through and it was very cathartic, in the same way this film was cathartic for me, too," she says.

In what way? "Opening me up again," Nicole says. "Suddenly, I have this man that I love in my life and, suddenly, I'm given a child and it's the same way in the film with the things Lady Ashley gets given – a man and a small child. Both Bella and Connor are teenagers and embarking on a whole different stage, so to have an infant again is astounding!"

As part of the sweeping back-story of *Australia*, the characters are present at the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese, an event that Nicole sheepishly admits she wasn't even aware had taken place before Baz told her the idea for the film. "I must have been asleep in history class," she says with a grin, "but I've educated myself a lot since I first heard about the film. Even my father, who is incredibly bright, came on set and saw some footage, and questioned whether the Japanese actually came on to Australian soil and I said, 'It's true, Dad, Baz told me!'"

Nicole and Hugh Jackman became a screen couple after Russell Crowe was forced to bow out of the film due >>>

to a scheduling conflict. The movie's success depends on the chemistry between the pair and maybe that is why Nicole seems reluctant to say too much about the fact Hugh happens to be married to one of her best friends, actress Deborra-lee Furness.

"Because Deb is an actress and Keith is an artist, there is just a tacit agreement among all of us that you do the work, you go and create something artistically in another space and that's what we do," she says of the suggestion it must feel strange to get paid to kiss her friend's husband.

**THE AFFABLE HUGH** doesn't want to kiss and tell either, but, he says, thanks to the collaboration with the trio, audiences will witness a great movie romance.

"I don't think there was a day we shot where there wasn't a moment of magic and it's the thing we all live for, the hairs on the back of your neck standing up, so the result is something beautiful."

Nicole knew Hugh and was a fan of his work. "He's such a movie star and so fantastic to work with," she says. "There is a lot of mystery to Hugh, which is good. People say there is mystery to me and I'm pleased about that because I don't think

you should have to reveal every part of you and, artistically, I think it helps because then you can abandon yourself into some parallel universe, where you both exist as actors and artists, and hope out of that something good comes."

Although Nicole's pregnancy was not confirmed until January, it doesn't take a mathematician to figure out she had conceived while filming. "I knew it was going to be a physically and emotionally demanding shoot because when I embark on a film with Baz, I know it's going to be extreme and I'm prepared," she says.

"But nothing happened in a small way on this film because we had heat and torrential rains and equine flu, and then I got pregnant! Seven babies were conceived out of this film and only one was a boy. There is something up there in the Kununurra water because we all went swimming in the waterfalls, so we call it the fertility waters now!"

The future for Australia's favourite redhead is undecided. The Urbans divide their time between homes in Sydney and Nashville, US, the latter a large estate that gives them more privacy. They >>>

Lady Sarah becomes the surrogate mum to Nullah, played by Brandon Walters, 11. Below: Lady Sarah as cattle station owner.





also recently bought a house in Beverly Hills “so we could be close to Bella and Connor, and go there with Sunday to spend time together”, Nicole explains.

Asked if Sunday will grow up in Australia, Nicole admits to a dilemma. “I am intrinsically Australian and I want her to have that because she deserves it, but she doesn’t deserve to be scared by paparazzi or followed to her school,” she says. “Hopefully, we can spend a lot of time there, but right now, they make it impossible because it’s dangerous.”

Sunday was born in Nashville, with Nicole’s mother, Janelle, sister Antonia and Keith in the delivery room. A month later, Nicole was back in Sydney in costume doing final shots on *Australia*.

“I’m lucky I’m so tall, so I carried small and also, I have to say, I had a birth that I was blessed with, a labour that was very good and a baby that was very good to me in that regard,” Nicole says. “They say that [an easy labour] is genetic, so I’m grateful for that because it was beautiful and Keith was my rock through it all.”

On the eve of the film’s release in Australia on November 26, Nicole hopes they won’t let down the country that she still calls home.

“We’ve all been inspired by wonderful film makers like Peter Weir, Phil Noyce, George Miller, Gillian Armstrong and Bruce Beresford. Hopefully, we will now represent the Aussie film industry and be able to give back to a country and to an industry that has given us so much.

“It won’t be for lack of trying,” she says. “We have invested our hearts in this movie and hopefully that will shine through.” ■

To see more of Nicole’s film career, visit [www.awwninemsn.com.au/slideshows](http://www.awwninemsn.com.au/slideshows).

## OUR HERO HUGH

For Hugh Jackman, the role he plays in *Australia* as a rugged cattleman is the stuff of dreams.

On the Sydney set of Baz Luhrmann’s *Australia*, in the background of a scene between Nicole’s character, Lady Sarah Ashley, and her Aboriginal surrogate son, Nullah, Hugh Jackman isn’t playing his cattle drover character. Instead, he’s a proud father, his eyes only for his eight-year-old son, Oscar, who makes his debut in the epic film.

“There’s my son, the first one in the front,” Hugh says, nodding towards the set. “He’s looking very serious because he’s been told the story and he knows it’s wartime. His school is around the corner and he knows when he finishes here he’s back to school, so bring on the extra takes!

“I’m trying to keep him out of films, so he can have a normal childhood, but he really wanted to be in this one and I’m very proud of him.”

The actor is not working today, but relishes his new role as stage parent.

“I had this high idea I would not pull rank, so I sat at the back with the parents of the other extras for a while,” he confesses sheepishly. “But then I found out they didn’t even get to watch the monitor, or see anything, so I gave up on egalitarian Hugh and came back up front.”

Earlier, we’d visited Hugh in the dusty heat of the Kimberley, where

he was on horseback navigating his way through a large herd of cattle and remembering his lines at the same time. An hour’s drive from the town of Kununurra, below a stunning red rock vista with baobab trees, is Faraway Downs, the film’s Queenslander-style house built specially as the property of Lady Ashley.

While Nicole stayed in town during the two-month shoot, Hugh and Baz Luhrmann set up their trailers on the edge of the remote set and never left.

“I’d been out there when I was nine or 10 and just loved it,” says Hugh. “I slept in my trailer and loved being with a campfire every night and a cliff overlooking a river full of crocodiles.”

Kissing Nicole Kidman was the easy part of his job, Hugh jokes, compared to the work he had to do with cattle and horses. “I remember one scene where Baz said, ‘Okay Hugh, you’re the leader, you bring in the cattle and bring them down to the camera, and when you get close, take the mob to the left,’” he recalls with a grin. “Then he called ‘Action!’ and they immediately went the other way – it was hysterical trying to control those cows.”

The star also had plenty of nerve-racking moments with wild brumbies. “My trainer warned me, ‘I know you’ve done a lot of work with horses, but when you’re in the middle of 200 of them, nothing you can do will ever stop them because they love to run as a pack.’ There was so much dirt flying that I couldn’t see in front of me, but when the dust cleared, half the pack had turned around and were running towards me. Afterwards, my sound guy said, ‘If you ever need to act scared, I’ll give you the tape because there was a lot of swearing on it!’”

After his roles in the three *X-Men* films and the upcoming *Wolverine*, not to mention his award-winning Broadway performance as Peter Allen in *The Boy From Oz*, he describes his role as the rugged cattleman who captures the heart of Lady Sarah Ashley.

“We are setting ourselves up to try and be the definitive Australian movie, and I’d be lying if I said we weren’t all wanting to do our best work,” Hugh says. “To be one of the leads in a film called *Australia* with Nicole to kiss and Baz to direct me is a dream. If I had to retire after this one, I’d think it was a good place to stop!”