THE OFFTOPICS RELEASE DEBUT EP, TELLING THE STORY ABOUT THE HEART OF BRUNSWICK, IN MUSIC AND COMIC – *BACK ON THE ZINE*

EP RELEASED 18TH NOVEMBER 2018

After a massive 12-months, the release of Melbourne's brokers of groove The Offtopics debut self-titled EP is on the horizon, completing the comic-style story they started back in September 2017. The eponymous EP, dubbed *Back On The Zine*, has been almost three years in the making and since the release of the first single, *Sunrise in Richmond*, in September last year, The Offtopics' fans have been following the story of 'Red Eye Jane' and 'Funky Grandma' across the seven-inch single covers.

Never a band to follow a well-trodden path, The Offtopics have always marched to the beat of their own drum, and it's one of the reasons that they have garnered such a loyal following. Working towards their EP, the band knew they wanted to do something special with it – not just by making it a vinyl release – but also something of a special collectible. Enter the comic-book style singles – *Sunrise in Richmond, Funky Grandma* and *A Man Needs Cooling* – that have dripped out a storyline set in the heart of Brunswick. Along with the Brunswick-esque song content, the covers of the singles told part of a story – each to be continued – the culmination of which will be wrapped up in the *Back On The Zine* EP.

For lead singer and funk dynamo Polash Larsen, the EP release, which features a full poster-style fold-out of the comic-story including the pivotal ending, sees the band come full circle. The songs represent the heart of the band, and their base in the north-west of the city, and the storyline embodies their everyday experiences. "The Offtopics are made-up of mature musicians and our audience are similar to us," he says. "There are kids, day-jobs, and aging parents, all vying for time. Frank and Donna's journey as they overcome various obstacles to get to The Offtopics' gig at The Funkhole incorporate just a few of the situations I've been presented with by friends, or family, who 'really wanted to be there, but couldn't'. While the songs on the recent release don't reflect any of the specific scenarios, they often inhabit the same world – Sydney Road, food trucks, dive bars, little old Italian ladies helping out with some babysitting, all locate the album within greater Brunswick."

Steering away from releasing the EP on CD and harking back to the romance of vinyl was an easy decision for the band. The three singles released over the past 12-months leading up to the EP were also all vinyl releases. "That warm, rich sound of vinyl goes hand-in-hand with the production style I went for in the recording," says Polash. "But more than the sound of vinyl is the ritual that is involved with putting on a record. The snap and hiss of the surface noise before the track starts takes me back to my childhood."

The album was recorded and produced over an 18-month period. Some of the delay was due to life getting in the way, but for the most part, it was deliberate – The Offtopics didn't want to rush things. They had a chance to record the EP they wanted to and to make it right. "We were methodical and determined not to be hasty," says Polash. "Arrangements were fairly painstaking and we utilised the full range of the band members' musical talent. There's a lot of multi-instrumental tracking, lush backing vocals and percussion, leading to an expensive sounding production. Our other consideration was making sure we got the most out of the great players in the band – that means at least one great sax solo (*Fire In My Flue*), one trumpet solo (*Plans*), some cool keyboard stuff (*A Man Needs Cooling*), a percussion break with a wah effect (*Shape I'm In*), backing vocals, handclaps, laughter in the studio and finally some stinging guitar solos."

The Offtopics EP features four punchy tracks on Side A – *Plans, A Man Needs Cooling, Red Eye Jane* and *Fire In My Flue* –and four party tracks on Side B – *Funky Grandma, Sunrise In Richmond, Shape I'm In* and *Big Booty Woman*. "Have you ever organised a kids' relay race? Me neither, but I've been told you put your fastest kid last, your second fastest kid first and then stick all the others somewhere in the middle," says Polash. "For albums, I'm also told there are all sorts of theories about where you put your feature track. I really have no idea. I just try to make sure that I don't put two songs that are too similar back-to-back. Side B seems to be the party side though, doesn't it?"

The Offtopics eponymous EP is released on 18th November 2018 at a special hometown Sunday Session show.

For more information on the band, please visit www.theofftopics.com