



Winning *Australia's Got Talent* seemed like a dream come true for Jack.

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Now



Enjoying a quieter life, Jack and girlfriend Isabella Dibbs recently travelled to Europe (below, in Venice).

The AGT winner still jams with friends, including *The Voice* semi-finalist Fatai (above).

AGT WINNER JACK VIDGEN I'VE QUIT SHOWBIZ

WHY THE TALENTED TEENAGER HAS GIVEN UP STARDOM TO WORK IN AN AGED CARE HOME

He won over judges and the nation with his killer voice and trademark platinum hair and, at just 14, Jack Vidgen took the crown on the fifth season of *Australia's Got Talent*.

Signed to Sony Music and releasing his debut album *Yes I Am* – which peaked at number three in the charts – success seemed certain, but four-and-a-half years on, the teen performer's attitude towards stardom is very different.

'Back then, my goal was to be a music star – now my goal is not to be a star. It turns out, I really don't enjoy fame... at all,' Jack tells *New Idea*.

The singer admits that he was naive about his expectations at the time.

'I totally thought: "That's it – I've made it, my career's set, I'm going to be fine for the rest of my life."

After winning the hit Channel

Seven talent show, Jack's rise to fame was meteoric.

Once dubbed 'Australia's answer to Justin Bieber', Jack received international exposure via celeb blogger Perez Hilton – who posted about his performances – and did a stream of gigs worldwide, as well as releasing a second album.

However, after a 10-month stint trying to crack the US, he made the decision to take himself out of the spotlight and the pressures that come with it.

'It's a very cutthroat business and to be so young, I just wanted some normality,' Jack says.

'I talked with my mum and said to her: 'I really want to experience life in other ways, I want to come back [to Australia], I want to study, I want to get a job... I want to do stuff I haven't done before.'

'I wanted to be a normal teen without being in the spotlight and having the pressure of everyone looking at me.'

While he's happy to be out of

the industry now, Jack doesn't regret the two years he spent touring and promoting his music.

'I've never really been the classic teenage boy, playing sport or having heaps of friends at school – I wasn't very popular at school – so I don't think I've missed out on anything there!'

Today, the Sydney-born singer has turned his back on performing – for the past 10 months, he has been working in an aged-care facility where he cares for dementia patients.

'I wanted to have a normal job in which I could still help people,' explains Jack, who turns 19 on January 17.

'Something I always loved about singing was that it really helped people. I'd always get messages from people of different ages saying how my music had helped them, which was so lovely.'

'So I wanted to find something where I could help people and show kindness and love to people in another way.'

'Back then my goal was to be a music star – now my goal is not to be a star... I really don't enjoy fame'

'I saw an ad for an aged-care worker in the paper and decided to apply. It's the most awesome feeling to care for others.'

But the job isn't all plain sailing, he says. 'With dementia comes other [things]: aggression, depression and other things... that's a struggle.'

The teenager's outlook belies his years, and his new-found wisdom will come in handy should he ever decide to return to the music biz.

'I don't want to give myself a timeline – if it happens, it'll happen naturally... maybe [this year.] I might get back into some writing and working with a few people.'

But if Jack does attempt a second stab at conquering the charts, he's going to do it with a different attitude.

'I've learnt a lot of lessons in the past couple of years,' he admits. 'One of them is the way I treated people. The first couple of years, I got pretty big-headed and full of myself for a while.'

'That was one of the main reasons I stopped – I had to pull my head in. I've also learnt how to be patient – patient with people and patient with your situation in life.'

Whether he returns to the charts or continues his career in aged care, there's one thing Jack is certain he'll be doing – no matter what the future has in store.

'Just living life to the full – whatever that may look like!'

By Paul Ewart **NI**