

The ultimate guide to the hottest emerging fashion designers from all over the world

\$9.95

# SASSY

## +CO.

JUNE 2023

**RIISING STAR SPOTLIGHT:**  
GET TO KNOW THE MEA QUEENS



**STARCENTRAL STARS**

Meet the fabulous rising stars of  
StarCentral magazine - Get ready to  
meet the next generation of talent in 2023

Editorial credit: Reghu Balaraman

# AAFW

afterpay

AUSTRALIAN  
FASHION WEEK

2023



WWW.GLOBALELITEMEDIAGROUP.COM

# PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION

Get yourself "As Seen On" ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX and  
more to gain INSTANT Authority and Credibility



# SASSY +CO.

## CONTENTS

- 6 Cover Story: Sassy & Co's event coverage of the Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023
- 18 Rising Star Spotlight: One on one with Paige Tonkin
- 22 MEA Spotlight: Find out more about Sheridan Mortlock and Naomie White
- 24 MEA Spotlight: Get to know Robyn Russell, Jaisey Molina and Haley Cobb
- 26 MEA Spotlight: Jessika Bassan and Kajol Chand
- 28 MEA Spotlight: Meet Riley Aston and Himaya Wijayaweera

## EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief  
Jenny Hu

Creative Director  
Vanessa Hodgkins

Photographic & Art  
Pedro Virgil, Tony Palliser, Stephen Wong, Dave Choo, James Mao, Eric Fonacier

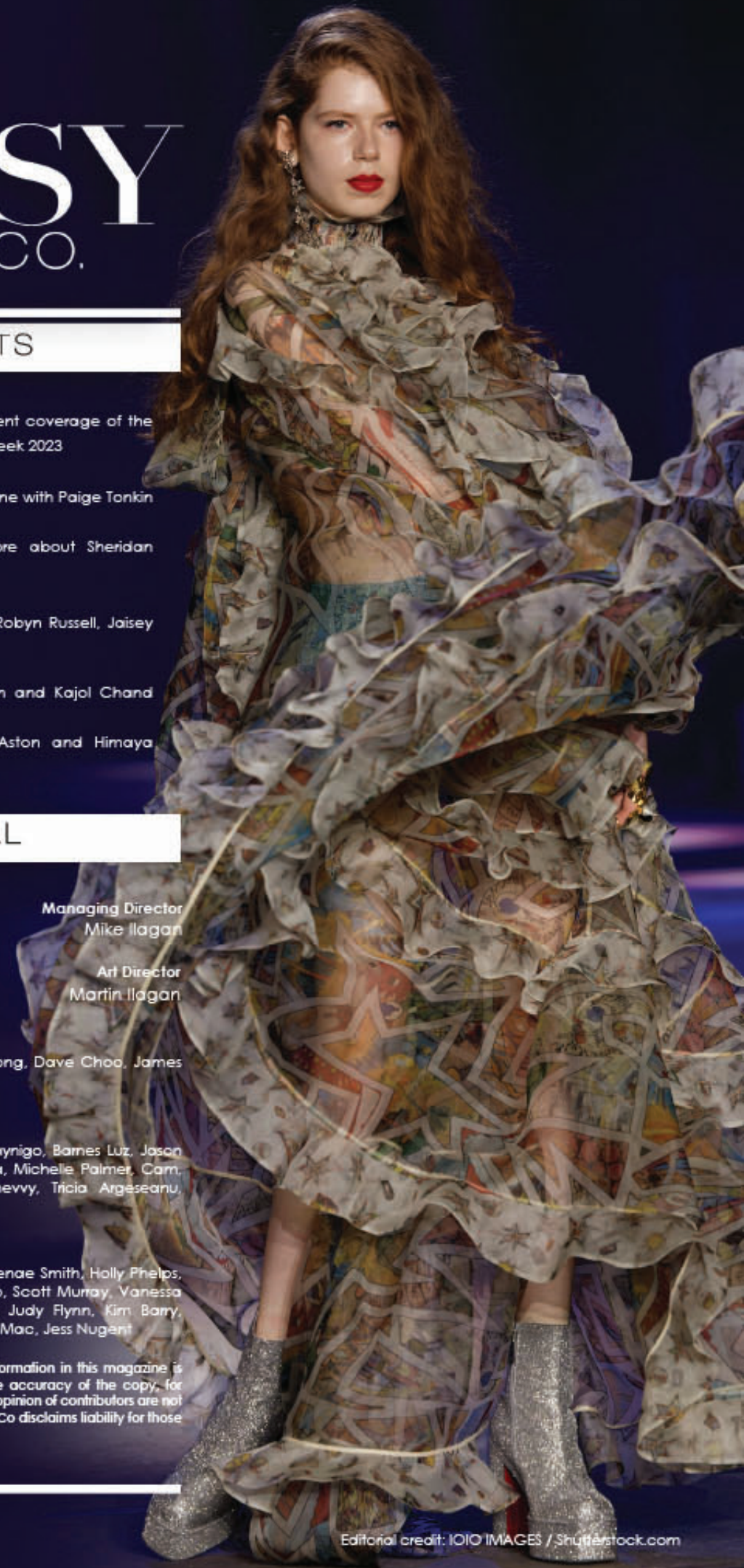
Marketing  
Alex Abella, Krissy Anderson, Eileen Maynigo, Barnes Luz, Jason Harris, Annabel Gottfried, John Esquerro, Michelle Palmer, Cam, Angelica Whitelaw, Joanne Azz, Chevvy, Tricia Argeseanu, Zenaida G, Gerry Samaniego

Writers & Contributors  
Anjelica Whitelaw, Shiwani Gurpah, Renae Smith, Holly Phelps, Jenny Hu, Charles Cubelo, Jill Antonio, Scott Murray, Vanessa Jensen, Leanne Harrison, Patricia H, Judy Flynn, Kim Barry, Maddy King, Dr Mike Sherouda, Anjuli Mac, Jess Nugent

While every effort is made to ensure the information in this magazine is correct, changes may occur that affect the accuracy of the copy, for which Sassy & Co holds no responsibility. The opinion of contributors are not necessarily those of Sassy & Co staff. Sassy & Co disclaims liability for those impressions.

Managing Director  
Mike Ilagan

Art Director  
Martin Ilagan



Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com



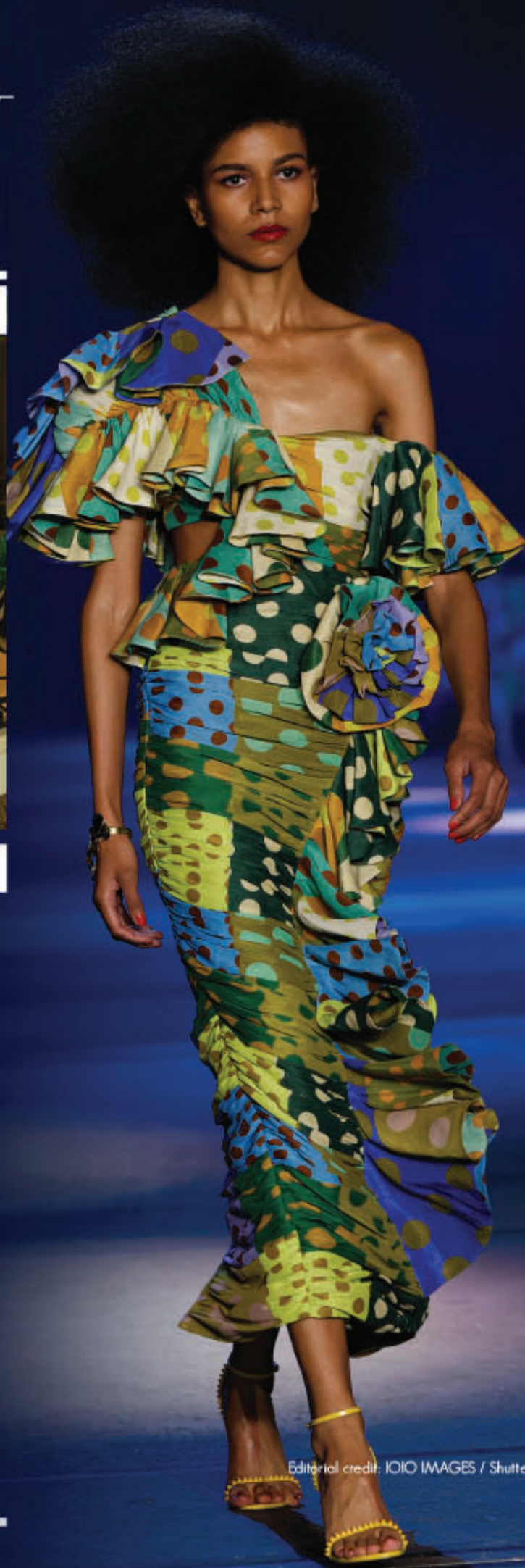
# SASSY +CO.



## EDITOR'S NOTES

Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023, held from May 15 to 19 in Sydney, showcased the best of Australian fashion with a schedule comprising 45 designer runway shows and presentations. The event featured a diverse range of established and emerging creatives, along with engaging conversations and panel discussions led by industry experts.

The event celebrated diversity and inclusivity, with twelve designers of Indigenous heritage prominently featured in the May schedule. Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 left a lasting impression by combining innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity. The event provided a platform for emerging talent, highlighted established designers, and emphasized the importance of ethical fashion practices and representation within the industry. AAFW continues to be a significant force in shaping the Australian fashion landscape.



Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com

GLOBAL ELITE MEDIA GROUP

# SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Would you like to achieve your social media marketing and branding goals effortlessly?



NORMALLY

~~\$2,500~~

PER MONTH

SPECIAL RATE

\$1,000

PER MONTH

What we can offer:

Grow Your Online Presence • Optimize Your Social Media Accounts  
Create High-Quality & Engaging Posts • Research Relevant Hashtags  
Schedule Regular Posts on all Your Accounts • Create Original Content  
Design Social Media Strategies to Achieve Organic Marketing Targets

Contact us via: [admin@globalelitemediagroup.com](mailto:admin@globalelitemediagroup.com)





The HENNE show during the Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 at St Barnabas Anglican Church on May 17, 2023.

Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com





The INJURY show during the Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 at Carriageworks on May 17, 2023.

Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com

# AAFW

afterpay AUSTRALIAN FASHION WEEK

From May 15 to 19, Afterpay Australian Fashion Week (AAFW) 2023 took center stage in Sydney, Australia. This year's event featured a jam-packed schedule of 45 designer runway shows and presentations, showcasing the talents of established and emerging creatives. With a strong focus on sustainability, craftsmanship, and inclusivity, AAFW 2023 dazzled attendees with its captivating collections, thought-provoking discussions, and the return of several esteemed designers.

Lesleigh Jermanus, the creative force behind Alémais, set the tone for AAFW 2023 with her debut show. Alémais is a contemporary ready-to-wear label that embodies the principles of sustainability and craftsmanship. Jermanus's collection captivated the audience, showcasing her talent for blending modern aesthetics with eco-conscious practices. Her debut signaled the event's commitment to showcasing emerging talent and promoting ethical fashion.

AAFW 2023 welcomed back familiar faces who had made a mark in previous years. Alix Higgins, who made his runway debut in the previous edition, returned to present his captivating collection on the final day of the week. Joining him were esteemed brands such as St. Agni, Albus Lumen, Bec + Bridge, Bondi Born, Anna Quan, and Wynn Hamlyn, all of whom showcased their latest creations, building upon their previous successes.

One notable comeback was that of Kathryn Forth and Julia Ritorto of Acler, who made a triumphant return after a five-year hiatus from AAFW. Their collection was a testament to their impeccable craftsmanship and distinctive design aesthetic. Additionally, Jeremy Hershman presented his unisex leisurewear label, Haulier, for the first time, while Ana Piteira of Blanca, Maggie Hewitt of Maggie Marilyn, and Elinor Molnes made their impressive debuts at Carriageworks, adding a fresh wave of creativity to the fashion week.

AAFW 2023 showcased the rich diversity of Australian fashion by highlighting Indigenous designers. Throughout the May schedule, twelve designers of Indigenous heritage took the spotlight. Indigenous Fashion Projects Runway, hosted by David Jones, featured labels like Ngali, Liandra Swim, Kamara, Gammin Threads, and Lazy Girl Lingerie, among others. The closing night show celebrated the designs of Maara Collective, further emphasizing the importance of indigenous representation and empowerment within the fashion industry.

Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 exceeded expectations with its vibrant displays of creativity, commitment to sustainability, and celebration of diversity. From Lesleigh Jermanus's stunning debut to the return of established brands and the introduction of exciting newcomers, the event showcased the immense talent and vision of the Australian fashion industry. By promoting sustainable practices and providing a platform for emerging and underrepresented designers, AAFW 2023 reaffirmed its position as a global leader in the fashion world, inspiring future generations of creatives and pushing the boundaries of style and inclusivity.





Photographed by: Reghu Balaraman

The BEC + BRIDGE show during the Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 at the Overseas Passenger Terminal on May 16, 2023.

Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com







The BEC + BRIDGE show during the Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023 at the Overseas Passenger Terminal on May 16, 2023.

Editorial credit: IOIO IMAGES / Shutterstock.com



Photographed by: Reghu Balaraman



# SASSY +CO.

Paige Tonkin is a motivated, bubbly, and caring model/actress who has always been fascinated by watching beautiful models and actors on television and has dreamed of making a name for herself one day.

It was at the age of 14 when her dream was kick-started, and she was scouted and taken to Las Vegas for a talent and runway show. This fantastic experience made Paige fall in love with the industry and made her even more determined to succeed.

Paige was StarCentral Magazine's CoverGirl winner in 2022 and is currently the reigning Miss Oceania Regency International 2023. When she isn't working the camera or the runway, you will find her coaching Aerial Silks, Aerial Lyra, and Women's Artistic Gymnastics at the local gym.

StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with Paige and here's what went down:

## How did you get into the modelling industry?

I was 14 years old when I was introduced to the modelling industry. I actually found an audition online for acting, so I showed my parents and asked them if I could go and audition. After having a read, they agreed to take me, so we submitted all the forms. I learned the monologue they sent me, and off we went.

We didn't realize that the company was a U.S. Talent Scouting Agency, and that the two scouts were well-known actors and models. I was initially there to audition for acting, but they both encouraged me to audition as a model. So I did, and I made it through and was off to Las Vegas to take part in IPOP, where I learned so much, met a lot of industry professionals, made a heap of friends, and completely fell in love with the industry.

## What do you like most about being a model?

I honestly love everything about being a model, from modelling beautiful designer creations to the adrenaline and excitement of the runway and all the fun and amazing locations of photo-shoots. But if I had to choose one, it would have to be the fantastic people I get to meet and work with. I get to make new friends every time I go to work.

## Downside to being a model?

There are not many downsides to being a model, but I would have to say I am not the biggest fan of having to get into the water on a cold winter's morning or the super early 4 am starts every now and then, as I do like my beauty sleep. In saying that, once I am up and going, I am pumped for the day, and nothing can stop me.

## What has been the most memorable experience of being in the modelling industry so far?

Wow, this is really a tough one, as I have gotten to be a part of so many incredible experiences, and I cherish every one of them. I honestly don't think I can narrow it down to just one, so here are a few that definitely stand out - modelling at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, modelling at the Multicultural Fashion Festival and Global Elite Fashion Festival, modelling at The Versace Penthouse, being awarded the Global Elite Model of the Year and the GEQ Teen Queen of the Year and being named the GEQ Cover Model at the recent Australian Golden Sash Awards and the Global Elite International Awards. And, of course, winning StarCentral Magazine's Cover Model Quest 2022 and winning the title of Miss Teen Australia Regency International 2022 at the National Australian Miss Pageant and traveling to Las Vegas with Team Australia to represent my beautiful country.

## Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far?

Again, this one is tough, as I have been lucky enough to meet so many amazing and interesting people worldwide. I have had the privilege to meet and work with many amazing photographers, videographers, actors, stylists, HMU Artists, models, and designers. But to name a few, I would have to say the incredible designers Oogi Flower, Lisa Swinbanks, Fal Penny, Tommy Ge, Tammi Parvez, Dee Mukherjee, and Trendy B are all amazing and were all so lovely. I feel so honoured to have been chosen to wear their beautiful creations. Then there is the incredible Bridget Foster (who starred in CSI Miami) and Mark Carroll (Abercrombie & Fitch Model), who encouraged me and scouted me for Las Vegas when I was 14. And lastly, I cannot forget the amazing Sue Turner from Global Elite Media Group and Mike Ilagan from StarCentral Magazine, who have shown me so much support and encouragement.

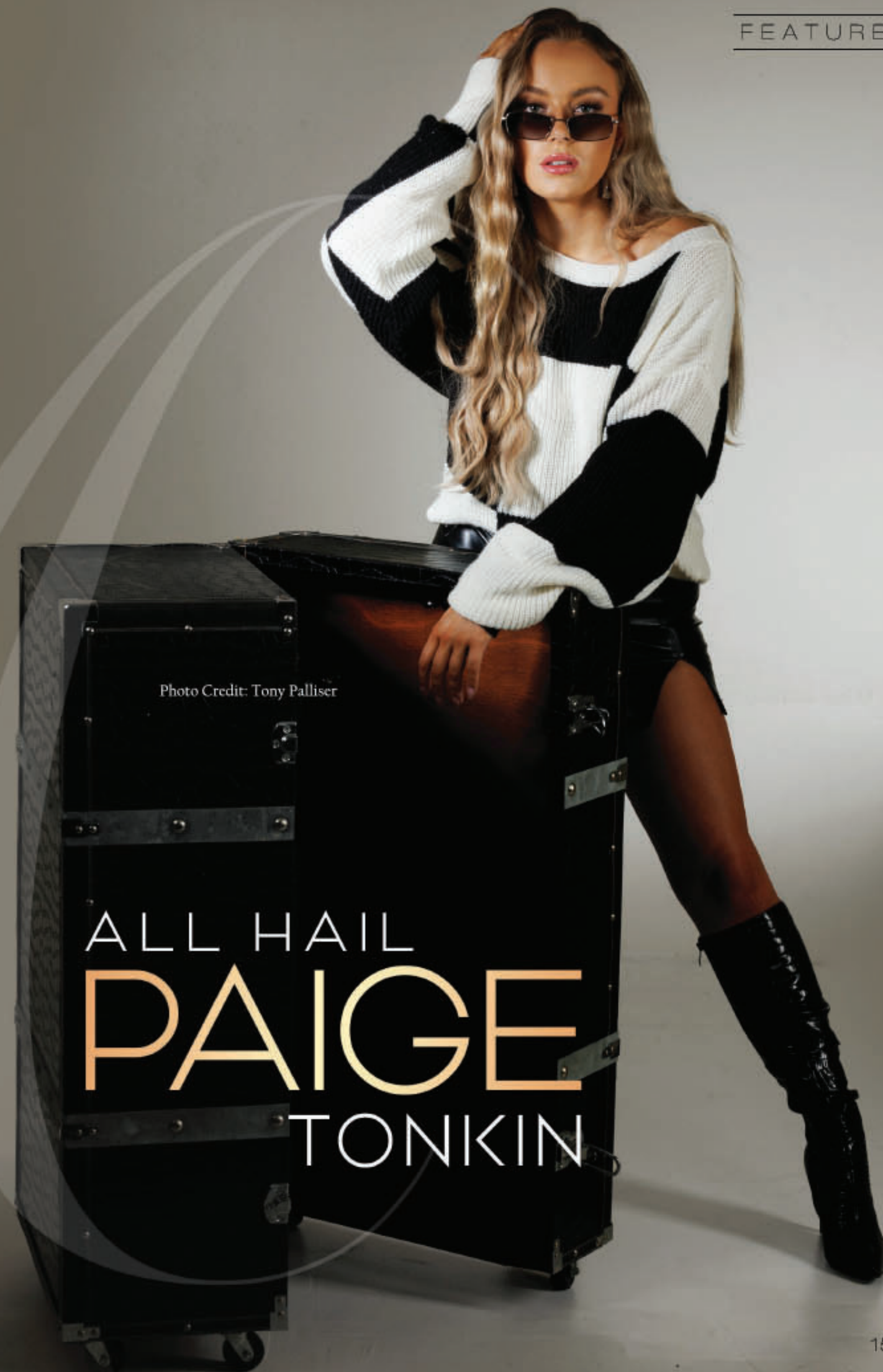


Photo Credit: Tony Palliser

ALL HAIL  
PAIGE  
TONKIN



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white wide-brimmed hat, a white short-sleeved dress with puffed sleeves and a ruffled waist, and brown leather boots, is sitting on a sand dune. She is holding a brown leather crossbody bag and sunglasses. The background shows a blue ocean with white waves and a clear blue sky with light clouds. Two wooden posts are visible in the sand.

# studio49

photography

49 Johnston St, Annandale NSW 2038  
Phone: 0416 095 875





**What has been the most valuable lesson you've learned while in the modelling industry?**

The most valuable lesson I have learned from the industry and something that I live by every day is that confidence is key. You can achieve anything and get to wherever you want to be, if you hold your head high and believe in yourself. DREAM, BELIEVE, ACHIEVE.

The other most valuable lesson I have learned is to always know who you are working with, as your safety and integrity always need to come first.

**Is your family supportive of you being a model?**

My family is definitely my biggest support system, and I would not be where I am today without them. My Mum is always right by my side. She has been there to drive me here, there, and everywhere, helping me with my hair and helping me pack for a modelling job when I need a hand, and always ensuring I have everything I could possibly need. My Dad is always standing there with a coffee in hand when I am up for a big day of shooting, ready to help carry everything to the car, and he even comes along to shoots when he is not working. And, of course, my sister, who is always lending me half her wardrobe, makeup, and more (laughs). My family is beyond supportive. They are always at every event I am modelling and cheering me on from the side. I am seriously the luckiest girl in the world to have such a supportive family.

**What is the best advice you have ever been given?**

One of the best pieces of advice I have been given since I was a young child was always to treat others the way you wish to be treated. This is something that I will carry with me throughout my life. It costs nothing to be respectful, kind, and compassionate.

**What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.**

I have always had big plans to make acting and modelling my full-time career and one day be cast in a big-budget feature film and walk on catwalks worldwide. So now that I have completed my HSC, I am even more determined than ever to kick my dreams into high gear.

Photo Credit: Tony Palliser



Photo Credit: Tony Palliser





# Star Central

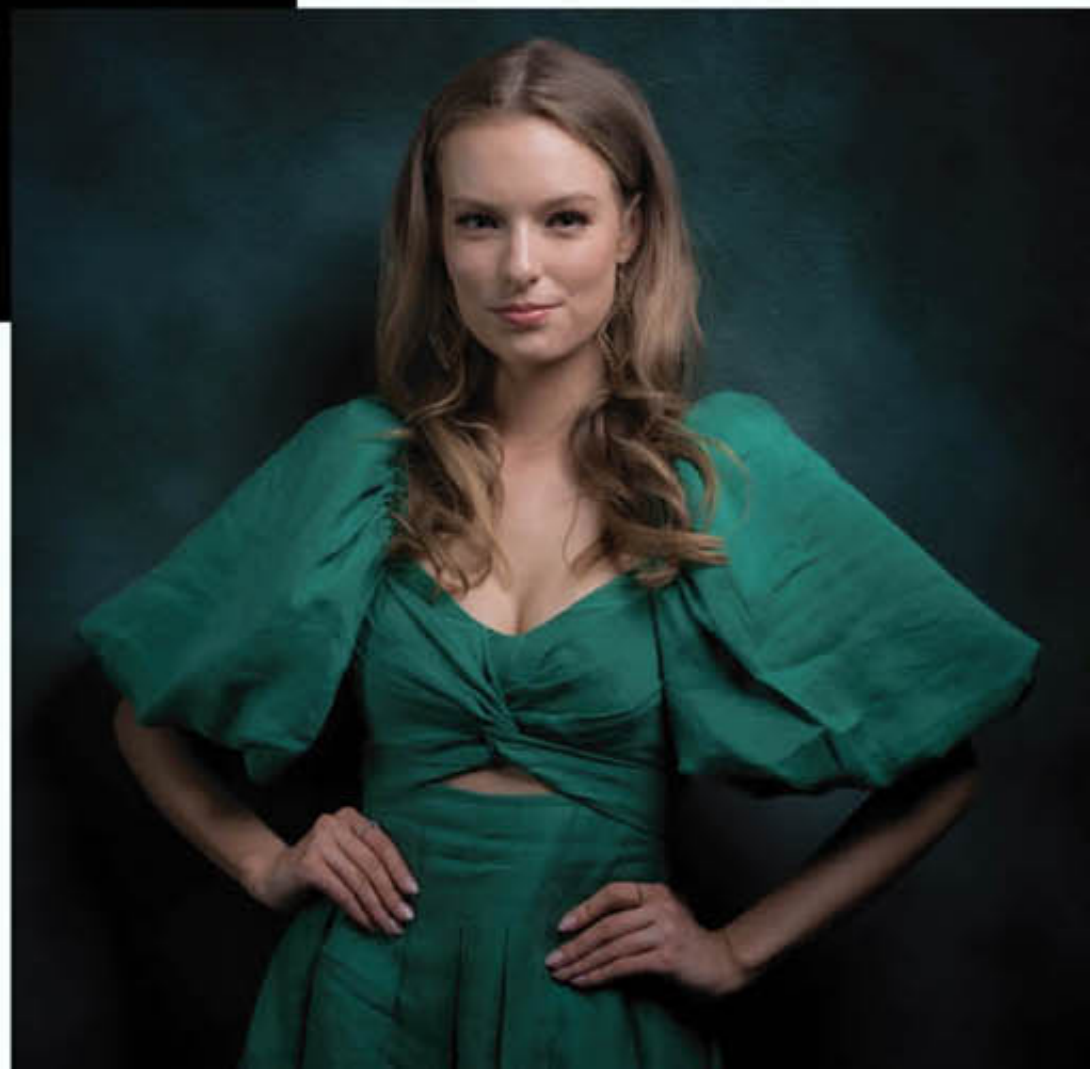
MAGAZINE







## Sheridan Mortlock



Sheridan Mortlock joined Miss Earth Australia because she feels that fighting for the conservation and protection of our planet is the most significant battle we must overcome. She has consistently advocated for the environment, but her university studies have further intensified this. Currently, she's undertaking a double degree of Global Sustainability and Politics. She believes Miss Earth Australia provides an excellent platform to amplify our voices and actions as we protect mother earth.

## Naomie White

Naomie White gravitated toward the Miss Earth Australia pageant as she was inspired by her trip to the Philippines in 2018 and met former Miss Earth 2017 Karen Ibasco - she opened Naomie's eyes to the fact that young women have a voice to be a catalyst of change. As a young woman who has been proactive about the idea of a sustainable Earth, she finds this the utmost opportunity to become a quintessential part of the change.







## Robyn Russell

Robyn Russell joined Miss Earth Australia because she loves the mission behind the organisation. She felt she would be able to meet like-minded women who have the same mission as her. It aligns with her morals and views to save Mother Earth. In her current full-time job, she's educating people about sustainability and the impact of internal combustion cars on climate change. Through this platform, she can broaden her audience and educate more people. Miss Earth Australia truly is beauty for a cause.

*"Robyn Russell's current full-time job is educating people about sustainability and the impact of internal combustion cars on climate change."*



## Jaisy Molina

Jaisy Molina chose to compete in Miss Earth Australia because it is an opportunity for her to raise awareness about the ongoing climate crisis. Miss Earth Australia stands for more than just beauty; it also stands for bravery and courage. She can speak out and inspire others to reduce and eliminate plastic pollution via this platform. She wants to protect our precious mother Earth - she feels that we are stronger when we work together.



## Haley Cobb

Haley Cobb joined Miss Earth Australia because she felt that this pageant aligned very closely with her values and beliefs. She believes Miss Earth Australia will allow her to further develop her self-confidence in her advocacy by raising environmental awareness toward businesses' social responsibility.



# Jessika Bassan



Coming to Miss Earth Australia, Jessika Bassan feels she can be a voice to empower everyone to be independent, believe in their potential, and don't lose their essence in life. Being the eldest sister of her three younger sisters, she believes she should be a good role model for them, where she lives a humble and respectful life – while genuinely learning and finding life's true purpose.



# Kajol Chand

Kajol Chand decided to join Miss Earth Australia to pursue her interests in serving and preserving our environment. Her love for nature stems from her upbringing and background – having Fijian blood meant she was attached to nature. Nature is a big part of the Fijian culture, with much emphasis on keeping it thriving. She shares this journey with her sister Shayal who was born with a rare disability. Her sister continues to inspire her to believe that we can create the perfect environment for coexistence between humans and the natural world.





# Riley Aston

Riley Aston joined Miss Earth Australia 2022 because she believes in promoting environmental awareness, conservation, and social responsibility towards Mother Earth. She's planning to utilise the Miss Earth Australia platform to make a difference by highlighting the importance of our environmental actions and acting on our social responsibilities to conserve the natural beauty of this planet we call home. She's excited to lead by example and share her eco-friendly tips with everyone throughout her Miss Earth Australia journey.



# Himaya Wijayaweera



Living in Australia has made Himaya Wijayaweera so appreciative of the beauty that we carry throughout nature and the diversity of cultures. Her "STRIVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY" approach targets everyone on how we as a collective need to work in unity to incorporate sustainable practices in our everyday lives. This pageant encourages the fulfilment of a purpose toward the protection and preservation of our mother Earth. By taking small steps to educate others on sustainability, she's aiming to use her platform to target the health-care industry to bring light on how we can make the change to be more considerate.





TV1 is an entertainment and lifestyle global streaming platform offering Australian content. TV1 promotes the most exhilarating events, the most glamorous and successful people, the most in-demand celebrities, the hottest rising stars, and the most exciting trends down under. TV1 may be new but it's most certainly in demand and 100% Australian. We are committed to making Aussie local talents, events, and entrepreneurs easily accessible to both our local and international audiences via the highest quality streaming technology.

Co-founded by the StarCentral Media Group and the Australian Millionaire Business Network, the TV1 channel is the home for independent Australian Screen content. We very much welcome our local screen practitioners from emerging through to the established to make TV1 their home. By streaming your content on TV1, you join a family of rising stars, entrepreneurs, celebrities, and various artists.

**MISSION:** Our mission is to present the most unique and compelling original Australian content by tapping into the hottest local talents and events.







# MAKE IT XTRA-ORDINARY.



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS: CONTENT & COPYWRITING | BRANDING & DESIGN  
CUSTOM WEB SOLUTIONS | DIGITAL & SMS MARKETING | PR & EVENTS

## **XTRA-ORD.COM**

REACH OUT: [HELLO@XTRA-ORD.COM](mailto:HELLO@XTRA-ORD.COM)