



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

PAYPAL MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL 2024
Friday 23 February 2024

Acknowledgments

The Honourable Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Outdoor Recreation *representing the Premier of Victoria* and **John Cardona**

The Honourable Ted Baillieu, former Premier of Victoria and **Robyn Baillieu**

Launa Inman, Chair, PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival and **Howard Inman**

Caroline Ralphsmith, CEO, PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival and **Dion Werbeloff**

Board Members

Distinguished guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which this House stands – the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

We were delighted that Aunty Diane Kerr was going to be here this evening to deliver a Welcome to Country, but unfortunately, she has not able to attend as she is unwell. We send her our best wishes.

It's a pleasure to welcome you all to Government House to mark the launch of this year's PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival.

Established in 1997, the festival is an annual showcase of Melbourne's vibrant creative sector, and I'm delighted that Government House is part of the celebrations.

Fashion and creative design are woven into the history of this House.

Government House played an important social role in colonial times when it showcased the latest fashion and represented the style of its place and times.

After the arrival of Victorian Governor, Sir John, and his wife, Lady Fuller in 1911, *The Australasian* described Lady Fuller as an “*elegant tall figure*” who was “*very smartly dressed.*” This was one of many comments about the people and fashions that graced the House.

Now, the vibrancy and creativity of Melbourne’s fashion industry extends well beyond the occupants of Government House. And the fashion of the times has always been a combination of the street and the elite, and both are represented here.

Our multifaceted fashion industry is at the heart of this festival and its success.

From the vibrant and eclectic suits of Reigner Clothing to the gentle elegance of Arnsdorf, our capital city is home to a diverse array of designers and aesthetics.

Its ability to bring together creative communities is what’s made the PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival an integral part of this city’s major event calendar.

And, as the city expands, changes and grows, so too does the festival, reflecting the style and expression of the community that calls Melbourne home.

This year’s programme is no exception.

Now in its 28th year, the 15-day festival will feature over 100 unique events.

Each will showcase the rich diversity of Melbourne, and indeed Victoria’s, fashion industry, with almost double the number of featured designers year-on-year.

I’m particularly excited about the *Emerging Mob in Fashion Runway X Fujitsu* show.

Combining the talent of First Nations creatives with support for emerging designers, the runway reflects the very best of Melbourne’s fashion industry. That is, its celebration of diversity and its support for each new generation and their ideas.

It is thanks to this industry, and those who work within it, that Melbourne remains a creative hub for designers and artists alike.

Thank you to all who have joined us this evening.

And, to the staff and volunteers whose tireless work has made this year's Festival possible.

Thank you also to the PayPal Melbourne Fashion Festival board members, their Chair, Launa Inman, CEO, Caroline Ralphsmith, and the Victorian Government and partners whose support has made this evening possible.

I wish you the best of luck in the coming weeks and look forward to attending some shows myself.

I now invite Minister Dimopoulos to address us.