



Kirsty Lee Akers

Kirsty Lee Akers is one of Australia's most unique and authentic recording artists. A rare talent who is proud of her First Nations heritage, she is a woman of the Wonnarua Nation (Hunter Valley – Australia). Akers has embraced a global musical culture and now spends her time between Australia and a hard-earned international touring schedule in

North America and Europe. Although she spends time overseas during the year, Australia will always be her spiritual home. "Music and family have always been the most important parts of my life. My Nan, Mum, and Aunt were all singers, and I grew up with my pop playing country music all the time. I still remember my first performance at age three. I was hooked!" – Kirsty Lee Akers

Kirsty's childhood was far from easy, and her family could be described as "Aussie Battlers". Born when her mother was only 17 years old, she quickly learned the importance of teamwork, love, and family connection. Akers was not born into money, one of four children growing up in a small house, she saw her father work two jobs to get by. Kirsty learned early on that if she wanted something, she was going to have to

earn it. These are traits that to this day are extremely important to her and help her connect with her fans on an honest and personal level. Akers performed in public for the first time at the tender age of three years old and recorded her first EP at the age of 16. She funded that recording with the money she made busking tirelessly on the streets of Tamworth each January. This connection with Australia's Country Music Capital lead Kirsty to graduate from the CMAA Academy of Country Music and then further afield through the Talent Development Project. After these achievements, it was time to spread her wings and explore the world – First stop Nashville.

“That trip to Nashville in 2006 was just like my first trip to Tamworth, and from the time I stepped off the plane I was in love! There is just something magical about that city. Music everywhere, dreams everywhere, it is so inspiring. But as much as I love traveling, Australia always calls me home.” – Kirsty Lee Akers

From her first recording, people who heard her voice described the vocal delivery as sitting somewhere between Dolly Parton and Loretta Lynn. This foundation, combined with progressive modern country production, offers an incredibly unique and hard-to-match sound. Akers is the only artist in history to have won three of the major prizes in Australian Country Music- Toyota Star Maker, Telstra Road to Discovery, and a Golden Guitar Award (two in total). After seeing these achievements early in her career, and with a taste of the world at her feet, she set her sights on the festival scene to expand her opportunities, and to hone her craft as a singer-songwriter and performer. With this focus, she started to see consistent bookings both domestically and internationally on festival circuits from 2008. New audiences were discovering the petite powerhouse from Down Under. “One of the rising stars of the Americana scene!” – Chuck Taylor, KHYI Dallas (America's highest rating Americana radio station)

The year 2010 saw Akers commence writing and pre-production on her most dynamic record to date. Having been signed to record labels since the age of 18, she saw this release as an opportunity to explore her creative boundaries. Kirsty made the decision to cut ties with her label and release the music independently. This resulted in an unfiltered and raw album that resonated globally. The album 'Naked' was released in 2011 and received 3 Golden Guitar Finalist spots (Best Female Artist, Best Music Video, and Best Vocal Collaboration).

In 2012, Kirsty connected with Emmy-winning producer and Billboard #1 writer Trey Bruce. Doors were opening, and as her circle of songwriters in the USA grew, it became apparent that her musical journey would now stretch beyond Australian shores on a more permanent basis. With her album 'Naked' receiving acclaim in Australia, Akers made the move to Nashville on a more permanent basis. This breakout move resulted in more touring activities and the creation of relationships that have ultimately helped her on her path.

"Pure and real. Those are the first two words that come to mind when I hear Kirsty sing. With the pure voice of and songs with an attitude about real life, love, relationships, brokenness, bad times as well as good. Kirsty has gained a huge fan in me. The coolest part is, she's as great of a person as she is an artist!" – Jerry Salley (Legendary Grammy Nominated Nashville Singer-Songwriter)

In early 2015, with a book full of new songs created on her travels, Kirsty signed a new deal with Maven/Sony Music Australia. After spending the best part of 3 years writing songs with some of the world's best including Byron Hill (George Strait, Gary Allen), Jerry Salley (Chris Stapleton, Toby Keith, Brad Paisley, Loretta Lynn), Trey Bruce (Randy Travis, Faith Hill, Trisha Yearwood, Trace Adkins), Jeremy Spillman (Leeann Womack), Tia Sellers (Dixie Chicks, Alan Jackson) and Angaleena Presley from the Pistol Annies, she had amassed over 100 songs that she would now whittle down to 11 for the new album 'Burn Baby Burn'. She formed a partnership with beloved Aussie producer Glen Hannah to bring them to life. The album was released on April 1st, 2016, and catapulted Akers forward once again. The record saw her achieve her very first ARIA Australian Country Music Album #1 chart position, as well as producing seven consecutive #1 music videos on CMC. Internationally, her single 'I Will' attracted 150,000 unique video views within 3 days of release and was her first video to be added to both CMT (Country Music Television) and GAC (Great American Country) in the United States. It has now amassed over 700,000 combined streams across all digital platforms.

Kirsty toured both the United States and Canada throughout 2015-2019. The year 2018 saw her step up in Canada to play the two major Canadian Country Music festivals (Calgary Stampede and Big Valley Jamboree). The year then saw her expand her horizons, as she showcased her music in the United Kingdom for the first time at the Buckle and Boots Festival staged near Manchester.

Never shy of a challenge, Kirsty decided that the next album would be all hers. She decided to take over the production. The rarity of female producers in music was something that she wanted to address. She assembled her core musicians and took the reins. The album 'Under My Skin', released in July 2018, saw Akers achieve her highest ever ARIA chart positions (ARIA #8 Australian and #29 All-genre chart positions) with the title track 'Under My Skin' exclusively premiering on the Country Music Channel (CMT) social media achieving more than 50k video views on debut. That single alone has now eclipsed the much coveted 1 million streams mark on Spotify, and the album is her most successful yet.

In 2019, Akers concentrated on touring her new album across Australia, paying considerable dividends on the home front. She also developed one of Australia's most enjoyed live shows, entitled 'The Road to Nashville' it celebrates the stories behind the songs that made Nashville famous. Her 2020 'Small Town, Big Hearts Tour' was set to encompass 31 locations before COVID-19 forced postponement.

Online, things are powering ahead for Akers. As her Facebook closes in on 50,000 fans, 'Under My Skin' as an album has now achieved over 2 million streams, with the four music videos from this record released being viewed almost 350,000 times. During 2019, her music was added to 'Fresh Country', 'Country Party', 'Country Chill', and multiple times to the Indigenous songwriters 'Original Storytellers' playlists on Spotify, as well as 'Aussie Country' on Apple Music.

The last few years have seen Akers achieve many accolades including a Golden Guitar Award Finalist spot in 2017, an APRA Award finalist spot in 2018, Vanda and Young Songwriting Competition finalist spot, and seven CMC Award nominations (2016/2017/2018), she has also been recognised with finalist spots and honorable mentions in the International Songwriting Competition (USA - 2018/2019/2020) and NSAI Songwriting Contest Runner Up (2020). She was thrilled to represent her heritage as a finalist in the 2019 APRA/AMCOS Smugglers of Light Award.

Despite the COVID-19 limitations of 2020, Akers teamed up with fellow top-tier Aussie artists Amber Lawrence, Aleyce Simmonds and Dianna Corcoran to record an all-female version on John Williamson's iconic track 'True Blue'. Intended as a thank you to Australia's first responders, the track was a smash hit across the country. They ultimately took out the 2021 Golden Guitar for Vocal Collaboration in Tamworth, demonstrating to all that not even a global pandemic can keep a talented and hard-working woman down.

If her schedule wasn't busy enough, Akers and her husband Jesse Anderson went on to star on Channel Nine's 'The Block' in 2021, winning over \$300,000 and creating a house that the judges described as the "greatest house ever seen on The Block". Kirsty and Jesse are now completing their own renovation of their home in beautiful Lake Macquarie which is being documented and turned into a series called the "Lake House Build".

On April 15, 2022, 'Wild' was released on the eve of the 50th Anniversary Tamworth Country Music Festival. The album has turned out to be a career-defining release. On release week, it became the #1 album released by any Australian artist across the nation. It also took out the #1 ARIA spot for all genres globally, and #1 ARIA Country Album chart position. It spent the first five weeks of release at the top of the ARIA charts. To top off her Tamworth Festival, Kirsty became one of the youngest artists ever to be inducted into the 'Hands of Fame' alongside artists like Slim Dusty, Keith Urban and Troy Cassar-Daley. The album was the ARIA 4th highest-selling country record in 2022 and received two Golden Guitar finalist nominations.

2023 saw Akers, husband Jesse and long time guitarist Dan Ebbels join forces to create the trio known as Rhinestoned. The trio saw immediate success with their 90's country sound and intriguing look. Since launching in June 2023, the trio has released 2 x top 10 radio singles (Livin' The Low Life and Margarita Weather), an acoustic EP, and a Christmas song (Hard Candy Christmas). Rhinestoned performed at the Groundwater Country Music Festival on main stage to a packed house and has an extensive touring schedule throughout 2024, including performing at the Gympie Muster. The band is currently in the studio recording their next single.

April 2024 will see the release of Kirsty's solo single "Girls Are Why The West Is Wild" with Akers set to release her seventh studio album later in the year.