

# MECCA

## MECCA Commits \$10 Million to Accelerate Gender Equality on International Day of the Girl

### PRESS RELEASE

**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 5AM, MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2025**

To mark International Day of the Girl 2025, MECCA is proud to announce a series of bold, long-term commitments designed to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

International Day of the Girl is a moment to recognise the power and potential of girls everywhere and to confront the barriers still holding them back. It's an important day in MECCA's calendar, a time when we lend our voice and weight to the global gender equality effort and deepen our commitment to creating a more inclusive, equal future.

Today's announcements reflect MECCA's belief that beauty, in all its forms, can be a powerful lens through which to shift systems, challenge stereotypes, and elevate new ideas – and that investing in women and girls is one of the most powerful ways to shape the future. Each initiative builds on MECCA M-POWER's existing \$25 million commitment to champion a global network of partners driving real change for women and girls.

These commitments mark the culmination of a month-long campaign to launch The MECCA Archive – a living record of beauty, celebrating and preserving the stories, rituals, and ideas of women and girls across generations.

### MECCA's 2025 International Day of the Girl Commitments

#### 1. A \$10 Million Commitment Over 10 Years – In Partnership with Co-Impact

MECCA M-POWER is proud to announce a major new philanthropic commitment to Co-Impact, an organisation that brings together local changemakers and global funders to shift the systems that hold women and girls back in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This \$10 million, 10-year investment into Co-Impact's Gender Fund will help scale practical, local, predominantly women-led solutions in education, health, and economic opportunity – challenging harmful gender norms and creating measurable, generational change.

"We are delighted that MECCA is joining us in advancing the leadership and vision of local organisations driving systemic change where it matters most," said Olivia Leland, Founder & CEO, Co-Impact. "We are deeply grateful for this partnership and look forward to what we can achieve together in the coming decade - to create a more just and inclusive future for women and girls."

#### 2. The MECCA Prize – A New Annual Award for Gender Equality

Launched today to coincide with International Day of the Girl, the MECCA Prize is an annual award that recognises the people and projects driving bold, lasting progress towards gender

equality. Over the next year, MECCA will work closely with each Prize recipient – helping to shine a spotlight on their work and share their ideas with our community and beyond.

## 2025 MECCA Prize Recipients

### 1. Associate Professor Helen Frazer – 2025 MECCA Prize for Healthcare Innovation

A pioneering breast cancer clinician, researcher, and Founding Director of BRAIx, Associate Professor Helen Frazer is using artificial intelligence to transform early detection and treatment outcomes for women.

MECCA has been supporting Helen's vision to establish a world-first National Breast Cancer Innovation Centre, fast-tracking access to lifesaving technology and reducing healthcare inequities – ensuring more women benefit from earlier diagnosis, personalised care, and improved outcomes.

"Having clinicians working with AI is a powerful combination," said Prof. Frazer. "We now envision a future where every woman understands their breast cancer risk, screening is personalised and precise, and many more lives are saved with early detection."

### 2. Dr Stacy Sims – MECCA Prize for Science and Sport

A global leader in female physiology and exercise science, based in New Zealand, Dr Stacy Sims is transforming how we understand and support women's bodies – from adolescence through menopause.

Her bold, evidence-based approach is challenging outdated assumptions and empowering women and girls to make informed decisions about their health, performance, and wellbeing. The MECCA Prize will raise awareness of her female-centred scientific research and reach, and her Next Gen program focused on ensuring more girls stay active and playing sport.

"Not long ago, female-specific resources for active girls and women were nearly impossible to find—leading to injuries, burnout, and poor nutrition. That gap drives all that I do. As the mother of a soon-to-be teenager, I'm more committed than ever to helping her generation understand their unique physiology and feel empowered as active, confident females. With programs like Next Gen, I'm thrilled to be working with MECCA to cut through the taboos around puberty, periods, and performance, and to empower girls, their parents, coaches, and mentors to help young women thrive and keep loving the sports they play." Dr Stacy Sims

### 3. Katy Hessel – MECCA Prize for Cultural Inquiry

British art historian and best-selling author of *The Story of Art Without Men*, Katy Hessel is rewriting women into the pages of art history.

With the support of the MECCA Prize, Katy will turn her lens to the world of beauty – exploring how aesthetic expression, visual storytelling, and beauty rituals have shaped (and been shaped by) gender norms throughout history. Her work will be preserved in the MECCA Archive, offering a new way to understand beauty as culture.

"I've spent my life studying art, and artists – who are conduits for showing us beauty in tangible form, whether it be a painting, photograph, song, poem, or film. Looking at art from a broad perspective expands our ideas of the stories that exist in this world, and the more we share

these, the more people will feel seen. It's not unlike cosmetics and make-up: the more we see different people experimenting, the richer our idea of beauty becomes. With the MECCA Prize, I am excited to explore the spectrum of these worlds in depth," Katy Hessel.

## A Legacy Built to Last

Through M-POWER and the MECCA Prize, MECCA is proud to support the global movement for gender equality – aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and elevating the voices, leadership and lived experiences of women and girls worldwide.

"At a time when women's stories are still being erased or ignored, the MECCA [Archive](#), our newly created collection of beauty culture, ensures they are preserved. The Archive is an invitation to the next generation to help write beauty's next chapter – so that decades from now, girls can look back and see their stories and experiences reflected there," says Jo Horgan, MECCA Founder and Co-CEO.

"And through the MECCA Prize, and a bold commitment to Co-Impact, we're standing shoulder to shoulder with the women building what comes next. From transforming health systems to rewriting cultural narratives, these changemakers are challenging the status quo – and redefining what the future could be for women and girls."

**For further information, interviews, or media enquiries, please contact:**

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@MECCAbauty #MECCAarchive #21stCenturyGirls

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## About MECCA

Since opening the doors to its very first store in Melbourne in 1997, MECCA has completely redefined the Australian beauty landscape, championing retail innovation and delivering the ultimate beauty experience to customers.

Founded by Jo Horgan, over the past 28 years, MECCA has grown to become Australia's largest prestige beauty retailer, serving more than four million customers each year. With more than 110 stores across Australia and New Zealand and online, MECCA offers an exclusive edit of the best in beauty from more than 200 brands. Today, MECCA has a growing team of 7,000 spread across its Support Centre, Distribution Centre and store network, all working towards a shared purpose of helping people to look, feel and be their best.

From the very beginning, the MECCA team has shared a passion for education and equality. MECCA's social change program, M-POWER was established in 2017 and aims to educate, elevate, and empower women and girls to help create a world where everyone has the same rights and opportunities.

## About MECCA M-POWER

M-POWER is MECCA's movement for social change, championing our bold vision for gender equality. We partner with game-changing organisations working to dismantle the systems that hold women back. We champion healthy norms that build confidence, back people that spark change and redefine what is seen as beautiful.

Because when women and girls rise, we all rise.

## **About the MECCA Archive**

Beauty is more than appearance. It's how we express who we are. It's how we shape the world around us and reflect the world back. This September, MECCA proudly launches the MECCA Archive - a living, evolving collection of digital artefacts, personal stories, and cultural commentary - recognising beauty as a powerful form of culture that has shaped, and been shaped by, the lives of women.

Built to last and designed to grow, the Archive marks MECCA's most ambitious purpose-led project to date, powered by M-POWER, its social change initiative for gender equality.