



# Fashioning a career

Twice a week Rebecca Judd casts aside the glamorous life of a model and A-list celebrity to make a difference in the lives of some of Melbourne's sickest people, says **Ruth Lamperd**

**S**OME of her patients won't recognise the beautiful face, the big brown eyes, the near flawless complexion, the perfect hair. The body of a model.

They won't know that this is Rebecca Judd, wife of football superstar husband Chris Judd, who models fancy clothes, is often featured in the social pages and is a Myer Racing Ambassador.

At Melbourne's Alfred Hospital, none of that matters. Judd is just one of hundreds in the medical machine that puts people back together. She isn't Rebecca Twigley or Rebecca Judd. She's a speech pathologist called Bec.

This is Judd as you've never seen her before. She assesses brain-injured patients, helping wean them back on to solid food, to learn how to communicate and swallow again. She works with stroke patients, organ recipients and car accident victims.

For two shifts a week, she leaves behind the glitz of her life. For her it's the healthy pinch to remind herself life is not one endless party. "It gives me balance," she reflects.

"It makes me feel good about things. I'm very lucky to do the other work I do — I get to do some amazing things and go amazing places and get paid for it — but 'speechy' work lets me give back a little."

In late 2008, The Alfred offered

her a job as reward for a four-year speech pathology degree. It was the ultimate sign there was more than looks behind Melbourne's most regularly photographed beauty.

Her two improbably compatible working lives were borne out of high school when she was a straight-A student (she loved maths and science) and did some modelling.

Later, even as she lived a princess life modelling in Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand and held jobs such as a Perth TV weather girl, she studied her speech pathology.

She'd return to Perth to complete study blocks and it earned her gentle ribbing from model friends for being so nerdy. She was used to it, though. She'd been nerdy right through school.

Setting out in her degree with the aim to fix kids' stutters and lisps, it wasn't until her third year that she even knew about the acute care speech pathology — a form of the profession dealing with far more than fixing speech impediments.

On rare occasions her working lives cross over.

And when they do it's bemusing for onlookers and slightly uncomfortable for Judd.

"Mostly, I don't reckon they even recognise me. And that's one of the things I love about

here," Judd says.

She recounts with a laugh another time when her working worlds collided.

There was a breakfast in the city that required Rebecca Judd in full sweetheart mode — the hairpiece and the total make-up treatment.

As soon as it finished, she rushed to The Alfred, removed her 10cm heels and put on her flats, changed into her trim professional garb and swept up her folder of patient details.

Still looking glamorous, she arrived at the bedside of a gentle 80-year-old man recovering from a stroke, who was still having trouble finding the right words.

She started her assessment as he stared at her face, her eyes still fluttering with the false eyelashes she'd flashed at the breakfast an hour earlier.

"Oh my goodness," he marvelled, "your eyes are very exciting".

It might have been the eyelashes he saw. Or it might have been that glint in the eyes of a young woman who is in the middle of a juggling act that reminds her she's alive.

"All these things that I do teach me how to juggle. Every day in The Alfred is fast pace," she says. "It helps complete me."

**Turn to page 32  
for tips on Cup dressing**

I get to do some amazing things and go amazing places and get paid for it

