

# MEET OUR AUSSIE YOUNG GUNS

WHAT were you doing in your teens? Probably not making big money, running successful businesses, swaying public opinion or saving the planet. Meet Australia's young guns, who are doing just that. They're some of the country's most inspiring and influential young people. The nation's rising stars include social media influencers, athletes, actors, entrepreneurs, YouTubers, inventors, academics, farmers and scientists aged from just nine to 18. Some have made their names in the online world, while others have done so by pushing bodies or brain power to the limit. MANDY SQUIRES reports.



## MODEL SPORTS STAR

JAYLA Rose Li On Wing is only 13, but the teen actor, model, soccer player and influencer has already made a name for herself and amassed more than 37,000 followers on Instagram. She has appeared in a string of TV shows, series and promotions, as well as modelling on both the runway and in magazines. Jayla is also a skilled soccer player, competing at state level, and hopes to one day represent Australia.



## EXPLORER

SHE'S only just turned 18, but Melbourne's Jade Hameister is already an Order of Australia recipient and understood to be one of, if not the youngest ever, to make the venerable list. The plucky teen last year became the youngest person to ski from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole unsupported and unassisted — the first Australian woman to do so. Jade was also the first woman to set a new route to the South Pole unsupported and unassisted, the youngest to make it to both poles and the youngest to complete the Polar Hat-Trick. She has featured in a National Geographic documentary that has aired in 170 countries and delivered a TEDx talk. In June 2017, Jade also made history by completing the 550km traverse of the Greenland ice cap unsupported and unassisted — the youngest woman ever to do so.



## ENVIRONMENTAL WARRIOR

SHE might be just 11, but Cairns student Molly Steer is making a difference to the planet. The schoolgirl's passionate environmental campaign Straw No More aims at doing away with plastic straws — and saving the Great Barrier Reef and our precious marine life in the process. Molly's influence has extended far beyond her north Queensland home, with her campaign receiving recognition and support across Australia and as far afield as Canada, South Korea, the US and the UK. Molly is one of just 50 young environmental campaigners in the world to be selected to attend a major marine convention in Canada.

## SWIMMING STAR

NICKNAMED "The Terminator" after smashing her personal best 400m freestyle time and in the process breaking the world record at the World Short Course Championships last year, 18-year-old Tasmanian Ariarne Titmus is shaping up as Australia's next queen of the pool. The swimming sensation won gold in the women's 800m freestyle and women's 4x200m freestyle relay, and silver in the women's 200m freestyle at last year's Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.



## TINY DANCER

WITH three national titles under her belt and trophies taller than herself, 11-year-old Melbourne champion dancer and acrobat Isabelle Bitsikas has travelled the world performing. This year's Showcase National Dance Championships Pre-Teen Dancer of the Year, diminutive Isabelle has been showing off her skills since the age of two and trains up to 25 hours a week. A star of the latest season of TV show *Little Big Shots*, she is loved for her perky personality as much as her rare talents.

## GAMER

BETTER known to his devoted fans as Eystreem, Victorian school student and YouTube gaming sensation Jordan Barclay boasts more than 1.5 million subscribers and uses his platform to sell his own merchandise. The 16-year-old from Bendigo is responsible for one of the biggest Minecraft YouTube channels worldwide. Eystreem — who focuses on family-friendly mobile and console-based videos — has grown a devoted fan base. He was the youngest Australian gamer to pass one million subscribers on YouTube and has the 79th most-subscribed channel in all of Australia. He plans to work on his YouTube channel fulltime when he finishes school.



## CHILD ACTOR

REMARKABLE for not only his ministerial name but also for his commitment to making it big in the Aussie film industry, 10-year-old Morrison Scott, aka "Mo", from the Yarra Valley, is a rising star. The Grade 5 student recently acted alongside Australian star Russell Crowe in filming *The True History of the Kelly Gang*, set to screen next year. Mo also has a YouTube channel, for which he writes, produces and edits his own work, has modelled and appeared in advertisements.



## CHILD GENIUS

DUBBED "The Human Encyclopedia", they don't come much smarter than 10-year-old Evan Luc-Tran. As a child genius with a photographic memory and an IQ in the top 1 per cent of the population, the primary school student is a member of MENSA. With a passion for travelling and geography, Evan knows the capital cities, flags and currencies of every country and can also tell you what time it is anywhere in the world. He was been crowned Australia's youngest spelling and word-building champion at age six. But Evan is not just super smart, he is also an actor, model, Instagram influencer, brand ambassador, talented tennis player and gamer.

## BARBIE GIRL

THIRTEEN-year-old Grace Mulgrew, from Melbourne, has made a career of playing with dolls. The YouTube child influencer is filmed with her Barbies by her dad, for her hugely successful Grace's World channel, which has more than 1.8 million subscribers. Grace is so successful, her dad quit his job to support her.



## BUSINESSWOMAN

THE huge success of Adelaide teen Violet Coleman's Georgie Paws pet accessory business proves age is no barrier to making it big. The 16-year-old schoolgirl started her business designing stylish dog collars, leads and other doggie accessories and gifts when she was just 13. Violet was nominated for the Telstra Business Awards and her range has been stocked in more than 200 stores across Australia, New Zealand, the US and the UK.



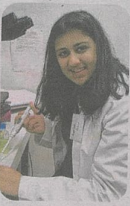
## ENTREPRENEUR

HE created his first company at just 12 and now, at 17, Brisbane's Jack Bloomfield is one of the nation's youngest and most successful entrepreneurs with a net worth of "well over" \$1 million. He unveiled his first business plan to his father at the tender age of seven. A year later, he designed his first website. Jack is not only heavily devoted to his own business success, but has now developed a range of mentoring and training programs to help others. Incredibly, the teenager runs multiple businesses and manages his influential social media accounts from his classroom.



## SCIENTIST

SHE'S a teen with her eyes on the big picture — like fixing oil spills with algae, inventing biodegradable plastic from prawn shells and researching microplastics in fish. At 17, Sydney's Angelina Arora is already a well-known environmental scientist, innovator and inventor. The biodegradable plastic she invented is made completely of waste and decomposes 1.5 million times faster than conventional plastics, significantly reducing the amount of pollution to the environment.



## CANDYMAN

NINE-year-old Angus Copelin-Walters, from Darwin, who has dyslexia, has found sweet success selling crocodile-themed confectionery in the Top End and beyond. His business Croc Candy turned over \$10,000 in its first year, when Angus was just seven, and nearly doubled that amount in his second year. Angus has always been the front man of the emerging firm and even makes his own deliveries when they are local. What's more, the young businessman is already a philanthropist, donating to cancer research and other charities.



## INVENTOR

WHILE other boys his age are playing, 12-year-old Anthony Foong, from Sydney, is working on ways to save lives. Anthony beat 3000 other kids to be named one of the three winners of last year's Origin LittleBIGIdea competition for his development of the lifesaving A-Watch, which he designed to identify anaphylactic shock or cardiac arrest. Basically, his invention is an EpiPen within a smart watch, which is also linked to an app. Anthony is severely allergic to wheat, dairy, nuts and eggs himself, and also lost his grandfather to cardiac arrest.



## HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER

REFUGEE advocate Bassam Maaliki was just 13 when he started his campaign #uBelong. Now 16, the Sydney high school student remains dedicated to ensuring all refugees and migrants feel a sense of belonging. Bassam has raised thousands of dollars for organisations that help youth refugees settle in Australia through #uBelong. He's collected thousands more with his #ThirstyForChange campaign, which sells water bottles to fund the building of wells and toilets in Cambodia and Malaysia.



## CATTLE BREEDER

IT'S not your average teenager that has their own registered beef cattle stud. Jai Thomas works with shorthorn cattle in Western Australia. What's more, he started the stud when he was just 13, with the help of his dad, a dairy farmer. At age 17, Jai is an old hand at genetics and breeding, and on the show circuit, winning the Royal Show junior dairy cattle parader award three years in a row. He is Australia's No.1 junior dairy cattle judge.



## MASTER CHEF

INSPIRED by *MasterChef* to create sweet treats, Tasmania's Freya Downie, 14, combines life on a busy dairy farm with school, state-level soccer and cooking up a storm in the kitchen of her family's historic home in the Derwent Valley. The Year 9 student has a thriving business selling her signature caramel sauce. More recently she's added quince paste and other preserves and pickles. Freya's Delights are now stocked in a number of stores throughout Tassie.



## SCOOTER SENSATION

AT just 15, Queensland's Bianca Dilworth is scooting up a storm. The teenager is a member of the Apex Pro Scooter Team and has just won the Australian Women's Pro comp. Bianca is representing Australia in the first women's world championships at the World Roller Games in Barcelona this month. "I am so excited," she said. "Ever since I was a little girl my dream was to represent my country and for that dream to become a reality at just 15 is unbelievable." The teen, who has won three national titles since taking up the sport at the age of 10, has nearly 56,000 followers on Instagram.

## ATHLETICS CHAMP

HE'S just turned 17, but track and field star Sasha Zhoya, from Western Australia, has set the athletics community on fire and has his sights set on world domination. The Australian Olympic Committee recently nominated the "blistering" and "genetically gifted" Zhoya as "athletics' next greatest showman". The son of a champion skier and a musician, Zhoya credits his parents with his athleticism, precision and timing. A triple threat, he recently claimed the Australian record in the under-18 110m hurdles, nabbed the under-20 200m title and beat the under-18 world mark in the pole vault.

