

Who Mattered

2021



Food System, a closed-loop house growing its own food, farming barramundi and recycling waste into fuel for the whole production. There were fancy dinners for the public (who's for marron in a broth made of its own shell?) but Future Food's biggest success was providing inspiration for visitors to try zero-waste cooking and off-grid growing at home.

Tours of the house will continue when the duo heads to northern NSW this summer to the kitchen at Harvest Newrybar. Delicious things starring Ballina prawns – and their shells – are expected.

Social media

BY THOMAS MITCHELL

THE INSPIRED UNEMPLOYED
MATT FORD, 26
JACK STEELE, 27

Far from a flash in the pan, comedy duo The Inspired Unemployed (Matt Ford and Jack Steele, pictured above) upped

their Insta-game in 2021. The two best mates from Kiama on NSW's South Coast ditched their tradie tools and made being funny a full-time job.

Their finger-on-the-pulse videos (*Is There a Reason We Talk to Dogs like Babies?* is a must-watch) have helped Ford and Steele find a million followers on Instagram. The affable pair are a marketer's dream and have collaborated with everyone from Louis Vuitton to OnlyFans, while creating their own zero-carb, zero-sugar lager, Better Beer. Most impressively, midway through 2021 they launched *The Inspired Unemployed* podcast, which, aside from being an extension of their everyday-battler brand, sees the boys engage in a little real talk, including important discussions about mental-health struggles.



STRUTHLESS
(AKA CAMPBELL WALKER), 31

It's not easy to reinvent yourself, and even harder to motivate cynical Millennials, but Struthless (real name Campbell Walker) achieved both in 2021. Having established a solid fan base on Instagram, the Sydney-based cartoonist changed lanes, building a YouTube channel for down-to-

earth self-help advice. More than half a million subscribers tune in to his videos, covering everything from anxiety and productivity to the downside of too much time online (spoiler: it makes you sad).

Part of the appeal is Walker's unflinching honesty and relaxed delivery, like Tony Robbins with tattoos. In his video, *What I Learned from Nearly Dying*, Walker notes: "We are but worm food in a waiting room" – offering the kind of self-deprecating self-analysis that he turned into a best-selling book: *Your Head Is a Houseboat*.



ABBIE CHATFIELD, 26

In a year where social media became the surprising frontline for the vaccination debate, no one fought harder than former *Bachelor* contestant Abbie Chatfield. The reality TV graduate has single-handedly given influencers a good name, leveraging her huge Insta-reach to become a vocal pro-vax advocate.

Chatfield became the unlikely poster girl for public health messaging by hosting a daily "Have you been vaxxed?" poll and inviting medical professionals onto her platform to debunk COVID myths. She was also unafraid to expose the warts-and-all life of being an outspoken influencer, sharing the (often shocking) abuse she receives in her inbox. At a time when social media is awash with influencers unwilling to rock the boat (and risk losing lucrative brand partnerships), Chatfield wasn't afraid to jump head-first into the sea of discourse and splash around.

Fashion

BY DAMIEN WOOLNOUGH



SIMONE ZIMMERMANN, 56
NICKY ZIMMERMANN, 54

In a year where opportunities to see Zimmermann's entrancing collisions of print, detail and embellishment were severely curtailed, sisters Nicky and Simone were busy behind the scenes.

"Zimmermann is the embodiment of the ease and beauty of Australia," says stylist Michelle Jank. "There is a lightness and a joyful quality which resonates like no other brand internationally."

That was certainly true in 2021, during which the label opened boutiques in Cannes, Milan, Tuscany and Rome. It's a far cry from their start selling dresses at Sydney's Paddington Market in 1989. The Zimmermanns are now focused on refreshing all of their Australian locations in readiness for designer Nicky's spring 2022 collection, "The Dancer".



ANDIE HALAS, 52

Fashion's waste problem is challenging, but with Thread Together, founder Andie Halas has resolved the equally daunting conundrum of uniting fashion egos for the greater good. The former operator of Seafolly swimwear has brought together 300 fashion partners, including P.E Nation and Calvin Klein, to donate fashion excess to the new not-for-profit, which then distributes products to more than 500 charity partners across Australia.

This year, Thread Together opened a state-of-the-art warehouse in Sydney; the next step is tackling textile recycling while helping those in need, all with the aim of keeping clothing out of landfill. Bridget Veals, GM of womenswear at David Jones, is a believer: "Getting fashion brands to think of everyone, rather than themselves, is a huge achievement."



DENNI FRANCISCO, 65

After exploding onto the runway at the 2020 Melbourne Fashion Festival, Wiradjuri woman Denni Francisco's label Ngali strutted into 2021 with confidence. As part of the focus on Indigenous talent at Afterpay Australian Fashion Week in Sydney in June, Ngali's translation of colourful artworks into fluid silk separates caught the attention of buyers.

"There has been a reluctance for consumers to engage with culture," said David Giles-Kay, Indigenous Fashion Projects manager at Darwin Arts Festival. "Denni is able to make that connection powerfully through the storytelling in her garments." With Ngali now shipping to France, a Paris Fashion Week slot can't be far behind. ■