



(far left) Lady Sonia McMahon dresses up for *Pink Ribbon*, and (left) a model poses in one of the magazine's fashion shoots.

Jana Wendt is no fool. As the long-reigning queen of current-affairs television, she knows what it takes to extract information from politicians, film stars and miscellaneous luminaries. Which made it surprising when the typically business-like broadcaster agreed to do something for the cameras that she didn't especially want to do.

But that's the power of the Pink Ribbon brand for you. Mention the words "breast cancer", "researching a cure" or "fundraising" for research, and even a so-called perfumed steamroller like Wendt tends to soften.

"This is the oddest request I've ever fielded," she noted when *Pink Ribbon* magazine's creative director, Melisande Clarke, suggested she join the many celebrities who'd said yes to the glossy publication's 10-page photographic essay.

At first, Wendt was mildly horrified at the thought of having a tattoo etched on her delicate right shoulder for *Pink Ribbon*'s photo shoot. How big would the tattoo be? How would it be applied? Would she be marked for life? But as the magazine's creative director, something of a perfumed steamroller herself, allayed her fears, Wendt began to warm to the idea.

By the time the day of the shoot came, the *Sunday* host was ready to embrace her transformation. Early in our negotiations, the television journalist had insisted on a blow-by-blow description of the temporary-tattoo removal process. Now here she was, heading home with a thorny rose still etched on her scapula for a private few to see.

And who knows what Lady Sonia McMahon was thinking as she took her place in front of *Pink Ribbon*'s cameras all decked out à la *Dangerous Liaisons*, complete with towering pink wig, powder-white make-up and a French poodle as an accessory? Whatever second thoughts she may have been having, the former first lady was keeping

PRETTY IN PINK

With hundreds of charities in Australia jostling for the philanthropic dollar, there's one bandwagon that gets everyone going, as *Pink Ribbon* magazine editor Josephine Brouard well knows. She reveals why people become so charitable when it comes to breast cancer

it to herself, surrendering, instead, to the charms of photographer Sam Borich and his team.

On another shoot, another day, I was staggering through the city with hampers full of sandwiches, fruit salad and energy-boosting chocolate to sustain one of our many fashion teams all working completely for free. One of Australia's most talented fashion snappers, Juli Balla, had wagged a finger menacingly at me at last year's launch party and insisted she shoot a fashion story for this year's issue. As my job as editor is to harness as much of Australia's creative talent as possible to produce an annual publication that makes loads of money to fund breast-cancer research, I have never been one to look a gift horse in the mouth. So here I was, on the day of Balla's shoot, showing my support with a bit of sustenance for her crew. I did a few mental calculations and figured eight of

everything would cover the photographer, the hair and make-up artists, the model and a few hangers-on. How wrong was I? I arrived at the location to be met by 15 – yes, I counted 15 – people in total, including someone there to mind the jewellery, and another simply to do the model's nails. Working not one, but two 10-hour days. All at no cost to raise money for breast cancer. The realisation warmed the cockles of my heart. No wonder I love this gig.

I was still verging on flabbergasted, my jaw slack with wonder, when I was totally stopped in my tracks by the sight of Balla herself, accompanied by a minder, barking orders to a lighting technician from the comfort of a wheelchair. Turns out the passionate fashionista had badly twisted her ankle the night before and couldn't walk, but had decided to push on anyway. When you're working for *Pink Ribbon* and everyone – and I mean

everyone – is giving their time, energy and creativity for free, there isn't much room for rescheduling.

So Balla and her entourage persevered with a sumptuous re-creation of the life of opera star Maria Callas, and what a breathtakingly glamorous depiction the final photographic essay proved to be. You'll have to buy *Pink Ribbon* for yourself to appreciate the extent of the artistry expressed, all in aid of the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

In fact, it's rare that anyone says "no" to *Pink Ribbon*. Off the top of my head, I can think of only a handful: Magda Szubanski couldn't oblige as she was *Grease*-deep in rehearsals; spunky Tom Williams was feeling (ahem) overexposed; and the lovely Jennifer Hawkins was jetting off on a *Great Outdoors* adventure. But all of them did assure us of their support, schedules permitting, next year. So when it comes to breast cancer and supporting *Pink Ribbon*, you could say there isn't a celebrity in town who doesn't wish to respond positively to our call for help.

Even Margaret Throsby's media minder at the ABC whispered, sotto voce: "The grand dame of radio never grants interviews if she can possibly help it, but she's agreed to this one." Similarly, bestselling author Geraldine Brooks (of *Nine Parts of Desire* and *Foreign Correspondence*) dropped everything in the middle of a frantic book tour and squashed in a photo session and interview with us. "Thanks for making the time," *Pink's* reporter murmured as the author prepared to rush down the coast to speak at a luncheon. "It was a no-brainer," Brooks explained. "I've had breast cancer myself."

Actors Georgie Parker and Kate Raison, comedian Marg Downey, swimmer Jodie Henry, TV host Lisa Wilkinson and kitchen queen Donna Hay are just some of the many wonderful women who grace this year's issue. Even Kylie Minogue features. "Please don't put Kylie on your cover," her agent requested as she gave us the green light with regard to a photo request. "The timing's awful, and Kylie doesn't want to be the centre of attention right now." As we know what women typically go through after a breast-cancer diagnosis, there

was no need to convince us. We understood completely and appreciated Kylie's support as she joined the *Pink Ribbon* celebrity clan.

Sarah Murdoch, up to her eyeballs in nappies and sleepless nights with baby Kalan, now almost nine months old, couldn't do enough to help out the charity of which she is a devoted patron. Asked to reveal to *Pink Ribbon* readers the things that get her up in the morning, she gamely shared private family photos with us (after convincing her reluctant hubby that this was a good cause). The supermodel went further, removing an all-time favourite family photo out of its frame on her bedroom wall and couriering it to our offices for use in the 2005 issue. She entrusted us with one family snap, taken of her, Lachlan and Kalan on holiday in Fiji, labelled "only for use in *Pink Ribbon*".

Apart from the talented writers, photographers, stylists and agencies who climbed aboard the *Pink Ribbon* ship, there were a lot of celebrity blokes who were prepared to make time for the magazine, too. It seems everyone is touched by breast cancer, and that's probably why genial blokes like Peter Berner, James Blundell and handyman Scott Cam were only too happy to talk about their favourite subject: women (apart from the footy, that is).

"I think the world would be a better place if women ran it," comedian and TV host Wil Anderson told *Pink Ribbon*, having witnessed first-hand how a breast-cancer diagnosis can impact on a woman's life. Fortunately, like 85 per cent of those diagnosed in Australia with breast cancer, his good friend has lived to tell her breast-cancer tale.

And that's the best news of all in this mainly happy story. Namely, that breast-cancer statistics



(main picture) Gold medallist Jodie Henry posed for *Pink Ribbon*. (left) Jana Wendt was (fake) tattooed for a good cause.



are continually improving, thanks to greater awareness, earlier detection and better treatments. While the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia remains high (about 11,500 new diagnoses every year),

the mortality rate has plummeted by more than 20 per cent since 1994. Research is also paying off, with the breast-cancer community getting better at making the breast-cancer journey safer and sweeter for sufferers. In just over 10 years, *Pink Ribbon's* publishers have donated a staggering \$20 million to research. Of this amount, almost half a million dollars have been raised from just three annual issues of our magazine. Long live community largesse, I say. And thanks to all those celebrities and creative people who make it all possible. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM BORICH FOR PINK RIBBON MAGAZINE

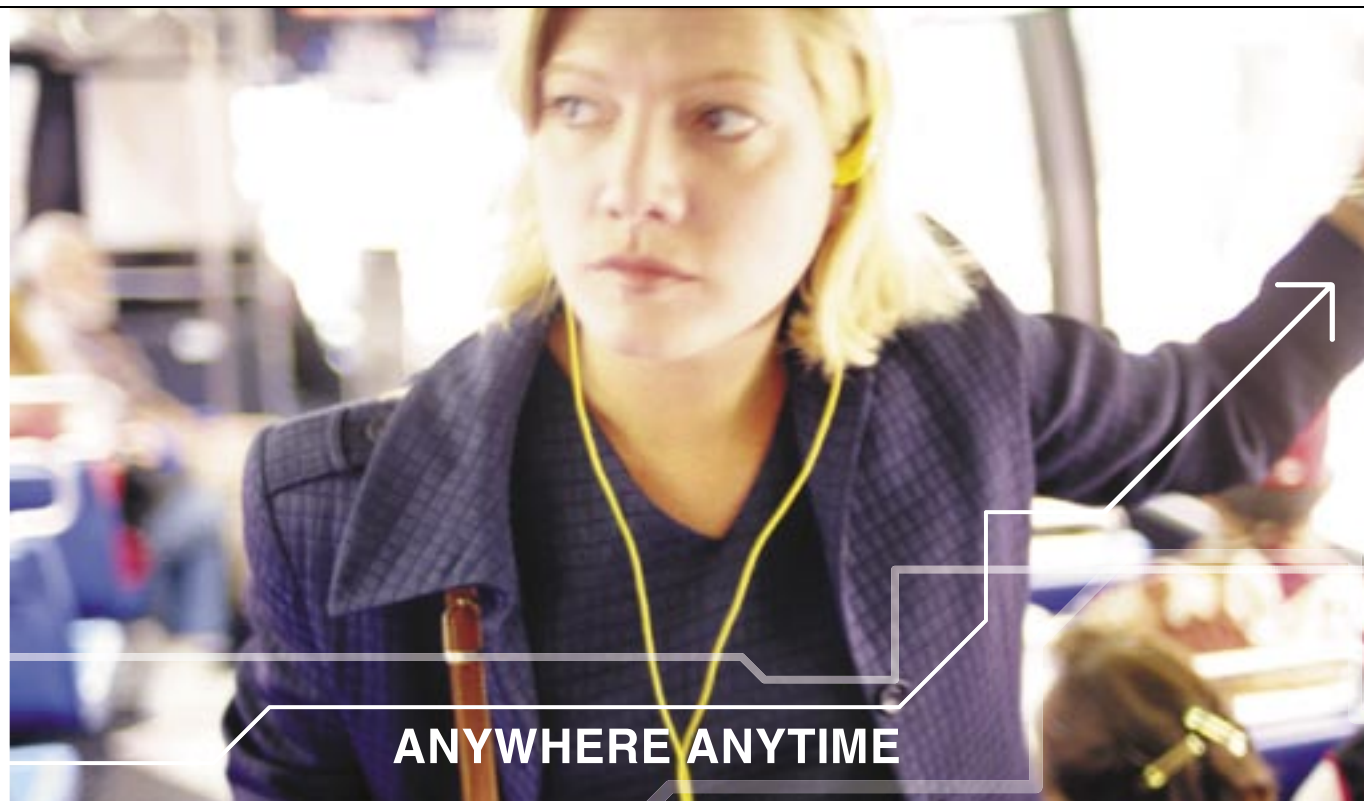


AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PROVIDER OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

www.csu.edu.au



1300 135 435
inquiry@csu.edu.au



ANYWHERE ANYTIME