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Page 1 of 2



Tracey Winter and Daryl Young



Liz and David Sharp



Carolyn Cooke



Bethany Sharman  
and Anna O'Brien

## **JULIE TENGDAHL BOUTIQUE OPENING**

Emporium, Fortitude Valley

Julie Tengdahl has made a career out of providing the kinds of clothes that help get women onto the best-dressed lists. She also helps make getting dressed in the morning a lot easier with her relaxed but polished approach to fashion. Tengdahl celebrated 10 years of her label with the opening of her third Brisbane store, in the Emporium centre in the Valley, and many of those well-dressed women, who have remained loyal fans, were there to help. With her swish new store and a stylish soiree, it looks like the Tengdahl label will remain a firm fashion favourite for many years to come.

**Kellie Alderman**  
Pictures: Drew Fitzgibbon



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**Kymerley  
McMahon  
and Megan  
Foster**

**Lindsay  
Bennett  
and  
Melissa  
Downes**



Cheryl and Andrew Cambridge at the opening of The Private Members Club at Viludos Restaurant, Brisbane, Page 31

# White is all right

IT HAS been said that Brisbane party people won't play fantasy dress. It's a myth. Fact is they will if they're given the right excuse. Viludos restaurateur and entrepreneur Michael Hade gave them one when he launched his Private Members Club at an exuberant in-house shindig for 300 bright-eyed guests.

The event was labelled The White Party. Invitations specified an appearance in white couture. The call was heard by 95 per cent of the extravagant players, who gave the gig a North Pole glow.

And then there was Viludos Restaurant, respectfully made over by Mr Hade to retain the charms of its yesteryear existence as Dods House, the creation of renowned Brisbane architect Robin Dods.

As for the Private Members Club, it's a kind of cabal for folks who like to pay for various privileges such as travelling by Bentley to dine with Michael.

He laid on the pleasures at his party. They included the importing of funky Stateside DJ Ravidrums, famous for beating out rhythms at *Playboy* tycoon Hugh Hefner's Bunny-drenched bashes. Cool is cooler when it's all white.

The Australian PGA Championships, an annual December golfing event played out at the still-stunning Hyatt Regency Resort at Coolum, has morphed into a celebrity showcase. This year, savvy star spotters had a ball checking out familiar faces on and off the famous fairways.

Business babes gathered at Gianni's Portside for their annual Christmas bash and gifted SEQ designer and retail dynamo Julie Tengdahl has opened a fashion boutique in The Valley's Emporium: Totally fitting!

Ken Lord



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**Ken Lord**

**Best dressed: Julie Tengdahl launches her new store at Emporium, Fortitude Valley, Page 31**

**Teed up: John and Melissa Doyle at the PGA Championship welcoming party at the Hyatt Coolool, Page 29**





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# Fashion festival bares all in documentary It's show and tell

**Kellie Alderman**  
FASHION EDITOR

THE frenetic behind-the-scenes drama of Queensland's biggest fashion festival has been captured in a rare documentary to be screened next weekend.

Sequins fly, tempers flare and gowns get hitched, stitched and ditched as the lid is lifted on the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival Brisbane.

The 90-minute documentary, *Catwalk 360*, was filmed in the lead-up to, and during, the week-long fashion festival held in August and sponsored by *The Sunday Mail*.

The successful event involved 34 designers, hundreds of models, 9000 members of the public and a \$500,000 budget.

Festival director Lindsay Bennett, who takes a starring role in the program, said the candid, behind-the-scenes footage might surprise some viewers.

"I think the public will be surprised at how hands-on some big-name designers are — the documentary is an extraordinary tour of the event," he said.

"It is also another opportunity to showcase to the rest of the country everything that Brisbane has to offer."

The program focuses on the fashion week journeys of Brisbane labels Sacha Drake, Paul Hunt, Julie Tengdahl and Easton Pearson, with comments from fashion-industry heavyweights, *Vogue* editor-in-chief Kirstie Clements and publisher Grant Pearce.

"People might think the fashion industry is run by a bunch of airheads all talking about bags and shoes, but it is a multi-billiondollar industry that is very tough and a lot of intense contemplation goes into it," Ms Clements says in the show.

The documentary was also one of the last projects of retired newsreader, Marie Louise Theile, who read her final bulletin for Channel 10 on Friday.

The 2007 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival, held mainly at the Brisbane Hilton, was a sell-out success, with plans already under way for next year's event.

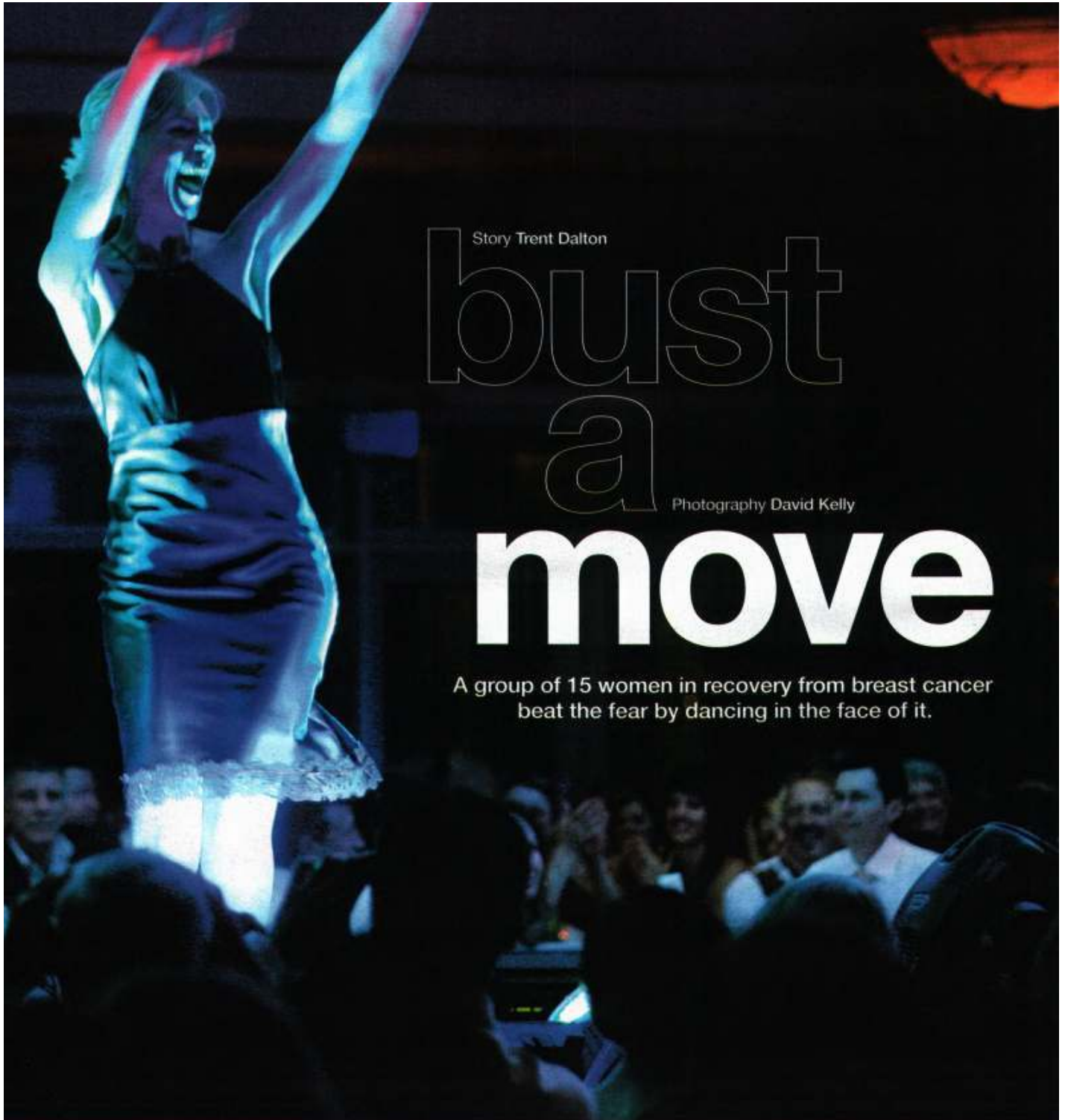
*Catwalk 360* screens on Ten at 3.30pm on Saturday.



**EXPOSED:** It may appear all glamour and composure, but behind the scenes it's a frantic quest for perfection at Queensland's biggest fashion festival



**NIP AND TUCK:** Last-minute hitches and stitches before a models heads to the catwalk



Story Trent Dalton

# bust a move

Photography David Kelly

A group of 15 women in recovery from breast cancer  
beat the fear by dancing in the face of it.



**T**hey could only be described as mum steps: the kind of awkward dance moves mothers develop somewhere between childbirth and menopause. Vicki Robie – 51, mother of three, daggy dancer – reaches the end of the catwalk, spins, slaps her backside and sings along to the music: “*Sex bomb, sex bomb, you’re my sex bomb.*”

Five minutes ago Robie was discussing the cancer that stole one of her breasts. “You must consider the sizes of these tumours,” she said. “If you’re told by the surgeon that it’s necessary, then there’s no mucking around. You just get in there and deal with it.”

Tonight Robie, one of 15 reluctant models in the Wesley Hospital’s Choices Gala Fashion Parade, gets one back on the Big C. “I think I’m warming to this,” she says, freezing her body in a dynamic montage of

model poses. Like supermodel Linda Evangelista, she jokes, she doesn’t get out of bed for less than \$10,000 – and maybe to put the bins out.

Another model, Cheryl Kelso, cackles with laughter. Tomorrow, after exactly one year of chemotherapy, she will have her 12-month check-up to determine whether or not her body needs another round of chemo. It wasn’t that long ago that the 58-year-old Gold Coast grandmother had no hair and no fingernails. Tonight, dressed in a knockout electric blue Kerri Craig number, she’d hold her own in the pages of *Vogue*. “People told me I had to learn to say no to things,” she says, tapping her toes to Tom Jones. “But I’m never saying no because there might be a time when I *have* to say no.”

Two hours from showtime, Genevieve Fitchew emerges for her walk-through. A 38-year-old Fraser

Island tour guide, she was diagnosed with high-grade aggressive breast cancer the day after her boyfriend asked for her hand in marriage. “It had moved to my lymph nodes,” she says. “I ended up having four lots of surgery because my fiancé and I did IVF cycling in the middle of it. We wanted to freeze some embryos before we started the chemo.”

Fitchew walks cautiously along the catwalk in a new pair of stilettos, laughing every time her ankles roll. She’s wearing three outfits tonight: two Tengdahls and a stunning Bora gown. “It’s very Oscars,” she says. “Emerald green with jewels all over it. I saw a picture of Jennifer Hawkins wearing it when she was Miss Universe. I’m hoping to live up to that.” Fitchew continues down the catwalk, all awkward knees and elbows. On her return, her optimism has flagged. “Alright, I’m just hoping I don’t fall off.”

Suzy Connor, one of three full-time workers who form the Wesley Hospital’s charity-driven Choices support network – a one-of-a-kind advice and support hub for people with breast cancer – leads the models along the catwalk. Her English accent lends her the stern tone of a department teacher. “You come to the end, turn, wave a fan if you have a fan, turn back, say hi to your family members,” she says. “And at the end you’re all going to come out and dance to *Flashdance.*”

“What?” says Robie, aghast. “Like, *What a Feeling?*” “Exactly,” says Connor.

Backstage, several models consult a whiteboard with a graph detailing times for wardrobe changes and catwalk entrances. Brookfield mother of four Alison Chandler has a hand to her mouth, puzzled. The 42-year-old was roped into this late. “I’m only halfway through my treatment,” she says. “It’s pretty hard to

think I’ll be modelling in front of 350 people out there. But there’s something about having a group of girls do it. It’s like we’re stronger together. This is probably what I need to kick on, get me through chemo.”

Robie pours a glass of champagne. “I think I’ll need a bottle of champagne to pull this off,” she mumbles to herself. “I’m really much better on a Friday night when I’m out on the dance floor.”

Linda Mackie, a 45-year-old Ferny Grove mother of three, spots the bubbly. “Champagne!” she says. The word gets around and the models form a small circle around the drinks tray. A discussion on breasts develops. “How used do you get to the doctor saying, ‘Can I feel you?’,” Mackie says. Bridgeman Downs mother Julie Van Dallen, 46, chimes in. “I find it easier showing strangers than family members,” she says. “I can’t show my husband at all.”

When Ann Dodd was diagnosed in June 2006, the 49-year-old immediately thought of her daughter. With tears flooding her face, she turned to her doctor and said: “My daughter gets married in 11 weeks, what am I going to do?” She’d already bought an outfit, a V-neck dress with no sleeves. “The oncologist said I couldn’t wear it. Sun and chemo don’t mix.”

Dodd nods her head toward Van Dallen: “There are certain people in your life that it’s okay for them to see you without your hair and certain people I would never show my hair to. A lot of family members. Because I don’t want them to see me like that.”

“My husband always says, ‘Show me, it’s okay,’” says Van Dallen. “But I just don’t want him to see me like that. I know some women can but I can’t. I’ll have a reconstruction in April and it’ll be a celebration.

“I’ll show him when I’ve got my body back.” ▶



The models go quiet. "What time do we go out?" asks Mackie. They consult their watches. Showtime is an hour away.

"Pass me that bottle," says Robie.

"Look," says a voice from the makeup room. 'Angela's put her wig on.'

**IN A SMALL ROOM WITH TWO MIRRORS AND A** makeup table, Angela Rattray has her eyes closed as a hairdresser fixes her brunette wig in place. "Normally I am a brunette," says Rattray, a 38-year-old St Lucia mother of two young boys. "But I've been blonde before. I even asked for a Morticia wig once but they didn't give it to me."

She sighs, fighting to keep her eyes open. It's 5.30pm. "This is normally lying-on-the-couch exhausted time," she says. "There's a few of us here feeling the pinch."

In August last year, Rattray was diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer, a rare and aggressive type that presents in swelling and a red rash. She's on a very expensive trial drug (up to \$2000 a week), the kind people go into debt to pay for. "I go in for chemo almost weekly," she says. Her hair first fell out at a work function. The first time he saw her bald, her 14-year-old son, Mitchell, ran from her in fear. Later, she asked her boys what they knew about cancer. "The boys said: 'It makes people die'. I said: 'That's right, but I'm going to have some medicine that will at least control it.' And that's what the medicine is doing. It's controlling it. It's not going to cure it."

As the weeks passed, Mitchell and his 11-year-old brother Connor clued up on cancer. They staged wig parties for their mum. Connor began organising a charity walk to help raise funds for his mother's medicine. "We learned to laugh about things," Rattray says. "I was going out one night. I got all dressed up and then I washed my face and I wiped one of my eyebrows off. You just laugh. Because it's fantastically funny. That's how we get through."

Carol Arnold, 58, places a hand on Rattray's shoulder. Arnold's dressed in a skimpy top with a low neckline, revealing the end of a scar above her right breast. "I haven't lost all of mine," she says. "I've just got this big ... chunk missing." Her designer jeans look painted on, as though the parade's organisers have intentionally dressed her to turn heads. "What are you talking about?" she says. "I haven't changed yet. These are *my* clothes."

Arnold walks into the dressing room and slips on a stylish black overcoat. "Oh my," she says, making circles before a full-length mirror. "I think I'm in love. I want to buy this. How much do you think this is?" Another model guesses upwards of \$800. "I can't afford that," Arnold says, deflated. She turns to her side, running a hand down her backside. She raises a finger to her mouth. "Or can I?"

In the function room, dinner is being served to 350 guests. The ladies of Table 28 trade chicken

dishes for beef dishes. These are the women from Carol Arnold's dragon-boat paddling team, all on their own breast cancer journeys and going by the name Missabittatitti. They have just returned from the Abreast in Australia Dragon Boat Regatta, an international breast cancer awareness event on Lake Kawana, on the Sunshine Coast, where they raced against teams from across the country.

"There were lots of tough teams," says Arnold's friend Leigh Muldoon. "We had Twin Titties from Tasmania. Then there was Nipples on Ripples, the Juggernorks, and, of course, the local team that paddles on Lake Kawana, Titti Titti Bang Bang.

"This is a sisterhood," says Muldoon. "Nights like this are about camaraderie. We're showing each other that breast cancer is not a death sentence."

Choices coordinator and breast care nurse Janine Porter-Steele bursts through the backstage doors: "Showtime, girls!" Faces turn white. Linda Mackie and Carol Arnold frantically fan themselves. "Hot flush," says Arnold. "It's the chemo," adds Mackie. "There's nothing worse," says Arnold. "You're driving along in your car and you have to turn your air-conditioning up in the middle of winter because you're having a hot flush."

"I call it a solo sauna," says Mackie.

"That's right," says Arnold. "And you have to tear that wig off no matter where you are."

The other models join the conversation.

"I can't handle going up stairs. It's the medication. It gives you aching joints."

"And tissues. I'm running out of tissues because the medication makes my nose run."

"And what about the memory?"

The girls nod heads in unison. "Yes, your memory!" "Hello, what's your name again?"

"Chemo brain," says Julie Van Dallen.

The models change into their catwalk outfits. They strip to their underwear without a second thought, relaxed with the odd flabby roll, the occasional scar, the random varicose vein.

Carol Arnold stands before the mirror. She sucks her stomach in, then lets it expand. Then again, in and out. Then she shakes her head, waving the mirror away like a pesky insect. "Aaah, bugger it," she says. Indeed, there are more important things in life to worry about. But the nerves are starting to show. Some breathe deeply, others swig from the champagne bottle. One model slips into a skimpy number that looks like a cross between a poncho and a contemporary art piece. "This isn't a dress," she says, anxious. "This is a sack. It's a hessian sack."

There's a sudden rush for the toilets. The champagne has caught up with the evening's talent.

"Let's go, girls," says Porter-Steele.

The models line up behind a black curtain, by the stairs of the catwalk. At the end of the line, Carmel Carrevella asks: "Can you smell that?" It's a scent she recognises. She turns her head to the makeup



room. "Someone's wig is burning!" she squeals.

Mass panic. The models break from the line and rush to their haircare bags. Anxious assumptions are made: "Oh my God, I left the straightening irons on"; "I dropped my wig next to a light bulb."

Twenty seconds to showtime and the models are running around like extras in a Charlie Chaplin film. "Wait," says Robie. "It's coming from the kitchen." They turn to see two male waiters exiting the kitchen. False alarm. It's just a well-done lamb rack.

Showtime. Tom Jones makes his raunchy return, prompting Vicki Robie and Cheryl Kelso on stage. "Sex bomb, sex bomb, you're my sex bomb." The girls burst onto the catwalk and the crowd rises to its feet. Wolf whistles. Hollers. Full-blown hysterics. Robie drops her shoulder and looks mischievously into the crowd, an image her children will take some time to erase. She doesn't get out of bed for less than \$10,000, full stop. Kelso dazzles in Kerri Craig. She shakes her hips and tips her head back, 12-month check-up be damned. "You can give it to me when I need to come along".

Backstage, Van Dallen fixes her prosthesis in place – "It evens you out, know what I mean" – and marches proudly onto the stage. That's her family and friends falling over their chairs to show their support.

Linda Mackie struts on stage to the sounds of Kylie Minogue's *Can't Get You Out of My Head*. Mackie's cancer was found during a regular pap smear. After a lumpectomy and one full year of radiotherapy, she thought she had beaten the cancer. Until her annual check-up revealed she would require a mastectomy and a year of chemo.

"My husband took the first bout well," she says. "The second bout, he didn't take so well. The breast

cancer wasn't so much the problem for me. It was the fallout from family problems that comes with it. Marriage stuff. If there's anything that's not quite hunky dory at home, the big stuff, like breast cancer, can emphasise the small stuff. My husband likes to be in control. But you just can't control breast cancer. It's such an unknown quantity. It throws everything into chaos."

Mackie calls tonight her "second wind". She spins, beaming a smile to her family, her auburn hair glinting under the stage lights. The fashions keep coming: Bora, Tengdahl, House of Dower, Pia Du Pradal, Kennedy & Forbes. The music is bouncy, risqué. Carol Arnold emerges to the sound of Rod Stewart's *Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?* She milks the song's inherent comedy dry, channelling the

seductive gaze of Naomi Campbell, with a dash of Kate Moss for good measure. The girls of Missabittatitti stand and cheer. Their yells morph into the Missabittatitti anthem, a rollicking, onomatopoeic ode to bravery and boobs.

The models file through: Katrina, Kim, Dorothy, Anna, Carmel, Karin. Mothers, sisters, daughters, friends. They laugh and trip. They put their hands to their faces in embarrassment. They raise their fists in joy. At the very place where image is everything – a fashion parade – they've turned image on its head. Image is nothing. Family, friends

and a full glass of champagne are everything. The songs continue: "Are you gonna be my girl?"; "I don't think you're ready for this jelly"; "Whether you're a brother or whether you're a mother you're stayin' alive"; "I believe in miracles, since you came along, you sexy thing".

Angela Rattray paces along the catwalk, ushered proudly by her son Connor. Backstage, Carol Arnold has made her mind up. She's going to buy the black coat. "Why the hell not?" she says. "I don't know how long I'm gonna be around."

Genevieve Fitchew approaches the side of the catwalk, ready to dazzle the audience with her final outfit of the night, the emerald gown. She looks radiant. Jennifer Hawkins would eat her heart out if her diet allowed. Fitchew breathes deep and exhales. One more run and she's done. She can slide off the heels and relax.

The music stops. Then a single synthesised piano chord rings through the function room, long and electric, straight out of 1983. Irene Cara sings: "First when there's nothing but a slow glowing dream, that your fear seems to hide deep inside your mind. All alone I have cried, silent tears full of pride, in a world made of steel, made of stone."

Fitchew takes the stage and the women follow. Robie taps her side with her palm. Van Dallen waves to her husband. The models tap their feet to the beat. "Now I hear the music, close my eyes, feel the rhythm, wrap around, take a hold of my heart."

Now the crowd stands. They start to move. The beat pulses through them. People are dancing on their chairs. Arms are thrown around shoulders. And Cara launches into the chorus. "What a feeling, being's believing, I can have it all now I'm dancing for my life."

They could only be described as mum steps. Arms go everywhere, elbows bump, knees knock, hands shimmy to the groove. They are hybrid moves, spanning various dance genres and eras, a bit of running man here, a bit of go-go dancing there. The Bus Stop blends with the Hustle blends with the Bump blends with the Twist. They are women, almost 20 of them, daggy-dancing for their lives.

The song fades out and the women shuffle off stage to a standing ovation. Backstage, the models gather in a huddle. The champagne bottle is raised triumphantly. There are long, warm embraces. There are tears and back slaps, high-fives and



hysterical catwalk re-enactments. In the corner of the room, Fitchew has a moment. She calmly scans the room, then smiles. "Wow," she says. "I just remembered why we're all here. I'd forgotten for a minute there." ■

The Wesley Hospital Choices Program is a free community service for women and men diagnosed with breast cancer: [www.uhc.com.au/choices](http://www.uhc.com.au/choices)

Breast Cancer Australia is a non-profit organisation established primarily to raise funds to support ongoing

national breast cancer research programs:

[www.breastcanceraustralia.org](http://www.breastcanceraustralia.org)

The National Breast Cancer Foundation funds research into a cure for breast cancer: [www.nbcf.org.au](http://www.nbcf.org.au)

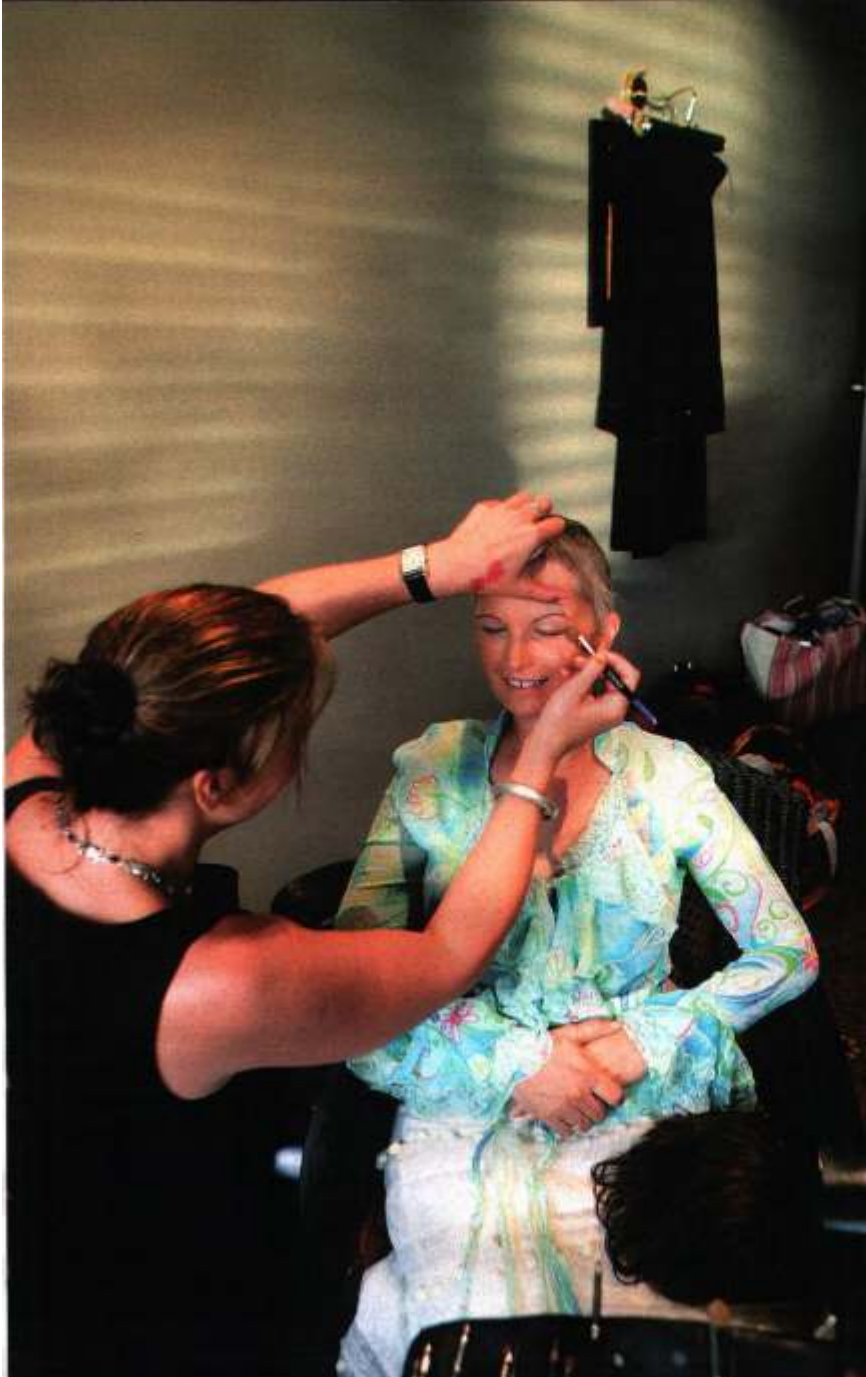
The National Breast Cancer Centre of Australia provides information about breast cancer and ovarian cancer:

[www.nbcc.org.au](http://www.nbcc.org.au)

Breast Cancer Network Australia is a national organisation for Australians personally affected by breast cancer:

[www.bcna.org.au](http://www.bcna.org.au)





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**Showtime ...** Angela Rattray gets the makeup treatment (*left*) and then hits the catwalk in a wig with Anna Dann (*far right*).

**Opening pages** (*foreground, from far left*) Karin Schuett, Carol Arnold, Julie Van Dallen and Linda Mackie kick up their heels onstage.

