Our annual list of movers and shakers in the arts, sciences, sport, technology, fashion, food and education.
BRITTANY BROBEN, 17, DIVER
She was Australia’s youngest competitor at the London Olympics but the then 16-year-old schoolgirl from Marymount College on the Gold Coast showed some of her more experienced teammates what performing under pressure was all about. When Broben stood on the edge of the 10-metre platform before her final dive, her legs were shaking so much she thought she might fall. Knowing she needed to nail a backward 2.5 somersault 1.5 twister to win a medal, she pulled off the dive of her life and scored 81.80 to take second place. Critics of the team say there were some Australians who lost gold in London. Broben won silver. MC

BEN WILLIAMSON, 32, CHEF
Williamson’s modern take on Middle Eastern fare is a hit with Queensland diners. The Perth native, who mans the pans at Gerard’s Bistro in Fortitude Valley, fell in love with Middle Eastern cookery after spending five years in Bahrain crafting menus for Gulf Air’s first-class passengers. “The traditional cuisine has such depth of flavour and a lot of mystery, and is quite beautiful, but not a lot has changed,” Williamson says. “I wanted to evolve it into something starkly modern.” A recent collaboration with tea maven May King Tsang has cemented Williamson’s reputation as a culinary talent to watch, wowing gourmands with a tea-matched degustation. SR

PROFESSOR DOUNE McDONALD, 53, ACADEMIC
As lead writer for the new health and physical education curriculum to be implemented across Australia in 2014, the head of the School of Human Movement Studies at the University of Queensland has incorporated into her own life many of the values she espouses. “This is a positive approach to health, rather than emphasising the study of disease,” McDonald says. “The key question is, ‘What keeps us healthy and active?’ All Australian children have the right to learn how to lead healthy, active lives, [and] given the breadth of HPE, it can help promote children’s physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing.” SJ
In May, at the Cannes Film Festival world premiere of his debut feature, The Sapphires, director Wayne Blair and his cast drew a ten-minute standing ovation, but nothing compares to Saturday night, August 11, when a crowd of 400 streamed into the foyer of the North Rockhampton Birch, Carroll & Coyle theatre for the film’s hometown opening. “All the people I grew up with in Rockyc were saying, ‘Oh, Wayne, we’re so proud of you’,” Blair recounts. "Shot in six weeks with a $9.3 million budget (it’s since grossed $14m in Australia alone), the titular Sapphires are a young female Aboriginal vocal quartet that in 1968 leaves Outback mission life for wartorn Vietnam. “The film parallels the US civil rights movement at the time,” says Blair. “Most of all it’s about family, and love. Add a bit of soul music and it just seems to kick.” Though born in Taree, NSW, Blair considers himself a Queenslander, having been raised in Rockhampton from age nine. After he played Jimmy, one of the characters in Tony Briggs’s original 2004 play of The Sapphires, Briggs asked Blair to direct the film version, slated for US release in 2013. “I have a passion for this industry that’s always been inside me,” the now Sydney-based Blair says. “I’ve stuck to my guns and followed my heart.”

MATTHEW FYNES-CLINTON
PROFESSOR LORRAINE MAZEROLLE, 48, EXPERIMENTAL CRIMINOLOGIST
Mazerolle, based at the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland, is the only experimental criminologist to be awarded a five-year Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship. She is working with Queensland Police, Education Queensland and Child Safety Services on a trial with 100 Brisbane disadvantaged families to address serial truancy, help children back into education, reduce crime and delinquency and support families. “These scientifically rigorous field trials are the best way to build sound evidence-based policy, because a lot of policy is not built on scientific evidence,” says the mother of two. “You can do harm if you implement programs that don’t work.”

BRENDON, 33, & CRISTY, 32, LEVENSON, GYM OWNERS
The largest fitness club operator in Australasia, with a projected turnover of $118 million this financial year, it’s little wonder the Levensons’ business picked up the No 1 spot in this year’s BRW Fast Franchises. Last week, Brenchon was named Ernst & Young Emerging Australian Entrepreneur of the Year. The Sunshine Coast couple, former Australian beach sprint champions, bought their first small gym in 2003. The idea behind Jetts was its no-contract, 24/7 model, with members able to go to any gym, anywhere. “We didn’t plan on naming the business after our son Jett [now 7], but we couldn’t think of a better name,” says Cristy. The family – which also includes son Jesse, 5 – lives at Peregian Beach.

DR ADAM KEREZSY, 44, AQUATIC ECLOGIST
This scientist’s obsession with, and dedication to, a tiny endangered fish in remote Queensland has not only thrown it a lifeline but also put it on the world stage. Kerezsy commutes week-about to Edgbaston Reserve, 1177km north-west of Brisbane, to research the 3cm-long red-finned blue-eye, which lives in only four of the reserve’s 100 springs fed by the Great Artesian Basin. Kerezsy’s work has seen the humble little fish included in a respected international list of the 100 species most likely to become extinct. Kerezsy hopes to get government support to begin a captive breeding program for the fish next year.

ALISTER MCDERMOTT, 21, CRICKETER
When he began taking wickets for the Gold Coast’s The Southport School he was invariably referred to as “Craig McDermott’s son”. If his career continues on its current trajectory, Australia’s Test fast bowler of the late 1980s and early ‘90s will soon be known as “Alister McDermott’s father”. Brisbane Heat MVP and leading wicket-taker in the 2011-12 national one-day series, McDermott the younger ended last season playing for Australia in a limited-over series against Pakistan.

ALYSSA AZAR, 16, ADVENTURER
If Azar reaches the summit of Mt Everest (8848m) in May 2014, she’ll not only be the youngest Australian to do so but the youngest female globally. And odds would have to be on the Toowoomba teen making it. Alyssa began hiking around the ranges near Toowoomba aged five, joining dad Glenn (who runs an expedition company) on training walks. At eight she was the youngest person to walk the Kokoda Track, she ticked off Mt Everest base camp (5364m) aged ten and at 12 climbed Mt Kosciuszko (2288m) and Australia’s ten highest peaks. Last year, aged 14, Azar conquered Tanzania’s Mt Kilimanjaro (5895m), all while cluing Year 11 as a home-schooler. And how do you top knocking off the world’s tallest peak? By climbing the loftiest summits of each of the seven continents. Of course.

ALEJANDRO CANCEINO, 28, CHEF
Despite working with meat each day, Cancino strives to remain devoted to both his chef profession and personal vegan philosophy. The Argentinean, who won UK Young Chef of the Year in 2008, honed his pared-back molecular gastronomy style in some of the world’s best kitchens, including Noma in Copenhagen, Denmark, and took the helm of Urbane in Brisbane’s CBD in May. He’s upfront about his ambitions to eventually open a high-end vegan restaurant in Queensland, and one day hopes to work in television to promote environmental sustainability. For now, Cancino, who lives in inner-north Newstead with his wife, relishes having full creative control of a kitchen, and says that his thoughts never stray far from food. “I finish service, and boom, straightaway I am experimenting,” he says.

SAMANTHA GALL, 37, TEACHER
For 11 years, Brisbane’s Gall has worked with students expelled from Queensland schools in a program bridging the Salvation Army’s Youth Outreach Service and the city’s St James College. In that time she’s given a second chance to about 300 troubled kids, about two-thirds of whom have graduated from Year 12 and many have gone on to successful careers. Gall says the students might have had drug and/or alcohol problems, a brush with crime or suffered extreme bullying, but all want to continue their education. “They all see that education is their best chance of turning things around,” she says.
MIRIAM GIBSON, 34, SOMMELIER

Miriam Gibson sits among the cherry blossom motifs in one of Brisbane’s premier Japanese restaurants, Sake, talking about its namesake. It’s a long way from where the former actress began her career with direct wine retailer Cellarmasters, which would hire young actors to spruik its wares.

When she travelled to London, at 24, Gibson again hooked up with Cellarmasters. That led to a diploma from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and soon after she landed a position at Zuma, a smart Japanese restaurant in London. Zuma’s sake expert, Sayaka Watanabe, took the young sommelier under her wing and after closing each night they’d pour a glass of wine and a glass of sake and trade knowledge. Gibson was so taken with the tipple made from fermented rice that she travelled to New York to become a Certified Sake Professional through the Sake Education Council.

Gibson is aware that some badly made sake has left many drinkers with the misapprehension that it is little better than “firewater”, and since returning to Australia two years ago she’s been on a mission to change that perception.

Her experience and practised palate could have taken her to Sydney or Melbourne where there are far more sake merchants and foodies, but she says simply: “I like Brisbane”.

LEISA SCOTT

JAMIE TEH, 28, & MICHAEL CURRAN, 29, SOFTWARE DESIGNERS FOR THE BLIND

A friendship forged in primary school at a music camp for the blind is the power behind software that enables the visually impaired to access internet sites free of charge. Jamie Teh’s and Michael Curran’s NonVisual Desktop Access software has been downloaded 71,000 times and translated into more than 40 languages. The program gives audio to whatever words the cursor touches, allowing blind people to hear what other internet users see.

MICHAEL COOK, 44, ARTIST

Named visual artist of the year at the 2008 Deadly Awards for indigenous achievement in the arts, sport and community, Cook is now feted for his highly stylised photographic tableaux, mixing historical and indigenous imagery. He has been lauded this year with several critically acclaimed solo shows, including one at the October Gallery in London. His work features in the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, which opens at Brisbane’s Gallery of Modern Art today. Next year Cook expects to complete a new series of works based on early voyages to Australia.

PB
VERNON AH KEE, 45, ARTIST
This Innisfail-born indigenous artist’s searing portraits have earned him an international reputation, but he most values the opinions of those closer to home. “I make work for my family,” Ah Kee says. “If they understand it, I’m happy. My work is geared towards making blackfellas feel stronger and better.” This year, Brisbane-based Ah Kee visited the US for a residency and exhibition at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. His travels took in Canada and the UK and he was named Visual Artist of the Year at the 18th annual Deadly Awards. He also showed new work at an exhibition at Milani Gallery in Brisbane’s inner-east Woolloongabba, and his large, extraordinarily detailed charcoal and crayon portraits featured in the exhibition Transforming Tindale at the State Library of Queensland. The show explores Aboriginal identity based on archival anthropological photos, including some featuring Ah Kee’s relatives. PB

KATE ELTHAM, 35, BRISBANE WRITERS FESTIVAL DIRECTOR/ CEO
When Kate Eltham took over running the Brisbane Writers Festival (BWF) in October, the first thing she did was book a holiday in Paris. “I knew my new job was going to be intense, so I wanted to take some time to reflect,” Eltham says. “Since I’ve returned to Brisbane I have hit the ground running. It’s frantic and wonderful.” Eltham was handed the reins by former BWF director Jane O’Hara after six years as CEO of Queensland Writers Centre. During her time at QWC she founded if:book Australia, an institute exploring book futures and digital media, and is the brains behind the Clarion South Writers Workshop, an international residential workshop for speculative fiction writers. Eltham writes short stories in that genre and is working on a novel while coming to grips with planning BWF for 2013. PB

HARRY GRAEPEL, 62, HUMANITARIAN
On a 2005 visit to a remote village in Papua New Guinea, Cairns maths teacher Harry Graepel asked the school what he could do to help. A year later he received the answer – books. So by 2007 he rustled up 74 boxes of them. Since then he’s set up 63 remote village schools with libraries and expanded his efforts to desks, chairs, furniture and sports and IT equipment. Graepel has this year shipped two 33 cubic-metre containers of gear to PNG, with plans for another two – a significant increase from the 7m3 of gear he sent in 2009. Within five years he has established collection points in Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane and has a donor in Bunbury, WA. MB
JAMES LILLIS, 36,  
FASHION ENTREPRENEUR

Four years ago, James Lillis could barely afford a secondhand sewing machine. Today, his multimillion-dollar fashion house despatches designer tights to the world from inner-Brisbane's Fortitude Valley. Black Milk, a wholly online label, is favoured by pop divas Britney Spears, Jessie J and Kesha. But that, says former lay preacher Lillis, is not the point. “What our [clients] really want to see is each other in Black Milk - real girls,” he says. “I try to have fun. I think of what we design as just playing dress-ups, really.”

Lillis’s leggings may be worn casually but are increasingly teamed with boots at hip nightspots. His signature Galaxy range is based on a NASA photograph of stars and space dust. Other examples resemble human flesh and tissue, while ancient hieroglyphs have been photoshopped to create an Egyptian stone look.

Lillis arrived in Brisbane from his native New Zealand 11 years ago and worked as a labourer, packer and in sales. Next, he tried to exploit the oratory skills he’d acquired as a Church of Christ layman in his homeland by setting up a corporate training and motivation business. “It wasn’t doing too well,” he says. “Then I decided I wanted to do something with my hands. I had no money. I’d never sewn before, but I went to Cash Converters and traded my CD player for a sewing machine. I said: ‘I’m going to make clothes’.”

Lillis bought a few metres of the cheapest fabric he could find - nylon lining - and knocked himself up a shirt. Moreover, a love affair with “stretchy fabric” was kindled. “I’d try clothes on friends, and friends of friends. They started saying, ‘I look great. I love this’.”

One of Lillis’s makeshift models gave him his first sale. She insisted on buying a pair of African-print leggings he had re-cut several times before they fitted. The agreed price was $50. “That validation really was a boost for me,” he recalls. “I thought: I can do this.”

Black Milk’s rapid evolution is testament to Lillis’s vision. After developing a blog to test the market, he progressed to an online store against industry advice. A licensing deal was recently struck with Lucasfilm - founded by writer/director George Lucas - to produce swimwear featuring stylised reproductions of Star Wars characters.

Lillis manufactures his garments in Brisbane and employs 140 cutting, printing, graphic design, sewing, accounting and administrative staff. “Our clothes might cost a little bit more [leggings average $75],” he says. “But we’re so passionate that I don’t like the idea of people on the other side of the world making them.”

MARIAM ARCILLA, 31,  
CO-FOUNDER OF RABBIT+COCOON CULTURAL PRECINCT

Rabbit+cocoon utilises vacant Gold Coast warehouse space which over the past year Arcilla and her colleagues have turned into galleries, art and design labs, a cafe and music rehearsal studios. The Singaporean-born former arts administrator is hoping the precinct will become a major cultural tourism destination.
KATE MORTON, 36, AUTHOR
When she was lauded at a dinner at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October, the Brisbane author was thrown. “It was all a bit surreal,” Morton says. The dinner was to celebrate her success – 7.5 million sales of her three previous novels The Shifting Fog (published internationally as The House at Riverton) in 2006, The Forgotten Garden (2008) and The Distant Hours (2010) – and to toast The Secret Keeper, published last month. Morton’s work is read in 38 countries and her Gothic novels have revived a genre and made publisher Allen & Unwin a lot richer. But the mother of two says it’s not about the money. “I love what I do.”

SUE BROWN SC, 46, BARRISTER
Medicine was a likely calling for Brown, as her father was a doctor and mother a nurse, but with a bent for humanities she enrolled in law at the University of Queensland. A commercial litigation expert, Brown was a senior associate with Minter Ellison before joining the bar in 1998 and last year was one of three barristers out of 44 applicants to take silk. With a master’s from Cambridge University, Brown is an advocate of mentoring budding practitioners. LS

PROFESSOR PETER TIMMS, 56, MICROBIOLOGIST
Timms, an internationally renowned microbiologist at the Queensland University of Technology’s Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, leads a team that has developed a vaccine against chlamydial disease in koalas, a breakthrough that should help stop the faunal emblem’s slide to oblivion. “We can do something here that’s really going to work,” he says. “Not in 20 years, but potentially in two to three years we can assist koala populations that are under extreme threat of collapse. We can turn them around and make them stable and healthy. We can save them.”

A sexually transmitted disease, chlamydia can render koalas blind and induce a slow, painful death. Up to 60 per cent of the animals in any individual colony are infected, with about one-fifth of all infections having progressed to full-blown disease. Female infertility – a principal outcome – leaves the already pressured populations struggling to regenerate. (As well as the direct effects of habitat destruction, thousands of urbanised koalas are killed each year from car strikes and dog attacks.) In the worst chlamydia-affected groups, the reproductive rate is less than one. In other words, there are more koalas dying than being born. “Disease,” says Timms, “is the single big impact on koalas that you can do something about.”

The ultimate hurdle is how to deliver the vaccine en masse. Even experienced researchers can have trouble spotting these notoriously shy creatures. Timms says he intends to start at the wildlife hospitals. “We know that in Queensland, there are between 2000 and 5000 koalas a year brought in,” he says. “It’s logical to vaccinate at that point before you release them back out. And in smaller wild populations – where there are 20 to 50 koalas – if you put value on them, we can make a change. We’ve made a vaccine that works.” MFC
THELMA PLUM, 17, MUSICIAN
Plum has been singing and writing songs as long as she can remember, and her hard work is starting to pay off. A graduate of Brisbane’s Music Industry College, she received the inaugural Opera House Award for outstanding promise in the arts at this year’s Deadly Awards and also won the inaugural Triple J Unearthed National Indigenous Music Award. She will release her as-yet-untitled debut EP early next year.

SCOTT SPARK, 29, MUSICIAN & RADIO PRODUCER
The pianist and composer’s first album, 2010’s Fall Like You Mean It, won the Grant McLennan Memorial Fellowship last year. This year Scott took leave from his day job as an ABC radio producer and went to Los Angeles to record a second album, Muscle Memory, due out next year. Critical acclaim is growing – he’s been described as the “biologically impossible offspring” of Ben Folds and Rufus Wainwright. “I write pop songs about outsmarting death, love, wanderlust and life’s variety of screw-ups,” Spark says.

MARGARET JAMES, 59, TEACHER & INDIGENOUS LITERACY ADVOCATE
James has released 20 storybooks in six indigenous languages, as well as complementary games, activities and song resources for teachers. “Respecting their language and giving it recognition builds self-respect and self-esteem, which in turn builds up confidence,” she says.

DOMINIQUE RIZZO, 40, CHEF & TV HOST
Thanks to her Sicilian heritage, cooking was “as natural as breathing” for Rizzo, and her passion for fresh produce made her a natural choice to host Network Ten cooking show Yes Chef, which premiered this year. “The show has an organic feel. There are no scripts: it’s just about getting behind the scenes and chatting with local and regional chefs about produce and their food philosophies,” says Rizzo, who published her first cookbook, My Taste of Sicily, last year and hosts guided food tours of Sicily, which she describes as her “dream job”. A darling of daytime TV food shows such as Ready Steady Cook, Rizzo co-opened Mondo Organics in 2000. Catering for everything from nightshade allergies to lactose and gluten intolerances, the restaurant in inner-city West End immediately filled a niche in the Brisbane market.

TRENT GRIMSEY, 24, OPEN WATER SWIMMER
Many believed the record for a one-way swim of the English Channel set by Peter Stuyvesant in 2007 would never be beaten, but Trent Grimsey wasn’t one of them. In September the member of the Lawnton Swim Club, on Brisbane’s northern outskirts, broke the Bulgarian’s record by 2 minutes 50 seconds when he walked ashore at Cap Gris Nez 6 hours 55 minutes after leaving Shakespeare Beach, Dover. Four years after quitting pool swimming, when he narrowly missed selection for the Beijing Olympics in the 1500m, the Channel swim capped an amazing year for Grimsey. He won the FINA Open Water Grand Prix with three wins, including a record-breaking crossing from Capri to Naples. The only downer for the world’s top-ranked ultra-marathon swimmer was missing qualification for the open-water event at London 2012 due to illness, but he intends to realise his Olympic dream at Rio 2016.
CLAIRE HOLT, 24, ACTRESS
Every high school has its shining star - the most beautiful girl, the most handsome boy who is also academically gifted. Claire Holt was that girl at Stuartholme School in Brisbane’s inner-west Toowong: a teenage television star who got up before dawn to start filming but who also bagged an OP3 score, putting her in the state’s academic elite.

“ar wasn’t sure what I wanted to do: my dad’s a doctor and I thought maybe I would do medicine,” she says via telephone from Atlanta, Georgia, where she is filming The Vampire Diaries. She’s lived in Los Angeles since 2009, but playing the role of the vampire Rebekah means flitting between LA and Atlanta.

Holt is an accidental American television star. “I decided in my last year of high school I wanted a job in my spare time that wasn’t going to interfere with studying, but a job that paid well, so I started doing a bit of modelling,” she says. “My agent told me about this television show ... he suggested I try it out.

MICHAEL ZAVROS, 38, ARTIST
He seems to have it all – looks, charm, a happy family life and successful career. Zavros, who has exhibited in Milan, New York and Paris, lives in Brisbane with wife, curator and writer Alison Kubler, daughters Phoebe, 7, Olympia, 5, and son Léo, 1. Phoebe is Dead/McQueen won the $150,000 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2010. This year, he won the inaugural $80,000 Bulgari Art Award.

The Prince exhibition is at the Rockhampton Art Gallery, February 16 to April 7. “With all that happening, perhaps I should feel a lot happier than I do,” Zavros says. PB to see if I liked it, and I got the job.” She played a mermaid in 52 episodes of Network Ten’s H2O: Just Add Water. “Mum did so many early morning drives from Brisbane to the Gold Coast [the series was filmed at Sea World, Southport] at 4am, and if it weren’t for her I wouldn’t have all this now,” she says. “I studied really hard and worked really long hours, both studying and on the show.”

Holt grew up in the Brisbane riverside western suburb of Fig Tree Pocket with her father Geoff (a cardiac surgeon at the Wesley Hospital in inner-west Auchenflower), mother Ann (a former nurse), two sisters and a brother. Her older sister Rachael, 26, is a policy adviser in Washington, and the sisters meet regularly. “It’s nice to have some family in the States,” Holt says.

What are her hopes for 2013? “I’d like to continue working consistently, in roles that challenge me. I’m shooting here until April and haven’t been home since last Christmas, so I’d love to take a trip home.”

QUYNH ANH LE, 38, CO-FOUNDER, NOJA POWER SWITCHGEAR
Quynh Anh Le grew up in Hanoi. In 1997 aged 24, she began an MBA at Queensland University of Technology. After graduating she worked for a switchgear manufacturer. In 2002, with three colleagues, she co-founded switchgear company NOJA Power.

“The name NOJA derives from our Christian names,” she says. Now the company has an annual turnover of more than $40 million, distributing its products in more than 75 countries and has just won the Queensland Exporter of the Year Award. SJ
SIMON KALINOWSKI, 34, ENTREPRENEUR & PHILANTHROPIST
Sometimes, if the weight of work and tough decisions is getting him down, Simon Kalinowski will log on to the website of the Hello Sunday Morning movement he helped create and find inspiration. The HSM ethos is about curbing reliance on alcohol, skipping the booze for a week, a month or, as HSM recommends, three months.

After struggling at school, Kalinowski had no idea what to do with his life. A begging letter to northern NSW’s Southern Cross University saw him accepted into a business course. While doing a marketing assignment, he was noticed by the owner of a pharmaceutical distribution business who decided it could “use my energy”. Kalinowski threw himself into the full-time job and full-time study – and got burned out. After four years, “I cottoned on to the fact that I could really do something with my life.”

At 22, he moved to Brisbane and bought a franchise with an ice-cream company but also became involved in the National Youth Roundtable, a federal government initiative aimed at tapping into the views of young people. Itchy feet led him to look for a business to which he could add value. A business broker suggested a company then called Weighmaster, which provided software that captured the weight of loads at places such as local government tips. Kalinowski changed the business model and the name (to Mandalay Technologies), employed new technical staff who developed the software to the point where it now captures one-third of Australia’s waste statistics on a daily basis.

As Mandalay continued to improve, Kalinowski wanted to give back to the community, and a chat with a friend, Chris Raine, now CEO of HSM, led to him helping set up the project. By now, Kalinowski had become a social drinker and didn’t want alcohol to gain control.

“Every person should commit themselves to assisting and developing their community,” Kalinowski says. “I think it’s a responsibility, not an option.”

GAIL HARWOOD, 31, FASHION DESIGNER
She’s conquered Europe, been one of the select few to design for Target and has dressed Winona Ryder, Dita von Teese and Mischa Barton. Now the QUT graduate is back in Brisbane to enchant locals with her brand of brooding “dark romanticism”, Gail Sorronda. After three years securing retail footholds in Paris and London, and having her designs stocked in Dolce & Gabbana’s Spiga2 store in Milan, the former model and stylist predicts “some exciting projects” with “a national reach” are in the offering for 2013.

PROFESSOR ADELE GREEN AC, 59, EPIDEMIOLOGIST
The 2013 Queensland Australian of the Year has devoted the past 20 years to reducing the impact of skin cancer – particularly melanoma, which is diagnosed in 9000 Australians each year. A senior researcher at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Green is working on two main projects – a long-term study looking for predictors on who will develop invasive melanoma, and another on high skin cancer rates among organ transplant recipients. “I’d like to bring a new message of hope for the future,” she says.

LE
JOHN SENDEN, 41, GOLFER
As a 20-something golfing nomad sharing cheap motel rooms and beat-up cars to play on Queensland’s “Trropp Tour”, big things were tipped for John Senden – if he could just improve his putting and self-belief. After working with coach Ian Triggs on those areas for more than 20 years, it is fair to say Brisbane-born Senden is at the top of his game. While his singular US PGA victory was in 2006, he remains one of the world’s most consistent players. With five Top 10 finishes this season, his $1.9 million in prizemoney took his US career earnings to more than $15 million. Based in Texas with Australian wife Jackie and son Jacob, 8, he returns home each year to play the local circuit.

PROFESSOR PENNY WEBB, 49, CANCER RESEARCHER
Penny Webb’s long-running interest in preventing and treating gynaecological cancer is both scientific and personal. The head of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research’s Gynaecological Cancers Group lost a university friend to ovarian cancer and has many other friends who have also lost loved ones. Webb, originally from the UK, is running a two-year, world-first study into the lifestyle factors that could improve quality of life and survival rates for women with ovarian cancer. About 1200 women from across Australia are being recruited for the study.

JACQUELINE HARPER, 28, TEACHER
Jacqueline Harper decided early to teach. “I had access to a great education and I wanted all students to have the same opportunities as I did,” says the teacher at the 148-student primary St Michael’s School on Palm Island, off the coast of North Queensland. After a stint in Italy as a nanny, an aborted attempt at studying architecture and working as a governess on a remote cattle station, Harper decided to try classroom teaching. “As soon as I saw [the job advertisement] I knew it was for me … I’ve been teaching Grade 3 for two years now and have had so many great experiences.” She recently flew to New York for the marathon, ruined by Hurricane Sandy, but still managed to raise almost $1000 for the Cathy Freeman Foundation, which supports indigenous education on Palm Island. “I even had people donating money after the race was cancelled,” she says. Harper was thrilled for her students. “I want all students to believe that they can do anything they put their minds to.”

CRAIG FRANKLIN, 51, PROFESSOR IN ZOOLOGY
Fish, frogs and reptiles might sound like an esoteric academic pursuit, but Craig Franklin’s work with them is playing a key role in the world’s research into climate change. The University of Queensland academic has proved small increases in temperature and UV radiation can affect how “cold-blooded” animals function and survive, with their body processes acting as barometers of the effects of environmental change. Franklin’s work in “conservation physiology” has earned him global accolades; he chairs a branch of the International Society of Experimental Biology, has written more than 190 scientific papers, and been published by the London-based Royal Society.

JOANNE CROTTY, 41, MELANOMA CAMPAIGNER
When Joanne Crotty lost her carpenter husband Rohan, 43, to melanoma in 2009, she wanted to create some good out of the tragedy. In the following year, the self-appointed awareness campaigner from the Redcliffe Peninsula, north of Brisbane, set up not-for-profit Danger Sun Overhead to educate outdoor workers and employers about sun safety. Since then she has reached thousands of workers with workshops at 35 sites in Queensland, NSW and Victoria, and succeeded in having more employers initiate full skin checks for staff. The former hairdresser and mother-of-four wants to expand her education program into schools, and aims next year to include preliminary skin assessments by doctors as part of her workshops.

MC

A graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Gillham moved to London at 21 to continue studies at the Royal Academy of Music. The only Australian to have been a London Piano Competition finalist (in 2004), Gillham also does volunteer work with disadvantaged London kids. “What’s exciting to me is creating something of great beauty in the moment and sharing that moment with others; a unique moment, for immediately afterwards that moment vanishes,” Gillham says.
"What’s exciting to me is creating something of great beauty and sharing it with others."

— Jayson Gillham
LACHLAN MARANTA, 20, RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER

It’s Friday night, June 15, 2012: Brisbane Broncos versus North Queensland Cowboys at a seething, intimidating Dairy Farmers Stadium, Townsville. The crowd is baying, the pace is frantic and the locals have their noses in front as the referee signals a penalty Brisbane’s way. Cowboys’ co-captain, Queensland Origin veteran Johnathan Thurston, 29, playing club game number 186, holds on to the ball in order to slow the play and give his team time to organise their defence. Bronco Lachie Maranta, 20 years old and playing his second match in the big time, runs over to grab it.

“That’s alright, mate,” says Thurston pleasantly as he steps away. “I’ll take this one.”

“And I just went, ‘Oh okay,’” laughs Maranta as he remembers the moment.

Maranta’s grandfather Barry (along with Paul Morgan, Steve Williams and Gary Balkin) formed the Broncos club in 1988; his father, Brett Plowman, played in the inaugural season, and his mother Robyn, who raised him as a single parent, worked in the club office.

“I was in the Broncos development squad from the time I was 14,” Maranta says. “The club was always a big part of my family’s life. It was the decision I made and I haven’t regretted it.”

The Broncos’ Rookie of the Year finished the season with seven first-grade games and two tries — and a determination not to take any more dummies from the likes of Thurston. He knows he still has a lot to learn but good judges, including Broncos coach Anthony Griffin and the selectors who handed him an Australian Junior Kangaroo jersey in October, believe he has the talent to make it in the game. And he certainly has the genes.

Especially not on Sunday, June 10, when he made his first-grade debut against the Roosters in Sydney. His whole family was there to share the experience. “It was massive for all of us, but mostly for Grandad, I think,” says Maranta. “After the game I went to where you run out and saw him for about two minutes, then he shot into the dressing room to talk to everyone. He was in there longer than I was.”

TOM BUSBY, 31, & JEREMY MAROU, 29, MUSICIANS

Responsible for the Best Blues and Roots Song at the Australian Performing Right Association awards this year with Biding My Time, Busby Marou have been doing anything but. Rockhampton’s favourite sons have had a busy few years playing sold-out concerts throughout Australia and mounting their first tour of the US and Canada. Marou, of Torres Strait Island heritage, has a freakish ability to play anything he sets his mind to. Combined with Busby’s storytelling lyrics, their blues/folk/pop hybrid sound is joyously unique. “Music’s a way of culture for Torres Strait Islanders,” says Marou. You won’t find a Torres Strait Islander man who can’t play a guitar. If you can find one, they’re lying and from PNG.”
LOUISE BEZZINA, 31, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BLEACH* FESTIVAL
The inaugural Bleach* festival, “inspired by Gold Coast surf culture”, was held in February this year and included pop-up galleries, music and surfboard-shaping demonstrations. It’s on again next year as a lead-in event for the Quiksilver Pro surfing contest, and director Louise Bezzina is in talks with Opera Australia to stage a beach opera in 2014. The Mackay native has worked at the Queensland Music Festival, Brisbane Festival and most recently as program manager at Brisbane’s Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts.

PB

PETER HEGEDUS, 36, FILMMAKER
Hungarian-born and Brisbane-educated, Peter Hegedus wants to “change the world a tiny bit by making films”. His first tilt came at 21 with a film about his grandfather Andras Hegedus, the prime minister of Hungary who called in Soviet troops to quash the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Since then he has turned his lens to environmental and social issues. Next year, he will release a short dramatic feature on the asylum-seekers issue and a short film to appear in an exhibition about the Brisbane River at the Brisbane Museum.

PB

CATHERINE TITASEY, 44, AUTHOR
In 2006, Catherine Titasey began writing a 100,000-word murder-mystery. After 76 drafts and counting, her manuscript, Island of the Unexpected – based on her experience of living on Thursday Island – took out the emerging author category at September’s inaugural Queensland Literary Awards. As her prize, University of Queensland Press will publish the work next year.

How the Sydney-born daughter of an industrial chemist wound up on an island off the tip of Cape York is not as puzzling as it might appear. Titasey arrived in 1994 and secured work at a local hotel to save money for a planned overseas trip. She’d figured on staying a few weeks. But the place rekindled memories of her childhood in Papua New Guinea. It felt, she says, like coming home. “When I was eight,” she says, “we went to Lae and lived on the campus of the PNG University of Technology, where Dad got a job lecturing. I had such an interesting, free childhood, and it was a wonderfully rich little community with expatriate staff and their children from a range of countries. Thursday Island is the same, amazing environment.”

After earning her degree at the University of Queensland, Titasey worked for three years in Cairns but became disenchanted with the law. Soon after moving to Thursday Island, she discovered her writing gift. Island of the Unexpected is about a burnt-out policewoman who comes to Thursday Island ostensibly for a break, but receives a missing person’s report on her first day. “The locals say the disappearance is because of Torres Strait Island sorcery,” Titasey says, “and the police officer has her rational thinking challenged by culture.”

Titasey has not totally abandoned her former career, working on and off in criminal and civil cases, community justice programs and for a local legal service. But writing is now her main pursuit. “Every person has something special about them,” she says. “And for me, I hope that’s my writing. I just feel it’s something I have to do.” MFC
LIAM GILL, 20, RUGBY UNION
He began the season aiming to cement a starting spot with the Queensland Reds and ended it a Test player touring Europe with the Wallabies. Brisbane’s Liam Gill has been a young man in a hurry ever since starring in the St Joseph’s College, Gregory Terrace 1st XV. Australian Schoolboys captain in 2009, he was playing for the Australian Sevens team a year later. Last year he was called back from the Under-20s World Championships in Italy to make his run-on debut for the Reds. Just 14 months later he was playing for the Wallabies against the All Blacks, and is now regarded as one of the best open-side flankers in the game. MC

CHRIS EIGELAND, 22, PHILANTHROPIST
While speaking at a 2010 youth summit in London, Brisbane law student Chris Eigeland met Haitian delegates who spoke about difficulties obtaining education resources in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. Together with US delegate Erin Schrrode, Eigeland founded The Schoolbag – a charity providing pupils with enough materials for a year. The Schoolbag has since supplied more than 30,000 students in Haiti and extended its work to Africa and East Timor, where it employs manufacturers and two local staff and will soon expand its scope to improvements in schools’ infrastructure. Eigeland is president of the Griffith University Volunteering Organisation and in 2011 received a Prime Minister’s Australia Asia Award scholarship. MB

KRISTY WRIGHT, 36, FORENSIC BIOLOGIST
Kristy Wright has spent years working in criminal and disaster victim identification, including in Phuket after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, in Bali following the 2002 bombings, and for the Australian Army’s Unrecovered War Casualties. Now the Griffith University forensic biologist has used that experience to develop FASTID, a revolutionary DNA-matching forensic software system to be adopted by Interpol next year, and used internationally to dramatically reduce the time it takes to identify disaster victims. “It’s being able to give loved ones back to their families as quickly as possible,” Wright says. “In large disasters it could take months or even years to get loved ones back to their families, but this software is rapidly going to expedite that; and it’s about giving someone back their identity as well.” LE

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ANTHONY IKIN, 31, DANCER, AEROBICS CHAMPION

When Ikin taught himself to backflip, aged four, his canny parents Alan and Carmel saw his potential and enrolled him in gymnastics classes. All three Ikin boys – former footballer Ben, 35, musician Sean, 34, and Anthony – are variously talented. Winner of the gold medal in this year’s World Aerobics Championships in The Netherlands, Anthony has since retired from competing to focus on dance. A finalist in the first TV series of So You Think You Can Dance Australia in 2008, he has “carved out a life of all the things I love”. Currently in Japan spruiking his new dance fitness video, Ikin Shake It, he cites the money and opportunities that have come his way as “products of sticking to my passion and never giving up on what I believe in.” He owns the Ikin Dance fitness and dance studio on the Gold Coast and has taught Jessica Mauboy, Kate Miller-Heidke and Tina Arena. SJ
what happened to . . .

Leisa Scott checks in on best and brightest from years past ... and a couple who belong on another list entirely.

### Judith Goh, 50,  
Christmas for this self-funded volunteer will be spent in Ethiopia, working to improve the gynaecological health and social acceptance of women injured during childbirth. She will be back home for only a few weeks before returning to Africa to perform similar work on board a hospital ship off the coast of Guinea.

### Stephanie Gilmore, 29,  
When *Qweekend* first highlighted the ever-smiling “Happy” Gilmore, she’d won her first world women’s surfing championship. She now has five world titles. Her most recent 2012 title is even more impressive after rebounding from an unprovoked 2010 attack that cost her a record fifth consecutive world title in 2011.

### Ian Frazer, 59,  
In conjunction with the late Dr Jian Zhou, Frazer developed a vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV), now approved in more than 100 countries. He heads the Translational Research Institute, which brings together four leading state-based facilities and is aimed at improving and accelerating medical research.

### Marnie Goss, 36,  
Launching her own brand, FS by FrockShop and being Australia’s first internet fashion retailer to sign with Amazon.com’s foray into e-boutiques, are recent career highlights for the fashion e-tailer. It’s been a heady ride for Goss since launching www.frockshop.com out of her parents’ garage in Brisbane’s south six years ago.

### Clive Palmer, 58,  
He’s lost about 30 kilos and had his estimated worth downgraded by over $1 billion to $3.85 billion in this year’s *BRW* Rich List, yet Palmer remains one of the largest players on the Queensland stage. Having recently torn up his membership of the LNP he helped make financially strong, Palmer is never far from the news.

### Dishonour Roll

#### Eddy Groves, 48, Failed Childcare Entrepreneur  
The fortunes of the former ABC Learning chief began their spectacular nosedive in 2008. Although criminal charges were dropped this year, ASIC is continuing to investigate the company’s collapse.

#### Daniel Tzykoff, 29, Failed Internet Mogul  
The one-time Gold Coast whizkid became a US government informant after being arrested in Las Vegas in 2010 on charges of money laundering arising out of his online gambling empire.