

# Stasey steps back

Having posted nude portraits of herself online to challenge female objectification, Caitlin Stasey says she no longer feels the need to be quite as outspoken, writes **SHANNON MOLLOY**

WHEN she wanted to challenge the objectification of women, Caitlin Stasey published naked photographs of herself. If she had something to say about sexuality, inequality or misogyny, the actor would take to Twitter and not hold back.

It's a kind of raw candour not often seen in show business – and it generated plenty of headlines. But the 25-year-old felt she was made to look like a “bizarre, raving, sexual lunatic” by some of the criticism.

“I'm far less open now, purely for self-preservation,” Stasey says. “I've found it difficult the past year or so.”

Via social media about 18 months ago, Stasey went from former *Neighbours* starlet to maligned purveyor of uncomfortable topics.

In January, she launched feminist website *Herself*, kicking off with an intimate profile piece accompanied by nude portraits. Now, she wants to take a slightly different tack.

“When you're unabashedly open about your life, the nature of your relationship, your sexuality, all of these things, you're open to a world of criticism that doesn't necessarily attack just one part of your character, but has access to all of them,” she says.

“I'm less candid now than I was even just a few months ago ... it's not that I'm scared to speak out, but I don't feel like I have to fight quite as hard. I fought really hard for a year or so and now I feel like I can coast off my honesty. And there's also nothing else really to share.”

Being principled in Hollywood is sometimes “difficult”, especially when it comes to some of the roles on offer. Being a female in the television industry “can be a little disheartening”, she says.

That's why she's so fond of the Australian television series *Please Like Me*, written by comedian Josh Thomas, in which she plays Claire.



“It's rare you get to pair your desire for social justice and change with a good project,” Stasey says of the show's themes, which include mental health and homosexuality.

But she may not be so lucky with future acting roles, conceding they may clash with her ideals.

“As long as you have a core set of principles you don't stray from, that are important to you, I think you're fine,” she says.

Stasey, who also appears in the US period TV drama *Reign*, playing the fictional mistress of King Henry II, has learnt a lot over the past year.

For one, she's now pursuing “a far less aggravated assault on the world” when it comes to her views, instead focusing on providing a creative space for women on her site.

“I'm also trying to eliminate as much cruelty from my life as possible,” Stasey says.

That includes allowing herself to be upset by negative headlines or the tendency, in her view, to be “wilfully misinterpreted”. “I've definitely been hurt by it in the past, but now I get it – I get the game,” she says.

And although it's easier said than done, Stasey's trying to be kinder to everyone – including her enemies.

“I've definitely not been kind to my enemies in practice,” she says, perhaps alluding to her public spat with Fairfax liftout *Good Weekend*.

In July, the actor accused the publication of suddenly pulling a profile feature of her after she refused to pose for photographs in her underwear.

## CAITLIN'S CAREER

### 2003-06:

The Sleepover Club  
(Frankie Thomas, right)



### 2005-09:

Neighbours  
(Rachel Kinski)

### 2010:

Tomorrow, When The War Began  
(Ellie Linton)

### 2013-present:

Reign  
(Lady Kenna, right)



### 2013-present:

Please Like Me  
(Claire)

“They wanted to team an interview about my upset over the constant objectification of women with a sexualised photo shoot,” Stasey tweeted at the time. The editor denied the claims.

But she insists her reasons for stepping back from the firing line have nothing to do with potential professional repercussions.

“I don't really care, to be honest. I don't think anything I say directly affects that,” she says.

“We work in an industry ... where I think everyone is a little bit arrogant enough to believe they're not a part of the problem, so what I'm saying can't really reach them.”

For the first few episodes of the new season of *Please Like Me*, Stasey's character is in Germany and seen only via Skype.

“I've spent so much of my time as an adult away from the people I love, so I feel like I've spent so much time on Skype,” she laughs.

Her busy schedule means she lives a somewhat nomadic life. Stasey's home – for now – is in Los Angeles.

“I enjoy floating around but it's nice to come back to a space that's home, that's filled with the things I love,” she says. “I have a framed photo of my grandmother on her wedding day in my living room. I also have a photo of my mum, my sister and I, from when I was maybe five. I see those when I walk in the door.”

**PLEASE LIKE ME**  
THURSDAY, 10.05PM, ABC