



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

PayPal MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL 2023 LAUNCH RECEPTION
Friday 10 February 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries

The Hon. Ted Baillieu AO, former Premier of Victoria

Launa Inman, Chair, Melbourne Fashion Festival, **Board Members** and CEO, **Caroline Ralphsmith**

Sally Capp, The Right Hon. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne

Penelope McKay, Acting Secretary, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Distinguished guests

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather – the Wurundjeri and Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and to Elders of other communities who may be with us.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House to celebrate the launch of this year's PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival.

And there is much to celebrate!

We've had the pleasure of being involved in the Festival's launch over the past eight years. But this year is special.

A Festival that features the fun and the business of Victoria's renowned fashion and creative industries is **fully back** – including, back at the iconic Royal Exhibition Building.

I'm not sure that, when it was built for the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, anyone could have envisaged this event, with its heady combination and excitement of fashion, lights, music, design and Australian designers, let alone the capacity to *Shop the Runway* from individual electronic devices!

That said, even back in 1880, fashion was a part of Melbourne's psyche. The latest French fashions were an Exhibition highlight, and local events like the Melbourne Cup, twilight concerts in the Botanic Gardens and huge gala balls in this very ballroom, showcased a wide array of gowns and, where appropriate, hats and parasols.

Almost a century and a half later, fashion and our creative industries more broadly have become firmly embedded as an important part of our economy. So too have our Festivals.

It's a particularly exciting time with Ralph leading her first Festival, adding her own point of view and initiatives to build on the Festival's rich legacy.

Across the years, Tony and I have enjoyed attending the Runways. But we've also appreciated the significance of the Festival's other activities.

How it extends our understanding of fashion beyond its conventional boundaries, by including photography, performance, and exhibitions.

How it fosters collaboration between established and emerging creatives.

And how it serves as a springboard for new talent and the recognition of the need for sustainability within fashion.

This evening, we are proud to be featuring Victorian designers Van De Kooji, HoMie, Viktoria and Woods, Asiyam, Ngali and Reigner.

Thank you to everyone involved in the planning and preparation of the 2023 PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival.

Thank you to PMFF board members and their Chair Launa Inman, Ralph and the staff, volunteers and supporters and, of course, Government and partners who help to make this nine-day program possible.

We hope you enjoy yourselves this evening and wish every success to the 2023 PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival.

I now invite Minister Dimopoulos to say a few words.