



July 26, 2019

## Supermodel returns to her roots

Next month the world's first supermodel with Down Syndrome, Madeline Stuart, will walk the local runway which inspired her global career – the Ekka Natural Fibres Fashion Parades presented by Channel Seven.

Now a global social media superstar with over a million followers, Brisbane resident Madeline attended her first fashion parade with her mum Rosanne at the Ekka in 2014. It was at this Ekka parade that Maddy said to her mum “Mum me model”.

Rosanne knew it would take a lot of work and dedication, and told Madeline if she wanted to commit to the journey, she would fully support her.

In the four years since that decision Madeline has walked in over 100 fashion shows across the globe, including New York Fashion Week for the past six seasons.

Maddy will walk the Ekka runway for the first time in her special appearance on Monday 12 August in the 11.30am Natural Fibres Fashion Parade in the Channel Seven Pavilion, upper floor of the Royal International Convention Centre.

Madeline's mother and manager Rosanne Stuart said that as soon as they walked into the Ekka parade back in 2014 Maddy was captivated by the models on the catwalk.

“The desire to model was immediate after seeing the Ekka parade and look where that dream has taken Maddy,” said Rosanne Stuart.

“Madeline first went viral in 2015 after she became the world's first model with Down Syndrome to star in a brand campaign for sports lifestyle brand Manifesto and American handbag company, Evermyer.

“Maddy was the first model with Down Syndrome to walk at New York Fashion Week, London Fashion Week, Mercedes Fashion Week China, Caspian Fashion Week Russia and Runway Dubai to name a few.

“Her incredible story has also been featured in world leading publications, being named Number One game changer in the fashion industry in Forbes Magazine and coverage in Vogue, Marie Claire, the New York Times, Washington Post and Cosmopolitan,” she said.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the Ekka was delighted to hear how the Show's Natural Fibres Fashion Parades were the original inspiration for Madeline's remarkable career.

“We are delighted to welcome Maddy to the Ekka catwalk for the first time at this year's Show,” he said.



“She is a wonderful example of someone achieving their dreams which is what the Ekka is all about – a wonderful community celebration of inclusion and diversity.”

Through Madeline’s work in the fashion industry she has been able to influence the world to accept people with disabilities on the catwalk as well as in major branding campaigns. She has featured in campaigns for Benefit Cosmetics, Diesel, American Eagle and Tommy Hilfiger.

Maddy is also a high profile advocate of the disability community here in Australia and overseas. She was nominated for the Pride of Australia and Young Australian of the Year Award in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Internationally Madeline was awarded the advocacy award for her work in Uganda from Kulture City in 2017 and received the Quincy Jones Exceptional Advocacy Award from Global Down Syndrome in 2018.

Madeline is also the founder and ambassador for InsideOutside Dance in Brisbane – a dance school for people with disabilities. InsideOutside Dance will also make their first Ekka appearance this year performing on the Brisbane Airport Community Stage.

This year marks the 28<sup>th</sup> year of Ekka presenting its Natural Fibres Fashion Parades which is the Ekka’s most glamorous event.

The Natural Fibres Fashion Parades will be staged on the Fashion Stage, upper level, Royal International Convention Centre, Brisbane Showgrounds at 11.30am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm and 2.30pm daily during the Ekka with an additional show at 3.30pm on People’s Day, Wednesday August 14.

---

For more information please contact the Ekka Media Unit:  
Veronica Carew  
General Manager Communications  
Ph: 07 3253 3930/ 0408 323 631  
Email: [vcarew@rma.org.au](mailto:vcarew@rma.org.au)

Nicole Clifton  
Media and Communications Officer  
Ph: 07 3253 3931/ 0417 451 775  
Email: [nclifton@rma.org.au](mailto:nclifton@rma.org.au)