

5.3 Fads and fashions

By the mid 1960s, Australian wages and living conditions were better than ever. In the suburbs, men went to work, while most women stayed at home and looked after the children. However, as the first of the baby boomers became teenagers, many who had not directly experienced the hardships faced by their parents began to crave independence and new experiences. As they searched for inspiration, many teenagers would gaze outward, at the fads and fashions originating in America and, to a lesser extent, England. Thanks to the invention of television, teenagers often had to look only as far as their own living room.

Source 1 A modern artist's impression of an Australian dinner party in the 1960s



A The kitchen was where a woman would spend much of her day. With sleek, modern lines and pastel colours, the kitchen radiated control, hygiene and femininity, and often sported modern appliances.

B Men usually wore a suit and tie to a dinner party while women wore the latest floral designs.

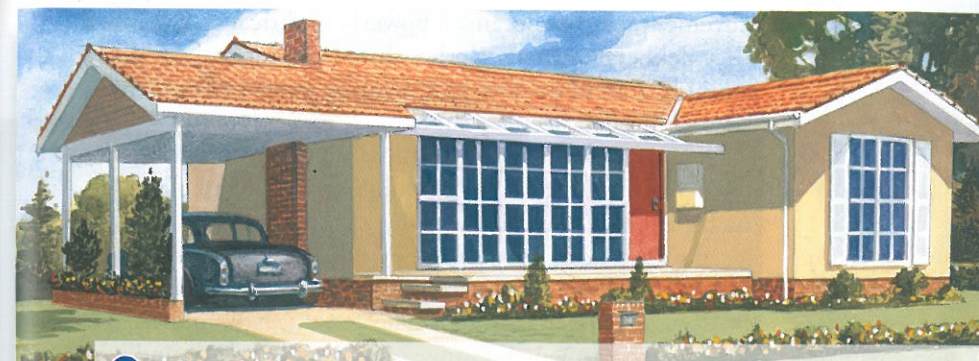
Game on!

With higher incomes at their disposal, many suburban parents were now able to give their children pocket money. This money was often spent on products developed and marketed by American toy companies. These toys gave children an opportunity not only to have fun, but to act out many of the roles

and concerns in the lives of their parents. In a decade dominated politically by the **Cold War**, boys spent hours playing with America's popular action figure, G I Joe, or his Australian equivalent, Action Man.

While boys played with action figures, girls were encouraged to 'play house', raising realistic baby dolls and cooking using their Easy-Bake Oven. But it was a blond-haired

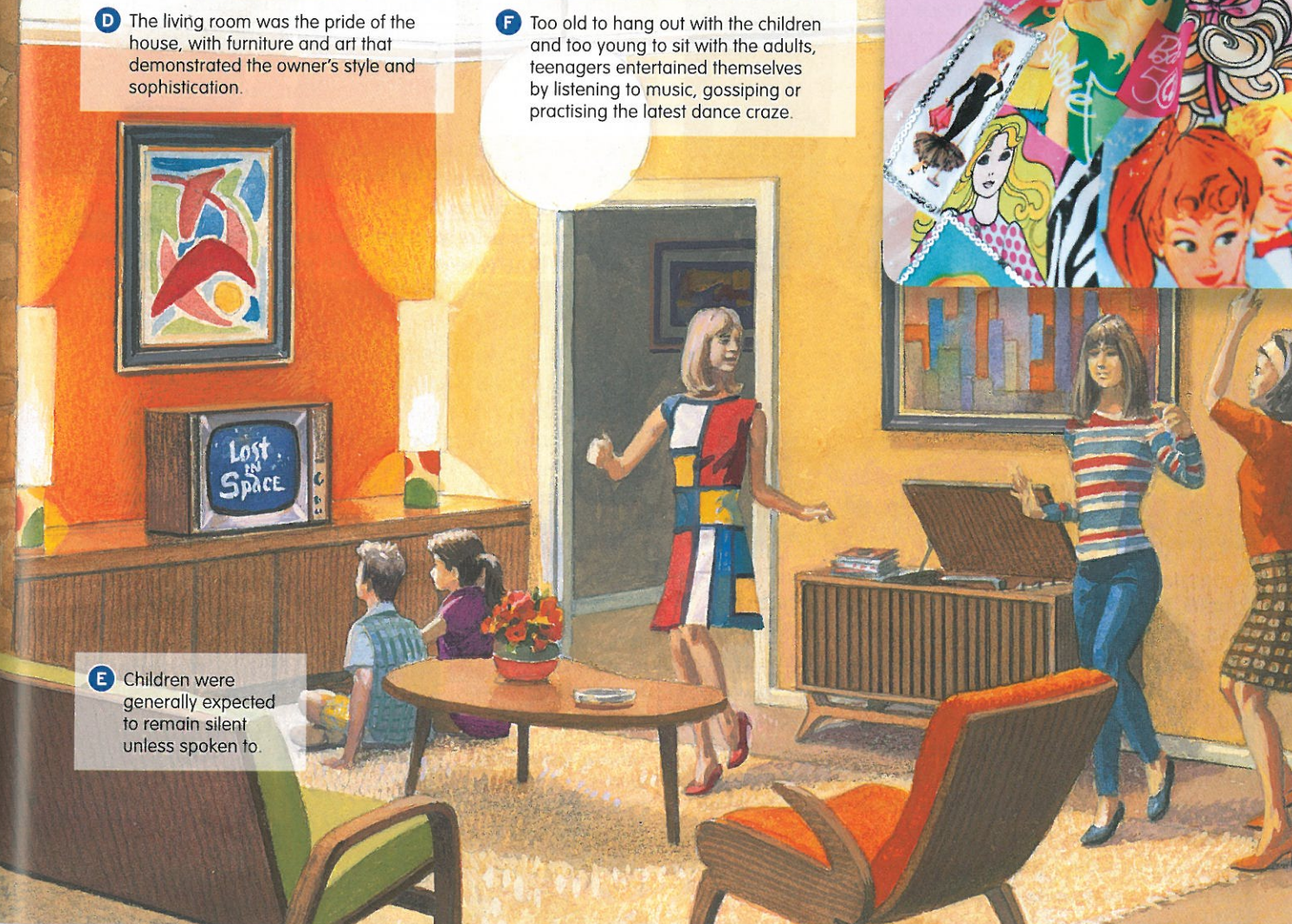
American doll with a 'womanly' figure, handsome boyfriend and tailored, interchangeable outfits that would take the world by storm. Launched at the New York Toy Fair on 9 March 1959, Barbie immediately captured the imaginations of young girls, with 351 000 selling in the first year. Barbie would become the biggest selling toy in history.



C For many people, the dream home of the 1960s was a brick, single-level modern design that would accommodate a growing family.

D The living room was the pride of the house, with furniture and art that demonstrated the owner's style and sophistication.

F Too old to hang out with the children and too young to sit with the adults, teenagers entertained themselves by listening to music, gossiping or practising the latest dance craze.



E Children were generally expected to remain silent unless spoken to.

The baby boomers are growing up

Due to the rising popularity of television and live-music programs aimed at teenagers such as Johnny O'Keefe's *Six O'clock Rock*, a number of rock 'n' roll-inspired dance fads swept the country during the 1960s. In 1960, Australian teenagers adopted the Twist, which had been popularised by a young, black American pop singer named Chubby Checker. Then came the Monster Mash,

the Hitchhiker, the Swim and the Mashed Potato. In 1963, about 20 000 teenagers descended on the Sydney Showground to attend The Stomp, a music concert arranged by a local radio station and named after a popular 'surf dance'.

As Australian teenagers rebelled against what they viewed as the conservative lifestyles and values of their

Source 2 Since the early 1960s Barbie's lifestyle and look have changed to reflect the world around her, as shown on the dress of this doll, which was created in celebration of Barbie's fiftieth anniversary.

