



Lifestyle Beauty

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## Tatts not welcome

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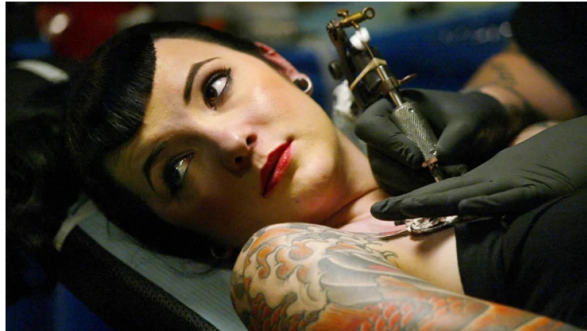
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It used to be bikers and trash celebs or their wannabes who had them. Then along came the grunge Nineties when everyone became an individual and got them - even your teacher. Today they're mainstream: check out the supermarket queue, the school run and the bridal party at the local park on Saturday. Yet tattoos still attract ire and men and women with tattoos suffer discrimination, according to inked club-goers.

They claim that a number of venues in Victoria, including a bar in Ballarat north-west of Melbourne, refuse entry to patrons with tattoos. Usually this means tattoos in the "wrong" places - prominent areas such as the hands, neck and face. The clubgoers says that these bans are not uncommon. "It happens in clubs and venues right across Melbourne and it's discriminatory," says "RJ", a heavily tattooed personal trainer. "You're refused entry or asked to cover them up before entry. It's happened to me and there's nothing offensive about my tatts. They're body art. These days all types of people get tatts."



Think before you ink ... tattoos can cause more problems than they're worth.

Still the prejudice remains. Imogen Lampert, an image consultant, says while discreet tattoos are usually tolerated by employers, most balk at large or suggestive examples of body art. "Tattoos are permanent statements and, in my opinion, they are not always appropriate in some situations," says Lampert, who advises largely corporate clients. "Sometimes they can just look wrong - like when a bride is in her beautiful gown."

But can tattoos be considered offensive when every second person has one? And there are some major and ladylike celebs leading the charge, too - Jessica Alba, Penelope Cruz, Heidi Klum all have tattoos. Do you? Do tattoos really attract censure these days or are the tattooed clubgoers in Victoria overstating the case? Do you like tattoos? If you've got them, have you faced discrimination? In what situations do you feel compelled to cover them up?

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