



**A MERRI BUNCH**  
(Clockwise from left) Clairi Browne; Vika and Linda Bull; Paul Kelly; Cameron Bruce; Kira Piru; Dan Sultan; Ash Naylor; Bill McDonald; Peter Luscombe

## Meet... Paul Kelly

**Paul Kelly has released his 20th studio album – a collection of collaborations with some of his closest musical friends – and is touring the country this month**

### TELL US ABOUT *THE MERRI SOUL SESSIONS*.

It's a soul record, a collection of new songs with a couple of old ones, sung by a variety of singers. They're the kind of songs that I thought would suit other voices better than mine – songs that needed a soul treatment. I recruited Clairi Browne, Kira Piru, Dan Sultan... Vika and Linda Bull have been singing with me for a long time.

### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE COLLABORATION?

I write a lot of songs that I think are better for other singers. I love musicians like Marvin Gaye, Al Green and Curtis Mayfield... So I'm often writing songs with voices like that in mind, but my voice is nothing like that. This is a chance to have them all together on a record of mine. I always

collaborate with my band – I often just have a sketch of a song – the words, the tune, the chords – and everything from there is collaboration.

### HOW DID YOU WORK WITH THE TEAM?

It was like working with old friends. I produced Vika and Linda's first album, and they sing with me on

tour. Vika and Linda were friends with Dan's mother, so they've known him since he was three years old. I've been playing with my band for quite a while too. What's new for me is working with Clairi and Kira.

### HOW DID YOU CHOOSE CLAIRI AND KIRA?

I heard Clairi's "Love Better" and I thought it was fantastic. A friend of mine passed on a YouTube clip of Kira singing a song called "One Eye Open" with her band. That song floored me. It's been a joy working with them. ★

### Paul's recommendations

I like Sweet Jean – a duo from Melbourne featuring Sime Nugent and Alice Keath. I like Laura Jean, who's been making records for a while. The Twerps, Dick Diver – and I really love Lost Animal, I'm waiting for their next record. Emma Donovan, too – she's made a new record with the PutBacks.

*Paul will tour The Merri Soul Sessions nationally, and will appear at Sydney's Taronga and Melbourne Zoo with a range of Australian musicians. [paulkelly.com.au](http://paulkelly.com.au); [twilighattaronga.org.au](http://twilighattaronga.org.au); [zoo.org.au](http://zoo.org.au)*