SOURCE 4.5.1 Michael Jackson in his famous 'Thriller' pop music video, released in 1984. At 14 minutes long, 'Thriller' is widely regarded as the most influential music video of all time; it set the benchmark for music video popular culture in the 1980s and decades to come.

'GLAM BANDS' AND CROOKED BASEBALL CAPS

Popular rock bands such as U2, Van Halen, Def Leppard and AC/DC, and the 1980s version of 'glam bands' in Bon Jovi, Queen, Mötley Crüe and Poison drew huge crowds with their big sound, energetic performances and elaborate special effects. Many of these types of bands became notorious for their party lifestyle and reckless behaviour. Less elaborate rockers such as Bruce Springsteen and Dire Straits also had hits in Australia. The heavier rock of 'metal' bands Metallica and Megadeth appealed to other young people, 'headbanging' and playing 'air guitar' as they listened on.

Gangsta rap was a type of music that grew out of African-American inner-city street culture in the late 1970s and became popular with some Australian youth in the 1980s. The often aggressive lyrics by performers such as Ice-T, Public Enemy, N.W.A and the Beastie Boys worried many parents, and explored social issues that were mostly unique to the United States. Gangsta rap blended with traditional 'rhythm and blues' influences to evolve into 'hip-hop'. The phenomenon of **break dancing**, that involved acrobatic and body contorting movements such as spinning on heads and backs to rap music, interested teenage boys in particular as they attempted to master the moves of groups like the Rock Steady Crew on taped together pieces of cardboard and linoleum.

SOURCE 4.5.2 Australian band INXS took the world by storm in the late 1980s and early 1990s, while maintaining their Australian identity. They experienced the highs and lows of modern media attention, and eventually hosted a reality television show in 2005 to find a new lead singer to replace Michael Hutchence who died in 1997.

Q
1. How do you know which musician is the lead singer?
2. What cues are there in the photograph to indicate that this is an Australian group?

AUSTRALIAN 'PUB BANDS'

The diversity of music available to young Australians in the 1980s was further supplemented by a booming Australian pub and nightclub music scene. Some of the bigger Australian bands of the time included Midnight Oil, Men at Work, Cold Chisel, Icehouse, Divinyls, the Church, Crowded House and Hoodoo Gurus, many of whom, as well as performers such as Kylie Minogue, made names for themselves on the world stage. The 1980s was seen as a critical period for Australian popular music, when many artists broke free of simply replicating the music of the United States and Britain. Such variety in music tastes is representative of the **heterogeneous** nature of generation X.

TELEVISION IN THE EIGHTIES

Television technology continued to improve in the 1980s, delivering popular culture to more Australians in remote areas through improved access via a new domestic satellite, AUSSAT, in 1986. Live broadcasts of the 1983 America's Cup, 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games, 1986 Commonwealth Games, and the Live Aid concert in 1985 are examples of Australians being as up to date with world events as most others in the Western world. Although spectators had to stay up late to watch international events due to time differences, the 'tyranny of distance' was being slowly chipped away. The establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in Melbourne and Sydney in 1980, and its expansion throughout the decade, began providing programs in many languages to support Australia's growing multicultural population. Video cassette recorders also meant that people had more flexibility with their television viewing, and by the 1990s over 80 per cent of homes had one. By 1980, businesses and advertisers had realised the potential of television to sell their products and services, and commercial television accounted for 33 per cent of all advertising revenue.

MINI-SERIES AND SOAP OPERAS

Along with music video programming, Australian television networks began producing dramatic **mini-series** that would be presented in a defined number of episodes. Series such as *Women of the Sun* (1981), *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1983), *The Dismissal* (1983) and *Bangkok Hilton* (1989) starring a young Nicole Kidman, were stories about Australians made in Australia and for Australians, that dealt with a range of social and political issues of the near and distant past.

Soap operas such as *A Country Practice* (1981–93), *Sons and Daughters* (1982–87), *Neighbours* (1985–) and *Home and Away* (1988–) all began their successful runs in the 1980s. Many Australian stars including Kylie Minogue and Guy Pearce launched their careers from these programs.

SOURCE 4.5.3 The *Neighbours* (1985–) wedding of Scott (Jason Donovan) and Charlene (Kylie Minogue) in 1987 had most of Australia glued to their televisions.

LOCAL PRODUCTIONS GAIN POPULARITY

Australians were becoming more comfortable with seeing themselves portrayed in every possible way on the small screen. It is estimated that eight out of ten of the most popular programs on Australian television in 1980 were Australian productions. The game show *Sale of the Century* first aired in 1980 (ending in 2001 in its original format), and the emerging tradition of Australian comedy programming was well represented with the skit show *The Comedy Company* (1988–90) on Network Ten, and *The Gillies Report* (1984–85), *Mother and Son* (1984–94), *The D-Generation* (1986–87) and *The Big Gig* (1989–91) all premiering on the ABC. Yet British programs such as *The Bill* (1984–2010) and *Doctor Who* (1963–89) were watched widely, and the cult sitcom *The Young Ones* (1982–84) had a significant following. US offerings *MASH* (1972–83), *The Love Boat* (1977–86), *Dynasty* (1981–89), *Cheers* (1982–93), *The Cosby Show* (1984–92), *Miami Vice* (1984–90), and animated programs for children such as *The Transformers* (1984–87) and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987–96) maintained the flow of US popular culture into Australia.