



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **VIRGIN AUSTRALIA MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL 2019 LAUNCH**

**Wednesday 12 December, 2018**

**The Honourable Martin Foley MP**, Minister for Creative Industries, **Representing the Premier of Victoria**

**The Honourable Ted Ballieu**, Former Premier of Victoria  
and **Mrs Robyn Ballieu**

**Mr Andrew Abbott**, Chief Executive, Creative Victoria

**Mr David Briskin**, Chairman, Melbourne Fashion Festival

**Mrs Sue Lloyd**, Williams AO Deputy Chair, Melbourne Fashion Festival

**Mr Graeme Lewsey**, Chief Executive Officer, Melbourne Fashion Festival

**Distinguished guests**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this evening.

My husband Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House to the Launch of the 2019 Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival.

Now entering its 23<sup>rd</sup> season, the annual celebration of fashion, arts and ideas is a much anticipated and much-loved festival in Victoria's yearly calendar of major events.

I must say that I particularly like the Festival's 2019 theme: 'Power to the Dreamers'.

Victoria's \$70 billion fashion industry could not have its local retail and its export success without the brilliant dreamers.

The designers who can dream new aesthetics and fresh ideas. Those who see things – literally, see things – differently from most of us. The beauty and the whimsy.

The clever scientists and technicians who not only dream of, but also deliver new fabrics and new approaches to textile making.

And those whose task it is to ensure large-scale commercial success: the dreamers and creators of innovative algorithms, of datasets and analytics, to find the way to tap into different markets, and to establish the most seamless supply chains.

I am proud that this afternoon, before this reception, we hosted a roundtable event that brought together some of the most senior experts within the fashion industry, with some of the brightest young and emerging talent.

It gave me the opportunity to see, first-hand, a great culture of cross generational support within the fashion industry. I think that the greatest legacy any of us can leave is through nurturing the next generation of leaders within our industries, trades or professions.

Just a few days ago, we returned from an official visit to the Hong Kong Business of Design Week, where Melbourne was the featured partner city - following countries and cities such as Sweden, Chicago, Barcelona and Italy. Not bad company!

Part of the design program was a Melbourne Fashion Showcase, celebrating the depth, diversity and creativity of Victoria's fashion.

All of you in this room, associated as you are with our fashion industry, can be proud.

Melbourne truly shone as the centre of Australia's retail industry. And the Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival was widely acknowledged as the largest consumer fashion event in Australia....and beyond.

We look forward to the exciting program of fashion, arts and ideas from runways to fashion films.

And the nation's first dedicated **Australian Fashion Summit** will bring an ambitious new schedule of business discussions into a day full of activity, proudly staged on International Women's Day.

Being Melbourne, there will also be food and entertainment, and a collaboration between the Festival and the Melbourne Museum, demonstrating how iconic venues and events can work together to create a 'whole that is greater than the sum of its parts'.

So, let me thank the Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival, and everyone associated with it, for all that it contributes to Victoria.

Thank you to the Chairman David Briskin, and his dedicated Board.

And thank you to the CEO Graeme Lewsey who has, for years, been a leading figure in fashion in our State. And, with others, he just represented us superbly in Hong Kong too.

And so, that brings me happily to the stage where I have just one other matter to address. And that is, that with great pleasure, I officially launch the 2019 Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival.

I now invite the Honourable Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries to say a few words.