



**NSW FASHION SECTOR STRATEGY
2025-2028**



WE ACKNOWLEDGE

We acknowledge NSW's First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW and recognise and respect their continuing connections to lands, waters and communities.

We respect Elders past and present, and all First Nations peoples, and recognise the continuation of diverse cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

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Cover: Yousef Akbar, Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2023, Carriageworks, Sydney. Photo: Mark Nolan/Getty Images for AAFW.

Previous page: First Nations Fashion + Design (FNFD), Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2021, Sydney. Photo: Lucas Dawson.

This page: Models wearing Michelle Jank backstage at Mercedes Australian Fashion Week 2005, Sydney. Photo: Robert Rosen, Powerhouse Collection.



MINISTER'S FOREWORD



New South Wales, and in particular Sydney, has long led the way for the Australian fashion industry. Zimmermann, Collette Dinnigan, Camilla and Marc, Carla Zampatti, Bec & Bridge, Aje, Romance Was Born, Camilla, Cue, Oroton and Sass & Bide, to name a few, all call Sydney home. These ground-breaking designers are not just Australian success stories but are consistently highly sought after internationally by global tastemakers and wider retail markets.

The common thread for the successes of these fashion creatives is that alongside their talent they have had organisations inside and outside the industry championing them – and investing in them. Our state's fashion designers are the heart of a multi-billion-dollar industry with \$7.2b export revenue generated annually. Nationally, this represents 1.7% of all Australian exports. The NSW fashion industry currently contributes \$9.7b to our economy in NSW each year.

The NSW Government is committed to working in partnership with the NSW fashion industry to strategically grow NSW as the home for Australian fashion.

The *NSW Fashion Sector Strategy* is the first of its kind, aligning with our *Creative Communities* policy and developed in collaboration with industry. It sets out a vision for the fashion industry in NSW with six strategic priorities to support and develop industry, to grow markets and profile nationally and internationally, and establish and extend pathways for new designers into the industry. It will ensure that contemporary fashion created and made in NSW in all of its forms is integrated not only into our everyday lives but the creative identity of our city and our state.

John Graham MLC
NSW Minister for the Arts
NSW Minister for Music and the
Night-Time Economy
NSW Minister for Transport

August 2025
Gadigal Country – Sydney

CO-CHAIRS' MESSAGE



We are delighted to introduce the *NSW Fashion Sector Strategy*; a comprehensive framework designed to support and elevate fashion in New South Wales. As the largest and one of the most dynamic of the state's creative industries, fashion plays a pivotal role in driving economic growth, fostering innovation and supporting local communities.

As Industry Chairs of the NSW Fashion Sector Working Group, we are grateful for the support of the NSW Government and proud to present this strategy, developed through the collective expertise and collaboration of industry leaders. The strategy addresses critical areas within the business of fashion, including innovation, sustainability, workforce development and market access. It is designed to foster a vibrant, globally competitive fashion industry in NSW, while ensuring that local businesses and creatives succeed in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The fashion industry in NSW is not only a major economic driver but also a cultural force that showcases our state's creativity and global influence. With this strategy, we aim to provide clear, actionable

initiatives to support the continued growth and success of the industry, empowering everyone from emerging designers to established brands.

We invite you to explore the *NSW Fashion Sector Strategy* and join us in making these plans a reality. Together, we can shape the future of fashion in NSW and solidify our position as a global leader in the creative industries.

Alex Schuman
CEO, Carla Zampatti

Edwina McCann
Editorial Director of
VOGUE Australia & News Prestige

August 2025
Gadigal Country – Sydney

FASHION INDUSTRY IN NUMBERS



489,000+
jobs across Australia



\$27.2 billion
per year contributed to
the Australian economy



\$7.2 billion
per year export value
for Australia



174,000+
jobs in NSW



\$9.7 billion
per year contributed to
the NSW economy



1.7%
of all Australian exports

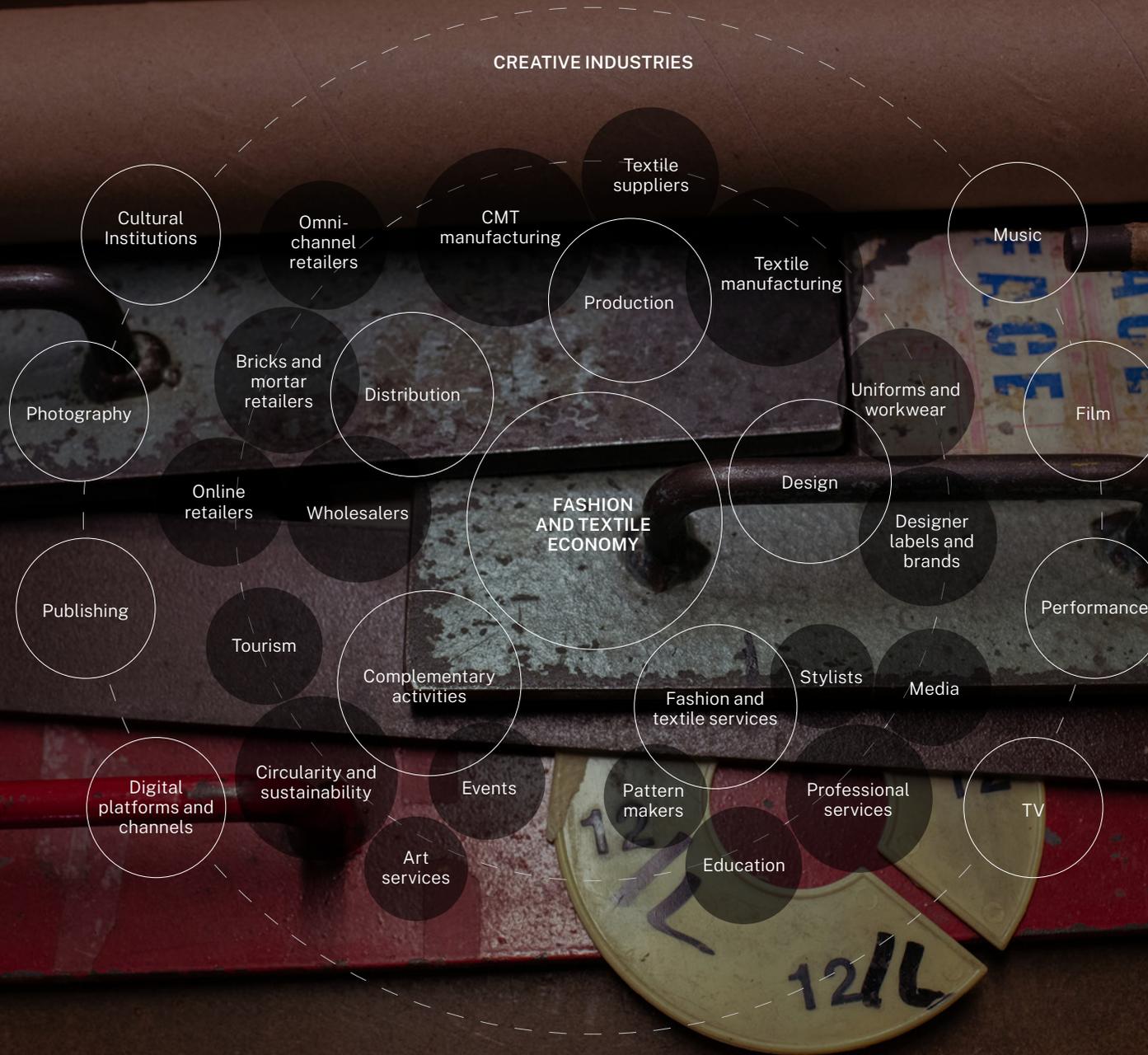


77%
of fashion workforce is female

Source: *From High Fashion to High Vis: The Economic Contribution of Australia's Fashion and Textile Industry*, May 2021, Australian Fashion Council and EY.



FASHION AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ECOSYSTEM



FASHION AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ECOSYSTEM

New South Wales' creative ecosystem is reshaping the national and global landscape. From visual arts and design to music and screen, most creative industries in NSW intersect with fashion.

VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN

Artists and designers often work across the creative industries, moving between commercial and independent commissioned work, often while supporting their own arts practices. They regularly collaborate to create textiles, materials, prints and runway shows.

- Romance Was Born x Del Kathryn Barton.
- Carla Zampatti x Lindy Lee 'The Art of Women' collection.
- Iordanes Spyridon Gogos' collaborations with Jenny Kee, Linda Jackson and Akira Isogawa.
- Alémais and artist collaborations with Adam Lester, Nadia Hernandez, Sam Pauletto, Chesca Athas and Emma Gale.
- Gary Bigeni collaborated on prints with Melbourne abstractionist Matthew Johnson.
- Social enterprise fashion brand The Social Outfit collaborates with young refugee and new migrant artists in Western Sydney and transforms their work into digital prints and clothing.

MEDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Media, photographers and filmmakers capture the essence of fashion for editorial shoots, brands and campaigns.

- NSW is home to head offices for *Vogue Australia*, *Harper's Bazaar Australia*, *InStyle Australia*, *Russh*, *Frankie* and *Marie Claire*.
- NSW stylists, photographers, models, digital media and content creators engaged for interstate and international fashion events and campaigns.
- NSW photographer Sonny Vandeveld photographed Christopher Esber and Zimmermann at Paris Fashion Week 2025.
- Victoria Zschommler is highly regarded for her work for clients including *Vogue Italia* and *Vogue Australia*, *Vanity Fair France*, *Marie Claire*, Dior, Bulgari and Rabanne.

MUSIC, SCREEN AND PERFORMANCE

Designers influence mainstream fashion through media film and television.

- Fashion designer Bianca Spender worked alongside artistic director of Sydney Dance Company Rafael Bonachela for the 50th anniversary performance of *Cinco*.
- Netflix reboot of *Heartbreak High* featured Sydney brands Rebecca Vallance, Ksubi, Alix Higgins, Em on Holiday and Ramp Tramp Tramp Stamp.
- Emma Roberts wore Christopher Esber for her appearance on *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon.
- *Barbie* movie star America Ferrera wore a lilac Alex Perry dress for the 2024 Oscar Nominee Luncheon.
- International celebrities, musicians and performers often wear NSW designers on the global stage, including Lady Gaga in Samuel Lewis at the 2025 Grammy Awards, Taylor Swift in Dion Lee at the 2024 Super Bowl, Katy Perry in Alix Higgins at the 2024 AFL Grand Final, and Cate Blanchett, Miley Cyrus and Lilly Allen all wearing Romance Was Born on the red carpet.

CASE STUDY

Catherine Martin developed her multi-award-winning costume and set design skills while studying at East Sydney Technical College and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA). In 1987 she met fellow student (and future husband) Baz Luhrmann, who asked her to help him stage his one act play *Strictly Ballroom*.

Their incredible collaborative partnership has been internationally recognised by audiences and awards judges alike, resulting in Catherine winning four Academy Awards, six BAFTA Awards, a Tony and 11 AACTA Awards so far (Baz has also won six AACTA Awards, two BAFTA Awards, a Grammy, and a Tony). She takes pride in creating costumes that are beautifully made, comfortable and — crucially for actors on set — easy to take on and off. In 2013 she was named a *Glamour Magazine* Woman of the Year and was featured the same year in the *Hollywood Costume* book by Deborah Nadoolman Landis.

Catherine Martin wearing Romance Was Born, 2022.
Photo: Sean Foster.

THE STATE OF PLAY

The New South Wales fashion industry is a complex ecosystem of design, textile, manufacturing, retail, and education and training. It is heavily interlinked with the broader national fashion and retail economy contributing a high-value component of Australia's trade and export portfolio.

Australian fashion has a global brand identity that is recognised as being design-led, innovative, fearless, effortless and raw. With brands as global icons, they help elevate Australia's international brand equity.

The industry is predominantly female-led and is one of Australia's leading creative industries showcasing diverse and emerging talent, and First Nations initiatives that are pivotal for inclusivity, cultural recognition and international distinctiveness. The First Nations fashion sector demonstrates significant growth potential, driven by increasing consumer demand for authentic Indigenous design. First Nations designers are recognised and celebrated with showcases at events like Australian Fashion Week. This growing recognition highlights the importance and influence of Indigenous perspectives in contemporary Australian fashion.

Fashion Week, held annually in Sydney, is Australia's only international fashion trade event, creating a platform for national and international exposure for Australian brands, emerging talent and its value chain. The week plays a pivotal role in driving the significant media, economic, cultural, and social impact on the fashion industry and beyond.

Across NSW's creative industries, the fashion industry is one of the most significant contributors to the NSW economy and generates significant exports.

Nationally, fashion employs more than 489,000 people, contributes \$27.2b to the Australian economy and generates \$7.2b export revenue. This represents 1.7% of all Australian exports. In NSW the fashion industry employs more than 174,000 people and contributes \$9.7b to the state economy.

The fashion industry workforce nationally is 77% female. For comparison, education is 72% female and healthcare 78% female, while the national average across all industries is 47% female.

New South Wales has long been the home of the Australian fashion industry, with well-established precincts in the inner west of Sydney — Alexandria, Redfern, Surry Hills, Marrickville — and in Western Sydney — Cabramatta. Sydney is also home to leading knowledge institutions and fashion and design schools, who offer a comprehensive range of fashion design education courses, spanning qualification levels and specialisation. They offer everything from bachelor's degrees from established institutions such as University of Technology Sydney, Western Sydney University, Whitehouse Institute of Design, and Billy Blue College of Design — through to industry-focused diplomas and advanced diplomas through TAFE NSW and FBI Fashion College. A diversity of options provide multiple entry points to develop NSW fashion and design talent, positioning Sydney as a fashion education hub. This is supported by micro-credential courses, delivered by industry, from foundational skills to advanced design specialisation.

Iordanes Spyridon Gogos, Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2022, Powerhouse Museum Ultimo, Sydney. Collaborators: Brittany Wyper (Print), Alexander Enticknap (Wearables), Julia Baldini (Shoes), and Alice Knight Scarlet Marshall (Hat). Photo: Mark Metcalfe/Getty Images



THE STATE OF PLAY

INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

The NSW fashion industry comprises of a diverse range of businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals across the value chain, including designers, patternmakers, manufacturers, retailers, consumer representatives, buyers, marketers, textile engineers, chemists, textile recyclers and circular innovators.

The industry faces challenges locally and internationally, including:

- Trade – rising tariffs in some markets, and changes in trading conditions globally and locally caused by a global cost of living crisis.
- Consumer spending – discretionary spending pushed down by cost of living and inflationary pressures.
- Supply chain – disruptions to production and distribution channels, and increased costs of doing business.
- Market change – accelerating competition and counterfeiting, and local manufacturing offshored to markets with lower-cost business models.
- Technological change – rapid integration of technology in prototyping, manufacturing, logistics and e-commerce.
- Sustainability – manufacturing method and supply chain need to support diverse creative business models.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE NSW FASHION INDUSTRY

1. Develop pathways and sustain practice for NSW emerging and established designers.
2. Connect audiences with designers, fashion experiences and industry to grow the profile of the sector locally, nationally and internationally.
3. Invest in skills, industry networking initiatives, promotional campaigns and trade showcases to grow the industry into new markets locally and internationally.
4. Invest in advanced manufacturing technologies and capabilities, including smart factories and data-driven business tools will help local manufacturers compete globally as well as reduce waste and increase environmental and economic sustainability across the industry.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Fashion sits at the centre of a creative ecosystem that encompasses media, film, music, performance, photography and modelling. During the last two decades, the industry has experienced unprecedented disruption and change, ranging from the emergence of fast fashion and escalating local manufacturing costs, to the rise of e-commerce and other changes in how consumers buy fashion.

Even without significant financial support, Sydney has developed a vibrant and expansive fashion industry that has made significant gains around the world. A partnership between the Australian fashion industry and the NSW Government can yield huge cultural and economic benefits to NSW, particularly in tourism, jobs and exports, and support for other creative industries within the fashion ecosystem.

Despite its successes, the Australian fashion industry is not given a significantly large platform in Sydney. It has an annual trade show, Australian Fashion Week, that receives financial support from Destination NSW. But Sydney misses the opportunity to properly nurture, celebrate and project Sydney as home to our largest creative industry.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM INDUSTRY

To support the development of this strategy, a working group of leading industry and government representatives identified the following key opportunities for the industry:

- Develop and advocate for NSW Government-supported skills and training programs that suit the evolving needs of the industry.
- Create and provide affordable spaces for fashion graduates and emerging designers to develop their creative and commercial skills.
- Develop programs specifically to support emerging and First Nations designers.
- Develop initiatives that reduce waste and support an environmentally and economically sustainable industry.
- Support the ongoing delivery of Australian Fashion Week held in Sydney as an effective trade show to grow the NSW and Australian fashion industry.
- Create and promote NSW designer showcases to international buyers in Paris.
- Build awareness of and celebrate Australian fashion.

The *NSW Fashion Sector Strategy 2025–2028* is focused on ensuring the viability and sustainability of the industry, along with its related creative industries. It includes six strategic priority areas to develop and elevate these industries locally and internationally, recognising their significance to the cultural fabric of the state and contribution to the NSW economy.

A VISION FOR FASHION IN NEW SOUTH WALES

To accelerate New South Wales' position as a global leader in high-quality, innovative and inclusive fashion – where creativity drives economic growth and a resilient, diverse industry succeeds through collaboration and global reach.

Strategic Priority 1: SKILLS AND TRAINING REVIEW

OBJECTIVE

Ensure the workforce and industry participants in NSW have the skills required to succeed. A strategic skills review will help industry and government assess current skills and future needs to deliver a revitalised training program that highlights the diverse career opportunities in the NSW fashion industry.

Strategic Priority 2: AUSTRALIAN FASHION HUB

OBJECTIVE

Establish a dedicated centre of excellence to incubate NSW's emerging creative talent under one roof and forge connections with fashion businesses across the clothing value chain. The Australian Fashion Hub will provide spaces for emerging and established industry participants to collaborate, while embedding and promoting advanced manufacturing technologies in the NSW textile sector.

Strategic Priority 3: AUSTRALIAN FASHION AND CLOTHING SMART FACTORY

OBJECTIVE

Establish an Australian-first Australian Fashion Smart Factory pilot that will combine testing, production and workforce development facilities alongside a distribution hub. The factory will feature leading-edge smart manufacturing technology and support NSW designers to develop short-run collections and made-to-order popular designs on demand with minimal waste.

Strategic Priority 4: FASHION WEEK

OBJECTIVE

Position the reimagined industry-led Australian Fashion Week, run by the Australian Fashion Council, as a top-tier Sydney event on the global fashion calendar, attracting domestic and international buyers, showcasing NSW internationally and driving commercial outcomes for the industry.

Strategic Priority 5: AUSTRALIAN DESIGNERS ABROAD SHOWROOMS

OBJECTIVE

Provide emerging NSW designers with opportunities to showcase their designs in Paris to expand their practice internationally. These showrooms will promote NSW designers and fashion brands internationally in one of the traditional global centres of fashion and strengthen relationships with international buyers, particularly those introduced via Australian Fashion Week.

Strategic Priority 6: CONNECTING AUDIENCES WITH AUSTRALIAN FASHION

OBJECTIVE

Support, amplify and connect audiences with the creativity of the NSW fashion industry through exhibiting, collecting, and preserving the work and archives of NSW designers, and provide space for residencies and programs. To embed NSW sector practice into the programs of Cultural Institutions through ongoing annual programs and events.

Strategic Priority 1: SKILLS AND TRAINING REVIEW

OBJECTIVE

Ensure the workforce and industry participants in NSW have the skills required to succeed. A strategic skills review will help industry and government assess current skills and future needs to deliver a revitalised training program that highlights the diverse career opportunities in the NSW fashion industry.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- A skilled NSW workforce to meet the current and future demands of industry.
- Toolkits and short courses to help develop commercial and business-focused skills.
- Education and training pathways specifically designed to serve NSW Indigenous students and to support Indigenous-led businesses.
- A joint working group across education and industry to develop new programs and products with a focus on environmental and economic sustainability.

ACTIONS

1. Undertake a NSW Fashion and Textiles Skills Review in partnership with industry and the NSW education sector that will contribute and align with the National Skills Sector review.
2. Co-design programs in response to the review in a collaboration between industry, UTS, TAFE NSW and NSW skill providers.
3. Support and develop promotional campaigns that build awareness of the industry and career opportunities among students and graduates, alongside agencies and media in the employment sector.
4. Concurrent with the Skills and Training Review, TAFE NSW and Create NSW will partner to develop the Next Gen Creative Industries Hub at the TAFE NSW Ultimo campus on Harris Street as part of the broader Ultimo Creative Industries Precinct. This will tie in with TAFE NSW's integrated creative industries sector training to support the broader fashion sector creative ecosystem.

CASE STUDY

Developing the next generation of NSW design and fashion talent requires collaboration between the industry and the education sector. NSW is home to some of Australia's leading knowledge and training institutions capable of collaborating with industry to design innovative training and skills development for the sector.

There is an urgent need to work across government and knowledge-based institutions to scope a new fashion industry production apprenticeship and traineeship program as well as short courses and micro-credentials tailored for school leavers and mid-career professionals.

A key focus is to develop clear education and training pathways specifically designed for Indigenous students and to support Indigenous-led businesses.



Fashion and Textiles Studio, University of Technology Sydney. Photo: Hamish McIntosh.

Strategic Priority 2: AUSTRALIAN FASHION HUB

OBJECTIVE

Establish a dedicated centre of excellence to incubate NSW's emerging creative talent under one roof and forge connections with fashion businesses across the clothing value chain. The Australian Fashion Hub will provide spaces for emerging and established industry participants to collaborate, while embedding and promoting advanced manufacturing technologies in the NSW textile sector.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- Dedicated space for NSW fashion industry participants to innovate and collaborate.
- Investment, support and workspaces for NSW designers and industry participants at crucial stages in their careers.
- Program of grants or interest-free equipment loans for emerging designers, manufacturers and fashion technology businesses.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a business and operational model for the establishment of the Australian Fashion Hub through a partnership with University of Technology Sydney, City of Sydney and the Australian Fashion Council.
2. Finalise a location for the Australian Fashion Hub at UTS within the Tech Central precinct, co-locating it with Powerhouse and TAFE NSW.
3. Work across government and the private sector to unlock access to vacant or unused spaces for studios.
4. Establish a program of small grants to NSW fashion designers, industry professionals and textile businesses to support showcasing business development and industry engagement. Allocate dedicated funding for First Nations and regional designers.
5. Profile the Australian Fashion Hub within Destination NSW marketing, major events and media.

CASE STUDY

Creativity needs community. The Australian Fashion Hub will create a fashion innovation ecosystem attracting the best of NSW's fashion talent. It will connect designers with customers, wholesale buyers and investors. It will be a place of collaboration between photographers, models, digital media developers and creators to profile the fashion industry.

Modelled on successful international examples like the Seoul Fashion Hub, the Australian Fashion Hub could benefit from being located near Tech Central, Australia's innovation engine. This emerging global innovation district is where entrepreneurial talent, research excellence and creativity connect in a vibrant, 24-hour precinct.

The Australian Fashion Hub could include:

- flexible retail space for 20 designers to use as creative space and retail showrooms open to the public
- a smart factory supporting designers with access to innovative technology, equipment, cutting tables, laser cutters, knitting and embroidery machines and a fabric printer
- a flexible collaboration space to support showings, expanded showroom space for events, fashion shoots, photography and content creation.



Fashion and Textiles Studio, University of Technology Sydney. Photo: Hamish McIntosh.

Strategic Priority 3: AUSTRALIAN FASHION AND CLOTHING SMART FACTORY

OBJECTIVE

Establish an Australian-first Australian Fashion and Clothing Smart Factory pilot that will combine testing, production and workforce development facilities alongside a distribution hub. The factory will feature leading-edge smart manufacturing technology and support NSW designers to develop short-run collections and made-to-order popular designs on demand with minimal waste.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- High-speed data networks and cloud-connected systems for tracking, analysing and reporting market insights in close to real time.
- Initiatives that reduce waste and support an environmentally and economically sustainable industry.
- Advanced automated manufacturing technologies including digital printing and cutting machines to make customised garments on demand, ensuring minimal waste and avoiding overproduction.
- AI-powered digital design software to enable rapid prototyping, including mapping the most efficient cutting templates to minimise scrap material.

ACTIONS

1. Australian Fashion Council to undertake a feasibility study to determine the commercial operating model and resource requirements.
2. Identify location and space requirement, consider co-locations with Australian Fashion Hub at UTS near Tech Central.
3. Secure Federal Government investment partnership that aligns with Australian advanced manufacturing objectives.
4. Promote the Australian Fashion Smart Factory nationally and internationally as a new industry model.

CASE STUDY

Rodinia Generation

Rodinia Generation in Copenhagen developed a scalable smart factory concept in 2017 to tackle overproduction and waste in the fashion industry.

Its micro-factory model includes a digital printer that uses no water, a curing oven, a laser-cutting machine and AI-powered production management software. Minimising waste in production saves approximately 200L of water and 4kg of CO2 per piece of clothing.

Commercial success is achieved by producing garments on demand to precisely fulfill orders. Customer loyalty is enhanced by delivering in-demand quality products in less than two weeks' and as short as 48 hours' turnaround — beating competitors who drop-ship batches of inferior products.



Rodinia Generation founder and CEO Trine Young at the Copenhagen microfactory. Photo: Rodinia Generation.

Strategic Priority 4: FASHION WEEK

OBJECTIVE

Position the reimagined industry-led Australian Fashion Week, run by the Australian Fashion Council, as a top-tier Sydney event on the global fashion calendar, attracting domestic and international buyers, showcasing NSW internationally and driving commercial outcomes for the industry.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- A reimagined Australian Fashion Week with a focus on inclusivity across the fashion ecosystem, celebrating First Nations fashion and the diverse creative talent that continues to emerge from Western Sydney, alongside promoting sustainability and amplifying local talent globally.
- Sustained investment in Australian Fashion Week to ensure its viability and growth.

ACTIONS

1. Invest in and assist in securing local and federal government support for Australian Fashion Week, Australia's only international fashion trade event held in Sydney.
2. Provide dedicated funding to showcase NSW First Nation fashion and emerging designers during Australian Fashion Week.
3. Measure the economic impact of fashion week on the industry and the NSW retail and visitor economies.

CASE STUDY

Since its launch in 1996, Australian Fashion Week has been held annually in Sydney. It is Australia's only international fashion trade event, providing a critical platform for Australian designers to showcase their talent and innovation on the global fashion stage. In November 2024, after the previous organising body announced it would no longer run Australian Fashion Week, the Australian Fashion Council (AFC) led the effort to ensure the event's continued existence.

With the support of the NSW government, the AFC has convened the industry to develop a new Australian Fashion Week – for the industry and

by the industry. Fashion is so much more than champagne, catwalks and social images, it's about economic value driven by trade, innovation and jobs.

The wide industry support for an AFC-led, industry-driven Australian Fashion Week is about protecting and growing jobs, sales and economic stability. The AFC is harnessing this unique opportunity in Australian fashion to examine and reinvent every aspect of Australian Fashion Week for its future success.



Romance Was Born, Afterpay Australian Fashion Week 2021, Carriageworks, Sydney. Photo: Don Arnold/WireImage.

Strategic Priority 5: AUSTRALIAN DESIGNERS ABROAD SHOWROOMS

OBJECTIVE

Provide emerging NSW designers with opportunities to showcase their designs in Paris to expand their practice internationally. These showrooms will promote NSW designers and fashion brands internationally in one of the traditional global centres of fashion and strengthen relationships with international buyers, particularly those introduced via Australian Fashion Week.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- International opportunities to profile NSW designers and fashion brands.
- Increased export value of the NSW fashion industry.

ACTIONS

1. Invest in the bi-annual Australian Designers Abroad Showrooms in Paris.
2. Invest in supporting participation in the showroom by NSW First Nations and emerging designers.
3. Collaborate across government and the private sector to promote Sydney as an international fashion destination.

CASE STUDY

International promotion and advocacy are critical to the viability and sustainability of the fashion industry and NSW designers. As the industry's peak advocacy body, the Australian Fashion Council's Designers Abroad Showroom was an export development program to build the profiles of Australian fashion designers during Paris Fashion Week, strengthening their reputations and helping them do business with more stockists abroad.

The bi-annual four-day Australian Designers Abroad Showroom in Paris showcased Australia's finest fashion designers to international media and buyers. Hosted as part of the city's Ready-to-Wear Fashion Weeks during Fall/Winter (March) and Spring/Summer (September/October).

The showroom included a mix of established and emerging Australian fashion talent representing the diversity of the industry, with designers chosen based on their industry skill, strength of their current seasonal collection and potential success in the international market.

For many designers, the opportunity to showcase their designs in Paris during this key period in the fashion calendar expanded the reach of their businesses to an international level, well beyond local market opportunities.



Australian Designers Abroad Showroom, Paris, 2015. Photo: Flaunter.

Strategic Priority 6: CONNECTING AUDIENCES WITH AUSTRALIAN FASHION

OBJECTIVE

Support, amplify and connect audiences with the creativity of the NSW fashion industry through exhibiting, collecting, and preserving the work and archives of NSW designers, and provide space for residencies and programs. To embed NSW sector practice into the programs of Cultural Institutions through ongoing annual programs and events.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- Investment in exhibitions and programs that showcase NSW fashion and design across Australia and internationally.
- Grants and opportunities to support First Nations and emerging designers as part of ongoing cultural institution programming.
- Access to space and resources for residencies.
- Collecting the work and archives of First Nations and NSW designers for institution collections.
- Cross-disciplinary commissions that support fashion collaborations across the creative industries.

ACTIONS

1. Cultural institutions to present exhibitions and programs showcasing both First Nations and contemporary fashion.
2. Work with Cultural Institutions to convert underutilised spaces into incubators or studio spaces.
3. Powerhouse Museum to provide a central information hub that documents and promotes the opportunities and outcomes of the strategy.
4. Establish a dedicated acquisition fund for NSW fashion and NSW First Nations fashion.
5. Deliver a commissioning program that supports NSW designers to collaborate across creative disciplines.

CASE STUDY

Powerhouse Museum, located in Tech Central, is renowned for showcasing and promoting Australian designers through its extensive fashion collection acquired during its 145-year history and the presentation of ground breaking exhibitions — *Zampatti Powerhouse*; *Jenny Kee and Linda Jackson: Step into Paradise*; *Collette Dinnigan: Unlaced*; *Future Fashion*; and *Akira Isogawa: Unfolding a Life in Fashion*.

The Powerhouse Collection includes thousands of garments and related fashion production materials (such as design sketches, pattern blocks, fabric swatches) by creatives who have worked in NSW, including designers Jenny Kee, Studibaker Hawk, Akira Isogawa, Romance Was Born and Dion Lee, and photographers David Mist, Frank Mitchell and Robert Rosen.

Future Fashion is an annual exhibition (initially titled *Student Fashion* and renamed in 2021), which since its launch by Australian design icon Jenny Kee in 1993 has showcased the next generation of Australian designers graduating from four public and independent Sydney-based institutions. The exhibition has featured the work of approximately 190 students across 30 years, many of whom have gone on to outstanding careers in fashion-related fields.

Powerhouse also provides residencies to the Australian Fashion Council and First Nations Fashion + Design (FNFD), along with renowned Australian designers Iordanes Spyridon Gogos and Romance Was Born.

Jenny Kee and Linda Jackson in Flamingo Park. Photo: Fran Moore, 1975.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2025–2028

	Year one	Year two	Year three
Strategic Priority 1: SKILLS AND TRAINING REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake NSW Fashion and Textile Skills Review and develop five-year skills plan for the industry Industry career pathways strategy developed Commence planning for the Next Gen Creative Industries Hub at TAFE NSW Ultimo 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fashion skills enrolment rates (% decrease) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill shortages reported by the sector 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fashion skills enrolment rates (% decrease) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill shortages reported by the sector
Strategic Priority 2: AUSTRALIAN FASHION HUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full feasibility study completed, including model for operation Space identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract signed and fit out completed Number of people utilising the space Rate of fashion community satisfaction with the space Volume of production undertaken Value of retail sales 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people utilising the space Rate of fashion community satisfaction with the space Volume of production undertaken Value of retail sales
Strategic Priority 3: AUSTRALIAN FASHION AND CLOTHING SMART FACTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of operating investment and partnership model Space requirement quantified and designed 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of manufacturing in NSW Federal Government investment in NSW sector 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factory utilisation National and international visitation Commercial investment
Strategic Priority 4: FASHION WEEK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand sales directly attributable to Fashion Week Number of new wholesale relationships established Revenue per participating brand attributed to export NSW export revenue attributed to fashion and textiles NSW visitor numbers 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand sales directly attributable to Fashion Week Number of new wholesale relationships established Revenue per participating brand attributed to export NSW export revenue attributed to fashion and textiles NSW visitor numbers 	(% increase) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand sales directly attributable to Fashion Week Number of new wholesale relationships created from showroom Revenue per brand attributed to export NSW export revenue Retail trade NSW visitor numbers

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2025–2028

	Year one	Year two	Year three
Strategic Priority 5: AUSTRALIAN DESIGNERS ABROAD SHOWROOMS	(% increase)	(% increase)	(% increase)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand sales directly attributable to showroom • Number of new wholesale relationships established • Revenue per participating brand attributed to export • NSW export revenue attributed to fashion and textiles <p>*Baseline gathered before showroom commences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand sales directly attributable to showroom • Number of new wholesale relationships created from showroom • Revenue per brand attributed to export • NSW export revenue attributed to fashion and textiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand sales directly attributable to showroom • Number of new wholesale relationships created from showroom • Revenue per brand attributed to export • NSW export revenue attributed to fashion and textiles
Strategic Priority 6: CONNECTING AUDIENCES WITH AUSTRALIAN FASHION	(baseline)	(% increase)	(% increase)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square metre of space allocated to studios and workspace • Website and digital establishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of exhibitions and creative projects • Number of collection acquisitions and donations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations designers • Creative commissions

NSW FASHION SECTOR WORKING GROUP



Alex Schuman
CO-CHAIR

Alex Schuman has a diverse career spanning investment banking, government and fashion. He is the son of the late Carla Zampatti and now leads the Carla Zampatti group of companies, including the Carla Zampatti Foundation. He is an advocate for the empowerment of women, a supporter of the arts and a champion of multiculturalism.

After a long career in finance he worked in the office of Premier Gladys Berejiklian as Head of Economic Policy.

Since 2019, he has led Carla Zampatti, a leading Australian-owned and Australian-made fashion brand. Established in 1965, it is now embarking on its second generation of growth, following the passing of its eponymous founder in 2021.

Alex is also a board member of the Australian Fashion Council.



Edwina McCann
CO-CHAIR

Edwina McCann is the Editorial Director of News Corp Australia's Prestige Network and Conde Nast titles, previously holding the position of Editor-in-Chief at *Vogue Australia* from 2012 to 2022. During her editorship, she was at the helm of the Vogue brand's strategic digital growth and played an integral role in launching the innovative STEM-focused Vogue Codes event series.

In 2015 Edwina topped B&T's list of 30 Most Powerful Women in Australian Media, and in November 2018 she was presented with the Australian Fashion Laureate's Lifetime Achievement Award as an acknowledgement of her significant and ongoing contribution to the national fashion industry.

Edwina joined the UTS Business School Advisory Board in 2014. In 2017, she was announced as a board member for The Australian Ballet and chair of The Australian Ballet Foundation Board, from which she retired in 2021.

She has served on Westpac Scholars Trust, was Co-Chair and founder of the Australian Fashion Council and a council member of Australia's Nation Brand Advisory Council.

Today she serves on the board of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) and the St Joseph's College Foundation board.



Marc Freeman

Marc Freeman is the Creative Director and co-founder of the iconic Australian luxury fashion brand Camilla and Marc, launched in 2003 alongside his sister Camilla Freeman-Topper. The siblings established Camilla and Marc to create a brand that appeals to women seeking quality workmanship, understated sophistication, sustainability and longevity. Camilla and Marc aims to bring a timeless and classic perspective through signature tailoring and holds an unwavering dedication to women. With degrees in commerce and engineering from the University of New South Wales, Marc developed and expanded the international exposure and brand identity of Camilla and Marc. He was instrumental in establishing the 13 boutiques across Australia, their successful online operation, and stock in high-end international boutiques and department stores, while Camilla spearheads the signature designs of the brand. Despite the huge success of their brand, Marc and Camilla have not sold any stakes in their company and continue to run as a family-owned private business. In February 2024, they celebrated the 20th anniversary of Camilla and Marc for friends of the brand in the new Woollahra flagship boutique.



Lisa Havilah

Lisa Havilah is the Chief Executive of the Powerhouse Museum. Through her visionary leadership she is establishing a new museum paradigm for one of Australia's oldest and most important Cultural Institutions. The landmark renewal of the Powerhouse is the largest cultural infrastructure project in Australia since the Sydney Opera House. It includes the creation of the museum's new flagship, Powerhouse Parramatta; the revitalisation of Powerhouse Ultimo; the expansion of the Powerhouse Castle Hill and the digitisation of the Powerhouse Collection. From 2012 to 2019, Lisa was the Director of Carriageworks. Under her leadership Carriageworks experienced extraordinary audience, artistic and commercial growth, becoming the fastest growing cultural precinct in Australia. Previously, she was Director of Campbelltown Arts Centre, where she pioneered an internationally renowned contemporary arts program that brought together culturally and socially diverse communities.



Alix Higgins

Alix Higgins is a fashion and textiles designer based in Sydney having trained in Paris. His work is about fashion as an image, a landscape to rewrite history and identity. Using upcycled materials, screen printed poetry and digital printed future forward textiles to create garments with strength, ease, and emotion.

NSW FASHION SECTOR WORKING GROUP



Grace Lillian Lee

Grace Lillian Lee is a multicultural Australian artist, designer, and cultural leader, deeply inspired by her Torres Strait Island heritage as a descendant of the Miriam Mer Samsep people. A graduate of RMIT with Honours in Fashion Design, she deferred her doctoral studies at QUT to pursue a rapidly growing career in the arts.

Grace is renowned for reviving and reinterpreting traditional weaving techniques — such as the ‘Grasshopper Weave’ learned from Elder Dr Uncle Ken Thaiday — through contemporary body sculptures and fashion storytelling.

In 2017, she founded First Nations Fashion + Design (FNFD), a pioneering not-for-profit organisation committed to supporting the growth and visibility of Indigenous fashion creatives nationally and internationally.

Her independent showcase in July 2025, supported by Jean Paul Gaultier during Paris Couture Fashion Week, marked a historic milestone — becoming the first Indigenous woman to independently present at Couture, while powerfully elevating First Nations design on the global stage.

Grace was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Design by the University of Technology Sydney in 2025, and her works are held in major public collections. She was also the recipient of the National Carla Zampatti Award for Women in Leadership in 2021, and the Indigenous Designer of the Year at the Australian Fashion Laureates in 2024.



Elizabeth Mossop

Elizabeth Mossop is Professor of Landscape Architecture and former Dean of the Faculty of Design Architecture and Building at the University of Technology Sydney. She has led the university’s strategy for the creative industries since 2021. She has held leadership positions at Harvard GSD, the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture at Louisiana State University and the University of NSW. She is a founding principal of Spackman Mossop Michaels landscape architects, based in Sydney, New Orleans and Detroit. Elizabeth is passionate about how we adapt cities and towns to be more resilient to the reality of uncertain climate. She has extensive experience in the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast post-Katrina. She is currently leading the development of the Northern Rivers Living Lab with colleagues from the University of Southern Cross and the support of the NSW Government.



Anna Plunkett

Anna Plunkett is one half of renowned contemporary fashion house, Romance Was Born, known for its unique storytelling vision. Anna met her collaborator Luke Sales while studying fashion in 2005. Their label is known for their ability to transform any theme or seemingly random inspiration into a glittery glimmering fashion paradise. Their collections are full of breathtaking statement pieces and feature covetable prints, hand worked details of appliqué or embroidery, intricate beading, and intensely detailed sequined elements. Romance Was Born is held in costume and textile collections nationally at the National Gallery of Australia, Powerhouse, The National Gallery of Victoria and South Australian Museum. Internationally, they featured in the 2019 summer show *Camp: Notes on Fashion* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Artistic collaboration is an integral part of how Romance Was Born design; they carefully choose collaborators who share their creative passion and dedication to their process. Past collaborations with kindred artists and brands such as; May Gibbs, Linda Jackson, Jenny Kee, Del Kathryn Barton, Disney, Marvel, Lego and the Sydney Theatre Company. Romance Was Born create clothing that is more than just beautiful garments – they create an immersive and emotional experience for the wearer.



Jaana Quaintance-James

Jaana Quaintance-James is the CEO of the Australian Fashion Council. A seasoned leader in sustainability and commercial strategy, Jaana has dedicated her career to driving impactful change and has a track record of delivering market advantage through sustainable practices and innovation.

Previously Jaana was Chief Sustainability and Sourcing Officer at Global Fashion Group (GFG), parent company of THE ICONIC, and using strategic planning and strong governance, delivered significant commercial and sustainability benefits. Prior to GFG, Jaana led sustainability at THE ICONIC and earlier, led ethical sourcing at David Jones following its acquisition by Woolworths South Africa.

A graduate of the Institute of Company Directors, Jaana also serves as a board director of The Social Outfit, a social enterprise.

